

## WIT AND WISDOM OF NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

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Key:

BU is Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (three volumes)

TA That Alone

T&R Therapy and Realization in the Bhagavad Gita

L&B Love and Blessings (autobiography)

YS Yoga Sutras (Living the Science of Harmonious Union)

DM Psychology of Darsanamala

MOTW Meditations on the Way

G Gita

Gita video (refers to the presentation on YouTube.)

SOC In the Stream of Consciousness

When a person does not know what their innate tendencies are, what their natural talents are, and what their basic drive is, they are likely to miss the mark in life. For such a person the rediscovery of their true Self brings a joy they have never experienced before. (G, 1)

Science is to help us avoid the folly of putting our trust in nonsense. (BU, Vol. I. 435)

We have to choose between the duality of appearance, and reality. (BU III.214)

The yogi makes every effort not to be a howler telling untruth or a simpleton believing in something because somebody said it or it is written somewhere. (YS, 243)

There is no such thing as an absolutely honest Marxist or Vedantin. (Gita video VIII.7)

Even a thoroughgoing rationalist has no defense against habits, reflexes, prejudices, appetites, passions and emotions. (BU III.261)

It is not through argument that one arrives at God. (BU, Vol. I. 611)

The Absolute and the relative are the same – it's only a matter of how you know it. (Gita video VIII.5)

The ambivalent aspects of the same Self can be conceived unitively or dualistically, the former resolving conflict and the latter accentuating it. (BU III.159)

When we think of our outgoing consciousness and the sublime consciousness that is being absorbed into the Self, each one has different kinds of freedom. One is the freedom to go by one's own will into the electromagnetic field of being, subjected to the continuous push and pull of psychosomatic urges. By our own free will, we barter our freedom forever. The other is losing our identity in the freedom of pure Being. In spite of the polemics between the outer and the inner, both are necessary and complementary to arrive at the final step of transcendence of the outwardly conditioned world and the inwardly conditioned states of mind. (BU III.201)

Personally, I am never tired of meeting conflict after conflict. (L&B, 335)

Liberation is nothing short of the emancipation of consciousness from its identification with the ego. This is the problematic situation of every embodied person. (G, 417)

Egos will burst naturally when once they ripen. (L&B, 399)

Yoga is not just sitting cross-legged and freezing into a static corpse of the past, it is a conscious participation in the scheme of life. By constantly pulling ourselves out of the tendency to freeze, to become morbid, numb or inertial, and lose awareness, we make ourselves available to the meaningful vitality of the moment. (SOC, 31)

Yoga is the union of ends and means, the cancellation of opposites, expectation and fulfillment. Tension and release cancel out into a neutral silence, and ambivalence is resolved. (Gayatri mantra meditation, Hawaii, 1978)

All our early training at home, in school, on the street, in the marketplace, and even in church is to convince us to adopt the ways and means of successful transaction. We are taught how to labor and get its fruit, how to learn and practice over and over again to obtain efficiency, and how to apply a well-structured formula or technique to get a desired effect. Afterwards when we come to seek the spirit, we presume that we are expected to do something similar to achieve results. But masters like the Buddha and Christ and the rishis of the Upanishads draw a distinction between the world of transactional gains and the world of spiritual attainments, pointing out that transactional methods only serve us well in their appropriate context. The Indian saints call the world of transactional gains one of “small pleasures” and the world of spiritual attainment “the great happiness.” (SOC 41-2)

On hearing the word ‘sacrifice’ those who are familiar with old texts will think of tragic pictures of innocent animals butchered and burned in the leaping flames of a sacrificial pit. We have to forget the ancient connotation of sacrifice and revalue it as the continuous process of making and remaking this universe so that all shades of its imperfections are corrected and new possibilities proclaimed. (BU III, 138)

Love is like an alchemy. The intimacy of love corrodes the dividing line between Self and non-Self. Like a river flowing into an ocean and merging with it, the limit of consciousness of the finite Self becomes absorbed into the limitless expanse of universal appreciation. (G, 447)

A botanist examining a flower to derive detailed information about its calyx, petals, ovary, and mode of pollination is different from a lover, moved by its beauty, offering it as a precious token of love to the beloved. The kind of knowledge recommended here is not the punditry of a scholar but the intimations of immortality that grow between an aspirant and God. (G, 448)

(Letter to Deb Buchanan)

Thank God that I have not yet felt the urge to become definitive and structured. There are no things to work out, as you seem to imagine, because my only function is to interact with another person of my kind who confronts me on the spiritual path. I do not think in terms of numbers. If you or any other person who is now in the Gurukula circle sincerely puts their fraternal trust in me for guidance and finds me sincerely responsive, I should not consider such incidents as anything other than a providential operation of one of the several random hits with which everything in the world is given its natural shape and meaning. (L&B, 472)

When I say “God,” it only means the experience of Beauty, Goodness or Truth in a given situation. (L&B, 600)

True transcendence does not cause the least violation of the inner integrity of the empirical nature of the transactional world. (G, 290)

Situations presenting themselves to us without any initiative on our part, and as a result of our most natural and correct behavior, should be taken as the will of God. (G, 241)

Our personality is caught between free will and the force of necessity. It would be fatal not to recognize one or the other. (G, 448)

If you do not want to be caught in the ever-horizontalizing mesh of a structured institution, be a respecter of each person's freedom to be what they are and don't expect more than what they can sincerely and spontaneously give without any demand from you. (L&B 472)

For all practical purposes, the Gita can be considered the essence of the Upanishads. (G, 8)

The philosopher's main task is to harmonize duality wherever it tends to bring contradiction. (BU, Vol. II. 1)

If there is no desire, there is no life, no manifestation, no world. (BU Vol. II, 67)

This work [Brihadaranyaka Upanishad] is not meant to be a code of ethics, and is to be kept free from degenerating into a mere dharma shastra (textbook on right conduct) or *smriti* (remembered application of heard wisdom) which would belong more to the side of action rather than to understanding. The present work is devoted mainly to Self-realization, and should be free from the social and obligatory aspects of morality. Therefore the author contents himself with broad generalizations which have more of a wisdom interest than one of social action. (BU III.157)

This way of confronting the problem of evil, which puzzles theologians and philosophers equally, is the prerogative of the dialectical, as against the merely rational approach. Steeped in scientific or unilateral rationalism, modern philosophers in the

West have forfeited their more ancient heritage of wisdom. (BU III.158)

We cannot sit around as passive witnesses of the doom that is steadily and systematically coming to a crucial point. The watchword that was given to us by Nataraja Guru was to take upon ourselves unlimited liability as the *Satya Dharmis*, the responsible custodians of the conscience of humankind. (L&B, 450)

Realization comes not by seeing everything as unreal but by making every moment real enough to love and adore it. (L&B, 422)

Anything taken as a discipline or a means to be happy is sure to lose its attraction after a few days. So like children who go from one toy to another, we have to invent fresh games to amuse ourselves. If you know, after all, these are all games, then you can comfortably sit back and see the world maya going on. (L&B 424)

Most people think of ends and means dualistically. When taken separately, “means” can become a painful anticipation, and can lead one ultimately even to frustration. When ends and means are unitively conceived there is a continuous and progressive realization of the end in the application of the means. For instance, when a child runs after a ball, its game is a “means” to gain the “end” of happiness. Here, ends and means have no real dichotomy between them. Happiness is not an award given at the end of the game. Right from the beginning, when the child kicks as well as misses the ball, it is in a state of happiness which is the natural end of the game. In other words, the game provides to the child a yoga of ends and means. The Bhagavad Gita treats the whole of life as a game presided over by the Supreme Lord, Ísvarah. (G, 9)

When a person sees the stump of a tree in moonlight as a ghost, it is evident that the ghost has no substance. If it is argued that by a

fragment of the tree the ghost came into existence, you are trying to establish the existence of two entities, that is, the tree and the ghost. When you see the ghost you have no idea of the tree. When you see the tree, there is not even the slightest trace of the ghost in it. Again, when you look at it from a distance, your timidity may suggest a ghost to your mind. If you want others to believe that what you experience is a confection of ghost and tree, that is far-fetched. Out there in the moonlight the tree alone is. The ghost is in your mind. (G, 445)

Narayana Guru speaks of a union that is coming from two sides. It is a complementary function, as in the coming together of a bolt and a nut. On the bolt are the threads. Their complementary grooves are on the nut. There has to be a correspondence between the thread and the groove. There also has to be the application of a progressive, gentle force of turning the bolt or the nut in the right direction. This does not mean forcing one's way, but rather submitting to the requirements of the situation. Thus, the final union has in it both a positive and a negative attitude which cancel out the pairs of opposites. Leaving all *dharma* is negative, and taking refuge in the Absolute is positive. Both these are happening simultaneously. In the highest sense nothing is happening. It is only like waking up from a dream. No effort is needed to leave the persons, things, and situations of the dream when consciousness emerges from it to the wakeful state. Similarly, when one recognizes the universality of Being, the several demands and peculiarities of the individuated persona vanish like mist in the sunlight. (G, 452)

Devotion verticalizes the mind and action horizontalizes it. (G, 4)

The parables and dialogues in the Upanishads are given a more cogent and philosophically structured presentation in the Gita. For all practical purposes, the Gita can be considered the essence of the Upanishads. (G, 8)

Realization is not a static event; it is a continuous process. In all states and stages of life, the higher Self is to be realized in the lower self, and the lower self is to be seen as an expression of the higher Self. (G, 9)

When we sit to meditate on *aum tat savitur varenyam*, we should not call to mind the image of the sun in the sky, or anything that has a name or form. Anything which is presented to the mind formally or nominally is an *adhyasa*. Only when all *adhyasas* are transcended can one come to the pure essence, which is *satya*. It is not through any drill or exercise of repeated chanting that we can get over the hurdles placed before us by the conceptualizing of the mind. So in one sense, all religious rituals are deceptive in their dynamics.... Religion itself has become the greatest snare to stop a person from the vertical ascent of spiritual pursuit. (BU III, 172, 174)

Every concept is a confection of the form, name and functional properties of what is seen. (BU III, 143)

The conjunction of intelligence and mind works for the good when the mind becomes subservient to intelligence. On the other hand, when intelligence becomes a tool in the hands of the mind, which is already vitiated by the colorations of past impressions, it loses its efficacy to release the lower self from bondage and becomes *durmati*, perverted intelligence. (G, 426)

Ego is the link between *buddhi*, intellect, and the consolidated memory of the individual, *citta*, which is intimately connected with the incipient memories of the past. When the ego is employing reason, the identification of the ego and the intellect is so close that one fails to distinguish between the two. In such a state, the intellect becomes concerned with the promotion of one incipient memory after another. This is called *saṅga* or *sakti*, attachment.



*Buddhi* is the true light of the Self. When it attains its freedom from bondage with ego and memory, it is called *asaktabuddhi*, unattached intelligence. Mind is too feeble to know the Absolute. Only intellect can comprehend it. That is why Krishna insists on freeing the intellect from the entanglements of the mind. (G, 444)

I admire your courage to love without wanting the loved one to change or transform to make life easier for you. I think only God loves that way. (L&B, 425)

Do not get caught in any web of social obligation. All that is expected of you is to share your smile with the morning sun and the gladness it brings to the heart of flowers. Your good work, charity, cooperation, fellowship, compassion, friendship, wifhood and husbanding, fatherhood and motherhood, are all only the commentaries of that one smile. (L&B, 426)

It is not by doing good deeds, speaking nice things or showing affection that you become good. It is by being good that you do all these things spontaneously. We're neither good nor bad by nature. We become good by falling in love with the Good One. You can neither go out and find the Good One nor force yourself to love her or him. It happens when it happens. Fortunately it happens everywhere and always. This fortune is the rare grace that is paradoxically abundant. To know this is to feel relieved. It is like being reunited with the lost parent. (L&B 426)

Many questions stem from their answers. So if we wait for some time, the questions will transmute into their answers. (L&B 426)

Obligation changes into sweet occasions of dedicated service when we are offering ourselves by free choice and not in response to a demand. Minds and marriages are alike. They can bind or free, destroy or create, debase or ennoble, hinder or help life's fulfillment. (L&B 427)

The person who is looked upon as a guru by a disciple and who tacitly agrees to do justice to the disciple's trust should be an exceedingly conscientious person who knows how to keep his own paces well balanced on the sharp edge of a razor. The razor's edge lies in between the two spheres of the universal and the particular. If he leans too much on the universal, he becomes less effective than an abstraction given in a book of axioms. If he slips into the sticky mud of the particular, he'll make a trap for himself and others which will end up in a personality cult. The world is full of dark and dingy wells resounding with the croaks of self-seeking charlatans and their hypnotized chorus. (L&B 430)

If you are not affected by what you see, what you touch, what you feel, what you notice, what is the difference between you and a stone? (BU Vol. III, 47)

Our reference to death is mainly aimed at a state of mind that refuses to grow, refuses to change, and refuses to flow. Such a misfortune can happen to anyone if they bottle themselves up, even though it might be through a legitimate discipline or technique. (SOC, 31)

It is the Self that is to be seen, heard, meditated upon and realized. A person in the path of *brahmavidya* first comes to know about the Self from their teacher. What is heard is the exposition of the a priori teachings given in the scripture. After hearing it, the truth of what one has heard is fully brought out by engaging oneself in a positive dialogue with one's teacher. One has to apply one's own sympathetic and critical mind so the intention of the teachings can be fully appreciated and stabilized in one's life. (BU Vol. II, 625)

You don't have to think of a Supreme God sitting somewhere in a far-off place and of one day reaching him so that bhakti can begin. No, bhakti is operating all the time. The very person next to you

now is a symbol of the Unknown whom you are seeking. If you can see in this person the manifestations of truth, the manifestations of beauty, the manifestations of goodness—to that extent you are moving towards fulfillment. Your realization is at hand, not as a distant promise but as what is presented here and now. (Bhakti, 14)

When your own nature is becoming more and more evident to yourself, the imperfections of your social personality will become more and more clear. In its place *īśvara*—the universal person not afflicted with the love/hate dualities of physico-social life—can be accepted as a better model for imitation or identification.

The word *īśvara* is derived from *īś*, which literally means “ruling from within.” The life of an individual is not an amorphous chaotic structure that comes from the randomness of the physical world. It has a goal to achieve and laws to abide by. The innate law of everything that governs, controls, and maneuvers it to function for the purposeful attainment of a given goal is *īśvara*. If you know there is such a guiding principle in your life, life becomes all the more dear and an incentive comes to live as correctly as possible. Thereafter, the lower aspect of the self will always be in resonance with *īśvara*, the higher Self. That *īśvara* is looked upon as your true teacher or preceptor. Relating always with that *īśvara* to develop insight into the meaning of your life combines both the purificatory and educative aspects. (YS 149)

Every possible value in the contemplative context is so rich with the presence of the Absolute that it is not necessary to idealize or idolize any one of them particularly. (G 220)

Carrying a bee in one’s bonnet and admiring its buzz as the perennial hum of eternal truth can at best be nothing short of finding one’s niche in a fool’s paradise. (My Personal Philosophy of Life)

“My friend, all that you have just said amounts to claiming, ‘My zero is greater than your zero.’” (MOTW 96)

When I say “they” I create a barrier and cause a limit to my own I-consciousness by cordoning off an area of my consciousness. Then I fill the other side with an indistinct grouping of centers of consciousness of ‘they’ which are so feeble that no single individual can function separately. Yet I assume ‘they’ has a collective dynamics to honor me or shame me, to grant me its approbation or to condemn me with its disapproval. In this way it becomes my social counterpart. (SOC 27)

The contiguity of time is manufactured by the mathematician and is forced upon us by the commercially minded technologist. When I pick up a hot cup of tea or chocolate, I am not worried about the space it occupies nor am I thinking about how many seconds elapses between the cup and my lip. But all this irrelevant data is laid on the table as the precious findings of the philosopher, who is bent upon manufacturing metaphysical problems for the edification of his own sense of vanity. (SOC 28)

The best cleanser of life is hot tears. (BU Vol. II, 247)

Unfortunately, many hallucinatory malfunctions of the mind easily pass for mystical experiences, and pseudo-yogis and pretentious spiritualists claim the experience of nondual visions. As *brahmavidya*, the Gita is an uncompromising science, not admitting into its scope anything that refutes sound reason. As a *yoga-sastra* it attempts to be precise and truthful in comprehending every detail of the perceptual and conceptual world, so that the aspiring yogi or spiritual seeker will not take any false step in advancing toward the final realization of nondual identity with the Absolute. (G 289)

When the mind is tied up with the symbols of analysis and cluttered with discursive thoughts, it cannot have any streak of intuition. Ratiocination and analytical reasoning are therefore to be dimmed or even abandoned in contemplation. Only in this state can the subject intuitively identify himself with the object. (G 178)

The seeker and the seer are on the same path. All the same they are not the same kind of beneficiaries of wisdom. The seer has solved age-old riddles in his or her heart. The seeker again and again gets lost on the slippery pathway to certitude. The quality of life is decided by how happy you are, how consistently you are happy, and how you are established in that happiness. Those who lack this excellence are always haunted by the questions: “What next? Where should I turn? Who can I approach? How can it be accomplished? How can I know that what I seek is truly what I need or what I want?” From the examples of those who have gone before us, we discover that in most cases those who have succeeded had someone to guide them, someone to hold their hand with compassion. The successful have been led to the sanctuary of satisfaction where there is no longer any remorse or sense of inadequacy. The masters who lead the seekers are called preceptors of wisdom. (BU Vol. III, 433)

Any person who turns to the Khila Khanda of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is assigned a duty which will benefit all blessed people who are endowed with pure intelligence to decipher the paradoxes and enigmas of life, and at the same time, to be deeply devoted to the Cause beyond causes. The message of this mantra is that the Supreme is in love with every part of itself, and every part has to reciprocate that love by furthering the message of the Vedas, which can bring one to the silence of wonder that washes away the bitterness of the phenomenon which is superimposed on the noumenon. (BU Vol. III, 183-4)

Situations presenting themselves to us without any initiative on our part and as a result of our most natural and correct behavior, should be taken as the will of God. That very feeling will give us a sense of our togetherness with God. Even though a situation looks difficult and beyond us, this trust in the Highest will give us new hope and courage, and unsought aid coming from all directions will enhance our trust in God's grace. When this trust and consequential fulfillment increases day by day, we know we are on the right track and we progress. In such a case no one will have any doubt in their mind of what is happening. (G, 241)

Although in principle Vedanta is supportive of the idea of the One without a second, in our daily life we always encounter the notion of the many. Therefore there has to be a continuous exercise of the mind to again and again find similitude between the seemingly diverse forms, names and functions. There is a central focal point to which all the pluralities are to be centripetally referred, to give full orientation to our understanding of brahman. This central focus is found in the heart. That is why prajapati is identified with the heart. (BU Vol. III, 53-4)

*Praja* is that which has within it the law of being, the law of fecundity, the law of propagation, the law of proliferation. So Prajapati is to be understood as an eternal cause, continuously projecting innumerable possibilities of which some become immediate probabilities, and a selected few probabilities become actualized. (BU Vol. III, 360)

The time span of human life, from infancy to old age, needs special value orientation, so it is generally marked into four parts; the period of learning, the period of earning, the period of furthering the culture of the race, and the period of gracefully withdrawing into oblivion. These are called *ashramas*. (BU Vol. II, 594)

When the transparency of the mind is not affected by any kind of emotional crisis, intellectual conflict, or psychotic or other pathological affectation, it gives a spontaneous expression of its own truthful nature. (Gita 353)

As we are used to accomplishing things and obtaining desirable ends by our actions, we entertain the false impression that for the self to become *brahman* there has to be some kind of process by which the part can evolve into the whole.... This is not so. We are always the whole. All that we need to do is forget the false notion that we are anything other than *brahman*. Realization is not accomplished by a forward march but by a regressive dissolution. Up to the last moment you have a choice to skip the whole process of samsara merely by accepting the fact that you are the Absolute. (BU Vol. II, 583)

For each one of us there is only one world. That is what we each call “my self.” That world is an actualization of the total creative energy of one’s manifestation, i.e. the *prajapati*. In that, one cluster of attitudes makes one divine, another set of attitudes makes one a human, and a third set of primitive urges makes one a demon. However ugly those urges are, out of them the most sublime aesthetic sensibility and spiritual wisdom are to be evolved. Looked upon this way, there is no hell outside, no heaven outside, no world outside. All pluralities organically belong to the unity of one’s being.

Now we can see how the false fabrication of heaven and its denizens, the earth with its sociopolitical histories, and hell with its wildest screams of fear causes millions of people everywhere to undergo excruciating pain, shame and misery. All these are manmade hypotheses which have become the most deplorable concepts of theology, religion, science, sociology, political economy, and every kind of belligerency. To clear the board of all such misconceptions we should make a valiant attempt to go through the entire maze of conceptualized beliefs.

A deep psychological analysis is to be made to understand the images we generate inside, the emotional energy source that generates imaginations that can foster sustaining faith in us, the energizing value which is fed into images, and the shifting values that intrinsically belong to the inner dynamism of personality formation. (BU Vol. III, 40-41)

There is an Indian myth that a certain demon came and challenged Balarama, the brother of Sri Krishna. Balarama accepted the challenge. He went, raising his fist to smash its head. Then the demon became twice the size of Balarama. Seeing this, Balarama, who had psychic powers, grew double the size of the demon. The demon doubled in size again, and started lifting hills to throw at him. Then Balarama realized he could not overpower the demon. He turned to Sri Krishna and asked for help. Krishna smiled and said, "Brother, leave him to me. I'll deal with him."

The demon turned to Krishna and found that in his hand there was no weapon. Krishna stood with his hands open and smiled. Then the demon became the size of an average human being. Krishna still stood there with his bewitching smile and said, "Come on friend." He came close and became smaller than Krishna. Krishna patted him. He became very small. Then Krishna took him in his hand and stroked him. He became so tiny.

Then Balarama came and said, "Brother, I don't understand this. How did he become so small? How did you tame him?" He replied, "Brother, don't you know this demon's name?" "No." "This demon's name is Krodha, anger. When you become angry, you are only feeding him. He thrives on somebody else's anger. When you take away your anger, there is nothing to nourish him. He becomes less and less. So when I give him love, there is nothing on which he can feed himself and he becomes very small."

This is also the central teaching of Buddha: with hatred you never appease hatred, but with love you win all. (TA, 314-15)



Do not look into the social mirror and then think that is what you are. You should have an inner estimation of yourself and the value of what you are doing. Of course, it is possible to be self-deluded and make mistaken judgments. In order to avoid that, you need a confidante who is detached. If you learn to strike a root in the universal order, that gives you stability.... When you sit firm on your own truthfulness, your own trust, you can face any encounter. (Gurukulam Magazine)

from *Therapy and Realization in the Bhagavad Gita*:

Sannyasa is the giving up of the personal agency which can make the center of consciousness change from self to ego. When that tendency is given up, you find, instead of a personal agency, a cosmic order functioning, of which you are an integral part. When your program of life is identical with the general system to which it belongs, then you are a sannyasin. Sannyasa does not mean you should have a beard or a shaven head or a colored cloth or anything. Those are all superficial things.

Ultimately, what is renounced here? You renounce only your personal motivations and your personal sense of agency. You make yourself part of the whole. This is how the entire process is worked out.

more *Therapy & Realization*:

In the Gita, Krishna wants Arjuna to know what his dharma is and how he should perform it. Implied in this is a revaluation of the value system to which man should conform, and of the proper functioning of those values in our life. For that, Krishna, as a teacher, is also doing what the psychologist is doing to his patient. The psychologist is not there to provide a plank for the patient to lean on which will always be held up by the therapist. Rather he should help him to stand on his own feet. That is possible only when the patient obtains an insight into his own problems, his own being. When he knows what he is and how he should function, he

will be able to function by himself. The very basic attempt of a psychologist is to make the patient realize himself.

If self-realization is the motive of the psychologist, why do we stop half way? Why don't we push it all the way until the patient is no longer a patient but a student, and further, not a seeker but a seer? Krishna functions here not merely as a therapist, he offers much more than therapy. He educates his patient. His patient becomes illuminated. He is no longer simply a patient in relation to a psychologist – the seeker has become the seer.

The noumenal and the phenomenal can be compared to pure light and the rainbow, respectively. Pure light by itself has no form and color, whereas the rainbow is a colorful spectrum with an arc-like shape. To a person's uncritical mind the rainbow, being visible and objective will appear as positive, whereas pure light is what they might know only by mere inferential abstraction. On the other hand, someone with a discerning mind sees the rainbow as a negative phenomenon which falsifies the true nature of light. The relation between light and the rainbow is of an independent factor and a dependent accident. Light can shine on its own, whereas the rainbow cannot exist without the light even for a second. On that account, one can treat light as real and the rainbow as unreal. In spite of this philosophical verity, the fact remains that the rainbow is part of our experience. There must be something in the very nature of pure light that accounts for the emergence of the rainbow. To that extent it cannot be unreal. In the same way, the phenomenal, while being entirely dependent on the noumenal, cannot be dismissed as unreal. That is why Vedantins call the phenomenal world *sadasat*, meaning "real-unreal". (G 181)

Devotion or practice in the Gita is not to be confused with indications in such texts as the Nārada *Bhakti Sūtras* and Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, which should be looked upon as *darśanas* (distinct systematic visions of reality) on their own, with very little

in common with the pure contemplation of the Absolute which is implied in this chapter (XII). (G 287)

Letter to a disciple:

“Who am I? That is the great question. Go within. Find out.” So clamor all the masters. Take a break from being so serious. What is the point of knowing who you are? You are just you, a plain and simple you, like the plain and simple “I am” among a multitude of I’s and you’s and he’s and she’s. What’s more important is to watch the traffic and note the light signals at the crossroad and to understand the moods of the people and the markets you deal with. You will be a lot better off if you cultivate good taste for forms, shapes, designs and colors, a good ear for music, sound logic to think correctly, good ethical norms to conduct yourself amicably and cheerfully with others, and a sensibility to appreciate all the finer nuances of life’s music, which has a wide variety ranging from the Sama Veda to disco.

Everyone is as important and unique as I am. So let me re-frame the question “Who am I?” as “Who are all these wonderful people including me?” Why go within? Why not be friends with this tangible world, this unending feast of colors and music in which the grand drama of life is always in full swing. Why should anyone dampen one’s spirit with a cynical philosophy of rumination on death and disease? That will be taken care of anyway.

Your self does not belong to any caste. You cannot be perceived by the senses. Unattached, formless and witness of all are you. Be happy. This suggests a drastic reduction of the solid person of flesh and bones into a rarefied abstraction. I do not have to write off the legitimate use of my senses and mind to be happy. I know caste is a barbarian prejudice, just as race is a regional scruple that can be dismissed as a pettiness of mind. We are mini systems intrinsically fabricated into the microcosmic system of the macrocosmic system. I can be genuinely happy by functioning as best I can within the frame of reference to which I legitimately

belong without either exaggerating or obliterating my role and identity. (L&B, 485)

Another letter:

Depression by itself is not a disease. It only shows that there are some kinds of air pockets in your personality that are not fully plugged-in with life interests. For long you were running away from life and were seeking hideouts for your psyche. Now you're coming out of the bush to face the challenge of the city and the burgermeister. It's an education in itself. Even the most sublime song can be sung sitting on solid ground. (L&B, 395)

Annoyance is the immediate reaction to any advent of clumsiness where one seeks perfection. The world is in the slow process of becoming perfect with a norm that is not fully revealed to us. So our annoyance is not only caused by somebody else's imperfections, but also because of our lack of understanding of the patterns of the other person's self, designed by whimsical Chance, which lyrical people call Fate and religious people call God. (L&B 532)

It is not with any word that we comprehend the Word, but with a total plunge into inexpressible wonder, to which we come with the canceling out of all the contradictions of this eternal paradox. After exhausting all possible complementarities and reciprocities, we come to grapple with the all-out contradictions. This gives us the secret of canceling out opposites to land in the neutral zero from which words recoil and the mind is melted away into oblivion. (BU II,171)

Nobody disputes that a book is a physical object, but the effect it has on one who reads its contents can bring about so many changes in a person that their meaning of life can be totally changed and their pursuit turned in an altogether different tangent. (BU III.260)

The culminating conclusion of the Upanishad is that rote learning or parrot-like recitation of the Vedas and Upanishads will not lead us anywhere unless we live what we have understood. Thus the whole Upanishad is our asvamedha—our sacrificing of all tendencies to exaggerate. (BU III.288)

There is an assumed superiority in the mind of all the aggressive races who have built up their fortune on the unwilling meekness of slaves. There is a concealed cruelty right in the heart of all their enthusiasm and kindness. As I see this ugly face sometimes very pronounced behind their sweetness and sincerity, I cannot help pointing my finger at it. (Now found in L&B, 350.)

In the sixth chapter of the Gita Krishna says, “Be established in me. What makes a thing what it is, is its beingness. A thing becomes stable because of its beingness. Know me to be that beingness. Without me nothing can be, because I am the beingness. After having found it, feel devoted to it. Let your love flow toward it as the one beingness in all, as the one beingness which makes truth truthful, goodness good, beauty beautiful, love endearing.”

You cultivate this through constant meditation. I am not speaking of meditation as sitting cross-legged with eyes closed, or some such. Life itself is a meditation. Everything passing in our life is a theme of meditation. When you say “this exists” and “this does not exist,” what enables you to say it is that beingness. That is what we are asked to adore as the one God. It is up to your taste to call it God, or the Supreme Principle, or the one reality, or beingness, or what you poetically feel within you as the greatest empathy you can have, the sense of beauty you feel as an artist, the great love you feel as a lover. In all these there is a substantiality of beingness. You sense it from your heart.

Then the Gita says to see That as your own central reality. You are constantly saying “I am, I am, I am.” What assures you of that “I am” is the light within you. “I am That” is just like saying “I am that I am.” See it as the Absolute in you. Thus, having found

beingness as the reality of everything, and as your own reality, it is easy to see that the real in you and the real in all other things are the same. This is how you gain the secret of sameness, *samyam*. It will bring you great serenity, great peace. (TA, p. 265):

Reality has three unifying aspects. One is called *sat*, existence. I exist, you exist, this couch exists, the house exists, the sky exists, the world exists. All these can be brought under one common heading of existence. All that exists is a genuine existence which implies the existence of all. It's called *sat*.

I am aware of my existence, of your existence, of the existence of the world. Thus I have an all-embracing awareness that includes everything. What is not in it, I will never know. This awareness, which includes in it good and bad, far and near, one and many, big and small, irrespective of all variations, is just one knowledge, *cit*. So we have one all-inclusive existence and one all-inclusive knowledge.

I value my beingness and you value your beingness. Everything tends to become valuable in one way or another. All these values are measured by our own happiness. This is called *ananda*. So we have *sat*, existence; *cit*, knowledge; and *ananda*, the primordial value. Taken all together, the whole of reality is therefore called *sat-cit-ananda*.

One can be permeated with the consciousness of *sat-cit-ananda*. It can be blissful if it is not differentiated, but instead of this generic sense of existence, subsistence and value, we tend to see things individually. When they are broken into bits we have instead *asti*, this is; *bhati*, I know it; and *priyam*, I love it. In Western terms these correspond to cognition, connotation and affection. In the fragmentary notions of *asti*, *bhati* and *priyam* there is scope for a great deal of confusion. We can have "This is, I know it, I dislike it;" or even "This is, I do not know what it is, therefore I do not know if I like it or not." Only when we cultivate an ever-prevailing sense of unity are we out of this confusion. When we identify with the egoistic self we see only through this fragmentation and do not experience *sat-cit-ananda*. (TA, 152-3)

Nitya notes the similarities between adherents of science and religion in his *Psychology of Darsanamala*:

Both sides want truth to prevail; both want the mind to be systematically directed towards truth, so that whatever an individual does will be consistent with a truthful conviction; both hold that only truth will set man free from incorrect beliefs and wrongful conditioning; and both want their votaries to be happy. In addition, both spiritualists and materialists believe they should share happiness with others and work towards the perpetuation of peace, justice, love, and happiness for all through the achievement of the goals of their philosophies. (p. 106)

No physicist has ever seen an atom, much less a subatomic particle. But, like religious people who make icons, the physicist has also made conventional models of atoms and particles. Any person who has gone to school and studied the model of the atom cannot be dissuaded from that mental picture. In this way even scientific knowledge becomes a matter of belief. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad sweeps away all images born of mind. That is why a true Vedantin can never be a religious person. (BU Vol. II, 575)

The Gayatri mantra makes a special appeal: *bhargo devasya dhimahi*. The shining aspects of our physical reality are the senses, called the devas. The conceptual dross that has gone into them is to be burnt away. *Bharga* has two meanings. One is the all-filling transparency of vision which transcends space, time, mass and motion. The other is the total burning away of the irrelevant. Only when all the aspects of the *antakarana*—that is, the interrogative mind, memory recall, rationalizing intellect, and the affective ego—are gotten over, do we receive the senses in their most pure forms. Thereafter they are not sense organs at all: we are one with the Self. Meditation commences only from there. (BU Vol. III, 172-3)

Do not mistake the *deva* for any fanciful angel in some paradise of comic book stories. It's just you—your ability to see, think, formulate words, structure sentences, give to every thing or concept a use, and, at the other end, to give each thing or concept a use, a value, a meaning. Such is the function of the *deva* in you. You adore what you conceive, and you adore when someone passes to you an image they have perceived or a description of what they have conceived. (BU Vol. III, 75)

Religion itself has become the greatest snare to stop a person from the vertical ascent of spiritual pursuit. (BU Vol. III, 174)

Verticalizing one's self-awareness is one of the greatest secrets of the Upanishads. The first step in it is to identify one's mind with an absolutist vision and attitude. In the Chāndogya Upanishad (3:18:1), it says, "One should reverence the mind as Brahma."<sup>i</sup> When Krishna says, "Become one in mind with Me", he is calling Arjuna's attention to the difference in their attitudes. Even though Krishna and Arjuna were both placed in the same situation, Arjuna became filled with a great sense of guilt and was very agitated. Krishna, on the other hand, stood there smiling with an even mind. These two minds are, respectively, one subjected to relativistic influence and the other free of all taints of relativism. (G, 450)

The sin spoken of here has not even the remotest resemblance to the Christian concept. Its significance is one of epistemological import. True artists, when given wholeheartedly to their performance, experience a oneness which is neither inside nor outside. Like that, in unitive action the purpose of acting ceases to be an extraneous goal in the future which separates a person from their happiness. Instead, happiness prevails all through. The "sin" spoken of here is only a potential frustration or regret that is likely to be produced by a certain course of action. (G, 441)



Yajnavalkya establishes that, as soon as it occurs, life correlates itself with tendencies which are detailed by religions as sins. With death, that tendency is overcome. This categorical recognition of sin as a phenomenon only pertaining to one life term dismisses a possible day of ultimate judgment and relegation of the individuated self to hell or heaven. This is the greatest contribution of Vedanta to humanity. We read “That very person, on being born or assuming a body, is conjoined with evils and on dying or leaving the body, discards those evils.” (IV.3.8) Even people outside the Semitic religions entertain the thought that sin is a phenomenon which is vicariously continued through generation after generation. It is this belief that the present mantra rules out.

Where there is no body, there are no sense organs. Where there is no sensation or sense data, there is no mind also. *Anna* (food), *prana* (vital breath) and *manas* (mind) all belong to nature and are governed and controlled by nature modalities. Extrapolating the mind into a non-physical, non-sensory world of abstraction is only a product of imagination. From wrong premises, most religions build up an imaginary world and threaten believers about the consequences of their actions as if they are deeply painted on the soul of a person. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the belief in a Day of Judgment is a cardinal article of faith. The votaries of these religions think that only such a belief will deter a person from indulging in evil. This is like adults trying to discipline innocent children by telling them stories of imaginary ghosts and goblins to tame them and make their minds submissive to the dictates of their elders. The havoc such a wrong faith does to a person, in principle as well as in practice, inflicts a deep mental injury on individuals which makes their bruised minds bleed with anxiety and pain all their lives. (BU Vol. III, 425-6)

What is translated here as “duty belonging to one by birth” is *sahajam karma* in the original Sanskrit. *Sahajam* literally means congenital. Our potentials are genetic. There is scope for enlarging and developing these potentials into skills with education

and training. However, development is also restricted by these same inherent genetic factors. *Karma* is only an outward expression of what is potential.

The genetic theory of the Gita is not mechanistic. Apart from the physiologic or biologic structuring of the genes, which come from a family tree, the Gita also takes into account the continuation of a personality trait from a previous life. The concept of previous lives is also quite different from the popular belief of a linear continuation of an ego-unit from one embodied life to another. As seen here, death marks the return of the essence of a person into *Ísvāra*, the creative energy of perpetual becoming. Birth marks the reemergence of that essence as restructured by the cosmic creative intelligence. As a result of this we may find a genius born to parents of mediocre ability, or a dull-headed offspring to a genius. The social set-up of the environment in which any person is born does not indicate their natural or inherent abilities or aptitudes. Thus we can say with confidence that this verse does not support the claims of the caste proponents at all. (G, 442)

Just as coffee is made with ground coffee beans, sugar, milk and water, heated into a solution, our consciousness, which is like pure water, is mixed with the poisonous coffee powder of memories, the sugar of libidinal urges, and the whitener of pretensions. (BU Vol. II, 607)

Nobody wants to have factionalism, but even as you are attempting to bring unity, you become part of a faction. It is in the name of unity that you are creating all these factions in the first place....

So the true knower of this secret withholds from all disputes. Narayana Guru made this so central to his teaching because it is in the name of this one dispute that we have been killing each other since the dawn of human history. There has been more blood shed in the name of religion than there is water in the seven oceans put together. It is such an important question for all mankind. If the dignity of man is to be enhanced, we need to find a solution to this

eternal riddle of man killing man in the name of an opinion. (TA, 322)

The second model [of Darsanamala] that Narayana Guru gives is to think in terms of the continuation of life from seeds or genes which have come from a family tree. People are happy when they have innate talents and are able to live a successful life in society. Many mourn that they came from seeds of an inferior quality. They want to think that they are lost people who have been crippled even from the level of genes. They are not thinking of God: they are thinking of fate, a crazy superpower planning a destiny for all, and fashioning beings to go through predetermined paths of little joy and much misery. They think that once life is initiated in a body/mind complex there is no return and the destined path is to be tread. This gives the impression that life on earth in an imprisonment arranged by the caprice of an unknown overseer. (BU III.213)

The Christian notion of mysticism is an act of surrender to do service to others as an instrument of God. The favorite examples are Joan of Arc in the battlefield, St. Francis among the lepers, and St. Teresa organizing charitable institutions. This is what Bergson calls the “model of the throbbing machine.” The other variety is what is seen in the models of the meditating Buddha or Sri Ramakrishna or Ramana Maharshi in states of beatitude. In oriental mysticism, there is no idea of the “other.” The so-called other person is seen as one’s own Self, so there is no dualistic sense of duty to do service to oneself or to another. Instead, they only keep themselves true to their own inner rhythm that flows in harmony with the universal rhythm.

In a country where for centuries people have acted because of environmental forces, such as mineral deposits and consequent gold rushes, no realization makes much sense without relating it to action. Tales of yogis and seers attaining God-realization, brought to this country through books and by word of mouth, have fired the

enthusiasm of many people to seek God-realization. This has somehow created in the mind of most people an idea of a far off realm to which one has to move for realization.

There is no world other than this, and there is no experience that is removed from one's earthly life. However, the idea of worldly responsibility should be changed to an understanding of the world in terms of the Divine. (L&B, 358)

Regarding ego:

Many people muse on the glory of realization, and dream of someday reaching there while, as if from behind, they are eaten up by the canker of ego and the darkness of ignorance. Every religion and every philosophy is trying its best to assure us that there is a bright tomorrow when we will be in the benevolent hands of the Supreme. This is a kind of panacea where the believer is held captive by self-hypnosis. But if we can shake ourselves out of this stupor and become more wakeful and conscious, we will see that we are in the hellfire of ignorance—an ignorance that we ourselves have generated, if not during this very life, then in a previous one. It is all because we glorify the highest and neglect our existential life.

Unfortunately, our existential life is one of functioning as a masochist and/or a sadist, taking pleasure in hurting ourselves, as well as feeling the vigor of life in the blood we or others profusely shed. Although we make many hypotheses painted in numerous colorful forms that fascinate our imagination, they do not help us to come out of the quagmire of illusion. The next course for us in our search for the Absolute or Self-realization is to give time to the factual situations of life. However, this does not mean one helpless person should hold another helpless person on their lap with the two sitting together bemoaning their fate. That will not help either. We have to see our egos clearly to know which aspects are malevolent and which aspects are benevolent. We have to rigorously clear away the agony-brewing aspects of ignorance or selfishness. The selfishness which we speak of here is the bias

which in every walk of life leads us away from that central benevolence to which we should gravitate every moment. (BU Vol. I, 635-636)

In our own times, meditation and contemplation are used as synonyms: both the terms have lost their precise connotation and have become vague in meaning. So it has become necessary to revalue and restate the terms 'meditation' and 'contemplation'. Sequentially, meditation comes as a prelude to contemplation. The way to know something, as Henri Bergson puts it, is not by going around it, but by first entering into it and then being it. Meditation is an active process of applying one's mind to make a total 'imploration' of the depth of whatever is to be known. The state of actually being it is what is achieved by contemplation. It is a passive but steady state. (PDM, 368)

A flame that flickers has on one hand the flame itself, and on the other hand the wind which makes it flicker, as something extraneous. In a windless place, however, where the extraneous factors causing the flickering are absent, the flame just burns on. Establishment of unity is a similar state. It requires only the removal of what is extraneous to the situation. (G, 164)

The triad of the Absolute (*sat-cit-ānanda*) and the triad of nature (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) are complementary aspects of the Absolute, referring respectively to its positive and negative aspects. The former unifies and the latter differentiates. (G, 434)

God-realization is not the exclusive privilege of any chosen people.... There are as many ways of realizing God as there are people. The only condition is to establish an absolute bipolarity which puts the individual at ease in working out his or her course of life in a meaningful way. (G, 440)

Scriptures of most religions treat their votaries as if they are immature people with animal instincts and a discrimination that is no better than that of children. Moral norms are taught with the help of anecdotes and parables, which forcefully describe how wickedness is drastically punished and good is always rewarded. Believers' minds are fed with the lures of an enchanting heaven, a place where the most exaggerated hedonistic pleasures are lavished on those who are selected to enter paradise. In the same manner, hell is described as a terrible place of torture. Both the preachers and their congregations forget that when they die their brains and sensory systems transform into dead matter and thereafter the dead have no bodies to experience pain or pleasure. When the faithful are told that they might go to hell and be cast in the burning flames of brimstone, the fear of being scorched comes to them. Such outright stupidity is enshrined in the most adorable scriptures of all religions. Most people remain ethical in their outward life, fearing such punishments, and do good to others, coveting an honored place in heaven. Henri Bergson, in his *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, exposed the dubiousness of static religion and closed morality. The alternatives are dynamic religion and open morality. (YS, 73-74)

Yoga is not a passive way of closing one's eyes to injustice. If the yogi has a moral conscience, he or she has to challenge all three kinds of involvement in violence (greed, anger and delusion). (YS, 267)

It is not difficult to cultivate an awareness that is both critical and sympathetic. (YS, 371)

In the eighteenth chapter, when Arjuna said, "Now my mind is clear. Please tell me what to do, I shall do it," at that time Krishna says, "Thus has wisdom more secret than all that is secret been declared to you by Me; (critically) scrutinizing all, omitting nothing: you may do as you like." Krishna is not asking Arjuna to

obey him. A disciple is not supposed to obey his guru. The disciple should understand what the guru says. That is absolutely necessary. But you don't have to be a slave of your guru. You are a free person exercising your own freedom of choice, but if you ask for the guru's opinion through his wisdom teaching, then you are committing yourself to a serious responsibility. On your part you have to critically scrutinize all that he says. This is all that's required. You may choose to touch the feet of your guru so that your ego won't be tempted to jump up. This may look very crude and crass to the western world, but I am only speaking of an attitude. After humbling yourself, you should look for an opportunity where the guru is pleased to narrate. But beyond that the reverence stops. Thereafter, you put searching questions to the guru. You are not to just sit there like a dunce; you must ask searching questions. And when he or she speaks, you are not to lie down and accept it at face value, but you must critically examine every word. Scrutinize all that is said. Then afterwards you do what you like according to your best understanding, not what the guru likes.

Arjuna is given full freedom before the teaching of Krishna is closed. (T&R)

The relation between a question and its answer is analogous to the relation between a disciple and Guru. A silly question can evoke only a commonplace answer, while a serious question, in its turn, can open up rare secrets. Each disciple gets, as it were, a Guru according to their own merit. (G, 13)

Friends of the Gurukula      Varkala, India      January 1, 1980

On this occasion of the new decade, the first of January 1980, it is my privilege as the Guru and Head of Narayana Gurukula to wish you a Happy New Year of unity.

There was never a time in history when people did not think that it was a difficult age through which to pass. Ours is not

different from any difficult age that has tested the patience and wisdom of mankind. With all his mistakes, man each time successfully creates a new landmark in the history of our civilization.

The characteristic problem of our age is the belligerent confrontation between communal groups. Communalism is an irrational phobia generated in the form of a persecution mania, in which both the contesting rivals fear the vilest conspiracies being hatched out in their imaginary enemy's camp. The identification of one's group is always referred to as "we" and "ours," and the hated and suspected enemy is always referred to as "they." The psychologists' cliché, "I am okay; only you are not okay," was recently revalued by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross to, "I am not okay; you are not okay; but that is okay." The reassurance of Elizabeth has an immediate effect to silence one's mounting guilt complex. A similar calming down is necessary on all fronts so that the high walls of emotion that barricade mutual communication between the self-labeled "we" and "they" can be erased, and the cordiality of a warm dialogue be introduced.

When war is declared between mutually fearing power blocks of race, caste, religion and nation, only the very brave have the knack of entering into the no man's land between fighting factions to sing the hymns of peace. This no man's land is none other than the very Self of Truth, from which everyone derives their love of life and light. The apostle St. John called it the Word, and the Chandogya Upanishad recognizes it as Aum, the word of consent.

The realization of one's Self at the ontological level is not anything other than giving up the diehard hatred for the "other" and recognizing the common bond that unites all men in their general good. This is done, rather than said, only by purging oneself of the natural instinct to possess and dominate and the equally strong compulsion to offer oneself masochistically as prey to some tyrant. Not to oppress and not to be oppressed is the last liberation man can achieve. This revaluation of our basic social



instinct is what we should achieve by constant self-criticism and self-education. The Upanishads characterize such an attempt as *yajna*. *Yajna* is not self-immolation but renaming the mean, the parochial, and the relativistic to qualify oneself to enter the Kingdom of God, the casteless and classless society where Love reigns supreme. May you initiate yourself to this grand revaluation of your psyche that aspires for realization. (L&B, 475)

Although Narayana Guru is, in my mind, a teacher without parallel, I know that this is an attitude many people have about their own teachers. When I look at those teachers with my norms of evaluating wisdom, I see something wanting in all of them. So I naturally expect some imperfections in Narayana Guru that others clearly see that I do not. For this reason I don't want to make any exclusive claim of his greatness.

If you watch closely, you can notice that in a Christian circle, I keep myself within a Christian frame of reference; in the Ramakrishna Mission the frame of reference is Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and the Holy Mother; in the Aurobindo Ashram the familiar frame of reference is the concept of the Divine and the Supramental Descent. I'm not doing this as an opportunist to please the people with whom I move, but out of a consistent adherence to the teaching of Narayana Guru, deciphering the norms of others in terms of an overall scheme of correlation.

I respect the spiritual clichés of other schools by discerning the intention within the literal wording of their adherents' claims. I cultivated this respect for my fellow seekers' views over years, and decided that I should not put forward Narayana Guru's teaching as an alternative to any other teachers. To me he has become someone so precious and sacred that I treat him now almost as a secret. Moreover, when I think of the wide spectrum of knowledge covered by various teachers and what I have gained from every such school by keeping myself open to all, I think I'm doing a service to all who come to me by not programming them to be adherents of a single teacher for the rest of their lives.

It was by sheer luck or providential favor that Narayana Guru found in Nataraja Guru an unusual and able interpreter. If you know what Narayana Guru has written in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil, and how his words and thoughts remain in a category of their own in Indian literature—which is equaled only by the Upanishadic rishis—you will appreciate that he is not a guru who could ever be substituted for. The mandate that is passed on to me by Nataraja Guru, as a guru representative, is only to be a sentinel to guard the purity of the teaching that came from the great master. No one is more conscious than myself of my ignorance and inability to fathom the full depth of many of Narayana Guru's works, before which I still stand in awe and admiration. My only prayer is that I understand all his works before this body is laid to rest.

There are certainly many Indians who were more scholarly than Narayana Guru. There are others who have excelled him as a social reformer. People with mystical insights and psychic powers are also not rare. But Narayana Guru combined in himself all these and many other qualities in such a way that his words are not to be taken merely in the letter. They can be interpreted only when we also become inwardly rich and mature enough to feel his feelings and act with the spontaneity with which he acted. His manner could be the best example of social justice and critically correct spiritual appreciation for all time.

Although I am a respector of empirical sciences and pragmatic considerations in social planning, at heart I'm willing to give due consideration to the benevolent operation of invisible forces, which I attribute to the axiological unity of an ever-evolving world order. This is something more than a religious belief or sheer faith. My expectation to be succeeded by someone equal or superior to me is as natural as a mathematician putting his faith in deriving riders and lemmas from an axiomatic formula. There is no guarantee that any guru's immediate successor will be as wise as his predecessor. By the same logic we can also expect that another one who comes in a hierarchy may even supersede all

previous teachers. Therefore I think that it does not profit anyone to speculate on the future of the Gurukula and what would happen after my death.

I never met Narayana Guru, but I accepted him as my guru and started learning his ideas and ideals much before coming in contact with Nataraja Guru. Afterwards when Nataraja Guru came into my life and enabled me to structure my world of philosophy in the light of Narayana Guru's teaching I did not consider him as a new or separate guru. (L&B, 470-2)

What is war after all? War is born in the minds of people. It comes only when you have disagreement with the other. You are here, the other is there. Between you and the other there is always war or love. War and peace is between you and the other. What I call "you," you say "I" – I and the other. 'I' is called the self and the other, the non-self. What is non-self for me may be self for you. Western psychologists, when they use the word 'self', are mostly using it in the sense of the ego. In R.D. Laing's 'Self and Others,' 'The Divided Self,' and books like that, what he means by 'self' is that ego in us, which we refer to as 'I-consciousness'.

We look around, we see a horizon. Beyond the horizon we cannot see. Is there anything called horizon? No. Our eye is so made and our brain so functions that the span of our vision becomes limited and becomes circular to us. So we see a horizon. Wherever we move in the world, we carry a horizon around us, which is the limit of our own eyesight. Similarly, the self that we carry around has also a boundary. You may call this the ego boundary, the boundary of the self. In a person, the ego boundary can cave in, can become so close that he feels stifled. All around him he finds there is rejection. He is not recognized, he is not admitted. That means his horizon contracts, it smothers him, it stifles him. Then he has to fight and push it and he puts all kinds of pressures or he succumbs to it. Either he fights or he succumbs. But when your understanding of the self increases, your horizon also widens. A person who is fully enlightened of the Self, it is as

if he has no finite horizon. Wherever he looks, he sees a continuation of his own self and thus he has no 'other' there to fight. Two people who say 'I' and 'you', when they melt in love, they say 'we'. When you say 'we', when you say 'us', the boundary is gone. You have melted, you have become one. (Gita video, chapter 1)

You may have seen the dancing Śiva statue. In it, Śiva is standing on a small dwarf. On the head of the Śiva is a crescent moon. The dwarf is representing the alpha point; the crescent, the omega. From the alpha to the omega, there is a rise of your energy. This dwarf is called *apasmara* which means hysteria. In all of us there is a hysteric energy. No one is free of that, but it becomes pathological only when we cannot sublimate it. Once you sublimate it, it becomes more and more refined and that becomes your creative energy. When it is absolutely resolved, sublimated, then you produce the most beautiful poetry, the most beautiful art, the most intuitional writing, etc. It is all one and the same energy. It is all a question of how well you can sublimate it. (Gita video, chapter 1)

This is our discipline. We are reading the Gita not for becoming scholars, but for the personal effect on us. The personal effect is how we can liberate ourselves from the various bondages. The bondages here are not something which we have to think of in terms of the past karma (of course past karma is there), but here and now, what we feel, how we can make our mind liberated from a very constricting feeling – something which makes you feel so bad in this moment. To release from it and bring in joy, bring that cheerfulness. And for that, you learn how to equalize the mind. That's a good discipline. If you have no pain, how can you learn how to withstand pain? So, you welcome it. (Gita video, II.15)

The Gita itself teaches that only when there is *kuṣalata* – dexterity, expertness in your action – your action is of a yogi. So whatever you do, you can do it only when you know the whole scheme of it. You are only asked not to covet the fruit of it. Your intention is to make the fruit so much available to all, and that itself is an incentive to make the action more intense, more valid, more correct. Not that you should do it with indifference. But people speak as if this is teaching us a kind of indifference to our actions. No. There we should correct ourselves. (Gita video, II.47)

Only if the performance is done as if the Absolute Itself is guiding us, only then does karma become karma yoga. (Gita video, II.48)

Many disciples expect the Guru to tell them what exactly they should do, and this is what the Guru does not want to say! There are people who are dictators and people who love power and they will always say, “Come on, obey me! You are my disciple. Do this, do that.” But I don’t think a right Guru does that. The Guru will only show how things are. It is entirely up to you to choose your path and do that. Of course, he will show you how things are. Then you have to use your discretion, your own volition. Otherwise, what will happen is that the Guru will have all your karma upon him. The disciple will say, “I did not do anything. I’m only a servant. The Guru asked me to do it, and I did it.” (Gita video, III.2)

Krishna says, “I agree that there are two paths. From the very beginning of time these two paths were there. What we have to decide is, how much Arjuna is fit to take a model of a renunciate, a contemplative. This is one of the major contributions of the Gita – to enable a person to discover his personal identity, called *svadharma*. If it is in your *svadharma* to be a contemplative, you will become a

contemplative. This was very kindly done by nature to all beings.

If you look at the world, the mango trees bring forth only mango fruit and not apple, and the coconut tree brings only coconut. A tiger lives by killing other animals while a deer or a gazelle which is in the same forest lives by eating grass. These are all programmed by nature – their taste, their tendencies, their urges, everything is somewhat fixed. But man has a wide variety of choices. Also, he moves from place to place and puts himself in circumstances which are not as fixed as in the case of other animals and the vegetative world. The result is that he is confused. The Gita is giving a method by which you can make an analysis of your own personality, your own self, your own psyche and decide where you can fit in and unfold yourself in a harmonious manner. Not that whimsically you run into something that looked good for the time being and after a few days you find that you are a misfit. (Gita video, III.3)

*III.4: By refraining from initiating activities a person does not come to have the attainment of transcending action, nor can one by renunciation alone come to perfection.*

By giving up action, you do not become a renunciate. By not performing an action you do not attain wisdom either. In America, electronic devices are made to create a feedback system so that you can train your mind to create alpha waves. When a yogi sits in meditation and goes into a state of *samādhi*, he establishes an alpha wave in the EEG. Taken reversely, if you can establish an alpha wave, that means you go into *samādhi*. So you make a machine and condition your brain in such a way that it is pacified and the same result is achieved. But does that make a person wise? Will he come out of it as a *paramahansa*?

If you go to the mental hospitals, you can see people who sit like a Sri Ramakrishna or a Ramana Maharshi. To praises and reproaches, they are the same. Heat and cold are the same to them. Thus, they show great equanimity. They do not cry; they do not smile. They have no reaction. We see that a *paramahansa* also behaves like that. What is the difference? When the *paramahansa* opens his mouth, pearls of wisdom come out. When this mad man opens his mouth, it is just rubbish. So, the mere outward conformity will not help you.

When I first went to Ramana Ashram, I thought how wonderful the life of Bhagavan is, that he is sitting absolutely unconcerned of the world. You cannot make out from his eyes whether he was seeing you or not seeing you. The whole world is in oblivion. Why not you also remain in that state? Then I read in his biography, that when he first came to Thiruvannamalai, he sat under a tree and for several days he did not even move. People had to go there and thrust food into his mouth. I thought I should also adopt the same thing. So, I went and sat under a tree with the resolve not to eat, not to talk, not to look at anyone, but just be like Maharshi. Sit under the tree. After two hours, I found my body was aching, my mind was not there, I had no concentration. So, I looked everywhere. Again, I said, “No, no. This is not how I should be. I should not look at anyone. I should not give any thought to anything.” Then teatime came. I could not sit there. I very badly wanted one cup of tea. I thought I would take the cup of tea and then come back to sit again! It’s not possible. By outward conformity you cannot come to this. This is what the Lord says. (Gita video, III.4)

*By the Self the Self must be upheld; the Self should not be let down; the Self indeed is its own dear relative; the Self indeed is the enemy of the Self.*

In us there is a higher self and in us there is a lower self. Daily activities are mostly done by our lower self and we do not even suspect the presence of the higher self. It remains just watching, witnessing. When we say Guru, when we say God, actually it is that higher self in us. If the higher self in us or the better part of our self is not taking the light of a Guru's teaching or the grace of the Divine, we are not affected. So it all has to come through the higher aspect of our Self. It's the best light in us. That light should be made your own savior.

A person who is always sitting and crying, saying that I am a hopeless case, I will never be able to do anything good, I am a lost soul, I am a sinner, I am wicked. There is a lot of self-criticism in this country which then becomes an excuse. I am a bad man! Once you have established that you are a bad man and cannot be improved, you believe that is why you behave the way you do. That is not the right thing. It is said here that the Self should not be let down – either you can be your own friend, or you can be your own enemy. When others are already wanting to be our enemy and wanting to find fault with us, at least we should not turn against ourselves. We have every right to defend ourselves and present our case properly.

In this verse, what we usually take as a social function is to be understood as a personal correction. Here the Guru is not an outsider, the friend is not an outsider, the enemy is not an outsider, the brightness that happens is not an outside thing, the darkness is also not an outside thing. All these are happening within the psyche. So you assume the responsibility to brighten yourself and therefore brighten your future also. (Gita video VI.5)



For this [meditation] you need determination. It's not a *rājasic* determination, but a more thoughtful consideration. You take into account everyone involved in the situation and what is beneficial to all and then you regulate. (Gita video VI.25)

We have senses in the forefront, the mind behind it, and behind the mind is *buddhi*, the intellect, and then comes the *ātman*. Mind has the power to attract the intellect and make it into a kind of a lawyer or a defendant, thus making the intellect somewhat vicious. It tries to find reasons for doing what you like. Instead of that, if the *buddhi* is allowed to exercise proper discrimination, it will be in resonance with the soul or spirit, so to say. The 'yes' and 'no' that you get from the intellect will be more appropriate, more helpful than allowing your intellect to be influenced by the mind. (Gita video VI.25)

Two things which assail our mind are the *vilāpa* of the past and *cinta* of the future, but both are generically called *cinta*. "This happened to me. I shouldn't have done that." "If I planned like that it would have happened like this." "If at that time I had chosen this it would have happened like this." This is all remorse, called *vilāpa*. *Cinta* is about what will happen tomorrow. "Will I be able to make it?" "Am I going to lose?" "Will somebody find fault with me?" "How can I make someone agree?" A number of uncertainties are seen before us and those uncertainties cause worry. That worry is called *cinta*. So, when you are asked *kimcid api na cintayet*, that means do not worry. Not that you should not have any thoughts in your mind. Thoughts will always be in the mind, but the quality of thoughts can be controlled, can be changed. (Gita video VI.25)

We have a wrong idea that *brahman* means something very big. When you use a word like Absolute, it gives us a better sense. When you say “I am absolutely happy,” you don't change from what you are, but a new dimension comes to your life, and that new dimension is called the Absolute. When you say, “This is absolutely beautiful”, it's not that all the beauties of the world are there. You have given to that particular experience of beauty the highest rank. So, you become the Absolute by filling yourself with a wholesomeness. The outside world and the inside world are not separated with any wall. There is a free flow of the external into the internal, of the internal into the external. You don't want to bar anything, you don't want to close your door against anything. Then that is an Absolute state. But to arrive at that, first you may have to make many controls. Then you say in that state you say you have become a real yogi, and you start understanding what is *ānanda*. (Gita video VI.27)

Even non-theistic religions, like communism, for instance, ask people to sacrifice. (They may say it is not a religion, but it is a religion.) What for? If you sacrifice, the State will protect you. The State will be beneficial. Where we put God, they put State. And everybody is made to think of the State as a very benevolent being. That is a hypostatic idea. You are deifying an idea, and you are expecting from that, everything which you expect from God. In theistic religions it is only natural that we think of divine grace, and that is also to be fitted into this. If you have an idea of the Absolute where there is no grace, then what is all this? It can all be reduced only to one thing, and that thing is nothing that you have experienced. If it is not anything that you have experienced, then you do not know that, and when you do not know that, you can only say *sarvam śūnyam*. But the idea of *sarvam śūnyam* truncates life. (Gita video VII.16)

I had a friend, a German friend, who adopted Buddhism as his religion. So, he was always meditating on *śūnyata*. The result was he came to an absolute negativity. Nothing was of any value to him. Friends are of no value, beauty is of no value, music is of no value. Nothing is of any value. In Sri Lanka, even now, the Sinhalese have not taken to music, because they are taught that music is opposed to the highest truth. So, you should not listen to the senses. Indian cinema and music became very popular in Sri Lanka. That's the only stuff they could hear. This has a corroding negative effect. So afterwards, I told this friend, even when you reduce everything to nothingness, we still say "nothingness is". There is an 'is' aspect – the final affirmation. When you turn to the affirmation, then you start affirming many things in this world. We can see that 'is' is in everything that exists. (Gita video VII.16)

There is a secret in saying *neti neti*. We don't say one single *neti*; we say *neti neti*. You have to say *neti* twice. And when you say *neti* twice, by double negation, you will come to an affirmation. We don't come to that affirmation by just saying *neti*. (Gita video VII.16)

A man may be a great scholar, but he should have the humility to know that he does not know, and everything is done for him. Thus there comes a great *āśraya* in him. "Everything is done for me," he says with gratitude. It is that gratitude which gives him faith and strength. Without faith, there is no strength. That faith stands him in good stead always. Even though he is at the brink of a fall, something in him will tell him, "Hold fast, I will save you." (Gita video VII.16)

A most synthetic, integral view is given in the Gita. Things which are lying scattered in a fragmented way in the Vedas and

Upanishads are all taken, and an integrity is given to it. (Gita video VIII.5)

*Hiranyagarbha*... symbolizes the island of hope to which we come in the ocean of desolation. Everything is dark, and in the middle of that darkness there is a spark of light. That spark, however meager, is more meaningful than the infinitude of the blindness caused by darkness and chaos. Hence it is to be treated as the little pearl of priceless worth. Its light beckons to the hopeless to become hopeful. The ideas of God, the savior, the grace-giving fountain-source of life, and of all such epithets come from the envisioning of a spark of hope. (BU III.190)

In India, tradition allows a disciple to complement the writings of his guru by supplementing the guru's writing with what the guru should have said but did not say. Secondly, the disciple has the permission of tradition to rephrase the argument of his guru if the latter's words do not properly serve to establish and arrive at the conclusion intended by the guru. (BU III.440)

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