

THERAPY AND REALIZATION IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA

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Pictures and Dialogues

Alice in Wonderland begins when one day Alice was sitting with her sister, the sister was reading a book, and in that book there were no pictures and no dialogue. Alice thought that was boring, so she got up and walked away. To me, the opening of this wonderful book appears to be very meaningful, in light of the rest of Lewis Carroll's story as well as to quite a broader range of experience. What is there without pictures? What is there without dialogue? Life is seeing a series of meaningful pictures. In the German language this is called gestalt. A gestalt need not be a static picture. A movie is also a picture, but there is a certain flow to it. Movies are moving, changing, living gestalts. The other important aspect in life is the dialogue. In our conversations we relate ourselves to the "other." The "other," being a person who also has an "I," reciprocates. Dialogue is a word game in which you send the ball across to the other side of the court and from there it comes back again. Every game is interesting and so is dialogue.

Dialogues are made through the use of words. A picture depicts a form and every form can be designated by a name. According to the philosophy of Vedanta, this world is nothing but an aggregate of name and form, plus the meaning that is suggested to us by the form and the name. There are three things: names, forms and a conceptual connotation that you give to both the name and the form. The form alone can suggest a meaning, or the name alone can suggest a meaning. In either case the meaning will evoke an interest. Hence, it is the meaning that really matters to us and not the name or form as such. The name becomes pleasing when it relates to a meaning which is suggestive of what is pleasure-giving or beautiful to us. The form becomes pleasing and consequently interesting when it suggests the proximity of something dear to us as an object of our pleasure. The meaning can be one that is affecting our life in a positive way, or it can be negatively influencing our mind to turn away from it. This constant attraction and repulsion in life belongs to the world of pictures and dialogues.

I have referred to the adventures of Alice for another reason. The other day a young lady came to see me. She told me of her endless struggles to get adjusted to her husband. I suggested she read a bible. She said, "I already have a Bible." I said, "This is not the bible which you have. The bible I want you to read is *Alice in Wonderland*. In that, Alice goes through a rabbit hole and arrives in a strange world where strange people and strange beings live. So when your husband becomes really nasty, think of him as the Mad Hatter and you can smile at him." She was very happy. She vowed to go straight away and buy a copy of the book. I heard afterwards that she did so.

Ignorance, Search, and Realization

We have this world presented to us which occasionally brings us a feeling of well-being or happiness, and at other times a sense of uneasiness. When the problem is at its worst, frustration and helplessness come. At a certain point you feel absolutely lost. The sense of loss, however, is only at one level. Right inside there is still another part of you which keeps alive and does not give up hope. This part of your mind suggests that there is a way out. You want to believe that there must be someone who can show you the path. When you go on muttering, “I should seek, I should find,” there comes that someone who knows that path, who sees things clearly. He sees for himself and he can also show it to others. This process has three aspects: the first stage is where you are lost and become blind, the second is where you are seeking, and the third is where you are shown where you are and what you are seeing.

In this diagram I have drawn three eyes. The one on the left represents a blind eye. It stands for what is given at the beginning of the Bhagavad Gita, in which the first words are, “Dhritarashtra said...” Dhritarashtra is described as a blind man, or rather, a blind king. One may wonder why such an auspicious book as the Bhagavad Gita begins with the mention of a blind man. In fact, this suggests the very purpose of the Gita. When one is in darkness, one needs light. Where there is blindness, you pray for sight. You say, “Lead, kindly light, amidst this encircling gloom.” You want someone to lead you from the encircling gloom of darkness to the promise of light.

The name Dhritarashtra is that of a king. The name itself suggests a king. *Dhritha* means to support. *Rashtra* means a nation. Dhritarashtra then, means the supporter of a nation. Every nation has its own Dhritarashtra, and in some more fortunate cases the state has a philosopher king who is very far-sighted. But in most cases we find blind heads of state who may be called the blind Dhritastras.

Blind to what?

When we say a king is blind we mean that he is blind to justice, he is blind to wisdom, he is blind to dharma, blind to virtues, and blind to truth. The blind eye drawn in the figure above represents the first position: the state of gloom or darkness or frustration where you are lost.

The other eye, which I have shown on the right side, is open and wakeful. There it is written “Parthaya.” That eye belongs to Arjuna. Dhritarashtra and Arjuna are on the opposite sides in a situation of war. Arjuna is also lost, but he does have hope. He wants to turn to the light of Divine Wisdom.

In the Bible, Jesus says, “Those who seek light, turn to me.” If you walk in the dark you will stumble and fall into a pit. At this point Arjuna chooses to turn to the light.

The third picture I have shown in the above figure is an eye in a flame. It represents the awareness in us which is self-luminous. It shines by its own light. We can say it is like a luminous flame. But it is not only shining, it is also aware of its awareness or consciousness. It is as if the light sees itself and the light can see everything else around. The flame with the eye in it in the above figure represents the “Bhagavata,” the eye of the Lord who illuminates Arjuna.

We have three representative people in the Bhagavad Gita, Dhritarashtra, Arjuna and Krishna. Dhritarashtra, in our case, can be thought of as a state of blindness; being morally blind, spiritually blind and intellectually blind. We become blind in so many ways. Arjuna can be another aspect in us, the seeking mind, the searching mind, and the mind that likes to be

disciplined. It is the mind that likes to be related to the source of wisdom. And the third is Krishna, the one light which is present in all of us, the eternal light of the Supreme, or whatever name you may call it. This is qualified in the Gita Dhyanam as the light that teaches. That light is attributed to Narayana.

The word Narayana is again very significant. *Nara* means man. *Ayana* means to dwell in. Narayana is that which is dwelling in every man, the shining principle which animates the individuation of every person. Narayana himself teaches Partha, another name for Arjuna. Partha is the ever-vigilant one.

If Dhritarashtra is blind, then the nature of Arjuna is just the opposite: to be ever awake so that the light which illuminates him is never far from him, but within himself. Another description given to Arjuna is Nara. Here Nara indicates the representative man. Narayana and Nara: the indwelling spirit of man and the man. Narayana himself teaches Nara. The guru is not outside of you. There is no one without a guru. Everyone's guru is within him or her. The questioning mind is the disciple and the conclusive answer that comes from within is the guru. Narayana is within everyone.

But, you may say, Krishna was teaching Arjuna. Why do you bring in Narayana? And again, the author of the Bhagavad Gita is Vyasa, not Krishna. These words have come from Vyasa, the author. Why, then, do you attribute them to Krishna? How is it that you are attributing the same teaching to Narayana, Krishna and Vyasa?

If you would ask me how do I know that two plus two equals four, I may say I learned it from my father. Did my father discover this mathematical principle? No. He learned it from his father. That two and two make four is a perennial truth. So it does not matter if you say it is Vyasa's or Krishna's or Narayana's because it is perennial wisdom. The truth that is given in the Gita is to be recognized as not belonging to time. It can be of Krishna or Narayana, or it can be that of your own teacher. And it can even be your own. There is a verticality in which the choosing of the truth of different ages can fall together and become identical as one and the same truth.

A Compendium of Psychological Types

In the second illustration here I have given certain terms which occur at the end of all eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. The Gita itself is extracted from the middle of another book called the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is a classical Indian epic. Psychologists of the present day are grateful to C. G. Jung for his studies of psychological types, as well as for his vast understanding of archetypes. If I were to suggest just one book for a study of the innumerable possible variations of archetypes and the possible sorts of personalities one could imagine, that book would be the Mahabharata. This book is a great compendium filled with very exhaustive treatises upon the various psychological types. In it you will find all the types of persons: good, bad, straight, crooked, bright, dull, and so on.

Before writing the Mahabharata, Vyasa wrote another book known as the Brahma Sutras. *Sutra* means a thread on which the cryptic teaching of the Upanishads are strung. *Brahma* means the Absolute. Thus it is a teaching concerning the Absolute. Various aphorisms of the Absolute are strung on a thread of reasoning and the entire necklace of wisdom is called the Brahma

Sutras. They give us the quintessence of the teaching of the Upanishads. Either you can read the 108 Upanishads and understand each Upanishad separately, or you can go and get the gist of it by reading the Brahma Sutras.

However, the Brahma Sutras are written in a type of cryptic language even scholars cannot understand. There is no point wasting your time on it unless you already have some insight into the mind of Vyasa. Having found the Brahma Sutras so difficult, Vyasa thought, “Well, I should attempt it in another way. I should simplify the entire teaching of the Upanishads by writing an epic. In that epic I can bring in all the teachings lived by the people in their everyday life.” So he wrote the voluminous epic. The Mahabharata has an English translation now published by the Oriental Institute of Bhandarkar, in Poona, that runs to seventeen volumes, as big as the Encyclopedia Britannica.

In the middle of the Mahabharata there is a chapter called “Bhisma Parva,” the chapter dealing with Bhishma, one of the main characters, and within that part come 700 verses known as the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita is like a pendant that glorifies the necklace of wisdom given in the Mahabharata. It is a book of pure wisdom teaching that is made fascinating by the stories which are strung around it. In the Gita the essence of the Upanishads is given in a very simplified form. One can read either the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras, or the Bhagavad Gita. The Gita is like the cream of the Upanishads.

Bhagavad Gita means Bhagavan’s song. Bhagavan means Lord. Gita means song. It can indicate a song sung by the Lord, a song sung about the Lord, or a song sung for the Lord. Actually these meanings can all be correct, because it is a song sung by the Lord about His own truth, for His own purpose.

Why is it called a song?

You cannot sing this song just as you sing the notations composed by musicians; it is a song in a very different sense. We call Dante’s book *The Divine Comedy*. Actually it is not a comedy at all, but it gives you the same kind of joy when you finish reading it as if you had been reading a comedy. In this sense it is a “divine comedy.” In Plato’s *Republic*, he speaks of the hymn of dialectics. The hymn of dialectics has no formal hymn or litany of praise in it, yet it is called a hymn because the effect brought to your mind when it is tuned to the dialectics as described by Plato is similar to that of a hymn. In like fashion, when your mind is beset with problems and you turn to the Gita, it is as if you are listening to the charming flute of Krishna himself. In this sense it is called a song.

Sitting at the Feet of the Master

Next we will consider the term Upanishad, another beautiful concept. In the context of the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna was sitting close to Krishna, you may say at the feet of Krishna. This was a situation in which a teaching was going on by the guru opening his mind to his student. *Upa* means near. *Ni* means down. *Shad* means to sit. Upanishad means to sit near a guru in reverence and devotion and learn from him whatever he teaches. Whenever there is a situation in which somebody receives wisdom by relating to a superior person – superior in wisdom, not in any sociological sense – then you can say it is a situation of Upanishad. Another meaning of the term Upanishad is a “secret teaching.” The term secret is used here not in the sense that it cannot

be told to another person, or that it should be whispered only in the ear. The Gita is a song and also a teaching which you have to hear directly from a teacher. If you were to give the equations of Einstein to a man who has not studied physics or mathematics, he would not understand it at all. It will remain a secret to him. The Gita is also secret in the sense that you have to qualify yourself to be benefited by it. There is directness in it. It is to be gained through bipolarity. You have to polarize yourself with the teacher and through this bipolar relationship you can have this wisdom. Hence, the Gita is called a compendium of Upanishads. Its eighteen chapters are treated as eighteen Upanishads.

The Science of the Absolute

The next term is Brahma Vidya. Brahma is derived from *Brihad*. *Brihad* means big: so vast that it can include everything. Vidya means knowledge or science. If there is a wisdom or knowledge that can be described as final, absolute, and concerned with the fundamentals, then you call it Brahma Vidya.

We are involved with four areas of experience. Now, I think all of you, except the child sleeping there, are wakeful. This is one area of our experience, the wakeful experience. It is called the *jagrat*. This child is sleeping; it may be dreaming. After a few hours, we also will go to the same state. That is called *swapna*, the state of dreaming. There can also be a state in which there is no dream at all. It is the state of *sushupti*, deep sleep. And there are moments in your life, maybe very short ones, where you do not relate to the transactional world, you are not in a dream state, and you are not sleeping. Then there is a pure awareness, a transcendental state.

All these are represented by the symbol Aum. When you say “A,” you open your mouth fully. Like that, when your mind is fully open, it is called *jagrat*. When you say “U” (oo), your mouth is half closed. Like that, in the dream state the mind is half closed. It is a state of pure subjectivity, not relating the subject to the object. In the third state the subjective and objective aspects of awareness cease and everything merges into a deep unconscious state. It’s like closing your mouth to say “mmmm.”

Your concepts are lying buried in the unconscious. They have to come from the unconscious to the wakeful world when you perceive things or to the dream world when you dream in your sleep. When you see something, a certain concept arises from this deeper aspect of your unconscious to tell you what it is you are seeing. Concepts help you to discern or to identify. When you hear a word, a concept comes to decipher its meaning. The deep sleep state wherein the concept is lying buried is called the causal consciousness, *karana chaitanya*. The consciousness of wakefulness is called *visva* and the *chaitanya* or consciousness of the dream is called *taijasa*. The fourth state is simply called the “fourth.” No name is given to it. *Turiya* in Sanskrit is “the fourth.” All human experiences should necessarily come under these four categories, and the study which deals with the fundamentals of wakefulness, dream subjectivity, causal consciousness, and the transcendental is called Brahma Vidya.

The Science of Harmony

The Gita is also called Yoga Shastra, the science of yoga. *Yuj* means to unite. You can only unite those things that have an inner homogeneity between themselves. When a man does not perceive his own homogeneity with others, he holds himself as heterogeneous. When we are heterogeneous we only see the dissimilarities and differences. When one comprehends the unity of all things, one can relate everything to oneself with great ease and harmony.

There are different levels where different kinds of union are possible. The science that teaches the nature of things at different levels and the method by which union can be effected is called yoga shastra. The Bhagavad Gita is such a science, and should not be treated simply as a religious text of the Indian people. It is a discipline which deals explicitly with one's relation with oneself, others, and all the things around us. Everyone and everything can be traced to one common origin. The Gita teaches us to reunite ourselves with everyone and everything in this unifying principle. Hence it is called yoga shastra.

The word 'yoga' is used in the Bhagavad Gita in a very special sense. The principle of correlation by which one can structure a system of philosophy or mystical vision is called yoga. Let me give an example: Descartes' philosophy is called the Cartesian school of thought. It is different from Leibnizian monadology or Marxian dialectical materialism. Each of these systems has its own valid frame of reference. If we have a common scheme of correlation, we can integrate all these diverse systems to complement one another. The Gita offers us a method whereby these various schools of thought can be correlated so as to yield a meaningful, integrated vision of the Absolute.

Arjuna here is placed in a battle. The participants on either side have differing motivations to fight. If Arjuna were to understand the minds of all of them and tackle the situation seriously, he would be able to correlate their differing angles of vision. As he was confused, he turned to Krishna and asked for the latter's help in gaining a proper perspective on the situation. Krishna, who is also known as Yogeswara, the Lord of Yoga, shows Arjuna eighteen possible angles of vision. In and through these visions there also runs a common methodology by which each vision can be correlated to the others. The Bhagavad Gita excels as a masterpiece in presenting the methodology of integral philosophy.

The Dialogue in the Wisdom Context

A *samvada* is a dialogue. In a dialogue there are two voices involved; one representing the anterior critic who can also be the anterior skeptic, the other representing the conclusive teaching or the posterior conclusion that is given to every question placed before it. In this case Arjuna is playing the role of the anterior skeptic. In eighty-five verses of the Bhagavad Gita we come across Arjuna presenting his own state of mind. Thirty-three of these verses appear in the form of questions. And you should be careful not to take those formulations as the teachings of the Gita, because they represent only the questions or opinions of the skeptic. In another 574 verses we listen to the words of Krishna. In a number of the verses he is only reviewing ideas which were prevalent in India at that time. But wherever a true teaching is given he will say, "This is my determined view. This is my decided opinion."

In the Bible, if you read the gospels and underline all those sentences in which Jesus says, "Ye have heard like this, but now, verily, verily I say unto you..." you will find his own

conclusive teaching. First was “Ye have heard an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth...” Then he says, “But I say unto you, if somebody strikes you on the right cheek, show him the left also.” In such revaluations it appears there is a rejection of the anterior position.

Like that, Krishna makes a number of restatements. You are able to understand those statements of Krishna only when you come to know the character of a *samvada*. Some people come and say, “Oh, this Gita is teaching caste system because it says that if there is a caste confusion, there will be great tragedy.” They forget that this idea was put forward by Arjuna and not by Krishna. That was one of the basic doubts in the mind of Arjuna that he had to state to be clarified later by his guru.

Once in Trivandrum, South India, a group of rationalists was debating the worth of the Bhagavad Gita. They decided to burn the book. The reason why? One man quoted this verse of Arjuna: “If there is caste confusion, there will be great tragedy.” He said, “We should not have a book like this.”

Here again, he did not grasp the difference between a question and its answer. In a *samvada* like this there will be different positions of the questioning skeptic and there will also be the conclusive teaching of the master.

The Dialectical Pairing of the Eighteen Chapters

I have given here on the board what I would like you to understand as the scheme of correlation which was in the mind of Vyasa in presenting this book. It is drawn here as an arch. If you look at the structure of an archway you can see that the slabs are placed horizontally at the bottom and vertically at the top. There are eighteen slabs in this arch, representing the eighteen chapters. The first one is a horizontal chapter; the last one is also a horizontal chapter. All of the chapters in between are more or less vertical. Between the ninth and tenth chapters you will find there is a division. The last verse of the ninth chapter marks the closing of the first section. And the second half of the arch, from the tenth to the eighteenth chapters, represents the other section. In a modern department of physics you have the morning classes which teach the pure physical theory, and in the afternoon come the classes that illustrate the application of the theory in the form of experiments. Similar to pure and applied sciences, the first nine chapters of the Gita are devoted to pure principles, while the last nine chapters present an application of the same teaching in your daily life. Rest assured there was a methodology in the mind of Vyasa when arranging the chapters of this book.

What is the central teaching in the Bhagavad Gita?

If we examine all 700 verses in the book we will find only one verse that is repeated. The convention in Sanskrit literature is that where the author wants to offer his own final teaching, he repeats it. Only one verse is repeated in the entire Gita, and its placement in the overall context of the book is crucial. It appears as the last verse of chapter nine, marking the exact middle as well as the end of the first half, and again as the first verse of the final teachings of Krishna in chapter eighteen, marking the end of the second half. I have given these verses along with the structural illustration. They are chapter nine, verse 34 and chapter eighteen, verse 65.

Looking at this diagram, the arrangement of the chapters is really very beautiful. For every chapter on the first side of the arch, you find a corresponding chapter on the other side. The first chapter is “Arjuna Vishada Yoga,” translated as, “The dialectical Conflict of Arjuna.” The corresponding chapter right across the arch is the eighteenth, “The Unitive Way in Behavior Patterns.” In Sanskrit it is known as “Moksha Sannyasa Yoga.” I will give only one example of their connectedness because this represents an elaborate study in itself. The first chapter closes by saying “Thus having spoken in the midst of the battle, Arjuna sat down in his chariot seat, casting aside his bow and arrow, his mind overwhelmed with sorrow.” If a psychiatrist had been present at that time, he could have made himself a great case with Arjuna.

Someone makes a complete withdrawal. He becomes catatonic; he sits immobile and inert. He has gone stony and refuses to speak, think or act. All this is on the actual field of battle when all other people are in the thick of action. This man has given up action completely. Also he says it is better to become a sannyasin than to become involved in a war situation with his own family. Mentally, he flees. He wants to run away from his responsibility. At this point we are not discussing the ethical aspects of his decision. We see just a patient: a man who was well known for his spirit of action, his enthusiasm on the field of battle, who has lost all desire to act.

What transformation comes to him in the course of the Gita?

In order to see that, we have to go through all eighteen chapters to the last chapter, where we again hear a description of Arjuna. Arjuna himself says, “Gone is my delusion and Self-recognition has been gained by me through Your grace, O Achyuta (Krishna); I am properly established with doubts gone; I shall carry out Your word.” We see him standing with his bow held high again. The bow which was thrown away in the first chapter is picked up in the eighteenth chapter. From a posture of withdrawal and flight, Arjuna is transformed once again into a man willing to participate. This is the transformation we see brought about by Krishna in these chapters.

Now we will review briefly each chapter. The first chapter is called “Arjuna Vishada Yoga.” *Vishada* means a state of despondency. This chapter deals with Arjuna’s despondency, Arjuna’s conflict, Arjuna’s crisis.

Why is such a state called yoga?

We will come to know that very clearly when we go further into the text of the book. Patanjali’s definition of yoga is, “Yoga is the cessation of the modifications of the mind-stuff.” If the mind is having thoughts and agitations, emotional fluctuations, then there is no yoga. Yoga is a state where there is a cessation of all these modifications of the mind. On the other hand, *vishada* is a conflict or crisis, a state where the mind is turbulent. How can you say that a state of turbulence is a state of equipoise? Either Vyasa does not know the meaning of the term yoga or else he has a very special meaning in his mind.

We really cannot assume that he doesn’t know yoga, because it is believed that he wrote a commentary on Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, known as Vyasa Bhasya. He well knows what yoga means. His idea, then, is that there can be sorrow that won’t lead you anywhere and there can be sorrow which comes as a prerequisite to learning and understanding. A glance at the life of Buddha shows us that before his illumination he underwent a state of great despondency, great crisis and conflict. After that he came to realization. It was a *vishada* which was leading him to a state of yoga. Before the awakening of Jesus he was tested by Satan, and he also underwent a

conflict. It was a *vishada* which was prior to and necessary to his illumination. One can hear similar stories of other seekers of truth. Arjuna also underwent a similar crisis before his illumination. If you look carefully, you can see that his *vishada* was not an ordinary one. If you have occasion to compare the conflict of Arjuna with the conflict of Duryodhana, for instance, you will see that Arjuna's is the conflict of a yogi.

This is where the problem comes to us here. The Bhagavad Gita need not be only a story of Arjuna, a man who lived several thousand years ago. Under the surface, the real story possesses an immediate relevance to our present life.

The second chapter actually begins only from the tenth verse. The first chapter's theme continues up to the eighth verse of the second chapter. Before that section closes, we again hear Arjuna speaking: "Struck down by the evil of a tender disposition, with a mind confounded in regard to what is right to do, I ask you: that which is definitely more meritorious, that do indicate to me. I am your disciple; do discipline me coming thus for refuge to you." The tables are now turned. When Arjuna came to the battlefield he was the boss and Krishna was only his charioteer, his servant. Even though Krishna was the Lord, the Lord had agreed to be the servant of his own creature. When Arjuna was giving his opinions, Krishna did not say a word. Finally when Arjuna says, "I have lost my way; I do not now understand anything; please teach me; I place myself at your feet; I want to be your disciple; discipline me; only then does Krishna begin teaching.

But did Krishna want to make him a slave only so that he would have the final say?

Not at all. 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. That is further demonstrated by how the chapters are placed.

Self-Analysis and Realization

When you come to the vertically placed chapters, where only pure wisdom is given, rather than the applied teaching, you should keep in mind the most fundamental questions asked

by Arjuna. He asked, "I have become confused on what is right and what is wrong; what is my dharma?"

When do I become real?

When I function in a certain manner. The word dharma means "that which sustains you." If I am a teacher and I come and sit here and bluff and I do not know how to teach, I am not functioning as I should. That means my dharma has become defective. Luci gives this drink to me as apple juice. If I put it to my mouth and it tastes salty or brackish, I will say "Luci this is not apple juice, take it away." The dharma of the apple juice is not there.

The dharma is the essential nature of anything. If this microphone does not work, then you throw it away and it becomes only scrap metal and no longer a microphone. Its dharma is gone. In every one of us there is a dharma which makes us what we are. When you function that way, you can say your dharma is going on. We have to discover our dharma. Arjuna asks, "About my dharma, I am confused; will you kindly teach me?"

Secondly he asks "Please tell me what course of action will lead me to the well-being of all?" Not "my well-being," not "my victory." He here indicates the *sreyas*, the total well-being of the whole of mankind. "I should do only such action as will lead me to that."

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.

How does Krishna occasion that process?

The first half of his talk is used mainly for a general discussion, giving Arjuna an orientation of what the self is and what the mind is and all that. The twelfth chapter, which is called "Bhakti Yoga," marks the beginning of the greater search and greater discovery. People generally think that *bhakti* means some sort of sentimentalism. The very sound *bha* means lift. *Ikti* means being conjoined to. When your mind is conjoined to light you are in a state of *bhakti*. A *Bhakta* is one whose mind has light to follow, light to see. Sankara defines *bhakti* as, "When a person is enquiring after his Self continuously, that state is called *bhakti*." Narayana Guru says, "Meditation on the Self is called *bhakti*." *Bhakti* here means that if you know that your true beingness is divine and that what you have been living so far falls short of the nature of divinity, then you make an attempt to bring that aspect of you closer and closer to your own concept of the divine. Then *bhakti* begins.

The Self and the Other

Four schemes of self-analysis are placed before us in the Bhagavad Gita:

The thirteenth chapter teaches us “The Unitive Understanding of the Distinction Between the Actual and the Perceptual.” If as a psychologist you should want to use the Bhagavad Gita for therapeutic purposes, you should teach your patients what the self is and what the other is. R.D. Laing, in *The Divided Self, Self & Others*, and other books, makes an attempt to tell people how to distinguish between the self and the other. Fritz Perls and others also speak of the boundary lines of the self, the ego boundary and how it can be extended, and so on. But here the self is not to be confused with the ego. You should not become too caught up with the disease of the patient. Consider for a moment the case of a normal human being, any human being for that matter. There is awareness, and in our awareness we are relating all that is known at a certain time to a central focal point of our awareness, where we experience what we call “I.” This is a pure psychological fact, and it is not to be colored with any of our sociological preconditionings. Some people say, “Oh, this ego is bad. Therefore I don’t write “I” with a capital I, write it with a small i, as if when you start writing it with a small i from then on your ego will be reformed. This is kookiness, madness. There is no need to resort to such exaggerations. The “I” is simply a point of reference. Without it you cannot speak, you cannot relate yourself to other people. There should be a center of awareness then, that leads to the center of the self.

If there is a center, then where is the periphery of the self?

If you are aware of the farthest star in the sky, the awareness in the center is extended also to the star. If your “I” awareness is not up to the star you cannot conceive of that star. The self really extends to the whole field of your awareness.

Then what is the “other”?

What you are aware of is the other. The whole of awareness is taken here as the self, with “I” as the central point of reference, and what is presented to it is taken as the “other.”

Now you have the field and the operator of the field, the field and the seer of the field, the field and the projector of the field. Now you know where you stand. This is all described in the thirteenth chapter. The Bhagavad Gita is not to be treated at all as a religious study, it is a pure psychological study.

Analysis in Terms of Modalities

Following this the fourteenth chapter, “The Unitive Way of Transcending the Three Nature Modalities.” After focusing our attention on consciousness in general, including awareness and its interaction with what we are aware of, the Gita examines what types of modalities arise in the personality.

This question is examined in terms of three principles known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Sattva is an all-pure and clear way of mirroring anything presented to it. Rajas is kinetic, it is a way in which the mind is not just seeing, it is doing, it is reacting. The first is a pure state of perception and the second occurs when that initial perception moves you to action. The third modality, *tamas*, is when you don’t want to move away from a stable foundation, and you are holding on. That is, inertia. The inertial state is always trying to maintain itself; it is opposed to

the kinetic rajas. There is an interaction here. The two opposing forces are both working, one wanting to retain the status quo and the other wanting to change. The change can be in conformity with a pure vision, the change being for the good, or the change can be leading to a diversion, where it is going to be pathological. You either grow or you pathologically malfunction. To understand this one should have a clear notion of how sattva operates in you, rajas operates in you, and how tamas operates in you. This is given in the next analysis.

Krishna also gives some symptomatic descriptions in the Gita. The majority of people who read this book, however, are so religious that they assume, “Oh, these are all the great teachings of our Lord. The Lord says sattvic food is sweet and oily and good to look at, so we should go to the pastry shop and have some good Danish pastry. That is the kind of food which is suggested in the Bhagavad Gita, not the spicy mango pickle of the Indians.”

That is true, spicy mango pickle is not good for the stomach. I agree completely. But by eating pastry instead of spicy pickle, you will not become more sattvic. Suppose you don't give the dog food to the dog, but instead always give the dinner of the master to the dog. Do not expect that the dog is going to become the master by eating his food. This is a symptom only given here, a partial symptomatic study. By looking at the kind of food that you eat, you can see what the nature of your personality is, your tendencies, characteristics, etc. This is meant as a psychological insight into the personality type to which we conform, so that we might attain a spirituality in harmony with our type. What was right for Ramana Maharshi could not be expected to be right for Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to fight the British nation: he wanted to establish satyagraha; he strove to do these things and much more. But if you go to Ramana Maharshi and say, “Come out for a satyagraha,” he will only go deeper into his meditation, because his nature is such. You should know what your nature is. You should not work on a spirituality that does not agree with your nature.

People come and ask me, “Could you please tell me what kind of meditation I should have?” I keep quiet. Then they think I have not heard their question. They ask a second and a third time; then I ask them if they would like some orange juice – they make their own conclusions and go away.

Nobody can give a meditation to another person unless they know exactly what that person wants or what he is. If meditation is not to be given from one person to another, one must get into that state from within oneself. Each of us has to decide what he wants and where he stands. However, if one relates to another person just as a patient goes to a psychologist, and through a number of sittings they get into a kind of rapport in which they understand each other well, then it is possible for one to give the other certain guidelines. But even then it is all worked out from the inside.

Here in the fourteenth chapter, as you are given insight into your own particular state, you are able to find out for yourself whether you are sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic. This can help you decide which kind of meditation would be best suited to you. The guidelines are fluid and the conclusions concerning the different types should be taken only in a general way. It is unnecessary to think of sattvic as good and tamasic as bad, for instance.

The fifteenth chapter is introduced here to make a major correction in the epistemology of the Gita. The second chapter is called “Sankhya Yoga.” In Sankhya philosophy there is a duality between two principles. These two dynamic principles are called *purusha* and *prakriti*.

Purusha is the spirit; prakriti is the creative nature. In a poetic way people think of it as a male principle and a female principle. This is pure poetry. There is no truth behind this except poetic truth. It is here in the Gita that the author wants to go beyond this apparent duality. He brings in the idea of a Purushottama, the superior person who has within him the principles of both, the spirit and the creative nature, so that he blends these two into a totality.

The Ambivalence Between the Bright and the Dark

The sixteenth chapter, “The Unitive Way of Discriminating Between Higher and Lower Values,” gives a new way for self analysis. Even the best of men, who is calm, serene, peaceful and loving, has moments when he is dull, and also when he can become harsh and negative. That is the ambivalence in our life, which swings from the darkest extreme to the brightest extreme and goes on swinging. The rhythm of the swinging can be different for different people, but it is certainly present in all. In some people there is the tendency to go to the bright side and remain there for a long time, along with the tendency to go just a little to the dark side and then immediately leave it. Your personality type can be discerned when you see how long you can remain on the bright side and to what intensity of brightness it can attain. Similarly, knowing how you sink into the dark, and how you are caught in the trap of that darkness, and how intense that darkness is helps you to discern your personality type. This dark nature is called *asuri sampatti*, and the bright nature is called the *daivi sampatti*. If the *daivi sampatti* is stronger in you, you come more and more into the open brightness of life and you keep yourself more or less in that area. If the dark side is operating too much in you, then you like to hide away from anything which helps you to open up, and you become very withdrawn, or it can be expressed as a very negative indulgence in violence. The *asuri sampatti* and *daivi sampatti* are the two alternate faces we have, and each person has to find out how much of them is in him or her. And our spirituality has to be so modeled that we can regulate these two principles.

Then the seventeenth chapter gives us “The Unitive Recognition of the Three Patterns of Faith.” Earlier we said that there are sattva, rajas and tamas operating in us. These three tendencies also bring us to different patterns of behavior. If a certain pattern has become well established in a person, he cannot totally erase it and make another one, but he can make a number of modifications in that setup. Realizing that this is the pattern of behavior in which you feel good, you can effect a number of modifications, but it is impossible to completely eradicate what is already established.

Finally we come to the eighteenth chapter, “The Unitive Way in Behavior Patterns.” In Sanskrit it is called “Moksha Sannyasa Yoga.” The word *moksha* means to be liberated. Liberated from what? Liberated from bondages.

What is bondage, then?

Luci has great love for me. If I say to her that I will come on Wednesday and on Wednesday Mary calls me and I then tell Luci that Mary called me and that I am going there instead, Luci will cry. Then if I go to Mary’s house and sit there thinking all the time, “Now I have let down Luci,” and all the while Mary is speaking pleasant things, and she is giving me good things to eat, I won’t notice all these things because I am so much tied up in thinking about Luci. Here my mind is caught up in a certain bondage. These kinds of bondage make life very

unpleasant for us. But if you can liberate yourself from the thousand-and-one obligations of life, where the obligations can be transformed into a meaningful way of relating to people, in which there is a well-founded reciprocity that is understood with your intelligence, and if it is not going to rock your whole system of being, then our relationships become beautiful. A relationship can be beautiful or it can be very biting and sad and cause many emotional stirrings.

When a person remains beautifully related to all and yet not caught in any of the hang-ups of life, you can say the coloration of his mind is erased. Coloration is called *raga*. In Sanskrit the word *raga* means a color, and also love or bondage. All these are *raga*. When the *raga* or the coloration is effaced, you become *vitaraga*, devoid of *raga*.

Moksha means liberation at a number of levels. You are no longer bound. You understand everything in its proper perspective and you accept it. If Luci says she won't cry that means she understands the situation in the proper perspective and she is not going to be upset. She thinks, "If Nitya isn't coming, I'm going to call John." Now she has no trouble. This keeping in tune with the fluidity of the mind is called moksha.

But what is *sannyasa*?

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.

But then, why do I do all those things?

For the same reason the traffic policeman puts on a uniform: so that a car may not run over him. The driver of the car should know that he is a traffic controller standing there. The sannyasin puts on a certain cloth so everyone knows he is not beholden to ordinary conventions. But fake people can also put on the traffic policeman's dress. Like that, you may find that outward conformity has really very little meaning. Sannyasa thus means that from inside one has given up his sense of personal agency. He sees that he is part of the whole system, the totality, a beingness, and in that he flows smoothly.

The sannyasa in this chapter is referred to either as an institutional type or a non-institutional type. Arjuna was directed to conform to the non-institutional and not the institutional. When you become a sannyasi you become a *tyagi*, a relinquisher of the fruit of action. Sannyasa and *tyaga* are taken up again in this final chapter and *tyaga* is placed as the real model for all people.

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.

DAY II

Why did Krishna encourage Arjuna to kill?

This question is in the minds of many people. Good scholars have also asked this question because it involves a violation of an ethical norm that is universally accepted: the tenet

of non-violence, non-hurting, (*ahimsa*). We worship the Buddha because he was compassionate. Jesus gave us the great lesson of not resisting evil with evil, but loving the enemy. The Bhagavad Gita is considered to be a great scripture and many people are led to think that through this book Krishna encouraged Arjuna to kill. This would seem to raise contradictions between the teachings of Buddhism and Christianity with the teachings of the Gita.

To fully understand this, you should also know a little of the overall schema inherent in the Gita. Previously some brief indications of the structure of the Gita were given. Now we can go into a little more of the detail and arrive at the central theme.

If the gist of Vedanta and also most of the Indian religions is to be given in one word, it is *lila*. Lila means sport. Life here is to be taken as sport. If we take a game like football or tennis or hockey, we can see that they always involve two sides. It really doesn't matter who the winner is. Playing the game is what is important, and in the game you have a role. Playing your role is very important within the framework of the game, but ultimately even this aspect of the game must be treated as only a game. Within the context of the game we are very serious, but we realize that by itself it is not a serious thing. In the end there are no tears, but within the frame of reference of the game there is provision for laughter and crying.

In the Gita an old theme is taken from ancient history, that of two teams coming together on a battlefield. On one side there are people who are deprived of that which naturally belongs to them. On the other side stand the aggressors. We have these two groups, the aggressors and the deprived. On the side of the aggressors is a king named Duryodhana. Duryodhana means one who is difficult to fight with. It also means he employs many strategies which can be deceptive. He has another name as well, Suyodhana, one who knows how to fight well. On the side of the deprived there is also a king. His name is Yudhishthira. Yudhishthira means one who remains steadfast, and he is also, like Suyodhana, a valiant absolutist.

Something occurred the day before the actual fighting began; it's a very beautiful story. The mediator between these two groups was Krishna. Even with the peaceful supplications of Krishna, still these two groups, the people of Yudhishthira and the people of Duryodhana, could not resolve to avoid this suicidal war. The night after his peace mission had failed Krishna was resting on his bed. Duryodhana decided to go and seek the help of the great Krishna in the upcoming battle. When he came to the room in which Krishna was resting, he saw him lying on the bed and decided not to disturb him. He thought, "I, a king, cannot just stand here waiting for this man to wake up." He pulled a chair to the head of the bed and sat down. Now Arjuna, being the younger brother of Yudhishthira, also thought of going to Krishna for help. Arjuna arrived and saw his friend Krishna was sleeping. He respectfully went to the foot of the bed and stood there.

When Krishna opened his eyes, he saw Arjuna first, and he said "Hi Arjuna. How are you?"

Duryodhana then shot up. He said, "Look, I was waiting here for a long time. Now you are speaking with Arjuna."

Krishna said, "That's right; I didn't see you. I saw Arjuna first."

Duryodhana said, "Well, that's not fair. I am older than Arjuna. I came to your room first. I was waiting for you to wake up. You should first talk to me."

"What's the matter?" Krishna asked him.

"I want your help."

“And why did you come, Arjuna?” Krishna asked.

“I also want your help.”

“So both of you want my help. Well, I shall give you a choice. On one side I will put my army, all my armaments, all my weapons, everything. And on the other side, I will stand alone, unarmed, with a pledge that I will not touch weapons. You can choose between the two. The one who gets all my army and weapons won’t get me. The one who gets me has to forgo all these quantitative, massive things.”

Being a very practical, pragmatic man, Duryodhana said, “What is the use of getting a man who is unarmed, with a pledge that he won’t fight? That is of little use to me. I shall have your weapons and your armies and your horses. Bring me your chariots. I will take those.”

So Duryodhana made his choice and this was granted to him.

Arjuna said, “I want only you. You don’t have to fight. Kindly be with me. Could you be my charioteer and ride with me?”

“Granted.”

Krishna is supposed to be a god, but the Creator here agrees to be the servant of one of his creatures. He said to Arjuna, “I shall be your servant. You are the master.”

Arjuna got Krishna and Duryodhana got his army. Duryodhana now had all his own army in addition to the men and weapons which had hitherto been Krishna’s. And on Yudhisthira’s side is Krishna, unarmed and vowed not to fight, as Arjuna’s charioteer.

Before the war begins, Duryodhana comes forward. He is the first person presented to us by Vyasa. He arrives with his guru, Drona. Here again is the disciple and the guru; in this case a very pragmatic disciple of a pragmatic guru. Duryodhana turns to Drona and says, “Look at that army of the Pandavas, that army of Yudhisthira. Sir, I want to caution you. This army is marshaled by Dhrishtadyumna, who is your own disciple; he is the son of Draupadi. He is very intelligent and he is great among the charioteers.”

This description that Duryodhana gives of the opposite side reveals much of his own character. He warns his own guru, who is also the chief strategist of his armies: “You, as a guru, taught that man on the other side. You have given all your secrets to him. He knows all your vulnerable points.” It is very difficult to fight with a disciple because he knows just what the guru is going to do at each point. “He is not an ordinary disciple, he is a very intelligent one. You cannot count on his friendship because his father is now your greatest enemy. The son now wants to take revenge on you because of what you have done to his father.” We see here that there is an enmity, a feud.

Thus he is inciting his guru to go against that army, and secondly he said “I shall now tell you who the people on that side are.” He narrated many names. In these names there was no mention of Yudhisthira or any of the Pandavas. He said there were people who were as valiant as Bhima and Arjuna, but he never mentioned that on the opposite side we have Bhima, Arjuna, Yudhishtira, etc. This is the way in which Vyasa kept these five brothers away from the group when he mentioned the opposite camp. Instead, people of the same nature as Duryodhana were alone mentioned. Afterwards Duryodhana said, “I shall now mention the people on our side.” He used the word *samjnarthan*, to mean the symbolic significance of the people on our side. He said, “First you.”

You see, the Indian culture is one of a confluence of two cultures. One is the culture of the departed ones, which we call the pitriyana, and the other is that of the shining ones called the devayana. Bhishma pitamaha, the grandfather, represents the pitriyana. Drona represents the devayana.

So first he said, “We are the supporters of devayana because you are on our side. We are the supporters of pitriyana because pitamaha Bhishma, the patriarch, is on our side.” Then he said, “We support Kripa who is known for his virtues. We have Karna on our side. Karna is one of the brothers of the Pandavas. So that very brother is with us. That means we are in the right.”

He was looking for a moral backing for this assault. After mentioning all of this he came to a mental crisis, a conflict. He said, “Even though that army of ours is marshaled by the great patriarch Bhishma, I find it is inadequate. Even though this army of theirs is marshaled by Bhishma, it looks adequate.” We should compare this with the *vishada* of Arjuna, which is coming next. We could call it “Duryodhana Vishada.”

Duryodhana expressed conflict. The patriarch who was on the side of Duryodhana wanted to console his grandson. He said, “Don’t be afraid. I am now going to give the war cry.” He blew his conch and a great sound blasted forth. The war cry was given. The challenge was made.

This is a master stroke of Vyasa. In the case of the aggressor, there is no need to go and fight the deprived, because he already has everything. The whole country is in his hands. There is no need for him to go and fight. The Pandavas have come to fight because they must, but if they shoot the first arrow they will be the aggressors. Vyasa did not want them to be seen as the aggressors. He made the chief of the side of Duryodhana blow the conch first and thus become the aggressors. In the general confusion the old patriarch forgot what he said or did. He very foolishly took up his conch and sounded it.

And as he sounded it, another foolish thing was coming from the other side. When the patriarch sounded the war cry, it should have been responded to by the king on the other side, or by Bhishma who was the commander of that army, or by the marshal of the day, Dhristadyumna; but another fellow, who had none of these positions, Arjuna – he was not a king, he was not a commander, he was not the marshal of the day, he was just a warrior there – he came forward and sounded the conch shell for his side. The war call came from Bhishma and the response came from Arjuna. When Arjuna responded to it, others also echoed him and the arrows started to fly.

With the arrows flying, Arjuna, who was still holding his bow, said to Krishna, “Before I fight, please take me to the center of the two armies so that I may know with whom I am fighting.”

Krishna, as an obedient charioteer, took the orders of his master and brought the chariot to the center of the field. This of course is an impossibility. In war there is a no-man’s land, and nobody can enter there and live. To say that Krishna brought the chariot of Arjuna into this no-man’s land and stood between the two armies is a logical impossibility. So why is this given in the Bhagavad Gita?

You may be familiar with other spiritual works, such as the Bible. Suppose you want to become a Christian. You go to a Christian missionary or a priest and say, “Sir, I want to become a Christian.”

“Fine, beautiful. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your savior? Do you believe that he was the only begotten son of God; that he was born of immaculate conception?”

Then if this man says, “Sir, I don’t think that’s possible because we understand that children are born from the coming together of a father and mother, husband and wife, and how could a woman give birth without any man coming to her, by the will of God? This does not agree with my scientific understanding. I really love Jesus Christ very much. I think of him as very great.” The priest will say, “Well, you may be a lover of Jesus Christ, but you are unfit to be a Christian unless you accept the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ. It may sound unlikely to you, but you have to accept it. Do you also believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross?”

“Yeah, that I can believe, provided that you won’t tell me that afterwards he got up from his grave. I would have to think that he was in a coma and he was not dead; that Jesus Christ was left in a coma for 24 hours.”

“No, that’s not possible. You should believe that he died. This is the second article of faith.”

“Ok, he died. But if he died, he cannot come back to life again.”

“No, you should believe that as a third article of faith. He died and then he was reborn. He came back to life.”

“Anything more?”

“Yes. You have also to believe that he physically ascended to heaven.”

“But that’s impossible, sir. I cannot believe all these things.”

“Then you are unfit to become a Christian. You can be a great friend of Christ. You can be a great lover of the Christian faith, but you cannot be a Christian.”

“Why? Why do you insist on this?”

“We insist on this because the kind of reasoning with which you make observations and analysis and calculations in science is on the rational plane. You have to transcend that plane to get onto this field; so we insist that you accept it.”

Like that, in the Gita also, if you are on a rational plane, you won’t be able to get into the fundamentals of it. There is a point where you have to give up your surface mind and be prepared to dive deep and also to soar high. Another kind of reasoning is to be introduced here. This kind of reasoning is mentioned in Plato’s Republic, where he speaks of dialectics as a hymn. This is the kind of philosophy that a philosopher king should possess. When a seeker goes on step by step using rationality he eventually comes to a point where reason stops and he can only go beyond through an intuitive flash. There, instead of going from a major premise and a minor premise to a conclusion, you are taking two polarized aspects of reality which are apparently giving you a paradoxical enigma, and transcending that enigma. You transcend the paradox through dialectical reasoning. So this dialectical reasoning is applied in the Bhagavad Gita just as it is applied in the Bible. In India we call it Yoga Mimamsa. Mimamsa indicates a critical enquiry; a critical enquiry which unites two opposite poles to make a total truth.

So here in the Gita you come to see Krishna and Arjuna standing in the middle of the two armies. We should take this as a symbol which requires us to transcend ordinary reasoning, to unfold a very special type of methodology and reasoning called Yoga Mimamsa.

Was it only an accident that Arjuna asked Krishna to take the chariot to the center of the battle, or did he mean anything more by it?

When Arjuna was brought to the center, Krishna wanted to test him. After bringing the chariot there he turned it towards the enemies and said, "Look, there stand your enemies, the Kauravas, such as Bhishma, Drona and Karna. Look at them." Arjuna didn't look. That means he passed the test. Krishna purposefully did this; but instead Arjuna looked on all sides. He said, "I am seeing only brothers, fathers, uncles and friends everywhere. Where is my enemy? I don't see any enemy to fight here. I see only friends and brothers." He was filled with great pity. His eyes were filled with tears and the bow slipped from his hands. He found that he could not even stand up, so he sat down. Arjuna threw away his bow and arrows and said, "I cannot fight in this state." He was overcome with despondency.

Now, in the second chapter, before the teaching of Krishna as guru begins, Vyasa presents us a very beautiful picture. Two armies oppose each other. On one side are Krishna's own generals and army, and on the other side are Krishna's own friends, with Krishna standing in the middle. He should naturally be vexed to anticipate the destruction of his friends. Arjuna is now also in the middle, and he sees that he also has friends on both sides. Arjuna is crying, but Krishna is described as looking as if he were smiling. Krishna was smiling and Arjuna was crying, yet both were standing in the same place, both were caught up in the same situation. Arjuna has people on either side, so it is natural that he is crying. Krishna has his people on either side too, so he should have been crying, but he isn't crying, he's smiling.

Here Arjuna is turning to Krishna. He says, "Look, I am confused. I am here to play a role. But I am seeing two roles to be played at the same time. One role is that I'm here as a warrior, so I should fight. I'm also standing here as a dear relative among relatives. I should not kill my relatives. If I succeed as a relative, I will fail as a warrior. If I succeed as a warrior, I will fail as a relative. This is a paradoxical situation, with both sides involving important values. Please tell me which value is more real, and which value truly belongs to me? If fighting is righteous for a warrior, that is my dharma. But killing your own uncles, your own brother, your own father, your own teacher, that cannot be good for anyone. There is a clash of dharma and I am failing my own dharma. Please, tell me which is my dharma?"

It is from here onwards that we become interested in the unfolding dialogue. We get into life situations of playing roles where opposing values come together in seemingly irreconcilable conflict, and in such situations what should we do? It need not only be warriors like Arjuna who are having this dilemma.

A certain friend came to me with a great problem. This time it was a young lady. She wanted to be very honest, truthful and loyal to her husband. She had four children born of him. Then she met another person of great merit, a wonderful man. Her heart has gone to him. She loves him with all her heart and soul and mind and might. In the eyes of the world this is a very wrong thing. She should be loyal to her husband. She should rear her children. Her rightful place is in her home. What she does with the other person can only be seen as flirting, and it is a very unchaste thing for her to do. All the social norms are against it. But then she says, "My heart has its own logic. My heart says I cannot live without this man. He is needed by me. He alone gives me the warmth that I want, the joy that I want. He understands me. He knows all the finest feelings in me. Don't ask me to throw him away." This is not the problem of just one woman, somewhere in the world. There are similar problems in the lives of men and women everywhere.

Thus in the field of life we come across such similar situations all the time. In every one there is a war going on. In the war we see the faces of our friends on either side, and we do not know to whom we should say no and to whom we should say yes. Then we may know that the Kurukshetra war is a war in the human heart.

The word *kuru* is derived from *kri*, which means action. The world of action is such that it brings enigmatic situations. *Kshetra* is a field. Kurukshetra is also called *dharmakshetra*, the field of the intrinsic values which make you what you are. As a person, you are this and that because of an aggregate of values structured in a certain way. If that structure is demolished, you cease to be. You become someone else. You cannot destructure yourself without endangering your personality makeup. You will cease to be you. This is how it becomes everyone's problem.

To address this problem, Arjuna turns to Krishna. He says, "My dear friend, I was treating you earlier as my charioteer, but now I have come to a certain stage in my life where I cannot continue like this. I see your superiority because you can smile in this situation and I am crying. Please help me so that I might also smile."

When a patient goes to a therapist or a doctor, he believes that they know how to set him right. If the doctor is worried and upset, then of course he is no help. So even when the doctor sees that there is a very grave disease involved, he smiles to give encouragement. Like that, Krishna smiles.

When Arjuna turns to him and says, "Please accept me as your disciple. Discipline me; teach me so that I may know," Krishna has no hesitation to change his position. Krishna smiles and tells him, "You are grieving for those for whom no one should grieve."

That was the first thing that he said: "Wise people do not grieve for the living and the dead." It is usually translated in the English translations as "The living or the dead." That is wrong. "Or" and "and" have very different and distinct connotations. In the original Sanskrit, the word *cha* is used, and not the word *wah*. *Cha* means and; *wah* means or. You are not to take the living and the dead separately. You have to take the living and the dead together. "The wise man does not grieve for the living and the dead." When the living and the dead are taken together, life and death is a happening taking place in the world of becoming, the flux.

The wise person is one who sees what is beyond the flux. What is beyond becoming is beingness. There is a beingness and there is a becoming. The becoming is coming and going, changing, transforming, integrating, disintegrating. All these are in the world of becoming. One who has a transparency to see through all this, he alone is a wise person. The other person is seeing only one segment of it.

Krishna's look implies "You are crying now because you see only one segment. I am smiling now because I am seeing through all this. I have a transparency of vision that allows me to see this as part of the cosmic phenomena. I smile because I know this is *lila*, this is a sport. You cry because you think that you are going to fail, or you will be knocked down now. You see only this one little moment here. You should be endowed with the same vision that I have. The vision that I have is transparent."

I have shown here on the board some sort of a symbolic, graphic picture. Here there is a vertical axis and a horizontal axis. This is a scheme of correlation we are using to explain the overall structure a little. Take a very common symbol which has verticality and horizontality, the cross. If you take the cross, you see it has a vertical axis and also a horizontal axis. What Jesus

Christ endorsed as the main teaching of the scriptures was to “Love the Lord thy God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.” We say, “Our Father which art in heaven..” Father in heaven and man on earth. There is a vertical relation in it, a bipolarity which relates man to God. He reaches up to God in heaven, and God showers down grace from above.

Jesus also gave a corollary to that: “Love your neighbor as your own self.” Where is your neighbor? He is on either side. Love for God is vertically placed, and your neighbor is horizontally placed. Your vertical love for God is expressed horizontally to your brothers on either side. In the case of Christianity, horizontality represents the brotherhood of man and verticality represents the Fatherhood of God. Because of the Fatherhood of God the brotherhood of man becomes real, but not without it.

All the functioning that is happening in the world of becoming depends on the world of being. The beingness is the eternal, the vertical. What appears as momentary on the horizontal also has a place in the eternal. I am hungry. I take some food and my hunger is gone. It is a momentary thing. But hunger is perennial. I was hungry yesterday, I am hungry today, and I will be hungry tomorrow. All living beings have hunger and need nourishment. Hunger is a vertical principle; eating is a horizontal action. Sex is a vertical principle, and the sex act is a horizontal function. Thus in our life all urges come from the vertical but they are lived on the horizontal plane.

The horizontal we divide in two: minus and plus, negative and positive, or mental and physical or virtual and actual. Something is on the actual side when you see a thing presented, and on the mental side all the associated ideas come and make the actual thing meaningful. You cannot have an actual thing without a corresponding mental image. What is actually here should also be virtually in your mind.

I have shown here in the diagram how the vertical urge of hunger comes and stimulates a process of becoming on the horizontal axis. For the nourishment of my organism, I should have food. That food is certainly going to nourish my physical self. I place it on the side of nature. It is that quarter of the eternal nature that is functioning within us which makes it necessary for me to eat. Also I have, along with this, the corresponding idea of hunger which makes me seek food, find it, prepare it and eat it. For that one act there will be hundreds of mental functions. Nature on the one side, with its physiological constituents has to come to our attention, and then there are different aspects of our psychological responses. The soma and the psyche are to be seen as counterparts of one system. On one side there is nature, on the other side is the collective unconscious. Behind every personal nature there is a collective nature. So the collective nature and the collective unconscious are the great resources which are engaging our life. And, until it comes to the surface, we really do not know what is going on.

Man does not become hungry just all of a sudden; nature is slowly necessitating it. The search for food is not sudden; the mind is slowly getting prepared for it. Here I have taken only one urge, and there are hundreds of such urges which make life what it is. When one urge becomes horizontalized, there is a tendency for that to drag you down and create an ongoing vicious cycle. It makes you an ordinary human being who cannot transcend the pressures of the present moment. Arjuna was caught in the trap of the pressure of the immediate present and he was unable to transcend it. Krishna wanted him to verticalize his vision, verticalize all his urges.

How does one verticalize the urges?

I have shown here on one side, on the positive vertical side, the sun, and at the bottom an eye. Your unconscious has a greater understanding than your conscious mind. Everything that you are is planned and structured without your knowledge, from beneath, from within. There is an all-seeing eye here which is in tune with the cosmic order, or the very purpose towards which the whole universe is always moving. When this eye and this sun are in tune, you will be able to make these two horizontal eyes secondary in their function and they will become like helpmates to recognize this deeper vision which is in tune with the most sublime light. This is the whole scheme of verticalization.

Verticalization is the first thing taught by the Bhagavad Gita, in the second chapter. The verticalized state of awareness is called *sthita prajna*. *Prajna* is pure consciousness; *sthita* means remaining in the state of. When one becomes established in the supreme truth, the individual manifestations of the state of flux are all seen in relation to it. That stabilizes your mind and gives it a vision from within, so it is not getting swayed by the stimuli that are flowing in through the senses. It may often seem to a beginning reader of the Gita that Krishna is off the mark by speaking of *sthita prajna* to Arjuna. Arjuna is in the middle of the battlefield and he doesn't know whether to shoot or not. Instead of saying anything about that, Krishna is addressing himself to the control of the senses, how to look into yourself, what the supreme nature of the Self is, and so forth. The purpose here is to bring about a verticalization. Jesus did the same thing. Before asking a man to be good to his neighbors, he said, "Love your Father, your God, with all your heart." If you love the Father and know his fatherhood, then you will see the brotherhood. If the rhythm of life is to be appreciated, one should know the music of life, the whole symphony of it. The whole symphony of life is known by knowing the vertical principle.

Krishna said:

When one banishes all desires that enter the mind O Partha (Arjuna), satisfied in the Self by the Self alone, then he is said to be one of well-founded reason.

He whose mind is unaffected by mishaps, who on happy occasions too, evinces no interest, rising above attachment, anxiety or anger, such a sage-recluse is said to be of well-founded reason.

He who remains in all cases unattached on gaining such or such a desirable-undesirable end, who neither welcomes (anything) nor rejects in anger, his reason is well-founded.

Again as when a tortoise retracts its limbs from all sides the senses are withdrawn from objects of sense-interest, his reason is well-founded.

Objective interests revert without the relish for them on starving the embodied of them. Even the residual relish reverts on the One Beyond being sighted.

(Gita; chapter 2, verses 55-59)

Some people think that if you control your mind and even practice abstinence, then you will be able to get over the conflicts of life. Here the Gita warns that it is not like that. Only by seeing the Supreme will you be able to harmonize the relative. What is required of you is to see the Absolute in order that you may know how to tackle the relative.

How do you see the Absolute?

Only when you see the Absolute can you say that your *prajna* is well-established and that your wisdom is well-established. You are asked here to take the example of a tortoise that pulls its limbs inward, its head inward, its tail inward. The turtle has a very significant structure. It has a head, a tail and four limbs on the sides. The limbs are on the sides and head is on the top and the tail is down at the bottom. Like that, your personality also has a head and a tail and limbs on either side. You have a drive and you are heading toward a certain interest. Your interest has a tail end, too. The tail end is lost in your unconscious and you don't know anything about it. What is the urge that is prompting you to do things again and again and again? All through your life you can see that you have a master drive.

What is this master drive?

If you do not know your master drive, you will not be able to control it. To know the master drive, you should know its head as well as its tail. The head is consciously seen in your scheming, planning, scheduling, etc. If you examine the things you have schemed for in a day, what you are planning immediately, what you planned yesterday, what you want to do tomorrow, you find the head of your interest. But the tail won't show up immediately. There is a hidden purpose in your mind which makes you do all these things, and to discover what this is you have to go to the tail end. What you actually perform is on two sides. In one of the Upanishads (it is also quoted in the Brahma Sutras) there is a structural reference to our happiness. Happiness is said to have a tail and a head and two wings. *Sukham*, the positive awareness of happiness, is the head. The unknown Supreme is its tail. The general sense of happiness, or the pleasurability of things which you can imagine, is the left side, *modha*. The right side is *pramodha*, that is, an individual item of happiness of which you are indulging at a particular time. *Sukham* is the head, *brahma* is the tail, *modha* and *pramodha* are the two wings. This is how you are led forward in your flight of life.

The first thing you are asked is to centralize all these things. You have to find your own center, and bring *sukham*, your positive idea of happiness, to your center. Likewise, you have to find out your unconscious urges and see that they are also brought to the center. It helps to bring all your strategies back to the center to have a good look at your own self first. This center is "I am."

When you are looking at the center, you are only looking at the locus of a circle. The circle has its own circumference, as well as its own radii. From the center your self is radiating in many directions. At its most expansive, it finally identifies itself with what you call the total. You are at once a point here and you simultaneously belong to the total. If you find your center, and expand that center and see how you fill the total, then you cease to be an individual. All individuals also cease to you when you see this way. You see all mankind as one, or all sentient beings as one, the universe as one, the Supreme as one, truth as one, God as one. You have expanded yourself. The other alternative is that you contract all these and bring them to just that one point in your center. There only you exist. There is no "other" to fight or deny; there is no "other" to misunderstand you.

Either only you exist and nothing else, or else everything exists and you don't. You exist as everything. There is a throb, a pulsation, such that at one moment you are your own self and the next moment you are the universal. When this pulsation is going on between "I am," and

“That thou art,” either you say, “this consciousness which I see here, *ayam atman brahman*, I am the Supreme,” or you say, “*prajnanam brahman*, all that fills this world or this consciousness, that is the Absolute.” When you freely pulsate between these two aspects, you have learned the art of making the self resonate with the Self. The self has been established in the Self, raising the self by the Self, and making yourself your own best friend.

To make your own self your friend, Krishna suggests seven models. One is the model of the *sthita prajna*, one who is well established wisdom. In the second chapter, verses 55-72, you will find Krishna’s model of the *sthita prajna*.

Another is one who has a unitive vision in the world of action. If you take all this as a world of action, then in order to see your place in that world, you should know which actions are appropriate to your nature and position. The Gita says that the path of karma (or action) is not known even to very wise scholars. *Karmana gatih*, the path of karma, is extremely difficult to understand for the great pundit as well as for the layman. Chapter four, verses 18-24, gives Krishna’s model of the karma yogi.

Next we come to the *jnani*. A *jnani* is one who has a correct understanding of the vertical essence of things and their horizontal expression. The *jnani* also understands the correlations between the two in everything he experiences. In the fifth chapter, verses 23-28, can be found Krishna’s model of the *jnani*.

Or a man can be a yogi. A yogi is one in whom there is a perfect union of the opposite poles. The bipolarity is fully established in him. The model which Krishna gives for the yogi is located in chapter six, verses 27-32.

Or he can be a *bhakta*. The *bhakta* is one who sees that his only reality is the Absolute, God, the divine, the unnamable, the Tao – whatever name you give it. He must turn to that. All that he does, everything that he experiences, should be an expression of that alone. Chapter twelve, verses 12-20 give the model of a *bhakta*.

Another model is that of one who is capable of discriminating at every level. The discrimination that allows one to perceive the smallest details which comprise all the differences is called *viveka*. The model of a *viveki* is given in chapter sixteen, verses 22-26.

The last model is one who is fully established in the sense of beingness, the Absolute. This is called the *brahmi-sthiti*, or *brahma nishthan*. That model is given in chapter eighteen, verses 50-57.

DAY III

Question: could you explain what is meant by the theory of reincarnation?

Nitya: A thing transforms and becomes something else. In physics they also speak of the Law of Conservation of Matter and Energy; that nothing really comes to a total extinction, there is simply a formal transformation. If there is only this transformation, then when we die, we must transform into something else. Of the physical body, the water goes with the water, the heat goes with the heat, the carbon goes with carbon, and so on. It is relatively simple to understand how the body, when it perishes, becomes part of the physical universe. It does not completely cease to exist. But we sense that there is something other than the physical body in us. We call it the soul.

Here a Marxian materialist would have to disagree and say instead that consciousness is only a byproduct of organized matter. When molecules are structured in a certain pattern, the quantitative variations of the structure itself will yield qualitative changes. Thus when a certain level of organization is attained, we call it consciousness. But this consciousness is not present if the structure is broken down into its parts. So why should anyone assume that the quality of a certain process will remain when the process is not there? For instance, when a matchstick burns out, do you think that the soul of the fire is still lingering somewhere near? It need not be so; when that process has come to an end, you don't need to think that the qualities of that process are remaining. Like that, why should you have to think that the present consciousness or awareness which gives you the idea of an individual persists in some form when the body disintegrates? That is the view. There is a real point to it, too.

But four fundamental questions arise that can make us feel very ignorant when we try and answer them. The first is: What is matter and how did it originate? Even to consider the meaning of that question is a very humbling experience. The second question is: What is life? How did it originate? We can push our knowledge a little bit beyond the present state of man, but we come to a point of total ignorance, beyond which we cannot go. Then ask the question: What is consciousness and how did it originate? These first three questions have no specific point from which we can say they arose, but we can see that one telescopes into the other. Consciousness telescopes into life and life telescopes into matter. You can finally ask: What is truth? Here we have the same problem. We simply don't know.

As you undertake a study of reincarnation, you find that there are several varieties of reincarnation, and it is important to know which one you mean.

There was a certain boy named Jesus. He saw a man called John baptizing people in the Jordan River. He went to John and said, "Please baptize me also." John was a very humble, modest man and he told Jesus, "I am not worthy of even untying the laces of your shoes." He said these things but then he baptized him. When he became baptized, Jesus changed. It was as if he had just become spiritually born. You may say that this is the rebirth of Jesus Christ. He had been the son born of Mary, and then he experienced a new birth that made him Christ. The birth of Christ makes Jesus reborn. You can say it is his second birth, a rebirth. Many people are spiritually reborn in the present life itself. A certain man called Ramakrishna was a *pujari*, a priest in a temple in India. Something happened and he was no longer just a priest. Ramakrishna became an awakened person, a wise one. The same again in the case of Siddhartha: the young prince was prepared to die under the Bodhi tree, but an awakening came to him and he was reborn. That is one kind of reincarnation.

When I raise my hand, I say it is an incarnation. Why?

I have an idea to raise my hand. Initially it's just an idea, it has not yet incarnated. Incarnation means to get into flesh and blood. When my idea is put into flesh and blood, the hand raises. Every time I raise my hand, open my mouth, or walk, incarnation is happening. I can pull it back and again raise it, so I am reincarnating moment after moment. That is another kind of reincarnation.

Here is my friend Edda. I know she is naughty. And she has two children who excel her in their naughtiness. I can see her reincarnation in these children. But not all of their naughtiness resembles Edda's naughtiness. Some of it resembles their father Jimmy's. You can say that that

part of them is a reincarnation of Jimmy, and this other part of the naughtiness is the reincarnation of Edda. That is another kind of reincarnation.

Then, you put a seed into the earth. It germinates and brings forth a plant. Thousands of pea seeds come from the plant, and each one of those seeds can bring about another pea plant. Suppose we take one measure, boil and eat it, and leave the others that are still capable of reproducing. Do you think the souls of the peas we have eaten have a chance to be born again and can come back and find other peas to be born through? And how is it that this one life is proliferating into thousands?

Our idea of reincarnation is a very simplified one, and therefore is not scientifically tenable. If it is to be made scientifically acceptable, we must be able to account for all the possibilities of the manifestations of life, as well as the proliferation of the spirit (or idea or consciousness or animation) in all these life forms. Nobody has done that. I think that the theory of reincarnation presented to the world today is somewhat naïve and oversimplified speculation. I wish someone would take it seriously and present it properly.

The Bhagavad Gita says it is not that you reincarnate, but that God reincarnates. When you die, according to the Gita, it is like the fragrance of the flower merging into the wind. Like that, your personality as such merges with the totality of beingness. God, then, has his own ways of retaining a rhythm, of maintaining the wave. If a wave submerges into the water, you don't see the wave anymore because the wave is nothing but water particles. But those particles have a momentum, a movement, and that puts the same momentum into the next particles. So there arises another wave. That wave is caused by the momentum of the previous wave, which is now submerged. The new wave is comprised of new water particles, but it has in it the qualities of the previous wave. If the water can be taken as the Lord or God, then you, as a certain momentum merged into it, bring back another wave. You cannot say who it is or when it will be. The Gita says God reincarnates, not that you reincarnate. The total being is reincarnating, but it carries with it the continuity of the phenomenal happenings of the universe.

The theory of reincarnation is generally brought up to account for some things we cannot ordinarily explain. A child, say, is born without hands or legs. What could this poor creature have done to merit such a life? You think in the terms of one cause and one effect. I am opposed to that. I think thousands of causes can make one joint effect, and one cause can give a thousand effects also. There is a complexity in this relationship of cause and effect that you have simplified too much. You imagine that if you do this certain good thing then you are bound to get this or that. But there is no such single "I" sitting anywhere that can collect the rewards. The "I" is in constant relation and is being influenced by hundreds of other "I's" at all times. There is no action that is willed by one single person. Behind everything there are promptings from so many situations, people, social conditionings, atmospheric pressure, cultural backgrounds, educational backgrounds, etc. Action is not the isolated output of a simple person, but the representation of a complex of influences. We recently printed a pamphlet called "Beyond Cause and Effect" in which I tried to explain this.

I once made some investigations into the usual sense and context in which reincarnation is meant. A professor from a respected university in India came to me with accounts that so and so was previously so and so, and I also thought he might be right. I went with him to all those places to collect the data. Unfortunately, in every case it appeared that very good lesson of

memorizing had been given to the person by the parents and the investigators. I was totally disillusioned by that series of researches that we conducted on reincarnation.

Question: Would the same justification that you gave to the question of why Krishna encouraged Arjuna to kill hold for today's wars?

Nitya: That question was not fully answered here. It really requires instances in which you can see that Krishna gave direct encouragement, or insisted that he fight, to say that he encouraged killing. If you look back you will remember that there was no need for Arjuna to respond to the war call given by Bhishma. As described in the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna also committed others to war. He knew when he asked Krishna to come to the battlefield as his charioteer that Krishna was unarmed and would not fight. Was it right on his part, after bringing such a man to the battlefield and giving the war cry, then to say, "Now, I won't fight?" Isn't it irresponsible to call the people to war, bring your friend to the middle of it, exposed to the arrows, and then tell him, "I won't fight."? He should have thought of that before the war.

An analogy can be given. A woman agreed to marriage. She went with her husband and became pregnant. When she was advanced in the state of pregnancy, she decided "I don't want to give birth." This is very dangerous. You cannot do that. You should have thought of it earlier.

That is why I said Vyasa had made a master stroke by having Arjuna respond to the war call, rather than Yudhisthira or Bhima or Dhrishtadyumna. If any one of them had responded, Arjuna could have walked away and nobody would have found fault with him, but he made the response.

That is one thing. Second, Krishna did not ask Arjuna to kill. He only asked him to stand up. He said once, "Fight." But in the next verse he immediately qualifies his statement. He says "You fight *kama*, desire, which is your eternal enemy, *nityavairi*." The *kama*, the *nityavairi*, is the one he has to fight, not any person. Finally, in the last chapter, when Arjuna tells Krishna, "I have now regained my memory. I have no doubts in my mind. I shall carry out your command; please tell me what I should do," Krishna says, "You have now heard me; ponder over what I have said." He did not say "You swallow what I said."

Question: Somewhere in the Gita doesn't Lord Krishna eulogize war as honorable? He says if you die you will go to heaven and if you win you will enjoy the fruits of the earth.

Nitya: There are thirty-eight questions put by Arjuna. And to each question Krishna gives an answer. As we mentioned earlier, in the setup of the book there is a provisional anterior position and a posterior conclusive position. Arjuna is the anterior skeptic and Krishna gives the posterior conclusion. When Arjuna spoke of certain things which he believed, Krishna made a rebuttal by saying, "If you say like that, then this is the conclusion you should draw." Arjuna spoke of *naraka*, hell, saying "We will fall into *naraka* if we wage the war." By the same token one can say you will go to heaven if you wage the war. This is only presented as an argument for rebuttal. Here you have to take into account the context and relevance of the question in regard to the answer. You will then find that this was not the conclusive teaching of Krishna. Vyasa was only developing the argument. Arjuna brought up subjects like *varna* (caste), *varnasamkarah* (caste confusion), *papam* (sin), *naraka* (hell), etc. All these subjects are taken up by Krishna one at a time, and he demonstrates the contradictory conclusions you can be brought to if you stand on these positions. Finally he rejects all that. Arjuna is hoping for *swarga* (heaven). And Krishna says, "*Swarga* should not be your goal; *moksha* (liberation) should be your goal." Liberation and

not pleasure. *Swarga* is a hedonistic goal, whereas *moksha* is the final release. Krishna is not supporting *swarga*. Again Krishna says, “The Vedas are of the three gunas. The Vedas are asking you to go to *swarga*, and I am asking you, Arjuna, to transcend the dictates of that and come to Vedanta.”

Question: In relation to the question about reincarnation, what is commonly meant by the day of judgment?

Nitya: I said earlier that ancient books like the Bible are written in an archaic style. Jesus said, “I am teaching you in terms of myths and parables.” He used to give parables, and after a parable he would ask his disciples if they had understood. If they said no, he explained the symbolic meaning of what he had said. This means that anything given in a *lingua mystica* should be deciphered into *lingua scientifica* if you want to speak to the present age. Let me give an example. Jesus has gone bodily to heaven. Even Mother Mary is supposed to be in heaven. But suppose the Russian cosmonauts or the American astronauts come back to earth and say “We saw them half way. When we were up there we saw Jesus and Mother taking tea.” You wouldn’t believe that. Why? Because the ascension which Jesus made was not to the physical heaven we imagine, but in your faith, in your heart. The day of judgment is taking place here, not somewhere else. It can be this very day. You don’t have to lie in waiting. Of course, if you read Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, then it is quite a different matter. Then you have to pass through all the problems of Purgatory. But otherwise, the day of judgment is this very moment. Judgment of what we do is made here, by us.

I have a story that I made up to take away the sting of judgment. The story goes that there was once a great sinner and a great saint. They lived side by side. One day they both died. When they died the sinner found the most unexpected thing happening; he was traveling with the saint. The saint found it very embarrassing to be traveling with a sinner on his way to God. Finally, both were entering the council chamber of God where he was sitting on his golden throne with his golden beard and beautiful face. God just stretched out his hands and said, “Come on children.” They thought that there must be something wrong somewhere. He should only say that to the saint, and the sinner should be rejected. But he said, “Come on my dear children.” Wrong accounting, perhaps. The sinner didn’t want to remind God of what he had done, but the saint did not want to leave the situation like that. He said, “God, I would like to see the book in which all our actions are recorded,” and God said, “Oh?” He called the clerk and asked him to bring the book. A big, golden book was brought. One page was taken and shown to the saint. The saint looked at it and became rather pale. It was gold leaf. There was no mention of his name on it. Nothing was recorded there. He was embarrassed. The sinner’s heart was pounding very hard. He thought, “Now where is my page?” Another page was taken out. It was the sinner’s. Another golden page. Nothing was written. One of them asked, “What is this?” The clerk said, “After all, God is very pure. He lives here in eternal joy. The darkness of Earth is all forgotten here. Those darknesses are never brought to his presence. So you both lived. What you lived out there as a sinner and a saint, that was your reward.”

So here and now we live it. We don’t take account for it anywhere else. That is my view.

Dr. D: One of the things I’ve come across in the Western world is the avoidance of suffering. You know, the whole social system avoids it, somehow more in the Western world. I think people try to avoid suffering at all costs. In my work with young people over the past years,

one of the things that we decided to do was to ask people to give five very pleasant experiences, happy experiences, and five unpleasant experiences. Believe it or not, among the seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen year olds, none of them could give any such experience. What I'm trying to say is that the whole of existence seems to be telescoped into this one small area that is completely ambivalent. There is no real suffering or happiness. So one of the hypotheses that I set out to look at was that if we could extend this then there would be greater suffering when they go out into the world, but also greater joy. Now is this a foolish thing to do in therapy? Or do you think this is worthwhile? What I am trying to say is aimed at increasing the capacity of a human being to experience both suffering and joy. In other words, what you said about the coexistence of a bipolarity and an awareness of it. Then we can restore the gestalt aspect which you explained yesterday.

Nitya: There is an unconscious acceptance of suffering in the West, perhaps more so than in the East. When you take, say, mountaineering, what you want is not to go to a pleasant mountain that has a tea shop on the top or to get there by some easy conveyance. You want to encounter all the hazards possible, and the mountain should be as high as possible. There should be no easy access to it. When it is harder and harder, you enjoy it more and more. The joy of mountaineering is also coupled with the harshness, the difficulties and pain. The possibility of death also comes along with it. Unconsciously you accept this. In several of the programs of life you are asked to look for this challenge. It becomes more stimulating. Western people take to this type of challenge very much. When it comes to the matter of expression, however, they come to you; they come as patients, not normal human beings. They have become lopsided. They shy away from the challenge of life. Then they want to be nourished, to be supported, to be consoled. They are always speaking of happiness, of wanting to be happy. But otherwise, the normal, healthy human being accepts pain and pleasure as the counterparts of one system. Don't you think so?

Dr. D: I don't want to differ with you because you have so much more experience in this area.

Nitya: Oh, no. That's not fair.

Dr. D: I wouldn't like to challenge this now. But what I am trying to say is that the whole social orientation in the West is geared to this idea that man samples only from the pleasurable or the happy aspects of existence. Like the wave pattern that you have mentioned. Take, for instance, alternating current, when it is rectified and cut off from the middle. If that rectification is not done properly, then you get only one crest and then nothing, then another crest and again nothing, and so on. A continuity comes to the current only when there is a connecting trough. This is what I understood when you spoke of the wave pattern and also the merging with the Absolute. You see, in a basic encounter group, some of which I've had the pleasure or pain to lead, I allowed people to suffer to some extent. It was the whole idea of the exercise, I thought, because they were supposed to express their emotions in different interpersonal situations and so forth. They accused me of being a sadist. That's why I began to wonder about this sort of thing. A search for happiness is a very exclusive thing and there is an avoidance of the suffering part.

K: Happiness and sorrow are relative terms, Dr. D. What is happiness for you could be a sorrow for me; they are abstract words. They are relative terms like good and bad.

Dr. D: That's not the point. For each person, as Swamiji just now explained, there is this bipolarity which should at the same time be conscious of itself. Each person has to learn to integrate the bipolarity. That is what you said?

Nitya: That's right.

Dr. D: So this bipolarity could differ from person to person, yet every individual who learns to integrate the bipolar relation becomes whole, like a gestalt.

K: You mean he gains more strength, perhaps, to face the sorrows or pain or whatever you call it?

Dr. D: But should he avoid it specifically?

Nitya: I want to agree with both of you. I had my bipolar relation with my guru. Sometimes it was so very painful, just as Daya here knows how painful it can be when she relates to me I would tell Guru, "Guru, you are really very cruel. You are very cruel to me."

He would answer, "Last year you said the same thing, and now this year you are thanking me for that."

As you say, it could all be relative. When you first get it, it is very painful, and when you move beyond it, you start to appreciate it. Then you see the real value that is emerging and you are tearful with your gratitude.

Dr. D: If our nervous system operates on the principle of contrast and balance, then what you have said makes sense for all of us in our practical living. Because if you don't have darkness, there can be no light. And if you don't have hunger, you can't enjoy food. If one does not have all these drives that you mentioned – sex drives, hunger drives, all of these innumerable drives – then you won't be able to know the satisfaction of them. In the West people seem to think they must avoid being hungry at all cost. When I say the West, I don't mean only the people who live in that part of the world only. There are undoubtedly people living in the Eastern part of the world who act in a similar manner. It's simply a metaphorical way of speaking.

Nitya: I think that can be easily understood. As a psychologist you must know that attraction and repulsion are the ambivalent forces which rule our lives. When something is painful, you avoid it; when something is pleasurable, you move towards it. The common tendency is to avoid whatever is painful. Whether East or West, the general inclination is to stay away from that which is painful and look to that which is pleasurable. The *samskaras*, or the preconditionings we have, exist in bipolarity. One aspect is positive, pleasure-oriented, the other is a negative conditioning which tells us to avoid something. Why do we avoid pain? Because that is how nature works. Nature asks us to avoid it.

Dr. R: But then, is the Gita teaching us to go beyond nature or not?

Nitya: Yes, to go beyond nature. Nature is doing this by its very presence, but we are constantly trying to see how we can transcend nature.

K: But should we go beyond nature, Swamiji?

Nitya: Yes. If you call it nature with a capital N, then there is nothing other than Nature. What you call God is that kind of Nature. But if you make a difference between nature and the Divine, or that which transcends nature with a small n, then nature means this manifested aspect. And what is beyond is that which is the ground of all manifestation, or that which is controlling all manifestations. If you consider Nature as one whole entity, then no questions will arise. This flower belongs to Nature. I belong to Nature. The color of the flower belongs to Nature. My

capacity to appreciate the flower belongs to Nature. And the joy that emanates from it is also Nature. Here there is nothing other than Nature. But if you take the joy of appreciating the flower as another factor which is turned towards nature, then you draw a line between the physical nature and the understanding of that nature.

Understanding can be transcendental. Take, for example, a triangle drawn on paper; it belongs to nature because it has an origin and it has an end. Just as you draw it, you can also erase it. When you draw the triangle it becomes specific, PQR, or XYZ. It attains a definite dimension. But the general triangle is not PQR or XYZ; it is neither isosceles nor equilateral. It has no special dimension, and yet none of the triangles can be formed without knowledge of it. The general triangle belongs to the world of understanding that transcends all the specific triangles. When you say "spiritual," it is unfortunate that you give it a religious connotation. To me, triangle PQR is material and the general triangle is spiritual.

Question: What is the cause of suffering?

Nitya: In physical terms, it is the agitation of the system. Our central nervous system is made so that when it is agitated by a certain rhythm we laugh. And when it is agitated by another kind of rhythm, we cry, using the same muscular coordination, the same tear glands. But the effect that the latter agitation makes in your association is somehow unpleasant. The other association is very pleasing, but as for the unpleasant one, the whole system wants to get over it immediately. Then you are suffering. You want to hang on to the one rhythm, go again and again to the same rhythm. This is the rhythm that you call pleasure, in the actualized world of experience.

Then suffering can also be a philosophical concept. You may say, as Kant puts it, that this world is the training ground where the soul is made to grow and experience, and suffering is the discipline by which it is made to grow. That is the philosophical view.

In psychological terms, suffering occurs when you have a motivation that is thwarted and you don't get the fulfillment of your desire. That is psychological suffering.

Question; What is meant in the Hindu system of thought that all that is around us is illusion, maya?

Nitya: You see, I'm living now with the lady here, called Edda W. Mr. W. says she is his wife. I look at her very carefully and I don't see the wife. Her existence as W.'s wife is really only in his mind. I accept this as a matter of course, because of social convention. But the agreement is only a mental supposition. If people do not agree that this is W.'s wife, then the family collapses. The family is established on that notion. The entire society of Sydney is based on social units called families. The nation is based on these notions.

It is by many such mental suppositions that our world is maintained. The break in a person's leg can be easily repaired. A breaking of the faith between a man and a woman cannot be repaired quite like that. Thus, the reality of the so-called world in which we live is more of a mental supposition. That is all. The Hindu philosopher says the world is a supposition. He does not say that it does not exist. He says only that it is a supposition. If you suppose like that, it is. If you don't suppose like that, it is not. If, one fine day, a husband declares, "She is not my wife," she is no longer his wife. Or the wife may say, "I don't see the husband in him." Then he is the husband no longer. When the supposition changes, your world changes.

You will say that this wall exists here, but I don't expect a physicist would agree. He would tell us that it is not a simple, static wall, but only a colony of molecules flying around – a very compact colony.

Question: But it is there, whether you call it molecules or gaseous particles, or whatever.

Nitya: Oh, no. Eddington said, "When I place my hand on this table and write, though I agree that there is a table under my hand, as a physicist I know that there is no stable table at all. These are all moving molecules." The physicist's chair is to be separated from the common man's chair. When you sit on the physicist's chair, you don't fall through because you also are not compact. You also are made of flying molecules.

Day IV

Once there was a king named Milinda. He invited a Buddhist guru by the name Nagasena to come and teach him. Nagasena put a question to king Melinda.

"Can you describe a chariot?"

The King said, "Well, a chariot is a vehicle used for the conveyance of people which has two or four wheels, a seat resting upon it, and an arrangement to hitch it to one or several horses, so that it can be drawn." Then he went into further details of the structure of the chariot.

Nagasena said, "Sir, suppose we have all the materials for the chariot. Four wheels, the axle, the seat. If they are piled one over the other, then would you call it a chariot?"

The king replied, "No, it will not be a chariot."

"But nothing is lacking. Even the screws that are needed are all there. Why don't you call it a chariot?"

King Milinda said, "It should be structured in a certain way. Only than can it be a chariot."

"Well then, say all the parts are properly structured, but that it does not run. Then is it a chariot?"

"No. That is only a model of a chariot. It is a chariot only when it functions."

So, in order to deserve the name chariot, the thing must have a structure which is conducive to a certain kind of function. In the Upanishads the human life is also analogously referred to as a chariot. This body has a structure. It is a structure of hands, eyes, legs, nose and ears – all the organs. The structure is designed for a certain type of function. A function becomes mechanical only when it is repetitive. There are certain functions that are not meant to be repetitive, but which can be progressive and creative, leading from one stage on to the next, and ours is such.

If there is a structural defect, it will affect the function. When there is a functional defect, it will affect the meaning or the purpose for which it was conceived. The malfunctioning or dysfunctioning of our organism can cause any number of problems. When a problem arises in a machine, you call in a mechanic to repair it. The basis on which the repairs are made is the content of the mechanical devices inside that machine. The machine cannot talk. The mechanic must examine the various component parts there to find the parts that work and the parts that don't work. He pinpoints the spot where it is malfunctioning. When the malfunction or dysfunction is spotted, it is the understanding of the mechanic that is used to correct it. These

days people are attempting to build computers which can correct themselves, which can learn. A self-correcting machine should also have an understanding of the self to correct it. Earlier psychologists, like Freud, came to the understanding that psychogenic diseases can be corrected if the patient is given an insight into the nature of the malfunction, as well as what should be the normal function of his being, so they begin to see just how their normalcy is affected. If the patient understands this, he will be able to correct himself. You are teaching a machine to be its own mechanic. When the machine becomes its own mechanic it is a realized machine. This is what we are doing for the correction of it.

But is correction all of it? No. Correction is not the be-all and end-all of this process called life. The machine is supposed to give us a particular result. In the case of a human organism, however, the psychophysical setup of the body and the mind does not produce just one result. It is designed to give continuously over time so many kinds of results which are beneficial to itself and also beneficial to persons who are similarly structured. In a community of people, in order to obtain results positive for the whole, each person has to function in a reciprocal fashion.

Something is emerging here: a development from one stage to another in which the life process progresses through a hierarchy of value-realizations. When a person such as Maslow thinks that there is a hierarchy of values that it is possible to actualize, I agree. The highest value should be a benefit taken and shared by the maximum number of people, by the entire community. When you take community in its most inclusive sense, it becomes all sentient beings. If all beings of the universe can benefit from one man's kindness, one man's life, then certainly it is a great life.

We all know of people like the Buddha. Buddha lived 2500 years ago, but in his name, even today, people sit in the morning, noon and evening, before bed, and even at midnight they wake up and say, "I take the pledge that with this hand of mine, I will not hurt anyone. I take the pledge that I will not disturb the rhythm of the universe where things are apportioned to all beings. I will not take away that which naturally belongs to another. I know that my time is short and I should not waste it in gossip or meaningless endeavors, so I will make my life very meaningful. I take the pledge to do that. I take the pledge that I will not pollute my system with anything that can adulterate its proper functioning. I won't take anything which is intoxicating or that can do damage to my system. I take the pledge that by passion I will not deviate from the right path of life, from the virtuousness of life to that which brings grievance to me or to others." Most of them live up to it, too. A man who lived in such a far-off time in history still has a hold on the hearts of people. Here we can say he functioned until he came to the very climax, to the summum bonum of all values, and that still shines as a great value and model before us.

We have before us two problems: there is a malfunction or dysfunction, and how do we correct it? And how can we step by step lead our lives towards that maximum realization which it can achieve?

The psychologist takes upon himself the humble role of the corrector, the mechanic of the human mind who will help you to correct it. But the teacher or the guru takes another role, offering not merely correction, but giving nourishment as well, showing the path to you, giving directions until finally you have reached the summum bonum. This is how it has to work.

The twelfth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita puts before us the problem of establishing the bipolarity which will gain this maximum unfoldment. Yesterday Dr. D. made a reference to it that I want to elaborate on a little.

The fact that I sit here and talk to you and that you understand, means that your mind must be analogous to my mind. The mechanism of your mind must be similar to the mechanism of my mind. The word meaning that arises when you hear a word, the word image, must have some correspondence to the word image that forms in my mind when I articulate those words. You certainly cannot understand and do not understand a word unless you already have an image which can be pressed into service when you hear this word. Actually what you think of as new knowledge is only the restructuring of a composition you have already gathered within you. Then in a sense that becomes new knowledge, and it will help to further your search and study.

In fact, your mind and my mind are both functioning within a common reality. They are aspects of a total situation. If that is so, there is the likelihood of a mind which is not fully disciplined, a mind which is not fully enlightened, a mind which is only at the beginning of its search, being helped by another mind. To get into more and more homogenous communion is like an osmotic process. When this mental osmosis takes place, the mind of the seeker and the mind of the seer can come so close that there will be more and more opening up coming to the seeker's mind until it assumes the same brilliance as the seer's mind. To effect that unity we are asked to hitch our life to that of another person who has seen what is to be seen. In a small way, when a psychologist is helping a patient he is doing the same thing. The psychologist is enabling the patient to see what the psychologist sees. If the therapist is seeing the patient's mind and the patient also can see his own mind clearly, he will be able to correct it. Here we are even going beyond that.

I have given here a diagram which may help you. I have marked a source of light which I call the guru. Here is something like a lens. If the light is focused through the lens, it comes to a point where it can become so intense that it will set fire. The disciple's mind can be thought of as something like cotton wool. If the light is centered there, it will catch fire. The wool itself becomes a self-luminous object. The sun is luminous. The fire is also luminous. Yet there has to be a device by which the one can be concentrated into the other. This device, a lens which focuses the light, in Sanskrit is called *sraddha*. *Sraddha* indicates a one-hundred percent bipolarity. First you have to polarize. The teacher's interest is to give to the student. The student's interest is to take from the teacher. The student's interest is to clarify a doubt. The teacher's interest is to give that light which clarifies. The teacher is happy when the doubt of the disciple is articulated. The disciple is happy when he gets the light that dispels the darkness. They both live one happiness. Their aim is one, their interest is one, their joy is one, yet they are counterparts of a single situation. When they are together there should not be any doubt that can be so negative as to block the light. There can be hazinesses which will make it difficult for this light to act on the mind of the student. If it is not haziness, it can be opacity. The mind has to be focused properly, and that focusing may take time, because the guru has a personality and the disciple also has a personality.

The disciple understands his personality as the "I" factor in this relation. From childhood the "I" factor is fed with so many images of a social being. He thinks of himself in terms of what others think of him. Others expect him to be good, so he makes an image of what is good. Others

expect him to be smart, so he makes an image of what being smart means. Others expect him to be brave, so he makes an image of what being brave is. He puts together all these images and he makes a composition out of them. "This is I," he thinks. But that is not the real "I." That is the mask he is holding before him for others to see. Behind the mask stands his consciousness, sometimes with confidence, sometimes with indifference, sometimes with fear, sometimes with deceit. It is playing many games. The disciple is afraid that the mask will be taken away from him by the guru.

This is exactly what is happening when a patient goes to see a psychologist. He wants the psychologist to think of him as he wants to think of himself. When the psychologist begins putting inconvenient questions to him, he wriggles like a worm, because there are sore spots in the psyche. If you put the finger of truth there, he cannot stand it. Then he brings in the defenses. These defenses are what I call opacities. When an opacity comes in between a guru and a disciple, there can arise what we call disadoption. There has to be a perfect adoption. The teacher should have a feeling that "This student is one hundred percent mine." And the student should have a feeling that "This teacher is one hundred percent mine. And he will never have anything against me. I can open up everything about myself to him without reservation. I don't have to hold anything back. I can go and tell him the very things for which the society may crucify me. I shouldn't be ashamed of that; I shouldn't be ashamed to go and tell my guru anything." The patient also should have the same feeling when he goes to his therapist.

As long as the opacity is not there, there needs to be something else. That is that the closeness is not always effected voluntarily. It is not by your deliberation that you become so close to another person. It has to come through a spontaneous process. Just by saying that you love me doesn't mean that you love me. You should feel like loving me. When you see a flower, you are naturally drawn to it. This kind of spontaneity has to come. It comes between two people. Freud speaks of the key and the lock. The key should fit the lock and the lock should find the right key. One person is the lock and the key is in another person. When they come together, they know it. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. When I call my sheep it recognizes my voice." The good shepherd's voice is recognized by his sheep. That recognition is the only thing which can really focus your mind. If on the first day it doesn't happen, you must wait for the second day.

I had this experience I have narrated many times to my friends here, but some of you are new, so I will repeat it. When I was in search of a master, I heard that Ramana Maharshi was a very great soul. I went to see him. My first impression was, "What a lazy man. He is wasting his time and the time of other people. India is a very poor country. People should work hard if they are to make a living, and if that country is going to rise up in any way. But here is a lazy man sitting on a couch. He is not teaching anything. He is not doing anything. He is only just sitting quiet." I thought that was a very bad example. I was very much inspired by the example of Vivekananda, who was so dynamic. He wanted to do many good things for the country, for the people. He went all over the world and gave inspiration to people to be active. Quite a contrast was this old man sitting there on his bed. I sat there before him. I didn't see anything great coming from him. He even looked rather ugly to me. When he got up and walked away I noticed he was limping. I asked myself, "What am I doing here?"

The second day passed, the third day passed, and it became a really boring affair to be there. I decided to go away. But even so, I wanted to be good. Even though he was not worthy of adoration, I wanted to behave as a good man. So I went and purchased some oranges and came to see him again. I stood before him with the oranges, wanting to just say "I am going." I bowed before him, but he did not look at me. I thought, "This fellow, he does not even have good manners. At the very least, he should behave as a social person." Anyway, I just bent over to leave the oranges before him. Then I had a peculiar feeling to go back and sit down. I went back and sat. People were very, very quiet. Always this man was looking overhead, so I couldn't make out where he was looking. But this time he lowered his head and looked into my face. He looked into my eyes.

My God. I felt as if suddenly the sun came out into the room as the two eyes of this man looked at me. I felt that I was becoming transparent before him. His looks were passing right through me like X-rays. I felt as if two shafts were coming from him and striking right in the center of my heart. I felt as if I were pinned there. I wanted to move, but I could not move. My whole body started shivering. Then I remembered that when Vivekananda was before Ramakrishna and Ramakrishna touched him, he felt some similar sensation. Vivekananda wanted to shout at Ramakrishna, "Don't do this thing to me; I have my parents!" I also felt like calling out "Are you trying to hypnotize me? Don't do this!" But I found I was tongue-tied and couldn't speak a word. Only two minutes before I was behaving like a normal human being. Now I was completely changed. For no reason tears started coming from my eyes and they were flowing down my cheeks. My whole body shook as if I was electrified. Then the world became very dark. I was seeing nothing but darkness. And in that darkness I saw the previous day and the day before that. In a reverse order I started seeing everything that happened in my life, until I went back to that stage where I was a fetus in the womb of my mother. It was all like a film played backwards.

When the vision faded, I found that my eyes were not closed, they were open. His eyes were still looking into mine. But now it was no more like an unbearable light coming, but a very soothing and compassionate, very loving look, such as the look of a mother. There was great tenderness. I sat there and wept with joy and also some sort of grief over what I had seen and how the life I was leading was so miserable and meaningless to me, even though I'd never felt that way previously. Then somebody came and touched me and said it was meal time. Everyone was gone. I got up and walked like a man in a trance. When I went to the dining hall, I saw Maharshi sitting there for his meal, and next to him a banana leaf was laid for me. I didn't know how I merited that very special treatment on that day, to sit next to him. He was careful to see that I was served everything in a proper manner. Then I ate. Afterwards, when I left his physical presence, I found that a great change had come upon me. It was no longer necessary for me to be in physical proximity to him, to sit before him. I could carry his presence with me anywhere I went.

This is what I mean by the coming together of two minds, of the seer's mind and the seeker's mind, until all the intervening hindrances are removed. But it won't go all in one stretch, or in an instant. It goes step by step. Then it happens by an act of grace. When it happens, you know without a doubt that it happened. In all other cases it is only a matter of your trying to please another person, or trying to show devotion. Trying to show devotion is very different from

spontaneously experiencing devotion. When that devotion is established we may say sraddha begins. When the sraddha begins to operate, a transformation will come. The transformation comes as the result of an osmosis.

In chapter XIII, the Bhagavad Gita gives a list of qualities or changes that are expected in the disciple. These can be used with advantage by the psychologist also. The first on the list is called *amanitvam*. *Manitvam* is wrong identification. When you give up a wrong identification, what takes place is *amanitvam*. *Mana* means a measurement. You measure yourself: "I am this." It is a measurement which you make constantly. If a value you have adopted is something which you want to stick to, then in some new situation or context where you should function differently, your lucidity is lost. You have become morbid with your fixed notion. You have become rigid. If this ossification and fossilization that can come to a person's ego is removed, we say that *amanitvam* has come to him. It means breaking away the morbidity of yourself; that constant feeling, "I am this. I am this"

When you have *dambha*, that kind of feeling has become worse and difficult to change. You have taken pride in being so and so. You are proud of yourself and you don't want to give it up. This attitude keeps the *mana* rigid. If you want to break the one, you must break the other. The dynamics of identity is the exaggeration of the value that is given to it in the form of pride. This pride you must give up.

If you want to give that up you have to cultivate compassion, not pity, born of an understanding of your oneness with others. Sometimes in the Gurukula when newcomers arrive, I ask them to do some work. When they do it, they generally do it in a clumsy way. Another person will show his preference to push that person away and do the work himself. I stop him from doing that.

Why did he want to do that?

He will say, "I am better at it than him. I can do it better."

But if you allow the other man to do it two times, he also will be better. Yet you won't allow it. Your pride that you are better than him gets in the way. Or you could become compassionate and understand that he has never done this before. Give him some time. You have to hold yourself back. In spite of your superior knowledge, you hold yourself back and allow the excellence of the other person to come through more and more. You estimate that another person will become better as they go along. The result will be that it becomes habitual for you to keep up this reverence for all persons, all beings. This culminates in what is called *ahimsa*, (non-hurting).

Ahimsa becomes manifest when there is provocation. One's individuation becomes stronger when it is being provoked. If you find yourself in such a situation and yet refuse to be provoked, you have demonstrated a greater understanding of the manifestation of your own being and also of the other person's being. When you realize that you and the other person are both molded out of the same stuff, you are not provoked by him. You say there must be some reason for that person to behave like that. In Sanskrit we call this *kshanti*. *Kshanti* is not mere forgiveness, it is born of an understanding of your mate's, your friend's, your neighbor's, or even your rival's life situation as a whole.

There are some classic examples of *kshanti* given in Indian epics like the Ramayana. When Rama gave the final death blow to Ravana and Ravana was breathing his last, Rama saw

what the world was going to miss because of his death. Rama called his brother, Lakshmana, and said, “My brother, we are going to lose a great statesman. Will you please go to Ravana and ask him to be kind enough to teach you statesmanship? There is not much time left. He has this great worth of being a statesman. Will you please learn it from him?” He was asking his brother to seek instruction from the very man who had wanted to cause his death. Lakshmana went and knelt before Ravana and said that he wanted to learn statesmanship from him. Ravana said, “My time is nearing, but I want you to be benefited by this for the sake of the world.” And so Ravana gave his knowledge of statesmanship to the very person who was his enemy. That large-mindedness is a classic example of *kshanti*.

When Ravana died his wife cursed Rama so that he would also come to know what grief is when one’s life mate is separated from him. The curse did not annoy Rama. He thought, “This is a reasonable curse that I should get. I really deserve such a curse for what I have done.” He could only sympathize with the wife of Ravana. When you read this in the Ramayana, you cannot read it without tears coming to your eyes. If there is one book from which I cannot read more than ten verses at a time, it is the Ramayana. I feel my heart is breaking up, my eyes are going wet, and my throat is choking. I cannot speak. These higher values are highlighted so much in it.

Then comes *arjavam*. The name of Arjuna suggests that he is ever-wakeful. A person who is a student or a disciple has no holiday. He can never be on vacation. All the time he has to be vigilant and watchful to see how he is progressing, how wisdom is coming to him, how the guru is enlightening him, how the world around him is taking shape, and what his role in it is. He has to be ever-vigilant, watchful and wakeful. That is called *arjavam*.

For that he should give himself entirely to the situation. We call that *acharyopasanam*. That does not mean that you are washing the clothes of your guru or that you are heating his bath for him. That is also good. But that is not what is meant here. You are giving yourself entirely to the situation, to the context. For that one has to be pure, *saucham*.

What is this purity we speak of? There is an environmental cleanliness that makes us feel a sense of sacredness. So the environment should be clean; the body should be clean. One’s action should also be clean; ideation should be clean; meditation should be clean. There comes this cleanliness all through. Today when this young friend came and asked me about discipline, this was in my mind, but I didn’t say it at the time. But this is the purpose of discipline. It is an act of vigilance which you are manifesting in the form of discrimination on the level of your own life.

For that there has to be steadfastness, *stairyam*. You succeed when you are steadfast. But that is defeated by the body going weak, the senses being disturbed, the mind being assailed by fear. Here arises the need for the correction of the mechanism. When functional and structural defects hinder the process you must turn to someone who can handle that with care. Most people stumble at this point and life goes off on a tangent.

Throughout the entire process one has to keep the nucleus of his being in a state of pure consciousness which is not fully identified with this image or that image. There has to be a continuous process of reflection. Suppose you are driving the car and you have a rearview mirror through which you can see what’s happening behind your car. If one reflection that comes sticks onto it and doesn’t allow the next one to appear, it becomes useless. Your car is moving, so the

scenes are also moving. Your mirror keeps continuously changing the earlier images for newer ones. It keeps itself pure enough to mirror continuously. The mirroring is always honest. The mirror gives an honest reflection. Likewise, your consciousness should honestly mirror whatever is happening at each particular time. At every moment it should be honest to that moment. Consciousness is constant in its function of mirroring; it should not become frozen in an identified state like a still picture. Bergson speaks of our experiences as the still of the cinematograph. In the cinematograph there are so many different stills, but the stills make a joint effect on you and they appear as movement. We hold onto the stills as memories. Most people live more in their memories than in the actuality. The passing actuality of life is again and again blocked by bringing back an old memory and holding on to it and looking at it. One should have the capacity to let go as soon as a hindrance presents itself to consciousness and blocks its lucidity. The flow of life, the rhythm of it, should never be allowed to be jarred or blocked. If a blockage comes and you cannot release it, then naturally it is there that the guru comes, it is there that the psychologist comes.

But why do you want to hold on to something? Our mind is sticky. In Sanskrit we say *sakti*. Once an impression is made, it sticks. The guru is *asakta*. It really is wonderful to live with a guru. He fondles you in great affection and shows great love. Believing that to be so in the next moment also, you walk towards him. Now he seems a total stranger. He shows no emotion. He shows no love. He shows no recognition. You wonder, "Was it the same person to whom I was just speaking with so much understanding and joy? Now he is showing the same love to another person as if I don't exist." Then both these people are pushed away and there is yet another person. What's going on?

The guru has no attachment, and he expects the same from us. There can be no *sakti*, no clinging.

The cultivation of sameness comes next. There are always ups and downs. The ups and downs affect the surface, but the quality of the water does not change at all. Water continues to be H₂O. In slack water or at high tide, water is still H₂O. If you keep your qualities no matter what happens, you have *samatva*, sameness.

If you can achieve all this, then it is said *bhakti* arises. Your bipolarity now becomes really firm and well established. When it is well established, you become more and more attuned to the nature of the seer. The nature of the seer is termed as *anadimat*. *Anadimat* means it is beginningless. It is also endless. You call it Parabrahman. *Para* means the Absolute. *Brihat* means the all-inclusive. All-inclusive is Parabrahman.

And then, was it not? You have to say it was not. Then you say that it was not what you called 'not'. You reject both possibilities. Everything now finds a place in your new consciousness. The seer's consciousness is such that it finds a place for everything.

Next is *sarvendriya gunabhasam*. If you look at this universe and the workings of nature, you will find it is so amazing. Take the mouse and the cat. The formation of the cat's claws and its teeth are perfectly in tune with the softness of the flesh of the mouse. The taste buds of the cat's tongue are very much in tune with the taste of the flesh of the mouse. Mouse is the ideal food for the cat. The cat enjoys it. It is adoring nature, or God, who created beautiful mice to be consumed. But the same nature has given mice some extraordinary sensitivity to the presence of a cat, and nimble feet and legs to run away, to run faster than the cat can run. It has a body which

can get into the smallest holes without any trouble, to run and escape from the cat. Then you think that nature is on the side of the mouse.

On whose side is nature? You cannot say.

In this world the good and the bad, what appears as painful or pleasurable, are so very well balanced. This is what Dr. D. said yesterday. We are only seeing one side of it. That is true. The two sides should be taken together. In the Bhagavad Gita when Arjuna wanted to see the cosmic vision of the Lord, the Lord said, "Look." When Arjuna looked he saw all these beautiful luminaries of the sky, millions and millions of colors all shining forth, and all of them are just a small part of the Lord. He saw what was going on in nature, he saw the flowing rivers, the seas with their billowing waves, the floating clouds, and the vegetation, all these wonderful things. We glorify all this. We say, "Oh, my Lord. You are great." He showed the excellence in human beings, how they can be intelligent, how they can be peaceful, they can be beautiful, they can be great artists, great philosophers, all because of the Lord's grace. Arjuna said, "Wonderful."

Then the Lord said, "Now look at this."

"What's that?" asked Arjuna.

"This is called time."

He saw the devouring mouth of time opening up, into which all beings were flowing, like a river going into an ocean. He saw between the teeth of this monstrous thing called time, the heads of beings getting crushed. He said, "Lord, are you also this?"

"Yes, I am this also."

"Please stop that. Enough. I have seen enough of you."

So you have to see both sides. The Vedantic concept of God is not only a benevolent God, but he is at once good and terrible. He is the creator as well as the destroyer. He is time and timelessness.

It is said, *sarvendriya gunabhasam*, it shines by the specific characters of all the senses. The Lord comes and puts the beautiful little red lines on the petals of a flower and sees that it is only at the tip and not at the bottom. There it remains white. And on the next flower he gives a new design. He says, "I can have another design, and yet another design, and still another." How many kinds of beetles have we? There are as many as 700,000 varieties of beetles, and every one of them has a different form. So God excels in the bounty of His creativeness. It is never exhausted. In all the gunas you see His touch. At the same time He is not any of these things. If you take a flower and crush it, throw it away, nothing has happened to God. You can crush the whole world, yet nothing happens. When you can say you realize this in your own life – that all that you have made in one lifetime will be crushed and thrown away, you sit back and smile. You don't lose anything. You begin again. That is the joy of it.

Yet He is the one who comes and sits here either as a Daya or as a Nitya, and looks at the flower and says, "Ah, wonderful." Who is that? That is Him and only Him.

So those are the two sides. I have not described the seer or the seeker in isolation. They are the two counterparts that come together through this lens of bipolarity, *sraddha*.

In the next drawing, figure six, I have given the seer in the middle. All the rest are part of the seen. Here you have fear, here you have hope and ideals, peace, achievements, fights, love and the unknown. All these are within the field of the seer. What we consider as outside is inside the inside.

Here I want to make one comment. I am not usually very fond of making divisions between the East and West, but I have to make one comment here. Somehow the kind of education that is given to our children serves to crystallize the “I” as different from the object: this is the subject and that is the object. Drawing a real distinction between the subject and the object is the flaw of Western education. Thereafter the object is always “out there.”

The approach in Vedanta is to say there is one total consciousness in which the consciousness of the object and the consciousness of the subject are oscillating. The subject and the object are both products of the total consciousness. The object is inside consciousness and the subject is inside consciousness. We do not say inside the head. We say inside consciousness. You as a person are your own ideation within that consciousness. That is why I said the outside is inside the inside.

Here is a very funny tree I’ve drawn in figure seven. The tree has three roots. One very dark root called *tamas*, a reddish root called *rajas*, and a green root called *sattva*. On the tree are borne three kinds of fruit. There are very bitter ones, sweet ones, and very deceptive kinds of fruits. They symbolize *dukham*, pain; *sukham*, joy or happiness; and *moham*, delusion.

Some of our experiences are extremely happy. How do you know that they are happy? You can go back to that experience again and again, and the very memory of it takes you to your center. But even the memory of the other kind you want to bury very deep. Then there is a third factor which makes you fantasize. My psychologist friends are victimized by the eaters of these two fruits, bitter ones and fantastic ones; either those who are withdrawing out of a sense of fear or those who sit and fantasize.

The roots are called the three *gunas*. One of the major contributions of the Bhagavad Gita is to help us to discern our own personality makeup in terms of the operation of the *gunas* in us, the *tamasic*, *rajasic* and *sattvic* aspects. I am not going to go into the details of these three *gunas*, because between them there are many combinations. All that I want to suggest is that they are not fixed. An understanding of the operation of the *gunas* can alter the intensity of their combination, and also can cause structural variations so that you can make an improvement in your own personality.

I will close this by citing a very controversial submission of the Gita. Here in the diagram you see a vertical hierarchy of personality arrangement. At the bottom I wrote food and at the top I wrote freedom. At the bottom, or the lowest rung of the ladder, I have put a person with a begging bowl, who sits there very depressed, crying. I call him *sudra*. At the second rung is a person who is very calculating. He is in the world of transaction. I call him *vaishya*. At the third rung is a man who is willing to lay down his life, but who is also passionate in killing others. I call him *kshatriya*. Then there is a person on the next rung who is holding a book, who considers wisdom greater than anything else. I call him *brahmin*. Still higher on the next rung, a man who is completely oblivious of what is happening on the lower rungs sits there in total freedom. I call him *sannyasin*.

These are the five models. Which are you?

When I taught class on the Bhagavad Gita at Portland State University in the United States, one of my students wrote a letter to me. She said “Swami, after listening to your class, I now understand who I am. I am a *sudra*. I come from a middle class family....” Middle class family in America means a rich family. She decided that she was a *sudra* because whenever she

went out to the department store either alone or with her husband, she looked for anything new there and automatically her hand went to it. She never thought about whether it was of any use to her or her family. If it is new she had to have it. She pulls it out and brings it home. Hers is a very structured family, so everything must be neat. The bedroom should be like this, the bathroom should be like that. You cannot just throw things wherever you like. You have to keep everything tidy. She looks for a place for the new thing which she's purchased. Already the room is cluttered with so many things. She puts it somewhere. She paid for it so she does not want to throw it away. She said her big apartment is so full of things for which she has no use at all, and yet she cannot stop wanting new things. This continuous sense of want makes her a sudra.

You may be very wealthy but in your mind you can still be poor, poverty-stricken. I went to a very rich man's house somewhere in America. He wanted to give a gift to his son. He called him and said, "I am very pleased with you, my son. Take this money." As the son took the money from his father he said, "Dad, it was very kind of you to give this because I was wondering where I could get some money for the orphanage in India." At once the face of the father became so red. He said, "You fool. You will suffer for that. If you throw money away like that, you will suffer." He was shaking with rage. So this friend said to me, "Look at my father. He has enough money to purchase the whole of India, and yet he thinks that if I give away 500 dollars to this one place, the whole world will collapse." That is a sense of poverty in the mind of a person who is considered to be very rich. This is a sign of his being a sudra. The definition of the sudra is that he loses his stability because of his grief, because of his want.

Why? Because he is so close to the thing called food. Food here stands for the necessities of life.

The second person is a little bit removed from the necessities of life because he knows how to use his calculative nature. He relies more on his own powers of manipulation. He raises himself a little more out of the world of necessities by relying on his understanding. The third person makes himself more free still by making himself available and willing to sacrifice. The fourth person says, "I cut off my needs. I don't want so many things. All that I need is a Bible or a Gita. I will sit and read my Lord's words; it will give me enough peace. All that I need is one piece of bread. If there is butter, well and good." He can go and live in the far-off regions of the world, saying good things to others for the benefit of all. As you go up in the ranks, the needs become less and less. Finally there is a person who is established in freedom. He says, "Necessity? I don't belong to that world. If I die of hunger, it is equally good. If someone feels that I shouldn't die of hunger, it is good for them, but I'm uncompromising about my freedom. I will not tie myself down to the world of necessity and give away the freedom of the spirit."

These steps are not the same as the social caste system in India, but unfortunately the caste system has taken these names. It is the greatest curse of India. I would like these to be understood as types. It is for you to decide on which rung you stand. You can always change your personality type by enlarging your understanding and appreciation of higher values, and minimizing your world of necessity. Then your thoughts become loftier, your ideas and ideals become loftier, and you live a more simple life.

This is the ideal that is placed before man by the Gita. Arjuna is made out a representative person who is sufficiently intelligent like a vaishya, having the passions of a kshatriya, but who

was crying like a sudra; who had the wisdom awareness of a brahmin, but who could also be a tyagi, a true relinquisher of everything and yet accepting of the whole world.

Dr. D: Freud talks about transference, counter-transference, and all that. I tell my students time and again how much I have suffered because of this counter-transference. In India, for instance, when I first started off as a clinical psychologist, there was a young chap who, on a Friday afternoon, said to me, "Doctor, today is the last day that I'll see you." He said this in a dark manner, implying that he was going to commit suicide. Being new to the game, I didn't know whether this was true or not. That weekend I rang up his father and asked him how his son was getting on. The father was amazed. He said, "The boy is doing extremely well. Why do you ask? He is playing about and all that." I was really pained that he was going to die and this was only his expression of the pain of separation. To this day I still cannot get over this kind of thing. You know, I'm a very unsociable person, although it may not appear to be so. What I'm trying to say is that this is a problem that all of us are facing. How can we maintain this detachment and at the same time how can we be affectionate and loving towards other people?

Nitya: Well, I cannot say how one achieves it, but I can say it is a possibility, because I experience it and I've seen that my own masters experienced it. So it is there. Attachment and detachment are not rational phenomena. They are irrational. When we say irrational, we are not making these out to be inferior to rationality. In fact they are superior, as they come from the very depths of our being. Love comes from seeing in the object of love a possible adherence to security or the promotion of happiness. You are attracted to a person and you come into a very thick relation before you realize how much you have moved in that direction, because it is done for you by the unconscious. The pain comes because you visualize the negation of it, or the thwarting of that possibility, or even a drastic threat coming from that source. The threat and the reward are sensed by the unconscious long before the rational mind apprehends or understands them.

This problem cannot be tackled from the rational side. It is to be tackled from the unconscious side. If there is a technique, it is by not coming to the surface and seeking it, but dipping into yourself. Diving into yourself. There is an area where you and the other person become one in the depth. Depth psychology should mean not only the depth of the individual but the common depth in which you and I become one. When you merge into a depth like that, you will see that you are as much a miserable chap as the other person. You are both at the mercy of a greater factor. If you give consolation to someone, that consolation has really not come from you, it has come from the Supreme or the Absolute, and you are merely instrumental. When you go on recognizing your instrumentality again and again and can appreciate the source from which the consolation has come to your patient, you know that he is in the hands of that compassionate, grace-giving Being all the time. So you don't feel so much like moving away or not moving away from it.

Dr. D: Taking credit is the pride you spoke of. I very often find that if I succeed with somebody, applying the principle that you mentioned, that it is not me, but I am only acting as the agent or the channel through which this kind of cure or whatever is effected. Still, though, pride comes into the picture.

Nitya: I have to make one more comment. I wouldn't even call myself an agent or a channel. Two people put together in a certain situation are both the victims of the total. You are

as much benefited as your patient by that situation. The patient was a channel and an instrument as much as you were.

Dr. D: But at the same time, Swamiji, you mentioned that the therapist should appear not to have the same kind of disturbance as the patient.

Nitya: That is the role you play, yes. If I am teaching this class, I should be up here and not out there with those of you who are listening. Once I made a mistake when I first became a lecturer in the Vivekananda College. I wanted to be very generous to my students. I left the teacher's chair vacant and came and sat with the students. While I was on the back bench, I found that the noises from the room were rising and rising until finally there was this deluge of noise. Then I walked up the platform and stood. There was complete silence. I said, "Oh, there is a meaning in my role. My role is of the teacher, and this is the teacher's chair where I should sit." It worked very well. There should not be any mistake in discerning the role, but you should understand the significance of both the patient and the therapist as counterparts of a total situation in which each patient teaches you the uniqueness of a new mind. After the experience you have grown so much. And you don't pay for it. That is a different thing altogether.

When people come and put questions to me, what they give me is not only the opportunity to answer a question, but the question is a pointer to a new possibility. I know that if that question was never put to me, I would never have known that truth. The potential truth is already in the question, and it brings this new gift to me.

Question: How old is the Bhagavad Gita?

Nitya: According to Professor O. Lacombe, now head of the Indian studies department at the Sorbonne, the Gita was in a very fluid state probably from about 1000 B.C. to the first century B.C. Anyway it is older than the date we give for Christ. People like B.G. Tilak put it as far back as 5000 B.C., but I don't think it dates quite that far. We have put the date somewhere between 500 and 200 B.C.

Question: Has sannyasa always been the highest model?

Nitya: Sannyasa was not the highest model in ancient India. Rishi was the great model. A rishi was a seer. He could be married or unmarried, several times or not at all. The social formula for that was much looser. The pattern of sannyasa came much later. It became an institutionalized thing only after the time of Buddha. He instituted the celibate sannyasi order, and Sankara continued the same tradition. Before that the model being was a rishi, but, later, if the rishi wanted to change to sannyasa, that did not change his spiritual status in any way.

Yajnavalkya was the author of the biggest Upanishad, called the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. He had two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi, and about seven children. He was also the teacher of Janaka. After giving all his wisdom teachings he decided one day to become a sannyasin. He called his two wives and said, "Dear ones, here is my land and property. Here are the cows, here is the jewelry. I divide it into two and give one half to Katyayani and the other half to Maitreyi. Maitreyi was a young girl who married him for his teaching and not for anything else. She said, "Well sir, I am young and beautiful. My sister, even though she is a little older, is beautiful and very virtuous. Your children are great. To leave us and go somewhere, there must be something greater which is attracting you. Will you please tell us what that is?"

He said, “Maitreyi, you have become even more dear to me after putting that question. You are all really great, but there is something called time that will snatch you all away from me. So I want to go to that which is imperishable I am leaving you for that.”

Then she said, “If that is so, as I am very dear to you, you should be very compassionate and show me also that imperishable one. Why do you leave me to stick onto these perishable things? I am also leaving all this and going.”

There he gives his final teaching in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. He decided to take Maitreyi as his disciple.

Question: Would you give us some instruction about how to overcome pride?

Nitya: My guru's guru wrote a book called One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction. In that he says, “Oh God, the pride that arises from my physical body and my personal charm I can overcome with discerning thoughts. With true discrimination I can get over that pride, but when I do, another pride will come and possess me, called spiritual pride. You, Lord, please save me from spiritual pride Only by your grace, Lord, can I get over it.” You should also turn in the same way and pray that no pride comes and humility dwells in your heart. What is there really to be proud of when you know that you cannot do anything?

Earlier this year I could not raise this arm. I couldn't move my hand. Now I can raise it, move it, do everything with it. At that time the best doctors came, and the most wonderful doctor examined my nervous system and gave the opinion that the particular nerve which controls the movement of this arm and hand was paralyzed. All that I could do, he suggested, was to have an operation and remove the dead nerve so that at least it would not give me any more pain. Fortunately, I didn't do anything. I thought that my dear God may help. Now the doctor is proved wrong. So how can I be proud of anything? When I wanted to move my hand, I couldn't move it; but on another day He says “Move it,” and I move it. Even this little flower should fill us with that glory. We cannot make a flower like this. And yet God asks for no thanks. Tagore says God does not expect from us any gratitude for the sun and the moon He created, but He certainly expects us to thank him for the flowers He sends every morning.

Dr. D: Again, this might sound somewhat foolish in the light of what you have just said. You see, it is rather difficult and puzzling to know how much is man's responsibility. In Christianity, for instance, people believe you have to have faith. One example would be yourself, in the sense that you are not worried about what is going to happen tomorrow or anything like that, because you have transcended that stage and you think that the present moment is all that counts and that things will be taken care of. How much do all of us – I am talking about myself, as a very ordinary man, wanting to live in this world – how much responsibility should I take for my life and how much do I leave to God, so to speak? One of the favorite things – this is the negative part of me talking now – is that whatever I do, strangely enough, never comes out right the first time. This is not an exaggeration. I find this again and again. I think it is due to something within me which causes this, perhaps a lack of faith. Do you think there is a conflict between individual responsibility and the failure to have this faith which can transcend all this?

Nitya: I would request Dr. T. to say something about this, because I know the depth of his faith.

Dr. T: If I try to follow the request of the Swami to say something about this, I can only say something about myself. I cannot give any advice of how other people could solve this

problem. It is a problem which I myself don't know whether I have solved. But I try to solve it. I feel the most important thing is to come to a relationship with what I would call the invisible world. If one doesn't have this relationship, one just has to open the ears and the eyes and avoid the situation spoken of in the New Testament: "They have ears and do not hear, they have eyes but do not see." The opportunity to hear and to see is given every day. It depends on the individual whether he or she opens the eyes and ears or not. If one considers that we are on this planet for a purpose and if we assume this planet is some sort of a training camp, then it is not so difficult to find a solution. One of the problems is that we have to get control of what has been called the emotional body. The emotional body is the most important thing in self-education. It is regrettable that at present the emotional body is glorified so much that its control is often overlooked. If one tries to control the emotional body, then it is not difficult to gain that detachment, because it comes by itself. But if one doesn't believe in a purpose, if one doesn't believe in the emotional body, then of course it is difficult. Then it is best to continue the suffering until one opens the eyes. Swami Nitya, I would like you to tell me whether you feel that this was of any contribution.

Nitya: Yes. There is a transformation that comes to the personal consciousness and the identity called "I" when you accept what can be recognized as a commission, where you are put in relation with another to attack a problem, or if you are put together to grow in a certain experience planned by the divine scheme, so to say. The identity with which you walk into the situation will not remain static when you open yourself up to the resources and possibilities there. There may be, as Dr. D. said, initial floundering and hesitation, but when you really give yourself to the situation, in a very wonderful way you will see opportunities opening up. It is as if an unseen hand were sending unforeseen aids to you. And, if you have ears, as Dr. T. says, you will hear, more than you thought possible. And if you have eyes, you will begin to see more and more. I call it the whisperings of the Divine. You start listening to the whisperings of the Divine and that gives you courage and strength. You are so humbled by that. A great humility will come and sit on you and you feel a sacredness of the mission that is given to you. You do not want to defile the mission by bringing in your ego, or calculations or manipulations. This instrumentality is felt more and more and the sacredness is felt within. The problem, no matter how tragic it looks at first, gets a halo of sacredness. You welcome it. You feel good at heart that you were given this situation to suffer with another person.... Your suffering, the feeling of suffering itself, lightens the burden of the other person. Finally, you emerge from that. It is not only one person's problem solved, it is a common problem of the world. One eddy formed on the ocean of consciousness is cleared. There comes a calm.

Dr. D: One problem of most neurotic people is surrender. They go round and round with the repetitiveness of their thought, unable to break it at any stage. I had another kind of remarkable experience recently with a patient. I tried all the techniques I know, but nothing happened, no response. I realized finally that he was trying to exert his individuality and trying very hard to do the whole thing himself. I struck upon the strategy of suggesting to him that he absolve himself of the responsibility and throw it on our department. A remarkable thing happened, because from that day on, he was able to make the surrender. I am not saying that it was to one of us, necessarily, that he surrendered; perhaps it was the Supreme. Whatever to, he made that surrender, and decided it was no longer his problem. And he is improving in a

remarkable sort of way. Now are you implying something like this on a greater scale when you speak of surrender? In other words, individual responsibility, striving and all that, we could give it up and at the same time surrender ourselves totally to the Supreme?

Nitya: You have somewhat misunderstood. This morning we put a record on the record player. It was playing something; then there was some damage in the record and it was playing again and again the same line. When it had repeated several times, Daya moved the needle and put it just on the next groove and it started functioning properly. Your patient, who is again and again doing these things, is doing so because of a defect. Moving the needle of the record player is like you helping a patient to move on a step. Not that you both decide to sit there and say, "Let God do things for us. We now surrender." You use your maximum intelligence to see how this can be pushed to the next groove. The application of your intelligence is itself a participation in the total situation. I'm not asking for an inert, passive way of allowing things to drift. You use your initiative, but initiative here is taken as part of your contribution to the total situation. It is a sacrifice.

Question: Could you say something about what is meant by coming to one's center?

Nitya: When, for example, you start taking kindness, or *karuna*, as a way of expressing your life, very soon you come to have hypersensitivity to cruelty. You start seeing cruelty everywhere. It becomes your major preoccupation. It becomes a challenge to see how you can live through this cruel world. When you continue to accept the challenges with honesty and open yourself up, irrespective of that still emanating this kindness and compassion, you see the opposite is coming to you. All the instances of compassion become more prominent and the cruelty recedes into the background. If you follow it to the end, your mind goes from your individual expression of compassion for another person to a greater compassion which is lived towards all. This takes you to what I call the very foundation of life.

If you take any path and do not stop by the side of it, after making a zigzag, you come to the center.

Question: Do you mean to say, by zigzag, that the pendulum has to swing to both extremes, first to the negative, then to the positive, before coming to the center?

Nitya: That's how it works.

Question: Yet I have been trying to find that middle path all my life. Very often I find myself on one side, thinking that I am on the middle path, and realizing that the people I'm with are all on one side or the other. Even though I'm trying to follow the yogic teaching to the best of my ability, I'm not on that middle path. In this society I am a crank. I'm on the outside. What is the middle path?

Nitya: If you understand by middle path compromising between two extreme viewpoints, you do not understand the middle path. Because then you become an outsider to two people.

If there is a middle path, it is what is central. Your center is not in someone else; it is in you. When you live in your center, you can say that's the middle path. But when you say you are "trying" to be on the middle path, that means you live externally; you live in your superficial mind, you live in the world of external challenges and responses, in the world of compromises and conciliations.

Rather, one has to seek and sink into one's own depth. One has to discover one's Self. When you live it, you find the center and you find the middle path.

Dr. D: You might think that I am professionally this or that, but many times I consider that I have failed because of this striving. In other words, one can say it is ambition to achieve – not in any illicit way or anything like that – but the more you strive towards a particular thing instead of surrendering yourself, you know that you have to work up to a certain limit; thereafter you have to surrender. To whom, or what, I don't know. Perhaps it is the power within you. Very often I find that I cannot do this, the surrendering part, you know, because I tend to think that one has to keep on striving again and again to achieve or do whatever it is, even Self-realization.

Nitya: suppose you take an example of some unfortunate man. We want to find out about his psychotic or neurotic function. You think this is an individual patient there. That is the first mistake you make. This fellow has to react to his environment. He has to make it resonate with his own beingness. But it doesn't stop there. Say there is another person involved. She has her own way of reacting to the external world and her own way of responding to herself. But we consider only this fellow on the couch giving so many dollars, and not her. If the psychologist is very fair minded and motivated by other interests as well, he will ask her to be on the couch also some day.

But these two people suffer because of some other fellow who is out there somewhere. The man's reaction to this other fellow is not the same as the lady's reaction to him. His reaction is all thorny and hers is very loving. There is a big conflict. So three people's nervous systems and minds are involved in one person being neurotic or psychotic, or whatever you call it. You cannot correctly decide until you discover how the whole society has a big nervous system, of which you know only the nervous system of one man. Social neurology has not been studied so far, unless someone has a new department somewhere that studies the central nervous system of the society.

Comment: Transactional psychology treats that.

Nitya: Transactional psychology studies it to some extent. But still you cannot bring the entire society into your reaction group. The outside factor is still not known. Suppose something happens on Wall Street. From events in the world of economics this fellow has a heart attack. This other man has no share in the market; but the woman is looking at the other man's share. From that, she has a heart attack. You presume it is because her husband was aggressive and cruel to her. But it was the government which went all shabby and brought bad relations in the economic world. As a result of the New York share market, a man outside was affected, and because of that a lady was affected, and now her husband, this poor man, has to pay the price. These complexities nobody takes into consideration. Even if you do, there is nothing you can do about it.

Question: What has that to do with the question of striving?

Nitya; When you know that this is how the system works, and if you don't want to be caught in the malady, if you don't want to be caught in the general confusion, pull yourself as much as possible out of the whole social matrix. They may say you have withdrawn. Please see that you are not taken to a psychologist. You cannot have both a surrender to God and also a psychologist, because he will only take this as a pathological symptom. Unless the psychologist is Dr. D.

