

SELF-KNOWLEDGE is the official publication of Shanti Sadan, the Centre of Adhyatma Yoga in the West.

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ADHYATMA YOGA

The highest spiritual wisdom experienced by the Seers of Truth in ancient times has been passed down to the present day through an unbroken line of traditional teachers. Its metaphysical side establishes, by reasoning, a strictly non-dualistic explanation of the universe; its practical side gives clear guidance as to how man should act and the means whereby the purpose of life may be fulfilled. The essentials of the teaching are:

1. That God alone is real, and all else is unreal (transient).
2. That the Self of man in essence is identical with God.
3. That the purpose of life is conscious realization of this identity and that it can be achieved while actively engaged in the duties of life.
4. That it gives unbroken peace, poise and bliss, and the ability to impart these to others.

Adhyatma Yoga was introduced into Britain in 1929 by the late Hari Prasad Shastri, at the wish of his Teacher, the spiritually enlightened Saint, Shri Dada of Aligarh. The centre is at Shanti Sadan, 29 Chepstow Villas, London W11 3DR, where the teachings are given in the traditional way.

EVENTS FOR THE AUTUMN TERM 2009

Weekday evening talks at Shanti Sadan

Lectures will be given every Wednesday and Friday evening at 8pm from Wednesday 7 October until Friday 4 December 2009. The Wednesday evening talks will be a series on meditation and each will include a practical meditation session.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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Experiments with Truth

What I want to achieve — what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years — is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.

from the Introduction to Gandhi's Autobiography

In these words, Mahatma Gandhi states the secret of his life's purpose. His mission is usually associated with political causes, such as the independence of India from colonial rule and the raising of the status of those branded as 'untouchables'. But he viewed his life as essentially engaged in 'experiments with truth', that is, the 'experiments in the spiritual field which are known only to myself, and from which I have derived such power as I possess for working in the political field'. Speaking of his experiments in the political world, he tells the reader: 'For me, they have not much value; and the title of *Mahatma* they have

won for me has, therefore, even less. Often the title has deeply pained me....’

Gandhi identifies self-realization with spiritual salvation, *Moksha*, the supreme goal of life — the goal that transcends both life and death. This is the goal revealed in the ancient scriptures of the East, the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and is supported by the practical path called *Adhyatma Yoga*. The goal is realizable through a life dedicated to it. Being the true nature of Self, it is in a certain sense already in our possession. What is required is not a new acquisition but an ending of the mind’s obsession with other aims. This love of multiplicity, of constantly wedding the mind to outer things, renders our inner state one of stressful motion, whereas the presence of our supreme Self is revealed in a well established condition of inner peace and stillness, made possible by minimizing our desires for the things of the world.

The path to Truth as Self is man’s greatest challenge. Gandhi confesses: ‘I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. Even if the sacrifice demanded be my very life, I hope I may be prepared to give it.’

Such sentiments set our lives in a wider perspective, one that is all too easily eclipsed by our forced submersion in the details and duties of our crowded days. Yet that divine Presence always attends us. It is our inmost Consciousness and Being, the Self that transcends both life and death. In experience, it is the subtle percipience that knows and reveals our thoughts, and is the irremovable ground on which they appear. Whether our spiritual aspiration is mild, middling or intense (to use the classification of Patanjali), what really matters is to keep a part of our attention in touch with this great goal, just as a church-goer may be reminded of the place of worship when, busy in his labours, he hears the distant church bell chiming the quarter-hours.

The aim of this journal is to help us promote and deepen this living link with our own innate divinity, and show us ways and means by which we may prepare our mind for the realization of the liberating Truth.

The Basis of Dharma

AHIMSA, or non-violence, which Gandhiji has popularized and tried to live in his illustrious life, is, strictly speaking, a negative virtue. Not to cause injury to anyone by thought, word or deed is *ahimsa*, non-violence. But according to the holy Rishis and Acharyas of the past and present, the real, positive and essential basis of dharma is *karuna* or *daya*, compassion. A common saying among the yogis is:

Daya is the basis of dharma.
The root of hell is egoity.
O Tulsi, do not give up compassion
As long as there is breath in your body.

There is yet another common saying, which is on the lips of everyone following religion:

A man endowed with psychic perfection
Is a butcher unless he has compassion (*daya*).

Karuna or *daya* is defined in the Shastras as follows: A spontaneous feeling to relieve the pain or distress of any living being without trying to probe into its cause and without any consideration whatever as to whether the person deserves it or not.

Now it will be seen that *ahimsa* or non-violence is only a half-truth. *Karuna* includes *ahimsa* and also something positive and more vital. When Abraham Lincoln saw a pig sinking in the mud and rushed to extricate it while on his way to a meeting of the Senate, he was giving expression to *karuna*. If he had simply followed non-violence, he could have ignored the matter and said to himself: ‘I am on an important business of state. The Senate is waiting to consider urgent matters. This is only a pig, and it is meant to be slaughtered today or tomorrow.’

The feeling of *karuna* is the highest virtue. Non-violence is rational. *Karuna* is spontaneous. A horse, a cow or a camel is non-violent. But man can be compassionate.

The teachings of the world-honoured Buddha can be summed up in wisdom and *maitreyi*, friendliness towards all beings. Paramahansa Mangalnath, in his great work, *Vira Vijaya*, refers to Shri Shankara as *param-karunaka*, highly compassionate. Intelligence, dialectical acumen and renunciation are great qualities, but *karuna* is the greatest.

Hatfield and other psychologists are great advocates of pity and find sanction for it in the maternal instinct, evident in the region of biology. It is *karuna*, and not the negative quality of *ahimsa*, which prompts the establishment of homes for the incurable, the aged and the insane. Reason says: Why support these non-productive, useless old folk in a hospital, when the same beds could be occupied by youthful sufferers who are active and useful members of the state? But *karuna* intervenes and overrules reason.

The Spartans practised the utilitarian doctrine and destroyed the aged and the sick. But how long did Sparta live on the stage of world history? We read poetry, love children and nature, in order to soften our hearts and render them capable of *karuna*. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle says that tragedy makes our hearts sensitive to virtue.

At the end of his life, Paramahansa Mangalnathji used to graze his cows in the fields of Rishikesh, to set an example of *karuna*. Jesus's concern for a lost sheep, which distinguishes his teachings, is a great object lesson in *karuna*. The basis of the Confucian teaching is Jen, which means fellow-feeling between man and man. Mencius, the most eloquent of the disciples of the Confucian school, called Jen the highest virtue.

Krishna, as a prince of Braj, is seen carrying in his arms a newly born calf, pressing the little one to his bosom to keep it warm, to illustrate *daya*.

One of the early Moslems one day presented the Prophet with a breed of newly born birds for his table. 'Where did you get these?' asked Mohammed. 'I saw them sitting on a bridge, and I spread a piece of cloth and caught them,' said the disciple. 'Take them to their mother. How miserable she will feel without them!' ordered the Prophet.

One of the strongest objections to the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin is that the word 'pity' does not exist in their vocabulary. Like Nietzsche, they call it weakness.

Emperor Nintoku stood on the roof of his palace in Japan and saw no smoke rising from the roofs of the houses of his subjects. 'How is it?' he asked. He was told that there was a scarcity of grain and nobody was cooking. 'Distribute my reserves of grain among the people,' commanded the monarch. The following day he saw smoke rising from the houses and he was glad, very glad. This fact is recorded in the ancient chronicle, the *Nihongi*.

The Asuras of Lanka under Ravana became lost to all human feelings and were a terror to the pious, the virtuous, the virgins and the peaceful. Shri Rama destroyed them as a last resort, but the soul of each of them was sent to the heaven of *shanti* as a matter of compassion for them by the Lord.

Shri Dada was compassion, *karuna*, incarnate. His young disciple, Teerath Mal, went to participate in a wrestling contest in a small town. When he returned, he reported to his Guru that he had heard of a number of old barren cows and bullocks let loose in the woods of their master, left to die of starvation and want of shelter. Rupa Singhji was sent to interview the chief of the village and the local priest. An enclosure was set up for the cattle and they were looked after by the community.

It must never be forgotten that one of the great purposes of a traditional spiritual community is to enable its members to live as yogis, that is, compassionate men and women (*dayavan*), pursuing the *summum bonum*, a direct intuitive perception of God in their being. It is neither a club, nor a debating society, nor a class in philosophy, but a real fraternity to practise dharma and pursue spiritual knowledge.

H.P.S.

*If the sleeves of my robe
Were only wider
I would shelter all the beings
In this up-and-down world.*

Ryokan

The Liberating Truth

Open the casket of your mind with the key of Yoga
and grasp the jewel within — the crest jewel, your own Self.

Crest Jewel of Wisdom, Commentary to verse 297

THE LIBERATING TRUTH is that the spirit of man, our true Self, is perfect, and is not different from the supreme spiritual force that underlies the universe. ‘My Self is the Self of all’ is the realization of the one who knows ultimate Truth. This is the essential fact of existence, and man is here to realize it directly. This divine wealth of peace, bliss and knowledge is our true nature.

We seem to be creatures of time, yet our roots are in eternity. We seem to be limited, and our bodies and minds certainly are limited. Yet our spirit is infinite. We seem to be individuals, whose personalities are known to ourselves and others. Yet within us all there is a divine centre that is one, universal, pure consciousness absolute.

For some, the world is a valley of tears; for others, a revelation of beauty. For some, it is a funfair; for others, a field of conquest. But whatever the nature of our life experience, no-one can deny that it is dream-like in its transience, in its passing nature. True are the lines of Kobo Daishi:

Beautiful are the blossoms, but alas they fade.
Who in this world can remain for ever?
Crossing this day the mountains of transient existence,
We see no more shallow dreams, nor are we deluded.

The objects of the world, and the stream of thoughts in the mind, are appearances. Even if we would like them to stay, even if we wanted to say to the passing moment: ‘Don’t fly away from me — this experience is so delightful’, we cannot delay or arrest the process of change and decay that characterizes life.

But there is an answer — a solution, a refuge, a safe haven for the heart. Underlying this network of appearances, holding all things together, allowing them to appear and making them seem so real, is what is truly real, the divine Ground of being and consciousness. This is the great Reality that supports everything and makes experience possible. In the lines of Swami Rama Tirtha:

See, in this scene of changing shows
There is a changeless One that glows.
In seeming death, decay and pain
It changes dress but comes again.
Love That, not dress; love Him, not things....
The forms are chased by one another
That we may see the One they cover.

Take a small child to a gallery of wax sculptures, a child who doesn’t know about wax. The child looks at the forms of all those people, those kings and queens, heroes and villains, famous figures, some attractive, some fearsome. At first the child may think: ‘All these people here — why don’t they move? Why are they still and silent?’ Then the mother points out: ‘My child, all these forms are essentially wax. What you see is wax. All the forms you see are moulded of wax, superimposed on wax. The underlying reality is wax only. Enjoy the forms, the colours, the workmanship — but know that the underlying reality is wax, nothing but wax.’

Yoga teaches: In whatever you see or experience, there is a deeper reality behind and within the form, which is One and only One in all. Everything is a phenomenal appearance of that reality. But know that this reality, unlike the wax, is not lifeless, nor is it material. It is spiritual and it is the source of all life. Its nature is pure being, consciousness absolute and bliss. The process of Yoga is to awaken our faculty of insight, of spiritual penetration, so that we may know ourselves to be one with that changeless divine reality that is apparently veiled by the changing forms of the universe. We first find that reality in ourselves, as our true I — that which abides unchanged behind the movements in our mind, and is the constant light of

awareness.

This Truth is universal. It is the true nature of all experience. Every human being has an innate urge for transcendence. None of us loves limitations; we want to be free. The supreme science is that which will help us to view our worldly life in the light of a spiritual understanding, and to know that whatever parts we have to play on this world stage, there is always a deeper reality in us that is ever free and is not affected, disturbed or influenced by the changes that take place in our life. There is a Tibetan saying:

The science which teaches arts and handicrafts
Is merely a science for the gaining of a living;
But the science which teaches deliverance from worldly existence,
Is that not the true science?

What is man if he is confined within his transient individuality? We remember the fable of Aesop. A fly alighted on one of the horns of a bull and sat there for a while. After a good rest, it said to the bull, 'Do you mind if I go away now?' The bull looked up without interest. 'It's all the same to me. I didn't notice when you came and I won't notice when you leave.'

The real security and significance — the complete security and infinite significance — lies not in our personality but in the deeper pure spiritual Self that underlies it. It is only by uncovering our divinity that we will find true peace, certainty and perfection.

Although close at hand, because it is the ground of everything, the divinity and unique glory of our innermost Self seems to be far away, something quite different to what we are as struggling human beings, and even an impossible fantasy — in other words, not the Truth. The Greek philosopher, Democritus, is supposed to have said: 'Truth lies hidden at the bottom of a deep well.' There is a Chinese legend that the dragon keeps the jewel of Truth under his chin, and guards it in a cave in the depths of the sea.

Such ideas make Truth seem remote and inaccessible. But the spiritual masters of all religions proclaim that Truth is not distant from us. This is why Jesus said: 'And ye shall know the Truth and the Truth

shall make you free.' Being our true Self, it is exceedingly close at hand. 'Nearer is He than breathing, closer than hands or feet.' The Bible, the Koran, as well as the scriptures of India, all speak of the intrinsic divinity of man. In his *Song of Meditation*, the Zen master Hakuin expresses the Truth directly.

All beings are from the very beginning Buddhas.
It is like water and ice:
Apart from water, no ice;
Outside living beings, no Buddhas....
Not knowing it is near, they seek it afar —
What a pity....
It is like one in the water who cries out for thirst.
It is like the child of a rich house who has strayed away
among the poor.

Then, is Truth known or unknown to us? The fact is: Truth is *more than known*. The sage, Shri Shankara, points this out when he asks:

How can Brahman [the Supreme Reality or God] be unknown to any?
It is the support of the I. Yet it is not realizable to the unenquiring, to those of uncontrolled nature, who are remaining far off from the teacher.

Truth is the nature of our own immediate consciousness, apparently concealed by the mind's activities and functions. It is that light of continuous inner awareness through which we know our thoughts, and which makes conscious experience possible. It is as near as that. 'Not knowing it is near, they seek it afar — what a pity.'

In the spiritual writings of many faiths, we find the metaphor of a hidden treasure that is very near, in some place we know quite well, although we do not know it deeply enough. In one of his parables, Jesus says:

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure lying buried in a field. The man who found it, buried it again; and for sheer joy, went and sold everything he had and bought that field. (*Matthew 13:44*)

What is this field that we know well, yet do not know deeply enough? It is nothing less than that familiar companion, our mind. This mind has the supreme divine Truth as its very source. 'Through the mind is the Truth to be realized', is the liberating message of the Upanishads. Through the inner world of our mind, beneath the stream of thoughts and feelings, we can learn to detect the unchanging, untainted Reality, our true Self.

The forms are chased by one another
That we may see the One they cover.

Once we are convinced intellectually of this divine principle within us, we have a choice. Returning to Jesus's parable of the treasure, we can put the treasure back, as it were, and leave the field to itself. That is, we can be moved by the impact of the spiritual teachings, but decide, for whatever reason, to set them aside for the time being. Or we may have a sense of anticipation, a feeling of aspiration for the highest wisdom, the peak of understanding. And we may recognize that here is a unique opportunity to take full charge of the field, to uncover and rejoice fully in the treasure, for this spiritual treasure will regain for us the conscious immortality that is our birthright. 'Buying the field' and making sacrifices to do so, signals our determination to leave no stone unturned in order to unearth, so to say, our spiritual nature, and be free for ever.

If we want this treasure of Truth, we need a programme, a scheme of work, that we can fit into our life on a daily basis. Spiritual life does not replace the normal life, but reveals a background of light, security and peace that underlies all our activities.

There are three simple steps that are within the reach of everyone, because Truth is the goal of all.

- 1 Widen our understanding
- 2 Cultivate inner tranquillity and equanimity
- 3 Keep going!

What does it mean — to widen our understanding? Know that our self is not confined to the little world of our individuality. Our true Self is

infinite and transcends personality. If we choose, we can take our stand on that serene freedom.

Man easily becomes self-centred in a small way. When this occurs, we convert our inner life into a kind of prison. Everything that happens to us is taken personally, and viewed as a door to a private advantage or else as an imagined put-down. The egotistical man not only thinks mainly about himself. He also believes everyone else is thinking about him.

You know the story of the frog told by the Taoist sage, Chwang Tzu. This little frog was convinced there was nothing more to the world than what he could survey in his well. Seeing the smaller creatures who shared his habitat — the crabs, insects and larvae — the frog feels immensely superior, convinced of his eminence. But one day a water turtle from the Eastern Sea happens to pass and the frog invites her in. Joining the frog, though far from comfortable in those cramped quarters, the turtle proceeds to tell the frog about the vast and boundless waters of the ocean and the matchless delight of swimming in it.

In the same way, the spiritual teachers are telling us: 'There is a greater life, a realm of the purest, most joyous experience, which is known to the enlightened.' In the words of Swami Rama Tirtha:

Joy eternal, unbroken peace, is yours, nay, you are that. Realize your centre and be there for ever and ever.

Sayings like this lift us above personal ambitions and resentments. They can help us to re-locate inwardly, from the shadowy lowlands of the mind, to the peace and freedom of the higher reaches of the intellect. This phase of our intellect is in touch with the supreme light, which ever emanates from the inner sun of suns, our own true Self.

For someone intent on enlightenment, the value of any interest comes from the associations it arouses in us, the effect it has on our mind. Let us read and hear that which awakens the highest associations in us, and not waste our precious energy on those forms of culture which glorify name and fame, pleasure and power, or adherence to a narrow sect or creed. All these things trap our understanding, keep us in bondage and cut us off from our spiritual roots.

Instead, let us seek out those things that remind us of our higher

nature and divine destiny. We do this through absorbing ourselves in the wisdom of those who themselves have direct experience of this dimension of life, and through whom the Truth flows like a pure stream, namely, the enlightened sages. This divine wisdom is also transmitted through their writings and poetry, and is the basis of the scriptures of mankind, while its influence may also be discerned in sublime art and in the contemplation of nature with a serene mind. In this way we broaden our understanding.

The second part of our programme is to train our mind in tranquillity. Swami Rama Tirtha advises us:

With a mind at peace and a heart going out in love to all, go into the quiet of your own interior Self.

Yoga means cultivating equanimity in daily life. In life, we are constantly exposed to what are called the pairs of opposites: praise and blame, pleasure and pain, gain and loss. Too often these influences determine our happiness and our misery, and make us a slave to circumstances. But we are destined to enter the higher life, and to transcend all bondage to these pairs of opposites.

This potential for transcendence, for living above the sway of moods and uncontrolled emotions, is present in all of us. There is a deeper part of our mind that can take things calmly, because it has a deeper understanding. Within us all there is the sage, the wise person, the mother superior, who knows that all outer stimuli are part of the passing, unreliable show.

Let us meet life's commitments wisely, in communion with our higher nature. How to commune with our higher nature? Most people sustain an awareness of the time of day, by habitually glancing at the clock or their wristwatch. For many, staying in touch with the time is necessary in our time-run society. But in experience there is also something that transcends time: the present moment, the eternal now, the witness consciousness, the divine presence. Just as people sustain this intermittent awareness of the time, the yogi learns to connect frequently with this spiritual dimension of his being.

How may we connect in this way? There are many ways. Pause, take a few deep breaths, pronouncing OM or some other holy name.

Another way: Bring to mind some statement of higher Truth, such as: 'Peace light and fearlessness are my nature.' Evoking spiritually dynamic thoughts during the day will quickly free us from the domination of events and help us view things in a wider perspective. There are always spare moments — while waiting for transport, queueing, holding on during a phone call, waiting for a kettle to boil — when the mind usually drifts into daydreams. These are actually precious times — magical moments of self-help — for at these times our consciousness can be focused on something spiritual. To consult this eternal dimension at times of need is to open ourselves to help from the highest source. These moments sustain our lifeline with the divine. This is how we can cultivate tranquillity and equanimity in daily life.

The third point is to keep going. Every great venture has obstacles that try to dissuade us from our course. All obstacles, all opposition, is meant to strengthen us. These apparent hindrances, which go against the current of our personal desires, draw up in us deeper resources which relate to our spiritual nature. To a person set on the spiritual goal, all the happenings of life are turned into aids to self-realization. They are promptings from the supreme power to awaken us out of illusion and wrong identification. These reminders are often granted to us when we stray from our spiritual purpose and forget that the divine treasure of peace and fulfilment is not to be found outside.

As spiritual beings, our joy or woe does not depend on the smiles or frowns of others. Our true Self is ever self-sufficient, ever at peace, ever fulfilled. Here are some lines by a seeker who had a clear sense of direction:

Out of the blue the insult came
Like a slap in the face.
Making my bows,
I retire to the Presence.
The Master has really been
Too kind today.

Therefore, hold on, keep going, whatever may crop up in our life. Through patience and perseverance, we will learn to see all situations in the light of a deeper spiritual understanding.

Beneath the stormy sea of the outer incidents and the mind's immediate instinctive reactions, there is great, immovable serenity, wondrous gems of wisdom on the sea bed of our inner being. We are meant to claim those treasures. They are already our own. The means we have to apply are to widen our understanding, develop inner tranquillity, and keep going, brushing aside with a smile all discouragements, for, as the Upanishad declares: *Satyam eva jayate* — Truth ever triumphs.

What is the value of creating inner tranquillity, harmony, even-mindedness? These aid the awakening of the spiritual element in our intellect. This is how to make our heart a mirror of the infinite, a mirror that reflects the light and peace of our spiritual and eternal centre, our true 'I'. What is needed in order to convert our theory and book knowledge into the certainty and fulfilment of spiritual experience? A sustained inner atmosphere of serenity and harmony.

The Sufi teacher, Jalaluddin Rumi, throws light on the inner challenge:

Do you know why the mirror of your heart reflects nothing?
Its surface is covered with rust.

The idea is, that if we remove the rust, we will see for ourselves what a heavenly faculty, what a divine power of insight, we are harbouring all the time in our innermost being.

Know that the mirror of the heart (made pure and clear) has no boundary....

This is the mirror of great price...the universal mirror.

What is the rust that hides the reflection of the divine in our intellect? Anything that goes against the spirit of inner tranquillity, harmony, goodwill and even-mindedness. Rust is not a natural quality of a mirror. It settles on the mirror through neglect, or through keeping it in the wrong sort of environment. The mirror of the heart is naturally a reflector of the light of God.

It is the same as regards the true nature of man. Man's mind is not meant to be the home of anxieties. His heart is not bound to suffer the pangs of unfulfilment. He is not meant to stay in the dark about the

meaning and purpose of life. On the contrary, there is spiritual greatness and the light of infinite wisdom enshrined in every human heart. 'I, the Lord, am seated in the heart of all beings', is the drumbeat of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the Upanishads, as in the Bible, this human body is regarded as a temple of God. In one of the metaphors used, the higher intellect of man is compared to a lotus in full flower, called the lotus of the heart. Concealed in the innermost part of that lotus is, as it were, a tiny space, the 'space within the heart'. It is this inner region that is to be investigated through our enquiry, our meditation and our sustained inner atmosphere of serenity and harmony.

What is to be discovered in this space within the lotus of the heart? In the words of the *Chandogya Upanishad*:

This space within the heart is as vast as this space outside. Within it, indeed, are included heaven and earth, as also fire and air, sun and moon, lightning and stars. Whatever we have here, and whatever we do not have, all that is included in that (space within the heart).

This is the supreme potentiality of human life.

Truth is not for the gifted few. It applies to each and every one of us. Any serious interest in this higher side of life will produce in us inner growth of spiritual understanding and come to our aid and support as we cross these mountains of transient existence. But complete spiritual fulfilment demands our one-pointed quest. It has to be an interest raised above all others. A life dedicated to it leads to the supreme goal — the liberating Truth. In the words of an English writer:

The man who seeks but one thing in life,
And but one,
May hope to achieve it before life is done.

This is all the more so with the spiritual quest, where the supreme Truth, being our real 'I', is ever-achieved, and this will become clear when the apparent obstacles to our inner vision are dissolved.

THIRSTING FOR THE WATER OF YOUR PEACE

Anything, the depth of which is easily fathomed, the nature of which is easily grasped, or the attributes of which are easily accountable, begins to weary us quickly. Our minds like novelty. If the springtide lasted twelve months, it would cease to charm us.

But You, O Lord, are Omniscient and Omnipresent, and ever unfathomable. Your beginning and end are unknown, even to Rishis and Siddhas.

Nature reveals only an infinitesimal part of your beauty. The stars proclaim your glory but imperfectly. Intellect cannot comprehend You. Ever new, ever fresh and ever fascinating are the aspects of You open to our senses.

O Hari! You alone can satisfy our whole personality. As a master-musician plays upon a violin, so may You play upon our personality.

To live is to contemplate You with the heart, the intellect and the intuition.

You are honey to the taste, beauty and fascination to the heart, wisdom to the mind and peace to the soul.

In One, in your blessed Name, O Lord, your devotees find their fullest satisfaction.

Your highest Name is 'I'. You are the 'I' — the Self of all. By merging the little separative self with the Absolute 'I', we will contemplate You, thus making the personality fruitful.

O Atman! The ego is thirsting for the water of your peace and it shall not find peace save in You.

Salutations to You, who are the source of the creation and dissolution of the world.

H.P.S.

Where is Real Freedom?

THE WORD 'FREEDOM' has an immediate appeal to the human mind. It resonates with something deep within us, giving us an intuitive feeling about what it means.

The yogic explanation of this resonance is that our real Self, which is hidden from the untrained mind, already exists in perfect peace, bliss and freedom. Despite all the difficulties, upsets and disturbances that life brings to us, our real Self is like a detached observer of all life's happenings, much like a member of an audience watching a play in the theatre. In our heart of hearts we already know that we possess perfect freedom. All that is required is for us to re-assert our identity with our innermost Self, rather than be identified with our ego-self, which has become entangled in the play of life that we are watching.

The traditional yogic teachings contain a full and detailed philosophy explaining how this state has arisen, and how our ego-centric self is no more than a pale reflection of our real Self. It also gives detailed instructions on how to re-establish our true identity with our innermost Self, using techniques for training the mind and through meditation. Once we recognize that in our real nature we are independent of this play, then we can appreciate the richness and beauty of it without becoming lost in it or allowing it to overwhelm us.

The idea that we all have hidden depths is not new, nor is it restricted to one culture. According to the Greek travel writer, Pausanius, the enigmatic phrase 'Know Thyself' was inscribed in the forecourt of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Down the ages this instruction has been an inspiration both to those of a spiritual nature as a hint of the hidden potential within each and every one of us, and to the more worldly minded, as a hint to know their limitations in order not to overreach themselves. To both, it is a recommendation to identify their weaknesses in order that they may improve on them. Either way we are encouraged to look within ourselves in order to map out where our true nature really lies, and this is the aim of Adhyatma Yoga. It explains the reasons why it is important to understand ourselves and it offers us the tools and methods which allow us to

achieve this understanding. Through the application of the yogic techniques, we also discover the source of real peace and real freedom within our own being.

We might feel certain that if we know anything at all in life, it is who and what we really are, and that we could not possibly have missed something so important about our real nature. But consider what happens when we go to meetings where you have to introduce yourself to the other people there. We describe our self within the context of the meeting, so for a work-related meeting, we would describe what work we do. For a meeting at a sports centre, we would give a description of our self in terms of our sporting activities, and again at a parent-teacher meeting, we would describe our self in terms of our children, and so on.

So which of these descriptions is the real one? Is it a combination of all of them? Surely they all describe our interests and activities in the outer world, not who we really are in our innermost being. There is no doubt in our mind, though, that each description has a common element embedded in it, that all the descriptions relate back to you — that part which you identify as the real ‘I’ within. This shows that we already have an intuitive feeling about who and what we really are. It shows that we have partially discriminated the differences between our real Self and our ego-self, which is a pale reflection of it.

We also reveal that, at a subconscious level, we suspect that we are not the body or the mind, from the way we speak about them. We refer to them as objects which we own in the same way that we own any other objects like our watch, our overcoat or our umbrella. Swami Rama Tirtha, a great yogi of the last century, graphically illustrated this point in one of his lectures. He tells how a God-realized man was once approached by a young prince who asked if the sage could teach him how to know God, so that he too would have God-vision. The sage said to him: ‘A person visiting your father’s court, wanting to see the king, would have to introduce himself, send in his card, before being granted an audience by the king, so tell me who you are in truth and I will straight away introduce you to God.’

The young man took out a slip of paper and wrote his name on it, and for good measure added the address of his father’s court. He then handed it to the sage who read it and then passed it back saying, ‘You

have told me a name and a title, not what you are in truth. How can God receive you? Tell us correctly what you are and God will receive you with open arms.’

The young prince thought about it for a while, then suddenly said, ‘I see what you mean now, sir. In writing my name I gave you the address of my body, but have not described what I am.’

The prince’s attendant, who was standing nearby, looked puzzled by this response from the prince, so the prince was asked to give him an explanation. The prince took a stick from the attendant’s hand and asked, ‘To whom does this stick belong?’ ‘To me,’ replied the attendant. Next the prince touched the man’s turban and said, ‘To whom does this turban belong?’ ‘To me.’ ‘Well’, said the prince, ‘it is quite clear that these items belonging to you have a relationship with you. There are the items, on the one hand, and you on the other. You are the owner of these items. They are not part of you. Is it not so?’ The attendant nodded his agreement.

Now the prince touched the attendant’s ears and asked: ‘To whom do these ears belong?’ The attendant again replied: ‘To me.’ So the prince said, ‘Isn’t it the same for your nose, eyes, arms, legs and body? Don’t they all belong to you? Isn’t there a relationship between you and your body? You are the master — the body is like your garment and you are the owner.’

The attendant now understood the reasoning and agreed with the prince that by putting his name on the card, he had only given the address of his body, as it were, without really saying what he was in reality. The sage said to the prince, ‘You are not the eyes, ears, nose, body. What are you, then?’ After thinking it over for a while, he eventually replied, ‘Well, if I am not the body, then I must be the mind. Yes, that’s it, I must be the mind!’

Rather than answering him, the sage said, ‘Tell me how many bones you have in your body. And where is the food that you ate this morning for your breakfast?’ The prince looked startled and said, ‘I can’t answer these questions, sir. I haven’t studied physiology or anatomy, so I can’t call the facts up in my mind. Nor are they things that I can deduce through my brain or intellect, so I don’t know the answer.’

The sage smiled at him and said, ‘Dear prince, you say that you

don't have the facts in your mind; that you cannot deduce them with your brain or your intellect. By making these statements, you admit or confess that the mind is yours, the brain is yours, the intellect is yours. If the mind is yours, you are not the mind. If the brain is yours, you are not the brain. If the intellect is yours, you are not the intellect. These very words of yours show that you are the master of the mind, the owner of the brain, the ruler of the intellect. If you are not the mind, the brain or intellect — think. Think more carefully, and let us know correctly what you are.'

The boy began to think and think, but could go no further with the analysis. Finally he said, 'I cannot reach any further into the problem with my mind or intellect, sir.'

The sage said, 'How true are these young man's words. Indeed, the mind, the intellect, cannot reach any further into the Essence within; it is beyond the reach of words or mind.'

In Adhyatma Yoga, we are encouraged, like this young prince, to use reasoning in order to analyze all that we are taught, but we ultimately learn that reasoning will only take us so far, giving us only an intellectual understanding of our real nature. There is a step beyond this where our identity with the real Self is revealed to us through direct experience, but this only happens when the higher faculties of the mind have been developed through the yogic practices.

You might wonder what it is about our real Self that makes it so important that we need to make all this effort. As the sage promised the young prince, when we know our self in truth, who and what we really are, then we can be introduced to God, that is, we will understand our relationship with God and the rest of His creation. The yogic view is that the real Self of each and every one of us is identical with God. In *Wisdom from the East*, Hari Prasad Shastri expresses it like this:

The sages of all time have affirmed that the spirit of man is perfect, and is God the supreme. They do not say the spirit shall one day become God, or is part of God, for the doctrine that God is the supreme ego above all other egos is wrong, as is the doctrine which declares the spirit is a spark of the divine fire in the sense that it is something less than that fire. The truth is that the human spirit is God, wholly God,

nothing but God, and it is the rediscovery of this fact by the mind (and not by the spirit) which is called God-realization. There is nothing wrong with the spirit and never has been, for it is flawless by nature. The old idea that God has fallen into illusion is a fallacy. The holy Shruti (teachings) plainly say, Thou art indestructible, immutable, immortal, and supreme God. At this moment thou art That.

Here then we have a clear statement of the philosophical view of the nature of our deepest Self as given by the teachers of this Yoga. This is a consequence of what is called a non-dualistic view of creation, which states that God alone exists and all else is an illusion or a superimposition on God.

The justification for such an unusual claim can be reasoned out on logical grounds as follows. If God created the universe, then where did the material from which it was fashioned originate if not from Him? Was it there already, or did it come from some other source? In either of these two cases, God cannot be God if the material of the universe came from some other source.

The yogic literature says that God projected the universe out of Himself, for His own amusement, as it were, in a similar way that we project a whole world out of ourselves when we dream at night. Our dream world appears real and to have a history which stretches back in time well past the time we started dreaming. That is to say, it has objects in it like trees or houses, which would seem to have a history attached to them, even though we may have only just started dreaming.

In a similar way, the universe projected from God is not what it appears to be, for it is non-other than God. While we look outwards at the spectacle of it all, we will only see the appearance and not the underlying reality. However, when we can withdraw our senses from the external world and search out the core of our being, then we can contact God within. Ultimately, through constant practice, we will have a direct experience of this fact such that we are never again fooled by the appearance of the outer world, for we know its essence within our own being.

This is quite a radical concept and in the true spirit of this Yoga, it is vital that we subject it to the deepest logical analysis before

accepting it. The hidden implication in this idea is that the universe we see around us is created out of Consciousness itself, rather than Consciousness appearing as a property of matter in the form of living beings. If we use the dream analogy, it is clear that the world we dream of at night has no existence outside our own consciousness. So it is with the world and universe we see around us: it has no existence outside the Consciousness which created it. Again, it is incumbent on us as yogis to ask: 'Does the yogic idea of creation stand the test of logic or is it just something fanciful put forward by a group of idealists?'

Modern science is converging on the same conclusion, whether it is the conclusion of physicists or of psychologists. Science has already shown that the materials from which our universe is made, including those which make up our body and brain, all come from the same fundamental particles. This conclusion was reached some time ago in the last century when atom-smashing experiments were first designed to help scientists discover the fundamental particles which make up matter. Their expectation then was that they were close to discovering the one particle from which everything in the universe was constructed, and that an explanation of everything would soon be possible. Rather than simplifying our understanding of the structure of matter, physics has shown that the material side of creation is like a series of Russian dolls, with one doll inside the other. By smashing atoms into their component parts, we have discovered that the picture is much more complicated than at first thought, with each new set of experiments revealing lower and lower layers of 'fundamental' particles from which the previous layer was constructed.

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC), which has recently been completed by CERN underneath the French/Swiss border, has been built to take research to the next level of detail. By using the greater power of the LHC, scientists hope to discover more about the components inside the atoms from which the matter in our universe is composed. In fact, the LHC has been built in an attempt to complete the picture (that is, the mathematical model) that scientists currently have about the structure of atoms, and it is theorized that the collider will produce the elusive Higgs boson, the last unobserved particle among those predicted by the Standard Model.

Despite all the experiments conducted like this, none seems to question the nature of consciousness, which is tacitly assumed to arise if all the fundamental particles are put together in the right order. That is to say, it is an unquestioned assumption that consciousness is a property of matter and not the other way round, as Yoga predicts. Ask a scientist about the structure of the so-called particles they are trying to find and they will admit that they are really wave-particles rather than solid objects. At their core these particles are no more than packets of energy which form into the material of the universe when held in place by invisible forces, like gravity, electrostatic forces, strong and weak nuclear forces, and so on. At this level of detail, our solid universe dissolves into a complex mixture of intangible packets of energy, tied together by invisible forces. Surely this resembles the dream world which is described in the yogic literature.

Perhaps physicists are not the right people to examine the nature of consciousness; perhaps this is the realm of the psychologist. But this discipline seems to target how our thinking is influenced by external phenomena, and determining which part of our brain is responsible for processing the stimuli that different types of phenomena send to our brain via our senses. Their approach is geared to the analogy that our brain is similar to a computer, rather than examining and explaining that which gives us independence of thought. Modern psychology does admit, though, that we can never know what the outer world is truly like, for we create a map of it in our mind which, like any other map, is only a representation of the outer world. Therefore by their own admission, the true nature of the outer world is unknown to us, and can never be recognized for what it truly is via our senses.

It seems that real freedom cannot be found in this direction then, so where does this leave us in the search for real freedom? We have to return to the phrase, 'Know Thyself' and look inwards to the source of consciousness within our own being. In the book, *Yoga for the Modern World*, our late Warden, Dr A.M. Halliday, makes the following point about this Yoga:

What is unique and important about the claim of the real Yoga in this day and age is that it is 'experimental religion' in the strict and proper

sense of that term. In other words it offers not a static faith or even a way of life, but a technique of experimental verification of truths which it teaches, which can be tested by the individual himself in the laboratory of his own personality.

Our own mind is the key to this ‘experimental religion’, but if it is left to its own ends, it will never develop the power to focus on the goal of self-discovery, and will continue to chase the things of the world. Initially, then, we are asked to carry out some very simple exercises which will train the mind to be obedient to our will, by setting it some pre-defined task each day and then making sure that we carry out the task without fail. The task doesn’t have to be something major, but it is surprising how resistant our mind will be, no matter how easy or short the task.

For instance, we could set ourselves the task of reading a short section of a book on the yogic philosophy, like the *Bhagavad Gita*, or the task of reading a scripture from our own chosen religion. To be a training exercise, the task has to be specific, like fixing the time when we will do it, where we will do it, and for how long. We could choose to spend ten minutes on it first thing in the morning at home or on the way to work, if we travel by public transport, or in the park over our sandwiches at lunch time. Occasionally there will be unavoidable circumstances that prevent us from carrying out the practice, but we may also notice that it is our own mind that is creating diversions to distract us. Delaying the start; cutting the period down; extending the period when we are enjoying it; all designed to undermine the resolve we made at the start. The training really starts at this stage and we have to keep the mind in firm but gentle check when it starts to revolt, and stick to the simple discipline we set ourselves to do. Eventually, the mind will acquiesce to our will, and become a useful and obedient ally when we need to make it still, prior to our meditation practice.

We have to maintain this simple discipline also when we come to meditate each day, by again choosing a definite time when we will do the practices, how long we will spend on them, and then sticking to those times whether things go well or badly. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it says:

Let a man raise himself by himself, let him not lower himself; for he alone is the friend of himself, he alone is the enemy of himself.

To him who has conquered himself by himself, his own self is the friend of himself, but to him who has not (conquered) himself, his own self stands in the place of an enemy like the (external) foe.

Through these simple mind-training techniques we start to raise ourselves as advised in the *Gita*. Our lives will improve and our meditation sessions will become interludes of great peace and beauty. Whereas if we once let the mind escape from the simple disciplines we set it, it will become unruly and interrupt our tranquillity through its wilfulness, much like an external foe.

Here then we have the beginnings of the techniques used in this Yoga. They consist of training the mind as a prerequisite to meditation, and this is achieved by study of the teachings and then a deep logical analysis of what we have studied. This practice is called *vichara* in Sanskrit and it is used to demonstrate to ourselves that what we are learning does not fly in the face of logic. We are also required to check the yogic information against what is happening in other disciplines, like the sciences, to ensure that we are being objective about the ideas of Yoga and not merely clinging to them irrationally.

Then we need to bring our mind under our own control, at least to some extent, before we will have the necessary control to meditate successfully. Some practices to help us are given in the book *Training the Mind through Yoga* by Marjorie Waterhouse.

Ultimately we need to search out the nature of our true innermost Self through these practices and through meditation. Is this really a worthwhile aim for us to put so much effort into? In life we find that there are certain undertakings to avoid and others that are really worthwhile. Those in the first category start off by being easy to do, but end up being very difficult to continue with and cause us much pain. The best things in life, they tell us, start off being difficult but end up getting easier and easier, and also give us great pleasure, peace, joy and a sense of real freedom. The investigation into the deeper Self falls into this last category. As Shri Krishna explains in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

When the Self becomes an object of perception to the higher part of the subdued mind, then follows matchless bliss, perceived through the purified intellect. This bliss is unique and transcends the senses, and once experienced, abides forever. No acquisition is considered superior to it, and the greatest blows of sorrow cannot move the yogi from it. It is only in this state that sufferings cease forever.

May all come to know this Truth.

S.B.

I AM A PUPPY

I loved a little darling of two. His hair was golden and curly, his complexion like ivory. He talked incoherently but very sweetly. He was mischievous at times and at times truly affectionate.

One afternoon I took some cream buns and went to the little garden connected with his home, where he played with earth and sand, sometimes alone, sometimes with two neighbouring girls of the same age. I looked for him, but in vain. I missed the naughty boy dressed in a golden coat.

I nearly gave up the search and was about to leave, when I heard a few artificial barks issuing from a thick bush in the garden. I said: 'I have found you, little rogue. Come, here is something for you.' He said: 'I am not here. I am a puppy.' More barks came and the puppy peeped through the bush. I went near and he said: 'Do you not see? I am not here. Here is a puppy.'

The little puppy, as my darling believed himself to be, came out. It frisked around my legs, giving dear, short barks.

* * *

We are all playing puppies, believing ourselves to be enjoying and acting as individual units of consciousness. We are squeezing ourselves

into the bush of the mind and playing puppies, giving out little barks: 'I am a man. I am a woman. I am learned. I am rather ignorant. I am a wife. I am a citizen.'

In fact each of us is nothing but God, free from any limitations or conditions. We are bliss and freedom, above experience, beyond the reach of birth and death — each of us is nothing but God.

The Guru loves his children. He asks the little ones to come out of the bush of the mind and cease to imagine themselves as jivas (separate individuals), the puppies. He says: 'Dear ones, you are Shiva, all Good. You are the object of the love of Plato, Petrarch, Romeo, and also the lover. You are eternal and immortal. Play the eternal darling of simplicity, truth, infinite love and light. You are not the puppy of the body or mental consciousness, of pretence and pursuit of your shadow as pleasure and power. You are the one Lord and there is no other entity beside you.'

* * *

The little darling took hold of my finger and walked, shouting: 'I am Shiva. I am the highest good.' He forgot himself. His golden hair waved in the breeze and the sun shone on his face. It was transformed into light. I lifted him in my arms gently and kissed him. He was still murmuring: 'I am Shiva.' In a moment he fell asleep in my arms. I gently laid him on a chair and saluted him, saying: 'My salutations unto Thee, O Shiva, O Divine Sportsman! O ray of the Universal Sun! O Essence of beauty and charm! O Krishna! Jai to Thee!'

Hari Prasad Shastri

Vairagya, or Non-Attachment

*A talk by Marjorie Waterhouse**

WHEN ONE enters this Yoga, one is told that a yogi is above the pairs of opposites and that he should look on wealth and poverty, matter and spirit, with an equal eye, that he is at home everywhere and should reject nothing, and that he is universal. Very soon one begins to hear mention of *vairagya*, of distaste for the objects of the senses, of renunciation, of the sorrow-breeding nature of phenomena. It is not surprising that the pupil should ask himself how the one teaching can be reconciled with the other. I suppose that the answer is obvious, but it certainly wasn't to me. In case you haven't guessed it either, the freedom one hears about at first is the state of the adept, to which you are aspiring, while the rejection and dissatisfaction which is to be encouraged, is the training which is to train you for that freedom. This explanation is not quite so simple as it looks, as you will realize later on, but I give it because the whole question of *vairagya* puzzled me very much at the start, and I even went to Dr Shastri and pointed out the discrepancy.

There is an intimate connection between immobility and bliss. Shri Gaudapadacharya's words are:

All objects are in origin as limitless as space,
And multiplicity has no part in them in any sense.
All are by nature deeply still, full of serenity,
Mutually alike and indivisible, a pure eternal identity.†

The yogic training and discipline has as its goal a return to this state of consciousness.

*Marjorie Waterhouse was Warden of Shanti Sadan from 1956 to 1963. This talk was given to a small group of fellow disciples in 1947. The reader's attention is drawn to her public lecture of the same title, published in *Training the Mind through Yoga*, which gives further insight into the meaning and practice of *Vairagya*.

† Gaudapada's *Karikas* to the *Mandukya Upanishad*, 4:91 and 93.

Fear, restlessness and suffering have their roots in the conception of multiplicity and separateness. The growing awareness in the mind that, in fact, unity and oneness exist where it has been accustomed to see variety, while it produces a feeling of disillusionment on the one hand, is accompanied by a growing, if hidden, sense of satisfaction and security on the other.

The pronouncement of Gaudapadacharya may seem difficult and perhaps cryptic, but unless it is deeply pondered over and, at least, conditionally accepted, *vairagya* simply doesn't make sense. You and I cannot know for certain, at this stage, that the ultimate essence of unity is bliss and the essence of diversity is pain; but unless we are willing to take the risk that this is so, on the word of the Teacher, there would seem to be no necessity for withdrawal from sense objects and *sansara* (the world) generally.

It is just weariness of the flesh to restrict your mind, your critical faculty, your tongue, your ears and your eyes unless you do so with a very definite purpose in view. In fact, nothing which is done for the sake of conformity, and without intention, avails very much. The path is not a moving staircase. It is a clearing for you to walk on, and you do not make a step without conscious effort and purpose. The Teacher is not with us to teach us the beauty of holiness and the ugliness of sin. He is here to convince us that *sansara* is unreliable *in toto*, and that the time has come for us to transcend it; that all phenomenal activity is subject to the three *gunas**, and therefore can never be stabilized. 'Arise and go' is his cry, not 'Stay and build'.

These remarks are just by the way. They may be helpful to the understanding of the explanation which follows.

* *Guna* Wave-like principle or mode which pervades the whole of creation and veils the nature of spiritual Reality as waveless bliss and non-dual consciousness. There are three *gunas*: *Tamas* produces the most complete veiling. It is the obscuring factor, manifesting as the inertness in matter, and error, laziness and absence of discrimination in the mind. *Rajas* produces a less complete veiling. It is the principle of activity, manifesting as life in all things, and activity, desire, selfishness and greed in the mind. *Sattva* produces the most tenuous veil. It is the principle of transparency, clarity and reflection. (Cont.)

Vairagya is the term used for the progressive states of the mind-force while in the process of dissolving into another and higher force. The energy which we call ‘mind’ can only be properly classified as ‘mind’ while it is in the state of flux, while it is selecting and rejecting, expanding and contracting; just as the world, *sansara*, is the visible play of the *gunas*, good, bad and indifferent, so to say. A state where there was complete stability might be heaven or it might be hell, but it would not be the world. Therefore, when it says in the Upanishad, ‘There the mind becomes no mind’, it does not mean that the mind loses the power of recognizing and identifying objects, but that the mind reaches a stage when it sees that the basic origin of every object is one and the same, and, being thus robbed of its characteristic power of selection and activity, ceases to be able to be properly called a ‘mind’.

Having made these points, we can now consider the question of *vairagya* under the headings:

What is *vairagya*?

Is it always accompanied by a distaste for the world?

Is it a necessary preliminary to release?

Does it last when once obtained?

Vairagya is usually translated as ‘non-attachment’ or ‘dispassion’, but some of the examples of *vairagya* given in the classics go to show that in its lower stages, it can hardly be called ‘dispassion’, for it may manifest as an active dislike for phenomena in every shape and form. The fact is, there are different species of *vairagya* and they may be conveniently classified under their prevailing *gunas* as the *tamasic* — the misapplied; the *rajasic* — the striving, or *vairagya* with effort; and the *sattvic* — the enlightened or effortless *vairagya*.

Gunas (continued) *Sattva* manifests as the inner organ or personality in man and produces in it the qualities of balance, virtue and understanding. In this metaphysical analysis of experience, all three *gunas* are present to varying degrees in all the phases of the physical and mental worlds, but a particular *guna* usually predominates. Spiritual practice aims to establish the ascendancy of *sattva* as a preparation for recognizing the Truth that transcends the *gunas*.

The *tamasic vairagya*, that is, the *vairagya* which is born of ignorance and wrong thinking, manifests itself as active dislike and disgust of the world and phenomena. It is born of disharmony, and is usually set up by some happening. It is an induced state where, for example, a man becomes a misogynist through being rejected by one woman. A good example is that of the man who told Swami Mangalathji that he had conceived a violent aversion for the pleasures of the world and for taking life for food. Swami Mangalathji’s comment was: ‘And when did you lose your teeth?’ This species of *vairagya* is intense while it lasts, but it passes. It is the lowest of the three categories and is often the outward sign of some form of unnatural inward restraint and may, at any moment, break down and turn into its opposite, which is licence. It is built on the tacit recognition of the power of the thing it is denying, which, as you will see, is not the case with the other two categories.

The lowest category of *vairagya*, therefore, is the *tamasic vairagya* and it is a temporary condition, produced by some happening such as a reverse of fortune, or — most important of all — a mistaken interpretation of the teachings. ‘A touch of pain, breeding dislike of that which gave the touch, is lost in the next succeeding touch of pleasure’, is how the Sage Vasishtha describes it.

The next category is the *rajasic*. This manifests as satiety, not dislike — a subtle difference, but an important one. It accompanies the dawning of knowledge, being born of a growing surmise that what has hitherto been regarded as variety, and therefore worthy of attention and capable of producing feelings of dislike or love, interest or fear, is, in fact, a manifestation of one and the same substance appearing under different guises. It is called by Swami Vidyananda the ‘sharp *vairagya*’ and he says it comes as the result of a resolve on the part of the intellect not to be involved any longer with happenings. Whereas the *tamasic vairagya* springs from the emotions, this springs from the intellect.

The *rajasic vairagya* is usually brought about by *vichara* or inquiry into the teachings. *Vichara* leads to indirect knowledge, that is, knowledge which you have theoretically and mentally accepted but which you have not, so far, verified in your own experience. This is the *vairagya* which was experienced by Prince Rama and which is

described in the first book of the *Yoga Vasishtha*. It leads, in due course, to the third category, the *sattvic vairagya*, born of awakened intuitive knowledge of the Essence or Reality underlying every object. Here there is a complete and automatic indifference to the world and all phenomena. Every object, conceptual and perceptual, appears like straw — not important in itself, only apparent by virtue of its substratum, and therefore incapable in itself of awakening any emotion, and unworthy of special attention. It is the preliminary to the dawning of the superior or direct knowledge, that is to say, it heralds in the supreme experience.

The *sattvic vairagya* is called by Swami Vidyananda the ‘sharper *vairagya*’. Shri Shankara says of this condition: ‘Here the *jiva* (the individual) gives up his waywardness, his attention being wholly given up to Self. As a result there springs up the youthful life, which although encased in the body and the senses, is unaffected by boyhood, old age and other bodily attributes, and is extremely blissful.’

As against the first two, one of which is artificial and the other induced, this is direct. The other two spring from the emotions and reason respectively; the *sattvic vairagya* arises from the higher intuitive faculty. One category is accompanied by emotional dislike; the second by satiety brought about by reasoning; the third is characterized by indifference — disregard — brought about by the recognition of something infinitely superior, which fills the whole picture.

You might say that the *tamasic vairagya* is the *vairagya* of a man who is focusing on the foreground and nothing else, and who does not like what he sees. In the *rajasic vairagya* he looks at the foreground and the background, and chooses the background, to the detriment of the foreground. In the *sattvic vairagya*, the foreground is completely out of focus, while the background fills the whole picture.

I think the first two questions have now been answered. They were: ‘What is *vairagya*?’ and ‘Is it always accompanied by a distaste for the world?’ The remaining two questions are: ‘Is it a necessary preliminary to release?’ and ‘Does it last when once obtained?’

So long as *vairagya* is not confused with abandonment of the world, it is not only necessary, but a natural result of spiritual growth and is the precursor to spiritual maturity. In *Yoga Vasishtha*, the sage Vasishtha says to Prince Rama, whose *vairagya* is increasing and who

is manifesting a desire to have done with the world and its burdens: ‘O Rama, first reason with me and then, if necessary, leave the world. I ask you, is the world separate from God? If so, you are at liberty to leave it.’

Vairagya is necessary, because, as Saadi says: ‘You cannot ride in two boats at the same time, each sailing in a different direction, and yet enjoy the bliss of true knowledge. If you care for the supreme bliss of divine knowledge, you have to give up the pleasures of the flesh.’

To give reality to something means that you identify yourself with that thing. If you give reality to multiplicity, your condition will be like that of a chameleon on a tartan, most distressful and bewildered. But if you are graced with patience and continuity of purpose, you will be led through the teaching and the compassion of the Guru, perhaps even forced, to fix your gaze on the underlying reality, and the stage will be cleared for the final act.

Shri Shankaracharya says: ‘Fire does not touch wet fuel but only fuel which has been dried by the sun. So too, this fire of knowledge does not touch the mind which is wet with attachment, although it may have acquired merit by the performance of prescribed duties; only that mind which has been dried up by *vairagya*.’ So the answer to the third question is ‘Yes, *vairagya* is a necessary preliminary to realization.’

The remaining question: ‘Does *vairagya* last when once it is achieved?’ is an interesting one. As we have said, in the *sattvic vairagya*, the attention is increasingly fixed on reality itself. After realization, one substance, *Chit*, Consciousness Absolute, Reality, God — call it what you will — is perceived everywhere, in the foreground, in the background, to the left, to the right, above, below and in the middle, and this entails equal vision.

There is a Zen parable which says that to those who know nothing of Zen, mountains are just mountains, trees just trees, men just men. After a man has studied Zen for some time, mountains are no longer mountains, trees are no longer trees, and men no longer men. For while the ignorant believe in the reality of objective things, the partially enlightened see that they are only appearances, that they have no abiding reality and pass away like drifting clouds. But, to him who has true understanding of Zen, mountains are again mountains, trees are

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again trees, and men are again men. The *Ashtavakra Gita* says: 'The cessation from action is as much an outcome of ignorance as the performance thereof; knowing this full well, abide in the Self.'

In the set of ten 'Ox-herding pictures' (pictures from the Zen tradition that signify the stages of mastering and transcending the mind), you will remember that the last picture is of a rotund smiling person, returning, carrying bags full of good things. The inscription on the picture says: 'No-one knows his inner life. He goes into the market-place and consorts with wine-bibbers and butchers, and he and they all become Buddhas.'

This would seem to infer that the outcome of the *sattvic vairagya* is the recognition of reality, which confers the lasting mood of universal acceptance and equal vision on the man. When this occurs, *vairagya*, *per se*, disappears, for its work is done.

You may say, 'Well, this may be a description of *vairagya*, but how do we produce it within ourselves?' As the illumined teachers have said: 'Bend all your powers to achieve an uninterrupted remembrance of God in whatever conception suits you best, and subordinate everything to this. This is the way to get out of servitude, to get out of Yoga and emerge into Eternal Freedom. Think of Him more often than you breathe. Once this *vritti* (thought or idea) begins to support itself on itself, the mind will become stabilized, tranquil and detached. Recognizing the presence of the object of its contemplation in all it looks upon, it will see all things as alike and equally good. This, and no other, is the goal of Yoga. OM!

M.V.W.

Haiku

*It is a sweet spring night.
Who sits up all night beside me?*

Bakusai

*Bright autumn moon!
I leant against the verandah post,
Shifting my seat around it.*

Shofu-Ni

ONE OF the uses of science is to teach man how to put certain articles together to produce an expected result. This principle will be widely and easily recognized if we study our radio, electric lamp or pen. Nature has almost infinite potentialities, and when man is able to exploit them, he can obtain wonderful results. A few miles from the borders of Kashmir there is a huge waterfall. When the writer saw it, he thought that its potential power, if organized, could supply the whole of Kashmir with electricity at the cheapest rate.

Yoga is the method of combining the functions of the mind with a view to create a super-function (*vritti*) producing peace and freedom. The mind in its natural state serves the instincts, but when the refined part of it is brought into the service of the cognitive and introspective processes, the results are psychologically wonderful.

Our desires are like a huge and wide waterfall, the force of which must be harnessed and utilized to serve a higher end of life, the knowledge and service of Truth. The instruments which help in the organization of the desires from a state of wildness into a regular process are called *vairagya*, indifference to the objects of desire in the external life, and *viveka*, or spiritual discrimination.

How can we do so? Aristotle says that intellect is a divine part of human personality. Intellect in an organized form is called reason. In the ordinary individual, it remains mixed up with instincts. By silencing the mind through meditative relaxation, the intellect can be freed from the tyranny of instincts.

It is a psychological law that any thought that is not contradicted by reason, held in the mind repeatedly at a given time, creates a fresh atmosphere in which the light of discrimination can be brought into play. The yogis utilize other psychological laws also. A very prominent one is the law of association and transference.

Association is of two kinds: physical and mental. Objects brought together always interact. If our physical associations are of a peace-giving and love-producing nature, then success in Yoga is half achieved. The internal association is the friendship of ideas, pursuit of spiritual wisdom and cultivation of love of the ultimate Reality. It is in

this atmosphere that the transmutation of the instinctive and human mind into the spiritual intellect takes place.

The object of spiritual study will now be perceived clearly. St Paul and other Christian mystical writers recommend faith as a prerequisite to spiritual life. The Vedas teach the same lesson. Unless one has confidence in himself, in the methods of spiritual practice and the Teacher, the spiritual progress is not possible. Faith can be cultivated, and the mind can be tutored in faith. An inquisitive mind is valuable, but a sceptical mind very often leads to self-destruction. If there is the least doubt in our heart, our fate in Yoga is bound to be disappointment.

Ibn 'Arabi, the prince of Arabic mystic philosophy in Spain, tells an interesting story. A doubting philosopher and an illiterate faithful peasant started on a spiritual journey, the goal of which was vision of Truth. The intellectual, on account of his doubting tendencies, made little progress, whereas the simple faithful man reached the goal.

By the yogic process the modes of the mind are slowly so arranged that they resemble a harmonious orchestra in which each instrument, though different from the others, is tuned to produce the same melody. The guide is the conductor of the orchestra, and the music is SO-HUM (He am I) and SHIVO-HUM (the highest Good am I).

H.P. Shastri

A Poem of Kabir

Life is passing. When will you practise devotion?
In the womb, you made a promise to do so,
But on emerging you forgot.
Your childhood you wasted in playing,
Your youth in pride.
Now you are old, and your body quakes and trembles.
Shaking your head, you feel remorse.
Says Kabir, 'Listen, ye good people,
Every living being is the personal property of Death.'

Translated by A.J.A.

The Pilgrimage of Life

HARI PRASAD SHASTRI'S teacher, Shri Dada, gave these words to his followers, early in the last century, on the way life should be lived:

My friends, take your life as a pilgrimage, every man as your fellow pilgrim, and your Atman (the true Self) as the goal of the pilgrimage. A pilgrim is detached from his surroundings; his thoughts are devout, his behaviour holy and his love for his fellow pilgrims apparent to all. The clutching fingers of beautiful scenery, of shady orchards and soft flower gardens fail to attract or detain him on his onward path. So do you, my friends, apply all your endeavours and thoughts to the goal — Atman-realization — without letting friends, pleasures, relatives, advantages of wealth or fame detain you on the way. Like the pilgrim, love your fellow men and, in time of need, help them and share with them your food and comforts, without losing sight of the great goal.

The image of the pilgrim has long been a source of inspiration in both the secular and the spiritual fields — a symbol of qualities such as devotion, sacrifice, endurance and one-pointed dedication to an ideal. The accounts of the pilgrim either as a fictional character or from true life cases, modern and ancient, provide a source of comfort and hope both on an allegorical and an actual basis. The vicissitudes of the pilgrimage mirror the events of life — *sansara*, as it is known in Sanksrit — that which is ever moving, changing and unpredictable. The appeal of the pilgrim is not only that his story constantly delights and interests us, but that there is so much with which we can identify on a personal level.

The term pilgrimage covers many types of journey, from the traditional desire of every Muslim to make the journey to the sacred Ka'aba once in their life, to the mountain climber's desire to scale a certain peak, which may be thousands of miles from his home. It is curious, too, that in the twelfth century people made pilgrimages to Glastonbury, claimed by the monks to be the site of King Arthur's remains, and in the twentieth century youngsters have made an equally

dedicated pilgrimage there to hear the pop music festival.

A life that is based in Yoga is also a kind of pilgrimage, leading us from the tedium, division and suffering of ordinary existence to a state in which our minds are transcended in the discovery of our true inner being. And like other pilgrimages, progress may be gained along different routes. For example, yogic growth may be explained as the individual's progress through the different planes of existence — from the physical to the mental, and from the mental through to the spiritual plane. Or that our development takes place along the paths of action, devotion and knowledge. And another facet is the change in our relationship to God or the Divine Spirit. This begins with the feeling of an impersonal, separate being: 'I have given my heart to the lover of the calves of Brindavan', sang the disciples of Shri Dada. A further stage is to sense the Divine as a being with whom we can communicate: 'Thou art dearer to me than life, O Hari!' The crowning realization is the experience of unity with that Divine Spirit: 'In me the infinite ocean, arises the imagined universe. Tranquil and attributeless, my Self abides for ever.' These are just some of the ways of looking at the process of inner development through Adhyatma Yoga.

Although there are many different types of pilgrimage and, like the numerous routes of the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage, different ways of progressing, there are significant parallels between those who undertake these journeys. For example, the determination of the pilgrim to succeed, the courage needed to overcome new problems, the troubles they face, and particularly the way these give rise to suffering and sorrow, and then to success and joy, and the fact that each chose to undertake the dangers and uncertainties of their own free will. But there is one important way in which they can differ. That is the purpose. Why is it that the pilgrimage is undertaken?

With the discovery of the remains of the apostle, St James, in the ninth century, the pilgrimage of Santiago de Compostela was well established in medieval times. The routes to Compostela, in the north-west of Spain, ran from many countries. From France, Portugal, Switzerland, Spain and others too, over a hundred routes have brought pilgrims to the church at Compostela for over a thousand years. For many the route was very hard, lasting months rather than weeks, and

encountering many perils, including illness and banditry.

In the early days, no doubt as news of the discovery of the remains of St James spread, local people began to make the journey with no expectation other than the satisfaction and blessing of having visited such a holy site. Then came people from further afield and quickly its fame and attraction grew — so much so that at its height it was one of three pilgrim routes that qualified for a plenary indulgence — the full remission of the temporal punishment incurred by one's sins, so that no further time had to be spent in purgatory.

No doubt the expiation of divine punishment for sins committed qualified as having conducted the pilgrimage 'in a religious sense' — but it is arguable that it lacked a truly spiritual focus. For those original Compostela pilgrims there was no established expectation of merit; some two hundred years later, the prospect of shortening the temporal punishment in the after-life was for many the major purpose.

Similarly in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* the lack of any deep spiritual purpose is revealed early on:

Then people long to go on pilgrimages
And palmers long to seek the stranger strands
Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands,
And specially, from every shire's end
In England, down to Canterbury they wend
To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick
To give his help to them when they were sick.

In the Lourdes pilgrimage, which attracts millions of people each year, the majority undoubtedly have as their main purpose the help of the Virgin Mary to heal their afflictions. This is not to belittle the value of the pilgrimage for such people, who more often than not will have suffered the same difficulties and deprivation as those seeking spiritual benefit. Regardless of their purpose, they will inevitably benefit from the company of spiritually-minded people and the sacrifices they make of comfort and material contentment. But what they gain at the end is a shadow of the real benefits to be gained from a spiritual quest.

Purpose is all-important in spiritual endeavour. Nachiketas, in the *Katha Upanishad*, sees through his father's sacrifice of his elderly

cattle in the hope of gaining heavenly rewards. He decides to include himself as an offering of his father's possessions in order to validate the sacrifice. And through his devotion and steadfastness to his vow, he succeeded in extracting from the God of Death the ultimate teachings of the spiritual Yoga.

So with Adhyatma Yoga in our lives, the purpose is not the ancillary, worldly benefits that may or may not attend our endeavours, but the full merit of spiritual knowledge that this tried and tested path can deliver. As Shri Dada said: 'So do you, my friends, apply all your endeavours and thoughts to the goal — Atman-realization — without letting friends, pleasures, relatives, advantages of wealth or fame detain you on the way.' It is the attainment of the goal — Self-realization — which should be the purpose of undertaking Adhyatma Yoga.

It is said that the beginning of love is easy, but its course is hard to follow. And the same is true of the pilgrimage of life. Life goes on for us, with or without our input, for the duration of this incarnation. But the path of Yoga is manifest only so long as we continue to pursue the quest, diligently carrying out the practices, analysing our behaviour and actions and learning to control the mind in meditation. Chaucer's opening of the *Canterbury Tales* describes the freshness, enthusiasm and energy of the new undertaking, as the signs, smells and sounds of springtime infect the mind with the desire to travel strange lands in search of the holy relics:

When in April the sweet showers fall
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power
As brings about the engendering of the flower,
(So nature pricks them and their heart engages)
Then people long to go on pilgrimages.

But it is an enthusiasm which quickly fades for many who would journey on the path. In that other great classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian has hardly gone two paces before he falls into the Slough of Despond, where he wallows helplessly in the mud.

In Yoga it is very often the case, that when the decision is made to take up the practice of meditation and self-control, it is in a spirit of

anticipation and hope. Our efforts are sustained well for the first week, and we may even notice a difference in our mind. But come the second week, we are not so ready to lift the sheets on the dark, cold mornings that much earlier. And then there is an unforeseen problem which is difficult to fit into our new regime, with the result that we miss or curtail a meditation. And so there builds up a trail of difficulties and mishaps which eventually undermine the meditations and yogic studies of all but the most determined of aspirants.

It is here that we need that most important of qualities, desire for liberation — for that has to become the driving force in our lives from the time we embark on the journey. The Himalayan mountain climber is very different from the Alpine or Peak District rock climber. For him there is truly a pilgrimage before he begins the glamorous climbing. In the 1950s, an assault on a Himalayan mountain was just that — a carefully planned expedition, often in uncharted territory, involving huge quantities of stores, porters, climbers, etc. Apart from the lengthy journey to India, there were hundreds of miles to be covered to get to the foothills. The hazards of the journey itself were enough to break the resolve of those on the expedition, even before a foot was set upon the mountain. Through all these difficulties the desire of each mountaineer to stand upon the summit of the peak would be his driving force, sustaining each of them and uniting the team.

So in Yoga, we must create a master sentiment, which eclipses all other desires. Our desire for liberation must equate with that of the mountain climber to stand on top of the mountain. We must develop that deep desire. Just as he thinks about the summit every day, so must we think about the Self, our true nature and goal. Just as each day the climber wakes on the journey thinking of the peak, so must it be our waking thought. He reads about the mountain and runs through the different approaches to the summit in his mind during the day; so, too, we should study and learn about the practices by which we can gain a glimpse of the inner being. Like him, the quest should affect our every thought, feeling and action.

Another point of distinction between *Adhyatma Yoga* and the traditional forms of pilgrimage is that, unlike the latter, which inevitably involve movement from one place to another, the spiritual

pilgrimage is something which can be entirely an inner journey, with no geographical movement at all — a journey which consists in the development of the mind, rather than the physical movement from one place to another. The Compostela pilgrimage attracts people from as far away as America, with all the costs, difficulties, stress and preparations that requires, before they can begin the pilgrimage proper. But there is another view. It is that the pilgrimage begins immediately one leaves one's home. This is the closest sense to the pilgrimage of Yoga — for we can set foot on that road without the need for any preliminary journey or exterior preparations.

To make a start on the path of Yoga we can rest assured that there is nothing standing in our way. We need no costly materials, no financial security, no level of physical fitness, no standard of accommodation. All we need is the determination to carry out the practices diligently, whether at home, in a church or a park, on a cushion, chair or bench — and we simply need to take the mind and begin to control it.

This may seem to conflict with traditional images of the yogi meditating in a cave — but much emphasis is laid on the inner pilgrimage taking place in the very struggle of outer circumstances. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Shri Krishna does not take his pupil, Prince Arjuna, away to a sheltered, quiet spot, where one would imagine the highest teachings could be given in peace, enabling the pupil to imbibe them away from the turmoil of the trials and tribulations of daily life. Instead he gives the teachings on the very battlefield, as they stand between the two opposing armies, whose loud roars ring across the plain.

Similarly in Yoga, we are expected to undertake the training in our lives, not separate from them tucked away in a corner for a short period each day, and then to return unchanged to the demands and duties of daily life. This is no different to the man who daily counts his accumulated wealth, stored in a box, ever reluctant to remove its contents to distribute in a good or constructive cause in real life. So with the yogic practices. We should not see them as storing up some invisible cache of personal merit, but gain and share spiritual benefit in our daily action and thought, steeped in our practices. If we undertake them in life, rather than in the armchair, they are more strongly

developed and others too benefit from our progress. What are these practices?

The yogic aspirant has to be able to function on two levels: the inner and the outer. And for effective operation, he needs to be self-controlled. The most important practice of Yoga is meditation, in which the mind is stilled, and then focused on a spiritual subject — it may be an image or a text, or even a sound such as the sacred syllable OM. The successful meditation leads us to an inner awareness of our true nature, by removing our ignorant attachment to our limited self — the complex of the body, mind and personality. The development of self-control is crucial to meditation, for without it we will be unable to bring stillness to our mind.

A passage from the *Bhagavad Gita* captures the spirit of self-control:

When the yogi completely withdraws his senses from sense-objects, as the tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides, his knowledge becomes steady. (2:58)

It is an interesting fact that when we have something engaging to do, especially something we like doing, the mind becomes naturally concentrated, whether on a spiritual subject or not. We may feel when we try to tackle meditation that our mind is very hard to control — but it takes only a moment's reflection for us to remember a film or documentary at the cinema or on the television or a good book which has kept us totally absorbed. If we are trying to do something which has been imposed on us and in which we not really interested, the slightest distraction is insurmountable. We mutter and grumble, lack the concentration our task requires, and watch the minute hand of the clock creep slowly round the dial. But when we have something which means as much as life, then we are oblivious to things going on around us and to the passage of time. So, too, when we approach the practice of meditation in this spirit, we will find the mind much easier to control.

One of the yogic practices is called discrimination. The yogic assessment of life is that it may be viewed from two standpoints. From one standpoint, we take the world as the ultimate reality. We can touch objects around us; make relationships; experience pain and joy; plan the

future; even produce new life and, of course, destroy it too. But from the higher standpoint, it is all a sham — like a play, which, however convincing, turns out in the end to have been a piece of fiction. At the time it enthralled us, excited us, appalled us, moved us — but in the end, it is only a memory.

When we turn to the world around us, our instinctive reaction is to regard it as reality. How can it be otherwise? And yet, when we reflect on the events of history and even on our own life and the lives of those around us, there is much room for questioning. The great pyramids were built to conceal and maintain the glory of the Egyptian rulers — such glory that was unseen by the ordinary people of the time. And yet, what has become of those great leaders? Their mummified remains housed in museums around the world, are exposed to the unabating gaze of curious tourists.

Reflections such as these form the initial basis for yogic discrimination, in which we chip away at our reliance on the worth of the world, but without abdicating our responsibilities in it. We can become awake to a far more exciting reality underlying what we see as the real world. Major events, such as the death of someone dear to us, are often a trigger for inner reflection, which may last for weeks or longer. But often these reflections are overcome in the hustle and bustle of our daily duties, and life returns to so-called ‘normality’. But our insight can be strengthened through a yogic perspective of the disasters, failures, bereavements, and also through a detached view of the successes and joys, which are normally less likely to give rise to inner reflection.

We can begin to put our worldly life into perspective — always remembering the yogic analysis that all that changes is not real, and that that which is unchanging and therefore real is our true nature. Then if, for example, we lead very busy lives, we can begin to lose our anxieties at attempting to meet ever increasing responsibilities. We can become independent of success and failure, finding serenity in all situations, without giving up our duties in life. And if on the other hand we are understretched, through unemployment, for example, then we can replace our sense of futility and frustration with the dynamic purpose of Yoga, giving meaning and direction in our life.

Another practice is to become detached from the things of the world. As Shri Dada said: ‘The clutching fingers of beautiful scenery, of shady orchards and soft flower gardens fail to attract or detain him on his onward path.’ We cannot be a pilgrim if, at every corner, we see something and want to possess it. A man who chases every passing butterfly will never get far along the road. Detachment and discrimination (*vairagya* and *viveka* in Sanskrit) go well together — for as the world becomes less of an ultimate reality, so the things in it which hitherto we have valued so much, lose their worth. As Shri Krishna says: ‘The yogi whose self is satisfied with knowledge and wisdom, who remains unshaken, who has conquered the senses — he is said to be a saint, for whom a lump of earth, a stone and gold are equal.’ (*Bhagavad Gita* 6:8)

In the same way, in our lives, we must free ourselves from attachment to things, people and ideals. It seems cold and hard, but that is not the case. Attachment to objects and material possessions is quite obviously a burden. What a pointless waste of a life, when a person becomes a depressive when the stock market plunges. Of course, everyone needs a certain level of income to maintain a normal lifestyle — that is a *dharma*, or duty. We all have to be contributors to society, and, for some of us, to bring up a family. So we need shelter, food and clothes. But as students of Yoga we should not be materially ambitious or possessive. As our teacher said: ‘Hold tightly — let go lightly.’

Attachment to people is naturally a far deeper tie — but we tend to confuse love and attachment, believing them to be the same. Shri Dada was a God-realized man. When his father died, he grieved as any ordinary person would, yet his grief did not disturb his knowledge of the true nature of existence. Although it is an oversimplification of the situation, he is like an actor in a play, who enters the plot fully in order to give a convincing performance, and yet all the time is aware that the action is not the ultimate reality. The great actor is the one who feels the emotions his part demands as though they are real; so with the enlightened person. The experience is in his lower self, but his consciousness rises above it in the light of his Atman.

Shri Dada makes clear the balance required in his opening words:

Apply all your endeavours and thoughts to the goal without letting friends,.... relatives detain you on the way. Like the pilgrim, love your fellow men and, in the time of need, help them and share with them your food and comforts without losing sight of the great goal.

When an inner conviction of this truth is established through our yogic practice, we break our attachment to the personal relationships, without in any way diminishing our love for those around us. On the contrary, our love becomes greater by tapping into the stream of love which emanates from the Self of the universe.

The ultimate purpose of the yogic practices is to overcome the false perception of the world — to see through the illusion of duality, and recognize our true nature as one and indivisible. That unity, which encompasses not only the physical and mental realms, but the highest spiritual level — unity with God — is not peculiar to the teachings of Adhyatma Yoga, and is found in the mysticism of all great religions. In Christianity, we read from the fourteenth century sage, Johannes Scheffler, known as Angelus Silesius:

God is nothing at all; and if he something be,
Only in me it is, he having chosen me.
Incomprehensible! God lost himself; wherefore
He will that, here in me, he shall be born once more.

‘God lost himself’. As the Yoga teaches, we are God. That is our real essence. And yet, we live our lives blissfully unaware, or rather, painfully unaware of our identity. God, or the Divine Spirit, is seen, not as something separate, but as the underlying reality of the universe and our own being. It is an experience characterized by bliss and fulfilment, as all those who have successfully travelled the spiritual path describe.

J.M.

He who conforms to the Way is gladly accepted by the Way.

Lao Tzu

The Yoga of the Upanishads

THE TIME has come when we should communicate with our eternal spiritual home, the time, the remembrance of which, in the form of a deep-seated dissatisfaction, haunts us in all our enterprises and undertakings. The apex of human life is conscious communication with that eternal home, which is just beyond the empirical being or mind of man. There is no other way to peace; there is no other way to unalloyed joy; there is no other way to serve living beings.

Those who make occasional excursions into that great realm, the realm of light and bliss, their infinite home, come back refreshed and are able to face the problems and battles of life with composure and success. They can see the things of the world better. They can interpret the experiences of daily life, whether entailing suffering or joy, in a wise and proper way. They are truly human who make these excursions at least three times a day. Moslems do it five times a day, and there are many others who have this excursion into the infinite within all the time. This is real life.

The one word which expresses these excursions into the Infinite is called Love of God, *bhakti*, and this word is more expressive than any other word. Let us every day put aside the shoes of our profit and loss, of our friendships, enmities and neutralities. Let us shake off the dust from our feet of all attachment, all friendship with temporary objects, and then create a silence within, and through yogic means pass through the narrow and straight way, the way which is within, into the region of light. A joyous welcome awaits the soul who dares to penetrate from the region of gloom into the region of light. Let them be serious; let them love light; let them show detachment from the region of gloom. He who awaits us in that infinite region in our mind is our loving father, the creator of heaven and earth, and embodiment of knowledge and peace.

Let us learn how to live with our whole being. We are living at present about one-tenth of our life, as long as we live mainly for earthly pleasures. We live in preservation of our material interests and our body. We are unaware of the great treasures of our mind and much less

of the spiritual realm. When man learns to live entirely, he will be happy, he will be wise, and he will contribute to the happiness of all.

It is not a brilliant mind that is necessary, but a strong will. Everybody can strengthen his will. By means of devotion, meditation, spiritual study and habits of punctuality, we can strengthen our will considerably. This is the message which is given to you today. It matters that you have a strong will in right matters, and that your nerves are in a condition of repose. By reading the *Bhagavad Gita* with faith and by trying to live the teachings given therein, you can calm your nerves, and you can have a reposeful mind and also a strong will.

Yoga is the fulfilment of life and not the negation of life. Yoga is not a way of escape, but a way of acquisition. Yoga is not a narrow sectarian doctrine but a practical way whereby life in all its richness and abundance is realized in this very incarnation.

Long before Patanjali wrote his classic on Yoga, the Upanishads existed as the eternal source of wisdom. According to the Upanishads every man has four great objects of life. If he does not follow them, the word 'man' does not apply to him. Man, to have the title of 'man', must strive to achieve the following four objects.

The first of the four great objects is *dharma*. It means harmony, righteousness, duty, charity, ethics, the fulfilment of obligations to humanity. The Chinese translate it as Ho, and the same word they have for law. This is the first word in Buddhism. It also means the written law of God in the holy scriptures. It includes observance of one's duty to family and to parents. 'Let your parents be a god to you. Let your teacher, let a guest be a god to you,' enjoins the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. To care for truth more than for life, more than for comfort, more than for any material gain, is a great part of *dharma*.

The diplomacy of the world is founded on lies, on determined efforts to throw dust into the eyes of their own people and of all others. Alexander of Macedon had learned about *dharma* from Aristotle in many ways. Once in Babylon, when he was advised to attack Darius at night time, Alexander turned round and said: 'I do not want to steal a victory by night attack.' Manu has said: 'Those who protect *dharma* are protected by *dharma*, and those who kill *dharma* are killed by it.' Respect for truth-speaking, for parents, for humanity. Humanity comes

before country. Patriotism and narrow nationalism are not taught by any scripture. In the first verse of the *Koran* it says: 'Praise be to God who is the God of all the worlds.' This narrow patriotism and nationalism goes against *dharma*.

The second object is *artha*, prosperity. It means to create, not to amass, wealth by legitimate means, not by robbing, swindling and deceiving.

The third object is *bhoga*, the enjoyment of legitimate pleasures, the pleasures which uplift our mind without causing agitation or restlessness within and without, leaving behind a reaction either nervous or ethical. This rush for pleasure, because it is not legitimate, does not give satisfaction to man. A few lyrics of Shelley, a few lines of Wordsworth or Tennyson, will give a man much greater pleasure than seeing one of those films which are a waste of time and money. The fall of Rome was due to the gladiatorial shows. The condition of the civilization, of an individual and a nation can be known by the kind of pleasures they enjoy.

The fourth object is *moksha*, deliverance. The first three are a preliminary or antecedent to the fourth. Deliverance from what? From sorrow, from anxieties, from limitations and from death. The most important duty of a man is to realize his immortality in conscious life. It means to make himself master of his destiny. It is called *moksha*. Yoga means the way to deliverance. The greatest possible desire to be free in this life is called *mumukshuta*. Some live in large prisons, others in small ones, in prisons of iron or of gold, but prisons they are. Is not life a prison? Are not laws limitations? Man has a chance to be free, and this Yoga teaches how to be free.

Deliverance consists in the consciousness of the unity of Atman, the first principle in all things. There is a fundamental principle in all, common to all, and that is reality, and deliverance means conscious unity with it. Theology calls it God. This is a complete scheme of life.

The key note of deliverance is, first, the annihilation of all unethical desires. Each desire is a new bar added to the cage in which the soul is already imprisoned, and the fewer the desires, the happier the man. Next, man must strive for the annihilation of the illusion of multiplicity, in daily life, in international life, in metaphysical life. You

are you, and I am I: this philosophy must go. All life is one. All mind is one. All bodies are cells in the body of the Lord. No country can be happy unless all other countries are happy also. My indictment of this patriotism is the sentiment: 'My country is the greatest country in the world.' When these illusions are destroyed, man becomes free.

The first annihilation is obtained through discipline, a life of spirituality (*brahmacharya*), and the second is obtained through Yoga. Meditation will not destroy our desires. Unless our desires are curtailed, our meditations will not be helpful, and we cannot be happy. Desires and possessions are encumbrances. Yoga is union with God, to be obtained by dissolving the illusory world by meditation on Self. The first thing the Yoga teaches is: What am I? Discipline, according to the *Amritabindu Upanishad*, is freedom from fear, anger and indolence; from excessive wakefulness, excessive sleep, from too much food, too much starvation — the yogis must refrain from these extremes. To train our mind slowly so that nothing that happens outside is able to disturb us, to bear heat and cold, to take insult and praise — it is all a dream.

After this discipline the second thing is meditation. How to sit? On a level surface, on the ground, pleasant and free from faults. A place should be quiet and free from distraction. Sit firm and motionless. The influences from the subtle world enter through your head and make you strong morally and spiritually.

Then suppression of the organs of sense. In an ancient text it is said: 'As a tortoise at a given time withdraws his limbs, so should a wise man be able to withdraw his senses into the heart.' This is called right living. To withdraw the senses into the heart means into the mind. From the mind issue five streams, which are the five senses. Withdraw them and collect them in the mind. That is a requisite of Yoga.

The thought of Govinda (God) and Guru helps concentration. You cannot immediately think of the God who has no attributes and no forms. Think of Him first as one of the divine incarnations, such as Christ, or a holy prophet like Abraham, or as your Guru, and then one day you will be able to think of the absolute. Think of the living Christ, Moses, Buddha, Shri Dada. With a little practice it is easy to do so. This state is called concentration. Concentration in Yoga means concentration on the heart, on God, when the senses have been withdrawn.

The mind, through the yogic use of the will, seeks deliverance. Mind comprises thinking and feeling, memory, imagination, etc. Withdraw them into the mind itself. What matters most to the yogi is the will. In this way our will is transformed into a mighty force. When we say deliverance, we mean deliverance from the mind. Our body is our mind materialized and objectified. Change of mind means change of will. The mind must be restrained, curbed and then immersed in the meditation of Self, God, the Atman of all, and be entirely dissolved in it. Mind is a creative and transforming force. Be careful what you concentrate on. The mind is transformed into the impressions, good or evil, which it receives. When the mind is intensely concentrated on God, it is dissolved in it. Mind creates and also cuts off the bondages.

What is meditation? According to the Upanishads, it means withdrawing the senses, transforming the mind into inner silence, and in that silence to meditate on OM. Meditate on its form and on its sound AUM, representing fire, sun and wind, the essence of all things, everything material. Meditation leads to the supreme goal, that is, deliverance. The sound to be meditated upon is like the tolling of a bell, or like the prolonged dripping of oil. The sound OM is God. Samadhi (absorption) is thus described in the *Maitreya Upanishad*: 'There is in the heart a sun, and in the latter a moon, in this a fire, in this there is Satyam (Truth), the cause of all, and in this the soul, which breaks all the coverings and voyages in the boat of OM and joins with the supreme.'

Thus through meditation on OM according to the Upanishads, following the discipline, comes deliverance. Such a man overcomes illness, anxieties, fears and also death. He becomes master of the universe. He is king of kings. He acquires what is called Svarajya (self-sovereignty). In the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* we read: 'He who through thousands of births does not exhaust the guilt of his sins, sees finally by Yoga the destruction of Sansara here.'

By other methods you may take thousands of incarnations, but by means of this Yoga of the Upanishads you realize deliverance in this life. For details of this way of life, see the *Bhagavad Gita*, and for further details, the commentary on it by Shri Shankaracharya, which is the last word on the subject.

Hari Prasad Shastri

PRAY, ADORE AND MEDITATE

When you have a little respite from the hustle and bustle of life, use your time to make the restless mind restful. Rest does not mean inactivity or non-creativity. True rest is to place the mind in the *sattvic* state. Quietness of the mind and devotion to the eternal Truth as identical with the Self, the cosmic Self, is real rest.

To keep the mind from mischief in outer and quasi-inner life, meditate on:

Maitri – friendly feelings towards all, unconditionally.

Karuna – compassion towards all who are in distress. Do not call them sinners or infidels. Just be compassionate.

Mudita – goodwill towards all who are virtuous, although not of your religion or persuasion.

Upeksha – not minding the frailties of others.

By cultivating these cardinal virtues you prepare your mind for higher devotion to the Lord.

Forget the pleasure sense in the physical form. You can have mental pleasure in a tranquil mind, free from the pairs of opposites, and study the holy classics like *Panchadashi* and *Direct Experience of Reality* and write articles on them.

Let not show and pretence mar your mind. Remember your duty to yourself, to man and to God.

I wish you rest in the spirit, Atman.

H.P.S.

A verse of Sureshvara

How can the man of discrimination, who sees the same one Self in the friend, in the enemy and in his own body, feel anger, any more than he could do so against the limbs of his own body?

Realisation of the Absolute (*Naishkarmya Siddhi*) 2:18

SHANTI SADAN NEWS

During the Summer recess preparations continued for the Autumn term, which is always a busy one. Following the appreciative reception for similar presentations, the Wednesday evening talks will be a series on meditation, with particular emphasis on the practical sessions that each will include. It is recognised that meditation calls for both careful application of definite techniques, and at the same time openness and growing sensitivity to the need and opportunity for inner adjustments. So care has been taken to make the presentations as helpful as possible to those interested in taking up the practice regularly. Books on the subject continue to be among the most popular of Shanti Sadan's publications, in particular Dr Shastri's *Meditation - Its Theory and Practice*, and *Training the Mind through Yoga* by Marjorie Waterhouse, his successor as Warden of Shanti Sadan and a most lucid exponent of the application of yogic wisdom to all aspects of daily life.

There has been a very active response to the new edition of the *Ashtavakra Gita*. This classic text is an uncompromising statement of the non-dual truth, with a special appeal to those who understand the limits of dialectical argumentation and appreciate direct expression on the authority of experience.

Readers are reminded that the most up-to-date information about events organised by Shanti Sadan is always available on the Internet at shantisadan.org/events. This includes the titles of the talks to be given every Friday evening at the centre.

Autumn 2009 Special Course

The Power Behind the Mind

Sunday 1 November 2009, 2-5pm

Talk 1 *Paths to the Inner Summit*

First Meditation session

Talk 2 *Living Consciously*

Second Meditation session

Talk 3 *The Knowledge that Satisfies Forever*