

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 SPRING TERM 2010

Weekday evening talks at Shanti Sadan

Lectures will be given every Wednesday and Friday evening at 8pm from Wednesday 27 January until Friday 26 March 2010.

Spring 2010 Afternoon Course

The afternoon course will be held on Sunday 28 February, 2pm - 5pm,

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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Applying Yoga in Daily Life

THE THEME OF THIS discourse is the practical application of the yogic principles in our daily life. How to live is most important. There are two ways: to live a life of pretence, or to live a life which fulfils the purpose of our existence. The life of pursuit of shadows is one-tenth to one-hundredth part of real life. That it is not the real life is demonstrated by the fact that it gives no satisfaction; that everything in it is fleeting, on the wing, and that we do not feel the peace that our heart yearns after. It is therefore clear that the life in which we run after temporal values is not the real life; it is not the life which a wise man will wish to live. It is not enough to listen; we must make changes in the inner realm of our mind and heart.

Start today on the path of right living. The first principle is to seek after God. God is the name of the highest and yet the most normal position to which man can attain. You must learn to feel that objective things have no real existence. You see a tree, a friend, the sun, learning; either these percepts and concepts have an independent existence, or they stand on a substratum. Does this house exist independently? No. Its existence depends on matter. Does matter exist independently? No. It depends on electro-magnetic flashes. Are these the ultimate reality? No, for an object cannot exist independently of the subject. There must be some principle in which subject and object exist as appearances. You see waves. Do they exist independently? They are dependent on water. Is water independent? No, it is H₂O. Every object in the world exists on consciousness or God.

At the end of the last century a German scientist published a book called *The Riddle of the Universe*. This man was Haeckel. He proved that there was one principle behind all diversity and that this principle had two aspects, one, substance, and the other, force. Therefore he gave the philosophy of the monism of inert substance to the world. Inert substance is the basis of all. Well, he did a service, for he abolished the conception of duality.

A hill, clouds, a horse, a tree — is there anything common to all of them? Yes, existence. They all exist by virtue of existence. Therefore objects are not independent; only 'existence' is truly independent, and is called in the Vedanta philosophy 'Sat'. To the wise man all things are seen to have come forth from truth or existence, and when they have played their part as separate phenomenal entities, they return to their substratum. Pots are made of clay. Take away the clay, and the pots will cease to exist. Even God would cease to exist, if he were phenomenal. Thou art free! The substratum of the waking, dreaming and dreamless states, of mountains, rills, stars, birds, art thou. TAT TVAM ASI — THAT THOU ART. This is the truth, and it can be demonstrated by experience only. The whole world exists in your Self, which is infinite light and bliss. If there is a God at all, he must be existence, truth and your own Self, not something apart from you. Why do we not feel this? Error. Error is dissipated by knowledge, study of the truth, living the truth. All that was and is, all time and space, rests on your real Self.

A good part of your day, except when crossing the road, must be devoted to this truth, 'I am Shiva [the ultimate Reality]'. This is the way

to happiness, the only way to peace, even in the empirical sense. We are what we feel ourselves to be, not merely what we think, but what we feel ourselves to be. Consciousness of ability is ability, consciousness of health is health. Experiences in life have their root in your mind. The spirit must feel expansion. Narrowness is unnatural; both individual and national narrowness are unnatural. Nature teaches that one of the signs of life is progress, unfoldment, evolution.

You cannot afford to live a life of fixation. The greatest enemy of man is fixation. Don Quixote had a fixation that he was a great knight. It is a fixation to think that you are English, German or Chinese. Faust's great power was that he never wished to continue an experience; he never had a fixation. One great necessity is to have a tranquil, rather than an intellectual, mind. Tranquillity comes through *vairagya* (detachment) and *viveka* (discrimination between the transient and the eternal).

The last twenty verses of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* paint a picture of an evolved man, who stands like a great light on the top of a mountain, undisturbed by atmospheric and other changes. A dull mind is not a tranquil mind. You cannot obtain a tranquil mind by external means. What should the motive of such a life be? Withdrawal from the world and contempt for everyone? No. It should be motivated by purified love, that is, love in which there is no attachment. It is born from a combination of principles immanent in the cosmos. Bergson calls it *élan vital*, Wordsworth *Nature*, St Thomas Aquinas *God*, Shri Shankaracharya *Sat*. In this life, which is the life of a *Jivanmukta* (one liberated in life), the finite personality is not given up; it is a life of liberation before death. If freedom is not achieved in life, it will certainly not be achieved after death. A *Jivanmukta* is no longer a victim to fear. The biological life is a life of continuous fear. All beasts and birds are constantly vigilant. The sense of finite existence must gradually be lost. Individuality must give place to the infinity of cosmic consciousness. Do not cling to individuality. The path of wisdom begins when the satisfaction of will and heart has been consummated in *upasana* (worship), *shanti* (inner peace) and *dhyana* (meditation). Epictetus advised man to think more constantly of God than he breathed. Behind the conditioned is the unconditioned. Take refuge in God with your whole force and life. Then the dawn of the knowledge of conscious immortality will break before you.

Discovering Infinity in the Finite

The aim and object of life is to keep your own self peaceful and happy, independent of all surrounding circumstances and gain and loss. Keep yourself joyful, well-pleased and peaceful. To be dejected and gloomy is a religious, social, political and domestic crime. It is at the root of all other crimes.

THIS IS a message from a knower of spiritual Truth, Swami Rama Tirtha. It indicates how our state of mind influences the world at large. We can carry a light or carry a cloud. If there is such a thing as a collective mood or morale that runs through a family, a society, a nation or a company, it is the result of the mental states projected by the individuals in that group.

As individuals our first responsibility is to ourselves. The first place to be set right is our own heart. Once the heart is right, the benefits are bound to be shared with those around us. This same point was made long ago by Confucius, when he wrote:

If there be righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in character;
If there be beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home;
If there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation;
If there be order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

Discontented hearts are the root source of wider problems. If the heart is at peace, that peace will spread as surely as the fragrance of sandalwood pervades its surroundings.

‘Keep yourself joyful, well-pleased and peaceful.’ It is easy to voice such positive sentiments and to give out prescriptions for happiness and success, but it can also be counter-productive. It is rather like when we are told by some well-wisher to ‘Cheer up’ at a time when we would rather be serious and thoughtful. Nor is it obvious how to effect an inner uplift of our mood. Some people seem gifted with a tendency to good cheer, while others may smile but rarely. Yet such impressions are shallow and tell us very little. Someone with a breezy and friendly appearance may be superficial and lack real depth, while another who

is quiet and undemonstrative may be gifted with real empathy for others and harbour great resources of inner peace and independent joy.

Another important factor is that our happiness may be marred by our knowledge of others’ pain or of the general sufferings of mankind. Miranda, in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, witnessing a shipwreck, cried:

Oh, I have suffer’d with those I saw suffer!...
The cry did knock against my very heart!

And her father, Prospero, praised the way her heart was touched by what he called ‘the very virtue of compassion’.

Then what is this peace and happiness that Rama Tirtha counsels, and which he calls the aim and object of life? Is it based on some deeper insight or realization?

If we ask the question: ‘How is it possible to be peaceful and happy?’, we find there is a relative answer and an absolute answer. What do we mean by a relative answer? In the world, there is a multitude of counsellors each prescribing ways and means to make us feel better, usually at a price. Some may do genuine good and bring about a lasting relief to particular problems with which we are burdened. They may show us a way forward that really helps, and turn out to be friends in need. But rarely, if ever, can our helpers and advisers lead us to that position where we can declare: ‘I have found perfect peace’, or ‘I know that true inner joy which nothing can mar and which needs nothing outside for its rise or its continuance.’ Yet such testimonies are found in the words of those who have awakened fully to the spiritual dimension of life, which transcends all misery and limitations. As the holy classics proclaim, the knower of Truth goes beyond sorrow.

Whether or not our advisers are spiritually awake, the effectiveness of our treatment depends on us: our attitude, flexibility, wish to evolve and willingness to follow instruction. Our response to psychological first-aid of any kind depends on our will and co-operation. We may respond very well to a path of inner development, but the pivotal factor is neither the teachings nor the teacher, but ourselves, that is, those reserves of character, drawn from within us. If we are helped, it is

because of our own response, our own need and our own efforts.

How deeply rooted are the reserves of character and spirituality that are treasured in the being of man? We said that in order to be peaceful and happy, there is an absolute solution which is different from the tentative support we get from friends and helpers. The real scope and richness of our inner resources is only brought to light with the help of those who have themselves discovered the deeper truth about their own being. In reality, our inner resources and hidden wealth have no boundary. They belong to what one teacher has called 'that region of Self-experience which knows no horizon'. There is infinity hidden in the finite, immortal divinity at the source of our mortal personality. The root of the mind and emotions, the source of our inner life, is spiritual.

We can prove this to ourselves through practice and inner enquiry. The life and consciousness in us is not other than the divine life and consciousness of the Lord. The sea-water trapped in a rock pool seems to be a little world of its own, unrelated to the great sea. A naive person may even believe that he can revisit the pool tomorrow and that it will be filled with the same water. But the water really has no limited individualized identity. It is one with the sea, and will merge with the sea once the tide sweeps back in.

So, too, man's individual life is ever at one with the infinite ocean of divine life and is destined to realize its oneness with the All. Our inner resources have their origin in something that is far deeper than the material, mental or intellectual planes. These planes of experience are compared to outer coverings. What they apparently cover is the central light of our being — the nameless, the infinite, the reality, pure consciousness. This is the true inner wealth, the foundation of peace and the home of happiness.

Through following a certain discipline, the obstacles to inner peace and happiness are slowly dissolved. As a spring of water jets forth once the obstacles of stones and earth have been removed, so too the tranquil bliss of our divine nature penetrates our mind more and more as we make a clear channel for the holy Truth to manifest in our being.

This divine presence is called by many names: the infinite, the true Self, the Godhead. But what is certain is that if there is anything worth desiring in this world, it is the knowledge and realization of our

innermost Self. While we are psychologically cut off from this realization of our own spiritual greatness, we are like someone who has lost the key to his own home. Missing this knowledge, lacking this living touch with our own intrinsic divinity, the peace and happiness we long for will always elude us. The mind becomes truly happy when it comes into contact with the source of ultimate happiness. That source is the indwelling Lord who is our true Self.

What is the force that can effect this greatest discovery of all? The force of our desires if we direct them rightly. Everyone has a right to desire the highest fulfilment: God-realization. This expansion of consciousness is what we are driving towards through all our attempts to achieve something in life. But it takes much experiment and experience to recognize that the absolute solution to our need for peace and delight is not to be found in the material world, or in the field of intellectual knowledge and power. Our true fulfilment can only come through our living, loving identification with the spiritual principle in our own being.

The spiritual teachers show us how to become much more conscious and wise about the desires we are cherishing. Rather than conform to their promptings, we are shown how to examine, question and test the validity of our wants. When we find that a desire is pressing on our mind, let us ask such questions as: 'What am I really looking for through this involvement? Can I step back a little and get an objective and freer view of what is happening in my mind?' How many crimes and stupidities would be avoided if we could only learn to pause in our tracks and ponder in this way. This is how we get to know our mind better, and find that we can consider things in a wider perspective.

This love of the spiritual principle in our own being is the only love that will not fail or betray us. Here are some lines by Hari Prasad Shastri, entitled 'I was a stranger and you took me in', which express this sentiment in terms of the personal Lord:

I fell from the high pedestal of fame and became bankrupt.
My house and all I possessed were sold by lot.
Friendless, hated, sore disappointed, with grief writ on my face,
I walked out of the circle of friends who had once called me witty,

liberal and good, but now a worthless, imprudent fellow.
I wandered in the forest eating roots and berries with a heart loaded with sorrow and the pangs of ingratitude.
Night overtook me. It seemed that the stars were mocking me, and the wind ridiculing me.
It was midnight, and the cold wind pierced to the marrow of my bones; the clouds gathered heavily like the grief eating into my soul; it rained, and snow fell in great flakes, covering my tattered coat and naked feet. I looked for a place of shelter, but in vain. The howling of wolves reached my ears and I cried like a child who had lost the coin with which he was to buy medicine for his dying mother.
'Have you also deserted me, Lord? Am I so unworthy that even the fountain of eternal mercy is closed to me?'
I was about to fall on the snow, never to rise again, when His hand was on my shoulder, and pressing me to His bosom, He said,
'Why did you not call me before? I was all the while following you, awaiting your call. Now come, and be my guest!'

This spiritual power is ever present whether we realize it or not. Through the spiritual Yoga we awaken our sensitivity to this source of relief and upliftment. But like the Lord depicted in the poem as being always with us, this power does not force itself on our attention. It responds when we turn to it in humility and love. The spiritual teachers make known the way to freedom. It is for us to choose how to respond.

Nonetheless at a certain point in our evolution, we are ready to take a new turning along a track not noticed before, a path that leads us away from fears and doubts, and which rises to the supreme summit of all experience, God-realization. This is a path that comes to light in our own being. It unfolds within us as a higher kind of knowledge, a radiant understanding that expands our feeling of selfhood beyond all limitations, as the water in the rock pool finds its complete and natural condition in its union with the great sea.

This knowledge does not reside in the mind as an object that is known and is separate from us. It dissolves the difference between knower, knowledge and known. The conviction, if it can be indicated by words at all, is: 'One ocean of consciousness exists, infinite, all light, all bliss, ever abiding. That am I.'

Long ago, the sages of the Upanishads realized that the living knowledge that liberates us from all limitations, including death, was something quite different from information, and from what can be expressed in words. In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, we hear how the pupil, Narada, went to the teacher, Sanatkumara, one who was a knower of the Self. He approached with the traditional words: 'Adhihi Bhagavan' — 'Teach me, venerable Sir.' The teacher said: 'Tell me what you know already. I will tell of what lies beyond what you know.'

Narada was a man of great learning, and he told of the many subjects in which he had gained expertise. Our knowledge may be encyclopaedic, but how does it contribute to our peace of heart, our happiness? Does it soothe and delight us when we are alone with ourselves without the comfort of outer props? Narada's answer to this was that such knowledge, acquired from books and tuition, does not help at all to cure the deep restlessness of the human heart. 'O venerable Sir', he confessed, 'I know these subjects intellectually, as one knows from books. But I am not a knower of the Self. I have heard that a knower of Self goes beyond sorrow. Such as I am, I am full of sorrow. O venerable Sir, take me beyond sorrow.'

In saying this, Narada shows the utmost frankness and sincerity. This is the first qualification of a true spiritual enquirer. Normally, when asked how we are, we say: "O, I'm fine...." The last thing we are likely to say is: 'In spite of all I have studied, in spite of my fame and reputation as a man of learning and ability, I need help. I'm in trouble. I haven't found the answer to the simple but basic question: 'How may one be peaceful and truly happy?'

The teacher explained, in effect, that all Narada's knowledge was useful up to a point, but that he would never escape from limitations and sorrow as long as his understanding was rooted in this realm of names and forms. There is a higher knowledge that is far richer and more expansive than can be caught in the web of words. His advice, in effect, is: 'All your knowledge so far depends on words. It would be nothing if your mind was not packed with the names of the things you have learned about. But all these names, these words, apply to the limited and ever changing forms of experience, and not to the ultimate Reality. At the back of all names and forms is something more, and it

is the real source of all the richness and multiplicity you find in the universe. That “something more” is the divine essence, that holds all the phenomenal forms together and makes them seem real and fascinating. This essence is infinite and it is one in all. Forget the details. Penetrate the Essence. Meditate on that which is at the back of names and forms and which is present everywhere. There is only one universal spiritual principle. That is the Absolute Brahman. Meditate on Name as not separate from Brahman, which underlies it. Meditate, O Narada, on Name as Brahman.’

The implication in the Upanishad is that Narada then withdrew in order to reflect deeply, through meditation, on this whole realm of ‘Name’. Now Narada was empowered to say to anything that appeared in his mind: ‘You are just a name; your essence is Brahman. Brahman only. OM.’

Eventually, he returned to the teacher and asked if there is anything greater than name. The teacher said: ‘Indeed there is. It is speech. For it is speech that makes known anything that has a name.’ Sanatkumara told Narada that all his knowledge of the vast curriculum he had mastered, had come to him through the medium of speech. And he added: ‘If speech were not there, there would be no knowledge of virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant. Surely speech makes all this known. Meditate on speech. He who meditates on speech as Brahman, acquires freedom of movement as far as the range of speech extends.’

Narada was told to meditate on speech as Brahman. Instead of swimming on the surface of knowledge, and getting lost in its details, his attention was drawn to the general and universal principle called speech, and also to the divine power which pervades all speech, the underlying power of Brahman, through which all speech is made possible.

Narada was thus equipped with a new way of contemplating experience. It was intended to lift his mind above particulars, and it produced an expansion of consciousness. He was being taught, through philosophical reflection, to rise above his individuality, and to see that the forces and the principles that governed his life, like ‘name’ and ‘speech’, were universal ones, that had their being in Brahman.

Then, the sage, Sanatkumara, tells him that mind is higher than speech, that will is greater than mind, that intelligence is superior to will, and takes him through a whole hierarchy of principles that he should meditate on. Always the meditation involved taking the principle, universalising it, and meditating on the essence of the experience, the power that makes it possible, taking that power as Brahman.

Despite this expansion of consciousness, Narada was still pursuing his quest as a finite individual. There was still the division: Me and my knowledge. The universe he experienced was still divided up into sections. It was not non-dual, and, in the words of another Upanishad, ‘where there is duality, there is fear’. The ultimate quest is for that knowledge that will expand our feeling of selfhood beyond all limitations, and reveal the identity of the Self with Brahman. And the final set of meditations prescribed by Sanatkumara brings this about.

Narada is now told that he must submerge his mind in a principle that has no worldly characteristics at all, nothing that encloses it, nothing that divides it up. That principle is the Infinite. Here at last is the secret of true joy. In the words of the holy sage:

That which indeed is the Infinite, that is joy. There is no joy in the finite. The Infinite alone is joy. But the Infinite indeed has to be sought after.

And Narada, like a true spiritual hero, affirms: ‘O venerable Sir, I seek after the Infinite.’

The sage then teaches Narada that when the Infinite is truly known, there will be no division between our self and It, no split into knower, knowledge and known. This is the real knowledge that completely fills experience and washes away grief, fear and longing forever. This is joy absolute.

‘The Infinite is that where one does not see anything else, does not hear anything else and does not understand anything else. Hence the finite is that where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else. That which indeed is the Infinite, that is

immortal. On the other hand, that which is finite is mortal.’
‘Venerable Sir, [asks Narada] on what is the Infinite established?’
‘In its own glory, or not even in its own glory.’

The purpose of the Upanishads is to teach us about the Infinite, Brahman — but not only to teach us *about* Brahman. Their function is to teach Brahman *and cause it to be known as the Self*. Man does have an interior sense of the Infinite. This is why he is never satisfied for long with anything in the finite realm of names and forms. He does not need to become the Infinite, the All. In his true nature, he *is* the Infinite. He *is* the All. He is the essential selfhood in all, and anything over and above that selfhood is an illusory appearance.

Do we want joy and fulfilment? Do we want to end fear forever — whether it is fear of anything or anybody, or fear that is to do with our own imagined weakness or inadequacy? The only solution is to know, through direct experience, that our own Self *is* the Infinite. The whole purpose of the spiritual Yoga is the achievement of final freedom. This is effected through knowledge which manifests when the mind has been controlled and purified. Then man’s higher powers of intuition and inspiration, normally dormant, become operative, and open the way to the freedom of enlightenment.

Where then is the Infinite? In this world of sense perception, how can we stretch our mind even to approach it? The only obviously infinite principle that presents itself in our experience is space. The *Chandogya Upanishad* first unfolds the concept *as if* it were spatial.

The Infinite is below, the Infinite is above. It is behind, it is in front, it is in the south, it is in the north. The Infinite indeed is all this.

This is an indication. The real Infinite transcends space and time, and cannot be grasped, however widely we stretch our imagination. As the Taoist master, Lao Tzu, puts it:

Without stirring abroad, one can know the whole world.
Without looking out of the window, one can see the Way of Heaven.
The further one goes, the less one knows.

Therefore the sage knows without having to stir,
Identifies without having to see,
Accomplishes without having to act.

Why is this so? Because the infinite is the true Self of man. In the words of Sanatkumara:

The Self indeed is below, the Self is above, the Self is behind, the Self is in front, the Self is in the south, the Self is in the north, the Self indeed is all this. Anyone who sees thus, reflects thus, understands thus, revels in the Self, disports in the Self, has union in the Self, has pleasure in the Self. He becomes a sovereign.

This is the unimpaired, unimpeachable, self-sovereignty innate in the very fact of being the Self of all.

OM. One ocean of consciousness exists, infinite all light, all bliss, ever abiding. That am I. OM.

B.D.

COMING TO GOD

An aged woman once came to the Bhagavan Guru and said:

‘O Holy man, I have lived a life of extreme selfishness, and I now wish to learn the way to holiness. Teach me and accept my body, mind and wealth.’

The Teacher was silent. Therefore, the woman asked: ‘Have I come too late?’ ‘No’, replied the Guru Bhagavan. ‘You have come soon. Whosoever comes to God before he is dead comes soon — though he may be long in coming’.

H.P.S.

I AM THAT

A poem of Swami Rama Tirtha

I have no scruple of change, nor fear of death,
Nor was I ever born,
Nor had I parents.
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.
I am That, I am That

I cause no misery, nor am I miserable.
I have no enemy, nor am I an enemy.
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.
I am That, I am That.

I am without form, without limit,
Beyond space, beyond time.
I am in everything, everything is in me.
I am the bliss of the universe, everywhere am I.
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.
I am That, I am That.

I am without body or change of the body.
I am neither senses, nor object of the senses.
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.
I am That, I am That.

I am neither sin, nor virtue,
Nor temple, nor worship.
Nor pilgrimage, nor books.
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.
I am That, I am That.

Serve the Sick, the Poor and the Needy

WHEN I READ the glowing account of Albert Schweitzer, his great philanthropy and benevolence, which is almost boundless, I began to think that perhaps some superficial thinker will say to a dedicated follower of the spiritual Yoga: 'Why do you not do something like this? Cannot any of you help in the local hospital or in some children's clinic?' The question is very legitimate. Let us consider it carefully.

When I was a boy of about fourteen, studying logic and the Puranas and the systems of Hindu philosophy, a well-meaning friend of my father said to me: 'Hari Prasad, you are wasting your time. Your studies will do no good to you or to anybody else. Either earn money to help your family and also others, or, if you still have spare time, go to the local hospital in hot weather and fan the patients or serve them cold drinks.'

The suggestion looked plausible, and for a while I seriously thought over it. Then I came to the conclusion that my studies were meant in the long run to create men like Albert Schweitzer or other helpers of humanity. For instance, von Goethe was neither a medical practitioner nor a helper in an orphanage, but by his contributions to moral and spiritual philosophy he has created an Albert Schweitzer and countless other men and women who serve humanity.

Christ, the very incarnation of love of men and God, asked his disciples, saying: 'Go and preach the gospel to the world.'

Shri Shankara devoted his short life of thirty-three years to studying and lecturing on the great philosophy of Advaita and the writing of the great commentaries which will survive as long as the Sanskrit language lives. Under the influence of his Advaita philosophy thousands of people have devoted their lives to philanthropy. Thousands have renounced the world to preach the holy truth of Advaita. Hundreds of colleges and schools have been founded to disseminate education. He has been the means of providing culture to the semi-barbarous people and has inspired countless poets and authors who have influenced the lives of millions of people.

We too admire those who serve selflessly the lepers, the sick and the

illiterate, but from where do these servers get their inspiration? In the vast majority of cases it is from the life of Christ or his holy saints or as a result of the study of Plato, the Stoics, Goethe, Shakespeare and others. William Rathbone was inspired by the Quaker philosophy. Florence Nightingale was a woman of deep religious convictions.

We are like the vernal breeze which helps the growth of plants and flowers. Our teachings create people of a benevolent heart. We denounce in a mild and friendly way all narrowness of the heart and propagate universal love and brotherhood. How many hearts in the future will catch the light of *The Heart of the Eastern Mystical Teaching* or the great *Panchadashi* and become philanthropic workers in the world!

Again we must state that the world needs idealism, great examples and a serious philosophy to back up the virtuous efforts of men like Albert Schweitzer and others. It is we who try in extreme modesty and humility to supply that spiritual need. The heart must be purified and tranquillized before it can be applied to any benevolent purpose selflessly. Besides, any philanthropic enterprise will receive shocks and joltings from the inner promptings of doubt and pleasure and from the glare of love of power. How to keep the soul intact from these disturbing and pernicious influences? It is by the methods of tranquillizing the heart and giving full devotion to the indwelling Lord, whose breath is virtue and philosophy, and whose spirit is truth. It is such people who inspire men to be good.

The greatest problem today is how to prevent the third world war. We have a clear-cut programme and doctrines which, if brought to the notice of men, will minimize the chances of such a war.

The human heart is not like a rock. It is flexible and can be influenced by truth. Shakespeare points to the truth of religious teachings and their power to change a wicked heart full of revenge and power into love and submission. In *As You Like It* the Duke, who has banished his brother and usurped the dukedom, is converted into an affectionate and righteous man by meeting a holy man when he is on the way to slay his brother in exile. It is the preaching of the doctrine of Christ that has found recruits for such benevolent works as are done by the Salvation Army and by the missionaries of Christ.

H.P.S.

The Nature of Faith from the Point of View of the Yogic Philosophy

WHY IS FAITH a quality so highly regarded by all the spiritual schools and one so much abused by the adherents of the scientific spirit of our modern age? To the scientist, what he calls 'faith' is often a blind thing, irrational and childish, which is at the root of all the superstitions and the ignorance in man's thought processes. It is the great obstruction which man has to overcome in his search for truth, the force that makes him cling to pleasant fancies and childhood dreams more suitable to the world of the fairy tale than the world of hard facts.

But to the spiritual schools faith is something quite different. It is that innate faculty in man which guides his whole life, colours his vision of truth and expresses itself in his life and personality. In fact the spiritual teachers are much more practical realists in some ways than the scientist, for they realize that every man, be he a rationalist or mystic, a scientist or a divine, is driven onwards and guided by a deep-seated complex of emotional convictions arising from his experiences and the degree of his understanding of them. It is in this sense that Dr Shastri speaks of faith (in *Teachings from the Bhagavad Gita*, Ch. XVII) as 'the basic tendency in the nature of each individual which gives rise to, and colours, his thought and action. Our mental, emotional and physical activities are actuated by this deep mystic tendency which is called faith. It is the aggregate of the subtle impressions left by our past lives on our own causal body [our subconscious mind]. Man can create, control and also change this tendency; it is not an unalterable fate.'

'Deep-seated in the nature of man is faith (says the *Gita* itself). It is threefold: of the nature of light (*sattva*), passion struggle (*rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*). A man is what is faith is. As his faith is, so is he, undoubtedly.'

An important point which is made here is that the soul of man is not simply moulded by circumstance. His mind is not like the wax disc upon which the incoming sound impressions are inscribed by the needle. The impressions in the mind and the faith to which they give rise are not a

result of experience but of what we make of experience. Bertrand Russell wisely says somewhere: 'Our minds are only deeply affected by what we ourselves choose to interest ourselves in. We make nothing of those experiences and events in which we take no interest.' In fact, Russell goes on to speak about how little we know of how the conscious can affect the unconscious. He believes that we can bury thoughts consciously. The truth is that man is free to set his feelings on and to give value to things as he chooses. This is a truth which science ignores, bent on its own purposes, but which has always been a fundamental and central point in all religious and spiritual teachings. We see it in the passing enthusiasms of a boy growing up.

The 'impartial' 'completely natural' observer of the scientist is a pure figment of their imagination. Each and every man has his deep conviction underlying and colouring his vision of truth.

For there is something even more important in the sweep of its implications — something which the yogis tell us about thought and feeling — which has the most profound significance. Namely that our mind itself, made up as it is of thoughts, impressions, memories and so forth, taking a thousand and more different forms, is moulded out of the substance of feeling and nothing else. This is what the yogis mean when they tell us that desire and aversion, *raga* and *dvesha*, stand at the very basis of our empirical mental processes and that the mind is made up of the pairs of opposites.

Swami Rama Tirtha has a long passage in his Notebooks on the subject of thought and feeling and he quotes with full approval, the doctrine propounded by Herbert Spencer.¹

The spirit of all successful movements is living Faith and flaming *Jnanam* (Knowledge). Even the avowed champions of materialism, scepticism, positivism, atheism and agnosticism, owe their success *unconsciously* to the active spirit of religion in them. In some instances they lived more religion than the professors of religion... none of your personal, domestic, social or political undertakings can flourish free,

¹ Swami Rama Tirtha, *In Woods of God Realization*. Vol 7. p.41 from *The Problem of India*.

except by borrowing grace and glory from the inner reaction, the heart conversion, the mental *Reformation*, the spiritual equation or, in your very soul, a God-revolution. 'Faith is great', says Carlyle, 'life-giving'. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, as it believes. These Arabs, the man Mohammed, and that one century, is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black, unnoticeable sand: but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from 'Delhi to Granada'. Allah-hu-Akbar! There is nothing great but God.

Whatever is truly great, springs up from the inarticulate depths within. Whoever lives not wholly in this Divine Idea, or, living partially in it struggles not as one for the One God to live wholly in it, he is, let him live wherever else he likes, in whatever pomp or prosperity he chooses, a nonentity, not alive or dead.

Even H. Spencer in his very last work, which might be called his dying swan song, referring to an experiment of Huxley with the large brained porpoise, says; 'The body of our thought-consciousness consists of feeling, and only the form consists of what we distinguish as intelligence. That part which we ordinarily ignore, when speaking of mind, is its essential part, viz. feelings. The feelings are the master, the intellect is the servant.' Feelings known in popular language as *heart*, the region of faith and religion, at once prompt the acts and yield the energy for performance of the acts. 'Little can be done' continues Spencer, 'by improving the servant (head) while the master (heart) remains unimproved.' And how remarkably does this conclusion of the redoubled arch agnostic agree with the verdict of the ablest psychologist of the age (William James), 'Religious experiences are as convincing as any direct sensible experience can be, and then, are as a rule much more convincing than results established by logic ever are.' To live at a deeper level of your nature than the loquacious level, to sound the depths of your being, to realize, feel and *be* the innate Reality in you which is also the innate Reality in nature, to be a living personification of the truth of the great dictum Tat-Twam-Asi.

Adhyatma Yoga, like all spiritual training, concerns itself in the first place with these deep and fundamental springs of human conduct.

Indeed it can be said that no one can be really happy until he has harmonized and tranquillized his inner being. We have to learn how to affect not only the surface of our mind over which the streams of ideas are constantly passing in a never-ending series of waves, but also the deeper currents from which they ultimately arise, but which are not evident on the surface.

Professor Hocking has pointed out that the essential characteristic of the great religions is that they demand that we should redirect our feelings and our devotion. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might and thy neighbour as thyself.' What an astounding demand it is. For who thinks himself free to love or not to love? Who can direct his feelings? It never occurs to us that we can regulate our feelings at will. And if we cannot, then the command 'Be ye perfect...' becomes merely an irony; for we all know that our uncontrolled feelings are the cause of much of our troubles — they 'run away with us', as we say.

But what the spiritual teachers tell us is that man is free to set his affections where they ought to be set and that the proper object of his love and worship is nothing short of God. Anything finite as an object of love is bound to disappoint him in the long run.

People often say that they have become embittered by experience. We often blame our cynicism on our disappointment with the world. We start with high ideals in youth, but as soon as a few difficulties come, or circumstances present us with the necessity of giving up our ideals or of fighting for them, we abandon them and say we have become disillusioned by the badness of human nature. But it is not experience in itself which disillusion us, but what we make of experience.

There is a Japanese verse which says: 'The water that is drunk by the cow turns to milk. The water that the snake drinks turns to poison.'

Did the saints experience less of the so-called sordid side of life than the cynics? No. Far more! There can have been few illusions about life in the raw to a Father Damien working and dying among lepers — and no illusions at all about what we are pleased to call the badness of human nature in the minds of a St John of the Cross or a St Teresa of Avila, who had to suffer every kind of malevolence and persecution from the other members of their own order. Then what was the secret

alchemy by which they transformed their own experience — even their experience of the world — into a source of inner peace and wisdom and light?

Swami Rama Tirtha says:²

You can never love anything so long as you perceive ugliness there. Love means perception of beauty. Fighting with darkness will never remove it... so the negative, criticising, chilling, discouraging process will not mend matters. All that is necessary is the positive, cheerful, hopeful, loving, encouraging attitude.

And yet we are commanded: 'Love them that hate you and to good to them that spitefully use you.' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy might (ah yes! We think, *that* is easy) — and thy neighbours as thyself.' (And if we think about this at all, we think how can we?) We feel, like Beethoven, that it is easy to love mankind but not easy to love Mr Higgins down the road.

The simple fact is that we have got to find out a lot more about this mind of ours — and its feelings and emotions and urges, which we never thought we could control. Much of our mind is still uncivilized, the emotions and prejudices are like the wild horses living in herds on the great plains in prehistoric times, roaming this way and that, hunted by beasts of prey and at the mercy of circumstance. Who could have supposed that these animals could become such wonderfully trained servants and friends of man? We have to do the same with our mind.

Hocking echoes the thoughts of Swami Rama Tirtha when he asks how it is possible to fulfil the injunctions: 'Be ye perfect', 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' and so on. He says that clearly the answer cannot be found in the idea of duty. There are many things which one does because one feels that one ought to do them, but one cannot command love in this way. No, says Hocking,

It must lie in a disclosure of the nature of the world. For a demand upon feeling calls for a transformation of desire; and desire formed in us by

² *In Woods of God Realization*, Vol. 5, p.19.

nature, can be transformed only by a vision of unexpected beauty and meaning in the heart of things. If man can somehow fall in love with the Real, as the source of life, he may fall out of love with his self-absorbed self; and it is hard to see how else he can be reborn in the orientation of his affections.

In other words, rebirth, not being something a person can *do*... is not impossible as an experience; but it must come to a person through the discovery of something outside himself (i.e. beyond his narrow individuality)... that elicits his spontaneous allegiance.

And that discovery is the outcome in a mysterious way of the transforming power of a faith, of a purposefully directed devotion. Yoga promises those who master it an unbroken inner peace and bliss, but at a price. Without the loving sacrifice of time and energy, the search will be fruitless and the goal will not be achieved.

Not by much study
Not by agile feats of intellect
Cometh the Spirit.
To him alone the spirit shall be given
Who wooeth it untiringly.

S.D.S.

The Yogic Life is Balance and Concentration

Notice a rope-dancer and see how balanced is his body and mind. He is concentrated on himself and he is defying the law of gravitation. The yogic life is balance and concentration. If one allows his emotions to outrun his reason, pleasure to supersede the good, comfort to have preference over study, ascetism and devotion, then you are out of balance in life and run a great risk.

H.P.S.

CONVERSATION IN KEW GARDENS

‘The yogi, being convinced that the world is an illusion (*Maya*), cannot take part in creating beauty, art, literature or even good conduct. It does not matter how things happen in a dream,’ she said to me as we sat in Kew Gardens, under a tree over which the sun was streaming forth in full splendour.

I replied, saying: ‘My child, this line of reasoning is faulty and illogical. Just consider, when we know there is a venomous snake in the room in which we are, we try to locate and exterminate it. Granting the world is an illusion, there must be its opposite, Reality, somewhere. No illusion has an independent existence. As illusion entails false knowledge, uncertainty and suffering, it is our duty to do away with it by discovering the Reality on which it stands. Man tries to know the cause of his woes and removes them.

The world is illusion in the sense that the Reality underlying all appearances is one and the same; and the Reality in my personality is identical with the cosmic Reality.

The illusion is cut by another illusion of a subtle kind. For instance, the dream tiger which harasses you is cut by the dream sword which you possess.

To sit lazily and do nothing to remove the illusion is yet another illusion. Because everything is passing and to a large extent a mental creation, so far as its values are concerned, it is called an illusion. An illusion is not unreal because the son of a barren woman can never shoot you down. The world is a misunderstanding, a wrong estimate of the Truth which underlies it. This world has many degrees: the lower, the middle and the higher, called *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* in the holy language. The lower, that is, *tamas* (dullness, inertia, darkness), is cancelled by the higher, that is, *rajas* — passion-struggle, unwarranted joy, the sense of aggression and so forth. This aspect of illusion or *Maya* is cancelled by *sattva* — light, equilibrium, benevolence, charity, worship, love of beauty, art, literature, music. They must be of a spiritual character.

You can see now the value of art in the life of a yogi. The highest art has been created by spiritual yogis, like Leonardo, Goethe and others.

No poetry in the world can surpass the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. The source of music, art and philosophy in the holy tradition is one and the same — that is Shri Shiva. He danced the first dance of creation. He created the arts and sciences so that through them a man may refine his mind and overcome the illusion of sansara.

No aspect of art is neglected in the life of Shri Krishna, one of the great founders of the Adhyatma Yoga.

Yes, Sansara is Maya, but your mind, inclinations, urges and instincts are also Maya. Do not forget to refine and overcome them. The personal yogic conduct is a very high art. To know how to behave rightly towards your fellow men is a great art. Vulgarity is a sin. To lose one's temper in another's presence is the densest of illusions. The lower illusion, like love of power, inordinate attachment to luxury and pleasure-desire, is all tamas. This illusion must be overcome by study, austerity, simplicity, devotion and co-operative association in a spiritual community. If you say that the world, being illusion, there is no room in it for art and the cultivation of true beauty, then you fall into a grave error and seem to think that the mind is not illusory.

When we say: 'All is illusion', we affirm the existence of Reality. That the world is an illusion is a half-truth and half-truths are dangerous.

I ask you, my sweet friend, to be reflective and logical and not dogmatic in asserting your unproven hypotheses.

Hari Prasad Shastri

I shall not need a ship, a sail and a compass
To come to Thee.
Give me the homing instinct of the pigeon
That I may reach Thee and be Thy shadow.

Translated from Persian by H.P.S.

Dhyana and Japa (*Meditation and the Rosary*)

MAN IS A RATIONAL ANIMAL, says Aristotle. How far this is true is hard to say. He is a seat of instinctive and emotional urges which must be regulated and the mind disciplined by the application of reason and will. Unregulated urges will ruin man's mind and health and render him an object of danger to himself and society. Nature will send him to bed as a paralytic or to a mental home as a deep neurotic to prevent him from harming himself and others.

Another faculty in man is that he is creative. An infant draws lines on the earth and he coos to himself. A child makes figures of sand on the sea beach. He whistles, he sings; he asks questions and is never tired of doing so.

According to Francis Bacon men of science are either men of experiment or men of dogma. The men of experiment are like the ant; they only collect and use. The reasoners resemble spiders who make cobwebs out of their substance. But the bee takes a middle course. It gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and fields, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own.

Man as a creator has a definite purpose to fulfil. He is not led by a blind force nor by a capricious deity, but by the supreme source of the world of reason, virtue and beauty, to create within himself harmony and mastery of the emotions. He creates so that the best in him may shine forth as Truth and Bliss. Man, to fulfil the purpose of his existence and lead the biological evolution to its destined end, moral and spiritual perfection, must create light within and benevolence, based on unqualified love, without. Let there be no mistake about it. The light of immortality, peace and right understanding must be discovered within and inspire our intercourse with others in the external world. This is the aim of the yogic life.

'Thou has made me for Thyself' cries St. Augustine. 'It is most difficult' some will say. In his *Novum Organum* Bacon says: 'We must turn our faces away from the declining past to the budding future with courage and hope in our hearts, though difficult, and we will meet with success.'

This inner creation leads to the discovery of the greatest, mightiest

and highest in the Self of man. The ideal is called *Jivanmukti*. Like Columbus, we sail in the uncharted sea of our mind, or quarry the mine of the Self to discover the gem which radiates peace, delight, wisdom and freedom forever. The lute of the Self (*Atman*) plays the divine music. You can listen to it and be intoxicated with it only when you have silenced the tunes of the pretenders, the emotions, prejudices, empirical aims and even reason.

The Yoga is a science which is meant for the study of the reflective — those who are convinced that the world of the senses has nothing substantial to offer. The riches, power, youthful and trusting beauties are not reflections of Truth, Atman. He is wise who is not attracted by the objects of the senses. He is fitted for *jnana* (spiritual wisdom). Let us be wise and convince our mind that what it is seeking in the form of satisfaction and freedom is to be found in the Self by the Self, through the Self. 'Reflect on It; talk only of It', says the great Vidyanaraya.

It is *dhyana* (meditation) and *japa* (repetition of a holy name or mantram given by the Guru), which are great aids to the yogi. The object of *dhyana*, or meditation, is to still the mind, to charge it with the ideal, to make it dive deeper and deeper in search of 'I am Brahman' (My true Self is, in essence, the supreme Reality). The yogi must ignore the alien voices of reason and power, false conception of duty or narrowness. Shri Prahlada defied his father and suffered indescribable calamity but gave him full forgiveness. What did not Shri Rama Tirtha renounce to know God as his Self!

Meditation colours the mind with the dye of *vairagya* (detachment) and makes it transparent. Unless an interest occupies the mind it will not materialize. The yogic life of devotion, peace, study, benevolence is impossible without daily meditation.

Our mind with its different functions of feeling, willing, imagining, reflecting and so forth, is comparable to a garden, the fruits of which ultimately are peace, tolerance, the light of wisdom and freedom. This garden has to be weeded of all wild and dangerous growth such as hate, foolish attachment to any object, pride, anger, egoity and irrational prejudices; otherwise it will remain unfruitful, grow wild itself and finally revert to the animal state.

Then the garden has to be protected from external invasions like bad

society, love of pleasure and power, aimlessness in life. In either case, nature will intervene and produce restlessness, anxiety, worry, melancholy and, in acute cases, suicidal tendencies.

The only protective means is meditation. Realize the objectivity of the mind, still it, and place before it high mental images of purity and spirituality. Meditation is an excellent exercise of the mind. It becomes a great help in daily life and a most pleasant practice. Patience, perseverance, courage and a distaste for the sense pleasures, are essential. To endow the figure of the Guru with spiritual qualities and meditate on it is a good prelude to meditation on Rama, Jesus, Krishna and Shiva. I loved the holy river Ganga, and meditated with closed eyes on its waves, eddies and bubbles with love; then on the water, then on the universal aspect of the holy river issuing from the locks of Shiva. In meditation we refer every idea to the universal aspect of it until the ruling idea is, 'All is Shiva'. The half moon hanging in a clear sky over the silent and majestic peaks of the Himalayas, revealing range after range in a dream-like vision, was the object of meditation for a long time. The images created as ideas by the biological urges of sex must be transmuted into pure Consciousness. Instead of the mind being allowed to dwell on a coming holiday or a little house on a green slope with Margaret playing the waltzes of Strauss on the piano, think of the sage, Shri Dada, blessing the Untouchables.

What about *japa*? It is a most important spiritual exercise. Take a holy name of God or your mantra and repeat it as if you were eating something most sweet and elevating. Concentrate on the repetition as a purifying exercise full of inexpressible beauty. Dada saw a young mother fondling her firstborn and calling his name with great sweetness and joy. He remarked 'Children, God is the sweetest essence of beauty and bliss. Do your *japa* as this young woman is loving her baby.'

Just as a skilful mason places one brick on another to build a palace, so in your *japa*; with each recitation you are adding mental images to your palace of eternal Light. With your single-minded *japa* you will erect a tower of spiritual Light of devotion to God. The rays of light issuing from this tower, your spiritualized heart, will give courage, peace and patience to countless hearts now in a state of torpor and scepticism.

Hari Prasad Shastri

Clearing the Mist in the Mind

WHAT IS THIS ‘mist’, to which the title refers? It is *avidya* or ignorance. Not ‘ignorance’ meaning ‘stupidity’, but as in being ignorant of our true nature. Just as mist obscures our vision of objects, so does *avidya* affect our ability to see the world and ourselves as we really are. And as mist can be so thick as to obscure everything, or be the finest diaphanous shimmer, so can the human mind be under varying degrees of *avidya* and, one way or another, all yogic practices aim to thin out this *avidya*. While *avidya* acts on all our experiences of the world, there is one object on which it has a particular effect, and that is our sense of ‘I’ or *ahankara*. The yogic philosophy divides the mind into four parts: the intellect or reasoning faculty, called *buddhi*; the lower mind, the *manas*, which mainly processes sense data; *chitta*, comprising memory and emotions; and the ‘I’, the ego sense.

The function of *ahankara* is to bind together all our thoughts and experiences, so that they become ‘my’ thoughts and ‘my’ experiences. When analysed, it is curiously difficult to pin down *ahankara*. One might imagine that to experience the pure ‘I’ one could progressively objectify all these elements and so conclude that there must be something different from all these thoughts and experiences. But if we do this and distance ourselves from all our thoughts and experiences, is anything left? One may be tempted to say ‘No’, and if one did, one would be in the company of some great Western philosophers. However, Adhyatma Yoga says otherwise and, indeed, this path of determining what we are not is a classical yogic method as given in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Adhyatma Yoga explains that the ‘I’ of man is identical with the Divine but that we do not realize this, falsely considering our thoughts, feelings and memories to be our true self. Consider the following analogy. Imagine a bulb shining with white light, surrounded by a shade made up of glass panels of various colours. Now imagine that each panel represents an individual who, like ourselves, is self-aware, conscious, if you like. Each panel, therefore, sees the light it emits and thinks, for example, ‘I am shining blue light, my real nature must be blue light’.

Likewise, the green panel thinks ‘I am shining green light, my real nature must be green light’ and so on for the different coloured panels. But this is an illusion. The real light of each panel is colourless and, moreover, all originate from the same source. But, you may say, the blue panel is still blue and different from the green panel. Yes, but what would be the state of affairs if the bulb went out? Well, the idea that the panels would be different colours would be meaningless as there would be no colour at all. In other words, in a certain way, the fact that there are apparent differences between objects at all is a manifestation of the white light, the divine unity. The goal of Yoga, therefore, is to realize this truth and, as has been alluded to, our sense of ‘I’ is at the heart of this.

How can we get to grips with this problem? We firstly have to become aware of our sense of ‘I’ as an object, and here we mean the ego sense rather than the ultimate ‘I’. In objectifying the ego sense we can observe its activity and, in so doing, we will automatically gain some control over it.

In the workplace people’s egos seem particularly prominent, perhaps because it is a situation that, for financial reasons, we have to remain in when we would otherwise leave. Or, more positively, we see it as an activity which denotes our sense of self worth. Whatever the reasons, it is a good place to observe how active and sensitive our ego can be. It can easily be seen how some apparently innocuous remark can hurt us or equally how a casual comment can be taken the wrong way by someone else. And you can be sure that when offence is taken or anger springs up in the mind, that the ego has been crossed in some way. A former Warden of Shanti Sadan, Dr Halliday, related an incident that illustrated this very point. He was travelling on a train with an ex-army officer who he knew took an inordinate pride in his appearance, especially in the tremendous shine he could put on his shoes. The train was quite full and, while a man was negotiating his way past this officer to his seat, he inadvertently stood on his shoe. This produced the most violent response in the officer, quite out of proportion to the damage caused. Why? Because, evidently the officer identified his self, his ego, with his impeccable appearance and when this was infringed it cut him to the core. Now we look at this and think how ridiculous it was, but we

all have points of our personality or possessions that, if infringed, might produce a similar response.

In relating this story, he went on to liken our ego to an exquisitely tender boil where we not only yelp if it is prodded, but also become acutely aware of when it may be touched. So how can we counter this? In the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is the verse:

When thought is quiescent, restrained by the practice of Yoga; when, seeing the Self by the self, he is satisfied in his own Self ...

The second line seems relevant here: seeing the Self (with a capital 'S' as denoting our real self) by the self (the small 's' denoting our individualized self).

In other words, we can try and realize that we are not this limited being with all its faults and frailties but in reality something far greater, in fact something perfect. And the verse tells us that when this process is complete, 'He is satisfied in his own Self', meaning that the constant desire of the mind for acquisition and pleasure is finally sated.

The practical ramification is that, as we go about our daily business we can try to keep, at the back of our minds, the fact that we have within us something perfect; something to which nothing need be added and from which nothing can be taken away. It is quite surprising the effect this has on one's view of oneself and, more importantly, the attachment and sensitivity we consequently place with the ego.

At this point there may be some anxiety that you cannot just start thinking in this way, as it will only lead to a sort of ego-mania. Adhyatma Yoga would reply that as long as we are under the influence of *avidya* we are already suffering from an ego-mania. All our thoughts are more or less self-centred, focused on achieving, in one form or another, happiness for ourselves or those close to us, who are really extensions of our self-identity; my family, my friends.

So, what results if we do start to remind ourselves of our true nature? This, in fact, and perhaps counter-intuitively, leads to a decrease in the ego-sense because, instead of propping up the little self by attributing to it many wonderful qualities it does not actually possess, we are realigning our sense of self with its real basis, the true Self. And there

are many other ramifications. For example, it starts to erode the sense of fear that is such a common affliction; fear of loss, fear of physical disability and disease. If we have the conviction that, while our little self is but a tiny, transient bubble in the ocean of consciousness, we are the ocean itself, then what do we have to fear?

It also allows us to take a dispassionate look at ourselves. When we are under the delusion that this little self is our real nature, it is terribly difficult to acknowledge our faults. It is all too close to home. However, if we see our ego-sense and its apparent attributes as something different from our real nature, then we are far more able to recognize our faults and be willing to change them. This, in turn, is invaluable in initiating another important change to take place in us, which is to realize that the true purpose of life is not the acquisition of fame and fortune, which are of little consequence, but to strive to realize our true and eternal nature.

However, as a word of caution, it is possible that, if taken in isolation, this practice might lead to no more than self-deception. Here the first part of the verse from the *Gita*, 'when thought is quiescent, restrained by the practice of Yoga' becomes relevant. It reminds us that all aspects of yoga practice must be undertaken to achieve real insight. Here the role of a spiritual guide becomes invaluable since, on one's own, the risk of deluding oneself is high, even after one has advanced considerably in the yogic training.

So far, we have concentrated on how we view the nature of ourselves. What about the nature of the external world? This Yoga tells us that just as our inner nature is perfect, so is the inner nature of all apparently external objects. On this point, the *Gita* again supplies a verse: 'With the heart concentrated by Yoga, with the eye of evenness for all things, he beholds the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.' 'He beholds the Self in all beings'; in other words, the presence of this perfect essence in all things becomes a conscious awareness. This is an outcome of all forms of yogic practice. It is said to arise from a purification of the mind which allows higher faculties to come into operation. Dr Shastri called these supra-mental, meaning that they are not part of the everyday mind but something which, though present in all people, need to be awakened.

A practice follows from this teaching, which is to try to keep this fact at the back of one's mind. The effect of this practice is far-reaching; it will colour all our activities in a most positive way, as it is based on truth.

A story about a Zen monk, from the book *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* by Paul Reys, may help to illustrate the point.

Gessen was an artist monk. Before he would start a drawing or painting, he always insisted upon being paid in advance, and his fees were high. He was known as the 'Stingy Artist'.

A geisha once gave him a commission for a painting. 'How much can you pay?' enquired Gessen. 'Whatever you charge,' replied the girl, 'but I want you to do the work in front of me.'

So on a certain day Gessen was called by the geisha. She was holding a feast for her patron. Gessen with fine brushwork did the painting. When it was completed he asked the highest sum of his time. He received his pay. Then the geisha turned to her patron, saying: 'All this artist wants is money. His paintings are fine but his mind is dirty; money has caused it to become muddy. Drawn by such a filthy mind, his work is not fit to exhibit. It is just about good enough for one of my petticoats.'

Removing her skirt, she then asked Gessen to do another picture on the back of her petticoat. [And as you can imagine this was a gross insult for a geisha to ask a monk to do such a thing]. However as quick as you like Gessen asked 'How much will you pay?' 'Oh, any amount,' answered the girl. Gessen named a fancy price, painted the picture in the manner requested, and went away.

It was learned later that Gessen had these reasons for desiring money: Firstly a ravaging famine often visited his province. The rich would not help the poor, so Gessen had a secret warehouse, unknown to anyone, which he kept filled with grain, prepared for these emergencies. Secondly from his village to the National Shrine the road was in very poor condition and many travellers suffered while traversing it. He desired to build a better road. And thirdly his teacher had passed away without realizing his wish to build a temple, and Gessen wished to complete this temple for him.

After Gessen had accomplished his three wishes he threw away his brushes and artist's materials and, retiring to the mountains, he never painted again.

This story has many wonderful teachings, but one must certainly be that if we try to infer the state of another's mind and his consequent motives, we are liable to be mistaken. Indeed, the conclusions we reach probably say quite a lot about the state of our own minds. Dr Halliday quoted this story to make the point that while it is in the nature of the mind to make inferences and judgements about the behaviour of others, we would do better to suspend this activity. What, then, should we think? Our thoughts should be that the real nature of every other being is perfection and all their actions, even if misguided and harmful, express their desire to realize their true nature, as do all our desires.

So, to sum up. The central problem regarding the state of man, according to Adhyatma Yoga, is that we take our self to be what we are not, namely, the body and mind with all its likes, dislikes, thoughts and feelings, rather than our real Self. Recalling the analogy of the light illuminating the glass panels of different colours, we imagine that we are the colour of the glass rather than the colourless light which illumines it.

While there are many yogic practices which gradually erode this misapprehension, the two set out in this paper are: firstly, to try and recall, consciously in daily life, that our central nature is perfection and that the only really worthwhile goal in life is to realize this. All other activities are in the realm of *avidya* and are part of the endless cycle of birth and death. Secondly, that we try to recall that the nature of all other beings is also perfect, divine and, therefore, identical in all beings.

Now this may sound rather theoretical and too remote from everyday life, but these thoughts are in fact most potent when the mind is agitated and the world seems all too real, when, for some reason, we have become angry, annoyed, offended or slighted. It is best, therefore, to make a conscious, pre-emptive decision that the next time this happens we will apply this technique and observe its effects.

P.R.

A POEM by ZAFAR

Those who came in hope of a pleasant spectacle
Left this world repentant in the end.
Those who could not penetrate to the land of dreams,
Even though couched on velvet,
Now sleep securely in the dust.
In this transient world we are but bubbles,
Wrapped in a winding-sheet from the first.
Beholding the blossoms already withered in the garden
The flowers learn their fate.
O heedless ones, why take pride in your life?
It is but a reflection in water,
A passing ripple.
We did not come here of our own volition,
There cannot be a footprint without a foot.
O Zafar,
Only the rains of the Cloud of Mercy
Can extinguish that fire of agony
That is fed by our mischievous breath.

Translated by A.J.A.

A piece of wood can serve as fuel, or it can be carved into a beautiful image of Kwannon Sama and delight the soul of many devout worshippers.

The yogi transmutes the life into nirvana, the highest peace and truth. He creates a personality of peace and beauty and lives in the eternal region of light which shines forever.

Follow either of the two ways. But apply reason and the experience of the sages.

H.P.S.

Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

When the seer beholds not an agent other than the gunas and knows Him who is higher than the gunas, he attains to My being.

Having crossed beyond these three gunas, which are the source of the body, the embodied one is freed from birth, death, decay and pain, and attains the immortal.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter XIV verses 19 and 20

THE REAL PATH to liberation has one final end, and it is called direct perception of the Self as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). Prior to the actual perception, many conditions have to be fulfilled. They are all psychological and have very little to do with the practical way of life. One of the necessary conditions is mastery over pleasure sense, anger, avarice, egoity and delusion.

The word *moha* translated here as delusion is an important word. It means attachment, but something much more than attachment as well. The direct result of the contact of *avidya* (spiritual ignorance) on the Self is *moha*, a feeling of delusion which makes the reality obscure and gives unreality an appearance of reality. *Moha* is the chief means by which *sansara* (the world appearance) is maintained. If *moha* is destroyed then there is no *sansara*. One of the chief causes which lends the rope the appearance of the snake is darkness, the state in which true vision is not possible. This is exactly what is meant by *moha*. The belief in the separateness of one's own self and in the reality of the subject-object relationship is due to *moha*.

Jnana (knowledge of Truth) destroys this *moha*, just as when a light is ushered into a room at dusk, where a rope has been mistaken for a snake, the snake disappears. Likewise egoity, the separative consciousness, the feeling of 'I am I' and 'you are you', 'this is my opinion, it must be true', all of which is *moha*, disappears under the light of *jnana*. All this *moha* is the effect of *avidya*. How to get rid of *avidya* is the only problem before man.

The urge to know the truth is as strong in man as the urge to marry,

to obtain food or to sail on uncharted seas by way of adventure. It is the highest indication that, beyond what is known as time, space and causation, there is something which is real, self-lit, perfectly independent and eternal.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* several ways are indicated by which this state can be acquired. One is self-surrender as described in the concluding verses of the eighth chapter; another is self-cognition spoken of in the last twenty verses of the second chapter and elsewhere; and there are other paths laid down, by treading which, men can overcome egoity, the separative consciousness or *moha*. When this is done, the end of the journey has been reached.

Shri Swami Satchitanandaji Maharaj used to cite two verses, namely 19 and 20 of chapter 14, to show the way to self-realization which he had followed and which brought him supreme illumination.

One of the feelings which is invariably associated with the consciousness of man is that he is an agent. Every man knows that he is doing something; the thief knows that he is stealing, the saint knows that he is contemplating. This feeling is located in fact in *maya*³ or *prakriti*⁴. It does not exist in pure consciousness or *Atman*. How can *Atman* be the doer? To do, means to change from one place to another, to make a differentiation between doing, what is done and the means by which doing takes place. If these aspects of mind are attributed to the Self, then the Self cannot be immortal, being subject to cause and effect. Then who is the doer? It is a most difficult thing to say. This is certain, that the Self is not the doer. It is the three *gunas*⁵ of which *prakriti* is composed

³ The deluding power of the Lord by which the universe has come into existence and appears to be real.

⁴ 'Matter' in all its subtle and gross manifestations, of which the universe and everything in it is composed.

⁵ Wave-like principle or mode which pervades the whole of creation (*prakriti*). There are three *gunas*: *sattva* (light, peace,

which make doing possible. Though it is impossible to locate where doing really takes place, for all practical purposes the spiritual aspirant may think it is the three *gunas*, which is the region of action.

The end of the evolution of consciousness is to become divine. In verse 19, the Lord says: 'He who knows himself to be beyond the operation of the three *gunas*, enters into My being'. This entry does not mean acquiring omniscience, omnipotence or the ability to create solar systems. What is meant here is perfect release from pain, suffering and limitations. The supreme state cannot be described in positive terms because the human vocabulary has no words to express it. When the state of illumination is reached, the soul recognizes its true nature which is beyond all description.

One of the ways by which this state is realized is to attribute all action, perception, conception to the *gunas* of *prakriti*. Verse 20 tells how the Blessed Lord Krishna expresses the result of illumination. He emphasizes that the consciousness which is today involved in the subject-object relationship or in the triad of doer, doing and what is done, is in the three *gunas*.

A stilled and purified mind contemplating itself as above the three *gunas*, comes to a point in consciousness when it gives way before the light of consciousness which is itself the light of the empirical mind. The body has been produced by the three *gunas* and so has the mind. When the Consciousness, *Atman* or Self, realizes its absolute separateness from the three *gunas*, then that which is attributed to the three *gunas* is no longer attributed to the Self. Birth, death and old age are overcome; grief of different kinds, which is caused by the frustration imposed by limitations, comes to an end, and the Self knows itself to be immortal.

Realization of the unreality of death, birth and sorrow is release. If these are said to exist at all, then what gives them existence is the Self, Sat or Truth. The Sage who has gone beyond the three *gunas* is immortal and free from all delusions or *moha*.

purity), *rajas* (activity and passion-struggle) and *tamas* (darkness, inertia)

Shri Swami Satchitanandaji stressed the importance of this method of meditation and expected his pupils to practise it. He gave many beautiful illustrations in order to clarify it. One of them is quoted here:

Some people in India have pigeons as pets. These are domestic not wild. Every afternoon the doors of the dove-cots are opened and the pigeons are let out to fly. In the middle of the courtyard a stand is set up, sometimes twenty feet high or even more. It is made of a bamboo which is fixed in the ground and on top of it is a cross-bar serving as a perch for the pigeons. Golden pigeons, ring doves and pigeons of speckled wings settle on the stand. The stand gives support to them all and it is not attached to any.

Atman is comparable to this stand; the pigeons are the *gunas* which phenomenally function on consciousness but consciousness is totally indifferent to them.

In this way, in sorrow and in pleasure, in prosperity and adversity, in company and in solitude, the yogi detaches himself from the delusion of the three *gunas* and does not identify himself with any of them. When this process of disidentification is complete, *moha* ends for ever, and infinitude, illumination and freedom are all that can be said of the state of the Jnani.

Peace and abuse are the same to a yogi. No one is so dear that he cannot live without him; none so repugnant that he has aversion for him. Whatever comes he takes it in the same spirit in which the pigeon stand accepts the visiting pigeons.

It is not enough to admire this attitude; what is wanted is the cultivation of it. Devotion to the Guru facilitates the promotion of indifference to the *gunas*.

Hari Prasad Shastri

The Two Paths of Man — Action and Reflection

THERE ARE TWO PATHS on which the soul of man travels; one is the path of external engagement and the other is the path of reflection and knowledge. These two paths are opposed to each other. Reflection is the negation of external activity and sense activity is on the other hand negation of reflection.

When the mind is engaged in external activity it gets experience through observation. Experience serves as a teacher and, if taken uncritically and in an un-human spirit, it serves as an incentive to further sense activity, the ultimate result of which is greater and greater bondage to circumstances. For instance a man for the first time drinks one ounce of alcohol. He may like the inebriation and the nervous agitation caused by alcohol and it may serve as a basis of further enjoyment of it. Man must always be a critical reflective being. Each and every experience obtained in the realm of the senses must be critically reflected upon, and an endeavour must be made to find out whether the experience has enriched the soul. If it has only caused a temporary, nervous excitement or a thrill, and not enriched the soul in virtue, in acquisition of Truth, in sympathy, more than all, in *vairagya* (non-attachment), then that experience is only a source of bondage. This is a supremely important fact.

The other activity of the mind is to reflect. The soul is like a bird that soars into the deep blue through the faculty of reflection. Reflection in the beginning leads to inference, deduction, analytical conclusions etc., but its chief object is the probing deeper and deeper into the nature of the Self and the ability of the experience — empirical as well as subjective — to furnish the right kind of enjoyment, the enjoyment which ensures satisfaction to the soul.

The real life begins when man recognizes that the goal of his life is freedom, that is, the ability to know the Truth and also the ability to communicate the means of freedom, the Truth, to others. Any life lived before this cognition is a fractional life, a partial life and not whole life,

and that which is whole alone gives satisfaction. The parts do not satisfy the soul.

How can the path of action be an instrument to the acquisition of the freedom which the soul yearns after? In the *Gita* the Lord teaches that action is indispensable and that nobody can live without action even for a moment. The secret of life, the great lesson of philosophy, is that man should live in the external world acting and reflecting in such a way that his soul may not stick to the alleged honey of the joys of the world, nay, it may make each and every action, and the experience consequence on the same, as a lever to lift the soul from the mire of the sense world to the beatific region, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Nothing is obtained without serious efforts. Ripe fruits do not fall into the mouth of a hungry man. Granting that the urge and the ability to strive depend upon the Lord, man will not have anything worth while, much less the grace of the Lord, without making serious efforts in the direction, whether spiritual or temporal.

The actions have their value through the effect they create on the mind and the conviction which propels the mind to action. The same action seemingly good may constitute a hindering means if its motive is unspiritual. The yogis colour their mind with one supreme motive, and that is the good of all mankind, and the universal good comes from the source of universal benevolence, the Lord. When the action is actuated by the motive that the Lord is the end-all and be-all of our existence and being, and that our actions have to be the means to fit our mind for identification with Him, all actions assume a purifying aspect. However pure and benevolent the motive inspiring an action, it is a source of bondage if it starts with anything selfish, narrow, pertaining to a race, a nation, a family or even humanity.

The actions of a spiritual man differ from those of common men, not only in motive but also in their practical aspect. He does not try to be 'an awfully good man'. He lives in his action, he is a whole man; his mind is so saturated with the divine essence that every action to him is a flower offering to his Lord. A detailed account of such actions is found in the lives of the gopis and gopas of Braj [the cowherd maidens and youths who were the childhood companions of Shri Krishna].

As to the path of reflection, it implies more or less a monastic life.

Pure reflection in its ultimate aspect is possible only in a life of solitude and spiritual brotherliness. A beginning in this direction is made in the form of a spiritual brotherhood in which the centre of common affection is the spiritual Truth. The yellow robe and the staff and the wooden *loshta* (water pot), and perhaps a book are the only companions of one leading the life of reflection. He walks aimlessly; his feet take him where his *prarabdha* (destiny) leads him. Life and death have the same significance to such a soul. To them society and solitude are not different from each other. Such men are called truly great men — *Paramahansas*. To be a *Paramahansa* one has to lead the life prescribed for spiritual monks in the Holy Shastras. Such a life can only be lived when pleasure and pain are viewed as aspects of the same experiencing reality. To such belongs the whole world. They are called the spiritual sovereigns of the world. Their words have spiritual radio-activity. Their looks are showers of moonbeams on the thirsty desert.

H.P.S.



A STAR

A star sheds its serene rays, which light the sky, the sea and the wood. Piercing the gloom, its light reveals the beauty of nature. It shines and shines ceaselessly.

There is life in its light; there is the nectar of peace in its brilliance. Love, delight and tranquillity of the heart emanate from the star.

He who looks up to it in the infinite sky and wonders, adores and loves this most wonderful luminary, he is happy and reveals the Truth to others.

But he who does not lift up his soul to the the star, creates wealth, mansions, runs about, loves speed, but always eats dust in the end.

It will enter your soul and fill it with Truth, if you lift up your eyes and look at it with attention.

Insufficiency of a knowledge and love of the star is called ignorance.

H.P.S.

The Inner and Outer Worlds

OUR EXPERIENCE OF LIFE can be divided into inner experience and outer experience. Dr Shastri wrote that it is our inner experience which is really 90% of our life, our inner world of thoughts, dreams, desires, ambitions, inspirations, intentions, convictions. When we try to make a list of its contents, we see how rich it is.

John Milton wrote, 'The mind is its own place and in itself Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.' Some of the richest men in the world have been as miserable as sin. For example, the oil magnate Paul Getty was obsessed with the fear that his company would be taken over by a bigger one. Herodotus travelled the world and found only three happy men who were poor as church mice. Many people have been afflicted with severe ill-health and have nevertheless led lives which have been inspirations to others. One definition of happiness is that you do not want to swap your life for anyone else's. That noble lady, Aung Sang Su Chi, has been unjustly imprisoned for years in Burma, but if you asked her if she would exchange her life for anyone else's, what would she say? We all know these things — once basic needs have been met, it is what you live for, it is what you fix your inner world on that matters. This is a truth which is hard to deny.

Adhyatma Yoga is a spiritual yoga which teaches us how to make a heaven of hell, how to make a desert bloom, how, one may say, to raise the dead, because once the inner vision is clear and the heart opened, we can see the goodness, the beauty, the wisdom. These are the qualities which really nourish us. They are the bread of life. Those of us who are acquainted with the Book of Genesis will remember that when God saw all he had made after six days, he declared that it was 'very good'. But as a result of the fall, we have entered a depression and don't see much goodness in anything. In Catholic theology the fall is due to original sin; we say that all the trouble is caused by a little ignorance of what we are. Yoga reawakens the spiritual vision which enables us to see goodness and reality in the outer world and in ourselves through knowledge.

So in this Yoga we are not much concerned with the outer world because we hold that everything is determined from within. The

philosopher William James was a man of some concentration and one evening he was at a dinner party. Everyone was chatting and he was left out. So he looked at the fire and began to think about it. He considered all its properties, its usefulness to man, the danger of it and sank into contemplation of fire.

When he returned, as it were, he found that everyone at the table was talking about – fire. Our world is determined by what we hold in our hearts and minds. But it is not only our world, but the worlds of those around us which is determined from within. Each one of us has the power to change the whole world by what we choose to give our minds to. Some very pithy *sutras* were written by a yogi called Patanjali many years ago. In one of them he writes that in the presence of someone who has perfected truthfulness, nobody can tell a lie. This is the way Dr Shastri built up his *sangha* or community. There was no attempt at making disciples or converting anyone, no compulsion: it was just what he concentrated upon which attracted people.

In days gone by, people believed in the stone of the philosophers which could turn everything into gold. Philosophy for them included natural philosophy which is what we would call science. The alchemists spent much energy trying to discover the stone with a view to attaining immense wealth. But the first thing any ancient philosopher would have told you would be that the acquisition of gold was not a sensible goal in life. The great philosophers like Socrates were concerned with justice, wisdom and truth. In the East, the spiritual philosopher Shankara simply says that 'prosperity is adversity and adversity is prosperity' so it is an open question what use a means of acquiring gold would be to them.

Once we have some sense of the potency of the human mind, it can be seen that the mind itself is that very stone of the philosophers. When it is brought under control and learns to focus itself on a great and uplifting theme, it becomes illuminated and all the good qualities appear.

If you think this is hard unrewarding work, it is a mistake. The mind is brought under control by the Yoga, just as a dog may be trained by well-established methods. What is hard work is trying to get what we want in the ordinary way. We are making heavy weather of the world

as it is; all our ambitions and desires and struggles for power and significance are hard labour. In the Greek myth, Sisiphus is condemned to roll a heavy rock up to the top of a steep hill, but just before he gets there, it slips and rolls all the way down. So he has to go down to the bottom and start again. He just couldn't get any job-satisfaction.

People expect to be happy when they complete a job or fulfil their desires, but somehow it doesn't quite hit the spot, as they say, and a new project has to be adopted. We need to find a happiness and satisfaction which doesn't depend on 'doing anything'.

Sustaining our imaginary pictures of ourselves also requires endless mental contortions. Many of us are wound up tight in a knot already. Dr Shastri taught his pupils to relax — that is, to pass from a state of tension to one of relaxation. He said that spiritual realization is the final and full relaxation because nothing any longer has the power to worry you or frighten you.

The teachings passed down to us by Dr Shastri say that the inner world has four parts. There is the manas which is the associative mind, the chitta the realm of feeling, moods and memory, the ahankara or sense of 'I' and the buddhi or faculty of discrimination, will and decision. The manas is the monkey mind which jumps from one thing to another unless it is firmly directed to pay attention to a particular object. Children are full of manas. It connects the inner world to the outer world through the five senses. When we see, feel or smell anything, feelings and associations are aroused in the chitta, which can be informative or may arouse a good or bad feeling according to previous impressions. When the senses and the feelings and the memories have supplied the material, the buddhi decides what is the right thing to do, like a judge in the court. This faculty is not very strong in the average person, who is quite easily hypnotized and bamboozled, especially by the media, by figures of authority and the influence of groups. The buddhi is the will which is able to take a direction and make the mind and body follow it, turning neither to the right nor the left.

Yoga practice strengthens this power of independent judgement. But the most warping influence on the buddhi is the fourth member of the inner quartet, called ahankara or the ego, the ego sense. All creatures

have a sense of self. If you walk up to a goose in a threatening way, it will hiss at you because it has a little ahankara, a sense of self-preservation. But in the human being, the ahankara easily gets out of proportion. It is the ego which really winds us in three types of knot, knots of ignorance, knots of desire and knots of activity.

It is a saying in the law that no man is allowed to be the judge in his own cause. This is because self-interest is so insidious. Even people as well educated as judges, and with as much experience of human nature, cannot be trusted to be fair when it comes to their own private disputes. There are other members of the legal profession who are called mediators whose job it is to resolve disputes before they get to court. They have to deal with people from many walks of life and their experience is that when people get on their high horses, they all behave the same way. The plumber forgets his plumberhood and everything he knows about how to get a good job done. The aristocrat forgets everything he knows about good manners and how to behave. The vicar forgets his vicarship and all Jesus said about loving your enemies. Instead they all focus on the bad side of their opponents' behaviour, they dredge up old grievances from the distant past, they indulge in self-justification and refuse to see anyone else's point of view. This familiar picture is the ahankara on its high horse, but it grumbles away in most of us most of the time. Given a chance to cook the books or fiddle expenses, the ego is delighted to oblige.

Jesus' famous words concerning his tormentors 'they know not what they do' have a universal application, especially when it comes to our narrow self-interest, our wealth, our private pleasures, our close families, our nations.

It is because of the power of these attachments and self-interest that surgeons are not permitted to operate on members of their own family. However, on occasions surgeons have had to operate not only on their families but even on their own bodies and have done so successfully. This is an example of a very strong buddhi. If a surgeon can amputate his own leg, we should be able to cut out ignorance and its children from our soul.

However, these rules for judges and surgeons have their purpose. The Yoga also teaches that a person cannot free himself by his own

individual efforts and that a teacher and a tradition are necessary. A torch is lit from a torch which is already alight. We need an enlightened one to enlighten us. But how do we know who is an enlightened teacher? There are plenty of claimants to enlightenment. We are thrown back on ourselves again because it takes one to know one. We have to make the efforts we can make to strengthen our power of discernment, our wisdom and our power of will, our buddhi. When the pupil is ready, the teacher will appear.

The means to do so are at hand. There is a great deposit of effective methods which can be found in the Yoga teaching. Once again it is not so much a question of force and physical strength as of decision, determination and perseverance. If you wish to build up your muscles and a certain amount of determination, then weight-lifting in the gym will help you. But to build up strength of mind, direct your mind. Do not let your stream of thought be determined from outside yourself. The actress Joanna Lumley made a fine remark recently about young people with all their ipods and blackberries and facebook and twitterings. 'When' she said, 'do they find time to do their thinking?' You don't have to be a professor to think to a purpose.

When we have developed this part of our minds and the ego has assumed its proper place, not only will we be able to keep it focused on that which promotes everyone's real happiness, but we will also be able to make it lie down and be quiet, like a dog in a basket.

When the mind is quiet, free from desires, when all its issues have been resolved, then something reveals itself which is really beyond both the inner world and the outer world and brings full satisfaction.

A.S-B.

Text for Meditation

OM. AS THE LIGHT PASSES THROUGH A TRANSPARENT
PIECE OF GLASS, SO DOES THE INFINITE PASS
THROUGH MY BODY AND MIND. I FEEL ITS PRESENCE
WITHIN AND WITHOUT. OM

UNITY AND LOVE

There are two modes of living: organic and rational. Organic living is instinctive and outwardly purposeless. The cow grazes in a field the whole day, through sunshine and rain, but is neither self-conscious nor has it an idea of a purpose in a definite form.

Man is self-conscious and works to a purpose. He manages to enjoy a family life; he goes on a holiday to find rest and relaxation; he studies to acquire skill and knowledge.

When man, suffering from neurosis, forgets himself and acts to no fixed and definite purpose, he is called mentally unbalanced.

In the organic world the law is strife. Self-preservation is effected through bloodshed. There is no moral consciousness. Killing, robbing, cheating are permissible. There is no respect for private property.

The law of rational life is charity and love. Man is self-conscious and through self-conquest and reduction of his ego-interest he acquires consciousness of the supreme purpose of life. Civilization with general refinement of the instincts is the result of education, rational living and recognition of the law of unity and friendly love.

In the earliest state of civilization man lives partly for himself and partly for his class. He wages war on other classes. Then man becomes conscious of his nature and lives, partly to promote the interests, real or imaginary, of his nation. There is still a state of strife and want of a true civilization. When a nation begins to emerge from the state of isolation and expresses the power it has accumulated, it invades other nations to exercise control over them. After 1852, when Japan emerged from the state of isolation of the Tokugawa regime, her first international act was subjugation of the Kuril islanders by fraud and threat.

There is no real civilization in a state of strife, uncertainty and insecurity. When a large part of the national production is devoted to unprofitable war enterprises, the nation is bound to starve and be demoralized.

The main purpose of civilization is to give security, peace and reasonable satisfaction of man's needs. But this is a mere preparatory stage. Ultimately to justify his existence, man must learn to love Truth, to appreciate and create inner and outer beauty, inner and outer

harmony, and to realize the grand unity of all beings. This is the cardinal teaching of the Confucian philosophy.

A dewdrop on the rose petal becomes, let us suppose, conscious. It will find itself surrounded by a large number of dewdrops and will discover that they are all water and not different from itself. Further thought will show that the same sun is reflected in each and every one of them. After realizing the external unity, it will begin to adore the sun as its father, mother, brother, friend, and the object of love and unity. It will meditate on the sun and soon will be absorbed in it. From the sun it came, to the sun it has returned.

This illustration applies to the state of man. War, strife, atom bombs are no final solution to the strife raging in the heart of man and in the social and international world. Man must live according to the law of nature prescribed for him. It is unity and love.

What have the poor, most peace-loving, meditative and studious Tibetans done to be so cruelly and mercilessly invaded, driven out of their peaceful monasteries and towns, and put to the sword by the demon of Communism? Why? To be liberated! What a mockery! Unless man liberates his soul from passions, beastliness, cruelty and lust, how can he liberate others ?

‘Man is educable’ says Aristotle. What can we do? We cannot sit silent in face of the danger to our spiritual, moral and civic ideals. Let us live in unitive consciousness and express our love for the Sun of suns, the Lord and Soul of us all, by educating the people of the world in the law of the *Gita*. The deluded ones must be disillusioned and taught the ideal of unity and love.

The Yoga of *Advaita* as interpreted by Shri Dada is universal. We have no church, we proclaim no heaven, no hell and no heretics. Truth is our Lord, our friend, our company, and it is *Advaita*.

The writer has devoted only fifty-five years to this service and has done it very imperfectly, but without any personal ends, he has suffered abuses, menaces and dangers.

Serve the best and highest interests of man; they are sadly neglected. Live and listen to the notes of the flute of Hari: ‘Take refuge in Me’.

H.P.S.

SHANTI SADAN NEWS

The Wednesday evening talks at Shanti Sadan during the Autumn term were a further series on meditation with guided practices. The course was arranged in three parts with the same set of practices for three weeks each. All included a breathing exercise, a spiritual visualization, and a meditation on a text expressing non-duality. The sessions were conducted in the traditional way, beginning with an expression of reverence to the supreme reality within, and closing with thoughts of unconditional good-will to all. The meetings passed in a receptive and attentive atmosphere, and there will be another meditation series during the Spring term, when the introductory talks will draw on the psychological and spiritual wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the classical text on meditation and other spiritual methods for those living active lives in the world.

During the coming Spring term the Friday evening talks will also be a series, in this case on the lives and teachings of great spiritual personalities from the Yogic, Christian, and Sufi traditions. The talks will illustrate the universal outlook of the non-dual teachings and their capacity to draw inspiration from all the great religions that can transform the quality of our own life.

The Autumn special course on *The Power Behind the Mind* attracted much interest. The combination of practical steps and teachings on the supreme goal of Yoga will be presented again at the coming Spring course on *Awakening the Higher Consciousness*.

Spring 2010 Special Course Awakening the Higher Consciousness

Sunday 28 February 2010, 2-5pm

Programme:

- Talk 1 *Self-Knowledge - the Key to Fulfilment*
First Meditation session
- Talk 2 *Growing in the Light of Universal Wisdom*
Second Meditation session
- Talk 3 *Being at One with the Eternal Reality*