

**THE GREAT WAY: THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT**

**By Arthur Naylor**

## **Introduction**

**This work outlines the one sure way to spiritual enlightenment.**

**It is the book that needed to be written - the teachings, some never revealed before, of a True Master.**

**It could change your life, and will - if acted upon.**

**You can know Divinity directly, as the old mystics claimed.**

**This book is for earnest seekers with a sense of humour. To walk a spiritual path you cannot take yourself too seriously. You have to be able to laugh at yourself and to be amused by life. After all, life plays tricks on you all the time. Of course seeking the Ultimate Truth of existence is a serious matter. To end all questions, to penetrate the ultimate mystery of life, to discover the truth of your own existence, you have to be serious and dedicated to the quest.**

**Not everyone will like this book. In fact no book quite like this exists. This book is unlike most other spiritual books. The subject dealt with is deep and profound. It explains the whole spiritual journey. Most books are written by people who do not know what they are talking about. They have not walked a spiritual path themselves or have not had deep spiritual experiences and true realisations, as opposed to simply thinking thoughts. They simply repeat what they have heard. This book will shatter many illusions about spirituality and what it really is. This book cuts through all the romantic nonsense. Some may feel I have been too harsh and critical. Remember that truth is hidden behind the illusions and you cannot get at it by fostering them. I did not want to cater to or pamper people's delusions, which is kinder in the long run. Some may not like the levity and lack of reverence shown at times. That is just the way I am, I guess. Must be the toilet paper I use.**

**If you do not like what is taught here, if you do not agree with it, it is because mankind has been consistently lied to by supposed spiritual experts and religious teachers, and you have bought into the lie of what spirituality is, that you are supposed to be good or have faith, or that you were supposed to conform to some ideal, things which may have been okay for infant humanity which needed something to believe in and someone to tell them what to do. In their ignorance they made you ignorant. In their blindness they made others blind.**

**The truth revealed here has been hewn out of my own profound experiences. It is not hearsay nor secondhand information. This began as a journal of my own thoughts about spirituality but then became something more. By attaining a higher state of awareness**

beyond mind I found I had something important to say. In some ways this is about my own journey and the revelations resulting from it. By that I mean actual insights which completely transform your life but have nothing to do with thoughts, attitudes or beliefs. In fact beliefs, opinions and concepts are just thoughts, and thoughts are not real. A thought is just a movement in the mind, a little ripple to which we assign unwarranted importance. Why? Because we think that we think them. Their importance is based on a sense of self: nothing is important unless we think it is. Thoughts seem important when we think we are the mind which thinks them. But we are not the mind.

This book should give you a new slant on what a true spiritual path really is. It is not about faith, belief or devotion; not about self-satisfying emotional guff or pretending to love everyone when you do not. It is not about ego or even about being a better person. It is about transcending all that and finding the Infinite. Lastly, it is about finding you are that Infinite, but not as a personality, not as an ego, nor as a mind. You are much greater than all that. For your true Self lies hidden. But you can find it and know it to be real.

I am not a writer, but someone had to write this. Nobody else did, so I took it upon myself to do so. It needed to be written because it also describes a unique spiritual path, the Path of Sound and Light, that spiritual seekers need to know about. I had been on many spiritual paths before I came to this one, spanning more than thirty years, and I found every one to be limited and unsatisfying as they failed to deliver on their promises of revealing truth. But, on this Path, those who travel it earnestly and honestly end up Enlightened. It is not about finding liberation in some fanciful future life. You are alive today and you can only find it now, or never. In fact there are many paths of sound and light meditation, but none of them lead to anywhere significant. There are no enlightened people on them. Only on this Path do you reach the end of the journey. You find that what you thought you were was just an illusion and a mistaken perception. You are vastly greater than that.

This is the real thing. It is not about twaddle. I have no truck with misplaced faith and useless, pie-in-the-sky devotion. I came to this Path to find the real thing. I found it. You can, too, if you want it. At the least you will find that this book makes you think. And its promise is immense. We are all going to die. That could be at any time for any one of us. We have no time to waste. We can find truth, find we are ultimate and timeless and infinite, or we can simply go on as before and pass away into oblivion and remain in ignorance. I know what I would choose. We all have choice. It is up to you what you choose. But I would urge you not to waste your time on some piddling little path that does not lead to freedom only to discover, years later, that you bitterly regret your lost opportunity, when you have to start all over again or you simply give up hope of ever finding freedom. Do not buy into the lie that all paths lead to the same goal. If that is so, where are all the enlightened people? Use your common sense. This book is for intelligent people, not fools.

**You will find this book comprehensive and that it answers many questions, as well as asking many. It is the best and most honest and truthful description of spirituality that exists at this time. I know of nothing better nor more worthwhile, I regret to say. If there were, I would not have had to write this. I am not trying to peddle spiritual junk food.**

**I can say what I do with assurance because I have walked the Path. It is all based on personal experience. Walking this Path has made me an authority because what I say is based on myself, on my own insights and recognitions, not on what I have been told. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that what I say is true. I know it to be so, just as well as I know I am alive, that I am me. Nothing could make me doubt my own reality. Are you sure about yours?**

**My spiritual reality, my daily experience of my own stillness in every moment of my life, is more real than this planet, even more real than my own body or mind. In fact my mind is not real to me. I live in another dimension. What I have found, you can, too. It is worth the journey. Every step along the way I asked myself: Is this real? Is it true? How do I know that? I questioned everything. I had trusted, wrongly, too often in the past. I told myself that I would not believe anything unless it could be proven. If it could not be, I would put it to one side till either it could be proved or disproved. I was a cynic. I was a skeptic. I was a rebel. I had to know for myself. I just had to. I wanted proof, not another useless theory.**

**As Voltaire said: Reason is the ability to see things as they are.**

**I did the work and Truth was revealed to me. And I was revealed to myself. I did not want religion. I did not want another belief system. I wanted Truth. I found it. Beyond all doubt or question. I am the Truth. That is my reality.**

**What is yours?**

**This is the real thing, a true spiritual path that delivers results. It delivers on its promises. It does what it says. I know of no other way or method which does that consistently. It says it will make you free and it does. It answers life's questions. It allows the bird of the soul to fly free. It uncages the heart. It breaks the fetters of illusion, the hypnosis of materialism which blinds people to their true nature. It breaks the ties that bind.**

**I know. I have walked the Great Way. Some of what I have to say may shock some people, but it is based on direct observation of spiritual experience, as well as many discussions with the greatest spiritual Master on this planet. When I was younger I would have given an arm and a leg for a book like this – my arm, and your leg! You need two legs to walk the Path.**

**There is a Power in man which, undiscovered, will result in a person being only half a man or woman, with a sense of incompleteness and dissatisfaction, with a feeling that something**

**important has been left undone, that the song of life has been left unsung. To feel fully alive the heart must open to this Power. To feel the presence of this Power is awesome and every moment of life is then lived fully alive in the moment; one feels the wonder and majesty of life, the beauty of the energy of life, and in tune with its flow. One feels acutely aware of being aware, acutely aware of being alive, of being the witness of life, and being beyond it as the spectator. That Power makes life more meaningful and more joyful.**

**And there is a way to open the door to that Power.**

**This is it. Walk this Path and watch the flower of the soul unfold and blossom.**

**I do not know if this is the only way, but of the literally thousands of methods, paths and teachings I have used and studied, this is the only way that unerringly and surely leads to liberation and deliverance from illusion. It is a simple fact.**

**This work, a flower for my Master, is dedicated to those who walk the Great Way, to my brothers and sisters on the Path, to those in my local group, Paul and George and Adam – to Clem, who supported me all through my journey; to Paul Taylor, who first inspired me, and taught me at the end; to Paul Mahay, who taught me in the early years; to Nick and Mary, who should have written this from their greater knowledge and experience, but failed to do so. And to others, as an inspiration, I hope, and as a testament.**

**With thanks to the writings of Fiona Placket and Tim Duerden, who helped to clarify my understanding in the early years on the Path.**

**And to my Family, with love. Always.**

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# The Great Way: The Path to Enlightenment

## 1

### The Spiritual Background

To know the origins is initiation into the Tao

Lau Tzu

Know thy Self and be free

Shrimad Bhagavatam

Live truth instead of professing it

Elbert Hubbard

Except for the point, the still point, there would be no dance, and there is only the dance

T. S. Elliot

All great truths start as blasphemies

George Bernard Shaw

What is spirituality? What is real knowledge? Where will you find wisdom? What is reality? What is Truth? Where will you find it and how will you know it?

Do you know you have been lied to all your life? Religion has lied. Government has lied. Education has lied. Society has lied. They have said you are just a body, a mind, a person. You have been led to believe you were just this little self, helpless at the hands of destiny.

Since before recorded history humanity has sought answers to the riddles of life. What is man? How has he come to be here on this planet? What is the reason for existence, and what is the cause of life? How does the mind work? Is death the end of individual life? Is there something in man which survives the death of the body? What am I? What does it all mean? Are there answers to these questions? Can I investigate the hidden depths of my own being? Can I find my true self? How do I deepen and enrich my inner life? Can consciousness be expanded?

We are all looking for happiness, contentment, fulfilment, enrichment and meaning in our lives. We want the abundance of life, that which makes living worthwhile. We are all in the same boat. We want our life to be meaningful and full. We want to live the beauty of life, the wonder of living. We want to feel complete. We want to live joy. We want to find our place on this planet.

Why do so many of us feel incomplete, with the feeling that there should be so much more to life? We enter into romantic relationships, but many of us find they fall short of expectations. We

want love, but some of us also want spiritual love, something we expect to totally fulfil us. We want to burst with life like an exploding nova. Or we want to find peace. Lots of it. Big Peace.

Many of us today have felt a sense of the sacred and we want it to become familiar, more common. Maybe we felt it while looking at the sky at night, or while gazing at some country scene or while looking at the power of the sea or looking from a high hill. Or maybe it just came out of nowhere, unbidden, a call from the soul.

Should life be a mundane thing, an ordinary thing, or should we taste the ecstasy of life, the sweetness of living? Should every moment be lived in happiness? Should we go through life half-asleep or with wide-awake alertness to the beauty of existence? Should we live in ruts and habits or should the heart fly free? In what way is life meant to be lived by a human being? Could nature have designed us for more than we think? If so, why are we living at such a low level? Could the heart sing the song of existence, like the songbird in the morning air?

Can we catch the echoes of the song of freedom?

Is there a part of us untouched by the miseries and problems of life, forever free? Can we find that freedom? Can we find that which uplifts and inspires us and makes life more rewarding?

Can we find a refuge and a haven from the burdens and troubles of life, a place we can go to at will, a place beyond all burdens and sorrows, a place so pure and elevated that misery cannot reach there? Can we live a sorrowless life? Or is that another pipe-dream?

Is there really a love as wide as the sky, a love so huge that it accepts everything, welcomes everything, rejects nothing, condemns no one, judges no one? What would it mean to come into contact with such a love? People who have had near-death experiences sometimes claim to have been touched by a torrent of divine love so great that it changed their lives and altered their attitude to living, yet what if that were but a trickle of the ocean of cosmic love?

What is the Great Mystery? Where is the answer? Who holds the key? Beyond everything you have ever known, heard or experienced there is still something else, a mystery unspoken, a truth unknown, a secret unrevealed. You may have sensed that there was something you could not quite put your finger on, something amazingly important, so much so that it would answer the riddle of life, explain your own being, yet it was just out of reach, beyond the ability of the mind to grasp or science to explore. Every religion has been based on this Mystery. It is what draws a person to a spiritual path. What am I? Where do I come from? What is life about? And what lies Beyond? Can I taste the wonder and sweetness and glory of that?

Can we find the Light that calls to us so sweetly?



Psychology looks at mental mechanisms, at the lowest in man, whereas spirituality emphasises the highest. There is a vast universe inside every person, worlds of light and sound, and wonder upon wonder, inner depths, and the very fountainhead of love.

Know that, says an Indian Upanishad, by knowing which everything is known.

Kabir said: The river that flows through you flows through me.

Cicero commented: The first duty of man is the seeking after and investigation of truth.

Thomas Aquinas, who wrote several books in the 1200's, after a mystical experience later in his life, said all he had written before 'was as mere straw.'

Many of us today do not know anything. We simply dabble in ideas. We like discussion and debate, logic and argument. Socrates said: 'Debate is recreation. Truth is an experience.'

Have religions offered us great hope or have they conned us? Have they set another trap for the unwary traveller or have they pointed to a greater reality? Have they helped us or messed us up? Have they offered us spirituality or hidden it from us? Have they helped us expand to our maximum extent and helped fulfil our human potential?

When was the last time you felt really, and I mean really, alive, full of zest at the glory of living, so full of joy it was almost bursting out of you, and so full of energy you could dance and jump in the air with it and it ran through you like quicksilver in waves of exuberant love? Remember when you were a kid and you could not wait to get out of bed and meet the new day? Except on school days! So – what went wrong? Life did. Thought did. You aquired habits, fears, confusions.

Human beings are creatures of habit. What does that mean? It means we are running on automatic, half-asleep and half-aware. The truth is that we are lazy in certain areas and we have let habit take over our living, to some extent. That includes our thought, too. Some of us do not think very much. Actually we think plenty, but it is secondhand, copied thought-patterns and beliefs we have not questioned. We are not thinking our own thoughts; we are thinking the thoughts of others. That is why it is easy to recruit terrorists. Otherwise people would say sod off and do your own dirty work. If they could only think their own thoughts. If. When the moon turns blue.

As Hitler, the crazy with the funny haircut and weird mustache said: How lucky for rulers that men do not think. Yea. He knew. There are still Russians today who think that Stalin was a wonder, the father of his people, happily ignorant that he wiped out millions of his own people. How stupid can people get? Governments have used people as cannon-fodder in endless wars. Our air, food and drink are contaminated by dangerous chemicals, yet governments do nothing to prevent it. When it comes to the welfare of people versus economy, people do not matter.

Government scientists are not to be trusted; they say what they are told. If governments cared about our health there would not be tons of salt and sugar in our foods; hydrogenated oils would be banned, and there would not be endless disease-producing additives allowed to poison us. But economy comes first, lies second, and humans last. Or should that be lies first? And we still trust these people!

Rene Descartes advised: If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.

Don't follow the flock. They are a bunch of sheep. Who says? Maaa.

We need to ask ourselves: What do I think? What do I believe? What do I know? And how do I know that? Do we know it or just think it? Have we just accepted or trusted some supposed authority? Is spiritual Truth inside or outside of us? Can we directly know a permanent Reality for ourself? And can we know that which transcends death while living? And would that not be nice?

Spirituality is the revolt against matter, for it seeks to break the ties that bind. It is the attempt to be free of the prison of materialism. It means to be free of every limitation, to have free awareness, to break every habit which conditions us. In the ultimate sense, spirituality means simply stillness, to be beyond everything, yet to be in a state of unity. Spirit itself does not need to be in revolt against anything, and does not even recognise the existence of the material realm, being absolutely free. True spirituality is the drive toward spirit. And yet, oddly, most of us seeking it do not know what it is. For it is out of reach, hidden; all we can do is sense it, feel the need of it. A few of us may have had glimpses of it, but beyond those glimpses it is still unknown. But mostly it is just a fancy idea. Or, for most of us, sentimental claptrap and emotional nonsense.

The Free was never trapped; the trapped was never free. The Free only awaits discovery.

All over the world today people are meditating. Millions meditate for many reasons and the core of these sit because of their desire for liberation. They meditate because of their desire to be free. They want to breathe the air of freedom. They want the taste of contentment. They want that elusive thing that proves they are not just a body.

Yet is freedom possible? Can we be free, as Buddha and all those spiritual teachers claimed? And what does it mean to be free? Can we live the spirit? Can we live freedom?

We cannot resolve life's problems through struggle. Freedom does not come through conflict. We cannot reach the Absolute through faith, thinking, prayer, effort or attitude. It is beyond all this. Nothing the mind does can touch it, ever. Nor the emotions. So devotion cannot lead us there.

There are so many systems of yoga, meditation and spirituality. How does one know which is the ultimate? If Liberation is our natural state, then it can be found in any tradition, or none, anytime, potentially. However, in practice, it does not work that way, otherwise millions would be enlightened today, which is not the case. Each tradition has a different answer, a different explanation. Yet, in truth, you will find very few realised individuals in any of the old traditions. Why? Because they are old, because they are outdated, because they have seen their day and have become staid, sterile, unspiritual. The living waters of spirituality have to flow into new bottles.

In olden days they asked: How can I live long enough to reach the Goal?

Traditionally the Indian disciple approached the teacher with fire-sticks in hand, indicating his need and willingness to be spiritually consumed. We have only a short time on this earth, even if it seems otherwise. We must not abuse it. We should not waste our life on trivialities, except in a casual, trivial way. But we should not regard them as important. Interesting, yes; but not important.

What is spirituality? It is the search for something greater than oneself. It is the search for that which is outside of us, apparently, the search for the meaning of life, the discovery of subtle realms and inner states, the expansion of our consciousness, the seeking of that which lies beyond our present state, coming into contact with transcendental energies.

This is a journey we do not know how to begin, not really. We can only search. We do not know what the signposts are. What is enlightenment? What is ignorance? Are they related? Some say we are all already enlightened. Then what is the need for a way to where we are already? And if we are, why do we not know it already? If we are naturally ignorant, how do we get to the place of enlightenment, if it exists? Those people who are not enlightened, what can they tell us about it? As the saying goes, they don't know dipshit. A travel guide can only speak with authority about where he has been. Don't trust a blind guide. And yet many do. And there's the rub.

For thousands of years many hundreds of people have also wanted to be free. Of all those who spent most of their lives in meditation and spiritual pursuits, how many achieved their cherished goals? Well, precious few. Maybe hardly any. How many gave up in despair, knowing with finality they were never going to reach that farthest shore in this life? Or in any other, come to that? And how many stopped before the end, having reached a lesser state, but thinking it was the ultimate goal?

Some have a romantic view of Liberation, something to do with wearing robes in the East, wasting our life away in a cave, or being sweeter than sugar (which we know is not good for us) with a self-satisfied "Ah Bisto!" smile permanently engraved on our smug face.

Some think liberation is to be totally free of everything that conditions the mind. Some think it is to be yoked to God alone. And some think the idea of God is another trap.

Thousands pray to God daily, seemingly unaware that their God is deaf, if not dead.

Does such a God exist? What is their God – a being like themselves, maybe flawed, cast in the same imperfect mould, only bigger and slightly better? Or is God an abstract state beyond knowledge or understanding? Religion lies. It says it knows the nature, will and intention of God. How could a flawed human being know that? It is arrogance.

You will not find final Truth in Conversations With God, for God does not talk, although you may find some truths. In that, and similar books, you will only find notions, ideas, opinions. They are not based on personal, deep, inner experiences of reality. Truth cannot be found in any tradition, for all traditions are dead, past, crystallised; and Truth, as Krishnamurti used to say, is a living thing, not a stagnant pool. It must be found within, in our own awareness. You must live it. You cannot live a tradition; you can only copy it, as it is fixed and rigid. You cannot live your life by any religion, as every religion is a tomb and a monument to its dead past. Every religion is a closed loop. It was founded on the realisations of its original Founder, trying to represent his own understanding and insight to others, many of whom were peasants. How could they understand the Absolute Reality in abstract terms? It had to be watered down, simplified and personalised for them.

How can we probe the ultimate mystery of existence? What is reality? If God exists, in whatever form, how can we know God? Can we find the inner face of God? Can we find the great secret? Or is there one, even?

If we cannot know reality directly, then it is all just another opinion, one more belief to depend on, one more thing for the mind to cling to. It is not truth. Not THE TRUTH. Religion arises when a go-between is needed, when Truth is not available as a direct perception. Then we have to ask another. Then we depend on Authority. But how does Authority know? Where did Authority get its insight? From some other authority? Yet how do we know that was right, anyway? Why do we accept so much superstition without question? Simply because we are ignorant, lost in illusion.

Socrates said: A life unexamined is not worth living.

Traditionally, meditation is the means used to contact Reality. At first we feel the gravity, the heaviness of mind, how it weighs us down, how big it feels; but then, with meditation, we find the simplicity of life, the easiness of awareness, and we find mind becoming lighter and lighter as we let go of the grossness of mind. Awareness becomes frictionless, without obstacles, like a flowing river. Mind becomes a very small thing. Very small indeed. Whereas spiritual reality is the Vastness, the Mystery unspoken, the unutterable wonder.

## **But why meditate?**

From wonder into wonder existence opens, said Lau Tzu.

Life is a sham. For most of us it is empty, meaningless, without purpose, pointless. Which is why many people have committed suicide, because they could make no sense out of life. Life is very uncertain. The only certain thing about it is its ending. It will end one day, which is not very comforting, if this is all we have and all that we are. What is the span of a human life compared to a star? We have a few years to find the reason for our existence. Who knows what can happen next? Life is very uncertain, and you don't get a carrot for cleverness for knowing that. Life is constant change. The end of life is death. But is there something beyond all this? Is there something in man that is permanent? And can we know this directly, beyond all question and doubt as a positive fact, as a certainty? What am I? What is the deepest core of my being? How real am I? Is there anything more real than I am? Can I live my life in that awareness, in the immortality of Being? Am I more than I appear to be? Am I merely a collection of molecules that function as a unit which I think of as me? Am I just a body? Does my brain, through experience, make me think I have a mind? Is the mind all that I am? Or is there something, a Big Something, beyond that, a clear blue sky beyond the clouds of mind and ego? Look how vast and beautiful life is, how varied and wonderful. If existence is so awesome, why is the life of many of us such a bunch of crap? Something must be wrong. Hey, mates, jump ship – they forgot to load the rum!

Chinese proverb say: He who chases car gets exhausted.

## **Can I know the truth of my own existence?**

The Hindu Scriptures say that the spiritual nature consists of absolute Being, absolute Bliss and absolute Life, and we should seek these out through meditation and know our own true Self because what we think we are is only an appearance, an illusion, a mistaken perception. The Hindu word 'udaseen' is often used to mean dispassion, but really means 'seated in the Self.' The Psalmist says 'kalti nafshi': I obliterate my soul in my desire to become one with God. Bondage is the I-concept. Maya or illusion is the principle of duality in which a self thinks there is itself 'and the rest.' Identifying with an entity (me) is illusion. But can we know this for ourselves?

Our moods, our thoughts and our desires are not our true self, nor are physical sensations; they are an artificial identification that masks our true unchanging state of eternal Being beyond time, form and every limitation.

To be free amounts to being what we inherently are, in our deepest nature, and always were. It is not a matter of trying to be something other than what we naturally are, of trying to evolve or grow into something bigger and better and different to what we are now. We cannot grow beyond

perfection. We are already perfect in our basic nature, and always were. We are what we are seeking. We are that, but not as a personality, an ego, a mind. We, in our true nature, are already perfect, already achieved, already whole and complete, already there. Thank God for that! But...

The question is, how to realise that so we can live in that awareness? That is the Big Question, the one sages and thinkers and spiritual seekers have sought an answer to throughout the ages. And I would say, the only question of real worth because its answer resolves the riddle of our own existence and removes the uncertainty of life from our minds. It also drastically changes our state of awareness, the dimension in which we live.

The answer must be: By means of yoga, by means of meditation. By means of looking deeply inwards. We have to find a way to make the discovery of what we really are.

Yoga is the means to yoke the mind to truth by means of samadhi, the effortless flow of attention, and Yoga is the state of unity itself. Samadhi means to let the current flow with ease in evenness, and this brings about mental steadiness: it allows the mind to sink into its own depths. It is the concentrated state of attention, the state of 'collectedness.'

Cha'an master Shih Tou taught:

Let go of a hundred years, and relax completely.  
Open your hands and walk innocent.

Meditation takes several forms. It may be to create a mental picture in the mind or to put attention on breathing or direct the breath to certain body parts or to continuously look at an object or painting or concentrate on some centre in the body or mentally repeat sounds or chant aloud or put your attention on external sound. Or many other things which direct the attention.

They all involve some form of concentration, even if very gentle. They are all mind-based. Being within the mind, can they lead beyond the mind to real spiritual realms? How can they? Can walking in Wales lead to Australia? Mind only leads to more mind.

There are meditations to soothe and relax, meditations to heal, to awaken subtle energy centres, to explore and refine the mind, and meditations to invoke Hindu gods or god-principles. But all this only involves the mind and works with the mind in its deeper layers. Or it may involve refined feelings and subtler emotions. How can any of this free us?

Then there is Kundalini Yoga which involves the direct transmission of universal energy from one person to another, in its higher form, which then works to arouse a corresponding energy to that transmitted to the disciple's body and mind, which one then identifies with as it takes

awareness to higher planes, but it does not take one to ultimate spiritual freedom, although many think otherwise. It is still a limited energy.

This energy, known as Kundali in its universal aspect, or Kundalini Shakti as it expresses itself in a human individual, is a material energy found at the basis of creation, and not a pure spiritual force lying entirely outside of creation. However, this energy is essentially fire and can burn. It can be too much for some people and may cause psychic, mental, emotional or physical problems, thus creating imbalance. The energy coming in overstimulates the atomic structure of the various vehicles. Plus it puts pressure on various obstructions to psychic pathways. The way energy overcomes these is to burn through them. The removal of these obstructions may open the door to very primitive emotions and urges, which can be difficult to manage.

Tantra Shastra occupies itself with the study and practice of this yoga which, as it is a spontaneous process of awakening, once activated by a real tantric guru, who acts as a spark to a flame, is very powerful, as it works with the fundamental force of matter itself. It works beyond the agency of the mind, and without personal force, will or volition. The energy does its own work.

It was this yoga, in the days of the drug culture, that Swami Muktananda, said to be a powerful activator of Shakti-force, brought to the West under the name of Siddha Yoga. Thing is, some were in Siddha Yoga sixteen years or more and still never attained anything. It is nice to trust, but knowing is better. You can never get back the lost years you waste on a false spiritual path. And what does false mean? It means what you were promised is never realised. It means you were never awakened. Just ask yourself one question: Where are all the enlightened people? Keep on asking. Should there not be thousands by now?

Hatha Yoga has as its goal the opening and raising of Kundalini through physical means without a guru, for real Kundalini gurus are pretty rare, by means of posture, body locks, breathing exercises, visualization, mantras, chanting, deity-worship and ritual. This also comes under the general banner of Tantra. With a guru Kundalini comes as a gift. Without one it is damned hard work to develop it.

### **The trouble with Kundalini**

And it is said to be dangerous. Even with a guru raising Kundalini can be uncomfortable, as it opens secret places and hidden areas. Kundalini is said to rise up the spine through a psychic channel in etheric matter. The etheric web is a subtle energy matrix underlying and supporting all physical matter. Kundalini has to pass through the main chakras or psychic gateways to the next higher level – the next body linked to the next plane on which it functions. These are all inside us. As Tantra says: ‘What is here is everywhere. What is not here is nowhere.’ The whole creation

exists within us – can be felt, seen, heard, experienced. Seven energy chakras (and many minor ones) link us to the etheric plane, to astral feeling-emotional-desire realms, to ordinary levels of mind, to higher abstract thinking, to intuition or Buddhi, and to Atma or Self.

Trouble is, as Kundalini rises (and so does awareness), it encounters blocks, as mentioned. In traditional tantric language, these are known as granthis or knots. Where do you think all the bad or negative psychic energy in your life went to? Did all the pain in your life vanish like smoke once the pain was over? Where did all your hurt feelings go, your doubts and self-questioning, your frustration, your mistrust of others, your betrayal and anger, your many disappointments, your mental impressions, the times you were made to feel unimportant, the loss of someone or something you were attached to, the sense of unfairness, all the times life bonked you on the head, lost loves, lost chances, lost trust? Some of those memories or feelings can be restimulated. Kundalini, to rise, has to burst through those obstructions. Then there is animal instinct, along with powerful sexual urges, which has led to the downfall of many a spiritual teacher.

Of course there is a sexual element to Tantra. How could there not be when Shakti is the very force underpinning the physical organism? Kundalini is the force of polarity, and that force gets rooted in the genitals. When Kundalini or shakti (or prana or chi) passes through any centre, it quickens the speed of that centre and so stimulates all its related qualities. Of course this can lead to higher awareness states, to seeing beings (real or not), to various psychic experiences.

The knots which restrict the flow of force into any chakra limit our experience of that chakra. The main impediments are the knot of Brahma at the base of the spine where Kundalini is said to sit, the knot of Vishnu which blocks the heart chakra, and the knot of Rudra which obstructs energy to the Ajna centre between the eyebrows. At least the old yogis said so.

These knots can be seen as a protective etheric web, shielding us from some wild stuff – a bit like a sunscreen, really. If such an etheric fence hems us in, it also keeps a world of discomfort out, too much to bear in one wild rush.

A true Master can act as a buffer, filtering energies too overwhelming for the average nervous system to handle safely. For the same reason, those energies from siddhis (unusual psychic abilities) like levitation and clairvoyance found in systems like the Yoga Sutras and mentioned in the Shrimad Bhagavatam need a Master to modulate their effects, otherwise nervous problems may arise. Siddhis can exhaust psychic force, whereas energy from a real Master is without limit and always safe. At diksha or initiation a part of the universal energy-intelligence of a Master is placed in the aura of the disciple which can then monitor the progress of the disciple and direct his or her energy currents into the correct channels so as to avoid imbalance.



Therefore, Kundalini meditation without a Master is pretty much a no-no, as far as safety is concerned. What is being put forward today as Kundalini is next to useless. Might as well piss in the wind. Most books about it are written by people who have no direct experience of it, who have copied ideas from others who also lacked direct experience of Kundalini of any depth. Some of the inner psychic material within a chakra can be a stone's throw away from neurosis. Not only that, but some practices can be too strong for the nervous system to cope with. Sometimes you come across meditators who are not happy people, who are not relaxed, who cannot cope with life, who are bad tempered, intolerant, nervous or fearful. The forces they have contacted have been too much for them to deal with. There may be too great a rush of prana or electrical energy, the force of the universe. Remember, prana or chi creates everything and is found in everything. Some people appear to be damaged by it. After all, electricity burns.

On the other hand, you do not get very far from imagining a yellow triangle and repeating: Ram Vam Sham or some other mantra. In the first place, a mantra is supposed to be given by a master of mantra who understands the effect of any given mantra. It is not like going to the supermarket and saying: I'll have that one, please. Also, traditionally, it is given during a ceremony where you are supposed to get connected to Kundalini or to some ancient god-force residing at some specific chakra. Some kind of transmission of force is supposed to take place, even if it is from the ritual invocation of ancient forces rather than the direct transmission from the teacher as such. Indeed a traditional mantra itself is such an invocation, a calling upon a Vedic god to appear in some form or to bless the practitioner with some quality or attribute residing at some chakra. The god or goddess is said to reside at some specific centre to give that chakra its qualities, and the mantra may be said to be the emanation or vibration of such a deity. Or you may simply say that a god is the symbol of certain psychological attributes.

Remember that Kundalini is essentially, as it has come down to us, the Hindu interpretation, via the vedic tradition, with all its religion and superstition, of a material energy connected with form; it is not the formless truth, nor will it lead to the ultimate. It is powerful, but not the ultimate changless Absolute.

A mantra is a sound-thought or mental vibration which serves as a mental vehicle on which to rest attention, which then allows attention to travel through refined states of mind and to connect with certain attributes contained within subtle aspects of the mantra as it penetrates subtle aspects of creation. In the traditional Vedic framework, mantra is the esoteric means of devotion, calling as it does on Hindu gods for their help and blessings. This is regarded as the means of true devotion by which, in theory, evolutionary impulses are generated. By means of mantra, say the Yoga Sutras, blocks to awareness are removed and, as they are uncovered, the nature of divinity is revealed. The god invoked comes to be known. Its presence is felt. Its nature is as universal awareness. A god represents an aspect of reality, some attribute of divinity.

There is no intent here to undervalue or demean the use of Kundalini, but much of what is practiced today in its name is sheer rubbish based on a misunderstanding of subtle forces. How can anyone seriously believe that they will become spiritually liberated simply through imagination of colour or symbols or by repeating a sound? I mean, really? If it were that simple...well. A common mantra in India is Om Namah Shivaya, but on using it you may find it rather dry and useless and rather hard work. Swami Muktananda often gave it, but when received from him, it is said, it often gave powerful results. Or did it? I have heard it said that some meditated on his mantra for many years and never got anywhere. It is said Kundalini can be given by touch, glance or by means of a mantra.

One sometimes hears, particularly in terms of kundalini, of people who hear voices telling them what to do, of seeing gods, devils, ghosts or various dead people, of guides and ascended masters, and God knows what other rot. I have never seen any of this. The fact is that people sometimes see what they want to see, and what you see on inner planes is not reliable. On this physical plane you see a lamp post and you know it is real; you can check on that by walking into it. The astral plane is full of imagined things and beings and psychological quirks. You cannot trust what you see. In South America it is not uncommon to see some entity behind every corner out of the corner of your eye, and in Africa you might find a devil under any bush. It is interesting that in near-death experiences in the west one sees Christ or some benevolent being; in Africa a near-death experience is regarded by the person as a dreaded visitation of witchcraft and impending doom.

In a Sarasvati Upanishad it points out that all the cosmological worlds of the Veda, from Mount Meru the supposed foundation of creation, through all the levels, to the gods and angelic beings in Indian mythology, from the waters said to flow down from heaven and pour down the Himalayas, and various other weird and wonderful things are all contained within the sushumna, the central etheric channel in the spine. In other words, you cannot believe anything you see or experience in meditation which defies reason because there is a stack of psychological strangeness within man's inner nature. There may also be some odd stuff in human DNA from far in the racial past. We should bear in mind, whether real or not, that hearing voices, communicating with spirits, recalling some supposed past life, and all the rest of the psychic stuff, is not spiritual. Oh boy, the mind is all too ready to deceive itself, maybe partly because it makes the ego feel special. I do not pretend to know all the answers, and there are some pretty mysterious enigmas, but I definitely know what real spirituality is, and psychism is not it.

All the 'channeling' in the world will not lead you anywhere near enlightenment. It might lead you nearer the nuthouse. When I was young there was a friend of the family, 'Aunt' Dora, who had been a spiritualist and now looked after my young cousin as a live-in housekeeper. Then one night, in the early hours, she started banging on the walls with a poker, shouting at the spirits to go away. She was taken away the next day. She did not look after my cousin again.

I once knew a Canadian man who thought he was developing spiritually because he started seeing striated patterns of light everywhere, but in the end it turned out he had a blood disorder that caused this. As he later said: ‘How can I ever believe even my own eyes again?’

Many so-called spiritual books today are uselessly trite and trivial, and the teachings on which the books are based are often superficial, based more on the myth and romance of spirituality than on fact. People, not knowing what true spirituality is, simply invent things based on poor understanding, and on what they think spirituality should be, rather than what it actually is, simply because **THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS, AND SO INVENT PRETTY MENTAL PICTURES**. Thus you have today teachings which are utterly useless, mainly based on emotionalism and faulty logic. The reasoning may be quite good and seem to make sense in the absence of real spiritual knowledge. But the only thing we can depend on is our own direct experience of reality. The rest is unproven. So what do we actually know? Not think, not believe in, not trust, not depend on. Not on what gives us mental security or makes us feel important and special because we know and others do not. Not on what we wish were true. Not on how, in the future, we are going to be so far advanced and superior and are going to have amazing super powers, vast compassion and stupendous intelligence and know everything and others will adore us. Do we know anyone like that? Has there ever been anyone like that? How do we know that? Or do we assume that all real spirituality is in the past? Or in India? Or Tibet? Most of what we call spirituality is simply romance, a fiction. Go East, young man. Find that all that glitters is not gold. If it was, a lot of these yogi teachers would sell it and stick it in their bank account.

Kundalini, however, is not the ultimate, final truth. It is the crown of Tantra, but even Tantra is not the final truth. In Tantra, based as it is on the Vedic framework, life is seen as twofold, being both Shakti and Shiva, god and goddess. Shiva is the ultimate Consciousness which is eternal, changeless, unmoving. It is being. It just is, without qualities or attributes. It does not act. It simply exists as itself. It is Truth. The truth of stillness. It is atma, the Self.

There is one popular author who wrote a book about enlightenment of the mind and another book on enlightenment of the heart. Tosh. There is no enlightenment of the mind. The heart cannot be enlightened, either. The mind is a small thing. It can never expand to infinity. Its very nature is limited. The heart, like the mind, is a centre, a place, and how can it hold the state which is everywhere outside of all boundaries? Such claims are based on a complete ignorance of what enlightenment really is. Such people are not enlightened. They are deluded. They think freedom can be crammed into a container. The vast sea cannot be held in a fish tank. Nor can a tank be made to fit the sea. If the mind could be enlightened, it would no longer be mind. And the heart would have to be wrenched open and stretched to infinity. And that means beyond creation.

Shakti is movement, energy, activity, cosmic Prana, creation, intelligence, flow, dynamism and power. It is all that we know and the field for the investigation of science. It governs the laws of nature, the laws of energy and the force of change and mutation. Shiva is never-moving and Shakti

is ever-moving. They are ever apart in the sense that one does not grow out of the other, although the Shiva aspect is the essence of everything. It is like the oil in the seed or the sap in the tree.

Tantra, meaning web or weave, is the basket of spiritual knowledge, the knowledge of various aspects of creation, the knowledge of a spiritual path and the disciplines and practices involved in it, particularly with regard to the practice of meditation, and specifically that meditation connected to the raising of Kundalini. It is also known as mantrayana, meaning the vehicle or instrumentality of sound. Sound weaves creation into shape and form.

The first motion in creation is sound or vibration. The first expression of Intelligence is Shabda Brahman – God as Sound. Where there is sound, there is also light, these being two aspects of vibration, caused as the result of the stir of the first movement when awareness became aware of itself in the distant night of time. In fact that is when time began. These are the Primal Vibration which steps out of the Void, as it were.

In Tantra the Void is called Bindu, the Point – the point or space out of which everything manifested. In the Rig Veda it is called Akshara, the Immutable, and in other religions it is simply called God, said to be the source of all, the eternally changeless Reality which is the support of all else. Space is the absolute because it is everywhere, if we can understand this as the Space in which space is manifested. Everything is inside it because it is outside of everything else. It is the container of all. It has no end, no structure, no form and no limitation. It is the causeless Cause.

For me the revelation of spirituality was even greater than the discovery in my boyhood that girls liked sex, which turned out to be pretty useful. And a lot of fun. At least for me, anyway.

You can't always say religion is fun. It is so serious. People get trapped by it, and in it. There was a strange group in Russia a few hundred years back. They engaged in castration. It didn't last though. The male members fell off.

Apparently that does not always stop you wanting sex. There was a eunuch in the Chinese Emperor's court who was discovered in his affair with a concubine. It was discovered he had a bit he was not supposed to have so the Emperor sent him to the barber – for the closest shave a man can get.

## 2

**At the Gate to Freedom**

I found stillness in this manner  
Basant

Wondrous is the Sound  
Wondrous the Wisdom...  
Ever present to our gaze is wonder  
At the sight of this Mystery are we wonderstruck  
Guru Nanak

Have you ever asked for that instruction by which we hear what is unheard, by which  
we perceive what is unperceived, by which we know what is unknown  
Chondogya Upanishad

Keep knocking, and the joy inside  
Will eventually open a window  
And look out to see who's there  
Rumi

Hear, and your soul shall live  
Isaiah

Divinity has two forms –the Impersonal God, the ultimate Absolute, unknown and unknowable, the Great Abstract; and the Personal God, the Divine Intelligence of Light and Sound. However, neither of these is a person, in the way that religion presents a caring Father Figure. Nor is the Personal God in any way personal. How can that which oversees the creation, maintenance and ending of all things be in any way personal? Eastern traditions have regarded the Principle of Light and Sound as Divine, which in fact it is, but they have also said that Light and Sound is God, which it is not, as Light and Sound is not the Ultimate Absolute, but its reflection. The Ultimate has no qualities and no attributes, being above everything knowable, as I shall explain later.

There is, however, the Principle of Compassion, if we can put it that way. This is called Maha-Vishnu-Tattva, the Great Master Principle, the Lordship of Divinity, also known as Ishvara, the Lord. The Yoga Sutras say: 'He was the Teacher of the ancients.'

Ishvara is not a personal deity, as H.P. Blavatsky points out in *The Secret Doctrine*, but an Eternal Principle which manifests periodically through a human vehicle to help spiritualise the world, to bring light into the dark chambers of human consciousness, and who is often regarded as a saviour and founder of some religion.

When an advanced human being is in the right place at the right time, when conditions are favourable, when there is a certain astrological configuration every few hundred years, this principle of Light comes into contact with and overshadows a specific human being and merges with him. Thereafter that human being becomes a Master, not just in a teaching sense of imparting guidance and knowledge, but he becomes one with and identical to Light and Sound, the primordial vibration of creation. He is, and always will be, a mystery, even to his closest disciples. For who can understand God, or the representative of godhead? Or, rather, a god-man?

Such a Master has to become free by his own efforts, as was the case with Kabir and Nanak in the fifteenth century, when two masters walked the earth together, a very unusual occurrence. Such Masters are self-liberated. At the moment when such a master becomes totally free, fully enlightened, there is a great rush of force from the Master Principle, which then becomes the inner nature of the Master, who also retains his human side on this plane of activity, even if flawed and faulted, as every personality is, as this is the plane of imperfection.

There is the myth perpetuated by every sincere, devoted student of any Master that the teacher, as a human being, is perfect; and it is such students who write books and foster traditions of the Master as the most perfect saint or godlike being. To some extent this may be true, but on this earth a man is just a man, flesh and blood, feeling, thinking, just like the rest of us. Anyone can be foolish. Mistakes are made. But these do not usually get into the history books. They do not give the right impression of the ideal man, perfect in every sense. Stick him on a pedestal and sell your product. Nice and shiny. Very neat and pretty. People want an ideal, not a flawed image, a tarnished picture to worship. What that man may be as a Master, however, may be an entirely different matter, perfect in his spirituality, divine in his ability as a Master.

A Gnostic teacher named Mani taught that a Divine Man manifests in all ages to awaken people to spiritual reality. That is pretty much the function of any Master.

We have to go into any spiritual undertaking with our eyes wide open. We must use discrimination, just as if we were going to invest in business. We must not be foolish nor allow ourselves to be conned, as so many have been. There are many movements just waiting to take your money off you. In the spiritual marketplace people can say anything, and will, most of it

hogwash, to get you into their shop, where they are selling cheap trinkets. Actually, not so cheap. The cost to you can be very great. Some groups are trying to sell spirituality, which is not particularly theirs in the first place. Let's make a buck out of it. Greed. Selling water by the water's edge. So-called spirituality has become big business. People are hungry for spiritual knowledge and direct experience and do not have the discrimination to sort the wheat from the chaff. And some teachers simply lie about what they can give, and some are deluded.

A Master helps make free beings, not slaves. There are more than enough of those around.

Our idea of what a Master should be mainly comes from the past. Buddha, Shankara, Lao Tzu – how do we know what they were really like? Today we have no way of knowing. As to Christ, there is no evidence that he actually existed. Is he not just a composite of several teachers with a lavish helping of fantasy? A book is not always what it says on the cover. St. Augustine said he would never believe the Gospel stories, unless he was ordered to do so; and he was so ordered. Of course. Some say that Christianity is a rip-off of Buddhist teachings, with some old myths added to it. And some say it is all myth. Or are they myth-taken?

The divine Master is still a human man. The personality is just something that is used to function on this level of creation. If the personality is not you, just something to be used, why does it have to be perfect? The Master can get a cold, take an aspirin for a headache, go to the toilet, get old and die. He has had bad experiences like the rest of us. He may have a couple of odd ideas. He may be a bit oversensitive. Or not sensitive enough. He has inherited his personality, not created it. So he may not be turning water into wine tonight. Or walking on it in the morning. Though he may be emptying it down the toilet. Now that is not very reverential, is it? Must be a fault I have. One of many, no doubt.

There can still be fear and anger and anxiety or any other mood, and the human man is still capable of error. The human side of man is not perfectable. So we can forget that one. The spiritual side of man is and always will be perfect. This is not something to be attained; only to be realised. This is the message of Hindu Vedanta. And of every real Master. And of any true path. Of which there are not many. Yes, many paths, but not true ones.

Of course we want our gurus to come from the mystic East, nicely wrapped in turbans and sporting beards and a pleasant smile. Full of eastern promise. Better than chocolate. Even if some of them have been a bit greasy.

The Real Guru, Sat Guru, has often been called God on earth or god-in-form. There is an Inner Guru, Shabda or the lifewave guru, the lifeforce-wave on the inner planes; and the outer master, who lives and dies as a person. It is said there is always a Master on earth. Masters come and go, being mortal. Therefore their presence on earth provides a very rare opportunity for anyone who comes in contact with them. A Master is only with us a short time. Each Master is different, in

personality terms, and probably in his approach and attitude, to some extent. Whereas the Inner Master is eternal, but can only be contacted through a living teacher. There is only One Master, throughout the ages, expressed through many teachers. Not all in one package. Why is there eternally only One Master? Because there is only the same Sound and Light, the Master-Principle, through all time. Light and Sound is the true wisdom of the ancients.

Anyone can be enlightened (despite evidence to the contrary), but not everyone can be a Master. In fact only one can be a true Master. They don't grow on trees. As a rule, only one gets connected to the Teacher Principle at any one time. A true Master is one who can connect a disciple to the transcendental energy of Sound and Light, which it then becomes possible for the disciple to meditate on or contemplate. That produces concentration and samadhi. So sound and light gives an object of attention. It also pulls the attention up onto higher planes and into other dimensions of consciousness. In that sense it is the Inner Teacher.

Perhaps one of the best descriptions of a master are the words attributed to Christ: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by me.

Oh, yea. Oh, yea.

This is the message of every great Master, eternally: I am the Gate, I am the Way, I am the Path. I come down that you might be lifted up.

That is the meaning of the eastern redeemer, the Avatara – one who descends to lift up.

There are three kinds of masters. There are those who have had deep experiences of inner stillness and unity and teach others about it.

There are those called Maha Siddhas in whom Kundalini is fully enlivened and who are able to awaken it in others through touch, look or mantra.

Finally, and extremely rare, are those Living Masters, Sat Gurus, who are able to connect others to high spiritual realms. Masters teach: Wake up from your sleep. Break your chains. Leave your prison-house. Break free of the herd.

The Master is the gateway to the Absolute, the one unchanging Reality. Because he fully knows divinity and his nervous system is totally refined and coordinated with highest truth, he vibrates in all his vehicles at an amazingly fast rate. By enclosing the initiate in his aura, and by touch, he can cause the initiate's aura to also speed up at the time of initiation, to expand his consciousness so a moment of revelation can occur in which spiritual regions are revealed to the initiate's awareness. The Source of life itself is revealed to the astonished mind.



The Master embodies the Principle of Enlightenment and can, therefore, reveal light – true spiritual light, often called the Light of God, Jyotish Brahma. This is what true Spirituality is – not trying to be good, trying to evolve, studying or even trying to live ancient teachings. These things are just mental activities. They are not spirituality. True spirituality comes from higher planes, from spiritual regions, not from the mind. The mind only generates thoughts, images, ideas, concepts. Spirituality cannot be copied. It cannot come from below. You cannot think your way into spiritual realms, and you cannot will yourself into heaven. Streams flow downwards from the mountain, not upwards. The effort to evolve does not result in growth. Now that's a bummer!

Effort is a waste of time, one part of the mind trying to control another part, thus setting up division within the mind and conflict within the personality. Wasted time.

The process of revelation is known as Initiation, sometimes called baptism or the New Birth. When the woman at the well of Shenar gave Christ a drink, he said to her, 'I will give to you a well of living waters that will never run dry, drinking which you will never thirst.'

There has been a tradition of Inner Light and Sound meditation forming some part, usually a small, hidden fragment, of almost every religion.

In Mathew 3:16 it says:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water (water is an occult symbol of the astral plane, as well as spiritual regeneration); and lo! the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.

It was taught in ancient China, is mentioned in Taoist literature, and there are several groups in China who still practice it.

It was taught in Zoroastrianism in old Iran. It passed from Babylon to Persia to India where it has had a long history, a tradition reaching back hundreds of years. Some say it was the practice of the religion of Aton in old Egypt. It was at the core of the Sikh teachings. There have been many true Masters in India. Some Sufi teachers, like Rumi and Hafiz, also preserved the tradition. Tukaram said: 'Let us hasten to where God abides.' Okey-dokie. Why not? Just hang on till this TV programme ends. Right, I'm ready. Now take me up.

There have been secret mystery schools in Egypt and Greece and Rome. Describing his experience of initiation in one of them, Lucius Apuleus said: 'At midnight I saw the sun shining as if it were noon.' I guess he meant the inner sun.

The Lost Chord of Masonry was never lost. It exists as the Eternal Sound. The Hebrew secret Name of God is Ain, meaning Infinite Nothingness. Genesis says God's breath in the form of

speech brought the world into being. It is said Shankara, round about 830, attained Divine Light known as Akashvaniat Joshimath. As the result of listening to Sound and looking at Light one becomes the Witness; witnessing becomes automatic, natural and familiar. When you witness something, you stand apart from the thing witnessed. Thus you become free of your emotions, free of your mind. You become the Observer, that which sees, that which knows. The Sound incorporates an energy, a vibration, an awareness, a feeling. All these. It is not just one thing, nor a small thing. It can take you far, very far. Right to the edge of Infinity.

The Varaha Upanishad states: The person desiring the wealth of Yoga should, after giving up thought, practice with subdued mind concentration on Nada (inner Sound) alone.

In a sense, in an important and significant way, meditation and spiritual practice are about intimacy with the Divine, about establishing an intimate yet impersonal relationship with divinity, but not on a mind level, and not using the mind to do it. When Initiation into Light and Sound is given, you suddenly find yourself in contact with a divine energy which you can contact when you meditate, and which gradually gets stronger the longer you meditate, with experience. Now you hear the Sound, or you see the Light, but you also feel them; and, furthermore, it begins to dawn on you, sooner or later, that you are experiencing yourself in your most intimate secret nature as your inner self, your real Self. It is both delicate and profound. Love arises: love of the Spiritual Self. You find your inner beauty. You find your own profound depths, hidden till now.

The Master opens the Third Eye or brow chakra and the inner ears, after which Divine Light and Sound can be perceived by the disciple. Thereafter it becomes possible for the disciple to meditate on these and lose himself in their beauty as he contemplates them. It is not a case of perceiving one light or one sound only all the time. They may often change because the Inner Guru takes you to different areas of creation, of light and sound, which are then absorbed into the initiate's consciousness. To be free, one must absorb more and more of creation into his own awareness till the whole creation becomes one with him, his awareness constantly expanding to include greater areas of stillness. That stillness, the inner silence, is his own being, Atman, the space of the Self. Therefore the whole of creation is contained within his own nature. He must become creation, must become all light and sound, all realms of existence. And he must still everything. He must find absolute stillness. Only stillness, complete emptiness, is untouched by anything. Only neutral space allows everything into it and yet remains outside it.

One old Master, Dariya, said:

‘Our path is through subtle regions.  
There the inner sight illumines our way.  
Entering the cave of the inner sky,  
See the manifestation of the boundless Sound.  
By dwelling upon the Unstruck Divine Music

The inner experience opens up.  
 And with the realization of the Truth  
 One reaches the other shore.'

Hooray. That's for me, boy. Gimme dat jazz.

He who aspires for liberation cannot hide somewhere in creation. He has to confront it all. He has to become everything. He does this by becoming nothing. It is only by becoming nothing that we can become everything, for only nothing is everywhere. By doing so, by accepting everything, by resisting nothing, by being a flowing river, he transcends all. So he becomes Brahman, the All. Brahman means the Beyond (literally, 'that which expands'), of which ancient sages declared, 'Aham Brahmasmi', 'I am Brahman, I am the totality'. Thus the Veda said: Transcend - go beyond.

This is done by meditation on Light and Sound. This vibration is a current of spiritual Energy that, once contacted, as long as meditation on it is done, pulls you up, from place to place, level to level. Hence it is known as Sehaja Yoga, natural samadhi, because all you have to do is sit there, let go, release your tightness, be empty, rest your attention on the inner Energy, fall into it and allow the process to unfold naturally, allow the Intelligence of Light and Sound – the Light of God, the Voice of God, as the Bible puts it – to take you where it will, to let the Inner Master show you what you need to see and hear and know, and to discover that it is all you, it is all love, and you are all love. Hence this yoga is also known as Nam Bhakti – Devotion to the Sound Current, becoming lost in love. Sufis have called this: Drinking from the Cup of Love. This brings about a state of bliss, often referred to as the raining of nectar or ambrosia. Some can feel this, even taste it, as sweetness like honey running down the face from the head. In the Vedas it is called Soma, and is the subject of many Vedic hymns.

Might do me some good. I'll take a cup.

I ain't been the same since that Vampire bit me.

Or maybe it's just the Prozac.

## 3

**The Key to the Door**

How wonderful it would be  
 If you should take your soul out of the body some night  
 And rise above to higher realms  
 After leaving the tomb of your body.  
 If your soul should do this  
 You would forever escape death's sword.  
 You would enter a garden that knows no autumn  
 Shamez Tabriz

In the beginning was the creator. With him was the Vac (the sound which creates). And the Vac was verily the Supreme Brahma (Cosmic Mind).  
 The Veda

I wish I could show you when you are lonely or in darkness the astonishing Light of your own Being  
 Hafiz

There are vast realms of Light and Sound, world upon world, each more ethereal and peopled, some say, with more sublime beings and wonders than the last. Some of these realms have been beautifully described by Guru Nanak in the Jap Ji. Some religions call these regions the heaven-worlds. In Buddhism they are known as the Pure Land, sometimes as the Brahma-worlds.

But the important thing to remember is that every initiate of a real Master has had some experience of these radiant regions and has heard sound emanating from them. It is not just a theory. It is felt as an expansion of consciousness, as the experience of more personal inner space, as a greater reality, more peace, more joy, more freedom, and more satisfaction.

But are these experiences real? Are they? Are they not imaginary, because you are looking for them, expecting them? Not only are they real, but often more real, more intense, than any other experience. And they are often different than what you expect. There is no one experience common to all. Yes there is – the sheer beauty and wonder of them.

Each person sees light in their own way, depending on their sensitivity and the condition of their nervous system. The same goes for the sound. When Jesus was led in to see Pontius Pilate, the Centurion said: Speak your Word that I may be healed.

Light may be a small area in front of your face, or a distant complex pattern containing many shapes, or a great golden sun or you may see a whole realm with several dimensions of lights

within lights unlike anything on this earth, or a hole in space or a radiant blackness. Or it could be none of these. Or anything.

Sound could be a rumbling vibration, a noise like a train or a sonic boom. It could be a sound of nature. The Bible says: I heard the sound of many waters. It could be a gentle flowing sound, hardly audible, more of a subtle feeling, a movement in awareness. There can be more than one sound at a time. There could be a high, sweet note like a flute, whistle or bell. It could be like a conch, drum or foghorn, like bagpipes or any musical instrument. Are these musical sounds similar to divine sounds, or were musical instruments copied from hearing divine music, long ago?

As the Christian gospels say: He who has ears to hear, let him hear. A Gnostic text asks: What is Christ if not the Sound? Now think about that. What would its influence on the Christian religion have been if its followers could have had the daily experience of communing with the Christ-sound, knowing it to be the basis of their faith, coming in direct contact with the object of their faith, finding it within their own consciousness and in their own direct living experience? What would it mean to find their own God as a reality in their daily worship? The real worship is within, on your own Self. If religion meant fulfilment, joy, a sense of purpose in life, the sense of being alive, would the churches be empty today? And that applies to every religion, of course – to know its basis in our own awareness. And what a difference it would have made to our society. It would not have been in the awful sick state it is in today. The world today, in every sense, is a madhouse of selfishness. That is to put it mildly.

It is said Muhammad meditated on the Sound in a cave for eleven years before he got the revelation of the Quaran. Pity he was wrong! Maybe it is just me or maybe I read a bad translation, but I thought it was the most dry and boring and irrelevant religious book I had ever read. I could not find anything spiritual in it, though no doubt there is. On the other hand I quite respect the Sufis. But all this stuff about God all the time. How dreary is that? All unreal, all fanciful, all ignorance. Bow down, bow down; humble yourself, O worthless man; and God has even less respect for women! What good is pie-in-the-sky to a hungry man? He wants a real jam tart. The Sound is something we can actually hear. Some may say it is physiological or a specific brain state or chemicals or whatever or a state of trance induced by concentration or the result of various neuro-peptides or other mentally induced chemicals. And even if that were so, the fact remains that it is a real experience. You actually hear the sound. It leads you to an altered state of consciousness, to a higher inward condition. It makes you feel better than you did before.

In the beginning it may be a bit ordinary, even boring, just a sound, not part of you. As time passes it becomes more comfortable, more attractive, more pulling, more absorbing, easier to lose yourself in, and more beautiful. The Sound becomes part of the silence, part of your own stillness, part of the spiritual river of life. It is the door into eternity, which the Master is holding open. This is not just the beauty of Sound, but of the profound beauty and grace of your own higher

Consciousness, the majesty and the grandeur of your own spiritual state, the elevation and majesty of samadhi, of profound inwardness.

Then you can understand the words: My God is a consuming Fire.

The Bible states: And God said: Let there be light; and there was light.

And those who meditate on it get to see the Light of God.

Those who have not yet walked this road will not see how significant it is; those now on it can only guess how big the end may be.

Shankara, the eighth century A. D. reformer of Hinduism, and many Masters of Sound and Light, taught that simply having a human body is very rare, very precious. There are only a certain number of human bodies around, and so many other life-forms. Liberation is only possible in a human being with a complex nervous system and with a human chakra system, allowing access to all fields of energy and to every plane. Whoever heard of an enlightened horse or cat? (See how they keep things secret?)

Buddha said: Find deliverance in this very life, in this very body. It has to be in this body, in this very life. Right now. Right here, pal. There is no other life. This is the only body you have. There is only this life. How do you know if you will ever be born again? How do you know if you ever lived before? There is only now. How do you know – I mean really know – if there is any such thing as rebirth? We could never evolve to perfection as, if karma is true, every day we will be generating fresh karma out of the state we are in to add to the existing store. How could it ever end? Therefore we would be trapped forever in cycles of time and experience, each experience giving rise to fresh experiences, reinforcing old impressions on the mind which condition us further and drag us down further into the mire of action. Depressing!

From ancient times those teachers in the east who could not take their followers to enlightenment told them they were not ready yet, not advanced enough; they had to evolve more, but they would finally get liberation in the next life – or in three or seven or nine lives. When you cannot give anything, give hope.

I would not buy into that, not for all the money in a blind man's cup. Or even a child's piggy bank, if only I could get into it.

As long as you dangle a carrot on a stick in front of a donkey, it will follow it, because it's an ass. Ain't trust a wonderful thing? Those who have been promised enlightenment in some future life have been conned. Buddha did not, could not promise any such thing. It is the greatest, and the meanest, hoax perpetuated on the Indian people, on all people, next to the caste system. I mean,

come on: Yogis, wake up! Over the centuries how many thousands, desiring liberation, left their lives and families behind to become hermits and yogis living in bleak austerity, in their search to conquer death? Imagine the suffering to their families at the loss of the breadwinner, the loss of a husband and lover, the loss of a father. And for the yogi himself, the utter frustration at not being able to reach the end of his road, the sense of desolation at being deprived of the prize that was promised. You might as well believe a politician.

The traditional teaching in India is that, as you age, you give up work, give up being a householder and take up sannyas (renunciation), become a recluse, become homeless, become a wandering pilgrim and seek liberation. Yet it is doubtful if any of those doing so ever attained anything useful or worthwhile. They ended up forsaking the comfort of home and family, which could have been such a boon in old age. For what? For what, indeed? Because of a desperate need to know the truth, or maybe just because of a fear of death, of going into the bleak maw of the unknown. Could they not have done that at home?

Spirituality does not, cannot, consist of thinking, of adopting any kind of mental or emotional attitude, of trying to be a certain way, or of thinking pure thoughts and doing kind deeds. Nothing that the mind does, including trying to still itself, will lead to spirituality. Thinking is not the way out. It does not lead to freedom. Understanding will not free us. Spirituality means spiritual reality must come to us; we must be put in contact with it. Nothing we do as a person will bring it. We cannot lift ourselves up to it; it must come down from on high. Nothing we do will reveal it. No agony of mind or intensity of desire will take us there. Even if we meditate, we are simply exploring subtler areas of mind. We are not going where spiritual energy is. The other shore is still far away. Far and far away, believe me. Or closer than you could ever imagine!

We have been told, particularly by eastern teachers carrying the message of their culture, that we are going to rise to higher and higher states through a process of learning and rebirth. They say through experience the person will become ever more perfect and complete. I say that is not so. No individual is reborn, because there is no continuous person who marches through endless lifetimes in some glorious learning adventure. It is just that experiences associate with specific energy-desire packages called a person, and these desire-experiences are recycled into another birth as tendencies and inclinations, and the form in which they find themselves, or its resulting consciousness, concludes that it is a person. In fact, however, there is no permanent person; you are not going to last forever. You are doomed! Doomed, I say. Doomed and damned.

There is no jiva (soul), no permanent self, no personality that lasts throughout all time. There is no Great Plan to bring everything to perfection through learning, pain and experience... Matter cannot become spirit. Its very nature is imperfection. It was never meant to be perfect. How could matter perfect itself anyway? Matter is the material which, when conjoined with consciousness, produces form, but consciousness is limited itself as part of creation. Matter, including the material of the personality, is a condensation and a slowing down of higher energies, the grossification of

more sublime forces. There is movement within creation, in fact that is all creation is – cycles of energy-flows. These, repeated, create habits, and these habits are perceived as different from other habit-packages; then individual habit-patterns are called the self, ego, which sees itself as special and unique, and the body-complex calls itself a person.

Of course this is a bummer for reincarnationists, but you cannot change facts to make them sound nice and comforting. The fact is that direct experience of higher spiritual states reveals that there is no permanent entity, no person that goes on forever. Buddha said this time and again to his pupil Kashyapa, yet Buddhist scriptures are full of crap about evolution, developing moral qualities and being good, karma and reincarnation, things Buddha could never have said, knowing them to be untrue. If there is no eternal person, for whom or what would learning be for, as the lessons would be lost at the end of a lifetime. There is no permanent Ego or spiritual being which gathers up the harvest of living to perfect itself. There is no soul marching on till the end of the road.

We are not marching on toward some glorious future.

We are just getting nearer death. You have a sell-by date. You will expire. Goodbye.

I am not being much of a comfort, am I?

However, there is another side of the picture.



### Taking Up the Challenge

He who conquers others is strong. He who conquers himself is mighty  
Lau Tzu

The Son who is perfect in every respect – that is, the Word that originated through that Voice – who has within him the Name, who is Light – he revealed the everlasting things, and the unknowns were known. And those difficult to interpret and secret he revealed, and for those who dwell in Silence...he preached to them. And he revealed himself to those who dwell in darkness, and showed himself to those who dwell in the abyss, and to those who dwell in the hidden treasures he told ineffable mysteries, and he taught unrepeatable doctrines to those who became Sons of the Light  
Trimorphic Protennoia, from the Hagg Hamal Library

We have to take up the challenge of spirituality today. We have to find the Truth now. To search for it tomorrow may be too late. How do we know we will be alive tomorrow? The Teacher is here now. He may be gone tomorrow. We have to find out if we are just a collection of atoms, if our moods are based on chemical reactions, if our self is just a bundle of memories and instinctive reactions, or if there is something real and true and lasting beyond all these changing patterns we call self. Or is there something else, a mystery unknown to normal mind, a hidden beauty, an unknown love, an unnamed god, an abstract state lying below the surface of the trivial and the superficial?

Are we born, just to die? Is death going to be the flower of our lives – a wilted flower? Will we be buried in the tomb of lost opportunity? Are we going to die, come to an end and find our life was empty and futile because we did not realise the purpose of our existence? What is that purpose? To answer the question: Who am I? To know ourselves, and to know ourselves completely. To come to the end of our journey, to reach enlightenment, to become liberated, to find the Truth for ourselves, to stand on the other shore. Or does life not have any purpose?

You have to be a clever sod to figure out the complexities of life and all its inter-relations. Every road in life leads to another road, and that to another, if we take it. Who knows where any road may lead? Or what the end may be? Or has it all been mapped out for us beforehand?

Throughout history a few, and very few, individuals claimed to have found emancipation on their own. Yet millions did not. Without a master it is like walking in a strange land in deep darkness. We have so many obstructions inside us. How do you find your way through a dense forest? If there are two mountain sides and a huge chasm in-between, how do you cross that gorge? Obviously, you need a bridge. If you are climbing a mountain you need a guide – someone who knows the way, and the best way. The Master, a true Master, is the bridge, the guide, and the way. The way out. And the only way. No shit, as the constipated Chinaman said to the doctor.

We are told that Brahman, the Ultimate, is closer than hands and feet, and that it is only a hair's breadth away. But how far is that if we are looking in the wrong direction?

All our life we have been looking outwards at things, people, events. We evaluate ourselves through sensations, stimulations, emotional and mental responses. And instead of pulling out of the morass we sink deeper. The longer we live, the more we accumulate, and the heavier our baggage. Experience does us little good because it is often full of woe and suffering, and we learn very little from suffering, despite all the unfounded rumours that it strengthens us and builds character, according to misguided occult and religious writers; it cannot, because suffering reduces our state of awareness, and we simply gather more impressions and accretions and often just conclude that life is crap and unfair. And with this same self, with this damaged awareness, we are supposed to find Enlightenment, the supreme freedom of Jivan Mukti, on our own, this huge thing bigger than all the worlds, yet simpler than a flowing river. This ever-active mind is supposed to find stillness unaided. Now I ask you: Does this sound logical? Does it make sense? Or is there something wrong there somewhere? And remember, untold thousands have failed, men and women, some of them more pure than us, more sincere, more dedicated, more intelligent and more diligent. So what makes us think we can get it on our own? For experience proves otherwise. Only the arrogance of the mind, that thinks it can do anything by itself, thinks differently.

The Upanishads say: 'That Spirit, that inner soul (or essence) of things, is the one thing that really deserves to be seen, to be heard, to be thought about and meditated upon.'

Yes, but how do we find that Spirit to meditate on it, to see it and hear it? The spirit to be thought about is not the real Spirit; it is a thought, an idea, a concept. Some people think that spirituality means massage with essential oils, crystals, tarot, angels, chanting, Feng Shui, Tai Chi, Chi Gong or yoga poses. Some think it means sacred sex (well, any excuse, eh?) or magical ceremony. But, without real spiritual Energy, coming from formless realms, nothing is spiritual. Buddhism is not spiritual. Nor is yoga, though it may lead us to finer levels of awareness. Only a Master can connect us to high spiritual realms of light. If it doesn't come from those levels, it ain't spiritual, man. It's something else. It might be good. It might be nice. It may be high. But it is not the highest, the truest, the greatest. It is not pure light. It is tainted by matter. A true Master, at Initiation, is able to enfold his disciple in his own pure aura and carry him to high spiritual planes, by which he becomes connected to spiritual energy whenever he turns his attention in that

direction according to the instructions given him at Initiation. About once every six hundred years one Great Master comes, according to Cosmic Law. This Master takes man out of the universe and outside of time. It gives his disciples access to the ultimate spiritual state. Not just to high spiritual states, which are still within form, but to the formless abstraction; absolute freedom from form.

There are so many spiritual groups around today. It would take forever to investigate every single path, so you must find a group where individuals have attained what you are looking for and can prove it in their own experience, and can describe it. This is vital, otherwise you will waste your life seeking in dead-end alleys. Then you will arrive nowhere, which is not a good place to be if you are trying to get somewhere. I am trying to save you from the mistakes I made. Listen and learn. Do not waste your life. Find a systematic way of freeing yourself. Make sure it works for everyone. It is no good if Johnny and Janet are free if you cannot be free yourself.

What good is that to you? If you want something useless, get a tattoo. Otherwise seek real freedom.

So seek a group which has many liberated beings within its ranks. If it does not, it certainly will not be able to free you, which means it is useless to you.

Seek truth beyond tradition. The idea that freedom can be found within any tradition is not only ludicrous, but self-contradictory. Traditions are old, sterile, hidebound, dogmatic. They limit the freedom which is Truth. A tradition is built on concepts and ideas, whereas the Transcendent is conceptless and idea-free. The transcendental does not have its home in traditions.

Truth comes from within, not from without; not from some form, but from the formless.

So look there for the Real.

You will not find it anyplace else.

Where else could it be? Look in the mirror of your own consciousness.

## 5

**Seeking Answers**

The best part of beauty is that which no picture can express  
Francis Bacon

We do not know how the Absolute can be taught  
Upanishads

One problem is: How will we recognise truth if we find it? By what will we gauge it? If we do not have the means to perceive it, it might walk right past us. How is the mind qualified to judge it? Based on what? We might have once thought religion had the answers, only to find later that it had not. The same goes for any group. The mind always thinks it is right. Belief has no solid foundation. What we believe today we may reject tomorrow. Is there a God, is there not a God? How will you know? By what will you decide? By your upbringing? What we believe often depends on the part of the world we come from. Our upbringing influences our attitude and what we believe. Many people believe what they are told, and always will; they never attempt to revalue their opinions. Why bother? They know they are right. Because they believe it.

No religion is true. None. Nor any tradition. For Truth must always be found anew.

Only Truth is real. Look for that. A belief is just a prejudice.

Socrates tried to get people to seek truth, to question tradition. That did not make him popular. It led to his death. When he was asked what his sentence should be he replied: A lifetime of free meals. The court offered him a cup of hemlock instead. Tight sods. He wasn't even thirsty.

You have to take a scientific approach to Truth and Spirituality, asking yourself: How do you know that? You have to be intelligent and discriminative. You have to think for yourself, not accepting second-hand answers without due consideration and investigation. Don't look at what you want to be true. Find out what is true. Most of all, instead of trying to find unverifiable theory, find out what you are. Who are you? That is the only question in life worth a damn. All the rest is crap. Just like ninety percent of all books on spirituality (and I am being conservative and generous here) are trivial and superficial and a waste of time. Only experience will give us wisdom. Obviously you have to rely on intuition and inclination to some extent.

Personally, I have looked at many things, many teachings. I discovered yoga when I was sixteen. I then took up occult studies for several years, but found them unproven and their claims unsupportable, even if they were comforting. But comfort or solace is no criterion of truth. Where's the proof? You can go to your deathbed thinking something is true when it's not. The only time to find out is when you are alive. Later is too late. What you have to do is, you have to

try something and see if it works. See if it produces results. If it does not, then it is no good. Things that don't work are useless. Like Buddha said, find out for yourself. Don't take the word of another. They may not know either. Don't rely on platitudes or empty promises. Find out. Find out if something enlarges your vision, opens your mind, expands your awareness, makes you happier and enriches your consciousness. Otherwise you might as well be licking coal in the coalhouse. If all these teachings do not make your life better, what good are they? Spirituality should be that which makes you feel glad to be alive. It should make you alert, wake you up, make you feel more intensely alive, more in tune with life. Your mind, your awareness should become sharper. How alive you are depends on the state of your awareness, not on what you know or think you know. Full awareness means full living, living to the maximum. No awareness means you are dead. Here is some good advice: Wake up and smell the roses – before you get put in a coffin.

Because then there will only be lilies, and your life will be weeds.

If you want a simple technique, here is a good one. Be aware that you are alive. Be aware that you are prana plus awareness. Or simply be aware of consciousness, the one thing which allows you to know everything. You can stop using it after you are dead. See, you do not have to use it forever. By being aware that you are alive, deliberately, which is equivalent to meditating on yourself, it pulls you into the present moment. And it is only in that moment that you are alive. When else can you be alive? This is similar to what the spiritual philosopher, Krishnamurti, taught, but in a different way. However, although this is useful, it is rather like putting the cart before the horse, in that, as the result of meditation, awareness widens and becomes deeper, and you naturally become aware of being alive to a greater degree. You would have to be, because the whole point of spiritual development is to become more aware of your own Beingness, and your Beingness is life. Actually, it is that which lies outside of life, because it was there before life was created, before time began, before creation commenced. I am That which was before anything. So the Upanishads say. And so say all those who have found Liberation.

All we can know is the Self, our own inner awareness. Life is so vast no one can know it all. They who think they know what life is are misled. Think of the vastness, the ramifications and the complexity of it all. Who can understand all that? The Veda says: No man, no human mind, has ever understood the Veda in its totality. Life is a lot bigger than the mind thinks it is, and the mind is a lot smaller than it thinks. Life will always be a challenge. There will always be more to learn. Whatever path we are on, we can always learn from other paths. Whatever teacher we are with, we will always learn something from other teachers. We may not always agree with science, but we will learn a lot from it. We may not agree with cold western philosophy, but it has lessons for us. We may not agree with the spiritualist movement, yet is it all pie-in-the-sky stuff? We may take exception with some ideas in psychology, but we know it has done a lot of good. We may be doubtful of spiritual healing, but are there not things which set us wondering? We may think we have life all figured out, but have we? It takes a cosmic computer to run the universe, a mind much

vaster than ours. Only a fool thinks they have all the answers. Life is a greater mystery than we think it is. Come to that, so are we!

I spent many years in Transcendental Meditation; at first, and for some time, quite content with my meditation, often experiencing a sense of peace and serenity and many moments of gentle bliss, sometimes hearing a flowing current at the left side of my head or feeling impulses of vibration throughout my body, at times having flashes of white light.

But, after some time, I realized I was walking the same ground and getting the same or similar experiences over and over. It seemed like I was treading water. Beyond a certain level I was making no further progress. I had hit a ceiling beyond which I could not go. Although I was not happy with this situation, going over the same ground in meditation, running round the same wheel like a hamster in a cage, running but getting nowhere, I just thought: Well, maybe this is just the way it is. I began to investigate every path and method I could find, finding none of them any more effective than the one I was on, and most virtually useless.

I felt there should be more, but I did not know where to look. I studied ancient scriptures, hoping to find in some little-known tome, a secret manuscript overlooked by others, a key to some secret that would unlock the door to a higher level of reality. I knew only too well that the level I was at was limited, although I had tasted flavours of a more sublime possibility and felt an unrest I could not quite define, and scented a deeper beauty. There had to be more. I was convinced there were worlds of untold wonder and a divinity sweeter than anything this world had to offer. But how to cross over, how to reach that deeper vastness? I would walk late at night, trying to figure it out. It made me pretty miserable. I knew, if I did not find some kind of raft to sail beyond this confining land, I would die without reaching my goal of being free, as so many had before me. I had pretty much reconciled myself to the fact that I would not find enlightenment in this life. Yet so many of the old Hindu books said it was possible to reach the highest state. Yet how? Could the old books be wrong? Or was freedom just for a select few, way beyond the rest of the human race? Maybe it was not for ordinary people. Maybe you had to be special and advanced beyond the rest of us.

What was holding me back? What was getting in the way? Why could I not find the answer? Frustrating. Very. In fact it was mental agony.

People like Krishnamurti and Ramana Maharshi said you could realise this freedom through looking in on yourself, as did the classic Yoga Vasistha; and Advaita Vedanta said that freedom already existed; all you had to do was see it. And Zen, both stupid and sublime, said in a moment of understanding you could be free.

Shankara said: 'As Brahman constitutes a person's Self, It is not to be attained. As it is omnipresent, it is part of its nature that it is present everywhere, in everyone.'

Yet, in the case of so many followers of these teachers, no matter how good the teaching sounds, where are the liberated ones? There are two questions to ask any teacher, before you join him: Can you give me a direct spiritual experience? Can you take me all the way? Is the teacher all-wise? Or is he just all talk? Can he show you others who are free? Or does he want to free you from your common sense? Or your money? There are a few of them. Oh, yea.

Finally I met someone who told me about a path of Light and Sound with a Master in England, not far away in India, some guru I could never meet, but someone I could see regularly, just a car journey away, a master who was not only Enlightened, but could enlighten others, and had enlightened many other seekers, and I could meet these people in person, talk to them, ask them questions. And I thought: Oh, wow. Can it be true? Surely not. But what if it is?

### ***How unusual is that, and how unique the opportunity?***

Then, at Initiation, in one instant of illumination I was lifted rapidly through plane after plane of light, through grids and webs and dimensions of radiant areas till, finally, I rested, all too briefly, in a honeycomb of shimmering gold, and a Sound ran through me that caused my body to quake, literally.

And I knew, unquestionably, that I had been given a direct spiritual experience and been taken beyond this world into realms of light, by a direct transmission of primordial Energy, resulting in revelation of the god-force that built this creation and maintains it.

The path of Light and Sound is a path of love – it can be called Nam Bhakti Marga –the Path of Devotion to the Life-energy. When you see light you love it, because it is beautiful and desirable; you desire it, you are awed by its beauty, and you want more of it. It is natural. You don't have to try to feel love. It is there as light arises. When a woman loves a man, does she have to make any effort to feel that love? No. She sees him, and it is there; it swamps her; feelings overcome her. She does not have to seek them. They come unasked. It is a natural attraction.

You cannot feel love on demand. Trying to love is not love. That is the memory of a time that you felt emotion, which the mind has tried to copy. But you can't copy love. That is forgery. A fake is not the real thing. It is a pale reflection of it. The mind thinks; it does not feel. Trying to love can be quite exhausting. Such an attempt at feeling is superficial and artificial. It is just a reflection in a mirror.

What is the ultimate love? When the one you love becomes more important than you yourself, when the lover is lost in the beloved. Sound-and-Light, viewed as one Energy, is the Beloved. In that the meditator becomes absorbed till there is no meditator; there is only meditation. There is only the Sound, only the Light – only the vibration, and only the space of silence, or the interior awareness. This self-forgetting love is a fire in which the dross is burnt, and the ego perishes in its

flame. In this meditation of love, which is tapas (that which purifies through heat), negative emotions rise up to the surface and are dissolved. Or you go beyond them.

Moslem and Indian Masters spoke often of drinking deep of the cup of love or of drowning in the sea of the beloved. They also often said: Die to live. This means by forgetting yourself in meditation you will come closer to the source of life and your awareness will come more fully alive as you draw greater livingness from the Source. Your awareness will waken up, becoming more lively, more acute, more alert, and more aware of its own wakefulness.

Strange, that in forgetting ourself we can find ourself. Dadu, a famous fifteenth century guru, said:

When I am, God is not. When I am not, God is.

He also said:

Search daily for the Source wherefrom arises Unstruck Music.  
 Repeat within the Name  
 Of the Imperceptible One in such  
 A way that God echoes from  
 Every pore of your being.  
 Dissolve yourself completely, as  
 Salt in water; that is called the true  
 Mantra of the Name.  
 Awareness leaves the body and reaches  
 The reservoir of Light.  
 It merges in this Light, as water  
 Merges into water.  
 Dissolve body and mind in the way  
 Ghee is dissolved by the  
 Heat of the sun.  
 Then offer salutation in the inner Lotus  
 Of the self, where God is manifest.  
 God echoes from every pore within.  
 Automatic repetition goes on within  
 The mind.  
 God echoes forth from the whole being  
 And mind is easily stilled.  
 You shall drink the divine Nectar  
 In the inaccessible and imperceptible realm.



Sultan Bahu, a Moslem Guru who lived till 1691, spoke only of love, the Master, the Sound and Divinity in words of rapture. Of the Sound or Hu, he said:

When the Essence is free of its attributes,  
the presence of God becomes evident.

Then Hu resounds within and without;  
No trace of Bahu can be found – he is lost in Hu!  
Love flourishes in that heart  
In which glows the Name of God.

Throughout history, in nearly every religion, mention is made of the Name of God; it is not the name, God, nor any other spoken or speakable name, but the unspoken resounding vibration – the eternal song of creation, the never-ending intelligent Life-energy of Love. And what is love? That which gives itself. Its Jewish name is Ancient of Days or I Am That I Am, and many other names; and every language and culture that is not barbaric has a name for it, and most of those do, too.

People talk so glibly about God, like they had some kind of special knowledge, or were the direct mouthpiece thereof. Religious people, in their arrogance, think they know what God is, what God wants – as if something way beyond man, beyond all creation, beyond every state, plane and realm would be touched by any desire.

Has anyone seen this God – other than those in an insane asylum? Anyone spoken to this God – other than to their own mental concepts, projected as false reality? Has anyone felt or sensed this God – beyond their own fanciful, imaginary emotional cravings? Many have felt a sense of stillness, an inner silence, and thought that was God.

What makes them think God is a person like us, with cravings, longings, compulsions, drives and demands? How silly is that? How trivial? And how insulting to their god.

If God is the very highest, then God would have to be It or That beyond the universe, not part of it, not partaking in any way of it, but wholly transcendent, absolute, apart. Yet, being absolute, God would have to be found in every part of creation as the Singleness of God, the unity and oneness of God, and the essence of life as a thread running through it all.

In other words, to the ego, God makes no sense. Those millions who pray to God are not talking to God – they are talking to their own ideas of what God is, a vague concept called ‘God’. God is all in their mind. God may or may not exist as a reality on some transcendent plane, but he ain’t listening to your waffle, folks. You are talking to yourself. Those who got rich telling you about their conversations with God were talking their illusions to the deluded. The mind talking to the mind. And how would you know God if you heard him? And is he so idle that he has nothing

better to do than to yap to some insignificant human? And a lot of those were just a wee bit sick. God must have been a bit worried about Moses - after all, He gave him His tablets.

No man hath seen God, says the Bible, because God is not a form, not a person to behold. No man can see God because God is transcendent to everything else. You can become God in your highest nature, but you cannot know God because knowing is of the mind. You can be God by transcending everything else, but then you are nothing because, from our level, that is what God is. God is the most subtle of the subtlest, and more subtle than even that because God has no contact with Creation. Beyond everything – there is God. Some have said God is Light; but no, because Light is a form. A myth says Moses saw a Burning Bush, and a Voice spoke from it. The burning bush was Light, and the Voice was the Sound. But these are forms, and God has no form, no size, no shape or mass or colour. Another interpretation might be that Cosmic Intelligence, in the Form of Highest Cosmic Being, contacted Moses through Sound and Light; but again this is not God. God cannot be contacted. There is no relationship with God. You is God or you ain't. If you are not God then you can never know God. God only knows God, ever. God is outside the zone. Or, putting it otherwise, only God is real, and the rest is Maya, illusion, just changing time, form, space and frequency of vibration. Only the Real is real for all time, and beyond time. And we call that God, which is a word-symbol for the Ultimate. It does not mean the Old Guy in the Sky idea for the brain-dead.

All these people, even the most devout, the most holy and pure, are distant from their God, because their love is a personal love, and that requires distance from its object. Real love is when you immerse yourself completely in the object of your devotion. If you cannot lose yourself in your devotion, then you are, in some way, feeding some need the ego has for something bigger than itself.

Buddha said: 'I am gone, gone – gone Beyond.'

Hey, man – a real cool dude, that Buddha was. But now he's gone. No doubt beyond.

An Indian story says a moth minister went to the King of moths and said: 'Some insects have joined our ranks, pretending to be moths.' A fire arose in a street. The king told his minister to send a moth to investigate it. An insect came back an hour later to tell the King the fire was very hot, he almost got burnt. The King said: 'Take this insect away; he is no moth.'

So he sent another out to investigate the fire, and he was back in a couple of hours. 'The fire was so bright,' he said, 'I had to fly away.'

'Imposter,' cried the King, and sent another.

His minister reported after a couple of days: 'He never came back. He must have perished in the flames.'

'Now that,' said the King, 'was a real moth.'

A moth throws itself into the flame. A lover throws himself into his love. A meditator throws himself into his meditation. And an idiot throws his life away.

It is said that Buddha once asked his disciple, Kashyapa, to sit down. As he did so, Buddha put his hand above his head, saying: 'I will enlighten you now.'

But Kashyapa asked Buddha not to.

'But, Kashyapa, why not? Many have begged me for this. Many would do anything for it.'

'Lord, I am afraid, once liberated, you will send me away from you to teach others – as I must do. Do not send me away yet.'

This happened several times, till, one day, Buddha said: 'Kashyapa, the time has finally come for your Liberation.' And he took him to the ultimate state.

Kashyapa left to teach others, but whenever a visitor came who had seen Buddha recently, he would bow toward the place where Buddha was last known to be. As he lay dying, he said: 'Point me in the direction where he was last seen.'

Love has been very hard to define through the ages, despite numerous attempts. Scriptures from many lands have not captured it, nor have the songs and poems from many cultures, and the words of great writers have failed to explain it. In the end, it is too subtle for the pen of any mind to master.

It is not always easy to understand how one thing can love something other than itself, something different, strange or alien; hence all the hatred in the world, the 'them and us' syndrome, the racial madness, religious bigotry, cultural narrowness and political stupidity.

But when the mukta, the released one, on becoming Buddha, the awakened, sees only one thing everywhere, the singularity of being, or when everything is Me alone, how can love not arise? His or her awareness encloses everything within it.

Before that there is only longing, desire and craving; there is only devotion, till this can merge with That. But while selfhood hems us in, Hindu statements like I am That or Thou art That have

little real meaning, even though they may be true. Otherwise they are just empty words, something for the mind to play with, but utterly useless, with no real understanding of their significance.

Because an ego, an entity, tries to understand that it is That, which it can never be. For That is beyond any limited being. Only That is That. It always was.

## 6

## THE ROMANCE OF THE PAST

The words of truth are always paradoxical

Lau Tzu

The Divine Sound is nectar.  
 This sound is the essence of all.  
 It takes you across the ocean of this world  
 Nanak

The unending music is the Hidden Treasure.  
 The saints have kept the key with them  
 Adi Granth

Except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe  
 John 4.48

Wonderful is the Teacher of it, rare the one who knows it  
 Upanishads

I cast a sound into the ears of those who know me. And I invite you into the exalted perfect  
 Light  
 Trimorphic Prototopia

A disciple, a meditator, must have devotion – to his master, to his path, to the Lifecurrent. His dedication helps to steady his mind, to keep him on track, to purify his aura, to keep him meditating. But that devotion need not be emotional. The devotee has to pay attention to that which he loves – the object of his attention, which just means to be aware of it. As far as meditation is concerned, it means, at first, to be concentrated on the object of attention, then to melt, or to dissolve into it, to fade into it, like a sugar cube in hot tea, like salt in water.

In India there is a mythical moon-bird which is supposed to stare at the moon. When the moon is hidden by clouds this bird keeps on staring, waiting for the clouds to clear. It goes on craning its neck in total concentration. That is devotion: constant attention.

The greatest obstacle for any meditator is boredom, when meditation becomes lifeless. If love arises, or if one is devoted to the meditation, or if one can forget oneself, or if one can find a state of mental comfort, then meditation becomes much easier and more rewarding, and an antidote to

dryness is found. So don't be a meditator – become the meditation, become the love you seek. How? By letting go, by becoming empty, by letting it happen, by not getting in the way, by falling into your own space. Of course it is not so easy to forget yourself, the very centre of your universe.

Thus you come to find the Holy Ghost, as the old Christians called the Life Current.

It says in the Tomb of Seti I: Nuk Hekau (I am the Word itself).

Love is not in the mind, or part of the mind, nor is it an emotion. It is not a feeling in the astral body. It is not craving, longing or desire. It is not found in the mind nor can it be generated by pretending to feel it, by copying some memory of it, by trying to force it into expression.

The ego is a block to love. Therefore, for love to arise, ego must subside. That means letting go the sense of self, not trying to be in control, refraining from manipulating consciousness, letting it be as it is, letting go of volition. This is done by letting go of resistance; hence there is no conflict, no mental violence. There is an increase of inner softness as we become less and less (and so become more) till it feels like mental floating, like meditation is going on on its own, as if we were hardly there. We lose ourself in meditation, we flow in our attention. And love arises. So we find ourself.

Our most intimate awareness is: I am. The Light is beautiful, the Sound can be most absorbing, but more beautiful, more intimate still is our own silent awareness, the deep tenderness of our own inner space.

Any unusual phenomenon rivets attention.

It is not by trying that we get anywhere. It is by non-effort, non-trying. We do by non-doing. No one will find spirituality by effort. All our lives we have been striving, making an effort, one way or another. Where has it got us? Do we see a lot of happy, fulfilled people made content through effort? One of our problems is that we take things too seriously. We will never be happy if we seek to be something other than what we are. How can we be different than ourself?

I remember when I was about fifteen. I used to wake from sleep, half awake, feeling the very deepest mystery of life, the mystery of the universe, the answer to all life's riddles, was about to be revealed to me, I was going to get it, the answer to everything...then I would wake up. Damn!

This may have been because Yoga teaches there are, between any two activities, points of change called sandhis, rather like railway junction-crossings, between sleep and waking, in which ego is forgotten and it is then possible to slide into an infinite state of fullness and contentment. One of the functions of a mantra is to allow awareness to fall into the silence between thoughts. Between sleep and wakefulness is one such transformation point.

In deep, dreamless sleep awareness rests in ananda kosha (the sheath of bliss). There are four states: Wakefulness, dream, deep sleep and Turiya, 'the Fourth', or the state of Transcendental Consciousness, above all other states, all changes, fluctuations and moods.

How is it that people keep coming along and having, now and then, one out of a crowd of seekers, an experience of liberation? Why them? Why not us? Are they freaks of nature, spiritual supermen, special cases for cosmic dispensation?

Throughout history, and, indeed, in the last hundred years, especially lately, a number of individuals have claimed to have achieved or arrived at a state of enlightenment, some under the directions of a Master, usually after some years; others on their own, and quite spontaneously, without even looking for it, sometimes.

Now, were all these individuals realized, even though they may have come to it by different approaches? To some extent, yes. Were they all at the same level of attainment? Ah. That is a moot point. Was Krishnsmurti at the same level as Ramana Maharshi? Was the difference one of personality expression? Was Ramakrishna at the level of Maharaj Nisargadatta? Was Muktananda at the same level as Adi Da Samraj (or whatever he is calling himself this year)? And were any of these fully enlightened beings? And can you tell the difference between a fully illumined teacher and a fascinating, evolved personality? Answers, at best, can only be guesswork. Heads or tails? Ultimately, only one thing is important. Can the one who says he is free free you? If not what is his or her value to you? A baker who can't bake you a cake is not much good to you, is he?

It still comes down to the question: Why could they not lead others to the same state? And not thirty years from now. Or seven lifetimes yonder. Because they did not know how to.

Of course it may be said as the state (or stateless state, if you prefer) of self-realization is our birthright – our natural inherent condition – we have the potential to slip into it at any time, even by accident. And then, of course, the question would have to be: How? That must have been the most pressing question of the early Zen Masters of the Sudden or Immediate Enlightenment School.

About two hundred years after the death of Buddha, there was a big meeting of leading Buddhists from many areas, to systematise the teachings of Buddha, who may or may not have said those things now taught under his name, which were not then written down. The meeting broke into two factions: those who said liberation was a gradual process of development that took many lives; and those who said enlightenment must be an instantaneous awakening. And so Zen (earlier known as Ch'an, Chinese for meditation or dhyana) was born.

Zen probably stems from the time that Buddha sat in a gathering of his monks, saying nothing, holding a flower in his hand. Some say that one of the monks (some say several) 'got it' and suddenly awakened to his true nature, his own buddhahood. If only it were so easy. Gimme a flower to stare at. Near his end Buddha predicted his teaching would be distorted within five hundred years, but would be rediscovered in eight hundred years. Well, I maintain it is still distorted. And ever will be. For Truth is to be lived, not taught as a tradition.

The Path of Light and Sound is a sure tried and tested way to move into spiritual realms and achieve high spiritual states, provided we have a true spiritual teacher, a Living Master who can put us in contact with high spiritual energies at initiation, as we are bathed in the waters of life, to use an old expression.

At initiation we are given an experience of the golden, radiant Thousand-Petalled Lotus on the Cosmic Astral Realm, if the initiation is real, way above the crown chakra in the head that is the goal of Siddha Yoga. In that very moment you have gone above what may be attained by Kundalini Yoga. The Third Eye opens and your whole system is speeded up as you are taken out of material realms. You suddenly have a spiritual Energy to meditate upon, not a mind force, not an idea, not a mantra-sound, an imaginary form, a colour or a feeling. There it is right in front of you, as real as your nose. Well, I assume your nose is real; you never know these days.

In the Yoga Sutras Patanjali says: **Samadhi is attained by devotion to Ishvara. Ishvara is the supreme Purusha, unaffected by affliction, action or its results or the impressions of desire. In Him is the complete manifestation of the seed of omniscience. Unconditioned by time, He was the teacher of the ancients. Ishvara is indicated by the sound of the Pranava. Repeated contemplation of it reveals its significance. From this obstacles vanish and knowledge of the inner Self arises. Or from the blissful supreme Inner Light.**

One might explain it like this. Samadhi itself is devotion to the Supreme. Devotion to Ishvara is devotion to Ish, or Divinity. Devotion is merely paying attention and surrendering attention to what one puts one's attention on, or the object of attention. In Samadhi one forgets oneself and gets absorbed in the object of attention. When you are still, you are absorbed, so stillness is devotion. The object, ultimately, of all valid systems of meditation is to access the Supreme and become one with it, to lose oneself in it. You are trying to merge with the Supreme Beingness, the Absolute Soul or Ultimate Awareness. The spiritual individuality is known as purusha. Ishvara is known as the Individuality of the Supreme, unaffected by time, causation, action or desire. Ishvara is without suffering or faults. But the Individuality of Ishvara is not as a person. Ishvara is the Intelligence of Sound and Light, the Creative Impulse that brought the worlds into being, and more particularly the Principle of Compassion. Put in other words, it is that which reveals Divinity by revealing itself, as it is itself the Goal and that which is meditated upon; and yet it is also that which meditates upon the meditator. It is an Energy that lifts up and elevates. It is the Spiritual Magnet that draws to itself. It contains the seed of all-knowing because, as an Upanishad says:



Know that, by knowing which, all else is known. It is the embodiment of Beauty and of all knowledge and the essence of all states of consciousness. The seed of everything is within it. It contains all possibilities. It is that which is most loveable and most desireable. It is Love itself.

Meditation on Sound and Light is devotion to Ishvara.

However, there is another meaning to this. Ishvara pranidhana – devotion to God – was a form of meditation practiced in old India. This consisted of having the idea of God and very gently concentrating on that idea till it became very fine, very vague, and then letting the idea go, thus transcending the idea. Or you feel devotion to the Supreme, and then transcend that. It does not consist of clinging to the idea. You let the concept become very abstract and then let it fade away into nothing. Then your mind becomes empty of content. You become nothing. Then you are in the state of Yoga. At least that is the theory.

Ishvara, it is said, stands throughout all time as the Gateway to Liberation, being the very embodiment of compassion, and seeks to awaken men through the instrumentality of a Living Master, by connecting to that Master and working through him.

When this principle gets embodied in a human being, you have the foundation of Masterhood. A true Master manifests this principle, as it is the principle of Light itself, the principle of illumination and revelation, the very principle of spirituality. It carries the seed of enlightenment. A spiritual Master exists in order to connect his disciples to this Energy. And more particularly, it is the Inner Master, and that on which you meditate. At Initiation, to be successful, you have to connect with this Energy. A Master, in his human nature, may be faulted in our eyes, but the Inner Teacher is faultless and far greater by far than anything we could imagine. It is that which we give ourselves to in meditation. In olden days they called it God. Krishna, speaking as the Ultimate, said: Having created this universe out of a portion of Myself, I yet remain. This whole vast creation in its endless diversity is the reflection of the immense beauty of Ishvara, Whose Form it is. As the Bible says: He brooded upon the Face of the DEEP. Or yet again, the most concentrated, most condensed, most compact, yet most abstract form of all this is Ishvara.

It says Ishvara was also the teacher of the ancients. Each Master embodies the principle of divinity. It is the same divinity throughout all time, of course. And it is the same inner teacher, the Eternal Guru, who guides the meditator on the inner planes, and on which the meditator meditates. It has always been the same Great Master in different human forms, expressed through various minds and nervous systems, age after age.

It says in the Advaita Bodha Deepika: Unless a master be gracious to him, no man will ever be liberated.

The Great Master, the Eternal Inner Guru, is embodied in a human being in each age, age after age, and enables him to give initiation. Initiation is given by suspending the laws of nature on each plane so that contact is made with higher energy. Each plane has its own law, usually called a ring-pass-not, beyond which awareness on that particular plane cannot go; one is enclosed by the plane on which one habitually functions. Each plane is a plane of awareness and is limited by that awareness so one cannot operate on the plane of awareness above it. But initiation turns aside the veils and allows access to higher levels, and also the ability to progress through inner planes to higher states of being and greater levels of reality and to greater livingness.

Ishvara is the Great Being of Sound and Light, the Intelligence of creation, the Principle of Love beyond time, hence the Teacher of the ancients, the Inner Teacher of all awakened beings. Because of this the old books called Ishvara God because the writers of old thought Ishvara was the Supreme, which in one sense is true, in the sense of the Intelligence which governs creation. The Yoga Sutras say: Ishvara-pranidhana, or devotion or self-surrender to Ishvara. This, like most teachings, has been corrupted to mean worship of God. True devotion is not in the sense of giving something or wanting something or the desire for something: I love chocolates, I love the girl in the green dress. It is not emotion. Devotion is to be open and receptive, to be still and empty so something can fill you, so you can receive what is given. Ishvara waits to flood you with Love when you can get out of the way and accept it. Sound and Light pull you up toward Ishvara. So it is said that the vibrational Sound heard in meditation is expressive of Ishvara; so there is your devotion and there is your worship. Worship is to put out the welcome mat; it is to say: Come on in. To surrender to the Light is not to lose anything; it is to become more, to expand. You, this little thing you feel is so important, can become the Vastness that is Love, that is universal intelligence and spiritual awareness. Ishvara stands there throughout eternity pouring out love through Sound and Light; Ishvara connects to True Shabd masters to reveal divinity and to lead their followers beyond death because compassion is the nature of Ishvara.

In the Chinese Buddhist scripture, the Surangama Sutra, it is made plain that enlightenment is made possible by listening to the Sound, by becoming lost in the listening. One famous disciple of Buddha said he found enlightenment because ‘I entered into the stream of hearing.’

Another said: ‘I turn my listening inward.’ It was also said: ‘Wonderful is a pure sound like the ocean’s roar. Try to hear your own hearing.’

The Surangama Sutra says: ‘Reverse your outward perception of hearing and listen inwardly for the perfectly unified and intrinsic sound of your own Mind-Essence...concentrating the mind on the sense of hearing, turning it inward by this Door of Dharma to hear the Transcendental Sound of this Essential Mind. Essence of sound is felt in both motion and silence, passing from existent to non-existent...Indeed, when there is no sound, hearing is most alert...learn from your own self by listening to the Dharma Sound.’

Guru Nanak said: ‘The Glory of God is the Sound-Current of the Nad, the Celestial Music of bliss, and the wisdom of the Vedas.’

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was a Muslim Master, Bahu, who said: ‘The heart is deeper than the ocean; dive deep into it, O seeker, and explore! Drink the water of life from this ocean, or your soul will always remain thirsty.’

Real spirituality comes down from spiritual realms, like water coming down from the mountain.

You may ask: But what about service to humanity? If the Master, being already perfect, comes here out of compassion, yet only reaches a few individuals, how does that help the rest of humanity?

Bugger! Awkward question.

The Master contains all realms within his awareness. Just his being here brings in great force. His aura must be huge and must be powerful in its effect. The Master is here for all those who will listen to his message and act upon it. If most people are so under the glamour of the material plane that they cannot see the importance and immediate necessity of initiation, if they are too blind to the urgent need of spirituality, too stupified by sex, booze, social functions or making money, what can a Master do? You can’t make a blind man see. A deaf man is not a good listener.

Now, consider the psychotic state of the world today - a violent world, where a person could be attacked for no good reason, just for kicks, a fearful place for some, an uncertain place for others, where there is corruption in high places, unfairness in law sometimes, plain stupidity in government, racism and every kind of insanity you can imagine, and where a war is always going on somewhere. The history of the world is one of war. Only an idiot would be unaware that we lived in a madhouse. And some of the inmates are running the asylum.

Consider the frailties of man, all his mental and emotional problems, his neuroses, frustrations, desires, greed, and all the other psychological stuff. And it has been going on forever. Who knows how many other cultures there were before recorded history, how many small and great civilizations rose and fell? Then, again, there is the history of the creatures of the sea and the animals of the land – tooth and claw existence, instinct, fear, hunger, pain, and all that animals have felt, suffered and endured. And there have been, as well, all the energies of maya and glamour sweeping from the astral plane, and thoughtforms from earlier days which have conditioned and influenced man. In turn, by his own responses, he has influenced and reinforced the delusive energies and all the trickery of the astral plane and created rigid thoughtforms and patterns on the mental plane, which are controlling man today, which tie man to the physical plane consciousness and limit his vision to higher things, and which reinforce selfishness, hate, division and narrow views of life, all the things which keep man in a narrow band of experience and limit

his livingness and perception. There will always be cruelty and murder as long as bigotry exists, which is founded on the sense of separateness, and no legislation will have much effect till men change their way of thinking. Now, maybe you can educate men to some extent, but do you think human beings are any better now than they were a hundred years ago? Has man evolved at all? Those ancient thoughtforms will continue to beglamour man. Just read the newspapers. Or better not.

It is a pity that people could not see the evil behind the smiles of Stalin, Nixon, Reagan, Thatcher, Bush, Blair, Milton Friedman, Kissinger and the like who darkened the face of the land and led to great suffering. Who says you can't fool almost all of the people? After the second world war a great many children were shipped to Australia by the British government without permission of their parents and Australian authorities told their people they were all orphans, the lying bastards, and they were often abused and suffered hardship. How can anyone trust politicians?

The lower planes are planes of darkness. The material planes are slow and sluggish, heavy and inert. They are cold, thick, and viscous. To break up old forms you need to bring in an energy that is fluid, fast and hot. That is spiritual energy. To burn up old thought patterns you need an energy that is hot. That is the meaning of the Hindu word, Tapas – that which burns up, that which heats.

There are a lot of problems in the world today, a lot of pressure, leading to conflict, tension and stress. There is peer pressure; we are expected to behave in a certain way. We worry. Can I trust my husband? Am I sexy enough? Am I desirable? How will I pay my bills? How is Billy doing at school? Am I slim enough? Do people like me? Am I popular? Was I a bit rude yesterday? Did I say things I did not mean to? Will the Doctor give me something for depression? All of this adds to the world thoughtform, as well as to our own. Then there are the many delusions we are subject to. I am American – I am special – or, I am Jewish, I am special, or all the other group identifications. Or just: I am me and I am special, I am different, I am unique. Sometimes ego does this in a reverse way: I am worthless. What good am I? My life is a failure. No one knows my pain; no one understands my problem. If people knew what I was really like – what a sham my life is, and how hateful I am. What have I got to live for? And the hate in the world – so much hate, so much exploitation, so much aggression and greed.

According to occult teaching, about three thousand years back the cosmic Ray of Devotion and Idealism became quite powerful on the astral plane, and in the middle ages the Ray of Concrete Knowledge and Science began to gather strength on the mental plane, and now the Ray of Ceremony and Ritual has begun to arise.

What is the significance of this for humanity?

The Ray of Idealism creates devotion and a sense of fanaticism to some ideal, to some idea or another which becomes of total importance in the life and in the mind of the particular person

involved in that ideal, in that devotion. It has created the worst that we have seen, from wars and massacres to the Spanish Inquisition. Later we have seen that same fanaticism in terms of politics, country, race and religion in which a person feels that their country or religion is entirely correct, no matter what, and the slaughter of thousands hardly means anything. Mass murder is glorified.

That is mass insanity. How easy for some it is to be evil.

It is a state of my country, right or wrong; my group, right or wrong. And wrong still means right. Whatever I do is right. Whatever I am identified with is right. Hurting others does not mean anything. The end justifies the means. Anything for a so-called just cause. When we become too engrossed in an idea or an ideal it takes us over so we become one-sided, lop-sided, and only see one side of things. We become blind. When we lose our discrimination we lose our sense of right and wrong. We become very arrogant when we become very blind and look through a narrow tube and only see our own point of view (is there any other?) and we suffer from blinkered vision. So the Ray of Devotion may cause imbalance in its negative aspect, or in our negative reaction to it. This in its most extreme form is the stuff of insanity.

Emotionalism can blind. It can mislead and it can lead astray. Misperception leads to wrong action, and to a distorted view of reality. One of the most stupid ideas is nationalism, where one feels one owes something to one's country. What is this country? Simply a piece of land, a bit of earth. What do you owe to some piece of ground? Is it worth throwing your life away for? Should we die for some group simply because some individual leader says we should? Why is that leader any more important than the rest of us? Is the most valuable life not our own? Why do we have to accept the assumptions of others? So many men, so very many, have been unthinking, unquestioning victims of mass delusion. Who in their right senses would have any part in war? How could one religious group attack another? What we believe in mainly depends on where we live and what we have been taught. Our truth is no better than anyone else's, unless we have thought it out for ourself. We should examine everything and challenge every idea, every thought. Who says a thing must be a certain way or there is only one truth? An idea is only a thought.

Of course the other side of this is that higher idealism which led to doing good, the desire for freedom, the fight to end the slave trade, fair wages and fair treatment, decent working conditions, proper health care for all, religious freedom, ending racial intolerance, equal rights for women and protection for children and animals, and other such noble acts and aspirations.

From the time of Bacon the study of scientific knowledge has been gathering momentum, due to the incoming energy of the Ray of Concrete Knowledge. Science has usurped and surpassed the role of religion, as the instructor of men and the custodian of truth. With education man has begun to think a lot more for himself, but still in rather limited ways. Man has a lot of knowledge, but he still lacks wisdom. Occultists say, with the advent of the Ray of Knowledge, the mental principle has been greatly stimulated. Ideas come from the realm of higher mind. These ideas are picked up

and become universal ideas or universal modes of thought. Our minds are the receiving-sets of universal mind. However, the mental bodies of men, when thought is not flexible, when perception is not clear, can become hard, brittle and rigid. Thus you get fanatics. Increasing knowledge increases ego. It gives us something else to be proud of...another thing to make us feel special.

Oh, my lovely, lovely mind. There it goes again. A little thing trying to be big.

With the development of knowledge our mental bodies become more organised. But we may run the risk of hardening the heart, hardening the feeling nature. There have been so many times in the past few centuries when we have seen people like Hitler, like Stalin, like Adi Amin obsessed with the idea of superiority because as ego is strengthened, the idea of being superior is also strengthened. And, above everything else, mind is concerned with differences and distinctions. So we have one thing set up against another – my family, your family: my group, your group: my class, your class; my nation, your nation: me and other: this and that. We are special; you are insignificant. Therefore, you are unimportant: therefore, it doesn't matter what we do to you. Hence selfishness is greatly accelerated. So we can strengthen certain mental tendencies; these patterns condition our behaviour, and by repeated mental responses certain attitudes are reinforced and mental habits become extremely hard to break, very difficult to change. We become obsessed with the rightness of our own stance, our own point of view, with our own position and attitude. To science we give the authority we once gave to religion. We exalt science. We think that if something comes from science it can't be wrong, it must be right because it is proven. But science itself is limited by the mind of man, by the limits of man's mind, by his concepts and his materiality, and by his arrogance and his narrowness of vision.

Another danger of overdevelopment of mind is that we can become too serious. Life becomes too serious and too earnest and we become rather unforgiving as we lose our sense of humour. Then we become too caught up in the pain and trauma of the past. We can't let the past go. We carry old hurts along with us. We cling to the past. We repeat the past and relive the past over and over repetitively. We can't forget or forgive those who have hurt us. Our egoic behaviour is programmed by past habit-patterns. These habit patterns, on the mental plane, are thought forms. These thought forms when too limited, too rigid, become prisons. These condition our attitudes and behaviour. Concrete knowledge tends to crystallise our thought patterns.

The Ray of Ritual tends to compound these effects, as it tends to crystallise things into patterns and rituals. From one point of view, life can be seen as a series of rituals. It is concerned with habits, with limits, formulas, with habituation into set grooves, with confinement of form and habits of limitation. Of course it must be said that any Ray has both a positive and negative effect, this being a universe of duality, but here we are concerned with the negative effects of thought forms on the mental plane, and with distorting emotional energies and illusions on the astral plane. Or we can say we are concerned with illusion on the mental plane and delusion on the astral plane.

The Ray of Ritual condenses and materialises and has particular reference to the etheric-physical sphere and to the flow of etheric forces which play around the planet and in and out of the body like a web of light which may be seen on initiation like a giant spiderweb of glimmering lines of criss-crossing golden lights. Some see it as a kind of chessboard-like floor of squares of light.

At Initiation tremendous spiritual force is brought down from the higher or Greater Astral (not the astral plane on which the emotional-desire body is found), and the astral plane is then filled with light, breaking up many old fear patterns and entrenched thought forms from the past, thus helping to purify the lower planes. Obviously, as spiritual energy is so fast, the vibrations of the lower bodies are greatly speeded up. That must make them more sensitive and more receptive to higher energies.

As contact is made with pure energy it must stimulate the atoms in the brain. In time, as higher neural pathways function with greater facility, one becomes more open to expanded states of consciousness. So greater levels of reality are perceived and experienced. In other words, as well as the brain cells becoming more organised and integrated and the synapses firing faster, they must become more illumined. Hence clarity of mind arises and greater stability for the personality as a person becomes more rooted in their own fundamental nature, more anchored in their awareness, and more sure of who they are and more alive to themselves. They become more intimate with their deeper nature. However, the Master comes for the entire planet, not just for the benefit of a few disciples.

Initiation must be given by a living Spiritual Master. How can a dead teacher give the touch of Life? An initiation must be given by another human being living as a person in a body, able to connect with the disciple's human aspect, as well as his divine.

Initiation is usually given by touch, but history records times when it was given without touch. It is said that early in the twentieth century there was a passenger in a train and a Master on a horse. The passenger had never met the Master but for a moment, as the train passed, their eyes met, and the energy passed from one to the other in a flash. This must have been the original way of Zen mind-to-mind transmission.

Ravidas, a cobbler who lived in the 1400's, teacher to the mystic poetess Mirabai, was a contemporary of Kabir, some say Kabir's disciple, and he had met Nanak.

Now there was a king, Raja Pipa, who desired spirituality from Ravidas, who was of low caste. Pipa was ashamed to be seen visiting a lowly cobbler, but he did so when a big fair was held outside the city, which most people attended.

Ravidas was soaking leather in a vessel of water. He took some of the water from the vessel and gave it to the king to drink, by way of baptism. Pipa was mortified at drinking dirty water. He pretended to drink it so as not to offend Ravidas, but actually poured it through the long sleeves of his shirt, and the dye in the water naturally stained his shirt.

Pipa returned to the palace and sent his shirt to the laundryman, who gave it to his daughter to wash. In those days stains were sometimes removed by chewing on the fabric. As the girl did this, she imbibed some of Ravidas's drink.

Soon, she began to swoon in ecstasy. As the word of this reached Pipa, he visited the girl and realised his lost opportunity. He went to Ravidas and begged for another chance.

After making Pipa prove himself for awhile, Ravidas then initiated him in the normal way.

And you thought it was bad to drink dirty water. Of course you can take that with a pinch of salt. Good story, though.

Because the Master embodies Truth, he can impart Truth. He can take you to Truth. Thereafter it becomes possible to meditate on Truth. At the moment of initiation you are taught how to merge away into Truth, yet you are not taught anything. There is no verbal instruction. There is revelation of light. Initiation is an experience of Truth.

At this time we tend to take many things for granted. Because we live in a fast age, we expect to get everything quickly. But initiation does not always come quickly. In ancient days an aspirant could wait years for initiation. One of Nanak's closest disciples had to wait 12 years before he was initiated, and he was an old man.

But he lived long enough to become the master.

There was a king who was a disciple of Kabir. One day the king was in the street when a woman threw dirty water out of an upstairs window over him. Naturally, the king lost his temper. For that, Kabir refused to initiate him. Over the years something similar happened three times, till finally the king restrained himself, whereupon Kabir poured his energy into him.

On the other hand, there were those who were initiated as children, and those who were quickly initiated after meeting the Master. It is said that the Master Dariya was visited by his guru as a baby and grew up hearing the Sound, becoming enlightened at the age of twenty. Then he himself became a Master.

In any case the old hard traditions and conditions have been much relaxed in the last hundred and odd years. Which is just as well, as most westerners would not put up with it. They would just



move on to another group, which are so easy to find these days. In America alone, it has been said, there are twenty forms of sound and light meditation paths taught. And yet in all the world there is only one path and one Master which uniformly and systematically leads to the enlightened state of freedom – being beyond the scope of space, time and creation, beyond all forms and conditions.

And by some odd, lucky coincidence it just happens to be the path I am on. How about that?

So far I have personally known about ten people get enlightened, and to my question: Is it as big as you thought it would be? The answer comes back: Bigger – but also different to what I expected.

Then everything is attained, and there is nothing to be done – except to brush your teeth, of course.

Initiation into Light and Sound is the original religion, the core of all religions, spoken of overtly or covertly in all traditions, and meditation upon it the true form of worship, Nam Bhakti – devotion to universal Energy, sometimes called the godforce. Veda calls this religion Sanatana Dharma, Eternal Truth. Hindus have misunderstood this to mean an eternal teaching to be studied, but the study of Truth is in becoming Truth. Hence God is known as Sat Purush – the isness of reality, the Ever-Abiding One, the allness of Brahman, the Unbecoming, the Unborn, the Unoriginated, the Eternal Spirit.

The Vedic teachings say:

‘Closing the ears with the thumbs they hear the sound of the space within the heart. This is sevenfold: like rivers, a bell, a brass vessel, a wheel, croaking frogs, rain, voices in a sheltered place. Passing beyond these, men disappear in the supreme, the Soundless, the unmanifest Brahma. There they are unqualified, indistinguishable like the various juices which have attained the condition of honey.’

All religions, including the Hindu one, are adulterations and substitutes of the true religion, which is pure, all-shining Light. Real religion is not conveyed by word-of-mouth; it is a direct living experience of spirituality, of living Silence. It is found by turning back toward your own source, your own inner essence, your own beginning, by turning attention to your own innate divinity. Where, outside of yourself, is this god of religion supposed to be?

The Thatness that is God is so intangible that no knowledge can convey it. No mind can comprehend it. The Vedic tradition says that no human mind has ever understood Veda in its fullness. The Apocryphon of John calls the godhead ‘the Invisible One who is above everything.’ An early Gnostic teacher, Marsanes, called God ‘the silent One who is not known.’

Religion should be to make life better. Or is that too easy and too obvious? Why does it not make us happier? Why does it not free us? Why does it not reveal the true nature of Divinity? Because it can't. Because it is about ignorance, not revelation or wisdom or insight or experience.

Life should be a flow, like a dance...yes, and some things will always bother us. There are parts of our nature that will always disconcert us. But that is no reason to dislike ourselves, to doubt ourselves, to be always blaming ourselves, to be always asking: Should I have done that? Did I do wrong? Am I a bad person? Guilt or shame does us no good, and it is not the true function of religion to encourage negative or destructive or self-doubting mental habits. Unfortunately most of the history of religion has been concerned with sin and with the idea that priests know best. At least they thought so, some of them. And that was a sin.

Religion is a failure, and always will be, as long as there is no direct experience of the subtler areas of existence. Man must know for himself, not take the word of another. He must question his own belief and ask how he knows things, how he has been conditioned by accepted ideas.

Religion means to bind back, to return the way we came, to seek our essential nature, to seek our origin in godhead, to find our own purity, not to have some false sense of old, outdated morality foisted upon us. Our task, our duty, our mission is, as the American hymn says, to be 'Closer, my God, to Thee.'

We, as serious seekers, think of that God as the Eternal Reality, the Unspeaking or, as St. Paul once put it, the Unknown God. But, in the end, it is not what we think, but what we become, what we find in our own awareness. It is not the knowing, but the livingness of it.

Guru Nanak said:

Unknown is my Lord, without end;  
 Unfathomable is He, beyond description;  
 Immortal, beyond cause and effect;  
 Self-existent and alone,  
 Without desire, without delusion.

He also said, rather beautifully:

In every heart Thou art hidden;  
 In every heart burns Thy light.  
 The guru's message bursts open  
 The granite doors to salvation,  
 Revealing the Formless One  
 Entranced in profound meditation.

The Guru's message is the benefits of initiation, the necessity of meditation and the revelation of the Sound Current. The Jains also had the same message. They said:

Hearing the sound similar to the conch and witnessing Lotus Light like a newly blossomed flower between the eyebrows, one faces his Ishta (divinity), the True Guru.

The only place you will find a Moses, a Buddha, a Christ, a Krishna, the essence of a Master, is within the Light and Sound.

Christ said: As long as I remain in the world I am the Light of the world.

After death the Master dissolves in the Whole, as the personality falls away. How can he reach others then? A dead Master does not initiate people, does not teach people. His mission is over; another will follow him; the Principle of Enlightenment will find another vehicle to use.

Unless a man be initiated onto a higher plane of being outside the universe, he will always be confined to the limits of the universe. He will be caught in the universal web. By meditation he may ascend to higher mind, to universal intuition or to the purest state of material unity above the physical, astral and mental planes and achieve a state of relative freedom high above the normal human state of being, but he is still chained to the world of form. He will be like a man trapped in a house, very nice, comfortable, attractive. But a house is still a box. There is a great world outside it.

In occult systems it is generally taught that spirit incarnates into matter and then evolves into a perfect state and frees itself from form in some mysterious way. What the point of this is, is a bit elusive. Climb the ladder. Onward Christian soldiers. Over the next hill, boys. There is a word for this: Tripe! Not true, not so. Because there is no soul, there is no self, no real person. So what would evolve? And how, when we are just made up of various grades of matter, when we are just a bunch of habits and urges and fears and identifications which form awareness which thinks it is going to last forever as a me, as a person.

If spiritual evolution were true, if one part of the All Self had managed to hide another part, making the Perfect imperfect in what is an individual soul or lesser self (without it knowing about it, of course!) so it could progress through experience, then how many millions of years, or even lives, would it take to regain its original pure state? Consider this. According to yogic teachings experiences leave impressions on the mind, which then condition behaviour and further degrade consciousness; so all experiences, instead of expanding awareness, actually limit it, so no lessons can be learnt of any spiritual use. Each time you are trying to set attention free, to be detached, untouched by experience and people (and so less feeling, less sensitive and less caring), you are strengthening ego.

At the worst, self effort alone is self-defeating; at best, a very hard slog. And very, very slow. What a struggle life is if you are always fighting with yourself, in conflict with your own nature. Where is the joy in living then? Where is the freedom, the openness, the sense of well-being?

Meditation is to open the heart, free the spirit, soften the mind; it is to open awareness, to make us feel more alive, to see the wonder that life can be, and to reveal what has been hidden.

7

### **The Way Inward**

One should plunge into one's essential Self  
Bhaskara

To the music of the distant flute  
Flows the wide, ancient river –  
Fresh with young waters

## Krishnamurti, The Garden of Happiness

The Guru offers an alternative. He says: Come to me. I will carry you to elevated areas even before you begin your journey. I will reveal to you the way to transcend yourself. I am where you want to go.

Whosoever comes wanting initiation comes seeking the Infinite. He desires to find the Supreme. It is no small thing. What is meditation for?

Meditation is for inner peace – inner beauty – inner wisdom – inner freedom. And who would not want that? But do you want it enough to do something about it? Or do you just want to think about it, read about it, and then do nothing? You have to see the importance of this, the utter necessity of it and you have to feel the urge and the hunger for it. Are you happy in your prison cell? Can you hear the pipes of freedom calling?

Creation is the expression of Sound and Light. Because the essential nature of the Master is that of Light and Sound he can be found in some form or in some aspect on every plane of existence and on every level at the same time.

Therefore, he is able to lead the student, to lead the initiate, to guide the initiate, and to reveal to the initiate that which he needs to see or hear to accept all levels of creation, all forms of existence so that he can encompass them in his own consciousness, so that he can accept all levels of reality and thus no level will represent to him an authority beyond his reach or outside his awareness, as an authority means there is something greater than he which restricts his access to greater reality, and there cannot be freedom in the face of restriction, for that indicates a no-go area, for an authority is always something greater than you are. Anything not accepted, examined or understood becomes an authority. A mystery will always be an authority, and an authority a mystery. Unless it is penetrated and gone beyond.

Without a real master, real spirituality is not possible, and enlightenment is hardly a possibility. Most spiritual seekers do not appreciate just how rare enlightenment is. Enlightenment is not found on every street corner in India. It is a very rare event. It is very precious to be free of the whole creation, to be free of all limitation, to be free of every plane of consciousness. That is extremely rare and unique.

This state, or stateless state, that of enlightenment, means you are no longer identified with that which is born and dies. You know you are something else, something which never passes away, which never changes, which is not of form or time, which was never caused by anything and is not an effect or result of anything else, that One Thing which is everywhere the same, immortal,

detached, outside of everything, devoid of all illusion, forever free, beyond mind or emotions or concepts. It is unrestricted Being. And indeed, it is beyond Being, beyond any state, beyond you.

Many teachers promise, or at least hold out, the possibility of enlightenment, when they are not enlightened themselves. If they are not enlightened themselves, how can they lead others to enlightenment if they could not lead themselves to that state? When looking at any group, any spiritual society, we must ask the question: How many of those involved in the organisation are themselves evolved? How many enlightened? If we are honest, in almost every case, we will have to say none. Many are not even particularly evolved. They may be charming, they may be able to talk very well, but are not themselves in an enlightened state, so how can they take others there? There is no possibility of anyone joining such a group attaining any great state. Those who are not free themselves cannot free others. If I could free you, would I not free myself first? I would.

A Master must have access to every plane of consciousness, and every sub-plane thereof, to contact the disciple as the Inner Master. Without the Inner Master it is not possible to contact the higher planes of Light and Sound, because what would be your guide? Who will lead you? Without the Inner Teacher, all is darkness within. Otherwise the higher planes are walls, they are barriers until we can bring them within our consciousness. They are obstacles to our progress. Only a Master can lead one to those planes whereon we must function.

Only a Master can lead us to those higher planes of consciousness. A flaming torch can light many torches. But if there is no torch to begin with, the flame cannot be passed from torch to torch. The fire must be there to begin with. Similarly, to take one to enlightenment, the spiritual fire must be there. All these spiritual groups are still trying to light a match, still trying to generate a flame – but that flame, that universal torch, is not within their grasp. Until they can grasp that flame in its fullness, they cannot pass on the fire to others. They cannot light other torches. Are you an unlit torch? Or are you burning bright?

Why do we meditate? The goal of an authentic spiritual path is to bring about the state of enlightenment. It is not to contact your inner child, heal old emotional scars, improve work performance, help with your relationships or make you healthier or sleep better. All that is not spirituality, nor is hearing angelic voices. And didn't they used to lock people away for that?

We cannot bring that state about after death. We need to bring it about, as Buddha said, in this very body, in this very life. We do not know if another life even exists. Even if it did, we do not know if we will have the same personality, the same mind, the same interest in freedom, in some other life. We do not know if what we call me will be the same me in some other form in another body. So the only enlightenment that counts is the one we can attain in this life. Only in this life.

Any other state of supposed enlightenment in some other life is completely meaningless, because any other state in some other life is not relevant to today. It does not exist. There is only now.

We do not know when the end of life will come, nor how, only that its ending is certain, though we may choose to try our best to forget it, nor what may come after it, so it is imperative that we arrive at an awakened state as soon as possible, before it is all over and wasted, that we are delivered from bondage. There is an immediacy here. That freedom must be in this life. It must be as early as possible before death. After death there is nothing we can do about enlightenment. The chance is gone, brother. We will be stuck where we are. In some vague state, how are we going to attain enlightenment? Who is going to lead us to that goal? And will we then even exist? Do we know that for a certainty, for sure? We only guess at it, and a guess is only a surmise, an idea, an opinion. It's just guesswork. There is no certainty there. How can we bring about enlightenment before we die? That should be the major guideline of our life, our major concern. This should be the main question. This should be what concerns us most in our life.

How can I be free in this lifetime? And what can I do about it now? Is there anything to be done about it now? We see all those seekers around us, all those groups – teachers, students, meditators, sitting, meditating, seeking some higher state. But are they seeking a state or are they seeking an experience, a spiritual or psychic experience? Nothing wrong with that. Or are they just trying to find some rest, a refuge from life? Are they seeking a condition of relaxation or are they seeking the ultimate state of freedom? Because anything less than total freedom, final liberation, is just bondage, and bondage, at any level, no matter how high, does not cut the cake. Whether a relative bondage, higher or lower, it is still bondage. A trap is still a trap, no matter how pretty. Bondage is duality; liberation is unity.

If we are three years from enlightenment before we die, then we are still far from the goal. We have failed. If we live a life without attaining to the state of enlightenment, which is the purpose of our life, the purpose of existence, then we have failed and have not completed the task assigned to us by life, the task of realisation of enlightenment.

We come into life with this bondage, that we do not know our own natural state, that we have not realised our own perfection, our innate perfection. We have not cognised it; therefore we have failed to attain it. It does not much matter if it is, and always has been, there all the time, if we can't know it, can't experience it and can't live it, if we can't express it in any way, shape or form.

There is no real purpose in life, except to live it, and most human beings are living at such a low half-awake state, knowing mainly boredom and dissatisfaction, misery and fear, hiding these behind a relentless search for stimulation and satisfaction, or behind a trivial, thoughtless social life. Most happiness is only apparent.

Unless we find freedom, we will always feel a lack, and we will always be trying to fill that emptiness. We will not be fulfilled. We will not feel whole. Desire will lead us to dissatisfaction. We will find problems. We will find life is change, and we will not like some of the changes.

Sometimes we will find calamity without certainty to support us, without the support of the Absolute as an anchor.

Initiation is the first step. We have opened the door that leads ultimately to enlightenment. We have to meditate to get it. But ultimately that state is conferred upon us either by the Energy transmitted to us at initiation or by a direct transmission at some specific time by a Master Teacher. A true Master has two forms: the outer Master who initiates, teaches and instructs so that we can develop the skills of meditation and develop our emotional and mental bodies through instruction and knowledge.

Then there is the Inner Master who guides us through the planes of existence, the Shabd itself, which leads us to higher states of awareness, and which is in fact all states. The Inner Master is like a rope of love which allows us access to all planes and states. Without this, the inner Intelligence of Light and Sound, we could get lost in or attached to any specific plane. Any one plane can be a trap for the unwary soul traveller. We do not get freed by staying in any one place or by repeating any single experience over and over, no matter how nice it may be. We have to see, hear, feel, expand, then move on, higher and higher. Ultimately the inner teacher leads us to that place where the outer Master, in some mysterious way, can confer on us the state of enlightenment whereby we realise the oneness and totality of life, where everything is seen as contained within our own awareness, where we know everything as Me – I am that, I am Atman, I am Brahman, I am All.

That is given to us by the grace, by the power and by the love of the Master and the inner teacher who is essentially the very essence of love, who is the perfect expression and embodiment of the Principle of Compassion.

Under an eternal law of sacrifice and redemption have come those from times long forgotten by the scribes of history, from ancient civilisations which rose and sank again in the mists of time, from China, Babylon and Persia, teachers like Aton in Egypt and Janaka in India, teachers and teachings distorted by myth, legend, superstition and the need of their followers to glorify and romanticise so we do not have the bare truth anymore in any factual sense.

That is why, after thirty years of meditation, I am with the only teacher who can prove, time and again, his claims to enlightenment, who can present men and women who have actually attained the state of enlightenment, those who have been given that state by him as a final special initiation.

It was pretty stupid of me in past years to remain in any group without looking elsewhere because of loyalty to that group or to a set of beliefs that led me to think this was the real way, the only way, the true way, without investigating every possible avenue of research till I found the right way or at least the most optimum way to find the state of enlightenment, to find the way to freedom; because otherwise it was just like marking time, like being a rabbit in a cage, like



marching on the spot, not searching for the ultimate way because I thought I had found it. One should try everything and everyone till you find a direct spiritual experience into Reality. You must find a way that is conducive to enlightenment, that accelerates the speed of enlightenment, that hastens one's evolution, till the final goal, till the final victory, till the final ascent up the mountain of attainment, at the top of which enlightenment is realised; and any time not spent in searching out the ultimate essence of life is wasted. Now some may not think that, but I do. Any time not spent in a spiritual pursuit is a waste of life because we are only living part of our lives, only living in a limited way, in a stunted way, in a conditioned way, in such a small way. We should be living in a full and complete wholeness of life that is ultimate awareness of totality and fullness. Our life is not complete without that wholeness. Guru Nanak sometimes visited a holy man called Meehan Meeta. One day he said to Nanak: 'What is this Lifesound you speak of?' Nanak told him to close his eyes and asked what he heard. He said: 'I hear nothing.' Nanak looked intently at him a moment and asked: 'Now what do you hear?'

Meehan Meeta said: 'I feel as if the whole universe is vibrating in every pore of my body.'

If some group claims to have the truth, then we must say: Show us the evidence; show us an enlightened person. Show us those who have attained the end of the journey. With many groups their spiritual path is just a romance and a fiction based around a nice idea and an attractive theory. It may be beautiful, but it is also mistaken, because if it were correct they could show us the evidence of its effect in their own enlightened ranks. They could say: Look, this is what our way has done; this is the fruit our way has brought forth.

If you are a spiritual seeker, faith and belief are no good to you. In fact they are your enemies. The Sufi master Ibn al Arabi said: 'Beware of confining yourself to a particular belief and denying all else, for much good would elude you – indeed, the knowledge of reality would elude you.' Remember that all belief is a restriction and a prison for the mind.

By their fruits ye shall know them, says the New Testament. So let them testify, if they can.

There are many people today who are connected to spiritual groups or who are pursuing meditation on their own, who may have been meditating for many years, who have not made any significant progress and are essentially the same as they were before, with the same problems and concerns, bothered by the same things, not knowing really who they are but just believing what they have been told or led to believe but not having any direct experience of truth as such. They have simply swapped one attitude or set of mental patterns for another, thinking they are making progress when in fact they are sitting in an idea they call 'spirituality' but not being any better able to handle life and having attained no distance or detachment from their problems or doubts and confusions and not having developed any great spiritual discrimination or insight into the nature of life but have just adopted another's views without developing their own stability. They are not flexible because they have no real anchor within their own awareness. It is more that their brand of

so-called spirituality gives them comfort and solace and makes them feel important because it makes them unique and different, apart from the rest of the human race lost in their material delusions. It is just another form of my religion is better than your religion; I am saved and you are not; I know and you do not; I am found and you are lost.

Would you study with a driving instructor who had never gotten anyone through a driving test? Could a penguin learn a sparrow to fly, or can a tortoise learn a hare to run? If you want to be liberated, go to a liberated master. But the trouble is, where to find one? A genuine master is like a needle in a haystack. No, actually, much rarer than that.

Some have thought, after getting initiated, all they had to do was meditate and enlighten themselves, but this has not proven to be the case. Many have meditated for twenty years or more and still not attained the state of enlightenment. There are those who have been initiated into Sound and Light but who have meditated under various teachers and have, after many years, barely taken more than one step further. Their minds may be a bit quieter, their awareness a little stronger. The clarity of their thought may be improved. They may have less stress and be more relaxed. But spiritually speaking, they have not advanced a lot and are still in a state of ignorance, confusion and delusion regarding the true nature of life. Mostly their attitude to life has been an adopted one, copied from the information gathered from various teachers, not from the inner Self. If they had not studied spiritual books, any occult or yogic books, their knowledge would hardly have been any greater than at the commencement of their journey. So meditation has taken them a little further, but not a great deal. They are mainly repeating previous experiences. I am talking now of those not meditating on Sound and Light, but even those initiated into Light and Sound who have gone a little further than those without it do not advance without a teacher a great deal in terms of enlightenment, in terms of being truly free. How can they get free when the sense of self is always there in the way like a stone stuck in your throat? You, the ego, are meditating so how are you going to get free from the thing you are using to meditate? That same thing is itself the trap.

They still have the same problems as anyone else, the same doubts, troubles and confusions, the same problems with relationships. They are still trying to handle their lives and to function as egos. The mind is still there, intact, causing the same problems. They have emotional problems just like everyone else. So – how far have they come? Without a teacher, maybe not all that far. The ferris wheel just goes round and round.

This is not to imply that Sound and Light meditation, in and of itself, is not a great step forward. Initiation is a gigantic leap. From the physical plane, from the mind-body complex, to spiritual states where, before, Light and Sound was not encountered, it suddenly became possible to perceive subtle areas of vibration hidden from the majority of the human race. That is a very big leap. It transcends many planes but still falls far short of the ultimate state of total freedom and complete self-knowing.

Anyone who has been on a spiritual path for a while should be asking themselves some serious questions: Am I any better off for my meditation? Am I kinder, friendlier, more loving, more open and tolerant than I was before? Am I less troubled by my mind and my problems? Am I more giving and more full of life, more dynamic or more relaxed? Because, if we are not better off for meditating, of what value is it? What good is something that does nothing for us, that does not make us happier? Should it not make us better able to handle life? And does it bring us any closer to divinity? Does it reveal us to ourself? Are my relationships any better for it? Does life seem better, fresher, more rewarding and liveable because of it? Do I have more insight, more wisdom?

After initiation different people will experience different things. Although there is a similarity and sameness about some experiences in meditation in general, the intensity and quality will depend on the sensitivity of the individual meditator and on the state of the nervous system, the degree to which they may block what is seen and heard and perceived on the inner planes because of fear. It will depend on the food they eat commonly, whether gross or subtle, the state of health, the degree of concentration, the state of balance in the body, upon an even balance of vitamins, mineral, proteins, the energy of the body; energies which rise, subtle energies of descent, ones which expand or contract, which digest or eliminate. It will depend on fine subtle channels through which currents of force flow in the subtle body. It will depend on the state of the aura, the total emanation of what a person is: and it will depend on the state of the chakras, which ones are active, which are latent, and upon the energy routes that the pranas take, and it will depend on the state of the emotions, and the mind, whether reactive or not, whether it is too analytical because of an overactive mental tendency. A too-analytical mind will interfere with the process of meditation if one is always looking at the mind to see how deep one has gone, always looking for results, always looking for phenomena, always looking to see what is happening in awareness, how quiet it is, how active the mind is, which will block the perception of higher states of cognition. All this tends to keep attention near the surface of the mind, whereas one needs to sink deep and to forget oneself to some extent.

It will also depend, of course, on how devoted one is. Devotion means steady attention to what one is devoted to. All one has to do in meditation is to pay attention; the eternal Lifestream does the rest. Sounds easy enough. Just pay attention. It also depends on how much one can let go and surrender to the Light and Sound, how much one can give of oneself and get absorbed in the experience of meditation itself.

Also, the depth of experience may depend on the condition of the physical body and the condition of health or illness, because it is difficult to meditate and pay attention when uncomfortable. Good meditation is when there is the utmost comfort of body and mind; it is to attain the state of maximum comfort and deepest relaxation. It is hard, but not impossible, to enter a deep state and remain in it if one is uncomfortable, one is suffering from a severe headache or other distracting

pain, from muscle spasms or other distractions of mind or body. The ideal condition is to forget the body altogether in meditation.

If one has an intense emotional upset that is worrying one, that one cannot let go of, that the mind clings to and worries at, like a dog gnawing at a bone, then that becomes a problem in meditation as the mind mulls over and over it all the time, as it agitates the mind and becomes an obstacle. Even so, that may not prevent the Sound and Light from being there. Whether one sees the light or hears sound, Sound and Light are still there all the same. Therefore, even if they are not seen and heard, they can be meditated upon. It is only you who gets in the way because you think you are the meditator. All one has to do is to be receptive to some extent and to employ or cultivate a meditative attitude or pose, mentally speaking, to be in that receptive mode in which meditation occurs. Everyone has their problems and limitations.

With initiation a door that was once closed has now been opened, and it becomes possible to explore the infinitude of creation from top to bottom, from side to side. Whether enlightened or not one has the possibility of unlimited discovery of hidden depths of planes of Light and Sound. Even enlightened Adepts do not have full access or full experience of all planes of Light and Sound and consciousness below the levels of enlightenment in all their majesty and glory because to look at every subplane and all the planes in their full complexity and detail requires a mind and an awareness that encompasses all creation and every thing in all details. Now we may say that enlightenment encompasses all creation and beyond creation, but it does not involve itself in all minute details, dotting every I and crossing every T. There are infinite details in creation, layer upon layer, level after level, worlds after worlds that would stagger the mind. There are endless expressions of Light and Sound. Not only that, but some say there are myriads of beings other than human beings, some of them very highly evolved on higher planes of consciousness, in other realms of Light and Sound, and Beings who have never had physical incarnation. So, there is all that, and there is the knowledge all these beings have (if they are real) because however evolved one might be one does not have the totality of knowledge (yes, and wisdom, too, from deep insight) of infinite creation. One only has it in its potential form or in its most concentrated, essential form where one has transcended all this and gone beyond that to the very source of awareness, the very source of creation, the very source of Life. But that does not mean that all the details of that Life have been encompassed and understood – or even encountered.

Therefore, for every being on this earth there is an infinite possibility of exploration into the endless beauty of creation, by which is meant all the planes of creation. Not only all the planes of form that we know, but beyond the mental plane and beyond the higher mental plane and beyond intuition, beyond the very seed of individuality and personal selfhood, beyond what we normally think of as spirit – vast planes of Light and Sound and therefore of experience. The likelihood of the full exploration of this in one single lifetime seems unlikely from a few hours of meditation each week. Even if one were to sit there for hour upon hour, week after week, one would not explore the vast panorama of life, of creation, of the totality of creation. Nor does one need to.

So what initiation gives is a master-key to the numberless doors of the infinite universe, the multi-verse, from plane to plane, leading eventually to all planes of existence and every dimension of reality, with the Master guiding you, in his Inner Form as Light, from door to door, house to house, mansion to mansion, from world to world in an infinitely growing splendour of discovery, and of Self-discovery, because one is not just investigating something outside oneself, but one is investigating the inner self, oneself. Or, to put it another way, all these planes of consciousness, all the planes of creation, all the worlds, are all inside, all within human awareness, in this form we live in. We have then, from the moment of initiation, an infinite possibility of investigation and discovery, not just seeing things, not just hearing sounds but of recognition and realisation of spirit and humanity, of the nature of reality, of the nature of all these worlds, and of the nature of love, up till the time the Master can take you to the ultimate state, and you can say: I am That. I am one. And I am free. And even then there are still discoveries to be made.

Initiation is the new birth the Bible speaks of. ‘Unless a man be born again, he will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ At Pentecost the disciples saw tongues of fire and heard the sound of rushing winds. Sound and light – group initiation.

Tamil yogic books speak of attaining the ‘bliss of sleeping while not sleeping’ – a kind of dreaming state of surrender where the sense of selfhood has been relinquished in a self-forgetfulness in which the attention is deeply absorbed in the beauty of contemplation, where awareness is flowing without hindrance or restriction, where concentration and me-ness become the everywhere-ness of letting go, and where doing becomes being.

‘Those who lose their life shall find it.’

Become what you seek. Become what you are. Learn to Be. Trust the Light, love the Light, follow the Light, give yourself up to the Light. Vibrate with the Sound, feel the Sound, follow the Sound. This is the message of the Masters through the centuries.

The Guru Granth says: ‘Without the Name the ego goes on burning. Once this sweetness has been enjoyed it cannot be forgotten. I have tasted all other flavours and nothing can compare with it.’

Love takes on the form of Light. Therefore in our meditation Light is to be loved in a light and delicate way that does no violence to our nervous system and puts no strain on the astral body by a false generation of artificial emotion that may be mistaken for devotion, which it is not. Devotion is attention. Pay attention. Simple, but not easy.

Sound and Light starts where other forms of meditation leave off – at the Golden Lotus on the Cosmic Astral Plane. Indeed, other forms of meditation have their end and goal long before this. Their aim is to reach the etheric crown chakra, no small goal in itself, but very far removed from

the true Thousand-petalled Lotus shimmering in golden splendour on the plane of pure feeling and spiritual intuition. Yet, to be free, we must go far above even this, for we are trapped by that which we do not transcend. We will always be smaller than that which we regard as an authority to which we look for guidance to get our bearings.

Spirituality has nothing whatever to do with morality. They are separate issues, spirituality and morality, confused by the ignorance of religion and religious leaders in various esoteric and yogic groups. Spirituality, and particularly enlightenment, is its own authority. The liberated person, being absolutely free, needs no guidance on how to think, feel, or act. They act out of the spontaneous freshness of life, from the love of being: that beingness, God, is their sole Authority. Freedom is their creed. Grown-ups do not need to be told how to behave. It comes natural to them.

Of course you have to treat others with respect, be generous, warm, kind, and recognise their worth as fellow human beings, and do no harm. You have to function as a decent human being in a civilized human society (if you can ever find one!). But that is a personality thing; it involves an ego, not the immortal, changeless Absolute.

The Absolute has no nature, no condition, no attribute, nothing to define or condition it, no limitation, no boundaries. It just is. It is as it is. And it is no nothing and no something. It is always Beyond; it is the Unknown, and unknowable. The mind cannot grasp it. The intellect cannot know it or understand it. It can never be held, never owned. Yet the nearer we get to it, the more spirituality comes to function and the more spiritual we become.

Spirituality is in an awareness of deeper Reality, not in behaviour.

Even so, he who embarks on a spiritual quest and seeks a true path must have certain attributes and develop certain specific qualities. We must never sell out our integrity or lower our standards. It is all you have as a person. You must maintain your values without being dogmatic or judgemental or oppressing others by trying to force your opinions and concepts on them. Each person must find their own way.

The first of these is humility. Only an empty cup can be filled. One who thinks he or she knows is carrying baggage. Such a one cannot tell a Master how to behave based on some misguided misinformation on how a Master should be. He cannot demand that a Master must see him, nor when. A Master does not have to do anything. No condition can be placed on the teacher. A Master does not even have to teach. He does so out of his own compassion – out of his desire to free others.

Initiation is a gift and a privilege, not a right. It cannot be demanded. It can only be asked for. If you say that spirituality is your birthright, then why do you not have it already? That is a misunderstanding. Because this is a physical-emotional-mental complex that we are. It is not a

spiritual one. The spirit is not incarnate, as most people teach, because then it would not be free; it would just be part of the form, and just as trapped as anything else. It would be part of the problem, and material.

So another virtue is gratitude for what you may be given, or for what you may have already received. Appreciation is an important value. You know that statement about casting pearls before swine. Don't be a swine!

There must be an open heart and an open mind. You must approach a path with a fresh innocence, prepared to lay your old ideas aside, at least for now. People make far too many judgements based on ignorance, often picked up from books they have read. But most books are rubbish, not based on deep spiritual experience, but simply on supposition and belief. Therefore much of what is written is unreliable. Therefore it is unrealistic to expect any spiritual path to be a certain way. It is just as it is – not as one would like it to be. Sometimes you have to let go of cherished ideas when they do not hold up to the light of truth.

A spiritual path is essentially concerned with emptiness. It is not so much concerned with information and ideas, although these may have their place for the mind. It is by becoming empty that we expand our consciousness into a bigger container. As we become empty our awareness grows. Silence is emptiness. Emptiness means the mind is still, abstract, silent.

A seeker cannot come to the Path with his head so full of assumptions and opinions that there is no room for anything new. How can you teach someone who thinks they already know?

The Path is the way it is. It may not be the way we would like it to be. It may seem autocratic to us, based on the whims, wishes, demands and 'kingly authority' of a Guru who imposes his own conditions, some of which may not seem fair or necessary to us.

Westerners are indoctrinated with the cult of the ego, how it must have its way, that personal selfishness is fine, even to be desired, and that personal freedom is essential for our happiness, which is true. This can sometimes make a person arrogant and self-satisfied in the false pride of their own ego or develop the conceited notion 'I will know the truth when I see it.' How? The only thing we have to go on is feeling, which may be faulty. Reason only goes so far. But common sense is a very useful commodity, often in short supply in the spiritual area.

It is all too easy to build up a romantic fiction of what a path should be, how a Master should behave, how a spiritual person should be (mostly what they should not be), what liberation should or should not be like. If you want to know what a journey is like, get on a train. Only when you arrive at your destination will you know what the place is really like. It is no good insisting it should be a certain way that you have heard when it may not be that way at all.

There are many charlatans in the spiritual arena today only too willing to take large chunks of your money from you without a qualm. It is easier to steal than to work. Some really want to help but have little to give. Some are arrogant and full of the sense of their own importance. Some are misguided or misled. The blind leading the blind. But they can lead you astray. They can lead you to lose hope so you can end up thinking there is nothing to be had. You can become cynical, critical, mistrustful and hard. Welcome to the club. Seeing is better than blindness.

In order to avoid being hurt, used or conned, you build a wall to protect yourself. Yet, to feel the flow of life, you must become vulnerable. To some extent you have to let go of the past, to surrender what you are holding.

All Masters have commended humility. This does not mean to demean or belittle yourself, but to simply be innocent like a clean mirror, not to be too full of yourself, too full of opinions and prejudices.

Bulleh Shah was very devoted to his master. He belonged to the upper crust of society and his daughter's wedding was a big social event, to which he invited his master.

Instead of his master attending, however, he sent a raggedy, lowly peasant disciple to represent him. Bulleh was far from pleased, concerned with his social standing and prestige, and he patently ignored the disciple.

When Bulleh's master heard of this, he refused to see him. The very name Bulleh means 'one who has gone astray'.

His pride separated him from his master.

This went on for a very long time. Bulleh knew his master always attended a yearly fair. Bulleh managed to bribe his way into a troupe of dancing girls who were to appear at the fair. Disguising himself as one of them he appeared with them and, doing his best to dance as a female, no doubt with very limited success, began to sing of his longing for his master, till his master asked: 'Is that Bulleh?' At which point, laughing, he forgave him.

Bulleh went on to become a master himself, after mastering his pride.

On any spiritual path you have to be kind, considerate, helpful, courteous and respectful at all times. You have to consider the feelings of others and not project your personality too forcefully on others or be too dramatic. You are being offered a great and rare opportunity to taste spiritual nectar. You are meeting those in contact with Divine Waters. So you need to be a little bit reverent and humble. They who bring the message of the Master are the agents of the Master; they represent him. The message is one of divine hope – one based on experience and valid evidence,



and proveable – that you will not be left to drown in the turbulent seas of life, that immortality is a real possibility and not a hopeless pipedream. That message is a cause of some jubilation and warrants a little gratitude.

However, good conduct must not be misunderstood for spirituality.

Spirituality is above any form of behaviour. It just ain't in the same fruitbowl.

And you really can be enlightened. That is the good news.

## 8

### **Creation and The Word**

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and cannot remain silent  
Victor Hugo

Atma (the Self) is sound. Sound is Atma  
Veda

For one desiring perfection in Yoga, Nada alone has to be closely heard, having abandoned all thought and with a calm mind  
Shankara

For creation to take place there must be space, energy, vibration; and from that vibration arises flow, motion, and expansion from a creative Impulse (Spanda). First there is Vac, the creative Word in the silence of the Void, wherein exist all latent potentials, like the Big Bang a moment before the explosion. The Big Bang did not take place only on the physical plane. Energy always starts to flow from subtle areas of creation. The BANG before the bang, from inner to outer, leads to creation. Remember creation is not only on physical planes.

Vac is Shabda Brahman, God-as-Sound. Before the 'face of God' looked upon the Waters of the Deep, there was only the Deep, only the ABSOLUTE, absolutely silent. Then the Absolute looked at itself, brooded upon the waters. The Knower arose, looked at itself, and knew itself. Duality arose within unity. Space was created. At that moment motion arose; the eternal hum arose.

Out of Prana, the first impulse to manifest, arose Pranava, the beginning of Sound, the Primordial OM, the manifesting principle, which brings all into being. There arises Trishna, the desire to be, or love for life, which manifests through Cosmic Law and through Universal Mind. I AM.

The crashing thunder of the Waters arose as the Sea of Being was set in motion and Nada, the Song of Creation, started. At the moment that divine awareness first knew itself as I-consciousness, Veda started to flow. At that moment space was created between the knower and the known (which was also the Knower knowing itself). As the Knower knows itself (and becomes known to itself, revealing itself to itself) knowing takes place, and the act of knowing sets up distance between the Knower and the known, hence space and motion arise and the soundstream arises in its flow between these two points.

In the old Hindu creation myths it is said that in the beginning all was chaos, just as in the Bible it says in the beginning there was only Darkness, emptiness everywhere, all unformed. In the Chandogya Upanishad it says: Let Me bring into being name and form. The entire universe, every object you can perceive, consists of name and form. An ancient text says: 'In truth all this, at the beginning, was space about to assume manifestation...without distinctions. He made name and form and created distinctions.' We cannot see an object without form or shape; we cannot hear without sound; there is no language without names. Name and form exist on subtle levels as the seeds of manifestation, like the acorn is the seed of the tree. Before they manifest there is materiality without intelligence. Intelligence arose in the form of Sound and Light, which manifests on all planes. For Sound gives rise to name, and light gives rise to form. So everything you see, hear or know is Sound and Light in a denser form.

In the Divine Now an instantaneous process of self-study is set up as the Knower investigates itself as an infinite series of cognitions and perceptions, leading to an infinite set of interactions within its own knowingness, an endless series of flows, and to an infinity of reverberations, leading to progressive manifestation. Where there is energy there must be expression. On the Path of Meditation this process is reversed as one looks at these flows and examines a series of cognitions and recognitions. Kabbala calls this the level of Limitless Light.

The physicist, John Wheeler, said: Nothingness is the building block of the universe. That nothingness is the basic substance of the universe; no, before the universe even came into being. That underlying non-substance, the Great VOID, contracts or condenses through motion, becoming colder and more dense so that non-substance seems to become a substance other than nothingness; then, through Maya or the power of illusion or misperception, reality seems to be other than what it is as differentiation takes place and layers of manifestation take place. The web of illusion weaves itself from motion. Essential reality is veiled through motion and arising consciousness as it solidifies itself and breaks away from unity or singleness. It casts a veil over subtler reality. Densification of matter masks the Truth. It hides the subtle.

Creation takes place from silence-in-motion, from Stillness set into activity within its own wholeness. At this point nothing exists. All things are in a virtual state, not yet actual. But here the process of transformation begins. The Seeds sprout.

From the Observer to the witnessed, there is the act of seeing. That which is seen is found to be desirable. A new perception is seen. And that is good. The desire to manifest arises. Hence there is subject, object and desire for the object, which is the cause of flow.

From the Absolute, which has no attribute of any kind, seemingly arise three qualities: Will or desire; consciousness or knowingness; and action or motion. However, this is illusion, as the Absolute never gives rise to anything, as it has no attributes, and never moves at all. It just IS.

From motion arises prana or Energy, causing the Undifferentiated to flow in the direction of Sound, giving it a subtle form and therefore limiting it or condensing it into a manifest form of expression or pattern of sound frequency.

From the creative throb a hum arises, which, interacting within itself, gives rise to different vibrational frequencies or potential qualities of expression. These grow out of the creative Void as impulses to create. The nature of the First Throb is expansion or explosion.

In essence these are the universal laws of nature.

Creation is instant (including the birth of time), spontaneous, instantaneous, not sequential or partial.

It occurs with the impulse: 'I am One, may I be many,' as Veda says. And yet the Absolute does nothing; it does not create; it just is; it does not become anything, yet it is everything. And yet creation happens. Some say Creation is a parallel Reality to the Absolute and Creation creates on its own and God does nothing. In the Yoga Vasistha it says that just as bubbles arise in water, so the creative manifesting force spontaneously arises in the Absolute without the Absolute doing anything and without any kind of volition.

To put this another way, there is the Absolute or God (to use an awful outdated name), and then there is Sound and Light. The Absolute does nothing and is nothing that we can understand; it does not think, know, do or will in any way. Then there are the infinite Eternal Planes of Light and Sound that have been called Enless Light. These have always existed and will always exist outside time or anything else. These formless realms manifest all creation, all planes, forms, patterns, colours and space and time.

Linking everything is Spiritual Intelligence which manifests on every plane and through everything, originating and organising the beginning, continuance and ending of all things, and which directs Sound and Light itself and oversees all creation and gives rise to the inner Witness or Eternal Observer. Every part of creation is governed by Intelligence and it is this Intelligence which connects to a Master. This is the Source of Light and Sound, which Occult Schools have called the Silent Watcher and the Bible called the Rock of Ages.

There are sounds within Sound, each sound being the seed of a cosmic principle. The interacting sounds-within-Sound multiply and increase in complexity and the dynamism builds up into an intense concentration of energy known as Bindu, indicated in the point in the Sanskrit Om symbol. This is also seen in the symbol of the point within a triangle which indicates the mass of universal Light is encapsulated, condensed and confined within limits on the border of manifestation, but ready to explode into creative expression through the three forces of nature (harmony, energy and inertia) governed by Will, Knowledge and Action.

As the Lifestream pours out, creation becomes more diverse, more complex and more concrete. There are vast planes of Light and Sound so subtle that it would be very difficult for us, at this level, with our limited vision and discrimination, to be able to discern one level from another. Nanak has endeavoured to describe some of these in the Jap Ji. These are what most true mystics and yogis would collectively call Spiritual Reality, in which are found to dwell legions of spiritual beings, according to various traditions, if you care to believe that. You can take such statements with a grain of salt – maybe two grains. These are formless realms of light. Or formless to us, at least, in our grosser state.

This is the level of Paravac where word, object and idea are indistinguishable and exist in a latent, yet-to-be-expressed form as subtle Truth. Scripture is the expression and manifestation of Veda.

Veda means Knowledge of Truth and existence, of Spiritual Reality, but it also implies Sound, which is expressed as mantra. Letters (which form mantra or impulsed sound-energies, the primary one being that of divine I-consciousness), and language, which clothe truth and allow understanding to occur in sentient beings by carrying ideas in it, are said to be primary mantras.

Sanskrit has been called natural language or sacred language or the language of the gods because the fifty two letters of its alphabet, ranging from ah to ksa, were heard by ancient sages, who also understood their original meaning and sound-quality as cosmic vibrations and the functions of any mantra. This is a very complex and abstruse subject involving knowledge of awareness, sound, light, space, creation and the senses and their objects. Their study is the field of Tantra, the study of energy or shakti. The universe is produced from Name and Form – the subtle name or sound manifests as form or structure; sound becomes all forms. The flow of sound (shruti, meaning that which is heard) is the flow of intelligence, awareness in motion.

Real mantras are not Sanskrit words; they are cosmic sounds or flows.

The universal form of energy (shakti) is Kundali or the Divine Mother, the goddess, which in the human body transforms into kundalini. Light and sound becomes kundalini; kundalini becomes the human body, which itself is a composition of threads of sound forming a structure of material elements.

Each 'letter' represents a vibration, a condensation of sound. A master is a Man of Letters, the letters or sound-frequencies of manifestation. A master of meditation can combine these letters in such a way specific qualities in creation, in vibrational form, can result in effects within consciousness.

Sound becomes language. The words of language contain concepts, ideas and meanings. There is an agreed-upon meaning for every word. Words also indicate objects, but the word is not the thing itself. In the mind, word and meaning become indistinct because the mind thinks in language and thought is clothed in words and words then become the form of ideas. Because of the uniqueness of personal experience, the meaning behind words can vary from mind to mind, hence misunderstandings arise. All this, of course, is the vedic interpretation of reality.

Maybe the first caveman knew what he was talking about when he said : 'Uugh uugh ugg nog.' After all, babies seem to know what it means. Some germ-laden giant head sticks itself in front of a baby and says: 'Coochi-coochi-coo.' What in hell does that mean?

Each Letter or mantra contains, on a subtle level, sound, light, vibration, colour and form or geometrical shape, energy and some kind of intelligence or life-force.

Creation consists of form and structure. The nature of form is change, which involves movement and time. Man's main concern is with life, death and survival. His main fear is the unknown. Such concerns are not found on higher planes, where existence is inconceivably vast, though still limited. Even the planes of existence on which higher beings function, though of great, seemingly endless duration, are destined to come to an end. Any thing, any something, subtle or gross, latent or active, must have an ending. Only nothing, as the container of all things, never having a beginning, has no ending. No change takes place within non-change, which is endlessly changeless, out of time and beyond motion. From the highest level of Creation change arises, vibration arises, sound arises, light emerges and forms come into manifestation.

Only Light and Sound remain constant and changeless as changeless change because the Intelligence of Light and Sound encompasses everything as the cause of creation, of motion, mutation and time.

Meditating on Light and Sound is love, because love is attention, and love is the utmost concentration. We concentrate most on what we love. Light and Sound are beautiful and therefore easy to concentrate on. They attract our attention. We can rest our attention easily on that which we love. The action of immersing deeply into that which is loved and lovely is Samadhi – the flow of love, the flow of attention. Because Light and Sound occupy the whole of creation on every level in its entirety, we have the perfect object on which to meditate in order to go deeper and deepest as we are lifted up by love.

Atma is the sense of being a Witness, the I Am, the level of impersonal Selfhood, the goal of Kundalini, and the core and first level of all the material planes, the point of material unity, where all material substance is experienced as oneness, and where everything is everywhere at once because there are no gaps, no distance, and where cause and effect, past and future, arise simultaneously, the First Atom of matter in all its degrees, subtle and gross, including the substance which goes to make up the self in the subtler bodies.

Atma, the Higher Self, is the ultimate state attainable by yoga, mantra, tantra, siddha-kundalini or devotional practices. No mental technique can reach beyond this point. This point does, indeed, give very elevated mystical experiences and it is a high state, but not the ultimate. It may be regarded as the halfway point.

In the past many have regarded this as the state of enlightenment, as it feels like perfection, being the highest material, mental, feeling-intuitional accomplishment, a sense of being everything, everywhere, because, at this level, the vibration is so fast that it is everywhere at once; here is there, and everywhere, at the same time.

The question arises, of course: If this is so vast and so impressive, yet is only halfway to the end, then just how great is the ultimate state of enlightenment at the end of the spiritual journey? And

the answer must be, beyond any human mind to comprehend it: for how do you measure the greatness that is God? Thus Guru Nanak cried: Wonder and Wonder and Wonder! It is always Beyond. Can the frog in the little pond understand the raging, living sea? Hence it is said that no human mind has ever understood the Veda in its fullness. At enlightenment we discover That which was ever free, was never bound. At the level of atma or impersonal selfhood we discover the subtle self that is in unity with the universe, but which does not go beyond the boundary of its own domain. In that state it may have access to super abilities over nature, but it is still trapped by its own limitations because it cannot go beyond itself.

Although such a person may be regarded as a sage or a saint, having access to wisdom and spiritual knowledge through intuition and revelation, and being in a state of unity (I am the chair, I am the door), that is only in comparison to the lowly state of other men, and he would still have to get out of this universe and explore many other levels to complete his spiritual journey. A box, no matter how big, is still a box.

Many spiritual teachers and founders of religion have been on this level. But did they realise the ultimate?

Atma is in all times at the same time. It is a neutral point. Being empty it would seem to be infinity. Thus it would be felt as infinite existence, called in Hindu texts Atman.

Attaining the state of Atma is known, mistakenly, as Brahma Consciousness or God Consciousness, the state of being one with everything below the level of the Absolute. Only the Absolute, being God, is God Consciousness.

The Higher Self (but not the Absolute Self) consists of Higher Mind or Manas, Buddhi or spiritual sensitivity, and Atma or impersonal selfhood.

In many systems Atma is regarded as the highest spiritual principle, but a principle is an object, something to be known, observed, experienced, whereas Ultimate Truth is not knowable. It is the ultimate mystery, formless, ungraspable, beyond the knower of knowing. There is only itself, so what shall know it? There is no one to observe it. There is only Unity. In Unity there is only love. There is only singleness. There is no Ultimate Truth apart from Stillness.

The problem for the human mind is that spirituality at the subtlest levels sounds just like Atma. It is hard enough for the mind to grasp the idea of Atma as the subtlest universal reality.

The next quality in creation is that of Buddhi, which has a correspondence with the astral plane, the level of feeling and desire, and is related to the heart and love. Blavatsky has called it the spiritual soul, the intuitional faculty.

Sometimes a person can see right to the heart of the matter, see what others miss without getting caught up in inherited mores or the conventions of culture, see what really matters in life without material delusions, without even having to think about it in order to know.

Buddhi is also known as Wisdom or pure reason. It is insight.

Normally we know through the mind, and through the senses, and what we experience is coloured by our past experiences, by likes and dislikes. We see from a particular point of view because we have an ego different from other egos. Our minds are distinct and separate, one from another. In fact all we really understand is separateness. The mind distinguishes and divides.

The mind perceives an experience and translates it into knowledge according to its prevailing world view. Mind accepts or rejects, comparing one experience with another.

But with intuition the knowledge is the same for all. It transcends mental function.

There is no personal self involved in Buddhi. The oneness of the moment, a sense of flow, experiencing life as being new and fresh, spiritual understanding, suddenly 'getting it' in a moment of insight, becoming the meditation instead of the meditator, these are Samadhi or Buddhi in motion, as is actionless action. The secret of Zen seems to be what the gate of Buddhi opens. With Buddhi you become what you see. It is one Consciousness everywhere. Buddhi connects all things. Mind cannot understand Buddhi. You are connected to everything by Buddhi. Further, Buddhi acts as if there were no time. All time exists in one connected moment (or non-moment) of inter-relationship. There is no time because all time is this time. There is only now, this-moment, nowhere, everywhere. This is the level of pure insight. This is where the Eye of Wisdom functions. This is the level of illumination. Wisdom precedes knowledge, which is just a collection of facts or information, whereas wisdom is revelation. Wisdom reveals. Wisdom gives direct insight. It shines a light. It gives depth to knowingness. It is the moment when the penny drops. It is from where sudden realisation comes.

As far as Buddhi is concerned, all things are happening now, and all time is at one point, the point of Atman. Buddhi reveals the unity between all things and all points, places and times. It can do so because it is that unity in material terms.

In the Veda it is often referred to as Soma. It is closely allied to bliss. The old sound and light masters of Shabd Yoga often spoke of nectar or ambrosia or divine sweetness.

Why do you seek freedom from ignorance while others are happily lost in it? What gave you the insight that there must be more to life while others feel no such discontent? Why are you miserable with a humdrum existence while others are happy in their routine? Something speaks to you that



has not spoken to others. Does the mind choose to seek the truth, or is the seeker chosen by a higher force? What made you want answers to existence in the first place?

Life may sometimes seem like an endless struggle with fate waiting to club you every now and then and dump a sack of heartache in your lap. But, of course, it is not all struggle, otherwise, without a ray of sunshine, we would be defeated by clouds of despair.

Hope keeps coming up. But hope is mainly for more of the same, minus the pain.

Sometimes people embark on a spiritual journey to understand the pain or to avoid the struggle or to find some meaning in their lives. What should I be doing with my life? Is there a purpose to it? Or is existence just a silly, pointless game of chance going nowhere?

But your heart cannot accept that. Where is the meaning, where is the love? What is the point of being here? Whatever logic or reason says, there is first, before all thought, a feeling, a certainty that there must be more. What tells you that? Intuition does. Intuition whispers to your heart.

The Great Light comes down from the formless planes and, on the point of coming into contact with Atma, splits into seven Energies or colours, the Qualities of the 7 rays: Will, Wisdom, Active Intelligence, Harmony, Knowledge, Devotion and Ceremonial Activity.

The second of these, Wisdom, under the Law of Attraction, is the main factor in Buddhi, which links all things in universal connectedness.

Intuition is to realise something you did not realise the moment before, bypassing the normal thinking process. How can you know something you did not know before? By virtue of bypassing the mind as it normally functions and coming into contact with a more universal mode of reality where all things are known to that level because all things are connected, where all things are happening at the same time, in the same place, to the same Consciousness which is everywhere and everywhen.

The higher mental plane, Manasa, is the first plane on which any kind of personal individuality is found. This is the level on which all the patterns or blueprints for all the structures on this and all lower levels are found. This is the plane of abstract thought and symbols, also known as the Abstract Mental Plane or body, where patterns – in sound and colour – form the prototype or model for the human individual personality or lower self. In occult terms, the Abstract Mental Body is called the egoic body or Soul.

This is the plane of Universal Mind.

This is the source of mantras. This plane of archetypes has as its symbol the interlinked triangles forming a six-pointed star with a synthesising point at the centre which manifests the above to the below; the inner patterns expressing as outer forms. Mantras reinforce certain qualities within the personality by accentuating energy-patterns.

The Higher Mental Plane projects or condenses into the Concrete Mental Plane containing the seed-germ or atom of the mental body.

The mind or concrete mental body consists of intellect and memory. You could probably break it down further, but too many categories may lead to some confusion. There is intelligence, the most important aspect, which allows discrimination between two or more things. There is memory, which allows you to compare past and present; and there is imagination, which lets you create new images and project into the future. By analysis you can organise thought and gain understanding, as well as exert some control over your life.

Mind and desire are now so closely interwoven it is often difficult to conceive of them being apart. Occult texts say there was a time when this was not so, and early man, barely more than an animal, was driven solely by instinct, emotion and desire, and mind was, at best, rudimentary and barely formed.

Man thinks, but thoughts are not his own. His mind picks up thoughts from the mental atmosphere. Most people pick up thought-forms from a crystallised and ancient mental planetary aura, a very low form of thought, more like an instinctive impulse, where low-level thinkers (or non-thinkers, automatic mental reactors) are kind of imprisoned by 'their' ideas: they are identified with their thoughts and march blindly to their tune. Hence there is so much hate, blindness and bigotry in the world. Hence you have people who are unthinking patriots or lost to some cause, who can only see their own cause with blinkered vision and never question authority.

On a higher level man is receptive to ideas coming from universal mind.

Ideas come, but they are not our ideas. They are just ideas. We think we are thinking, but ideas are just passing through the mental body. We string ideas or thoughts together through images, concepts and language by a process of continuity and identification.

Many people are not thinking; they are reacting to their own conditioning, reacting to their set programming of prejudice, opinion and rigid mind-sets. They are the prisoners of their own mind process. They do not look outside it or challenge, much less question, their own view of reality. The question has already been settled for them. There are no answers outside their own narrow views. They might as well stick themselves in the microwave and agitate their atoms.

But belief is not knowing, and thinking is not seeing. You knew that, right?

As the result of meditation, we start to become detached from the mind. We see we are not mind, and thought is just an activity within it. We are outside it, beyond it, apart from it. The mind is motion and we are motionless. Mind is confined and we are unrestricted.

Many people who do various kinds of meditation think you have to control the mind and get rid of thought; but if we are not the mind, nor the thinker, but that which lies behind it all, what do we care what the mind does? It is what it is. Its nature is to think. Ours is simply to be. In deep meditation it is like you are sitting on the bottom of the pond while thought is taking place on the surface, in little ripples. Passing clouds. No problem, unless the mind makes it one.

Chitta is the plastic mind-essence which receives the impress of thought. It is the awareness-aspect of mind which receives all impressions of experience, and all memory. The ahamkara or sense of self, the ego which identifies with a form through thought and feeling, links together all events which are stored as impressions in the mind, long after the event may be forgotten and becomes a tendency in the mind, and gathers together a sense of identity which is continuous. These impressions or mind-traces give the personality certain traits or tendencies, specific ways of acting or responding based on past events, and particular and peculiar ways of thinking. These tendencies, known in Sanskrit as samskaras, condition us to act in certain ways in a subliminal manner. Yoga meditation is supposed to eliminate these tendencies. These tendencies are simply habits, some of them unconscious and even unwanted.

The mind has a wide spectrum of activity, from the most crude and gross, to the fine and subtle up to areas which would hardly be recognised as mind – the state of pure sattva, the most refined level.

The objective of meditation is to settle the mind, make it quiet, still, to make it less active, less agitated, more like a serene lake; to take attention from the gross to the subtle, from heaviness of mind (the inertia of *tamas*) to lighter activity (the more excited state of *rajas*) to the pure state of non-resistance, *sattva*.

The mind runs on automatic under a mechanical process. It is not alive, nor self-aware. Awareness gets mixed up in the machinery of the mind-process. We identify with mental activity and come to accept ourselves as the thinker of thought and the doer of deeds. But we are behind all that as the non-involved Witness of all phenomena, the silent changeless watcher of all change.

Yoga is defined as *chitta-vritti-nirodha*: bringing the waves of the mind to a state of rest, suspending the normal state of mental activity, and taking attention to its least active level. The active eddies or disturbances in consciousness are slowed down to a less active, less excited state of perturbation. There are ripples and waves on the ocean's surface, but at deeper levels the ocean

is still. So we calm the surface to explore the depths of our awareness. There we find we have more being and the awareness is more profound, more real. There we find our own greater reality.

Buddha said: ‘Cultivate the mind that abides nowhere.’

This is also the highest teaching of Tibetan Dzogchen and Mahamudra, which says let the mind be as it is, don’t interfere with it, relax into natural mind; let awareness roam free, unhindered. It says, as also does Tibetan Chod, look for the mind, or for a you, a self, and you will not find it; and in that looking and not finding, abide in emptiness and set the mind free, set awareness free.

Yoga says three things are needed: Viveka or discrimination; abhyasa or practice; and vairagya or detachment. In fact, in the practice of meditation, these amount to the same thing. Yoga is the practice of desirelessness. From discrimination, practice; from practice, detachment.

Whatever form of meditation one uses, one has to practice till one masters the art of no-effort and settles into a subtle state, like water seeking its own level. But this word, abhyasa, implies more than this. It implies the practice of self-attention through inward-turning, abiding in our own essence.

Viveka means to discriminate the Self from the not-Self. It means to know the flow of higher awareness, to live in the Self, to experience the inner stillness. It means holding the attention steady on the innermost awareness of unmoving Silence. It means to seek the Real.

This is done by means of the practice of detachment from the mind. This is dispassion or freedom from desire by putting attention on the desireless state. Vairagya means ‘uncolouredness’: mind becomes uncoloured by its contents. By taking attention to subtler levels of lesser activity, mind becomes motionless and clearer by abiding in an unbroken stream of continuity of awareness of being. One then becomes aware of pure existence. One is aware of being aware of awareness itself as the substratum of what one is. One dwells in, and as, fundamental livingness, knowing oneself as pure existence or fundamental essence. I am Alive! I am ALIVE!

By means of spiritual discrimination, which means becoming aware of the underlying stillness, wholeness of awareness arises by the habit of practice; it becomes deeper and more profound as it is felt as a constant, undisturbed flow of silence: stillness-in-motion. Your awareness becomes alive. It gets activated. It awakens. You awaken to a greater depth of yourself – which is also felt as a universal reality. You see you are Dharma. Your living is the purpose of life. You are the purpose. You start to abide in Truth, in universal Existence, beyond being merely an individual ego. At first this is of short duration and sporadic and intermittent, but it becomes stable by practice. It becomes habitual, more real than the mind, as it is firmly established. It is found that

Dharma, Truth, is what you are. You exist in the awareness of your own universal existence. What was latent, dormant, waiting, now gets expressed.

You find yourself in another dimension of awareness, another field of experience. You find you are not what you thought you were. Your identity is not what you thought it was. You transcend a limited concept you have of yourself. You go outside the mould. Sometimes it is like an ice-cube in water. You just melt. You are gone, lost in rapture, lost in meditation, absorbed in impersonal awareness, in inner beauty, in the Eternal Now. You are just still. All you are is stillness. You abide. You are. There is nothing else. Only Being. You are silent.

This is true Bhakti Yoga – devotion to the Infinite, dedication to the practice, love of the Supreme. Devotion means paying attention – you give yourself up to the practice of turning inward, finding the stillness, and losing yourself in the Silence of Being. Love means fading away into a greater dimension and losing yourself in motionlessness, disappearing in the Vastness of your own emptiness, the space of your inner Self. The drop becomes the sea. You die to the known. Where are you? You cannot say what you are. You are nothing, yet more than what you were before. You are empty, yet full of Presence. You are gentle, soft, delicate, yet you have immense inner strength and fortitude. You have lost yourself and gained yourself.

The Knower becomes more important than the act of knowing or that which is known. In fact they become a singularity. In Samadhi knower, knowing and the known become the three-in-one, a collectivity, the state of wholeness. They are gathered together in the state of yoga. In the rest of life, awareness is broken up, fragmented, distorted, distracted, disjointed. In Samadhi awareness is an unbroken fullness. For a while we experience the Tao. In the state of freedom we live in the Tao, in the singularity of consciousness, Kaivalya.

Our life then becomes established outside the universe, beyond creation, rooted in the Great Mystery, the Inexpressible, the Unknown, the Unborn, the Uncaused Cause.

When higher states begin to unfold, mind becomes less prominent, less dominant and less significant than it was before. It is felt more as a vague notion, an impulse or a slight movement within the underlying stillness. As the sense of Self gets bigger, mind becomes smaller and less real in comparison to the inner centre, and somewhat less intrusive, and the inner centre itself starts to fade into a more abstract and impersonal state. The awareness becomes very simple, whisper-gentle, and still. The mind becomes silent when not in use, and is seen as very limited, and not as important as it used to be. One becomes detached from and apart from what one had thought oneself to be before. The ego is felt to be just a suggestion of an instinctual entity, a tendency to manifest as the thinker and knower and experiencer of events and the doer of actions.

In higher states there is less a sense of being a person, more of an impersonal Presence, of being alive, being life itself, pure existence, of being awareness itself, the Witness which is not an entity,

but more of a state of being or a sense of abstraction, of being in an unmanifest or unexpressed state – a sense of detached, impersonal Selfhood without ego-sense, the neutral substratum of all mental states or psychological modifications.

For that which is eternal, outside of time, everywhere, what is there to do? When there is no doer, no one to act, what is there to do? When there is no one to feel, no emoter of emotion, no feeler of feelings, what is there to attain, and for whom? If there is no one called the self, who is there to suffer? Who will be in conflict, and with what? So one becomes free of attachment to things of the ego. Of course ego goes on as before. Mind seems to think, but it is known as unreal to the awakening awareness, simply an area of awareness in which thoughts appear. You find you are not what you were; that is gone now. You are silence. You are the stillness that never changes. You are deep. Mind has become superficial. Personality becomes unimportant. You are not now the thing at the centre. You have turned inside out to surround and contain everything. And now ‘self improvement’ has become meaningless. Where is the self?

If there is no real self, in a personality sense, what is there to improve? Do you want to change or improve the unreal into another form of unreality? That which desires change is not real, at least not in a permanent sense. If it were permanent, how could it change? The Real Self, being permanent, has no desire for change. In fact change does not even exist in its awareness. How can the Eternal change and remain eternal? The best thing to do with the personality is to allow it to be as it is. The river goes on flowing. Why worry about some driftwood on it? Trying to hold it still is the problem. Trying to hold the moving still creates problems. It is not helpful to make the living dead. Trying to hold the living still kills it. It makes it unnatural. A still pond stagnates. Life is in motion. Leaving it alone allows life to flow. That makes life free. Restriction imprisons it. Then worry sets in. Conflict arises. Problems ensue and misery begins. Otherwise life sails along. There are waves, and there is change. The river remains the river. So life is life. The True Self is changeless, and so is eternal. It is impersonal. Only the personality cares about the personality. But the ego is just a bundle of impulses, tendencies, sensations, feelings, thoughts, in an endless process of change. Awareness persists through them all. An experiencer identifies with experience, but that does not make the experiencer real. The mind sees/feels an experience and says: This is happening to me. So it thinks it is real. It identifies with a doer of actions, a thinker of thoughts and a feeler of feelings.

How many selves does it take to be you? None. How can you ever be other than you? You are everything and nothing. In your essential nature you are the outside of the inside. By that is meant that all your life you thought you were the centre. You identified with a self, an ego, a me, including a form, the form of mind, the genetic conditioning, the influence of various experiences and associations with others, with various tendencies, sensations and impulses. Habits.

Then one day you are no longer identified with the self. You are outside of it and the mind is no longer real. It does not trap you anymore, and you do not depend on it for your sense of self. It is

not now your focus of interest and does not give you your sense of reality. You know yourself as unmoving stillness. You are the silence. You are you, the selfless Self. The mind goes on as before, but it is not you. You do not associate yourself with the personality, which is just something you use. What you are you cannot say. How do you describe the emptiness of the sky? It is not what you thought it would be. You are not what you thought you were. You find you are non-specific, non-localised. You cannot be found, cannot be pin-pointed. You can no longer say: Ah, there I am. You can no longer be measured by the mind, which no longer exists for you. Or, rather, you are outside of the mind; you have gone beyond it. You contain the mind, but it has become a very small thing. There is no longer any karma. For to whom would it occur when there is no self? And if there is no self, what could reincarnate? What is free was always free, but the mind could never free itself. It will always be limited. It will be as it is and was. It will never understand the emptiness, although it can bathe in its light. Now you see how small the mind is, how insignificant it is.

The mind looks for reasons. It needs meaning. But where is there meaning in the vast Void? It just is as it is, and you see that all ideas, all thought, all assumptions and concepts were meaningless. Only one thing is of importance. To be free. That means to be your True Self. But what wants to be free? The lower self. For the Greater Self is and always was free.

The astral plane is the plane of desire, and the astral body is the vehicle through which it is expressed. It involves all feeling, all desire and emotional sensitivity and intensity. It is also that which gives life and fire to idealism, as the governing Ray of this plane is that of Devotion and Idealism, and the Law behind it is that of Attraction and Repulsion. Or, in other words, love and hate. What drives most people is not mind or ideas, but desire, emotion and blind idealism. People, most people, are and have been, historically, mainly driven, and blindly driven, and deluded, by emotionalism and fanatical idealism. That is what has been mainly seen for the past three thousand years or so, or maybe forever, since time's dawn. Men have been motivated by a mad dedication, through blind stupidity, to country, king, state and religion. That is our sorry history. Bloodshed and fanatical religious fervour has been the lot of humanity, as a group. Only probably a lot worse than we think. Worse than recorded in the history books. Our history is one of insanity. Which is no doubt why we live in a society which is little better than a lunatic asylum today. And our 'leaders' are the maddest bunch, totally devoid of spirituality, hypocrites, liars, deceivers, meddlers and manipulators of the masses through their astral bodies.

In Rwanda the government stirred up, and ordered, the slaying of all Tutsis by the Hutu people, the massacre of people in their own village, people who had previously been friends and neighbours, friends they previously went to see, people they ate and drank and laughed with, and they had to chop them down like weeds, including women and children; and those disinclined to do so were beaten. Originally the Dutch separated one tribe into two, the tall and straight nosed into Tutsi, and their shorter flat-nosed brethren into the Hutu. Now the madness is all over and they are living together once more, no doubt rather cautiously, as you will not easily forget the loss

of slaughtered friends, lovers and family, and the Hutu have to carry the shame of it, and one day they will dance the Hutsi-Tutsi together.

Now, how could any individual kill another person because of some idea or ideal or because they belonged to some group they did not approve of or actively hate? Essentially because of distorted astral energy which causes delusional perception. This misperception is known as astral glamour because it beglamours the perception by distorting reality. Things are not seen as they are. That, to some extent, makes a person insane. Your point of view, your attitude, the way you see things, becomes perverted and distorted. Your thinking becomes twisted. That makes you crazy and unbalanced. Only to you it seems reasonable and right. Hate is only possible when we see another person as 'other' than us. Feeling clouds our vision and may make us see untrue. This does not mean that all effects of feeling are negative. Many feelings, of course, are rewarding and enriching. Feelings are from the most awful and gross to the most pure and sublime across the whole gamut of emotions and sensitivities.

Everyone feels feelings, though some may be blocked or thwarted. One of the main problems in society today is twisted feelings. Of course mind and emotion are so linked and overlapped that they can hardly be separated. No one can control their emotions. They just happen. Everyone is subject to feelings. There is no freedom from feeling, particularly from negative reactions. Everyone feels fear, anger, anxiety, sometimes. Anyone who says they have mastered their emotions is a fool or a liar. They are part of being human.

Did you think the Buddha was free of negative emotions, that he never felt anything? It is known that Buddha divided his Sangat into various groups. One of these groups was concerned with Siddhis or supernormal powers. In fact they are mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures as an aid to enlightenment. A mention is made of sitting cross-legged and flying through the air like a bird. Now a rich merchant offered two of these siddhas a plate of sandalwood, which was apparently valuable, if they would fly twice around his rooftop, which they did. Buddha was so angry at this that he smashed the plate into pieces. Of course you can take that with a pinch of salt. Or pepper, if you like.

Of course positive emotions have a useful purpose and can be used on a spiritual path. For one thing they tend to be healing in contrast to the mainly destructive emotions we feel in our life. Most people are not happy. They have not had happy lives. Even when people are not actively miserable their lives are merely mundane and boring. They do not live in a state of exultant joy. Bliss is missing from their lives. And how they long, if they have any sense, to feel fully alive and fully human. Actually, all humans yearn for this. We all want to feel complete and content.

Buddha wanted to find a way to end misery. He left his palace and his kingdom and family to find the answer to suffering, we are told. He had two teachers who taught him meditative absorptions, but he did not see how these would lead to the end of suffering at the time, so he went



on his way and spent six years as an ascetic, being hard on his body and starving himself, till one day he thought: 'Hey, I've had enough of this caper; I'm as far away as ever from the truth.' He found that the end of suffering does not come from inflicting suffering on yourself.

He recalled one day when he was young and the sun was shining and he was very relaxed and carefree and he sank into a sort of reverie. It seemed like a good way to meditate. And, in fact, it was just the same as what his two earlier teachers had taught. There are eight stages of reverie, according to buddhist teachings, which are higher states of consciousness. These are known as Jhanas. This word is a Pali translation of the Sanskrit Dhyana, which translates into Japanese as Zen, meaning meditation. But here something more specific is meant.

You get into a relaxed state by using a mantra like 'Araham' or noticing how your breathing passes in and out for a while till you feel calm. You feel a pleasant sensation somewhere in your body or something that makes you feel good or warm or you feel what it feels like to smile or have a feeling of friendliness or you remember a pleasant time and you concentrate on that sensation till it expands and gets bigger till it fills your whole awareness and causes Samadhi or concentration to arise and withdrawal occurs and you enter a calm state and that becomes delight or rapture and that becomes more refined, more gentle, more inward and more abstract and progressively deeper. It often results in hearing sound. So at first you scan the body for physical sensations, and then you look for subtler feelings and you go with that. You fix your attention in that, merging your attention in it. Then you experience a calm abiding, a sense of quietness, some inner peace, and from that joy arises. Something like this was the original Buddhism. You just sat and watched the mind. Let the mind be in its natural state and at ease, let thoughts come and go, go with the flow.

So feeling has its uses. And it is said by means of this that Buddha attained his liberation. At least that is what some say. Some do not. It is what the Buddha said. I guess he knew.

Astral means 'starry' because the astral plane is full of light, at least in comparison to the physical plane which is much more gross than this one. There are several levels to the astral plane, some of which, because they can be beautiful, may be confused with more spiritual planes. There are many forms of sound and light spin-offs around at this time, mostly derived from Sant Mat, a term Guru Nanak used, meaning the Masters Path, although the term may be much older. Some say it was invented by Kabir, who lived at the same time as Nanak. It has several spin-offs such as Quan Yin, Divine Light (now known as Elan Vital), Eckinkar and Masterpath. The sound and light teachings were more or less made public in 1861 by Soami Ji, who received them from his master, Tulsi Sahib.

Unfortunately, it came with a load of superstition, which has remained to this day. For instance, it contains a lot of nonsense about karma and reincarnation. It is also riddled with the idea of sin and retribution and relies heavily on the idea of an individual God. Lower than this God is the idea of a sort of cosmic devil called Kal, whose sole occupation is to prevent souls from finding their way

back to God. Then there is the idea of the perfect Master who is the living representation of this God, and who is himself all-knowing and totally wise and pure and mistake-free, claiming to be infallible.

As these were not true Masters they could not connect their followers to the higher spiritual planes. There may have been a true master way down the line, but there arose a line of succession. But Masterhood cannot be conferred. With each new so-called master, the power to connect to higher planes became weaker and weaker, like watered down wine. The first successor may have been enlightened, but the second was not, and the third less so.

Now today what happens, in lieu of a true spiritual Master, an aspirant is simply initiated consciously onto the astral plane, where the sound and light may be very beautiful, but which lacks spiritual power. As has been said, the astral plane has several levels and just about everything ever imagined, including what has been called the Radiant Form of the Master, who may actually seem to talk to you and offer advice and guidance. It is easy to mistake the radiant lights of the astral plane for great spiritual regions. A sound and light show is not spirituality. The question is: Does it enhance consciousness? Mostly it does not. Does it make you happier and more free? The sad truth is, no one ever got enlightened on the astral plane, which is the stuff of dreams, full of glimmers and delusions and ancient thought forms and everything that any religious person has ever longed for or feared. This is also the Summerland of the spiritualists, the land after death, the place of all hopes.

It is said that, as we sleep, the astral body leaves the physical and we function on the astral plane till we awake, and so it is familiar to the astral 'brain' after death and to that familiar territory we go after death. Sounds nice. Who wants to go first? Those who tell us how beautiful and wonderful it is do not seem in any hurry to go there. Would that be because they have to die first? Where is their spirit of adventure then?

The next and final level is the etheric body. The physical body itself is not an esoteric principle, as it is well known to medical science, and the physical world is the study of science itself. Actually the etheric body and the physical body are regarded as one principle.

The etheric body is a vehicle of energy through which all forces pass. It is usually thought of as the aura. In fact the aura consists of the total operating system of man, the complete radiation of all the vehicles in their active energy expressions. It is to the aura that the mantra addresses itself. The aura, the colours and geometric forms within it and the forces passing through it, change all the time according to various moods and influences.

At initiation or shortly thereafter the etheric body is often seen as interpenetrating lines of force or an etheric web of light. The etheric web itself surrounds the entire planet, otherwise energies from

higher levels could not find their way here. The etheric web interpenetrates and surrounds the physical body and extends beyond it as living lines of force. Within it is found the chakra system.

Yoga, Tai Chi and most martial arts are based on the flow of force through the etheric body. It is also the basis of various healing systems, where congested force is freed and encouraged to flow. The etheric body is designed for the dissemination of vitality. The chakras exist for the purpose of stepping down energy from one level to the next. If energy from one level came directly into contact with a lower level, the heat from it would destroy it. The chakra cools the energy down by slowing its vibration.

I heard of an American news programme recently in which it was reported that a young man tripping on LSD realised the physical plane was just condensed, slower energy from higher realms, that all this was an illusion, we are imaginary and we are not seeing reality as it is. As a matter of interest a friend of mine met someone who claims, when trying LSD some years ago, he realised that reality is not what it appears to be and he became one with everything and has remained so ever since.

The etheric plane is governed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Ray of Ceremony and Ordered Ritual. What this inherently means is that the etheric level organises everything on the physical level by means of etheric forces, which are of varying degrees of subtlety. The etheric and the physical overlap. For instance, certain chemicals, vitamins and herbs can affect the etheric body. It is known that electricity can effect changes in etheric function. A lack of certain minerals can effect certain changes within the physical/etheric mechanism. The 7<sup>th</sup> ray influences function which in turn affects the structure of form. Form depends on the forces passing through it and modifying its behaviour. This is the ritualistic aspect of the 7<sup>th</sup> ray of ordered activity. In other words the way energy flows has an effect on the form and its function. The 7<sup>th</sup> ray is concerned with the laws of form. A law is something which is systematic and repeatable. The 7<sup>th</sup> ray crystallises, limits, condenses and defines form and structure. Its laws determine its behaviour-patterns. Because it is the medium for the expression of kundalini, which is essentially psychic fire, it is also the field for the expression of sexual energy. But then, the etheric body is the medium for the expression of all forms of force or energy.

The aura is like a spinning-top. At Initiation we become enfolded by the Master's Aura. To sit in the Master's Aura is meditation, to just be in that Presence. The aura is the field of consciousness, the aliveness of our life and the expression of what we are on every level: our radiation. To what extent do we radiate? To the degree that we are aware and feel the bright light of life.

Till we are initiated our auras only reach up to the subtle levels of mind-awareness, but not beyond. And, for grosser people, barely beyond the physical.

The aura is alive before the physical body is.

The aura is speeded up by spiritual living and becomes more sensitive and more dynamic. It represents the present state of an individual, reflecting the essence and potential of an individual. It focuses vast astral/mental fields around the physical body. On the physical level bodies are separate, distinct; on the astral plane astral forms interpenetrate and share space, as shadows do.

The aura is the subtler aspect of ourselves – our awareness and our energy-field. The aura is an energy network with its step-up, step-down transformers of energy-centres or chakras.

Within the etheric body is contained light, sound, vibration, colour, space and geometric forms or patterns of energy. These geometrical forms can be seen in meditation, especially in the early stages. Later it is mostly white light that is seen in meditation. The highest, most subtle aspect of the etheric web is akasa or space. Meditation consists of looking into inner space, also known as the inner sky. This is found at or slightly above the third eye in the etheric body or, more accurately, within the aura. In meditation one should be aware of the space around the head. In fact, not just be aware of it, but actually become it over time. Thus one expands. In time, as the sense of self is transcended and one knows one is neither the mind nor the body, one finds that awareness is not confined to the body but extends beyond it. It is by the discovery that one is space that one discovers one is emptiness, and within that emptiness all is held, as it is the container of everything. The most important discovery that one can make is that there is no self, no me, and that one is nothing.

You are nothing, man.

And that is good. For only a 'something' dies. Nothing does not. How could it?

Do not seek to be a somebody. Be nobody. And thus attain the mystery.

## 9

### **The Path: Journey to Freedom**

Look at it you cannot see it.  
 Its Name is Formless!  
 Listen to it you cannot hear it.  
 Its Name is Soundless!  
 Reach but you cannot grasp it.  
 Its name is Transcendence.  
 Tao Te Ching

I turned to myself and saw light around me, and the Good that was in me; I became divine  
 Allogenes, a Gnostic text

To one who is trapped there is only one relevant question: How can I be free? Nothing else matters if you see your situation is desperate. Many do not. They are only playing at getting free. They do not seriously want to do anything about it. They do not see their house is on fire. Where there is a chasm you have to cross a bridge. Some times you have to leap. Talking about it, reading about it, thinking about it, does not resolve the problem. You have to leap.

How to cross to the farthest shore? Get in the bloody boat! Sail away, sailor. Push out to sea. Do not tarry. Do not say you will swim on your own. It is too far. And you do not know the right direction to swim in. Do not wait to drown.

The path to liberation has existed all the way back from beginningless time. But it is not for the reluctant traveller. You have to be serious. Very serious. It is not a Sunday picnic. It is not that it is particularly hard. But it demands discipline. You have to sit and meditate. Even when you don't want to.

When I was young my parents went out one night and left me to babysit my brother, who I had no great fondness for. We got into an argument. I threatened to hit him. He snatched up my pet frog and held it over the fire, threatening to drop it in. But the slippery frog made a bid for freedom. It jumped into the flames. Szzt. It kind of frazzled. Froggy was no more. I hit my brother. But Froggy was still. Kaput. Gone is gone.

In the words of Elbert Hubbard: 'Life is just one damned thing after another.'

We are all going to get frazzled, one way or another. Death is waiting with its jaws wide open. Unless we know we are not a person and unchangeable, death will always haunt us. He who says he is not bothered by death is either a fool or a liar. Or else he is free, knowing himself immortal. That kind of person is rather rare. We are all for the chop. We are all going to die. The only question is when, or how. And that question is enough to keep some people up nights. It probably will be sooner than we expect. Oh, the joys of living. They give you a nice coat and want to take it back again. Death awaits.

It waits for you, waits for all of us, pal. No exceptions.

Oops. Already? That's the way the money goes. Pop goes the weasel. Or the frog. Croaked! Death comes too soon. All too soon for most of us. Think you have twenty, forty, sixty years left? Any idea how short that is, how fast it will pass?

We are all going to die. That is certain. There is no way to avoid it. Science may delay it. But it is still there, inevitable. It waits for all of us. The trap is set. The only way to master it is to transcend it. You have to go above it, where death is not. So is meditation the answer? Yes and no. The problem is that you may meditate for 30 years and still identify with the form you think you are, mind and body. Even though meditation may give you super-sensual experiences, that does not mean you will be free. You may, and probably will, still identify with a meditator. You will still be a meditator, still be the person who wants to get free, still be the one seeking spiritual experiences. It can be depressing to reflect on the fact that there are very many meditators of long standing, from many traditions, including those of various forms of sound and light meditation, who are in a closed loop of meditation-experience-meditation, who will never break free into the full light of day. All they know is this loop.

As the song says:  
Caught in a trap-  
Can't get out.

Why is this? Essentially I would guess that it is because most meditations have a form and are done by the mind, and are contained within the mind, though at very subtle levels. They do not give access to the true non-material realms. Between form and pure formlessness there is a chasm that mind cannot step across. You need a bridge. You need to be thrown across. A technique, after all, is only a medium or tool for directing awareness into subtler states. How to go beyond yourself? How to reach where mind cannot go on its own? The self is a box. How do you step outside it, remembering it is you, without breaking it? How to open it?

To get to the end of the spiritual journey you need a trailblazer, someone who has been there before, and someone who can throw you across the great divide. The chances of getting there on your own are scant at best. Some would say impossible. Certainly very unlikely. And it need not follow, because someone is enlightened, if they are, that they can enlighten others.

If you are embarking on a journey you want to make sure you will get to your destination. You do not want to get on a rickety old bus that will keep breaking down or on an aeroplane that will fall out of the sky. Don't you just hate it when that happens?

Of all the spiritual groups today I only know of one which consistently, systematically, produces what it promises. It delivers the goods. And I am on it. Well, hooey for me. On this path, simply known as The Path of Light and Sound, there are many enlightened people and many advanced people, people whose authority is their own inner state. They speak from their own awareness and experience. They speak with authority from self-knowing and inner revelation. They do not open Hear Me Speak! And quote from the third line of the fourth chapter, I Shall Reveal. Their words are from the book of their own heart. What they have found they tell. They sing their own song. Theirs is the voice of truth from inner knowing, from their own beingness, in the place in which

they are, where they sit and see and know. From there they speak. They talk their walk. And walk their talk. And dance their dance.

Never mind what someone said 2000 years ago. Does anyone know today? Only that person alive today can help you now. The dead guy no longer speaks. How do you know he knew? What others say he said may be lies or misunderstood or perverted. Look now. Find out for yourself. The rest is secondhand. Question everything. Seek the truth. Don't accept assumptions. Find your own reality. Don't walk through life asleep. Don't dream you are awake. Awaken. Don't be somebody else. Be yourself. Be alive. Be free.

You may take jewels of wisdom from a dead teacher's words, but you cannot walk his way. He is no longer there to guide you. His road is closed to you now.

Just like my old pair of shoes. Pretty useless now. Still pretty, but useless. Hard to walk with. But then, they have walked on many paths. No wonder they are worn. Must get a pair of boots in case it rains. Might get a bit muddy, folks. Remember we already have one foot in the grave.

Why do people start on a spiritual journey? I guess the reasons would vary with the individual. Some say it is because of fear of one kind or another. Fear of death. Fear of the unknown. Fear of losing the self. Some say it is an escape, an evasion of life. Life as we know it is crap so let's search for something more meaningful, for some more beautiful world. There is no doubt that many have a romantic view of spiritual life, in particular New Agers. Those rose-tinted glasses are a bit myopic. Why, wouldn't it be nice to walk through walls, fly though the air, read other's minds and live forever? Yup. But how will that increase your awareness?

Essentially, I suppose, we begin a spiritual journey because we come to a crossroads in our life. We see that there is more to life than this material plane. Maybe we just want to know who we are. Maybe a traumatic event has triggered the need for change. Maybe we have suffered enough and want to find a way to end pain. We want to find an antidote to suffering. We may just desire to solve the riddle of life and uncover its mystery. Why am I here? Does my life have a purpose? Or we could want to find ultimate love, total acceptance, and to feel to the ultimate nth degree. Some of us have felt a spiritual impulse as children which has never left us. We have always known there was something else beyond the senses, something real and abiding, a thing we could not put into words.

We want to be complete, don't we? Can I be happy and content and live life fully?

I remember when I was sixteen, I had read a few yoga books and began to meditate, sort of. These yoga books talked about union with God. So I guess I was expecting that to happen in a few weeks, and at the same time I was scared shitless in case it did! Who wants to see God? I mean, he

ain't very nice, is he? All that smiting from an angry God. And I did not exactly think I was fault-free. Ah, pity the poor sinner full of guilty shame.

We find life is beyond our understanding. It is far too complex and far-reaching for any mind to comprehend it all. How can you contain it all at once in your understanding? You cannot. The human mind is too small. So we are hopeful that spirituality will explain it all somehow, at least in its essence. The ego poses an odd question: Can the mind know the unknowable? Can I know my own source?

Many, many people have discovered that the mind cannot free itself. It cannot free itself by thinking. The mind is part of the trap. It is part of the illusion. It can fool itself that by examining itself, which mainly means its thoughts and opinions, it can rise beyond them. The self, ego, can look at its tendencies and past experiences, its feelings and hurts and protective mechanisms, its sense of existence and needs, but there is something beyond that it cannot reach.

That thing, just out of reach, that mystery, calls to you. It won't let you alone. It demands attention. It shines in the darkness of your life. You feel a vague dissatisfaction, or maybe it is not so vague, a sense of discontent, a yearning for something more. What is your life about? Why aren't you happy? Why is there a sense of unease and unrest, an urge to discover something hidden? What is the missing ingredient in your life? Why do you feel a desperate need to find answers? Why are you incomplete? There is an intuition in you which tells you there must be something more real. You need to find that. Find the real. Find happiness. Find the unchanging. Find the ultimate answer.

But where the hell is it? What is it? How to find it? Who knows it for sure?

That is why the Path exists, and why we embark upon the spiritual journey.

There are answers. There is a way out, a bridge to freedom.

Some say that any path leads to the goal, all ways are true and valid. Now, that is arrant nonsense, for if it were true then all paths would lead to enlightenment, which clearly they do not. There is only one correct way, and that is straight ahead, direct to the end. Otherwise there is failure.

Why are so few people enlightened? Because in the spiritual arena there are so many twists and turns, so many side-streets and blind-alleys, so many cul-de-sacs to get lost in. There are allurements and delusions. The self traps itself and fools itself.

The Path is the search for the Absolute, the search for freedom, for release from limitation. Actually it is the journey to yourself in your own total nature as the One Soul, the Infinite.



How do you recognise yourself?

How do you know who you are? Where are you? Where were you before you were born?

Be aware that you are alive.

Who experienced that? Who knows that you exist? Who knows the knower of knowing?

Can you find the knower of knowing? Can you find the seeker who seeks? You have to look behind everything, not in front. You have to experience the experiencer. But here's the rub. You then have to discover that there is no experiencer! There is no feeler, thinker, actor. Then you ask: Who knows the knower of knowing, feeling and thinking?

Dear me. So many questions. So few real answers. And so few who know.

The spiritual journey is from the gross to the subtle, from the manifest to the unmanifest, from form to formlessness, from the concrete to the abstract, from the impermanent to the permanent, from the near to the far (which is the closest, most intimate thing), from the mundane to the sublime, from here to everywhere, from the smaller to the greater.

Initiation is the first step outside matter. Before that meditation is, and must be, on form and idea because up to this point only the mind can meditate on mind-forms or feelings.

On this Path there is a second initiation which allows you to merge with the Sound and Light so you can know it is your own nature, not something separate and distant from you, but your own essence. You know, then, that you cannot die, for you are formless and insubstantial, so how can you end? Only forms are destroyed. You discover that nothing you have previously known can contain you. Not thought, not mind, nor personality are real any more. They are not you.

You simply use them as the vehicles to live and act in this world.

With Enlightenment you know yourself to be the source of Light and Sound, beyond them. It lets us know our true state as Unity. Aham-Brahmasi – I am one. I am That. I am Brahman. At this point you entirely lose the sense of selfhood; you lose the self-centre that everyone else has. You are outside of creation. You are not confined to a body. There is simply Existence and utter simplicity and total stillness and utter non-resistance to life.

When we start to contact spiritual energies and to expand our awareness, our sense of self starts to become bigger and we are less threatened by change and disruption in our lives, as we normally identify with habits and familiar patterns of thought and living. We create a sense of me through

experience by assuming there must be an experiencer and by identifying with a 'someone' who experiences, the doer and thinker and knower and feeler of life, through habit. We seek to protect that doer and thinker and to make the experiencer special and unique. We feel we are important. That self does not like to be challenged: it clings to its own limits and shortcomings. It defines itself by its own limits, by its smallness and narrowness because it has edges and boundaries it can identify with and call me. Its walls identify it. It boxes itself in within its own fortress.

Yet the true nature of awareness is as the Boundless. Give me the wide open spaces and don't bind me in. Yet how can the Boundless be bound? How can the free be tied? It can't be, otherwise it was never free in the first place.

On the spiritual journey we begin to identify with higher structures of being.

Awareness begins to identify itself as the Witness of the lower self, more detached from thoughts and emotions, because it has learned to sit in silence, in stillness, behind all movements and agitations. Sometimes we are the experiencer and sometimes the witness of things. Being the Witness breaks the hold of the lower self. We distance ourselves from it, as awareness. So a sense of freedom grows. More and more we become the Witness, the onlooker, the observer. We discover the Immortal.

With the sense of immortality many fears and threats are reduced. Knowing the essential you cannot die - as a certainty – frees you from many tensions, even if they were unrecognised.

The spiritual journey is the discovery of Infinity. A growing security results.

You become more awake, more alert, more alive, more vital, more balanced. You become more you. But it is not the you that you used to be! More and more you discover what your essential self is: your true nature. You have no fetters. You are unrestrained freedom.

The Witness, your inner nature, the I Am, has no structure. It just is. Actually that is not entirely true at this point. It does have structure as Atma-Buddhi-Manas. But it looks to the mind as if it has no structure.

Atma or impersonal selfhood is dissolving forms continuously by bringing everything into a state of unity within itself. This is very difficult for the mind to understand or even to explain from a higher point of view. It is emptiness, but the essence of form.

Buddhi, which is very fast, is in a constant state of insight into the universal truths of creation. It simply intuits truth. It just knows. Its nature is realisation.

The Higher Mental Body, Manas, is said to be open to all thoughts from all minds. It simply sees. It sees and knows through direct insight. It is universal mind.

Light and Sound are the guide on the journey. But you need, as well, the Inner Master. Of course you need the outer master to connect you to the inner, and to give you advice on your progress.

Meditation is very important in order to achieve stability or to be you in your own right.

The personality is a collection of genetic forces and impulses, experiences and impressions and tendencies which predispose us in certain directions. Thoughts come into our mind and we consider we have originated them. Actually, it is more a case of them thinking us. The idea that WE ARE A THINKER LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT WE THINK THOUGHTS. Whereas in fact thoughts just pass through us. Thoughts just happen. We pick them up from the atmosphere. Thought is mainly a mechanical process. It takes place without our volition. We can't stop thought. Those who say they can are fools. They are deluded by their own thoughts. There are yogic books which talk about mind control. Ain't no such animal. You can suppress thought to some extent, but it is pointless. One should let thoughts be as they are without paying too much attention to them. But thoughts can be lopsided so they become deranged when used as an excuse for bad behaviour. Imbalanced thought leads to imbalanced behaviour so it becomes okay to murder people who do not share our views of life or who do not conform to our ideas of the way they should be. Let us go bash up someone who is different to us. Let us slaughter people of a different class or nationality. That excuses us from being entirely without decency. If you want something it doesn't matter what you do or who you hurt to get it. Some people are not animals. They are less than animals. They have no compunction about what they do. They are a disease. They are no longer people. They are not fit to be among others. They have lost their humanity. There is nothing to justify the existence of such 'people.' They have become vermin.

Any idea is just a thought. And what is a thought? Just a movement, a ripple in the mind to which we may give significance and importance. But it only has meaning to a human mind. Essentially it is pointless. Meditation lets us see this. Opinions are not truths. We emotionalise ideas and get lost in them.

The astral world is a murky fog of emotional connections, feelings, impulses, urges and desires which often lead to delusion and glamour, which politicians and the like use to manipulate and stir people to their own ends. It is easy to control people through their emotions. People think they think, but mostly they just feel. They respond to the pull of emotional urges. Unconscious forces dominate us, particularly if we are not stable on a higher plane. Thus we have to be anchored in ourself. The physical and astral senses normally overwhelm the subtler senses.

Meditation creates a neutral point between emotional polarities which literally blows or burns up illusion and thus creates freedom on the astral plane by shining light into the miasma of condensed astral energies which are influencing present humanity to act in an unhealthy way.

All the various influences in our life have contributed to our sense of identity. Not to just one identity, but to many smaller identities which create our sense of myself. Every identification represents security. Yet everyone's identity comes from the Witness.

We must go beyond all form to find Truth. Enlightenment means to be beyond all form or structure, to be independent of strictures and confinements. As Herman Melville wrote: Truth hath no confines. It means the realisation of our infinite nature. That nature cannot be held, influenced, manipulated or reduced in any way whatever. We can never touch it from this side: it is the great untouchable. That is why it cannot be manifest on this level. One of the aims of tantra is to bring it down to earth, which is impossible. Truth will always be out of reach to the mind. It will always be intangible, ungraspable, unfathomable, an ultimate mystery, always just beyond.

Do not look for the known. Look for the unknown. Seek for that which is just out of reach. For there lies the truth. Step back into transcendence. That is what meditation is for.

One Reality permeates and underlies everything as its most subtle essence. It is beyond the comprehension of the mind. It is known by becoming it. Only by becoming it. It transcends knowledge. It even transcends wisdom. It is Being itself.

Ultimate Truth is not knowledge. It is Sat, or isness. Buddha called it suchness. This is what Dharma means: The Truth of the Cause. We are already that – but functioning in such a gross way that it is hidden from us, like many veils thrown over a lamp so the light is hidden.

Ultimate Truth is a causeless Cause because it is not made; it has no origin, no beginning, no time, no end, because it is changeless Unity. It is uncompounded, having no parts, edges or limits. It is not put together. It was always complete, so is perfect.

Having no barriers, it is infinite; it is everywhere. Everywhere is it alone. All states collapse into it, and come from it, yet it does nothing. It has no characteristics; it is neutral. It is emptiness – infinite space, even prior to space, or spaceless space, from which all creation emerges, yet it remains fully itself, complete in its completeness.

Krishna, speaking as the Absolute in the Bhagavad Gita, proclaims: Having manifested this entire universe out of Myself, I remain.

Its nature is Presence – the presence or reality of itself, the field of pure divine Potentiality. In fact even this can be called a manifestation of the Absolute. This is found in each of us, and has

been called soul. But there are no souls – only the One Soul everywhere, which some may call God, or the ultime Ground of Being, the field of existence.

Creation is a field of expression of successively more manifested and more concrete or solidified forms of energy called planes of matter or planes of existence, each less refined and slower or more gross than the ones before it, each with its own forms on it, like fleas on a dog, of greater or lesser complexity and capacity of expression. It can also be seen as different dimensions of being.

Each form is imbued with awareness.

Each plane has its own limits, as each form has its own limitations and boundaries, and its own consciousness, limited to its form and expression. Each form will have its own tendencies, its own strengths, its own weaknesses.

Occult traditions and several religions talk of evolution, of purifying some mythical soul, derived from a sense of individual personality, and perfecting that soul. Yet if there is no soul, no self, no real and permanent individuality, what is there to evolve? What can a no-self evolve into?

To evolve, consciousness would have to leave this form and rise to the next more refined level of form which indwells it – for instance, from the physical to the astral, which exists in a higher state, from astral to mental, and so on.

The imperfect cannot become perfect. That would mean it would have to become not-is, no longer itself, something else. How is that possible? How can it remain itself and yet become something else? Does that make sense?

Only the perfect is perfect.

Everything else is imperfect. And will remain so.

Some say you grow through suffering. Hah! Can you grow up by growing down? When you suffer it reduces your awareness. If your awareness is reduced, how can it be raised at the same time? How can you learn anything from a lower state of awareness? What can you learn from pain? The more pain you have the nearer to death you are. Happiness brings comfort. The less pain you have, the nearer to happiness you are. Someone is trying to pull the wool over someone's eyes. Or maybe, and probably, those who teach this believe it themselves. Oh, folly. To believe the ridiculous. There is nothing to be gained from suffering. It is a loss, not a gain. It freezes the heart. Suffering is stored up to tarnish the brightness of life, reduce awareness and influence future attitudes. It conditions us and makes us smaller. It is a fist over the heart. It hardens us. All it can do is to learn us new habits. Oh, sure, we can learn from pain, but only in a very limited way.

Don't stick your finger in the fire, Jimmy.

Same with the idea of sin. What sin? Whose sin? How can sin, or any action, touch the unvarnished truth of perfection? How can ugliness spoil beauty? How can the outer touch the inner? Sin is essentially the creation of misguided zealots. Maybe, in some far past, it had some value in the infant days of humanity in the formation of society and in the setting up of moral codes. Sin is mainly based on fear. That fear made people conform. But fear of retribution also gave power to the priesthood, and they played it for all it was worth. Tack it on to the fear of death, the fear of hell, and you have a powerful weapon, particularly when applied to an ignorant mind or a young race. God is watching you. I said YOU. (Oh, shit. I'm in trouble.) But if you knew there was no self, to whom would sin apply? How could you be controlled then?

Who says religion has a lot to answer for? And haven't there been some wonderful Popes? There is nothing like personal experience of sin. At least they knew what they were talking about. Experts from practice, often the practice of evil. Sorry about the Spanish Inquisition and the burning of all those witches. There were no witches? Oh. Too bad.

There is the idea in religion that, if we remove all faults, we will rise to the heights of perfection. We will never come to the end of eradicating all faults, for faults are endless. There is no end to them. Faults are habits and genetic tendencies. There is no experience which will end in perfection, not if you live a thousand years. Every experience conditions us further, drags us further into the mire, adds further layers to our lower consciousness, adds to our imperfection and impurity. How is that? Because every experience leaves an impression, which is the seed of further action, creating habits: unconscious actions become habits which prevent us from living fully in the present moment. Then life is just going through the motions in an unthinking, instinctual manner. Then life is not fresh and new and bright. It is just getting on the treadmill and walking the same paths, moving in the grooves. We are just reacting to events.

Mind can only go as far as the mental plane, not beyond itself. Therefore, personality cannot become perfect. It is what it is. To evolve it would have to transcend this form and rise to the next, more refined form which indwells it – it would have to change its own nature. How could it function then?

As there is nothing to perfect, there is no individual soul to reincarnate in order to attain perfection. There is no self to get there.

The Absolute is neutral – an infinite sameness, or singularity, one thing everywhere. The everywhere-ness of God, the nothingness of things.

But manifestation allows consciousness or life to explore the endless diversity of creation in its endless expressions.

The ocean cannot be understood by the drop. The drop must merge in the ocean.

The Infinite is infinitely infinite, yet the mind thinks it can hold the vastness within its own smallness. It cannot understand the Vastness. It never will. Can a shell hold the sea?

To be permanent means to be beyond motion, form or change, and therefore prior to time. Such a state has no structure, pattern, laws or limits. It has no experience within it – no boundaries and no differentiation.

The Absolute has nothing to learn. It is beyond knowledge. It only knows itself. It is not aware of limits, boundaries or imperfections. There is nothing for it to gain. It is already complete. It never changes. It never has. Never will. How can it condense and remain infinite?

Creation is changeless change. It is endless becoming. It has endless variation. It manifests structure and form, giving the appearance of stability or fixity or differentiation from other forms or masses, and therefore individuality and specialness, a unique structure with which awareness can identify. This creates selfhood or the sense of me. This depends on the difference between one form and another, each of which is unique. A ‘self’ needs continuity.

Because mind can never reach the Absolute (in which case it would become absolute, and no longer be mind), all it can do is to create a mental model that somewhat approximates Truth and makes some kind of sense to the mind. But the ultimate is ultimately unknowable, except by becoming it, in which case there is nothing and no one to know it. Knowing it means there is no longer a knower to know it. There is no observer to observe it. There is only it alone.

The Absolute is always absolute. It cannot become less. Otherwise it could not have been absolute in the first place. It never loses its absoluteness. It is always itself – timeless, changeless, formless, whole, unalterable, complete. It never manifests as that would imply time for the timeless, and how could it get away from itself to create distance? It would also imply change, form and incompleteness. It remains where it is – everywhere, and nowhere.

The nature of infinity is that it is all-pervading. It is not concerned with freedom, as it is forever free, and there is nothing to be gained from it. Freedom is just a mental concept. To a human being, of course, it is a necessity. A human being, to be fully expressed and fully alive, must break all fetters and confinements, and we might say that all human misery is because of a lack in one area or another. The urge to be free cannot be stayed. The likes of Hitler and Stalin could not see that. Or maybe they saw it all too clearly, and feared it. Through history the urge to be free has surfaced again and again, even when it seemed impossible; but the tide of nature turned. One might wonder how so many greedy, nasty people got to rule great continents, and massive civilisations swung on the strings of manipulative political bandits. And still do. The more things

change the more they remain the same. Pity those who mindlessly vote for them are so stupid. But nice people do not want to go into politics. Our age is ruled by crass materialism because those who rule governments are crass. We are ruled by clever infants in the guise of adult servants of the people. Juvenile dictators pretending to be our friends and benefactors. Oh yea. Ain't life grand?

The main problem in life, as far as I can see, is that others are not more like me. What is wrong with them? Silly sods.

Liberation is attained through knowledge of the Self. The true nature of the Self is hidden by the senses, and by the vehicles which awareness uses. These forms create maya and limit consciousness. Each form can only express so much. Each higher form expresses more than the one below it and so has more freedom and less resistance to its will and capacity.

By associating with these forms, their own nature is superimposed on pure awareness on the plane on which that particular vehicle functions, but not on higher planes. However, any form can be brought into alignment with a higher state and made more sensitive to subtler states and finer energies and learn to respond to them by speeding up vibrations within the aura. One might say that the purpose of occult development is to bring all the bodies into a state of alignment so that pure spiritual energy can pour through them and one can more fully express oneself as a complete human being. All the various practices of yogic development are meant to purify the aura and refine its content. Spiritual light and sound gives access to high, more rarified forces. Then that force floods the aura. That means the aura vibrates with greater intensity and greater colour.

For knowledge to arise, ignorance must come to an end. The old books talk a lot about knowledge and ignorance. Ignorance of the Self is the cause of bondage, they say.

Ignorance and its cause cannot be understood by mind, because mind itself is a product of that same ignorance. Ignorance is a superimposition on the Absolute without affecting the Absolute in any way, just as clouds blotting out the sunshine do not affect the sun. It remains as it is. Nothing can affect it, for it is greater than anything. You can run round the maypole, but the pole itself remains unmoving. You are the silly sod who is going to get dizzy.

The Witness is the observer of all sheaths and states, subtle and gross, including bliss. These coverings seem to veil the true nature of the Witness, which shines in the clear, pure state beyond mind. It witnesses all functions, but the senses hide the Witness. But remember there is something beyond the Witness, beyond the knower of knowing.

The cause of mind is ignorance. Ignorance is not knowing the Self. Mind is contracted awareness. Mind is just the content of awareness, thinking that we are that content, and identifying the sense of self with it.



Consciousness is the reflection of the Witness. Mind is the doer and knower. The Witness is actionless, changeless, attributeless. It simply observes.

This is known through meditation.

Meditation consists of unswerving attention or steadiness of mind – where attention abides in its own alertness. It watches itself. Awareness is alert to itself, alive to its own aliveness. Meditation is an unbroken flow of consciousness, or steadiness of attention, where attention knows itself as itself. True meditation is when there is no content to consciousness – the mind is an empty vessel, yet awareness is full of itself, and that fullness is emptiness. It is still and silent. The meditator becomes the meditation. The centre becomes non-local. The background of awareness becomes the foreground. Stillness become active, more alive, vibrant and dynamic.

This happens through Light and Sound. How? Simply by paying attention to it, looking at it, hearing it, resting in it, feeling it, getting absorbed in it, diving into it and becoming it by identifying with it. So Samadhi arises. Inner space gets bigger.

Meditation uses the principle of attention, or concentration, to reach an abstract state, a state of unconcentrated attention, where the mind becomes vague and diffused, a bit like sleep, only attention is wide awake to itself.

By quieting the mind and slowing down the eddies of consciousness and the fluctuations of the senses, the seer, previously lost to and hidden by the things seen and felt, now awakens to his real nature as unmoving stillness. He finds what he is underneath all psychological agitations.

The real Self has no boundaries, being free, unconcentrated, unrestrained, unconfined. Without this awareness events in life overwhelm attention and impressions are left on the mind which affect behaviour and reduce attention. If events are not met with full attention we become consumed by them. When we are concentrated we consume life. Action without attention leads to habits. Full attention is Samadhi. Samadhi is surrender: then there is no more meditator. Concentration is devotion. Meditation is the process in which awareness uncovers deeper aspects of itself.

Most of our attention is directed to the outer world, to desire, and to our thoughts. Now we turn attention inward to our own awareness, to what lies beyond thought – to the basis or bedrock of our being. We uncover the hidden.

We locate a simple form of awareness.

We find steadiness of mind – steadiness of attention. We awaken to what has been hidden from us. We start to find our own source. What are we looking for? Most of us, because of discontent, are not looking for truth, but for peace, joy and love. We want to fill a lack. We need something

greater. We need to experience Infinity. We feel restricted, confined and small. We want to taste the unlimited. We want to fly free.

So we ask ourselves: Can Truth be found? Is it real? How do we know? Can we be free - in this body? In this life? Can we know the ultimate state?

Spirituality is the means of opening up the field of our awareness to subtle areas. We begin to strip away the layers which hide our inner core. It is like finding the centre of the rose.

We march along. Merrily, merrily. Unless life sucks. Then it's shitty-shitty. Bang-bang.

It is not the mind which knows the mind. How can the mind see itself? Mind only thinks. If the knower can know itself, who knows the knower, and who knows that? You have to be apart from something to know it. Eyes cannot see themselves. There must be a Witness to witness.

Mind is just an empty space in its essence, vacant, contentless. Thoughts are its content. But if you look for the mind, or for a self, an ego, you will not find anything, for what is there to see? It is a mirage. There is no mind. It is a mirage, which is why it cannot be found. The self is an illusion. It is a bundle of impulses, impressions, habits, memories and attitudes. We identify with this and call it me.

We want predictability and stability, but life is change. Everything is impermanent in life: only the Eternal is permanent. We want permanency, so we create habits. Steadiness of mind and clarity of mind result from meditation. Meditation gives self-assurance by going to the roots of your life, which steadies awareness in your quiet, true nature. It turns attention back on itself. The Self is more permanent than anything, more satisfying, and more stable. To know it is to give you the utmost assurance of what you are. Also, of what you are not. That is important, too.

Trying to change the mind, improve the mind, once you see how flimsy and unreal it is, is like a child playing with wooden bricks. What good is that to a grownup? Improving the mind is like painting the outside of your neighbour's house. What has it got to do with you? You are something else. Once you experience yourself as silence, once you see yourself as stillness, you need to abide in it, deepen it, dwell in it, let it grow. You identify more with it. You live it, love it, treasure it, sink into it, become it, welcome it, embrace it. You do not go looking for a non-existing mind to improve. You might as well go out and paint the road. You just let the mind be as it is. It is not permanent. It will pass away. It most certainly has its uses. You could not talk without it. You would not know how to tie your shoelaces or cross the road or make love or be able to meditate. Yet it is only an instrument. And it is the mind saying this. But why must you try and change it? Is it not good enough for you in its functions? Is it not just the mind wanting to transform the mind? Why make it better? Better than what? And to what end? It is not your behaviour that counts. It is your beingness. Your personality is already there. You cannot change its basic nature and

structure. Oh, you may change certain attitudes, fine-tune some characteristics, but this is just painting the outside of an old shack. It is superficial. It is removing an attitude at point A and moving it to the background at point Z, and shifting something at point Z to point A which had previously been in the background; but you are essentially the same person, more or less acting the same way, or acting in an artificial and unnatural way. Doing anything which is not natural and which involves effort must put a strain on the system. Joe, who previously was a bad-tempered git, now tries to be kind and loving. Sounds nice. Probably good for everyone else. But it must impose a great strain on his nervous system, trying to be good while denying or hiding his bad side. Poor old Joe. Hear he died of a heart attack. Be nice where possible. You have to consider others to some extent, otherwise it would be hell on earth – oh, it is? Be thoughtful. But don't kill yourself. Be natural. If you are one way and you try to act the other, you create conflict within yourself. All these books on changing your attitude to change your life are essentially rubbish. They just swirl the mind around. Will you be any different? Or will you just be pretending? As Lord Krishna said: Better your own dharma than the dharma of another. Better your life than the idea of another of what your life should be.

This is not to say you should not be disciplined according to your own lights. Any change, however, should be done softly, easily, not with strain and effort, which only make the mind miserable and resistant. Meditation is done with ease. Living should be the same. You should live as you meditate, without effort, allowing change to occur naturally. The inner must become outer. Easy does it. A good life comes from easiness of living, easiness of mind; hence living becomes easier and more comfortable. So if you want to change, do it easily, without putting strain on your system. Life is stressful enough. You do not need more stress. Be without effort. Use that as your life's motto. It will get you a lot further than reading some book about loving everyone. Try loving yourself first through kindness, not putting unneeded strain on your life, allowing your mind and emotions to be comfortable. Self-torture ain't no fun, son. Be gentle with yourself. You will get more love from a sense of well-being and joy than from anything else. There are systems of meditation which use visualization to see yourself as loving the whole world. Well, ain't that nice, folks? A mental idea of love is certainly not love. It is just a mental concept, a dead memory of love. Smiling at yourself will give you more benefit. I mean, it is just so superficial and artificial. Love the world? What the heck is the world? It is just a concept. Be honest. Does the world mean anything to you? Or is it just a vague, unreal concept? Where is this world?

In fact just allowing the mind to be as it is is the highest teaching in Tibetan Buddhism. Mahamudra, Dzogchen and Chod all teach the natural perfection of the clear mind which is uncontrived and innocent. Thought is allowed to rise and subside without interfering with it. Meditation in that tradition consists of looking at the mind and, failing to find it, simply remaining in that looking mode where there is nothing to find. It is a state of not caring if thoughts arise or not. There is no clinging to ideas and concepts are let go of. All except the concept of letting go, of course. Just relax into your natural state, they say. Easy as climbing over a wall with one leg.

Do what you can do. Do not do what you cannot do.

But at least do it without strain. Be effortless. That is the only way to live. Why is that? Because it is the way that nature intended us to be. We should live with softness, with ease and comfort, in a smooth and gentle way, without resistance. That is the most efficient way for a human being to function. The nervous system is designed to act from a subtle to a gross level, but the more subtle levels are the most optimum. That is the level of least resistance, where action is most free and most natural, and from where there is the least accumulation of stress. This is rather difficult to explain to someone who has not experienced it at work in their own life. This is the more refined level of human consciousness. The neural circuitry is wired best for this level. But hardly anyone operates at this level! That is an odd comment on the human condition. But it is demonstratable when one rises to higher levels of aliveness. In that state one is more fully alive.

From a teenager I realised that living a spiritual life was the only way to go. There was no other possible way for me to live. The two other great, life-changing recognitions were that life was a process of effortless flow in which all problems could be seen as stuck flows; and that the idea of being a person was a false notion. Both of these were incontrovertible direct perceptions.

Life is flowing like a river all the time. It is human will, resisting that flow, trying to change it, intervene in it, interfere with it, that creates problems in life. This flow is in consciousness, and non-resistance to it makes for happier living. Allowing life to be as it is lets bliss flow in a natural manner. Non-resistance means easiness of life and peacefulness of mind, and it means greater beingness and abiding in our deeper nature, both in and out of meditation. It allows greater depth and dimension to our existence. It permits us to be more fully alive and reach levels of more profound stillness. Frictionless flow is experienced as beauty in awareness, as peace and joy and immense satisfaction, where there is no self to act as an impediment to that flow.

Buddha said to his follower, Bahiya: In seeing there is only seeing. This means, in the case of any of the senses, there is pure perception without any contamination from the sense of self, no sense of praise or blame, no judgement made. No mind-self gets in the way. In hearing there is hearing without the hearer. In touching there is no toucher. In action there is no actor. So there is a pure channel through which life can flow. Thus a sense of infinity and omnipresence can arise. For limits are experienced as non-existing, or at least as not forming an obstacle within awareness. Then we have the experience of being free and unconditioned.

The experience of non-resistance is a transformation-point in our life. For one thing, we look at action in a different way. Actionless action becomes the basis of living. Before, we probably subscribed to the principle of hard work, that you do not get anywhere without effort, that you have to try hard to meditate, that you must work your socks off to be successful and life is a hard slog so get off your bottom and hammer away at doing something. And don't waste any time. But now your attitude tends to let things happen. You discover ease of action. You simply see what

needs to be done and you do it. You stop worrying about the results. You stop swimming against the tide. You tend more to flow. And life gets much better. You stop resisting. Easiness of action does not just apply to meditation. It applies to the whole of life. Actions become smoother. Life gets easier. You feel better.

The first time I remember this happening to me I was walking across a field and the whole area seemed to go silent. My mind seemed to slow down and I was aware of thoughts before I thought them, at the point at which they actually arose, which was a very subtle level. I felt the universal flow of life, the flow of Tao, the immensity of life. There was a feeling of being untouched by anything and detached from normal life. Very nice. You ought to try it sometime.

Unless you have something better to do, of course. Like salmon fishing off Alaska.

In the Bhagavad Gita one of the definitions of yoga is skill in action. Yoga is skill in action. How is that developed? The answer is given: By acting from the state of Yoga. That means perform action while established in stillness, inner silence, steadiness of mind, in the unmoving state. From the unmoving state initiate action. With your mind rooted in the eternal state of Yoga, act. Let your action be from there. Let it start there. Through steeping your mind in inner awareness, then returning to normal life, time after time, from the sacred to the mundane and back again, the brain adjusts to functioning at that level of softness till it becomes stable and the normal condition of awareness. The nervous system supports that state, upholds the subtle awareness even in activity. Softness seeps into awareness on a day-to-day basis. From that basis effortless action naturally arises. One develops skill in acting without effort, with easy intention. Life becomes like a ballet. Action is like a dance. One develops gracefulness of action. Gracefulness of action means beauty of awareness, the flow of purity, the flow of sattva. It is like the river of love rushing down the mountainside. It is like the heart and action are the same thing. Even in physical actions that inner harmony manifests. In some cases the body feels very light and without resistance. A lot of energy may be felt within the body. The normal heaviness and grossness within the body may seem to vanish. Then every physical action feels something like Tai Chi, everything feels so smooth, mind, emotions and body feel like one organism, one flow; that is what grace feels like, like the beauty and the grace of the universe are flowing through one, only there is no one there, only that wonderful flow. Instead of the stream bashing itself against a rock, it simply pours over it and flows around it and ignores all impediments. Now that is skill in action: the skill to live in beauty, the skill to live without resistance, and therefore without stress. Be like a hollow reed.

Now that, friend, is Yoga. In fact that is Karma Yoga. Now there are hundreds of books on Karma Yoga, the yoga of action, available today. Most of them are rubbish. They tell you how to act with thoughts of love, to think of the Divine as you act, to remember God and offer your actions as a sacrifice to that idea. Now that is purile and superficial. That is the worst rendering of the Gita and other old scriptures. Karma Yoga is meditation in action, actionless action, as the Gita itself says. It is love to get out of the way, to take yourself out of the picture and to allow the

universe to flow. Thought ain't it, pal. Thought is the obstruction and the problem. It is the hang-up. Just as Buddha said that seeing is just seeing, so action is just action, so long as you do not cling to it, nor expect anything from it. Although you may not find it in any popular book, ancient or modern, action is bliss, not because of the action, but because of actionless action, free action, action that is not binding, limiting, conditioning. Let the universe act upon the universe. That way you do not get tied up with the action. You act and it is done. Cycle complete. No unfinished business. You act but you are empty. Action flows through you. You are untouched and untarnished. You cannot do this well with intention, by deciding to act freely. It has to come from free awareness, which lets the state of Yoga flow through you with easiness. You cannot get easiness through force. Trying is not the way. Non-trying is the way, and that comes from that place that connects with the heart, the most intimate place within you, so intimate that sweetness arises from there, where the river of ambrosia is found, where the soul is light and living is easy.

Then the experience is a bit like floating through life, floating through action; action is so light and easy it feels nothing is in the way. This is particularly so in the early phase of this transition. Later, as it becomes common and more familiar, one tends to take it for granted. I speak here from my own experience; I assume it is more or less the same for others, but it may not be. It is also called desireless action. Desireless means impersonal; it does not mean we have no desires. It means the personal self does not get in the way of action. So, too, in meditation we arrive at the desireless state, where we do not give attention to desires at the moment, though of course there has to be a desire to sit there in the first place. Thus one becomes detached, but the detachment is impersonal. In becoming detached, one becomes attached to the Impersonal. It is not a refusal to experience, a refusal to act or a refusal to live. Life is not repudiated. It is not a denial or negation of life. It is not an escape from life. One simply grows into a bigger something in which one is not so identified with a smaller thing. One breaks free from an earlier identification because of an expanded vision of a greater reality. A greater vision is seen and embraced and one expands into it till it becomes our normal, habitual level of awareness. But the greater also includes the lesser. Advancement or spiritual progress means to include more and more within our awareness so we can live more, live at a higher level, live both the lesser and the greater.

We explore all avenues. We do not deny life. We affirm it. We do not say: Oh, only the spiritual dimension is important so I will ignore the rest, ignore what I think obstructs it, ignore the more mundane and material aspects. We include the beauty and wide variety of the material and emotional planes. Our objective is to live the values of the lower planes as well as the highest spiritual levels. We should not seek to thwart or suppress our natural instincts. We satisfy our needs. We try to satisfy our desires. We do what we need to be happy. There is no value in misery. We do not want a dry life. A dry heart has no spiritual value. On the contrary. We want the juices of life to flow. We want ambrosia; we want nectar to overflow.

This is our life. Enjoy it. Savour it. Love it.

The Gita says: Be without attachment. This has been taken to mean that one should act with a detached attitude by cultivating disinterest, but it is not an attitude that is cultivated by the mind through an act of will that counts, but by moving back into the stillness, into the silence. When you are in that detached state of stillness then there's no question of a deliberate cultivation of a habit of mind that insists upon pretending to be detached when you are not, to be free of desire when you are not free. You can't force yourself to be without desire and you can't force yourself to be detached when you are not. You cannot split yourself in two like that. It is so artificial. It is false pretense. It is just desire acting, asking to be free of desire; and it is attachment asking to be detached because you are attached to that thing or action or desire. That is not Yoga; it is pretense. It is false. It is play-acting. Yoga is to find the stillness, find the silence, and abide in that, remain in that. There is a detachment then because you are not immersed in the material world. You are detached from it. And yet you are fully there, fully in the moment, in the flow, enjoying life. You are being life. You are life. You taste the sap. You drink the nectar.

You find you are more alive. You feel fresher. Life looks brighter.

When I am the Stillness, I do not have to pretend to be detached from action. I naturally am. It's a natural process. I am naturally detached from that with which I do not identify. I no longer identify (at least while I remain in this state) with the lower state or with some action which demands my attention. I am naturally detached from it. I do not have to pretend to be detached. I do not try to be free when I am free. When you have ice cream you do not go looking for ice cream. It's only when you are out of that state that you seek an artificial detachment, and because you are not in a higher state you do not even understand the nature of the detachment of the higher state. You do not understand freedom when you are bound from the point of view of imprisonment. The prisoner may long for freedom, but unless he has known it previously he cannot comprehend its nature. Similarly those who are in a state of attachment to form cannot comprehend the nature of the formless. They may understand the constrictions of the state they seek escape from, but not the nature of the state they seek escape into.

Karma does not bind when you are already free. Karma only binds that which is already bound. But the Boundless cannot be tied down, cannot be constrained, simply because it is boundless. So, when you enter into that state of the Boundless you are free; when you enter into the detached state then you are detached and you do not have to try to be detached, just as you do not have to try to be free when you are already free.

Throughout your spiritual journey you are withdrawing into wider and more inclusive levels but that does not mean you are no longer interested in the lower levels. You function still as a human being while entering into the field of divinity more strongly. You simply become more you. But your identification with what you are shifts.

What is right action then? What is correct behaviour? What has been said above also applies here. How should I behave? Does an adult have to ask that question? Do we need to be told what to do, how to do it and how to live? If someone else is telling us how to live, then we are not living our life. Someone else is living it for us. We are copycats. You cannot copy life. You cannot live it according to some instructions. That leads to stilted living. Life then is no longer the rushing river. It is just a stagnant pool, a narrow stream of dead water. Be alive. Don't be a corpse. Sing your own song. Don't live according to a script. Society of course is mainly a bunch of rules. There is of course one universal rule: Try not to hurt anyone. That is not always possible. For instance someone may want to restrain or control you while you want to be free. You have to make sure you do not hurt yourself, either. You have to consider others while also having regard for your own feelings. But mainly you have to flow through life in a harmless way. Because this is a dualistic universe, there will always be opposites, and that means making choices. As far as we can we try to avoid shame and blame and actions which make us feel bad while following our conscience. We have to follow our own destiny. But the pages are already written. We are going to do what we were going to do. The action scenes have already been written. How we react may allow for some variation. The scroll of life simply unfolds. The mind says: I have free will, free choice. And life says: Oh yea – think so, do you? Then it brings down the hammer. Ouch.

A non-existent entity says: I have free will. A person, the not-self, says it will carve out its own destiny. But what is saying that? Just a bunch of conditionings. The elements, the gunas, the genetic tendencies say I want this, I want that. Those tendencies are going to tell you what you want, how you will behave; you just follow your impulses. What choice do you have? The game has already been decided. The play has been written. You do what your character is supposed to do. You act out your part. That is why you are on the stage.

Life will always be ready to upset us at some point, no matter how high our state may be. We will always have a mind to brood over things. We will always have emotions which can be hurt. And down some corner in time destiny awaits with pain at the ready. We can never be less than human. We are a collection of imperfections. No one is immune to life's woes. Nor, for that matter, to life's joys. I like them better. Don't you?

Swing low, sweet chariot.

Attune yourself to the rhythm of universal law as best you can. How to do that? Actionless action. Live as best you can. Live without strain. Have your goals, your desires, your intention; turn your interest in that direction. Do what needs to be done. Then let life handle the details for you. Act as you need to, not as others would have you do. Flow with the tide of life, which means according to your own nature. Do what makes you happy. Fulfil your needs. It is the fighting, the resistance, that make us miserable. Of course mad, bad things will sometimes happen to us or those we care about. There is nothing we can do about that. Life contains sadness, because life is change. There are high points and low points, good and bad. We cannot avoid that. We cannot hold life still.



There will be threats to our happiness as long as we identify with the self, as to some extent we must. Self-interest is built into our nature, otherwise we would do nothing. We have to protect the self. We cannot be a carpet for careless feet.

We have to think for ourself, live for ourself, feel for ourself, and not try to live for someone else. We have to find our own way in life. We should not let society dictate to us, whereas we have to conform to society's rules. But we do not let it put us to sleep. We are here to live, find ourself and express ourself. We are not here to conform to someone else's expectations. To slide into a mould, a groove, is to be in a rut, and that is to be mentally asleep. We are here to wake up. That is what meditation does. During meditation we become aware, highly alert, and this carries over into life. We do not accept the opinions of others. We find out for ourself. Even with a Master, we find our own path. For what other path is there? For we have to walk it, in the end, ourself.

Habits control most people, and affect all of us to some extent. When they become too strong we become weak, and they take over our life and influence us, and then we are conditioned by them. Then we sleep-walk through life. We do not have to do anything. Habit does it for us. Same with thought. When thought becomes habitual we do not have to think; our habits do it for us. You don't get freedom by being asleep. You have to wake up to find it. We must see life through fresh eyes and a fresh heart. Our spirit must be alive to challenge life or we will be overcome and consumed by the bigness of life; events will crush us. In life there is food and the eater of food. Will we be the consumed or the consumer? Will we act or be acted upon? We assert ourself by being spiritual. As long as we are identified with the material world, we will be acted upon. In finding ourself we find freedom. Where else could we find it?

The first stage of the spiritual journey is right at the beginning when we realise that we are not what we have been led to believe. We are not just a bundle of atoms and science does not have all the answers. There is something else beyond this form we use, and beyond this material existence. I am more than my emotions and thoughts. Surely life is not meaningless. Where is meaning and where can I find it? How will I get from here to there? My mind cannot think itself out of its prison and supply the answers I need. It is limited. There is an intuition that somehow says there is more than the apparent and obvious. There is a need inside me for something more substantial. Life is not perfect. I want to feel the glory of life to the utmost extent. I want to feel the zing of life. I want a rocket in my pocket. I want love to overwhelm me. I want bliss to flow like juice. I want to find happiness. Can I be happy? Can I be free of limitation? Can I find solace from suffering? How? By what means? By which path? So it starts. Now I am a seeker. I'm on my way. But where to look? How will I know I have found the right path? Where is a real teacher? How will I know that he knows?

See – more problems!

And more questions than answers.

Yet there must be an answer. Don't you feel it in your bones? I did. Or was that arthritis?

10

### **The Path to Wholeness**

Life is either a daring adventure or nothing  
Helen Keller

Reaching Me there is no rebirth. All others are in bondage  
Bhagavad Gita

From my point of view there is only one way, known as The Path. There is only one way which systematically leads one to the end of the spiritual journey. If you cannot get to the end then you are in limbo. This conclusion is based on years of study and research and practical work. If there is anything else, it is well hidden. Yes, there are some systems which give some kind of inner experience, but experiences are limited. What is the significance of any spiritual experience, once

it is over? It just becomes a memory. Spirituality has to be lived in daily life, moment to moment. We have to change our awareness and root it in spiritual reality. If we do not realise ultimate freedom we will still be bound, no matter how far we go. At the end of the day we will still be stuck in limbo. All or nothing, folks. Don't get stuck in the mud.

No bull, as the shy cow said.

There are plenty of systems of sound and light. So why do they not lead to freedom? Why cannot they produce even one enlightened person? Why are their leaders not enlightened? So what makes the Path any different? What makes it stand out from the others? The answer is simple.

The Master. The Teacher. The leader. The man behind it. The guy at the centre.

The Master of the Path has the ability to confer spiritual states on his followers. It is as simple as that. And how does he do that? Search me. No one knows. He gives, and you get it. It works, and that is all you need to know. You don't ask where dinner came from. You just eat it. This is a unique opportunity. It is not known for sure if any other master in history was able to confer the highest state. Maybe so, maybe not. But we are only concerned with now. Just with you and me.

Now in today's world there are many men and women who claim to be enlightened. Now, even if that is true, how does that help anyone who wants to be free? If I am free, but cannot lead you to the same state, what good is that to you? Your feet are still stuck in the mud. Wipe your feet.

This also raises the question: Are those who claim to be enlightened actually enlightened? It may seem so to them. So there they are, no longer identified with the body, emotions or mind, free of the personality complex. They are identified with emptiness. So what else is there? Everything! God. The Supreme. The Absolute ALL. That little thing there. The one thingless Thing that is everywhere pervading, but which no mind can fathom. The Yoga Philosophy calls it Kaivalya – the singleness of Unity. The Fullness of the Void. Just pretty words till you can stand in that place and know the Unknown. The Unknown which will be forever unknown. The more you go into its description, the less sense it makes to the mind. Being apart from the mind is not the same thing as being in a state of unity. Being outside the form of the mind is awakening. It is not enlightenment, though many have thought it was. There is still another step to take, another hill to climb. It is not the end of the journey. There is another lap to run.

Enlightenment gives one the perspective of neutrality, a spacious openness or acceptance which allows all things to fall into it. Acceptance is the nature of love, which enfolds and allows all things without resistance. It has no judgement and no point of view because there is no mind there. Opinions have no place there, and no value. Everything is the same there. There is no other and no opposition. There is no conflict and no goal and no meaning.

This does not in any way lessen the state those have achieved unknown to the vast majority of the human race, nor to denigrate the fine work of those like Sailor Bob Adamson who, awakened by Nisargadatta Maharaj, now teaches others how to attain the no-mind state. It is a great service. Yet, as Maharaj himself often said, there is something beyond this. We have to follow the message: Seek the Beyond. Do not seek for something. Seek the nothing. Whatever you find, that is not it. Step back. Most seekers are satisfied with a lesser state. Some appear to be satisfied with hardly any state at all. Why? Because it is all about belief and not about experience. Yet truth does not care what you think. Something is not true just because you believe in it. Reach deeper.

As the Father of modern medicine, Hippocrates, said, there are essentially only two things: one is to know; the other is to think you know. To know is science. To think you know is ignorance.

Find out for yourself. Know it. Own it. Be it.

Some teachers profess to give enlightenment through direct transmission, but upon investigation it is found they only give temporary experiences of the no-mind state. This is through the transmission of kundalini. Which is of course better than nothing. But this life is the only chance you have, and you want the full shish kebab, not just a taste of it. This is not a training ground for something else. Find your way or lose your way. No repeat performances. This is it. There are subtle mental states which look pretty much like the ultimate state, but how much more are you not seeing? Seeing this pretty light does not mean there are no more lights. A subtle mental state may seem pretty profound but is still limited to the mind. From above it may look awfully small. Till we move away from our form-nature the profound simplicity of spiritual states will always elude us, though we may have glimpses of it as something snaps in us, something we were holding on to is suddenly let go, and we relax and fall into a deeper aspect of our higher nature, and maybe something we had not seen before is glimpsed, and maybe we smile at the utter obvious simplicity of an unseen, but now obvious truth. Why did I not see that before?

Now here is an odd thought. There are all these seekers, yet they do not know what they are looking for! What they are looking for is actually unknown. No one has yet explained the mystery fully. No one has seen enlightenment. It is always ungraspable. And yet that is what we always want so much, what we all seek. That is the goal of our life. Actually we may never find enlightenment, yet enlightenment is always there. It always has been. But, strangely, it is not available to any person, for no person can be enlightened. The person is unreal. With enlightenment the sense of a self comes to an end. So how do you seek a no-self? How do you bring 'your self' to an end? Now that is a tall order. Is that what you are looking for? Or are you looking for a bigger self? The biggest Self? The all-Self? The me is not a totality; it is made up of parts, impulses, cravings, habits, experiences, fears, needs, identifications, influences of many kinds. Yet it feels so real, more real than anything else. Awakening means that you realise it is not real. Obviously there must be a personality there still because you still have personality traits and likes and dislikes, all the things that were there before. You must have a mind otherwise you could

not function. How would you know when to visit the toilet or know when you were hungry? So all that is still there and life is better, but you are no longer identified with it as the centre of your life. You now know you are bigger than that, that there is nothing to tie you down. You are the pendulum: you can swing to either side, from the absolute to the world of form. You are free. Most likely this is what Buddha meant when he said: Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. These words also mean, of course, that there is emptiness in form, and a kind of form to emptiness. In meditation we can begin to discover the form of emptiness, the form of stillness, the form of silence; and then we bring that emptiness to our form-life, and live in that emptiness, the form of silence, and act from the stillness of non-resistance and effortless action and free livingness. When there is no self, no doer, life lives itself through you. Who is there to learn? There is learning, but no learner. Where is karma then? If there is no self, to whom will karma occur? And how can it rebound back and find someone who is not there? When your life is crap you create a fantasy world where things look better. So if things are hard, imagine a life when it is better, and the best time for that is in the future. Now you have something to look forward to. Now get the idea of many lives. Now you need not do anything in this one. And congratulations: you have just created the idea of reincarnation. And if you can sell the idea of karma, then you have a way to control the masses. What a great comfort. Religion is a wonderful thing, isn't it? All that guilt and shame, all that sin, the promise of redemption, and hope of a better life to come. Of course this one must remain crap. Except of course – pardon my cough - except for the priests. And we are sorry about the Spanish Inquisition. A little misunderstanding, you know. A small glitch. Anyway, we saved a lot of souls. Of course if the self is an illusion, so is the soul. But that means heaven must be empty! But if there is no self, who can reincarnate? There is no who. If there is no actor, who or what will create karma? To approach 'God' with an ego is an insult, an affront, an assault. If there is no one to resist, then joy flows freely, and then you choose choicelessness, and you have choiceless awareness. This is what Krishnamurti tried so clumsily to convey, and he failed so miserably because he spoke to a group of selves who could not see beyond their own selfhood and narrow minds, which of course was no fault of theirs. He could not pass on to others his own state of awareness. Krishnamurti failed to talk about the freedom of freedom, by which I mean the freedom to act effortlessly and easily and to be very simple and very natural and to allow your life to flow like the wild sea and not to hem it in and confine it to the narrow boundaries of the self and to wall it into the walls of the mind. Any mind which is not free of itself must be restricted, no matter how clever it is or how clearly it sees things. The very nature of the mind is limitation. How big is any one mind? And how big is life? And how do you get all that life in there? You can't.

Just to be clear. The True Self, also called the Higher Self, is not a person. It is impersonal. It consists of Atma-Buddhi-Manas, or that state of Presence called in Kashmiri Shaivism the I Am awareness, the faculty of Insight, and the Abstract Mind. The Abstract Mind creates a bunch of selves loosely related in time, but not the same self repeating as the same ego through a line of a continuing personality. So there is no personality in a continuous process of repeated births. For one thing, the influences in each life would be very different, and each life is only a collection of bits put together to form something we call me through a process of identification with each

experience, including sensations, emotions, thoughts and conclusions. So there is no continuous personality to reincarnate, and awakening means to realise that you are not the form you have called a me, and no personality can ever attain continuity on a permanent basis; and in fact even the immortality of the True Self must pass away after uncountable ages, for it is a structure, and no structure, even a divine form, can endure forever, through all time, till the end of creation, till there is no time, and no higher levels on which to function, for all must pass away into what has been called the Grand Dissolution, and then all that is left is what has always been, the Great Absolute, which some call God, the very last realisation, hence enlightened people have said: I am THAT.

Of course, till you know for yourself that there is no real personality and that you are not the mind, this is just another opinion; and even then you will not know what awaits you after death, nor if the great planes will eventually be withdrawn, nor even if these planes exist, unless you see them through the practice of light and sound meditation. So what you choose to believe is up to you. It does not matter. Any belief is only an opinion. Some sages have taught that, at death, you simply dissolve back into the Great All, because there is no organism to tie you to the worlds of form anymore. Well, you will find out soon enough. Are you in any hurry?

Do not ask any living person what happens after death. If they have not died, how can they know what is to come? If you want to know what happens after death, ask a dead person. Just because there are old books from ancient traditions saying what happens after death does not mean they are accurate, even if they seem to make sense. If you want to know what happens after death, try dying first.

What you need to be fairly sure of is that meditation is good for you, that a Living Master can put you in touch with spiritual energy, that light and sound are real, that you can meditate on this energy, that they will lead to higher states of consciousness, that enlightenment exists, that you can have it, and that there are other enlightened beings on earth now. Everything else is an opinion. You essentially need to answer the question for yourself: Who or what am I? What is my true nature? Whether you lived before or not is hardly important. Is it important what house you used to live in? Or is the house you live in now the important thing? The other thing may be interesting, but it is gone, in the past. You are alive now. You are not alive anywhere else. Now is your life and you can only live it now. Some say life has no meaning, but actually there is one: to live. That gives your life purpose and it is the best way to live. Seeing as you do not have a lot of choice.

Everyone should know who they are before they die. That is why a spiritual path exists. If you know yourself, everything else is secondary in importance. In the end all you have is yourself. After enlightenment everything is you; that is all there is. You are the singularity, the aloneness of life. That, eventually, is all there is to be known...apart from the unknown! But there are increasing degrees of your own beingness and own livingness. It is all about expanding your awareness till it covers and surrounds everything till there is nothing left but you. Divinity is everywhere. If you know it at any point you know it at all points. What is at the periphery is at the

centre, and everywhere else. Nothingness has no point, no locality. Spirituality is a placeless place. This is very hard for the mind to grasp. How can it understand that the void is a great thing, a wonderful thing (even if it is a thingless thing!) and leads to a great satisfaction and a wonderful contentment? It leads to the nth degree of softness. Bliss is a very gentle thing, a subtle splendour. It is the quality of love. Love is that which allows all things to fall into it. There has to be emptiness for that to happen.

What most people call love is simply desire and need, because they have never gone beyond the self, which always gets in the way of love. Give me approval, make me feel special.

There is another word for this love, this bliss. Sweetness. It is the sweetest thing. Spiritual consciousness fills the heart with sweetness. This is the aliveness of it, the beauty of the inner awareness. It is a thing which cannot be explained, only felt. All you can say is: I feel, I live; I feel alive; I live my aliveness. I am the sweetness. In my inner nature I am love. I am the lightness that never touches this world, that the world of form can never, never touch. I am the untouchable freedom, the fullness of emptiness.

The Yogic Philosophy explains existence in terms of the gunas, which essentially means the strands of existence or the qualities of Nature on every level, from the most sublime to the most gross. The formless level of Existence, or pure Being, Unmanifest Unity, is called Purusha in the yogic tradition, when applied to the Higher Self of a person, which is where all words from the mind level fail; all knowledge is futile, because knowledge is also limited to what is known. So this level, Absolute Spirit, the Unfathomable, can be considered as that which is never expressed, always in the most abstracted Reality.

However, parallel with this, coexistent, is the level of material unity, but by 'material' is not meant physical but that before which all planes become manifest, all the potential but unmanifest planes of existence or unmanifest substance. This has the potential of breaking into unlimited form. There is a state of balance. Now, with the first impulse from the most abstract level of creation, which is more like a reflection of the Absolute, that state of balance is disturbed and the gunas come into being. These are Sattva, or purity; Rajas or activity; and Tamas or inertia. These affect all manifestation.

Sattva is the principle of spirituality. The word purity does not fully convey the meaning of sattva, which also means harmony, balance, rhythm, coherence, beauty and freedom. The impulse to create becomes the threefold gunas, from the threefold Higher Self (atma/buddhi/manas), then the subtle aspects of the five elements, which expresses as the universe. It is also consciousness, mind and matter. Sattva is the principle of abstraction or subtlety.

Rajas is motion, excitement, action, agitation, vibration, stimulation and energy. It is responsible for emotions like anger and fear, as sattva is for calmness and friendliness. Rajas moves all things into motion. It works through everything in creation. There is no action without it.

Tamas is heaviness, inertia, stubbornness, laziness, resistance. It is that which retards and holds back. It is sluggishness. It dampens the spirit. In its lowest aspect it is death or densest matter which is like death to the higher nature. Madame Blavatsky taught that matter was Spirit at its lowest level, and Spirit was matter at its highest level.

Through all these levels the gunas are at work. Sattva, as will or cosmic desire, brings the impulse to manifest. Rajas is the energising, motivating principle which builds the worlds and directs and activates evolution and manifestation. Tamas is the retarding agent which slows everything down so things do not happen too fast and manifestation takes place through time and in stages, step by step. Sattva becomes mind-consciousness, rajas the astral body, and tamas the physical form.

But, at some point, consciousness turns. It seeks a way back. It seeks its own source. So the spiritual journey commences. The inert form-nature of consciousness transfers into excitement or the stimulated desire-nature, then into the active mind, which then begins to focus on spiritual consciousness and the more subtle aspects of awareness. You start to notice you are more than the body. You begin to wonder what the ego is, what the self is made of, what might be beyond. So the search begins. From the active nature of the mind you start to touch the non-active, unexpressed level of sattva, the more quiet nature of consciousness. More refined levels of feeling are sensed and felt. One becomes more sensitive. That means one becomes more alive. That greater aliveness, sensitivity to the subtle, is sattva.

Now this can bring its own problems. To change from one level to another can have its difficulties. It is a bit like being in two camps at the same time, one you are leaving, one you are entering. You are attracted to both levels. You are going toward sattva, but tamas is resisting, calling you back, saying no-can-do, don't leave this shop. That very sluggishness is felt as your own nature, your own desire to be comfortable where you are. This you have been identified with. And yet – The call comes. It creates some conflict, some friction. And also there is the craving on the level of rajas for stimulation, for security, and for the desires of the lower nature, for the baser instincts, for the hitherto known and familiar. The ego wants to protect the known. It does not want to leap into the dark. It does not like unknown territory. On a spiritual path you have to break every chain, loosen every identification. Can you be chained and free at the same time?

This also applies to meditation. When you feel tired in meditation, when it feels like you are walking through mud, when your mind feels heavy and it seems you are getting nowhere, that is tamas. When the mind is overactive or emotions are in high gear or you feel agitated in any way or the physical organism seems excited and your breathing is unsteady, that is rajas. When the mind is clear like glass, when awareness is expanded, when thought becomes still and awareness is in a



state of balance and bliss is enjoyed and you feel your own space, that is sattva. So that kind of gives you a key to your meditation.

So there you go, the happy meditator, evolving to the next level. Hopefully.

Or you could take up politics. Or simply get a brain transplant. Naw. Meditation is better. Happy, happy, happy. Rolling on the river. At least you still have a brain. Your own. That's nice. Might come in handy.

Sattva is the collected state, in which there are no distractions. The objects of the senses claim the attention so one becomes distracted from the inner state; withdrawal from outer stimulation leads to the inner state of collectedness in which sattva is most pure, on an increasing scale of abstraction.

The Cosmic Energy, Prana or Brahma, is expressed through Maya or cosmic projection (which covers over or hides ultimate truth) by means of the gunas.

How does effortless action come about? The Gita says regarding action and reaction, that it is the gunas acting upon the gunas, or nature acting upon nature. It just happens. Change takes place within the medium of change. What can you do about action? It has to happen. So let it happen. Let the actions of the gunas take place within you. Be the detached observer, the uninvolved witness of all action. Be a passer-by, as the Gospel of Thomas puts it. The gunas are expressed through knowledge (leading to liberation, supposedly) and ignorance. Knowledge does not identify with ignorance. The interplay of the gunas upon each other, when we identify with them, seems to be us, but no – it is just nature. The Hindu tradition calls it lila, the game or play of life.

The Gita tells us what to do about the gunas. Go beyond the gunas. How? Abstract from the world of the senses. Withdraw through meditation. Find out where, as a personality or mind, you are not. Go there. Go where the gunas are not. Or where they are more subtle.

As Buddha said: 'When there is no self there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of suffering.'

What is normally called spirituality is sattva in its lower, more manifest forms as purity, compassion, gratitude, appreciation, friendship, admiration of beauty, kindness, helpfulness and general human decency. While of course these are very important as long as you are alive, there are yet higher levels, more impersonal levels and levels of greater spiritual beingness; but it is by means of putting your attention on sattva that tamas and rajas are overcome, and one starts where one is, not where one would like to be. Meditation causes greater and greater amounts of sattva to come into play. The refinement of mind and heart is the doorway to this.

With tamas you have, within the personality, depression, indifference, greed, bleakness, negative traits, meanness, coarseness, vulgarity, rudeness, a secretive nature, hoarding, none-sharing, narrowness of outlook, and simple stupidity.

With rajas you have a fiery nature, restlessness, creativity, aggression, violence, things like road rage, resentment, antagonism, attachment, clinging, separateness, frenzy, nervousness, obsessiveness, ambition, self-interest and loud and uncouth people, all the things that go to make up a world like – well, like ours, unfortunately.

With sattva a person is gentle and harmonious, studious, has a settled mind and experiences well-being and elation, wakeful alertness and detachment, is wholesome, well-balanced and helpful and kind in nature. By means of sattva, rajas and tamas are overcome; but it should be understood there is always an intermingling and mixing of the gunas, with one in ascendance. Without the slowness of tamas there would be no form or fixity, and without rajas no activity or fire. Purusha is beyond all the gunas. It is the detached, the far, the distant, the apart. It has never been touched by anything in this creation, being outside of creation, the Transcendent.

And that, the far distant star, is our Goal. And that close tenderness, that intimate sweetness, even closer than our own breath, closer than thought, more intimate than desire, the fragrance of love, is the object of our search. But do not always be a seeker. Be a finder. And find yourself. Find your Self. In finding your Self, find the heart of Life. And live it entirely. Live it completely. Live the vastness. Be fully alive. Love life. And live the Love. It is simple. The vastness makes it easy. What makes it hard is the smallness. What room is there in smallness for love? The little mind wants to wall love in and own it, control it, confine it. Yet it only shuts it out. But what if love is everywhere? What if love is the alertness, the aliveness of life? What if it is the vastness, and what if the vastness is everywhere? What then? What if we are only blind to it? Or what if we have built a dam for the wild, raging sea? Or what if it only looks like we have? Find out for yourself.

The thing most needed by any seeker is spiritual authenticity. That means to be oneself, to be as natural as possible as we encounter spiritual growth and not to pick up someone else's behaviour patterns as a mark of spiritual growth and advancement, but to discover what is there on the inside, and not what we think ought to be there. We have to find our own reality, not adopt someone else's view. Remember that secondhand information is just hearsay, rumour, not fact; we have to find truth for ourselves. As Krishna said: Better your own truth than the truth of another. Thus we become our own authority. We find out what is real within ourselves and not what we think should be real. We must doubt everything, we must challenge everything because a lot of what is written in books is simply not true. People who wrote books were not enlightened so they said what they thought their teachers said, what they thought it meant, not always what was actually said. Even in the case of great teachings you have to approach them carefully. You have to approach spirituality with your mind like a sword. You have to be open-minded, yet critical. On a spiritual path belief has limited value. It is experience that makes truth alive. What you need most of all is to sit down and

meditate. To know the river you have to plunge into it. To find authentic spirituality you have to be on an authentic spiritual path. You cannot find the Real by means of the unreal. Some paths do not allow you freedom, yet promise you freedom at the end. Now that is a clever trick. You cannot have slavery at the beginning and freedom at the end. Does that make sense? Freedom is the goal and freedom is the way and the means. You cannot allow others to tell you what to think, what to feel or what to say. That is not to be responsible for your own actions, for your own life. Do not sell yourself for fool's gold. Be an adult. My life belongs to me. Only I alone can live it. See what has to be done and do it. Listen to good advice. Yet think for yourself. Respect yourself. Be true to yourself, and true to your path. Be kind to others and kind to yourself. That makes the way easier.

The curse of many generations of seekers has been the idea of rebirth. Now, that is okay in itself. You can believe what you choose. The problem arises when a seeker thinks that he will live again, therefore there is no hurry to reach the end of the road in this life. You can just tarry along. No hurry. Death is only a break in an endless cycle of rebirth. What you do not attain in this life you carry on with in the next. Thus enlightenment is in the next life, or three, or seven, or nine, once you are on the path. Or, in other words, do you know any rich American who wants to buy London bridge? I thought I might sell it.

What reincarnates? Matter. Or, to be more accurate, substance, the stuff of all planes. Matter comes together in a form. The form lives, then comes to an end. After death the lesser you comes to an end. The form of the self breaks up. The greater You alone remains. The matter of each vehicle returns to the pool of substance, out of which other form-parts make fresh yous, and all yous to come, but not the same you as before, which was only a part or a projection of a greater You which is egoless and self-free. Out of the reservoir of substance all forms are created then, in the dissolution of the form, return to the originating pool. Then it is recycled again.

The gunas give rise to the five elements (the essence of air, water, fire, earth and space). They create all the universe, and the self. What you are in your lower nature are these five elements in interplay. All is the play of the five elements, and so all that happens is these five elements functioning automatically, but that is not you, in your true nature; you are the observer observing the five-element play, but you identify with it and think it is you. But all that action goes on spontaneously. You think you are what you do, what you feel and what you think. But you are none of these things. You are something else.

Unseen forces drive us into action, the results of which cannot be known beforehand. We do not have unconscious urges under our control, and that which would control them is mostly made of the same stuff. We follow our tendencies and desires unthinkingly. Why did we perform a certain action? Why do we have certain friends and not others? Why are we living with a specific person?

Some of us might wonder about that last question!

The problem is, looking in the mirror we see only the reflection. We think the reflection is us.

As a spiritual seeker, what you know is useless to you. You seek the unknown. Step back and find what you do not know. Unknow everything. Let the unseen grab you. Know the Unknowable. You want to go where you haven't been before. The Absolute can never be manifest, because manifestation, maya, hides the Real. It covers Reality with unreality. Of course there are degrees of reality. Find what is most real, the greater truth. Seek the hidden, my friend.

We need to steer our ship by the highest star, to live life to its fullest, to be fully alive, fully awake, to be fully human, to think clearly, feel clearly, free of delusion, to feel the full exuberance of life, not its pale reflection or faint shadow.

All the scriptures of the world, all the Vedas, all the flowery phrases and fancy words can be reduced to one thing: Go Beyond! Find the Real. Go to the most abstract state. Find out where you are behind every changing state. Find a way to go behind it all.

As human beings we all want to be happy. We seek happiness. We can be cheerful. We can be pretty content. Yet is total happiness, every minute, really possible? Can we be happy through all the changes of life? To be entirely happy you would have to change into a changeless state where misery cannot enter. You would have to freeze happiness so nothing else can enter. The nature of life is change. The changeless, timeless zone sits over you, but the little you will always be in and out of emotions, because that is the nature of life. Joy and sorrow is our life, yet there should always be in the background a sense of well-being, a glad-to-be-alive feeling.

Yet we should also be aware that happiness is based on the form, the state of the physical body and the emotions. There is no happiness in the mind; it just thinks. Happiness is a feeling, not a thought, not a permanent state. Spirituality does not always equate with happiness.

A living being expresses prana. The more prana, the more life is expressed.

I touch the Silence – but why am I not in rapture, in endless bliss? Because I am a human being with the whole of life open to me. To be open to that I must become more sensitive. The more sensitive you become, the more life can affect you, on every level. We become hard to protect us from the hurts of life, yet we must be vulnerable to life, sensitive to it, in order to respond most fully to life. You cannot be closed to the pains of life, yet open only to the good stuff.

Silence is stillness. It is not feeling. It is not bliss. It is beyond even that.

We should live life as if we were not there, letting life flow along without resistance, without interference on our part. Life was doing quite well before we came along. Obviously we think it needs our help.

After enlightenment the awareness of freedom sits over one, therefore that state is one of continuous natural meditation if one rests one's attention in it: Dharma-megha-samadhi, the flow of the cloud of virtue of spiritual fullness, the Samadhi-cloud of Truth, the truth of Being. The emptiness of awareness is the fullness of awareness. On a spiritual path paradox abounds. The spiritual Self has no purpose except to be as it is.

And what it is is Pure Existence, the vastness of life.

The Gita says: Give up the notion 'I am the doer'. The idea of being the doer leaves as the sense of self weakens so that actions just happen; the 'I' does not get in the way of the flow of consciousness. It is not a conscious volition: the flow of life just happens. The actor does not get in the way. But this arises out of higher awareness, not out of choice. This is the essence of karma yoga. You can't control life; all you can do is to flow with it, watch it, allow it to happen. It is going to happen anyway.

Go with the flow, Joe.

In the Stillness there is no anxiety, no threat, no fear, no anger, no envy, no vexation, no conflict, no pressure, no desire; nothing to become or attain. There is no me, no ego, no personality, no identity, no time, no doubt, no questions. What a person wants to use to get to enlightenment is the very thing that prevents it in the first place. You, him, her – the personality itself.

If you were nothing, who would know you were nothing? Where would the knower of nothingness be? Could the mind know nothingness if that nothingness were greater than the mind? Or would the mind only see a reflection of the reality? Or is the nothingness the no-mind state?

The God-Source is like wind blowing through the sails of a windmill causing cogs and wheels to turn and grind. The impulse of Universal Intelligence directs all the mechanisms of nature. These operate through the gunas, and the gunas operate through nature and through mankind. All that takes place through mankind is the gunas in motion, the automation of the mechanism of nature. We think we cause our responses, that we are in control, but things just happen, responses take place, but those responses are not us; we just think they are. We take ourselves to be small things, whereas we are the universe, but not in an individual sense. We are blinded by 'our' own smallness, this personal self we think we are.

There is no such thing as either gradual or instant enlightenment, because liberation is outside of time. Hence everyone is enlightened at that same point of no-time. Enlightenment recognises itself as being free; enlightenment enlightens itself, knows itself as enlightenment, knows it was always enlightened. Unity knows unity. When was unity not unity or disunited? Never.

At the same time there is a Path – a path of preparation, a path of purification, where the awareness is steadily expanded and the inner universe explored and transcended and one comes to realise the nature of consciousness and reality. The chains are steadily broken.

I do not believe there is anything to be learned from life. We can learn things, but these mean little. How can they mean anything when life is meaningless? That is not the same thing as saying that the endless variety of life cannot be wonderful and satisfying. But life is mainly about survival and enjoyment. There is not much of a spiritual nature to be learned, despite a million books saying otherwise. My brother used to tell me life was a meditation. Oh yea? How many people live their life in a state of Samadhi? How many found enlightenment through normal living? There is more misery in life than happiness. Lots more. I guess you knew that. Every experience leaves its trace on the mind and ‘impresses’ awareness, thus clouding awareness. These experiences accumulate to condition and reduce awareness, according to yogic texts, which say these very experiences create mind and tendencies. These give you limited awareness. They condition your behaviour. So what is there to be learned from life? It is by freeing yourself from life that you are enlarged. Yoga tells us that by meditation these impressions are removed by abiding in the stillness. Any experience that is not based on inner stability is merely sensory experience that ties us to the material level of life. We merely develop or reinforce habitual responses. No experience frees us. We are bound by our experience. So what do we learn? In the end, not much. We learn to be bound. The first man who said (not referring to his wife), ‘I come with baggage,’ stated a profound truth. Learning means we establish habits. Any lesson is a habit. A habit is a trap.

The Tao Te Ching says everyday we pick something up, and everyday we should drop something. As the American detective stories say: ‘Police – drop it!’ They never say that to pregnant women, do they?

In the early stages of the spiritual journey our sense of self is usually pretty small and pretty tight, but the density of it makes it seem massive. What we identify with represents our security and sense of safety. The world can be mad and bad, but we still have our sense of self to rely on. We can depend on that. Everything around us may be changing, but we are under the illusion that we remain the same old self. The self changes so slowly that we do not see it. We have a mission in life: to protect the self at all costs. If you lose your identity you will lose your self, the mind thinks; if you lose that you will lose everything. Change is equated with threat.

A ‘me’ consists of contraction, not expansion, excluding what is not me from a sense of self. We deny and resist ‘otherness’ or not-me. We structure a ‘me’ on condensation or narrowness and seek to preserve it as it is. We build different identities, though still with the sense of self, for different circumstances. The identity of the father is not the same identity as the worker. Yet it all looks like the same identity because of a sense of continuity. But we cannot allow it to change as it is the centre of our world. We exclude what does not fit in with our view of our identity. This is a small identity.

One eastern form of meditation is to put your attention gently on the self, the I-sense, the me, the ego, the personality, the sense of existence, of being alive, the sense of just being; another is to leave the personality alone, letting it be as it is without interference and simply watch it. Neither of these is easy to do. In fact they can cause tension for some people. In the first case, one might start looking for the sense of self and, being unable to locate it, can get frustrated. How come you cannot find something you always knew was there and kept shoving its beak into everything in your life? It is there all the time except when you want it. So there you are, thinking: Where the fuck am I? Another case for the nuthouse.

Help! Help! I've lost myself.

Weird, isn't it?

In the second case, it can be difficult to leave the personality alone, not interfere with it, just allow it to be the way it is without censure and just watch its workings. However, what often happens is that you shortly become involved with it again, you lose your attention and are soon immersed back in it. You become it and then you are not watching it anymore because the watcher is involved in the experience and lost in it. Being 'in the now' is just a memory of what you think the 'now' is, an attempt to pay attention. As soon as you put attention on now, it is gone, past. The mind is reminding itself now-now-now.

The trouble with these things is it is putting the cart before the horse. You are trying to do things which happen naturally when you are in a higher state. Trying to do these things is like trying to copy the behaviour one has naturally when in a higher state.

One of the big problems, particularly for young people, has been poor self-image and low self-esteem. It is not easy to accept ourselves as we are. What religion expects of its followers is ridiculous. It expects us to be super-human and ludicrously moralistic. A moral is just an idea. It is not set in stone. But religious fanatics seem to think a moral code is inflexible. That puts a lot of strain on those who want to live right. They simply cannot live up to the standards set for them and in a few cases this has led to nervous breakdowns. Being good is not all that good, when it is unbalanced. You cannot tolerate others dictating your behaviour. So what a relief to be able to let go and relax into a simpler state. Of course none of this is to imply that we should not have a high ethical code. Just not an unreasonable one. Not one we are unable to live by.

Goodness does not need to be practiced. It should be habitual, easy, natural. A spiritual person need not 'try' to be good. Goodness just happens. A good person is naturally good. Simple.

One of the evils of the world is a smug superiority that thinks it knows better than anyone else what is right for everyone else. That moral smugness is the source of unbalanced evil, that sees

only what it wants to. And such people are fond of forcing you to do what they want. That is the history of religion, pretty much. They set themselves apart from others. Clerics who encourage disunity and disharmony are spiritual criminals. Any facet of morality is just an idea, an assumption. An assumption is just a point of view we have assumed. That God, as a Person, is love or exists even is just an opinion. Actually, pretty much, morality is something that gives us an identity, that makes us feel important, that allows us to feel our own rightness and gives us a place in the world that we can call our own, even if we have inherited it by an accident of birth or if it has been imposed on us by a religious or social background. What is believed to be right and good in one age, at one time, or in one corner of the world, may not be accepted in another, or may change. Morality is just an agreement that a certain moral code is right. Now, by what means could we know the rightness of any action? Only by what our mind or feelings tell us. Do westerners know any better than the eastern countries? Does Islam have a direct line to God? Does a priest know better than a road sweeper what is good? There is, in fact, a universal rightness; it is called compassion, and it is an embodiment of spiritual intuition and is not mind-based. It is not based on arrogance or the I-know-best rigid mindset. It is soft and gentle and does not seek to control or manipulate others. It is not ego-boosting or self-oriented. Religion is its pale reflection. Religion tries to capture truth and nail it down, but truth is free and uncontained and always fresh and unstructured.

Life is full of uncertainty, so we look for certainty because we don't want life to be just the way it is. We want life to conform to our idea as to the way it should be. And that makes it crap.

Then we start to meditate and gain some distance and freedom from our thoughts and find that we are more than thought. We observe our mind and find we are not our assumptions. We create mental space, which allows us to be bigger than we thought we were. So we become more free. We find we can turn around in our mind; it is not as tight as it used to be. We have room. We stand back from thought and emotion and idealism. Now we do not clutch so hard to the sense of self and we can be more at ease, more relaxed within ourselves. We are not so interested in protecting the self from non-existing threats. Our sense of beingness enlarges. We can afford to be more tolerant and more open to outside influences. We also become more accepting of the way the personality is. It just is as it is. We are less critical of ourselves. We do not have to censor everything we do not agree with. We see we do not have to be perfect (which, in your case, is probably just as well!) and we can just let go a little of all that judgement. We let go of small identifications till, as they accumulate, we can let go of larger ones. Each identification binds us; so, as we let go of them, each dis-identification frees us to become more spiritual. It is like keys to different doors where the rooms keep on getting bigger. Each letting-go is a key.

Some meditators are afraid of letting go, of getting lost, of being nothing, as it is a threat to the mind; the ego will be erased, the self forgotten, and insanity will ensue as the result of losing their identity. But, in fact, this leads to greater sanity and balance, and to being more sure than ever of what you are, even if that is nothing. Sound and light is natural and meditation on it is enriching



and leads to the growth of virtue and wholesomeness. I have never known anyone be damaged from real meditation. To let go is to find a greater freedom. Besides, you never lose yourself. You are always you. If you lose yourself you find a greater you. You expand. To think you may lose yourself is a pointless fear. The mind itself, in the sense of the ego, is the obstacle to real living. But the mind will always be there; it can never be lost, otherwise you would turn into a vegetable. It is just that you now identify with something greater.

The spiritual journey allows us to traverse the different strata of creation by means of the various bodies we have as human beings. Different bodies let us witness/experience different areas of creation. By doing so we keep on expanding. We follow the guide, the Light and Sound.

Keep on reaching. Go to the Beyond. Touch the Void. Go deeper. Seek the farthest.

As we advance spiritually by getting nearer to spirituality we see through fresh eyes. It is like we are being renewed. We experience presence-awareness more fully, which means to be more fully in the present, which is another way of saying being more fully alive. It also means our attitudes become more positive. As our awareness becomes more acute, as we observe more, becoming more wide-awake, and as we become more sensitive, we appreciate life more. Moreover, we more fully appreciate our own inner beauty, the greater aliveness of our higher nature as it begins to reveal itself, as it whispers its presence. We feel the warmth of the inner sun. Sometimes the joy is so great that we feel like leaping into the air. There is something inside that wants to burst out. The inner rose unfolds into the dawn. Now, now we know what goodness is. It is us. It is what we are. All hidden, it was there all the time. And it is more real than anything else. At first it may seem like almost nothing, a touch of something, a hint of air, a gentle breeze, then a stronger wind, till it becomes big, almost everything, expanding into the Immensity.

There will always be duality, the Real and the unreal, Self and not-Self, the Self watching body, emotions, mind; there will be the Self and there will be a personality to interact with the lower levels on which we function as long as we are alive. That is what it is there for.

Atman, the eternal Self, can never be the cause of anything, as it is Unity. Cause and effect needs duality to operate. As Unity is all there is, it cannot give rise to anything else; and yet we find there is something else. Figure that one out. If there is only One, what room is there for two? How does non-change give rise to change, because to give rise to something it would have to change, in which case it would no longer be non-change. In that case it could not have been unchanging in the first place. Where there is duality, paradox is found. So are headaches.

Life reduces to two things: movement and stillness or existence and non-existence. Wherever you look inside yourself you will never find a self, only thought or silence or feeling. There is no ultimate Truth apart from Stillness. In nature there is rest and motion. All things arise from the

resting state. On the basis of rest, all motion takes place. From the soil sprouts the seed. Out of the stillness thoughts arise.

Meditation is the practice of Truth. Truth is stillness. Stillness is oneness.

Forgiveness is letting go. A sense of lightness and ease equates with letting go.

Mind is distance. It separates. It divides. It dissects. It judges. It blames. It analyses.

Listening is sensing. To listen is to pay attention. Paying attention is meditation. This leads to stillness. Stillness is sameness. Sameness is unity. Unity is Truth.

We identify with structures. Forms make sense to us. No-forms do not. In fact not all forms make sense to us. Ghost-forms are unreal. The forms of a higher plane seem to be unreal. How do we make sense of light-forms when we have never seen such forms? Forms determine function, in the sense that they limit motion, yet allow limited action. The form of a rabbit limits much more than a human form does.

Except when you are trying to catch one of the bloody things. Fast little bastards.

## 11

**The Path of Light and Sound**

By right means are the unawakened awoken. The awakened are enlightened by the truth  
Yoga Vasistha

Just as the great ocean has only one taste, that of salt, so my teaching has only one taste, the taste  
of liberation  
Buddha

I am joy  
The moment unborn  
That fires eternity.  
Within the very pulse of life –

Stillness, bursting on stillness.  
 I am life  
 the bright heart  
 unbearable and free.  
 I am the fruit within the seed  
 The Master

Having passed beyond various sounds they disappear in the Supreme, the non-sound, the unmanifest Brahman. There are two Brahmanas to be known: Brahman-as-sound and the higher. Those who know the Sound-Brahman get to the highest Brahman  
 Maitri Upanishad

The Path of Light and Sound is not an eastern path, an Indian or Chinese path. It is not a Vedic path of ancient scriptures, although these may be fostered to aid understanding. The Path that has its origin in England is the path of the Master. It is what he says it is. It is his path, based on his awakening, his spiritual power and on his own revelations. It is not based on some old tradition, although the tradition goes back to the beginning of time, when Light and Sound first manifested and brought about creation. This path is based on the enlightenment of the Master and his subsequent revelations, without which there would be no Path. His revelation allows for our revelation of Light and Sound and our possible enlightenment, otherwise the end of the journey would not be possible for us. Even if we found an alternate viable path, we would still get stuck and flounder on some intermediate plane, deluded into thinking it was the final end. Anyone who doubts this should read the end words of the Jap Ji by Guru Nanak, and wonder why so many of the old teachers of light and sound still failed to get out of the cage of superstitious teaching and went on and on about a personal God as the end of the spiritual search. Sad, really. As long as there is any kind of form, or any kind of concept, it cannot be the ultimate. You know this completely upon enlightenment.

The Path translates aspiration and theory into direct experience, knowingness, revelation and attainment. It is not enough to assume something is true without finding out the reality for yourself. A bunch of facts is interesting but ultimately useless. Knowledge must become knowingness. We must make personal discoveries. We have to structure reality into our awareness. It is a lot easier to adopt second hand knowledge so that you do not have to think for yourself. Is that what you want?

The Path takes awareness from restriction to the Boundless zone. It unbinds awareness. The Path is the road Home. The Path is about revelation. It begins with revelation of Light and ends with the revelation of Enlightenment. It leads to the highest dimension.

Most people never challenge their own consciousness or wonder much about their mind, their motives nor question the mores of society or the way things are. I am not so sure it is the purpose of life to expand human consciousness to its unlimited state. It is just a possibility. If it was the actual purpose of life, then we would be looking at a vast failed experiment and have to conclude that life had lost its meaning. Most people live a pretty pointless existence, in terms of larger cosmic issues.

We might call the Path the Transcendent Way. It enables us to transcend all that we previously knew or thought ourself to be. It opens the doorway to divinity. To our own divinity. It is important to understand that divinity is not something somewhere else. It is our own basic, underlying nature, but hidden from us till now. Now we want to find it.

The Path answers fundamental questions. Who am I? What is the meaning of life? Does it have a purpose? For some of us these questions and the inability to answer them has led to mental agony and inner suffering. What is life all about? That question can lead to a turmoil of confusion. Can we find the ultimate state of Truth, the absolute Cause of everything? Knowledge is about boxes and boundaries, parts and pieces of existence. It is not about the whole. Who or what could get outside of the whole to see it? To see something you have to have some distance from it. Otherwise you are only looking at fragments. A fragment cannot supply the whole answer. Even the highest spiritual plane must itself be eventually transcended.

The Path is from the beginning to the end, end to end, from the start to the finish, culminating in realisation of Unity, in knowing that one has transcended the Path. There is nothing more to attain. How can there be, once one has attained the everythingness of everywhere and found the Void where it all started from? The end and the beginning are at the same point. However, although there is nothing further to attain for the Absolute, there are still changes to be made within the personality, and so there is still meditation to be done. There are realisations yet to be made. Also, you will never come to the end of creation as a meditator nor be able to explore the infinitude of sound and light to its last possible expression. However, this is jumping the gun a bit.

If one were interested in finding out about and following the Path, what would happen?

First off, obviously, you would meet one or more persons, or maybe attend a group meeting, so the basic background of the teaching could be explained to you. You might meet someone several times. At some point pretty soon you would be taught breathing meditation where you watch the breath as you breathe in to the stomach, causing it to expand; then, as you breathe out the stomach deflates like a balloon. This process, though it may not at first seem so, is very powerful and can lead to a profound sense of peace. This is commonly used in martial art meditation, in chi gung and tai chi and in Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan meditation practice. You may also be given, then or soon after, a relaxation mantra to give the mind focus and direction like Lom See, which allows you a deep state of rest when done correctly. You may do this for a short period or for some

months, if you wish to continue. All this time, and all along the Path, you will have help and support and your progress will be monitored. You are not left alone.

After some weeks or a few months, if you want, you may pass on to a personal mantra. This mantra is to prepare you for Initiation into light and sound. During this time the teaching goes on. The use of the mantra expands the aura. It is into the aura that the sound and light pours at the time of Initiation. A cramped, narrow aura is not a good receptacle for a massive inpouring of energy. Rigidity must be broken up. Softness is needed in order to make room for refined energy. The less dense the structure of the aura, the more easily light is perceived. To state the obvious: The less darkness, the more light. The mantra duplicates patterns on the higher mental plane and strengthens the interface between higher and lower and integrates natural qualities into the personality. After maybe a year or so, in some cases longer, in some shorter, you are ready for the next stage. Guru Nanak's favourite, most advanced disciple was on a mantra for eleven years, even though he was an old man.

At this stage you have to decide how important spiritual advancement is to you. How much do you want it? How great is your desire to find truth? How much do you want sound and light? It is not given to you unless you want it. You have to ask for it. You have to buckle down to meditation and you have to study. You have to increase your understanding of what the Path is, what it entails, what it means to be an initiate.

Certain things are expected of you. You have to culture certain virtues. Patience, humility, kindness, compassion, helpfulness. You have to be able to work with people to some extent and to be part of a group. You are not here to boost your ego. Essentially you just have to be a decent human being and to be polite and sociable. You have to see your relationship to the Master, to see how fortunate you are, and what a rare opportunity this is, and to understand you are engaging in a spiritual friendship. The Master is going to carry us to the farthest shore. It might behoove us to consider what that might mean. We might have to modify some of our attitudes, or at least be prepared for change. The Master is more concerned with your Higher Self than with your ego, which he knows to be an illusion, and so will not allow you to bring your weaknesses to the Path, if they get in the way too much or interfere with others. This does not mean you are not expected to have any weakness. No one is perfect, which is why people seek a spiritual path anyway.

At some point you have to give up eating meat and consuming booze and drugs, including tobacco. If you are too weak to do that then you are the slave of your body and unfit for a spiritual path. Your cravings must be more important than freedom is to you.

Depending on your past experience and the innate amount of sattva you have, or your natural purity, you may find your breathing slowing down during meditation, or sometimes suspended, or you may find yourself suddenly without any thought, or in a state of peaceful bliss where everything seems right with the world and all your problems simply disappear, or you may find

yourself smiling for no reason at all or having strong feelings of affection. You may also feel you are in harmony with the universe and at one with the Tao. You may feel as if you are sailing through life at various times. It is not the same for all and you may simply feel more relaxed and at ease. We should become more cheerful, feel more comfortable within ourselves, and more at ease with the way we are. Meditation should become easier, though it may not.

During this time all your questions will be answered, except what actually happens during Initiation, as this would lead to you expecting certain things to happen, which would block their actual happening. An innocent, open attitude is best during which you just wait for whatever may happen to happen without craving for something that may not happen in any case. Each person is different, and there are no hard and fast rules, although there are certain tendencies and likelihoods, but the mind can get in the way and start imagining things which are not there or be disappointed when things it has been led to expect do not transpire. It may take some time in some cases for light and sound to work their way through the vehicles. In some cases people have first seen brilliant light during sleep, in a dream, some upon awakening a few days later, although most will see it instantly at the time of Initiation. Of course some aspirants are actually afraid of seeing the light; some do not feel they are worthy of seeing it. This feeling might sometimes get in the way of the experience. The light is there, but the perception of it can be a delicate business. Human beings with their history and the state of their aura can be rather complex, not to mention the confusion of their minds and the heaviness of their desires and feelings. The very desire to see can be an obstruction. Yet how do you not want something that you want? Ugh?

In an odd few cases, where people bring their own obstructions and their mind is dense, they may not see light for some time or may not hear the sound very clearly. But the energy is still there in the aura. One can still look and still listen and by doing so experience Samadhi. One can still be aware of awareness, in which case silence can arise and the inner stillness known. Then the inner space is experienced. Awareness is expanded. Distance from the mind is gained. Thus one advances on the Path, and one comes to know oneself more fully.

Then one day you sit down to be initiated. This is done by touch when spiritual energy is transmitted. This opens the crown chakra on the spiritual plane (not just the kundalini head centre, which connects to atma) and the third eye chakra in the forehead. This allows for the perception of sound and light and the connection with spiritual force and for one to enter out onto inner planes. The term, inner planes, is an interesting one because these planes are actually found to be inside one. In fact, the universe, the whole shebang, is inside you, but you will not realise that for some time. It is said that, at the point of Initiation, you are enfolded within the aura of the Master, which can set aside laws of nature as you are connected to the Cosmic Astral Plane, known traditionally as the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, and which Guru Nanak called the Pool of Golden Nectar.

With a mantra colours around the head get brighter and the area expands. At Initiation a ball of light rises rapidly up the spine, getting brighter as it goes, till it reaches the head, where it expands

massively till it dissolves in more and more subtle areas. It is questionable, I think, if anyone on the Path understands the full magnitude and significance of Initiation, at any time on their journey. It is probably much bigger than any of us think. After all, how vast is something which draws back the curtain on the laws of nature, setting aside those laws so that Energy from on High can be directly contacted and fill the aura to set us on our journey? How is that even possible? Divinity is not just next door (or is it?). And how big is Divinity? Vast and vast and vast beyond conception. How big is something which is everywhere? And beyond everything? Bigger than a pinhead.

The creation appears to have always existed in some form, subtle or gross. Some say this universe is the body of Sound and Light. The Great Being of Sound and Light is responsible for all creation, the Intelligence which masterminds and organises it all on every plane, and outpours it all into the myriad forms of life. This Being is LIFE. It is pure Divinity. There is the Absolute and there is Life. But the very nature of the Intelligence of Sound and Light is infinite Love and endless Compassion, which is why Liberation is possible. The idea that you can go beyond Sound and Light without the aid of Sound and Light is absurd. Hence it makes contact with a human agent who can grant Initiation and put you in contact with that Love. This is the true teaching of Bhakti, only the devotion does not consist so much of sending love out to it as being open and receptive and allowing it to fill you, of being inclusive without getting in the way.

You will remain in the aura of the Master as you meditate. In fact that is all meditation is now, to simply abide in the aura of the Master. Although there are techniques to access light and sound, which are spoken of in traditional yogic literature as Mudras, you can in fact meditate without them. There is nothing to do. You simply let go and sit in the energy. You allow yourself to be in your own Beingness. Some day you may realise there is no meditator, only meditation which occurs without your interference. The Master is the meditator; he meditates on you. On this Path you are sitting in the presence of the Master's aura.

Sound simple enough? Sure. Pick your nose while you are waiting. It took me about a year to fully appreciate this. Actually, I should say to even partly appreciate this. Till then I was mostly concerned with seeing the light. I would sit and think: Where's the light? It would appear, then fade, and I would think: Where's the bloody light? That is all I was really concerned with. I just wanted to see this wonderful, attractive radiance, this heavenly light. Because I wanted it, I was trying too hard. I was getting in my own way. After a while, however, I just sat in the silence, felt the stillness and was aware of my own awareness. I became very acutely aware and very much alive to my own aliveness. I paid attention to my own silence. I listened. Paying attention is yoga. It sounds pretty easy to say: Look and listen. It is, but the mind complicates simplicity. Continuous attention, or steadiness of mind, is meditation. Later, with practice, you just let it happen.

As I am not a teacher of this meditation, I cannot say how this meditation is for others or how Initiation is in every case. I can only speak for myself. As I sat there I was kind of abstracted to another level, almost like a waking dream in which light came like a fuzzy cloud, although I was

wide awake, in which, in the instant that I saw light, I was taken to another level of light, and in fact I perceived many patterns of light, and I passed rapidly from level to level and layer after layer of light, the likes of which I had never seen on earth. Each time I tried to hold the layer still to look at it, I would be pulled on to the next level. My mind could not cope with it. I had thought up to now, after many years of meditation, that my mind was still, that I had control of it. I was wrong. I was taken out of myself. In fact, I was taken out of the universe! It came as a mild shock. But a wonderful one. You are supposed to see golden light, according to old texts. I did, and other lights besides. What kind of surprised my astonished mind was a brilliant darkness, shiny and brilliant to behold, where gold and black mixed. I do not want to describe this in too much detail, as I do not want to condition someone to expect what I had. The important thing, anyhow, is what follows, the ability to meditate on sound and light and to feel the energy. I may say, for some weeks after, my whole body would shake and vibrate with the energy.

A famous Tamil mystic, Thirumoolar, said:  
 Within the heart will arise  
 A thrilling unstruck sound  
 Which, when practiced,  
 Will lead to realisation.

At first it may just be about the light and sound in their phenomenal aspects. Later it is also about feeling, and toward the end it is all about awareness. It soon becomes about the inner stillness as a sense of Presence of Silence arises. Consciousness begins to expand as your attention grows stronger and you become rooted in your Self. At first sound and light is something distant from you, and a little strange and other-worldly, but gradually you learn to include it in your awareness, as a less alien or not-me sort of thing. For some this evokes a feeling of love and a sense of devotion. Devotion to the Master, or at least appreciation, and devotion to the Inner Master, which is light and sound itself, and devotion to the transcendent Source of Divinity itself, the sense of the sacred. You can look at it this way, the traditional approach, or you can simply see it from a scientific, psychological viewpoint. The former way softens the heart; the latter develops a more detached attitude. You are looking into what has been called the inner sky, and this develops a sense of space, which is an enlargement of your own You-ness, in that you fill in that extra space with your own awareness. Because your sense of inner space is extended, you have a sense of greater freedom, along with many other spiritual qualities, and your feeling of well-being increases as you become more relaxed and at ease with life. Your life becomes smoother, and your inner and outer life come more into accord. You will have more and more spiritual experiences, your inner hearing should become more acute, and you should see many unusual things and geometrical light-patterns till you are just looking at white light. You start to see that you are much bigger and more significant, more important than you first thought. In looking at the light, hearing the vibration of the sound, you find yourself. There will be many changes along the way, some you will not notice at the time, and there will be many realisations and changing attitudes. You will grow in self-realisation. You will find you grow more steady in meditation. In daily life you will develop more



concentration, pay more attention and have more of what Buddhists call mindfulness. You will develop stability and self-assurance and a sense of inner certainty.

You're on your way, pal. Says so right here. It must be true.

After about four years, maybe a little less, could be a bit longer, you will be ready for the Second Initiation, known as Going Beyond Form or Going Beyond the Mind. This results in a state that many individuals have mistakenly thought to be enlightenment, thinking it to be the highest, the ultimate, which it is not. This is attained through a series of realisations or cognitions, which may be immediate, or take time to filter through into the brain. This attainment can be complicated by the fact that the personality aspect does not want to change, although it thinks that it does. It does not want it, because it is identified with itself as it is. It wants to remain the same. Change is seen as a threat to its identity. You have to leave that identity in order to find your new identity, the bigger you. There is an element of fear there. A child is hanging from a branch of a tree, clinging on for dear life, and someone says: 'Just let go; I will catch you.' Yea, right. Although the new energy has been poured into you, you still have to let go into the new level. Actually it is that way all along the spiritual path: it is a series of relaxations. Let go, let go. Hey, man, just let go. Easy to say, hard to do. Easier for some than others. It can be fast or slow.

You start to see, in or out of meditation, that you are the observer of things in your mind. You are not the thinker. Nor are you your feelings. You are the witness of all things. You are not the mind. The body is not you. You are something else. In fact you are nothing. You are no-thing. You are nothing tangible, nothing within the domain of the senses, nothing perceivable, and nothing knowable. You are that by which all things are known. You were never manifest. So, if you were never manifest, how could you die? If you never came into being, how could you come to an end? Your nature, your essence, is no-change; death implies change. Into what could the changeless change into? You are not the self, not the personality, not the individual. You know that as a certain fact, and the previous identification with the ego now seems a laughable absurdity in the light of your newfound certainty. You are what you have always been, and you have never been what you thought you were! You are freedom. Mind is still the mind, ego is ego, yet you are not identified with them; you are bigger than they are. You have to have a mind to function in the world, and feelings to be human, and a body to act. Yet you are behind all that. They simply do what they were made to do. You encompass them, being on the outside, untouched, untouchable.

You are Formless Essence. You are the Higher Self. You are Atman.

You know, for sure, that all religions are founded in Truth, in the Light and Sound as the Eternal Religion, to which the life-principle must be bound back, but that all religions have lost their way, lost the Light. Every religion has passed its sell-by date, has picked up useless accumulations and accretions, has fallen away from the Centre.

You know there is no self; there is only the machinery of the mind and a collection of habits and learned responses and assorted memories. But you are not that. You are not your feelings, impulses, desires, sensations, appetites, assumptions or conclusions. You are the awareness behind it all. Now, if you are not the self, if there is no self, where is the reincarnating principle, and what can be reborn? Can the unreal have had another life? If it cannot, how would it gain previous experience in order to store up karma? How could a non-existent self, a fictitious me, learn anything from repeated experiences? If there is no permanent centre, how could there be cause-effect between one life and another, one unreal self and another unreal self?

But don't all these eastern religions say there is a reincarnating principle? So? Does that make it true? Everyone used to say the world was flat.

Meditation becomes much easier. As the self abates, one becomes more desireless, as if one were not there. Less self gets in the way. More presence appears. Meditation gets accelerated. Then one seems to progress on the Path more rapidly.

Finding that you are not the self, awareness becomes identified with immortality. Only the self fears death. If you know there is no self, why fear its ending? If part of the fear of death is fear of the unknown, and you now know yourself to be the unknown in your essence, what is there to fear, since you are already where you are going? Although one can function with formless awareness in higher vehicles on higher planes now and consciously survive death, those bodies and even those greater planes, must in vast ages hence come to an end, as all forms must under the law of change, no matter how vast or subtle; and that is why, although one could tarry here, as some have, one must pass on to complete enlightenment. I say complete enlightenment because there have been those, and are those today, who, having reached this level, have thought it to be the end, and have settled into this state. Although some will be outraged at the suggestion, in ancient days there were sages who may have only gotten this far, and in modern days there have been teachers (ooh, this will make me popular) who did not quite make the grade, although their influence was immense. Such teachers only went to the level of the Higher Self, not beyond to the Absolute. Of course I could be wrong. I could be.

I studied Buddhism when I was young and innocent, before I turned into a cynical, mistrusting old bastard. I found the life of Buddha very inspiring, how he had sat under the bodhi tree, resolving never to move till he had found liberation. One assumes he had no bladder problems. There was countryside within walking-distance of my home, so I set off to find a suitable tree. Well, it was more of a bush, to be honest. So I sat there, having no idea how to become free, but it was pleasant enough. After a while I felt hungry, so I went home for my tea. My parents were poor, so I just had jam and bread. How come it does not taste as nice now as it did then?

Buddhism seemed a complicated teaching with big words and difficult concepts. Of course I now use bigger words because people are taller. But the thing I could not get around, apart from it being

intellectually cumbersome, unless I was just intellectually challenged, was all that stuff about there not being a self, that you did not really exist. Then who was reading that I did not exist, that there was no self? Just me, the self, and that made no sense to me at all. I could feel that I existed. I felt things. I experienced experience as me, the thinker, the feeler, the actor. I was real. I must be. I was here, wasn't I? Was it not me who felt hungry at teatime? It denied my own reality.

So I kind of lost interest in Buddhism, as it was not real to me. The irony was, many years later, upon attaining the Second Initiation, I clearly saw that the doctrine of no-self, as in Buddhism, was truly real. I knew myself not to be a self. I was not an individual, a person. That was a mistake of the intellect. I was something else again. Or, rather, I was nothing. I was empty of an unreal self. The me was just a persona, a mask. Now the persona was unmasked. It was real to itself, but unreal to the greater awareness that surrounded it, unattached to and unidentified with it.

A person can experience light and sound spontaneously, without being initiated, at odd times. I frequently experienced light and sound, most particularly sound, for some years. It is worth noting that kundalini has its own form of sound and light, but these do not come from spiritual planes, but from the subtlest material levels. After all, light and sound is found at all levels.

Because I was familiar with the attractiveness of sound, I thought it would be very useful if I could have a permanent sound, similar to what I heard, to meditate upon. I tried many mantras, all of which failed to produce the required sound. One day, in a vegetarian restaurant with my friend, Paul Kelly, I noticed a poster for Ching Hai's Quan Yin light and sound meditation. I asked my friend if he was interested in trying it. He was, and we got initiated. We both found it was utterly useless, and after three months we gave it up. Well you would, wouldn't you? Not all paths are the same. Thank God. Then I heard about this path. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Then, after a few years on this Path, one becomes entitled, if that is the right word, to the Third Initiation, which opens the way to Enlightenment, which is the state of being without boundaries, the ultimate state of existence. Enlightenment is the state of ultimate illumination, where one understands that one's awareness is unrestricted and is life itself; that all things are only you, and you are everywhere. One knows the stillness of that which never moves, the Silence which is untouched and unassailable, yet present everywhere. This is the reality above which nothing can be found. In fact it is both everything and nothing, the fullness of emptiness. It is where all words fail. It is the place of paradox, not to itself, but to that which is outside itself, from the little place of mind. Mind, including universal or cosmic mind, is the created, whereas ultimate reality is uncreated and unformed. There is only one Self. With enlightenment awareness knows the ultimate one cause of existence which puts an end to all doubts and questions, which no weakness can touch, which can never be lost, which is beyond and outside of time and condition, and which can never be influenced by anything whatever, and which is perfection itself, against which everything else is an unreal shadow.

It is a common saying on the Path that you can only know truth by becoming it. If this is true for the second initiation, imagine how much more true it is for the attainment of enlightenment. Even for the second initiation, how can the mind comprehend a state beyond itself? How can that be possible? How can the self understand an egoless state when it is the very negation of itself? How can any form have any real conception of a formless reality? Whatever you think a higher state is, it is not that, at least not exactly. It will always be something else. A spiritual state cannot be understood from a lesser state. Which is why every great spiritual teacher has been misunderstood, and why every religion has failed and been distorted by its followers.

Do you understand life? If not, how can you understand that which is the very Source of it? And so no book can ever explain it as it is, though it may outline its effects, but it can only suggest what it may be. All the books now being written, some very cleverly, which say when a seeker gives up seeking, then That which was sought easily comes within reach, are very misleading. Do you get something from doing nothing? Yea, and my name is Debussey. If that were true and so easy, how come ten million people not seeking enlightenment have not found it? And is that not rather like saying if you lie back and do nothing you will develop a muscular body?

Throughout history men have been misled as to the nature of enlightenment and spiritual attainment. And one of the greatest disguises has been the word God or of a hierarchy of higher beings. God wants this, God demands that. Although the concept of God is useful for the childish mind, it is debilitating for the mind that seeks to be free of its fetters. The idea of a God is based on an Ego bigger than your own, of a Super Astral Body, and a mind with a power complex. How to worship an insane being. Lovely. Now let's say a nice prayer. People who talk to themselves are usually regarded as being peculiar. People who talk to nobody are even more weird.

St Paul said he had come across the tomb of the Unknown God. Religion **is** the tomb of the Unknown God, as it hides Truth in superstition and dogma and false concepts. When you cannot know Truth for yourself, then you rely on others to provide it for you; and how do you know that they know? Because they say so, of course. Or because, they say, they have been told. They say some book says so and the book must be right. Why? Heaven knows. They don't.

That is like saying newspapers report the unvarnished truth.

Some time after the First Initiation, sometimes after the Second Initiation, which could be several years later, one is given a kundalini mantra, which is tried for a while. Some people find it difficult to see the Light, mainly because of fear or because of a feeling of being worthless in front of the Light. This is particularly so with people from a Catholic background or where people are afraid of a divine presence. By using the kundalini mantra this fear is reduced and it becomes easier to perceive the Light. At the same time it tends to soften the nature so one becomes gentler, softer and more loving and what are regarded as the higher qualities become more pronounced. One becomes more in touch with one's feeling nature, and one's physical nature becomes more

integrated. It is not uncommon in some so-called spiritual circles for the mind to be disconnected from the physical nature, as the physical side may be regarded as wrong, bad or unspiritual and retarding and restricting spiritual evolution and as dragging one down, as it were, with the weight of its grossness and crassness. So the kundalini mantra may be regarded as a process of loosening up yet integrating the lower vehicles. I am only saying what I think. Someone else may have a different take on it or see it in a different light, more in connection with the kundalini as a mystical force seen as light, as mandalas or patterns of energy or heard as sound. There is not just one way to experience meditative states or subtler forces. Each person is unique and so is their experience and their interpretation of finer forces.

However, sometimes the kundalini mantra may not be given till after the second initiation. At the moment an experiment is underway in which the general public are being given direct experience of kundalini without the kundalini mantra, by direct transmission. This is also being used on the Path in Africa, where the Master has suspended giving Enlightenment for the time being.

With enlightenment things are seen in terms of unity. Life – it is all you. The chair is you, the pavement is you, the boy down the road is you; you are everyone. Because of this, because of living in the state of Unity, love arises. You know love as the reason for existence. And you are love. You have to be, because there is not anything apart from you. You are the Absolute. You were never in this body, because the Absolute could never have not been the Absolute. I tell you true. Absolutely. Of course the personality, the mind, has never been absolute. Only the Absolute can ever have been absolutely Absolute. So love is loving yourself in all things. This is a concept the mind will never fathom. It is impossible. Telling yourself you are love is not love; telling yourself you are unity is the mind playing tricks. This is another form of delusion. Either you know or you don't, you love or you don't. When you do you do not have to pretend. Shankara himself, the great propounder of vedantic non-duality, proposed such a method to attain liberation. Well, he was wrong. It is superficial to tell yourself you are free when you are not. The profound does not come out of the trivial. Truth does not come out of lying to yourself, fooling yourself, deluding yourself. That is another trap. Get real. You ain't free till you're free. And then you know it.

Like the escaped convict who shouted: 'I'm free! I'm free!' But the little girl who was passing said: 'That's nothing. I'm four!'

12

**Meditation: The Inner Path**

When my barn burnt down, I could see the moon  
Taoist saying

Nirvana is the awareness that clings to nothing  
Buddha

Lots of people want to talk about meditation, read about it, discuss it, but they don't want to do the work. They are more interested in the mystery and romance of it than in doing it. Can you read minds? Can you walk on water? Will I be able to fly through the air? What good is it? To what use can I put it? How will it help me? Will it make me more relaxed? Will I be able to think better? Will I be more able, more in control of my life? Will my health be improved? Will it make it easier to fulfil my desires? Will it make me a better person? Will it make me happy? Of course it will. Why is my nose growing longer?

Life is about contraction and expansion. Pain and discomfort lead to contraction; joy and easiness lead to expansion. Meditation exists to expand awareness. When you expand you grow. That's for us, folks. Let's row for the farthest shore.

Meditation develops awareness of oneself as the observer, the inner Witness, that reveals that one is not in fact what one at first thought one was. Divinity is hidden by the senses, and by form. Meditation, by slowing down attention from the outside world stimulating the senses, reveals the nature of your inner self. Truth is found in the neutral place of emptiness.

Only in neutrality do we find freedom from habits, which condition our behaviour and responses. Freedom is to live in the moment, time-free, and to see each moment is perfect just as it is. True neutrality is free of time. There is no duality in it, no opposites, no positive and negative.

There is Unity because one thing permeates everything as its source, its finest essence, like sap in the tree or oil in a seed.

The soundstream is the Lifestream. Sound or vibration is life in motion. This stream reveals different aspects of creation, and different dimensions of awareness.

Our life consists of habits – little boxes within a greater box. How do we get free of it? How do we find freedom within limitation? Habits represent familiarity, comfort, security, and are not easy to break. We must reach beyond them – literally step outside of them. Your self is a habit. Your life may be a habit. Time to break some habits, Bubu. Time to start living free.

Spirituality is simplicity. What is simpler than unity, than oneness? We take our awareness to its most simple naked state. This is essential aliveness. We do this by increasing our alertness to our own inner life. We find out what we are in our deeper awareness and essential being.

We follow the strains of the Inner Music. We merge in Light.

Being on a spiritual path means we are stretching the box of limits all the time, but we are still limited till we get out of the box. We have to look beyond our limits. As Plato said: Look outside the cave. Find the unrestricted. Discover what freedom means.

All we have is our life and our awareness. When that is over, it is all over for us. So we need to make our awareness as acute as possible in its alertness and aliveness. Meditation works by allowing awareness to settle down to deeper states and softer levels which strip away layers of agitated or over-active fragments of mind. It is like water becoming clearer as you stop agitating the bottom of a pond. Ripples on the surface of water are allowed to settle down, then only the serene and clear nature of water remains.

We forget ourselves in sensations and desires and the objective world and forget our inner nature. But, as the result of meditation, you begin to see that thoughts and feelings are not you, because you are the seer of them. They go on automatically on their own. You start to disidentify from them and to see yourself as the silent watcher apart from them. You find that you are other than them, the detached witness. In time you find that you are you, the Real You. You ain't nothing else.

Till then we are a bit like the musk deer in the Indian story which, upon smelling a delightful scent, went in search of its source till, exhausted, it lay down, at which point it realised the smell was in fact coming from its own musk gland. So we find the greatest satisfaction is within us all the time, but we have to become aware of it, we have to open a passageway to it; then we can know the bliss of our own inner self.

So we thin or strip away the various layers of our mind, the grosser forms of the personality, thus finding the Me in more and more refined forms of self-awareness. So, when the ripples in the mind settle down, we begin to see what is in it and beyond it. By calming the restless mind, we come to a state of self-attention in which spiritual Presence arises. Then we can begin to see ourselves as we are, not as we thought we were, not as others think we are, not as what we have been led to believe we are. We start to see our own beauty. We should find it good. In fact very good. After all, we are getting closer to God. Or God is getting closer to us. The Infinite is not so far away now. We feel the familiarity of this, the closeness of it, the scent of it, the sense of it; we are starting to taste its sweetness. The charm of it draws us. It becomes more attractive than anything else. We crave it. It calls to us with its sweetness. How can we not follow its Call?

Meditation is the cultivation of the heart by which you taste the most sublime sweetness of life. What is it that we all seek? Happiness, satisfaction, contentment, a sense of completion, which we find in the inner beauty, the harmony, the perfection of our own deeper nature, the interior bliss, by looking deeper into what we are. Some teachers say that spirituality is living in the moment. Wrong. It is living with full awareness, with complete livingness in the moment. Any other kind of living is insufficient living, partial living, incomplete living. But enlightenment is not living in the moment. It is living outside time. Absolute awareness has no time, and time only occurs where there are moments. It is changeless and time only occurs where there is change. Time is maya, the unreal; the Real is changeless and has no parts, no division, and no creation. Nothing happens within the changeless. The Changeless is forever changeless.

You are that changeless essence.

The heart is cultivated not by trying, not by effort, not by trying to be something other than what you are, not by pretending, nor by lying to yourself. That is the mistake religion has made and it has done much harm. It has damaged people. It has given them an impossible standard to live up



to. The true cultivation of the heart is by taking attention to more sublime levels, to the level of the heart itself, to finer feelings, to appreciation of the inwardness of awareness, where awareness is soft and gentle and beautiful, where natural sweetness is felt, in that intimate place where love arises, in the same place that joy is felt, where peace is felt, where one feels most fully, most truly alive. Now, if you want to project love, project it from there, cultivate it there, project it into your life; find the place where true beauty lies, where love is not for the approval of others, not for fear of the opinions of others, not in order to conform. Go to that place where awareness is subtle, refined, sublime. Be true to yourself. Don't act the part. Let love be real. Go to the place where it originates. Meditation creates an access to that place. It takes you there. It makes it familiar. Don't strain yourself with artificial emotion, which you may think is love, but isn't. Love frees. It does not bind. Love is not a chain. You can only have love to the extent that you are unfettered and free.

When we are still, nothing touches us. Motion happens to itself, to things, an experiencer, a thinker; they do not happen to stillness. Only in stillness are we not in motion, not turning on the wheel of action and reaction. All motion creates confusion because any motion is in conflict with some other motion or thing and this conflict creates resistance and resistance implies that something is stuck. Resistance makes us feel uncomfortable. Discomfort is pain. Discomfort is the beginning of suffering. Anything can happen within stillness, but it does not happen to stillness, in that it cannot disturb it. How do you disturb nothing? Craving and aversion hurt, and running away from them is also damaging, as trying to escape reduces us; it cuts down our livingness and creates more resistance. Fear tends to make us flee and there are many fears in life. How can you avoid living? How can you avoid feeling? Doing so has led many a patient to the psychotherapist's office. In meditation we begin to slow down the wheel that keeps us spinning. We start to find the unmoving stillness. We begin to see that awareness is a field and that everything happens within that field of awareness and we can be bystanders as well as players.

A serious seeker begins meditation in the desire for spiritual renewal. Some kind of spiritual experience is wanted. As the attention is taken deeper into the mind, mental clarity increases because there is more inner space. Our senses are enlivened. In time we become poised and stable in calmness by reducing mental noise. In our subtler depths we find greater life and fuller satisfaction. We become more aware of our own mind. We investigate sublime, delicate, deep feelings. This makes mind sharper, more aware and more acute. This allows us to feel the aliveness of our own existence. We get to see distance from our thoughts and to know we are pure consciousness. We find divinity.

Be still, and know: I am God.

There are countless groups, paths and ways and dozens of forms of yoga. Essentially however they all come down to one single thing. Alice Bailey used an interesting phrase. I do not know if she invented it, but it sure sounds apt:

Meditation is holding the mind steady in the Light.

Holding the mind steadily in the Light. Steadily. That is meditation. An old Upanishad tells the story of a young boy, Nachiketas, who goes to the underworld, and wants to find that which is Eternal. Yama, the god of death, says to him: This men deem to be Yoga – holding the mind steady. It is all about steadiness of mind, meaning steadiness of attention. It means, in the beginning, concentrating on one thing, one object or one idea. Later it means resting your attention on attention itself, on Sound or Light, or on stillness and silence within awareness. It means to be aware, to pay attention, to be alive to that which you are putting your attention on. Continuous attention is meditation. Abiding in stillness is meditation. Just abiding is meditation. Meditation is the ability to abide. To just Be. It means to collect yourself together. To be collected. It means wholeness of awareness, full attention. It means to pull yourself to a point of attention or a point of aliveness. It means to settle down into your basic nature. Become centred. Find your centre. And then transcend that centre. Go beyond it. Find your own nothingness. Find a neutral place. Become the Void. Find the Place to Be. In stages, gradually, find your Spiritual Self. Meditation is the means to break free of limits. The Unlimited is the goal, the reason for meditating in the first place. Why meditate? If it does not make you happier, more assured, more alive, more aware, then what would be the point of it? I mean, why are you spending all that time sitting with eyes closed when you could be doing the garden, washing windows or clearing wax from your ears? There has to be some good reason for it. And there is.

Meditation is about transcending, going beyond and outside the normal range of conscious experience. This involves the Principle of Abstraction. Abstraction to a more subtle level of consciousness is brought about by allowing the previous level (the one you seek to abstract from) to become vague, unclear and indistinct. This is done by having a very light focus of attention, by just giving a slight attention to the object of attention, not taking it too seriously, but to perceive it in a light and easygoing manner, without effort or strain, being very gentle with it, and gentle with yourself, not forcing awareness in any way. In meditation the mind should always feel comfortable and unforced. It has been called being kind to yourself.

Meditation is to go into the Beyond. And discover you are already there! Meet Yourself.

Herman Melville, in *Moby Dick*, said: Truth hath no confines. You can't say much more than that.

It is far away, beyond, unrestricted, and yet here.

Kahlil Gibran said: I discovered the secret of the sea by meditating on the dewdrop.

In other words, by concentrating on the point we arrive at the vastness of our own wholeness. From the dewdrop we know the vastness of the sea. We start where we are and reach beyond.

The Yoga Sutras put it like this. We move from one-pointedness to all-pointedness, and then back again to the concentrated state.

In a similar vein Sir Edwin Arnold, in *The Light of Asia*, a long poem about Buddha, wrote: The dewdrop slips into the shining sea.

That is how to meditate. Slip into the sea of consciousness.

The essence of all religions, of all mystic traditions, the key to all yoga practice and to the spirituality of the Veda is contained in the words of the Veda: Transcend – go into the Beyond. Whatever you find in meditation, whatever you discover in your own awareness, go beyond; seek the unknown; find the hidden part of yourself.

And how to do that? Let go, and let go of letting go. Find what the mind can't find. Go where the mind can't go. Go beyond thought, beyond ego, beyond thought of a self. Let go to transcend. Give up being in charge, being the moderator, being the judge, the decider, the arbiter, the arranger. Stop being the captain. Let the ship sail on its own sails. In other words, collapse. The only place you can fall is into yourself. This is harder than it sounds, yet easier than anything. For what can be easier than falling into yourself?

This process is going on automatically each time you breathe in to the highest point before you breathe out again, and each time you breathe out to the lowest point before the next breath. Those intervals are transition-points to infinity. Similarly between each thought there is such a point, as well as between the thought-sound of a mantra. Also this applies to chanting, where breath, thought and sound merge. There is also such a point between sleep and wakefulness.

We go beyond through a process of abstraction. This is like sitting deeper into a cushion, sinking into a deeper level of experience, relaxing into a more comfortable position, mentally speaking, finding your own centre. We can do this by becoming more vague, less clear and less defined as a personality during the time of meditation. We simply make less effort. We are in the business of sinking. In order to dive through the sea of awareness, you have to function at a more subtle level; the nervous system must become more refined, otherwise you will stay where you are. It is by allowing attention to become more vague that you can explore more subtle levels of consciousness. Thereby you expand. The brain takes on a new style of functioning and mind operates in a softer manner. This is more in line with the way nature intends us to function. The mind starts to become quiet and clearer. You become more settled in yourself, more assured, because you are more yourself, deeper, less superficial, more real and more authentic. A little bit more of you starts to reveal itself.

Will the Real You please stand up?

In meditation we have to renounce. Give up. Give in. Give up grasping. There is no meditator to meditate. There is no meditating meditator. There is only meditation. There is no one there to meditate. To meditate means to allow. A person does not allow; a mind, an ego, wants to control. It can't leave things alone. It has to interfere, to 'improve' things. It thinks it knows best. It has to improve or change anything it thinks is not good enough for it. Meditation consists of non-correction and non-volition. It is the free wind and the flowing river, not the stagnant pond. It is the bird in free flight, not the fixed rock. Don't be the little pond. Be the great sea. Be the vast sky.

Steadiness of mind is not the same thing as freezing the mind in one place. You cannot hold it still on one object through force. To abstract you have to melt or surrender. You have to be able to let go. You have to go to more abstract levels. You have to start to disappear. Dissolve. Change from one state of awareness to a more subtle one must take place. You pass through finer levels of awareness or states of being. Each is more delicate than the one before it, on a descending scale. The mind is less agitated by that softer level.

In its higher levels, meditation is the desireless state, what the yogis call vairagya – the uncoloured, the untouched state. It is the state of detachment, but the detachment is not willed, intended or forced. It is natural. Non-attachment is naturally present when you reach a higher state. It is the condition of being in that state. It is the state of being free. Free of what? Free of motion, free of the agitations of mind, like the calm lake, free of sattva, rajas and tamas. As long as we are alive we will have these things; we will have some individuality; but in higher states we become impersonal and detached from that individuality. It goes on on its own. You, as pure silent nothingness, are not involved in its machinations, but simply observe it without interest. It goes on under the influence of the gunas, but you, the silent nothingness, are not influenced in any way by the gunas, not even by clarity of mind. Nothingness is even beyond subtle purity; it is more pure than that; it is that which nothing has ever touched, not even time; it was never manifest. It is prior to everything. It is ungraspable. The Timeless has no shape or form. What form could Nothingness have? It is the container of everything. It has no location. So where would you find it? Yet it is everywhere. It is found as the modifications and disturbances in the mind are slowed down, as the mind-waves are allowed to settle, as awareness comes to a standstill, more or less, as prana becomes steady, as you fall into your own depths and you discover your own stillness. Awareness becomes uncluttered, uncontaminated, clear, unconditioned.

Most of us do not want to be what we are. We want to be something different. We want to be special. We want unique experiences. We do not want to experience things-as-they-are. We want things to be better. Most of the time we try to avoid things. We want to avoid facing the fact that life hangs by a thread. We pretend that death is far away. We escape into amusement and entertainment, into sex or sport or business. We do not want to be alone with ourselves. We try and avoid the poverty of our nakedness. We want to be stimulated. We do not want to just be. So, because of this, we resist meditation. Let us find something to do. We do not want to sit here. We want activity and sensation. The mind does not like the fields of the senses suspended. But we

have to suspend the senses in order to meditate. We have to withdraw the mind from the objects of the senses and put it on awareness itself. What's on TV? Wouldn't a hot tea or coffee be nice now?

No. Must meditate. Keep to the programme. No excuses. On with the show. Just do it.

This results in the mind becoming steady, fixed yet flexible, soft yet anchored, as the Bhagavad Gita says, 'like a lamp in a windless place' in which the flame does not flicker: the mind is held steady, unmoving. This is also what Shankara meant when he spoke of unwavering discrimination; discrimination is made between the Real and the unreal. You always put your attention on the Real, and that itself is meditation, and that is Yoga. Hold your attention continuously on Truth, on stillness of mind, even if only for a short while, and then bring your attention back to your own depths, to your own beingness, the profundity of your inner nature, your deeper Self. Go toward your inner fullness and wholeness, toward your own nothingness, toward the point where you can disappear. That is real meditation. Find your own transcendence. Go beyond the known. Reach beyond your limits. Get out of the box. Find your own bliss. Find a point of concentration, then collapse into infinity. You have to fall. You cannot remain still. If, once having found a higher point, you try to remain there, you are hindering your own advance. You cannot freeze yourself at one place. You have to fall away. If fear holds you back, remember you are not anything. You are not the thing you fear for. You have to die to be reborn. You are greater than the thing you think yourself to be. You have to vanish. Die to yourself. Sink and sink again. Drown. What lies below is only you. There is nothing else but you. In all creation there is nothing else but you. This is what the old mystics meant when they said: Die to live.

To some this may sound negative, life-negating, but it is not. Nothingness is not empty. It is not dead, but most fully alive, most supremely alive. It is the fullness of your own life, your own livingness. It is the open door to your heart. Spirituality can never be slow or dull or dreary or be dead or stagnant. It means we are most aware, most acutely alive, most fully ourselves. What could be more alive than me? In meditation you become more aware of your own heart, more sensitive to your feeling-nature. It does not and should not mean you become more emotional with a false 'I love everyone' attitude. Love your own self first; accept yourself as you are. Forget false shame and guilt. You are what you are. You have done what you have done in the past. Let it go. Forgive yourself and move on. Being content is the best way to give love to others. Smile inwardly. Love comes from a happy nature, not from any moral code imposed from without. Share yourself by being a decent human being. Don't be a walking deadman. Simply mean well and from meditation take a sense of well-being into your life. Meditation renews. Be renewed. Look your own beauty in the face. Find your own wonder and joy. Don't live by platitudes. Live by your own sense of rightness. Be natural. Be you. You cannot be someone else. Meditation allows you to live life with ease. Be the living river. Everyone is entitled to their own actions and desires as long as they do not hurt others. Careless disregard for others and their feelings is the great evil. There is no purpose in life other than to live. So live your life. Live it well. Live for your own good without being selfish. Each of us finds our own destiny, as the current of life flows on to its destination.

Each of us acts according to our nature, according to our conditioning from past experience, and as the situation demands at the moment. As we become spiritually aware, we pretty much let nature take its course as we take a back seat and let action happen as we become the non-participating observer, the witness behind everything. We accept life. We accept others. We embrace life.

Many books, ancient and modern, speak about meditation in terms of bliss; but what does that mean? Do you feel bliss when you meditate? Do most meditators? If you do not, is there something wrong with you? Are you missing something? Are you doing something wrong? Have you been told the truth? Bliss, ananda, is usually thought of in terms of exuberance, great emotion, strong feelings of joy and gladness. But, in fact, during meditation you are entering more refined levels of experience, and anything encountered must be on a more subtle level, less on the level of the senses. That means we experience in a softer, more delicate way, and this is not always perceived as bliss, particularly in its earlier stages, where it may at first be seen as almost nothing; then suddenly out of nothing it explodes into a spiritual orgasm, sort of. (Ooo, that's nice.) However, even experienced meditators may have some problem, sometimes, with accessing bliss. It may depend how refined the nervous system is at any time, how tired you may be, and which guna is in operation, whether refined, active or heavy.

Bliss is not the goal of the spiritual journey. It is a side-effect. Even bliss has to be transcended. We have to go beyond it. Why? Because it is not the ultimate state of Being. It is a stage on the way. It is linked to kundalini. In higher states bliss is replaced by peace.

Meditation is not always easy, even if we are good meditators. Awareness sometimes gets obscured or blurred or feels heavy. Sometimes we feel tired or like we are walking through mud, like walking through a dream. We may just feel like dropping off. We might nod-off a bit. Sometimes we may find we are in the middle of a daydream. Meditation may not always be fun. It depends on the state of our nervous system at any given time.

Well, we may find ourself thinking, it was a lot more fun at the orgy! Or maybe not.

Mostly, however, meditation is a pleasure, a haven from the trials of life, a refuge and a harbour from our own personality ups-and-downs, a place of peace, a good place to be, a place to relax and to be more fully ourself, where we can feel more complete and whole, where we can anchor more fully in our own centre, where we feel deeply rooted and at home. It is also a place where we can let go, where we can forget ourself, our cares and concerns and woes and worries and just be. And what a relief that can be. To be nothing is good. It is good to let go of the censor, to forget about being the judge of everything. A little taste of freedom. Actually, quite a big taste, sometimes.

It is all good stuff, you know. But sometimes we have to go through the heavy stuff.

Yet it is about even more than having a spiritual experience, nice though that may be. It is about having more awareness in daily life and living better. It is about increasing our livingness. For there is a carry-over effect into our daily life whereby we live with grace and greater easiness. We acquire skill in living and enjoy more the majesty and glory of life, and we find that we are life itself. We are the song of life, and we sing it. In meditation we practice the melody. And the Song of Life is a powerful beat.

When all knowable things are known, there is only the Unknown to know. Only you cannot know the Unknown, as it is beyond the known and beyond the reach of the mind to know it. So by what instrument or human ability, by what sense can it be known? It can only be known to itself. Hence it is self-knowing, self-illuminated. So we use Sound and Light to know the known, including the subtle, hitherto unknown areas of creation and consciousness, and then we transcend those as well. In the end we have to go beyond Sound and Light, beyond everything known or even knowable. Everything is given up and everything is attained.

Now, we cannot be in the known and the unknown at the same time. In order to know the Unknown we have to disappear from the known. We have to let go of consciousness itself, for the Unknown is not in the field of consciousness, but beyond it. That is why it is unknown.

There is something beyond the Higher Self.

Some men call it God, Tao, Brahman, the Absolute. It is what it is. It is the Unborn, the Unknown, the Unspeakable. In more mundane terms, it is stillness. It is Silence.

It is the Unknown God that all true seekers seek, and which so very few find.

We should only be on that path which can reveal it. Most don't. Most can't. So avoid them.

What good are they to you? What good are they to a true seeker?

Be on that ship which sails to the farthest shore.

Don't drown in the ocean. Don't crash upon the rocks.

**Leaves from My Notebook**

None can ever become the hero of Shabd  
Who endures not the rigours of meditation.  
A diamond will not shine in brilliance  
If it endures not the strokes of the hammer  
Tukaram

When thy inner self experienceth  
Then alone shouldst thou accept the Truth;  
Within one's own experience  
The Truth is ascertained as the Truth  
Guru Ravidas



Who am I? And who are you?  
 What is the place from which I come?  
 Adi Shankara

I tasted life  
 Emily Dickenson

In this section I want to give some of the experiences and thoughts I wrote down at the time that I experienced them or shortly after. I would just point out that these are my experiences, but others may have very different ones, although there is a certain commonality to many spiritual experiences; but I speak only for myself, none other. It is quite common in occult groups to keep a spiritual journal. From time to time I did this over the years, but soon found I was repeating experiences and decided to only write down what I felt was significant or out of my normal range of experience, but some experiences were so outside the normal range of experience I could not find words to describe them. Some geometrical shapes were beyond description. Also, over the years, there were various questions I sought answers to and wrote down to ask those more experienced or knowledgeable than myself. Many questions I found answers to during meditation, and many other questions I never wrote down. Some of the questions I wrote down I have duplicated here now and then to break up the flow of experiences.

### **My Spiritual Diary**

Very relaxed meditation. Sense of well-being. For about 20-30 seconds tears ran down my face. There was a feeling of love.

Every cycle is a self-enclosed loop; any cycle is a prison. Any form of creation is a trap; only the formless is free.

Today there were small spheres like brilliant suns, then many madalas, one after another, of rays of light; then, for a long time, light moving so fast it was barely perceptible as any form, and it was constantly changing.

Several shifting patterns of light, then a sun, then a wall of white light. Immersed into the flow of sound. Lots of stillness.

Long piping song. Fell into stillness. A lot of 'being there.' Bliss.

Obstacles to seeing light and hearing sound.

Losing myself more in meditation. Starting to forget time and the body. Enjoying merging with S and L. Lot of Light till I started thinking: 'Lovely – how glorious.' Then it faded. (Not only the mind, but also emotions interfere with the Light. Both are obstacles.)

No Sound at first, but, after asking Inner Master for help, Sound appeared. Frequent Light.

Quite strong sound, merging in S and L. Body rocking a few seconds with the Energy. Heard long piping sound, then, as it faded, another one. (At the moment I feel I wasted my life in the shadows of the Real Thing, moving about in a box, thinking freedom was in the space between the walls).

Losing myself I find myself in Being. Lost the sense of time and self for short intervals. Pleasant meditation. Merged with S and L.

Easy, peaceful. Little light. Dots of light, sphere. Went into the Light. First time seeing Light in some days. Light came close. Falling into strong vibrating Sound, which is a current in consciousness as much as a sound. Just seemed to exist as the space and sound flowing between the ears. Strong silence and abiding in being.

Sound like a howling wind, very strong.

Sound like wind between the ears. There appeared a large diamond grid of moving lines of light with, at the centre, a point of light, into which I went. Later saw dull white light close to the face.

Stillness. Bright light with inner centre. Long whistle at start. Later there was an 'oo' sound like it was blown through a wooden tube. Inner silence, peace.

Lights merged. Then I saw a sort of greyish gel with depth and dimension with floating lights and patterns in it. During breathing whistle in left ear which is also felt as silent awareness.

(Sannyasa or renunciation is inwardness, turning back to the Self.)

Sound very loud and fast. Also heard like a drum beat, for a while: Om-om-om. Why is it that sometimes you do not see Light but, when you open your eyes, the outer light seems dazzlingly bright?

If I have all this spiritual Energy from high spiritual planes, how can I use it? Is the narrowness of my attitude limiting it?

(The most spiritual you can be is totally alive, fully aware, fully awake.)

Saw shadowy, circular forms, then dull black disk, then golden light, lasting a long while, then a grey-tinged white light.

Light and sound poor, but came out of meditation with a sense of lightness and bliss.

Clusters of glorious nuggets of the purest gold with brilliant black light. Many frequent, small white lights.

Lots of middling gold and white light.

Absorbed more in Samadhi, letting go and dropping into Sound and Light.

Very deep peace, at ease, on Sound, though it was a bit weak. Great meditation, lots of presence and devotion.

The mind cannot hold divine energies still, nor go where attention is taken at Initiation. The mind must always stay out of the way, thus leaving attention free to go where it is taken. Mind cannot be in control during meditation. Merging with Sound, less with light. Saw lots of weak white light, time after time, for ages.

Geometric grid-lines of white light with power-source at centre like a web. The Infinite cannot be condensed into the finite limited, nor can the finite become the unlimited Infinite.

Inner calm, concentrated attention. Poise. Instead of seeing Light, I am more aware of a small area of space.

Light seemed dark, thick, concentrated. Standing, saw Light.

Very deep, concentrated, satisfying. Feeling of being pulled up. Self-forgetting.

Lost sense of time; Sound clear; Samadhi felt during duration of 6 hours, abiding.

S and L has to be subtle in order to enter into all forms.

(Life is change. For happiness to exist, a moment of happiness would have to freeze and be fixed; an emotion would be fixed and therefore dead. How could happiness emerge from something dead, a moment that is not fresh and new?)

Incredible light in front, then a moving spider-grid rapidly expanding with a solid sphere of white light high above like a small intense sun. Later, like a sphere with waves of light, then like a cluster of wriggling worms of white light.

Big black sun, surrounded by gold. It faded into light, then I went into an area of lighted clouds, quite dense.

Love is that which is most free.

I find, in doing nothing, there is nothing to do but remain empty in my formless nature of just-being. The mind has no role to play in letting go.

A long, continuous flute-like note, gentle like a whisper, but clear.

Real meditation is when you sense the inner Love-being, the Spiritual Presence, and can say: All of You, and none of me.

A brilliant radiance with points of light coming from a source in front and surrounding me till I seemed to be in the middle of it.

(What good is love if it is not expressed? Love turned inwards is rapture.)

Several body movements on the Light, which seemed nearer or more meaningful, as I desired it or felt love for it. Felt, at times, the sacredness of the Energy.

Light is Love. (Note. Any statements or experiences from my notebooks were based on my experiences and observations at the time. I may not necessarily totally agree with them now. Based on your perception, truth changes.)

What good is faith if love is lacking?

Tired, vague. Then lost in thought. OK. Not great. Evening meditation: Heavy, tired, pain at 3<sup>rd</sup> Eye, but sound current came; then meditation much easier. Lot of thought. Picked up later. Some body movement. Some sense of peace. Feeling of obstruction.

Let me see the Light. Let me feel love. If I cannot see Light, let me feel the Presence of the inner Teacher. Let me abide in the being of S and L.

Shimmering light with various patterns, followed by black disk, coming and going, surrounded by light.

Soft, silent, peaceful. But why do I not feel more deeply? Why is my attitude to the Presence so impersonal? Why do I not feel the love of the Beloved?

(What does Enlightenment do for one's present awareness, for the way one is in the world, one's attitude and behaviour, and relationship with life and others?)

Why am I not seeing Light? What is the obstacle preventing this?

A rushing silence late at night heard from, or near, left side of head.

Meditation not particularly good, but quiet. Hand aching during sound a little offputting.

Strong, steady sound current, also there during Light. Light mainly on right front side.

Evening meditation: Crap! Arms heavy, neck and back aching, cold, feeling tired.

Whistling sound high at right side of head, while gentle hum heard at left side, both at same time.

Evening meditation: zonked! Weary. Body movements on Sound, sense of lifting up.

Kind of dreamy. First 3 hours of 6 easy. But arms tired, weak sound. Meditation okay, but lacking life, vitality and love.

Not much sound. Pretty bland till I softly felt love and called to the Beloved. Light fast, whirling, spinning.

Some body movement. Ping sound for a few moments, also flowing steady sound.

Some surrendering. In trying to let go, I am not letting go. Be concentrated, then let it alone.

Small, short ringing tone at left ear before meditation in morning, then in right at start of meditation. Couple of jerks, like suddenly waking up, startled.

A strong sense of Being. Poised. Merged in Sound. Witnessing. Self-forgotten as the underlying Silence opens awareness. As the everyday ego emerges, I am more fully here, more awake, more alive to my own awareness. I sit now in my own space, in the big Me, in the free space that is all me. I sit gentle, detached, untouched by desire or instinct. In my Beingness I am unaware of time. There was a sort of fluttering Light in front of my eyebrows; then, higher, a still light, which was replaced by a light similar to a candle flame.

Seeing more light standing than sitting in meditation. No sense of the passage of time. Easy. Deep. Quiet. Lots of space. A sense of light being there.

Not much sound, but pleasant. Light near end, like a rock-shape nucleus, surrounded by silvery light; then twisted beams and connecting dots of light in a mandala cobweb pattern.

Hardly any sound. No Light. Then I stood up. Then Light was like a broad curving road, so bright it hurt. It faded. Then came the most intense gold, of a shape unknown.

Beautiful strong sound, high in pitch, in left ear. Deep. Peaceful.

Meditation is an inner, spiritual intimacy.

Lost in sound current – flowing like a soft, gentle whisper. Sound flowing at left side an hour after meditation. Deep. A silvery light formed into a nugget, not very strong, but it lasted a long time.

Sound so strong it overpowered Sight.

Light a golden sphere like a shimmering heatwave.

Body feeling light, shaking. Teeth clenched hard. Loud sound at both sides of head. A sense of moving into another reality. Body tingling. Good meditation with mantra. Really deep. Left forearm trembling. Sense of being pulled up from forearms. Twice a quick flash of light in front of face. Sense of melting into something subtle.

A sense of deep flowing silence, a feeling of stillness in the head, before evening meditation...a feeling of being apart, a Witness.

Sitting with ease in the comfort of silence, not minding if S and L are there or not, taking myself out of the picture, settled in Samadhi, had a super meditation. Heard, briefly, a sound like a sonic boom.

As I sit to meditate, what I am as ego seems to thin out as I become a Witness, then even that vanishes into I am, the presence of Being. I stand back and abide. As I meditate where is the person, me, ego? There is only awareness with fluctuations of weak desires, thought-patterns, bodily sensations. How sweet it can be to be nothing, to float in awareness like a cloud; to be aware yet not to be anywhere. Just abiding in myself; just sitting in myself.

(If the meditator is looking at himself or the meditation, judging it, comparing it with perfect meditation, there is a division till the meditator become the meditation.)

Lots of small high whistling sounds.

Saw wide expanse of red filling whole vision like a TV screen.

Very clear meditation. No effort to look at 3<sup>rd</sup> eye. Very easy. Natural. Simple. Less a looking outwards. More of an abstraction, an inward retreat. Several walls of white light, which later turned red.

Cognition: There is no watcher, only seeing, only hearing; no meditator, only meditation; no thinker, only thought; no experiencer, only life living itself.

Sense of being stretched, bigger. Awareness extends beyond the body; I surround the body.

Streams of twisting light, white line-patterns with dots of blue; then changing to pure brilliant radiant white light – but the mind is commenting on this all the time ('great,' etc.).

Head tight, restricting awareness, so not able to see light; but sitting in stillness, in the state, despite pain. Shadows passing from right to left.

Hole above me filled with light.

Going in and out of sleep and meditation with awareness of both, still meditating while sleeping. Periods of light too subtle and fast for the mind to grasp or comprehend. Arms spontaneously lifting up.

Feeling that something significant is about to happen. Meditation going on on its own, effortlessly. Strands and threads of light zigzagging and disappearing.

Almost no experiences, except maybe on the sound. Why not? Easy to sit. No boredom. Deep. But why are there no realisations, nothing suggestive of a higher state after 30 hours of meditation? Now sound is flowing as I write.

Lots of sound, almost no light. All my meditations were good. Able to sit constantly without problems in a state of peace.

Sound there as soon as I start awareness of breathing. Why does Light not answer my questions? Is my mind too heavy, my aura too thick for revelations to penetrate?

L and S rule fate and destiny, justice and misfortune, suffering and times of happiness and joy, calamity and karma and greatness.

I saw a circle – within it a triangle of brighter light; then within the triangle a smaller triangle.

Flower of light replaced by brighter and bigger and bigger petals of light; then seeing inside the inner stamens like a Walt Disney nature documentary.

Awareness projected outside body surrounded by a dull orange cloud. Saw a brilliant sun with many rays of light, then 4 similar lattice patterns, one after the other. At one point there was a black centre with light around it and forming grids of light. Later light arose at the lower left; as I then lifted my attention to the 3<sup>rd</sup> eye a very deep blackness rose above with many points of light in it; to the right came interweaving threads and beams. Lots of gold light.

Listening to the sound like a band in front of and around the head; and seeing light-area in front of face in same area as the sound. Lots of light around the head, a kind of headband of light.

### **A Few Questions**

Why did other Masters use 5 Names while ours does not? (Traditionally, in India, meditators used 5 Names or 5 mantras to produce and maintain Sound.)

Why is Sound constant but Light is infrequent?

Why is Light so much greater when given at initiation?

Why have all Indian forms of S and L emphasised karma? Why do they all talk about Kal (a negative force something like the Devil)? If limits do not get enlightened, then only the Unlimited remains, and isn't that itself enlightened?

'Form has no beginning.' Explain this. Does Creation (form) not have a Source? What does 'True identity is that which creates itself into existence' mean? If Identity is self-created, this implies there was no identity before; and if there was, why would it need to create itself, already being existent?

What is meant by 'justice is changeless change'?

Is karma not true in the sense that activity conditions us, gives us tendencies, and leaves impressions on the mind? Does not joy lift us up and pain or sorrow drag us down? Were Masters like Nanak and Kabir wrong in teaching karma?

If consciousness is only a set of limits and the Real Self is unlimited, then how did we get to be here? Where is there any connection?

Why do the Tantras give so much attention to the Soham mantra?



What happens to all those under other L and S masters who never got enlightened? How can they complete their Journey?

How is it even possible that any Master is able to enlighten another?

Before enlightenment is S and L the nearest we can get to the state called God?

What are the planes beyond Atma like?

How can I best use my time till the next stage?

What is the difference in meditation before and after enlightenment?

At Initiation are we suddenly thrust to a new level of evolution? What effect has it on the subtle, astral and mental bodies? At Initiation how is the crown chakra related to the 3<sup>rd</sup> eye?

What does it feel like to be Free?

How does S and L affect the chemical function and structure of the body?

Do higher vehicles function whether we are aware of them or not?

How do you distinguish between those who are stable in Atma, and those who have realised full enlightenment?

What is the nature of the plane we are taken to at Initiation?

What is above consciousness?

Is there only one way to enlightenment – through S and L? Has anyone ever attained through any other means?

After enlightenment is there a change in objective perception? Does seeing become more refined? What is the most striking thing about enlightenment?

Why does meditation apparently not significantly affect the personality or deeply change it?

What is That which is beyond experience?

Why are planes of S and L called non-material when they have pattern-forms in them?

Why doesn't meditation radically change the personality, clear mind and emotions, heal and renew? Or does it?

If there is only Unity, maya must be untrue, and maya must itself be Maya. How can the Changeless become changeful? Where does Maya originate?

Did all the planes manifest simultaneously or was it a sequential, slow development?

Is it possible to live in this world without struggle and suffering?

How do we become the Path? What does it mean to establish a relationship with S and L?

If we see black light at Initiation is that our mind or Universal Mind?

Are ancient Vedic mantras out of sync with modern nervous systems?

If our destiny is preordained, how does it come about and are there Planners of it?

If we contact Buddhi (intuition), why can we not know all things at the same time?

What is the benefit of enlightenment? What can you do with it? Does it make you happy, content, satisfied with life? Do you live better because of it? Are you constantly aware of divinity and oneness with life? Or is it just a vague abstraction? Can you really say: I know God? Or does it leave you with the feeling there is more to be known and life is as much a mystery as it was before? Are you filled with love and awe and wonder at the beauty of life?

If we say the personality is what it is, having natural aspects like self-survival, anger, greed, then is it also okay to accept dominance, hate, avarice and violence? Or must we tame certain primitive awful urges?

How can a Causeless Cause be the cause of anything? If it is unmoving, neutral, how can it act? Why would it?

Why are we deluded? How did we become unfree? How did we get into a state of ignorance?

Why are our meditation experiences sometimes not so clear and vivid as reports of near-death experiences of seeing light?

Why do we need a second initiation? Why not go all the way at once?

How does Sound arise from nothing?

Why does spiritual practice not result in liberation, or hardly ever?

What is the nature of Divine Intelligence found at every level, functioning on every plane?

I touch the Silence – but why am I not in rapture, in endless bliss all the time?

Creation has no beginning, but does not all creation involve time, form and space, as well as motion? Are we to understand that creation has no Cause?

Can you explain how creation is fatalism? What does this mean?

If consciousness is limited, what replaces it on its ending? What is above conscious awareness?

What is meant by ‘The basis of creation is as a phenomenon’? When it is said that creation has no beginning, does this mean the planes of consciousness only, or matter also; and does creation co-exist with God?

Is S and L a Being or simply an Intelligence?

Is sleep different after Enlightenment?

‘Looking for justice is looking to justify the ego.’ Explain. Is justice not a reality? If there is no justice in the Universe, does that make life meaningless?

If the Absolute is absolute, can it ever be understood, as the instrument of understanding is finite; and can it even be understood by intuition? Or can it just be known when it is known?

Why is it that only a small number of humans can get enlightened? What about the rest of humanity?

If L and S is there all the time, why is it not always seen?

Does an Adept have mastery over all planes? Can he go anywhere he chooses?

What is a Master?

After attaining Enlightenment, what does the aim of life become?

Explain the fundamental ABC’s of meditation, as what we take for granted may not be obvious to us?

How much of the Alice Bailey teachings are true?

Was there ever a Golden Age, when man was perfect, or can there ever be one?

If evolution is untrue, why am I more intelligent, say, than a peasant?

What is the ultimate nature of Spirituality?

If the Hindu Gods exist, what is their place and function in creation? Why have some Beings never incarnated while human beings are in form?

All I know is conscious aliveness, becoming more acute, stronger. How, in what way, is consciousness limited?

What is the best advice to give to someone on this Path?

### **Waiting for the Light to Dawn**

This section of my record deals with the second section of the Path in which a second burst of Energy is given to greatly speed up one's progress. This is the record of that time as it developed over several months. The realisation of going beyond form and breaking free of my old identity was not an immediate one for me, as it is for some. In fact for some time I was not aware that I was entering into a permanent state; at first I thought I was simply undergoing spiritual experiences during ordinary living. At this time I began to observe myself more and more as a detached witness of my awareness. Anyway, here is what I wrote at the time in my journal.

Who is it that is sitting here? Who is looking out through these eyes?

In the dying of my dying, in my self-loss, I reconnect to my life. I live more freshly, more newly, more fully. In that newness, I touch the Untouched.

Let me die in my dying. Let me love in my loving. Love is letting go. It is not being here. It is being everywhere. The small cannot contain the great. The pond cannot contain the endless sea.

Can I live Life in its livingness, in its shining brightness, in its endless flow, in the beauty of its stillness? Can I be the living sea, not the stagnant pond?

If we are sinking in quicksand, who will pull us out? Who holds the rope? We stand at the water's edge. How do we get to the other shore? Some say they will swim on their own. Where is the boat, the sure raft? Where is the ferryman?

Who carries the lantern in the darkness?

Where is the guide for yonder mountain?

The Brightness calls, lures, enchants me.

Love sings its Song. Love calls from the great Deep. Yet I only know its reflection, its shadow. Near yet far, it is in the mist, a mystery. Longed for, it approaches, yet eludes. It cannot be held.

Spiritual Identity is something that is big enough to sit in, and still enough to identify with, a stillness that allows movement, that limits space, yet allows the space to be me in.

Ultimately, love is not one part loving another part. It is the All in love with itself, loving its own perfume, lost in itself, in its own rapture, in its own sweetness at every point and fragment of its raptureless unity. The sun gives off heat, the flower gives off fragrance.

What is spiritual living? It is to live in Presence, to have the feeling of the Divine. It is to have the heart cleansed without touching it, to bathe in spiritual rain, to be freshly renewed in our life. It is to have the heart bursting with an intensity that cannot be spoken, to live in the Immensity of the moment without reference to time. In that timeless moment the heart is open, innocent and free, immersed in the freshness that is free, untainted, unsought. The stagnant pond is flooded by the river. It is the livingness of life in full intensity, with full feeling, the glory and the grandeur and the beauty and the wonder of the Beyond lived now in its awesomeness, yet in its simplicity, in intimate closeness.

The sense of self makes us special, unique in our eyes, and cuts us off from every other self. As it builds walls around us, it inhibits love. Love demands no barriers. For love to come into play, the walls of the self must come down. Love cannot be locked into a small form, into a casket.

The Immensity must burst free of its cocoon – which could never hold it in any case, and it was never contained. What can hold the wind?

Fade away. Let attention become vague, abstract.

Every moment is an opportunity to love.

Love cannot be defined because the mind cannot know it. It can only be felt or sensed as a vastness beyond the mind, beyond the personal self – that which the ego lacks, and hence it is a completeness, a fulfilment of life, and Life itself. It is life in its fullness, in its perfection, in its glory. How do you describe the opening of a flower, a perfect rose, the sun at dawn? Beauty just is.

It is too big for the mind. For any mind.

Love is acceptance. Love includes everything, excludes nothing. The Absolute does not judge anything. It accepts all. It loves itself absolutely, for what else is there? If I am only one thing everywhere, what is there to judge me, or to be judged? Or to find fault?

The Presence of Sound and Light is the Friend. It is close. Being close, it may feel ordinary, as it is familiar. It may feel normal, yet it is the guide, the Inner Master. It is love. Sound and Light are varied, but there is only one Presence, the Master Power, the Inner Guide.

Where does love come from? Where does love go?

Love is the Silence, and endless inner space, and the Sound in motion, the current in flow. Love is the inner Beauty, and the vastness of Stillness. Love is the expanse of freedom and the glory of Being, of being-in-Being. Love is being unrestricted.

The only certainty in life is: I am alive. The surety of our death is not a certainty to us. It is to come, but we gloss over the reality of it. We are sure of our existence, that we are here now. That we exist is an unquestionable reality. We all know that.

Death, stay away.

There are two ways to Samadhi: One is the way of self-remembering or self-awareness. The other is the way of self-forgetting. The first is the way of enquiry or knowledge. The other is the way of devotion or surrender.

What will be, will be. The script of our life is written, to be performed by the actor-mechanism of the personality. The film unfolds according to plan. We are just the watcher, awareness itself, uninvolved in the film of life.

The most common miracle is that I live, I am energy. I-am-alive is the foundation of life, the source of Tantra, of Yoga and Taoism. To know my existence is meditation. To be aware of it is to live in the present moment. I am Life in its vastness and majesty. I am livingness. Life is the perfume of love.

How can you act in an unselfish way as long as you have a self? Will it not always get in the way of love and goodwill? To transcend the personal self is to invite love.

I sit here in the stillness of my meditation with a stiff neck. I remain in the silence because the pain from worn vertebrae is of less distraction than the bliss of inner peace. My body is ageing

now and the upper back muscles and joints are easily cramped. Hence old masters in past ages said you had to find freedom while you were still young enough to sit in comfort in meditation before the body became stiff and touched by pain. So here I sit now, over sixty. Where did all those years go? It all went so fast, as it must do for everyone. It will all be gone before we know it. Life is not meant to last. Life only exists in this moment and moments, as we know, are fleeting. But I sit because of my desire for liberation. I meditate because I long to be free. In the vast expanse of time, my life is but a flicker. What does the universe care if I get enlightened? But to me that is the most important event.

### **A Few More Questions**

Has there been or will there ever be a Golden Age of Spirituality?

Sound and Light are obvious expressions of vibration. Is that energy also expressed, in a less obvious way, as taste, smell and touch?

How does the Self get hidden from us? How does the sense of me-ness become Unity-ness? What causes the ego to drop away or to be perceived as unreal? And what made it seem real in the first place?

What brought about creation? What are we doing in it? Does it have a purpose?

How can a brilliant non-physical light appear to hurt our eyes?

What is the difference between the experience of stillness found in any system of meditation, and that of the true Spiritual Self?

What is it that knows that consciousness is limited?

Does the Master remain on the inner planes after death?

Is there a Divine Will? If the Absolute is already perfect and complete in itself, how did we get to be here, imperfect, on lesser planes of imperfection, which would also be the Absolute, since it is everything?

Is seeing the Light related to progress? In other words, does our progress depend on it? Or is our progress constant, whether or not we see or hear inner phenomena?

If ultimate Truth is total detachment, if God has never touched creation, if an ultimate state knows only itself, how is the first realisation on attaining Enlightenment that of ultimate love? Does love only love itself – and is there compassion for limits?

If God, as the ultimate state is not aware of limits, how is there the phenomenon of Avatars or saviours? Or is that just an accident?

We talk about the Path in a general way. What precisely is the Path? How should we relate to it?

Is there a distinction between the ‘being’ of Light-and-Sound, the true Lifewave, and those aspects of creation which we are hearing and seeing? Or are they all one? Do other forms of Life, other beings, have specific functions in creation?

Why did the old books talk so much of the Five Sounds? Were these just echoes of the five mantras? What is this Kal (a kind of universal devil) they keep talking about? Initiation also seemed to be of a lower order – why is that?

What is the relationship between the Absolute and beings at this level, if any?

Are smaller meditations advised to establish stillness in daily life?

Why does maya exist? Is it just the way things are, without any kind of moral value?

If the Absolute just is, self-existent, can there be such a thing as Divine Will? What brings the universe into being? How can action arise out of an actionless state, as implied in the Vedic statement ‘I am One, let me become many.’ Is that not maya?

If the Absolute is always absolute, as it must be, what becomes trapped, what traps it, from where does ignorance arise and what is freed upon enlightenment?

What prevents one from having revelations? Why do we not have them all the time?

Do you think founders of religion had only limited access to inner regions?

What is the distinction between the third eye and psychism?

What does an initiate have to do in order to progress?

How is the Absolute transcendent to creation, yet everywhere in its Unity?

As I meditate I hear some sound and see some light, apparently on higher regions. After death, as we go to these regions, are forms seen as clearly as those on the physical plane?



The Gita says that Divinity permeates and pervades all life; yet core principles state Truth does not touch creation, yet they also say enlightenment is a state which is everywhere. Explain this.

We are told the elements of the individual self, after death, return to the reservoir of substance. Does that self have an original being or is there just one Being, God?

Why do we see light and patterns, rather than shapes and forms and details of a plane?

How does an Avatar differ from a Master? What is an Avatar (spiritual saviour)? What is the difference between an Adept and a Master?

If reincarnation is untrue, does that invalidate the theory of samskaras (impressions from the past left on the mind which yoga is supposed to eradicate)?

Why is breath meditation profound? What effect has it on the aura?

Why do saints talk so much of the pang of separation and the pain of love?

Personality persists after enlightenment, yet ego is supposed to end. Explain this.

How is S and L related to seeing the Seer of seeing/looking at yourself?

Are there healing mantras to deal with specific problems?

Why does meditation in a group multiply its benefits?

If the purpose of life is to awaken, why are there so few realised beings?

How is it possible to confer Grace on another, and what kind of being could do so?

Why can't you close your eyes and see constant blazing Light, or plane after plane?

If siddhis, supernormal abilities, strain the nervous system, why did Patanjali list them?

Is Light a purer form of Maya?

Is enlightenment, as an experience, the same for all, or does it differ from person to person?

What is it when there is a warm glow and a sense of bliss after meditation?

On gaining full access to Divinity, why can an Adept not acquire all divine attributes, such as the ability to heal, as some saints are said to have had?

Does physical discomfort or the problems and worries of life interfere with an Adept's state of being?

Why have so few Masters been able to offer direct enlightenment?

Do the Akashic Records exist?

Is the Higher Mental Body the same as Universal Mind?

If there is no reincarnation, what happens to those who have reached a high state, but are not enlightened at the time of death?

No more questions! That's it, folks.

Oh, just one more. How come Jane is in love with Tarzan, if he keeps yelling all the time?

### **Revelation: The Penny Drops**

For some time now, there has been an awareness of my awareness throughout the day, where I am watching myself from a remote point of detachment, not involved as myself, but simply an impersonal observer. It is almost like I am prior to any state I find myself in. I am kind of there before any event happens. I am before thought occurs. I watch it happen. The mind has become unimportant. What is the mind but a bunch of concepts and opinions? What is an opinion except an idea? An idea is just a thought in the mind, and a thought is but a psychic movement. And what is mind? Nothing. Looked for, it cannot be found, any more than an emotion can be. That is kind of funny, because what is all the fuss about? What bothers us during the day? What disturbs us at night? What are we so concerned with? What makes us unhappy? What is a problem but a passing cloud? We are being fooled all the time by something which feels so real, yet is not. Does the mind exist? Where? Show me it. I am now just observing all the time, in and out of meditation. There is a more or less constant stillness, an inner silence, a sense of not being anywhere, in a kind of centreless centre. I seem to be above and outside the head. I surround my body. One time, sitting in a car, I find my awareness is yards in front of the car, not confined to the body, not fixed anywhere, free of the boundary that used to be there. I am in a new place, but I do not know where it is. It appears to be nowhere, not-here. Yes, I am the nowhere man. I am often not identified with this form, nor with the mind. I guess this could be a bit unnerving for some. It is kind of confusing to be in a new place which breaks with the old identity you always had. I mean, where am I now? What about the old reality? The mind goes on as before, but the awareness is not confined to it. There is the old me, and then there is the no-me Me. They are both there at the same time. Odd.

There is also an odd sense of being outside of time, and there is also a sense of presence I can't quite define.

I meditate upon my Self, on my own awareness – on the aliveness of my awareness. I am alive, I witness that. I witness my apartness. I am stillness. I am existence. I know the beauty of my naked nothingness. I hear my stillness. I am lost. Where have I gone? I am hollow. There is no thinker, only thought. There is no person, only a mechanism of response based on habit. There is no meditator – only attention. There is no me, other than a memory. The Self-aware 'I' is not involved in form as body-mind.

I am space without location. I am non-specific simplicity, mystical yet ordinary. I am wind. I am air.

I do not act. Actions happen. I am desireless. Only desire desires. What has the mind to do with me? What mind? Where? I am a subtle cloud. I am gossamer. Actionless, motionless, I am faster than thought, before mind was. I am sky-free. I am Life. I am nothing that can be spoken.

I am the shoreless sea, not the breaking waves. I cannot remain at the water's edge.

I am the unspoken word, the unheard song, the soundless sound. My echo is the flute's highest note, the sweetest tone of the harp, the wind blowing through the reed.

There is no contact for me. I am untouched. I abide in my own dimension. I am singular, only one in my aloneness. There is no other. I am the flow. I live the timeless moment.

Forgetting this little self, I remember That. I bathe in fresh waters. I am the silent night, and the Dawn's early break.

Disidentified with ego, I abide in my own Presence. The chattering of sparrows does not affect the solitary eagle.

I soar in the air of the unknown. I rest on the lightest breeze.

I am empty. I am nothing. All there is is stillness, space, existence. Where is mind? Where is there a self? Where is ego? They are subtle tendencies latent within awareness, seeds ready to sprout. I am not this form, nor a mind. I am just awareness, still and silent, without characteristics. Attributes are just tendencies in a latent form.

I have become identified with the Presence. Yet the 'me' is just awareness, wakefulness, and alertness to the stillness. There is no me in this state of alertness. There is only the flow of Silence knowing itself. I have no form and no me. I am aliveness, the sense of existence.

To be everywhere we must consume all space. We must fill everything with our own awareness. We must expand our own awareness till it contains everything there is. All space must contain our own emptiness, our own being. The neutral state is the container of everything.

Personality is just a mechanism of automatic response to given stimuli.

Light and Sound should be used to discover what and who we really are, what our true nature is. Light and Sound is a way to look at yourself. It is your mirror. Find yourself in it.

I opened the door  
 To the inner chamber.  
 What lived its life  
 Died in meditation  
 Renewed in the Self  
 Born of silent stillness  
 In the Light unseen,  
 In the Song unheard  
 In the endless roar  
 Of the endless ocean  
 And the unfettered space  
 Of the empty sky  
 Where I was not  
 And all was me  
 Yet still bound by mystery  
 Of the darkest Light  
 Of the unseen Void  
 And the endless depths  
 Of the unknown sea.  
 The Empty Mirror  
 Casts no reflection  
 When there is  
 Nothing to reflect  
 But its own nature  
 In its emptiness  
 In the glory  
 Of naked Being.

When I relax completely outside of meditation, I rest in myself so completely there is no me, no thought, just awareness of that resting state of no-motion, sitting in a void.

I am nothing. Fall into nothingness. Become the mystery. Be the void. If I am nothing, formless and immaterial, then 'I' must be only a concept. How does a concept die, if it was never real?

To live life, let it happen. You do not interfere. Life happens. You go with the flow. That is the Tao: to live in freedom. Volition, or choice, means limitation, to make living smaller. Be in the stream. What is going to happen will happen. You cannot hold back the tide. Volition is ego. It needs a doer to act. Action does not need an actor; action takes place without a doer. Then there is actionless action, impersonal action, free action, action which does not bind, action without a cause, without need. What is needed is done.

Consciousness can know itself as consciousness, but not the Self. Consciousness cannot know the unknowable, cannot grasp nothingness, which can never be an experience, for there is nothing to experience. Experience needs edges and boundaries, something to recognise.

Love arises with manifestation. When the Lifewave arises, Love is there. Before that there was nothingness, the Void. What was there to love? There is no love, as emotion, in stillness. Love is movement. Love demands duality – something to love. What can feel compassion, and for what? For itself? With manifestation a Point arose, and instantly the Point exploded into everything everywhere. That very Point is the Lifewave. Lifewave is Shabda, Sound-and-Life, the living vibration of creation, Love-in-action.

If you ask: Who am I? you go looking for a thing, a point, a centre, a self which does not exist, so how can it be found? Where am I? Nowhere. I am not a point. I am everywhere. I am nothing. I am unconfined and uncircumscribed.

There can be no mastery of self, for how can the self master itself? It would have to cut itself in half, and still there would be one half, the part that did the mastery, that was not mastered.

Regard Sound as omnipresence. Light and Sound is important because it is the Form of Divinity, Divinity-in-expression.

I don't live in the present – I am the Present itself. I **am** Presence. I am aliveness. I live it.

The mind is below the threshold of consciousness. It is a small thing in the background of awareness.

There is no I in awareness, no me. Awareness is free, without attributes. Awareness is untouched by anything, yet the container of all, unmoving. Consciousness depends on the brain and can be affected by chemicals, memory, heredity or damage to brain cells. If accidents or dementia affect consciousness, awareness of stillness still remains untouched, the nothingness beyond everything

else. To be accurate, everything else is empty and only awareness remains in its eternal constancy. It is unchanging, the fullness of nothing. (Later, I found even awareness is limited.)

Truth is a bastard. People don't want to hear it. They want to escape into a rosy, radiant future. They do not want to be stuck in the bloody-awful now. They want something. They don't want nothing. They want a better self, not a no-self.

Unconditional love is neutral – it accepts everything, denies nothing. It is wide open. It is an unclosed door.

Stillness is acceptance.

We are the result of a set of circumstances, surroundings and events which come together in a certain order. Our birth is an accident of circumstances, factors of duality, motion, time. We are the product of events in time. Put together they form a personality, self, ego.

Why is it that, upon attaining higher states of Being, one is not able to affect material life? Why are miracles not possible? The answer, maybe, is that it is not the Higher Self that wants miracles, but the lower; it is the mind, the personality, that has desires, not the spiritual nature, which is not interested in phenomena and psychic tricks, but only in Being itself, in unity, in pure awareness.

In being there is no one, only One, and no change. I (the I-less I, the no-me) is changeless. There are no moments of transition. There is only duration without the passage of time. There is no time. The clock has stopped ticking in timeless awareness.

In fact it never started.

I am. I exist. What more is there to say? Only the mind wants more. The mind expects explanations. Yet what is there to explain? Beingness just is.

The impersonal, universal life-principle, common to all living things, associates with a form and says: I live, this is me, I am this form. In our life we have to know both of these. Unless you become Life, life will dwarf you on every side. You will, to some extent, be smothered in your smallness, in your limitedness.

To find ourself, we must unknow ourself. We must seek the unknown. We must transcend our current identity. We must go where we have not been before. We must find the fresh and the new. We must find what we do not know. To know what we are, we have to find our hidden self, our secret part. We do not find it in the usual, the common and familiar. The old cannot reveal the new. We have to look elsewhere. The Real is not found in the unreal. It lies beyond it.

Where will we find the Unknown God?

Only in Thatness, which is apart from anything else. There is only That, the other-worldliness.

That is the Unborn.

The heart of the seeker, the true seeker, craves and longs for that.

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### **Experience of Nothingness**

Seek your own nothingness  
Nisargadatta Maharaj

I am without attributes and action, eternal and pure, free from stain and desire, changeless and formless, and ever free  
Shankara

On the Path there used to be a paper called Petals of Nectar, which contained the following statement: 'In meditation do not look for anything; look for nothing.' Interesting, but hard to do. Not as easy as it sounds. It is only now that I understand the significance of that statement. It is by looking for nothing that we find everything. Nothingness is the essence of spirituality. It is spaciousness. If you want to find spirituality, look for your own nothingness. It has to be done in a

very gentle way, as it is very subtle. The experience of nothingness is a contradiction in terms because in nothingness there can't be any thing, so there can't be any experience because an experience implies some thing and nothingness implies no-thing. Just an emptiness where there is no thing and no experiencer, for there must also be no-self, for the self is also a thing. There can be no person in nothingness, and no experience, and no individual to experience an experience, and no one to experience the nothingness. The mirror of awareness simply reveals the nothingness. In a higher state there is just God, and God is not a thing. And that is beyond consciousness.

This is the highest and original message of the Vedas: Transcend, and Go Beyond! And this is why we have a system of Light and Sound, to take us Beyond into the Nothingness. Light and Sound is not just about that Energy, but also about that emptiness that allows us to sit in that space of unknowingness and to take us into nothingness, to find that we are not who we thought we were, we are not what we were told we were, and we are not what we have been led to believe that we are, but we are something different, and transcendent to all forms, and to all this, and to all manifestation and we are something we can't quite put into words because even when you attain that state of nothingness, who or what knows the Nothingness? Nothingness exists, but the Nothingness, being nothing, cannot know something in its nothingness. For what, there, is there to know, and who to know it? What can be known? Nothing! Who can know it? No one. Nothingness does not know that it knows; it is consciousness that knows, and consciousness is something, and consciousness that knows that it knows, and also consciousness that knows that it doesn't know. It is consciousness that knows the nothingness; it is not the nothingness that knows the nothingness. This is a very important and possibly subtle point, that nothingness does not know; it is simply nothing; and being nothing it is one thing everywhere, because the quality of Nothingness is that it has no qualities. Emptiness is empty of all qualities, attributes or characteristics. Therefore, wherever it is found, and it is found everywhere, it is the same. Your Nothingness and my Nothingness is just one Nothingness, universal. Nothingness is nothingness. It is not connected to any individual entity (which does not exist anyway). That nothingness is the same reality wherever it is found, and the point where it is found is also infinity. So it is not connected to time. It is not connected to causation. It is not connected to any effect or result, and it is not connected to space and has no characteristics. So it is found to be the same everywhere for everyone – even though there is no one to know it because the experiencer, the knower, is itself an illusion, because the only reality is the Nothingness, as everything else undergoes change and is subject to time. We come upon that Nothingness first through Samadhi, the state of no-mind, or the state of total attention, which amounts to the same thing. Or, to put it in other words, it is desirelessness. When there are no desires, no turbulations in the mind, when it is undisturbed, you have the experience of nothingness, of desirelessness. Where there is desirelessness the mind has come to rest. Where there is attention the mind has come to rest. When there is full attention, attention is attentive to its own attentiveness. Awareness is aware of itself through desirelessness which allows the settled state of awareness to emerge in awareness, without turbulations, upsets, excitations or movements within the mind. In other words, in effect, the mind has ceased to exist in any form we can know. There is simply chitta or awareness itself. There is awareness, there is existence, there is awareness



of existence, of absolute existence or pure existence. Then awareness is seen as objectless and contentless, devoid of content and devoid of subject-matter, just a pure state of stillness, silence and motionlessness, like the empty mirror which reflects nothing because there is nothing there to be reflected; there is no image. And essentially, that attention to stillness, to the backdrop of awareness, is the essence of yoga, where attention pays attention to itself. This is the essential practice of yoga: know your own stillness and keep the mind one-pointed in desirelessness. We keep one-pointed in attention to our own reality. But then we let go of our attention and go beyond it. We first attain a sort of tension, a concentration, and then we transcend it; we slip away; we fade. We let go of the tension.

Nothingness is the subject of Asparsha Yoga. Asparsha means the intangible, it means no-contact, no relationship and no touch with anything. So it means apartness, apart from anything and everything else. Yoga is often decribed, almost always decribed in the yoga books, as union. But this implies that you get one part and tack it on to another part and stick the two bits together. You get the relative, the mundane, the world of form and tack it on to the Absolute, the formless, and you call that Union. So, that would be union with disunion - wouldn't it? – because it's partial, tacked onto something else; whereas union, in the sense of yoga, suggests not that you stick one part to another bit with superglue or hammer and nails, but that Yoga is wholeness, is completeness, because why does anyone come to a spiritual path in the first place? To be complete, to be fulfilled, to be more whole, to find your way home to where you are entirely you, to be completely satisfied as a human being, and to be connected to the completed state of unchanging wholeness, to be complete and whole and full. The early Christian writer, Plotinus, spoke of the 'flight of the alone to the Alone' but the state of Asparsha doesn't require that flight because it's about the Alone with the Alone, alone. Nothing else. Nothingness abides with itself. How can the mind come to terms with that? It is beyond explanation or reason. Asparsha is apartness; that apartness is the fullness of Life.

So far as I know, this Asparsha Yoga was first mentioned by Gaudapada when he was commenting on the Mandukya Upanishad in his commentary in the karikas, talking about the state of non-attachment and non-contact, where he said Brahman was on its own and everything else was an illusion other than it. How do you have anything other than everything? Brahman does not create this universe. Why would it? As Madame Blavatsky said: God never touched one brick of this creation. Brahman, as the Absolute, is ever apart, and the formless never touches form.

It is like a picture show at the cinema; the film is there on the screen, but it is not real. And -

Hey, you in the back row – stop that. Dirty little sods. Bloody kids.

Shankara taught, in his teachings, in his highest teachings, to just have an idea of Brahman, a concept of the Absolute, to meditate on that idea, and to just think of yourself, imagine yourself, to be Brahman, and to get identified with that state and that single thought. That is all he taught, and

all he was teaching was imagination and pretension. Of course what he expected and hoped was that you would identify, you would have the capacity to identify with the reality of Brahman, and hopefully transcend the idea and become Brahman itself, become the emptiness, the apartness, the stillness, the silence, the motionlessness, and become that Reality, and be that state.

Right – have you done it yet? I think I’m getting a headache. How about you?

The Ribhu Gita, said to be written or spoken by the Sage Ribhu, said to be enlightened, said to do that, to meditate on Brahman like that, to have the idea that you are Brahman, then let go of it, forget you are the idea of it and become Brahman beyond the mere idea of it. There is a part of us that no thought, no feeling, can ever touch. It is intangible, asparsha, beyond, apart, aloof. It is the nothingness of life, but it is not so easy to say something about nothing. People have been saying something about nothing for hundreds of years! Particularly politicians.

The Yoga Sutras say disunion of the union with form is Yoga; in other words, disidentification with what the mind thinks it is. Now the reflection of nothingness is non-resistance, effortless action, non-doing, doing without being a doer, actionless action, resulting in an unrestricted flow of awareness. This is spontaneous action, as mentioned in Zen, being without motive or desire, leading to desireless living. When consciousness is free, actions are free. When there is nobody there as an actor, a performer of action, what is there to resist? There is just life, prana. Responses are like waves on water, rising and sinking. There is no effort to be made because life is allowed to live itself rather than trying to interfere with the livingness of that life, trying to alter its flow, trying to alter its course, trying to make it be other than what it is. When the sea is flowing you don’t have to alter the sea because the sea is the sea; the sea is what it is. So life is what it is and it should be allowed to flow in a natural manner. By doing that life becomes very easy. It becomes easy in the sense that there is no conflict, and you aren’t fighting with it, you aren’t trying to change the course of it. You aren’t trying to interfere and interrupt the stream of life the way it flows. Asparsha is without relation or connection. It is kaivalya, the aloneness and apartness of life, that which is totally detached from life, totally apart from life, on its own. It just is. But it isn’t any thing. It is total potential. In fact it may even be incorrect to call it potential, which still implies something. How can nothing be something? See the futility of words? It is in its singleness and it is in its nothingness and it is in its voidness. It is that emptiness, that spaciousness that you find in deepest meditation. Or maybe that is just a reflection of it. This is why, when you come to a real spiritual Path, you have to let go of concepts and ideas, no matter how treasured; you have to untangle your mind; you have to empty yourself of preconceived notions and be like an empty sheet of paper.

The Bhagavad Gita says: Yogastah-kuru-karmani, act from wholeness, act from the sense of completeness, don’t act in bits and pieces, don’t act from partiality, but act from the Totality, from the living Whole, act with allness; let the rivers flow from the sea. It is only by becoming nothing that we can become everything. Krishna said that one in many millions is able to meditate on the

abstract reality, on the formless God, on the unexpressed and totally abstract, the unconditioned. So Buddha said that though he had taught for most of his life he had not taught anyone because there was no one to teach, and he as a teacher, as a person was not there and the person in front of him was not there because 'he' was not a 'person' either and was not real as an entity; really there is no me, no you; only the mind thinks that. In truth there is just emptiness. Buddha was trying to reveal the disunion of union with matter, the unreality of that union which looks and feels so real. To the mind, how can that be unreal? It feels so real! I feel myself. How can I be unreal? I feel so solid. How can I not exist? It is enough to give you a headache. How can I, being here, not be real? How can I disidentify with form? As the image in the mirror is not real so form, though seen, is not real, at least not in any permanent way, only a reflection in the mirror of nothing, an image, not the real thing, which is emptiness, the Great Void. When there is love, which is devotion to the stillness, to the fullness, when there is that love, then there is skill in action. Skill in action means to act with ease, to act without attachment. It means to be unrestricted and to flow freely. That is action, reaction, skill in action, the ability to act in that effortless, spontaneous manner, to act while realising Atman; that is knowledge and that is freedom and that is action without bondage; that is action without boundary, without limitation. There are no boundaries, no small bits, no pockets; there is just the Infinite itself acting through your actions; you do not act; action happens, actions occur naturally when you take yourself out of the picture as the one who acts, and actions happen naturally and spontaneously because there is no actor or doer or resistor to resist the flow of the action, so the flow just flows spontaneously and naturally just as the river flows downstream, as a piece of wood is carried by the stream. So action happens like that. The Self is acting through that action or through 'your' non-resistance, your not being there, in that freedom, in that stateless state of unlimited flow. Actually the Absolute is not acting because the Absolute does not act; it just IS. Only that which is within creation acts; it is simply action happening, the gunas, the qualities of nature acting within themselves without a sense of an actor. There is no sense of a person doing anything. There is action within stillness in which you are the stillness, not the action or the actor. You are free of the action, the actor and the consequences of it.

Contemplation of nothingness or being-in-the-emptiness is meditation. The highest teachings of Zen and Tibetan Buddhism say there is no self, there is no person, there is no one there, just a collection of traits, memories, inclinations, instincts, desires, thoughts, which are activated and set in motion by being stimulated through contact with the environment. The greatest teachings in Tibet are Dzogchen, Mahamudra and Chod. Mahamudra or the Great Seal (maybe better translated as the Great Mudra of Authority, like the King's seal) means being aware of the emptiness. Dzogchen, the Natural Great Perfection of Being, means to let things be as they are, to let life flow as it flows, and to let awareness be in its natural pure state without interrupting it; let it be as it is, let it go, let it flow, let it be. Whereas Chod says look for the mind and you won't find it, and that looking, that not finding it, is itself the meditation, seeking it without finding it, and remaining in that, is itself the goal and the way to it, and that itself is the attainment. By being in that nothingness which allows consciousness to be pure, unsullied and untainted by any sense of ego or differentiation allows the emptiness to be empty, allows wholeness to be whole, allows the fullness

to be full. That is all you have to do in Tibetan Buddhism in its very highest teachings. The thing is the way the thing is. And that's it. Dead easy, see. Yea. If only. Well it would be if the mind did not get in the way and you did not get stimulated and you could just be simple. It is not easy to be simple, nor is it simple to be easy. We have to learn to live in that clear light which is pure clarity and pure existence, just Beingness.

There is duality only when the mind moves. When the mind is still there is only one thing; there is only awareness then, aware of itself; there is only existence without looking for or experiencing anything else. Experience comes up when there is duality; where there is no experience there is no mind, no duality; there is just isness, the thing which is-in-itself, which is self-existent awareness. In that awareness there is no thought. Where there is thought there is no longer self-existent awareness, but manifestation, creation, expression, movement from stillness, from silence, from the Nothingness. Things come into being because consciousness has moved. Actually, awareness has become consciousness, which is circumscribed awareness or awareness-within-boundaries; it has become limited and restricted and confined. Awareness has created an object at which to look. In order for awareness to perceive an object it must first create that object in order to perceive it. In other words, objects perceived are there as the result of perception, which is a quality of awareness. Was I here before I noticed myself? Without the mind there is no creation. Yet the mind is the result of creation, and without movement within awareness there is no mind to create, to duplicate anything. There is nothing to perceive except the awareness itself. As soon as the awareness perceives itself it has created duality in the sense of knowing itself and this leads on to creation because it has created a gap in wholeness and therefore created duality between itself and itself, and created a flow. Movement occurs: I flow from here to there. I move into knowingness from unknowingness. Where there was only Beingness there is now a becoming aware of that Beingness. That is not one thing. It is two: division and duality. Beingness gets expressed in the perception of itself, and in that perception it creates a gap, and that is the beginning of creation because as soon as it has created an awareness of itself as the result of that flow it creates duality by creating space between itself and itself; creation manifests because there is a realisation or a conclusion of the nature of itself, about the nature of life. I am; and then desire can arise: I want to know myself. What is this that I am? Am I perceiving? A cognition arises, and from that a desire for further cognitions, for further expressions of myself. As Veda says: I am One; let me be many. A series of intricate perceptions and concepts arises. The flow of awareness creates vibration. From that vibration sound arises, and perceptions follow. I am Intelligence, let me flow; I am brilliance, let me shine. Out of nothing, out of awareness, everything comes to be from that simplicity of nothingness. Duality arises, and with the rise of duality there is fear, because we may be threatened by another thing outside of ourself; we can be influenced or affected by an outside force. When there is nothing, when you are nothing, when you know yourself to be nothing, what is there to fear? There is no threat to nothingness; nothingness cannot be threatened. Only something can be threatened. So to be nothing is to step outside of one's fear and to live within the province of that nothingness. Only in duality, in otherness, alienness, does threat, and therefore fear, arise. And fear always arises.

It is by means of self-surrender that attainment is attained. By self-surrender is not meant emotional self-abnegation, because that is one part of your personality trying to be in control of another part, trying to make it comply with the first part's wishes to do a certain thing, to make it perform a specific action, but that is not self-surrender, just artificial control of something unreal trying to control another part that is also unreal because the self is not a reality; the personality is not a reality; it is not truth. It is a mirage, an imaginary thing that has been imposed upon the basic reality of pure isness or life or consciousness or awareness of the reality. By that type of control you cannot bring about truth. You can't bring about truth through falsehood. You cannot rise to truth by means of emotion which is a lower astral level; from a lower level you don't get to attain the higher level. You may possibly purify that lower level, but purifying that lower level does not get you to the higher level. To get to the higher level you need to be picked up by something higher than the level at which you currently are; in this case, emotion; something new has to come into being. You have to transcend emotion, you have to transcend mind. You have to go Beyond and forget yourself. And that going beyond yourself, that is self-surrender. That is the real Bhakti Yoga, that is devotion, to actually forget yourself. And yet, how can you forget yourself? Because to forget yourself, you have to remind yourself to forget yourself! So how can the self forget itself? A bit of a quandary, eh? How can ego go beyond itself unless it breaks through the walls of itself and transcends itself and rises to a higher state of consciousness? Although there is always the possibility of that happening to some degree, that happens through a process of refinement where subtler levels of awareness are contacted and realised. It needs a higher energy to lift you up. It is only through devotion to the practice, devotion to the meditation, devotion to spirituality, that it becomes possible to transcend the lower states. This devotion is not an emotional devotion. It simply means paying attention to the practice you are engaged in, paying attention to the yoga, to the meditation, to what you are doing, paying attention to that practice which will transcend you and go beyond you as a personality, as a mind, as an ego. To go beyond that is to realise the reality which you can find yourself in. But, essentially, what you are being asked to do here, is to become nothing and to negate yourself, to void yourself, to become zero; and that is a lot to ask the self to do because it does not want to do that, because the personality, the mind, the ego, wants to get bigger; it does not want to become smaller, and it certainly doesn't want to vanish out of sight, except temporarily, of course. The ego will never willingly void itself, unless it thinks it is going to get something out of the process, and that very desire obstructs the path to transcending itself. It gets in its own way because it wants something beyond itself, yet it cannot let go of its desire to maintain its own identity and preserve itself just as it is. Talk about complications. It is required that you become desireless and you might even desire to be desireless, yet you have to transcend even that desire as well, which is a very difficult thing. My head is still hurting, you know. How about yours?

The very thing you are asked to transcend is the urge to survive, the need for security and self-preservation.

This is where Samadhi comes in, where you refine and refine and refine; you go chipping away and you contemplate one thing, one thing, one thing, till that one thing allows you access to itself in its fuller reality by paying attention. You pay attention till you can transcend that. But it is still for most people and for ego-oriented people, not necessarily selfish people, but people who have developed intellects, that is not an easy process, it is not easy, not an easy thing to do for anyone, come to that, to transcend themselves and let go of themselves. Because it is not a deliberate thing; it has to be an accidental thing (oops, I accidentally ran you over. Sorry, I'll try and do it on purpose next time.). It just happens, there is that moment of letting go, spontaneously and unconsciously, by just falling into or just collapsing into that state which is greater than the sense of self and greater than anything else, by concentrated attention, but effortless, easy concentrated attention like sex or reading or watching sport or knitting or whatever you like doing which holds your attention. I'm in favour of the sex thing, personally, but I never learnt to knit. Maybe next year, eh? Then I can knit while I'm waiting for the sex thing. Is it going to be a long wait? Yawn...

It is said that Ramana Maharshi simply asked himself: Who am I? and transcended the sense of self. To a few he said give up the idea that you are an ego, a mind, a self, the personality, and a few very advanced people were able to do this. But thousands have tried to follow him and gotten nowhere and soon found that was a very boring and pretty pointless method and remained just as stuck in the ego as ever. Thousands more in India have read the Yoga Vasistha for hundreds of years and tried to apply what it teaches regarding meditation: Who am I? Where did I come from? How did the universe come into being? What does life mean? How many of those actually became free? You only need one hand to count the numbers, I reckon.

By paying attention to one thing, to the meditation, to breathing or a mantra initially, then later to Sound and Light specifically because it is so much more powerful and easy to put your attention on something which broadens your horizon so much and increases your ability to rest in the state of beingness, giving one the ability to abide in that very subtle state, that state of inner beauty and love and joy to a greater or lesser extent and you live there, be it at first only for a moment; then you abide there for longer and longer duration. You enjoy that state. You enjoy being you in your higher nature, till you forget yourself enjoying the state and you just become the state, you become stillness. Like an interesting film, you get so absorbed that you forget you are the watcher of the film and forget you are that watcher, to a large extent; there is just the film. You become the object that you are watching. In this case you are both the subject and the object, which is the film being watched. So you become both. Your attention is on both things, but mainly on the film. So meditation is similar to that. Interest plus attention equals good meditation. That is what makes you concentrated and that concentration is what allows you to hone your attention to a very fine point, and from that fine point to arrive at the very finest point, and then to transcend that point and then from being the very finest, most delicate point of awareness, of attention, it opens up into a large field of attention, or even into attentionless attention where there is no awareness of being the attentive one, the experiencer or observer becoming absent. All experiences have gone when there is no experiencer to experience. Then you move into the timeless state where there is no duality

between you and that which is seen by you. You just become the whole, the complete picture, become that which you have your attention on, till it is no longer you having your attention on it, just being-in-itself, the total reality of the complete thing in that experienceless experience, and then you experience that which people call love. There is total absorption in going into something totally and completely and forgetting yourself and becoming the thing experienced, and the thing experienced is love; that is the action of love, going into that and forgetting yourself, becoming the object of love, becoming the beloved. This is what the mystics have been talking about through the centuries, becoming that which is love. You become God. People have been executed in all sorts of ways for saying that, of course. God is the beloved; you become the beloved, and you become God. Then you get your head chopped off. Thank you very much. It was giving me a headache anyway. And they talk about 'better times.' There were never any better times, not really, not unless you were well-off, and maybe not even then. History does not read well for the welfare of humanity. Being awake in an ignorant world where the rest of the people are dreaming has not been easy, unless you keep to yourself, for if you feel the need to express your reality you might find yourself fuel for the bonfire for daring to challenge accepted authority. Go to a psychiatrist (or, as a child might say, a pie-sick-tricks), and tell him you have no self, you are nobody and nowhere. Do you think he would smile and say: 'Well done, sister.' Well, he might smile.

Another nut for the Funny Farm.

The spirit, Atman, Brahman, is perfect. The personality is imperfect. And the personality is imperfectible. It can never become perfect. It was never meant to be so. Anything you do with the personality is just taking something from it or adding accretions to it. But it is not perfecting it. You can change the personality, but not perfect it. It is just as it is because it has taken matter from the subtle physical planes, the etheric plane, the astral plane, the mental plane, and all those forces are just as they are, in order to allow the spirit, as much as possible, to manifest or shine through the personality. But it does not matter what you do with the personality; the spirit won't shine through in its full perfection, in its full glory, its full splendour, its full brilliance. The personality is just as it is; it is not something else. It is not what you would like it to be. So all these self-help programmes, NLP, mind control, all that stuff is just playing a game with the personality. You take patterns of mind, personalities, of feeling, attitudes, and you try and change them. This is all self-help does; it imposes one mental pattern over another, trying to replace them with another set of attitudes or responses. But they are still mind patterns, emotional patterns, patterns of concepts. You just change one set of patterns for another set. You are not changing the personality as such because personality is just personality. It is just mental and emotional energies. You can move parts of it around. Meditation can bring a lot of change about, but you can never live long enough to perfect it. It will always depend on the Higher Self for its life. The personality is a form. It cannot be anything else but a form. All forms are transient, and therefore incomplete. The personality is just a vehicle for the expression of life. You can never make the shadow real. You can never perfect the unreal. The Real is the Void, Akshar, the host of all qualities and attributes. As the Yoga Sutras say, like the farmer in his field you open the sluice-gate and unblock the dam

and the waters flow in and water the field. Likewise the attributes of the personality blossom when you take your stand in Akshar and open the gate of awareness to unlimited potential, to the rivers of life. Then the personality will be what it was meant to be. You don't have to do anything. It gets done on its own. It gets fed at the roots. Does the gardener think he knows better than nature? Meditation feeds the roots. Mind just messes with the leaves.

Now these forces can be subtle, or they can be gross. But these are essentially the same thing, mental energies or emotional energies expressed through a brain made up of various chemicals and DNA strands which give to that personality certain characteristics or, to put it another way, they convey knowledge, energy and information through DNA; intelligence is carried to the personality, telling it to behave in certain ways. So, in that context, the personality is predisposed to behave in specific ways by the physical conditioning, or heredity, if you like, which manipulate the energies coming in. Those energies have to be expressed through the physical brain and through all the glands, through all the things that make up a person, physical, emotional, but all have to be expressed through the machinery of the body. If the machinery is not there no emotions can be expressed, no mental states can be manifested on this plane. So there is always this conditioning factor of the body. So there are preset limits imposed on that personality. In a sense, for instance, each person has a certain amount of intelligence which he or she is going to express. Some people can never be geniuses; some people can never be mathematicians. Some people will never be engineers. Some people will be road sweepers or cobblers because of certain limitations. The physical makeup of the brain and the nervous system and of the chemistry of the body will condition how energy is expressed and to what extent in any given form, for the form will always predispose function. For energy to come through from a higher level it has to come through the function of that system. How that system functions will condition or predispose that personality to act in certain ways which will limit the being or you might say will allow it to express itself, in its habits, in its attitudes, in its livingness, in all that. If you want to change your attitudes, if you think you can change your life by changing your attitudes, what are you doing? You are taking one area of mind and moving it to another area, from point A to point B, or from point E to point Y. You are simply moving the content of one part of the mind to another part of the mind. Chemicals are slightly changed. You are taking a negative aspect of thought and moving it from the foreground of awareness into the background. You are taking some positive aspect of personality that was sitting dormant in the background of the mind and shifting it to the forefront. Yet have you changed anything fundamentally? You have simply stirred what was there. You have moved the contents around. You have replaced one set of conditions with another set of conditions, but you have not fundamentally changed or chemically altered yourself. Have you transformed anything greatly? You may allow perception to perceive something it had not perceived before, but it is still mind, and mind comes with its own preset limitations; it will always be limited. It doesn't very much change consciousness itself. The only way you can change consciousness is to go to more subtle areas of consciousness till the brain begins to function, the atoms of the brain begin to function in a more effective, more optimum, more refined manner, in a way that is more conducive to the demonstration of spirituality because more subtle. Great. Now you are a positive thinker. You take



an active part of the mind and dump it in an inactive part, and you activate some latent part to take its place. Now you have changed. Congratulations. You have moved this part here to that part there. Yet the part of the mind you did not like and wanted to change is still there, only not so obvious. And you are still you. But are you really a better you? Or have you wasted a lot of time on nothing? Are you fundamentally different? Can you be other than you? Will you turn into someone really nice – like me! Or is all this just a little bit superficial?

When something functions in awareness in a more subtle way it creates changes within the body-brain chemistry, within the brain cells by creating a habit of functioning in a certain more refined way or habituating the mind-body connection to function in a specific manner which creates a change in vibration or frequency; it habituates that specific mode of function which allows that to become habitual. That means it changes body/brain chemistry. It becomes a common way of expressing itself or being in a specific mode which allows a more delicate area of awareness to function at a more subtle level, and as you function in a more subtle style you are functioning more in the way that nature intended a human being to be, to function in the most optimum and efficient way because it is more efficient to operate in a more gentle, soft, tender way, in terms of consciousness, than in a gross way because it allows the line of least resistance to function in terms of the body mechanism, in terms of wear and tear. It's more efficient to function in a gentle way, as energy is not being wasted and there is less strain and tension on the brain system and within the nervous system which means it operates in the most optimum way for the benefit of that system which allows the state of non-resistance to life, to the challenges of life to take place, which allows for easiness of living. Life without strain? What a jolly good idea! This allows life to be lived with greater ease and greater facility. They don't teach these things at university, more's the pity.

Now change happens in a natural manner. It doesn't happen because we will it, because we want it (and what made us want it in the first place: what influenced us, and were we free to choose, and was the choice ours?). We may be able to decide to change our jobs, change where we live, change our partners, change our friends. We can decide that kind of thing where we have some control, but we can't decide to evolve, to be better human beings, really. We are influenced by something, by events, by someone, by our own nature, by some energy, because all the mind does is to interfere with some natural process. The way to change is through a natural process. If we change it is not because we have decided to change (although of course we think it is) but because of the impulse behind that and prior to that whereby we suddenly became aware of a greater reality or a more subtle possibility or the fact that change was possible and we did not have to be a certain way that we did not see before because a purer energy entered us or we came into contact with a more refined type of energy so that we moved from a gross state to a slightly more refined state. As a result of a new perception we decided we needed to change. We saw a better way of being. We changed because a natural impulse was a catalyst for change. Something pushed us, urged us, drove us on. Have we not been doing this all our life since we were children? Have there not been many changes and many influences, if we stop to think about it? Do you really have a choice or is life pretty much chosen for you? The old sages said, as do modern ones: Let life happen; go with

the flow; let your actions be free; flow with the Tao. When you know there is no self, no actor of actions, no doer of doing, no centre, no one who decides, no chooser of choices, then you must say: Volition – what volition? Life happens, but to whom? Not to anyone. It perplexes the mind that is not in this state of no-thing-ness. You know you have made choices, or were they chosen for you, out of your own nature because of your inherent tendencies and predisposition? You might say you have choices within limits. You have limited choice. Right, you want that car but you only have ten pound and the car is forty thousand. So your options are limited. Heard the one about getting blood out of a stone?

Everyone seems to be trying to protect the self, look after the self, enrich the self, but the personality has been dumped on us. Did we have any say in the matter? We think this self is all important, but did we choose it? Did we even want it? Why is this self so special and not any other? We just got the luck of the draw. We did not have any choice in the nature of our characteristics, and we still do not. It is just the way it is. And get this – it is perfect just the way it is for our purpose. You are perfect. You have what you need to become enlightened.

There is change, of course. But it has to be natural. Of course change is useful, when it is the real thing, when it is natural and spontaneous, when it is not another trick of the mind, when it is not forced, which only creates strain. That is just the mind manipulating the mind, because of something the mind wants. It will always be an egotistical thing based on desire. It will always be an ego trip of one kind or another. The mind, trying to be in control of its life, when in fact it can't be, because the mind can't change itself, because that's just the mind playing tricks with itself, playing its manipulative game. For instance, if you think spirituality means expressing love, and you try to love, that is not love; that is the mind trying to duplicate love, trying to copy it. It is an artificial state because the mind does not know how to love. It only knows how to think. That ain't love. No one can bring themselves one jot nearer to love by wanting it or willing it because the very thing that wills is the thing that prevents it. A mental idea or an emotional feeling is not love. Love comes on its own when the veils to it are removed. We have to go deeper into ourselves and we have to go to the deepest. A person, a lover, a doer will always get in the way of love. Love must be free and spontaneous. It cannot be any other way. Not being there is the invitation for love to come. When you are not there the door is open. You are not obstructing the entrance. Love lies in self-removal, in self-forgetfulness, in taking yourself out of the equation, out of the picture altogether. Love is freedom. Unblock the dam and the waters flow. The personality is a bunch of patterns and habits. Only awareness is alive with intelligence, and when that intelligence flows, then it leads to change. But when you are not the personality, not the mind, if you are not the form, if you are formless, then what do you care about change to an imaginary form, change to the mind, change within the personality? What has it got to do with you? You are free from all that. It's not you. You don't have to identify with that. You are disidentified with form. Therefore let the form be as it is. Let the form of the personality be in its natural state, whatever that might be. If it is not great, then how does it affect you? You are not it. If you are not the personality, why do you need to change it? Why do you need to paint someone else's house? It's not necessary because you are

not it. Why do you choose to identify with it? Change is only interesting to the personality itself. It is irrelevant to that formless state of nothingness which just is, has no desires, no interest, no expectations, no thoughts about it, about what its reflection should or should not be. It has no concerns; it simply is on its own level, untouched, uncontaminated, untainted, unstained and free. True change takes place by unloosing the patterns, by breaking habits, by leaving space for fresher and more life-supporting patterns to emerge. But the newer patterns come from on high, as it were. They are not made by man. They are not Produced in the USA; they do not say Made in Hong Kong. They are there, waiting expression, on the Abstract Mental Plane as idealised prototypes of humanity, where they have always been.

The unknown, the unborn, the never-expressed can never be understood. It is always a mystery, the eternal mystery. It is the Unknown because it can never be known. Because that which would know it would have to be understanding, which is the intellect. The mind can never understand that which is beyond itself unless it can go to where the greater is, and mind can never know the Greater in a direct way. Not as mind stands. Even though when awareness moves, when it begins to act, when it is set in motion, it becomes mind. When it becomes still, it is no longer mind. It is something else.

It becomes pure awareness. Yet that mind which seeks to understand has a form. The mind without concepts or shapes is formless. Being formless, it is still and silent. When it becomes active it is no longer that still and silent awareness, but becomes mind because it has been **impressed** by form, by shape, by images, so it has lost its innocence. When mind becomes still, it becomes form-less, devoid of form. Then it is no longer associated with mind, which is a compact, condensed form of awareness, on a grosser level of expression and manifestation. Or, if you like, when awareness becomes coarsened and hardened, it becomes mind. It contracts. When it expands it returns toward its original state of free awareness and unconfined freedom, or toward the state of love. Love is unlimited freedom. It is the eagle soaring free. It is the open sky. It is not the narrow pass. It means to be open. So expand and flower; don't be contracted.

The manifested can never know the unmanifest. Only the unmanifest, the unseen, can know the unseen. So, there is no understanding involved of the unknown, but there is a becoming it, a being of it. It is only by becoming and being it that it can be known, and it is not known by the agency of the mind, which deals in concepts, as being is not a concept, and that which is above the mind is concept-less. It doesn't deal in pictures and images because it is idea-less and ideal-less. It has no ideals; it has no concepts; it has no form of knowledge because knowledge or understanding is still a form within the mind, and that which is above the mind is image-less and therefore concept-less, and therefore knowledge-free, and knowledge is an imposition on pure, brilliant awareness, of that which is unmoving and ever-free and unmanifest. Being ever-free it is unmanifest and free of form. It has no structure, no shape, nothing to know it by.

The intervals between any two activities, between one thought and the next, between the outbreath and the inbreath, or between the inbreath and the outbreath, is a period of stillness; in that gap there is silence. Between one feeling and the next is the inroad to stillness and peace. This is what the Tantra of Kashmir taught. In other words, there is always an opportunity to access a state of peace. It is there in the gap, and it can be expanded through meditation.

This is the first thing a meditator contacts as he or she learns meditation, to relax into the breath or to relax into the mantra or into whatever form the meditation may be. It is the space, the interval, between these two activities, breathing in, breathing out; breathing out, breathing in, or between one thought-sound of the mantra and the next. In any interval, in any gap, there is a stillness; and that's the beginning of the nothingness; that is the nothingness state, the state of void. As a meditator progresses, any time there is an experience of quietness, of stillness, that is an experience of the nothingness, although it may not be in its full-blossomed expression. But it is there each time stillness is felt, each time calmness is experienced, each time that silence is known. Traditionally, Light and Sound has been conceived as God. In the old teaching, in the old days, in the Christian tradition, and elsewhere also: 'In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,' so the Sound, the Vibration, is seen as God, as a Divine Being. That Divine Intelligence of Light and Sound is identified and identical with that which was called God, as the Divine Mystery, the Great Being. So, when you saw Light, when you heard Sound, you were in the Presence of God. That was the way it was viewed in those times, in those far off days. Indeed, in India it still is today, that you are in the Presence of the Most High when you are in the presence of Light and Sound. When you experience Light and Sound, they say, you are experiencing God. Therefore Light and Sound has been called the path of devotion, Bhakti Marga, the Yoga of Devotion, because you become immersed in that divine energy, absorbed in it. The wave is lost in the sea.

This was taught by Guru Nanak, and by Kabir, and by other Saints of Light and Sound who sought to instill the sense of the Divine Presence in their followers. In the Siddhagosht Guru Nanak says: 'The Word is the guru, and the mind, continually focussed on it, is the disciple. By dwelling on the Ineffable One I remain detached. God, the Eternal Cherisher of the world, is my Guru. By meditating on the Unique Word the ocean of existence is crossed.'

So in the case of Guru Nanak, what he said was that he had been initiated by God, that God had given him the right to reach the hearts and minds of men through the Light and Sound and to convey it to others, and he said his Guru, his teacher was God; but he also said God was the Sound and the Light. So the Light is the Inner Guru, the Inner Teacher; but of course not in the same way as an outer teacher. It is the Intelligence which leads one on to plane after plane and to experience after experience. It is the Guide.

Each day or each time one experiences something of a spiritual order, that is divinity, and that is Light and Sound, and they are identical as far as the teachings of Light and Sound in the East are

concerned; that Light and Sound are God. God is the Word, which St Paul spoke of as ‘the Name beyond all other names,’ and god is the same, the Logos, the Living Word, so these teachings claim. Or Brahman becomes expressed through the Light and Sound. Or Brahman is expressed with attributes. Brahman-without-attributes means that Divinity which is limitless, immutable, ineffable, all stillness and silence, the Absolute Stillness. And God-with-attributes means God in expression at a lower level, divinity in manifestation, Shabda Brahman, God-as-Sound. If divinity is being expressed in some way, it means it has a Form, and the Absolute is formless, actionless and totally Abstract. What most people call God is Divine Intelligence expressed as Cosmic Law, either manifest or in a state of Potential. Universal laws exist as Potential Tendencies, not yet actual, in a dormant state in a vast field of Intelligence. These get expressed through Sound and Light.

In China they talk about Wu Chi, Ultimate Nothingness. The Unoriginate, the Unborn, Brahman, takes birth only through Maya, the prime illusion, because it is not in contact with anything. There is no diversity in Brahman. So it is said: Not this, not this, neti, neti, because it is not anything else. It is itself alone, known only to itself, incomprehensible to any human mind. It only knows itself, generates itself, creates itself into existence, yet does nothing at all. As the old Hindu books say, it is neither existence nor non-existence. It is and it ain't. How can you explain a greater dimension from a lesser one? It is self-radiant. It shines with its own light. Maya is thinking that this becomes something else. But That, the non-existent, cannot become existent on this plane of existence. It can only come into existence in an illusory manner. If it is existence itself, if it is existing, how can it come to exist in another form, which would be to deny its original existence? How can that which is, come to be something else? If it is, how can it be said to be something else? In the Supreme Reality nothing whatever is born. It has no Source. So if nothing whatsoever is born, there cannot be a soul, which is a non-existing self, a product of illusion. Higher states of awareness reveal this fact very clearly and strongly, leaving no doubt about the matter at all. The Beyond is beyond. Always. The Timeless never comes into time. Where would the limited find room for the Unlimited? The Unmanifest can never be manifested. The Supreme Reality cannot be manifested because that would mean it would become something else and hence it would be impermanent and not supreme at all. What exists already exists as itself, so how can it become something else? If it is the supreme state, how can it become a lesser state, because if it becomes a lesser state, then it could not be the same supreme, total wholeness that it's supposed to be. Truth must be unchanging. And if it is non-existing Nothingness, then how can that come to be something? How can the immortal acquire mortality? The Birthless cannot undergo birth. It defies logic. It is bad philosophy. People look for reasons to explain existence.

By definition Brahman, the Immutable, the Eternal, is unchanging. How can the unchanging, remaining unchanging, undergo change? Then it would not have been unchanging in the first place, would it? The eternal is known as Sat, Truth, ageless, timeless, non-manifest. How can that which is Causeless be the cause of an effect? Can Truth create a lie? It can only create in an illusory way, seeming to be other than what it is. Reality is Sat, Isness, and that means it cannot

change into something that is not. Can a duck be a can opener? That doesn't make sense, does it? The Unoriginate cannot come into being, and it cannot be eternal if it is subject to change. If something comes to be as the effect of a cause, then that effect can be the cause of another effect, which can be the cause of another effect, which can go on endlessly, continuously creating effect after effect. But if the effect is not different from the cause, then the effect too will be birthless. How can the Unoriginate be identical to an effect that comes into being? The original Birthless has no motion. If it has no motion, how can it give rise to an effect? If it is the Changeless, how can it change into something else? Naw – that horse won't ride. How can the Uncaused come into existence? How can the Uncaused, uncausing, cause anything to be? The Real cannot give birth to the unreal, and the unreal cannot give birth to the Real. Really.

The truth of God or Eternal Existence is very simple. There is no truth; there are no facts. Because the Ultimate cannot be contained by any idea or concept, and all ideas are effects. Therefore any ideas relating to non-existence or Nothingness can only be an idea, a concept, a belief. It is not the thing itself (which is a no-thing), the Ultimate Truth or non-truth, existence or non-existence. It is simply the isness of the thing about which nothing can be said (without it being an idea) of any factual nature because it will always remain an unspoken, untellable mystery.

When we fall asleep or just nod off, the world disappears for us. Objects are no longer connected to the senses when consciousness collapses, contracts or withdraws. Therefore, is the world real, if it can disappear upon going to sleep, upon becoming tired? Is it a real world or does it depend on being aware of it through the senses? Sustained and regular practice of meditation leads to the development of the awareness of a field around the body. First, the awareness of an electro-magnetic field, a natural field around the body of the etheric vehicle. Second, an awareness of the field of consciousness, a field of silence; one becomes aware of the silence surrounding one, and in which one lives and functions. That silence is in itself Nothingness. It is the field of the Nothingness which is something, and which becomes everything. Only you can't say what that something is because it's nothing. It's one of those things which is a positive-negative. It can't be described. It can barely be talked about, and yet it must be. It can only be experienced and lived as that field of depth, as inner stillness and silence and meaningfulness. Although it has no meaning it is more significant than anything else in life because it is of a subtler reality. And being deeper becomes more important because one recognises it as being more real than anything else. It is more real than anything which can be seen, touched or known. It is beyond all the senses and because it is beyond all the senses and even beyond the mind it is called nothingness. It is nothing that can be perceived or known in any other way except by the perception of itself as the field of awareness that is a living reality which is alive. It is more, it feels more alive than anything else, and all other things become superficial, and when one lives in it the thing one calls me becomes nothing, becomes insignificant, becomes unimportant because it is not what you are. If it is not what or who you are, how can it be important? So, the personality loses its importance and its significance in the face of this greater reality, and this greater importance, which is the prime importance, this primal thing that you recognise as the most significant, basic thing in life, as life

itself in its purest, most brilliant state, what has been called a stateless state or a conditionless condition because this is something that can't be conditioned because it has never been manifest. It has never come into expression through any form of matter or materialisation. It is transcendent abstraction. In the end, this field is what you are. You have no fixed place, no abode, no centre. The body and mind are things you use; they are not you. You are – well, nothing. Everything else is inside your nothingness. This is your freedom.

How much more can be said about nothing?

So there you have it.

But why take my word for it? What do I know?

I am nobody. I am nothing. Thank God for that.

Gee, my ex-wives were right after all.

They said I would amount to nothing!

Damn right. And stuff them – call the taxidermist.

## Part Two

### ANCIENT WAYS – EASTERN TRADITIONS

15

#### **Yoga – Stretching the Limits**

The knower of Brahman, having known that wisdom, should seek to stand on the strength of it. Having realized wisdom and strength, he meditates in silence. Having realized silence and non-silence, he is a knower of Brahman. How should he behave? However he should behave, he is just That. Except for this, everything is perishable  
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Let a man practice the yoga of the Self, which makes the mind steady. There is nothing higher than attainment of the Self. Yoga is the basis for the destruction of impurity here in this life

Apastamba

Liberation is nothing but the realization of one's true nature  
Abhinavagupta

From instruction, the Path that leads within to That is known  
Brahma Sutras

If you want to be free, know your real self. It has no form, no appearance, no root, no basis, no abode  
Linji

Yoga is direct experience, as an activity; and as a state it is essential Beingness. You do the first in order to attain the second. It is to hold the mind steady in the Light. The practice of yoga directs attention. It takes the mind in the direction of the sacred. It makes Spiritual Awareness a living reality.

Yoga is transcendence. It means to go beyond anything else. It means to find stillness. Yoga is slowing down the thinking process through gentle concentration. It is to be very simple. It is to find your own essence, your basic nature. Nothing is more simple than nothing, and nothing is harder to find than your own simplicity. Yoga is to still everything till there is nothing left but you. In the end you will find that you are all there is. Not as a personality, but as the eternal Self. You are the Song that never ends, and never starts.

Anyone who meditates should ask: What is Yoga, and what does it accomplish? The Mahabarata states: Yoga is direct experience. Direct experience of what? Your essential nature, the inner Self. It is experience of the Changeless, except that the Changeless is not an experience, for what would experience it? Experience requires duality, two things, an experience and an experiencer, a knower and that which is known, a perceiver and the perceived. Yoga is direct knowingness, immediate recognition. Direct experience means to live something. Therefore it is an 'experience' which is intimate and very real. It is alive. It is not an idea, a concept, an attitude. A direct experience is when you get inside something and live it. In Yoga, what is it that we are experiencing? That, as some dead guy once said, is the question. The answer is that yoga is the experience of the Self. What is this Self? Whose self? It is pure consciousness, which some have called Universal Mind, although it does not think. The point and purpose of meditation, the end product of it, is to experience the highest possible essence of awareness, awareness in its purity. That is one's own Self, one's own reality. It is what one essentially is. That is what we come into intimate contact with in the state of yoga. We enter into the conditionless condition, the stateless state, free space. This is a dimension, a domain, of conscious awareness. Direct experience is the state of knowingness or Self-knowingness. We experience knowingness itself, and we know that we know.



What we know is fullness, wholeness, steadiness. It is a state of conscious alertness. We become acutely aware of our state. We enter into the balanced state, the established state. Established in what? In wholeness, in Silence, in stillness, for that is where balance is.

But, in the end, we have to transcend even this and go beyond Consciousness itself, into the Unknown, into that which is beyond all experience, all knowing. And that, as the soldier said to the lady midget, is not an easy thing to do.

As we sit down to meditate we start to quieten the mind. Then we start to access that which is not normally available to the waking mind. An advanced meditator could just go there. Others require time and practice. By some technique we take our attention to subtler realms of experience. We take our attention inward and refine thought. We look inward by putting our attention on some object or thought. We need an effortless, simple, easy process that offers no resistance otherwise we will encounter obstacles. Any perception, including thought, when persisted in without strain, will carry attention toward the centre of our existence.

As we perceive a mental object it becomes more subtle and refined and takes attention inward. The mind settles down as it reaches less and less active states. The less active the state, the more the mind settles down into a subdued condition. The system then achieves a state of greater rest. It is found that the mind becomes less and less gross as it becomes less active and more quiet. Space is created within the mind. Attention becomes less involved with surface levels of awareness. As it does this it becomes freer. Its bindings are loosened. It becomes free of those levels of activity which normally hold the mind on the surface levels of attention. Mental agitations are let go of. The mind begins to slip down to deeper and deeper levels. The mind becomes subdued. It feels itself getting quieter. The natural state of the mind is a clear, gentle, soft, 'fragile' state. Its natural state is one of deep quietude and contentment. Actually, its natural state is like space.

This is a feeling like coming home, being at ease, a feeling of rightness. You're okay, and everything is fine with the world. You have a sense of comfort. It is the opposite of life being viewed as a threat. The unnatural state is when the mind is agitated, excited and set into motion. Gross levels of mind are superficial levels. From there, the mind is more easily affected, because it is not stable and steadfast, and is not strongly rooted in reality, but wavers like a candle in the wind. There is nothing to anchor it to its foundation in pure awareness. Then it is unagitated. Otherwise it is not functioning at its optimum level. Problems arise when the mind functions at artificial levels of activation all the time and cannot come to a state of rest, which was never what nature intended for a human being. We should act from levels of restfulness in a gentle manner without undue force, which puts a burden on the system which winds us up tighter than we ought to be. Many people take life and their problems too seriously. Life is a joke – but we don't always get it! We need to be more light-hearted and take things a bit easier and approach life with a softer attitude. We need to see the funny side of things a bit more.

The unsteady mind finds it difficult to escape the shallow areas of consciousness where it tosses like waves and ripples on the surface of the sea, which is like a whirlpool of constant stimulation and perturbation. The Sanskrit word for this is *vritti*, an eddie, a current of consciousness, a disturbance within awareness which we call mind. Mind is the area in which thoughts are perceived, and then we have the notion of a thinker, which thinks it thinks and acts, and which wants things, and which feels emotion, which stimulates the mind even more. All these agitations deprive the mind of knowing its own source and foundation. Thus awareness appears to lose its profundity and depth and the deeper areas of itself become closed and the mind makes false identifications, giving the impression that it is only this small centre, this little self. It sees itself then only in its shallow aspects, and if it is looking at itself only in its shallowness, it is being deprived of its own virtues, of its own value, and of its own richness. Such a self feels restricted, confined and somewhat frustrated, yet without knowing why. Why is it not content? Why has it not found happiness? Why is there always this sense of dissatisfaction, a feeling of something left undone? Why is life not a song of joy? Is life only about satisfying endless desires? Of course most people think it is. Which is why most people do not practice spiritual yoga. They are not looking for release. They are not asking questions. They are looking for stimulation on an endless scale of stupidity. Their happiness, such as it is, depends upon being entertained. It comes from outside, not from within. Yet real joy is within, all covered and hidden, for the most part.

Could there be more to life than this? Could I be more than I think I am? Yoga is for those who ask these questions.

I recently read an interview with the famous yoga researcher and writer, Georg Feurstein, in which he said that most spiritual groups today are simply offering watered-down versions of teachings which are more like self-help, self-improvement courses. They are giving people what they want, rather than what they need for true spirituality to occur. Many people want a fast and easy answer, not a true answer, but false spirituality, as easy as possible for lazy people who are unwilling to think for themselves, and who only superficially challenge accepted ideas; they simply accept new ones. They just get stuck in a different rut. People who are selling 'spirituality' as a means of making money and creating 'wealth-consciousness' are prostituting the traditions they profess to serve. An authentic spiritual tradition will present authentic teachings and seek for authentic seekers. It will not seek to increase ego. For only authentic seekers will have the drive to become free. Self-improvement is okay in the earlier stages, but how does that enable you to overcome the ego when you are trying to build it up into something bigger and better? Ultimately you are trying to transcend it.

As we go down to deeper levels we find they are less states of thought and more states of feeling. These are the levels where we approach warmth, contentment, a feeling of mental comfort and greater integration. We feel our wholeness and completeness, tenderness and compassion, love and intimacy, joy and a greater sense of well-being. We experience tranquillity and bliss. These are the things that make us happy. If they did not, why would anyone bother to meditate for hours and

years? Normally the mind is going outwards, outwards, outwards. Now we turn it inwards. A human being is looking outwards trying to find satisfaction. His senses are leading him away from himself to outside objects. His or her desires are followed, whatever those desires may be, and they lead him away from himself, from the deeper nature. They form a veil. They delude him into thinking he is this shallow, limited being. For most human beings satisfaction is found outside, even when the satisfaction is based on feelings. The ego is like a wall that prevents what underlies the surface levels. The basis of everything is conscious awareness. The deeper levels are experienced as finer feelings. The ego is a tight, enclosed feeling. When the shell of ego is broken down the attention spans greater areas and wider horizons. Then there is identification with life itself. We transcend the small sense of me. We arrive at a greater state of being. When you transcend mind, go beyond ego and thought, the sense of distinction between the beingness of the universe and your beingness become blurred. You start to experience the wideness of life so there is greater livingness. That, boys and girls, is Yoga.

Now I will tell you a funny thing. People say they are looking for love, that they want love. But they are love. But when they say love they mean sex and passion and romance; they mean feeling and sensation. They want to feel deeply. But they are already in love. They are in love with themselves. Everything I do I do for myself, to please myself or to feel good about myself. I want things for myself. My desires are for me, about me. I eat for me, sleep for me, live for me. I just don't call it love. Yet it is; it is self-centred love. And if I have great passion, great affection, a heart full for someone, longing for someone, who is it for? Little old me. You make me happy.

Those borders become less distinct and less clear. The experience is one of consciousness and not so much my-ness. Or you might say my-ness becomes allness. There is the experience of gentility and subtler areas, and subtler areas are ones of greater feeling, more refined feelings. We have to develop sensitivity to these areas through yoga. We will experience these depending on our own sensitivity. Some people may meditate and not have experiences of great tranquillity and underlying bliss. They may not have a great sense of peace because that sensitivity is not yet developed. The aura may be a bit sluggish. Familiarity on a conscious level may not yet be developed with joy and well-being. Those areas are still contacted, but in a rather weak sort of way. It may not be a conscious contact with contentment. The subtle level, being less familiar, may not seem so real as other more mundane levels. Great joy and willing compassion are yet distant. Yoga trains the organism, trains the brain, trains the mind to be awake to these more subtle levels. Then we function at these levels with alertness, to be aware of and to be awake to these deeper levels of consciousness. When we awaken to these finer levels we become awake to the state of Yoga. We know that state is ourself. We know the state of Yoga; we live the state of Yoga. That state becomes our normal pivot of awareness.

### **Knowing our Own Wholeness**

Yoga is the gateway to life. When we have access to yoga we have access to fuller life, to better life. Yoga is life. Yoga is not something separate and apart. Yoga is the very basis of life. It is the foundation of our beingness, the state of wholeness. The only thing we are concerned with is our own beingness because apart from being life has no existence. What value is life to a dead man? What is its significance to a rock? Life only has significance to life. Those who are alive attach importance to life. What is more important than our own existence? Life itself becomes aware of life. Life gives meaning to life. Yoga makes us more alive, more aware, more conscious and more alert, and that very alertness is aliveness. What is life? It is consciousness, the flow of energy. To a human being life is most important. A stable person does not seek death. Yoga gives access to deeper and finer feelings. Through the practice of real yoga we enter more fully into deeper feelings of love, compassion, joy, serenity. All these things are on the level of feeling so that we experience ourself in terms of subtle sensation. We access deeper and more refined states of consciousness. Direct experience is very important. It is not something distant, abstract, away from us. It is intimate and immediate. It is something with which we are vitally concerned. Your life is all you have, and you want as much of it as you can get.

Buddha spoke of ‘pleasant abiding in the here and now’ and ‘one should pursue pleasure within oneself,’ and that there should be a ‘comfortable abiding.’ This turns meditation from a dull chore into a pleasant experience that one looks forward to. Bliss is inside us; we need to draw it out. We need to find the lightness within us. Then we become absorbed in that.

Through that love arises. Love is appreciation of life, gladness, a sense of well-being, a song in our heart, sensitivity and a feeling of wonder. It is not emotional gush. Of course there is nothing wrong with emotional gush – all the songs, and most poems, and millions of stories, say so. Wait a minute – don’t most songs sing about the pain of longing? But never mind. It made Danielle Steele rich. Oh, if I could have the perfect love. You can – with yourself!

Life came into being through Intelligence. That Intelligence governs, activates and motivates life. Consciousness is the result of that Intelligence. The state of Yoga is one of fuller life. Its practice gives the yogi a better quality of life. It freshens and broadens awareness. Deeper levels of feeling give one access to deeper life by going deeper into one’s awareness. The level of Being is the level of freedom. We are free to the degree that we have access to our own Being. We have access to our own Being to the degree that we are free. That freedom is a joy. That comes from identification with our own essence. Nothing is as important as the experience of our own Being. It is spiritual livingness that gives meaning to our lives. That is what is important. It is not what we do that matters. It is what we are. Having this job or that person is not as important as to find our own home in spiritual awareness. At the end of our life all we are left with is our spiritual treasure. Other than that we are left with nothing. You cannot take anything else with you. Oh, Death, where is thy sting? Shit, that hurts! It really hurts. Of course I have never died so I don’t actually know. I try to avoid it.

Yoga is directed toward spiritual beingness. When we say Beingness we have to understand that in terms of the Absolute. That which is absolute in spiritual terms is nothing in material terms, as it is non-graspable and non-understandable by anything material. What can know the immaterial? It is the utmost abstraction. So, as seekers, what are we looking for? Nothing! It is a strange paradox. The total potential that we have is wholeness of life. Wholeness is what we fundamentally are. Wholeness is not compounded. Everything else is a process of change from this point to that point, a process of transformation. The nature of life is creation, maintenance and decay. This is the process of transformation of any state, condition or thing. Everything born of matter is subject to decay. Anything may change. Nothing is permanent. The only permanent thing is no-change, underlying all change. The changeless state is Being. Wholeness is whole because it is complete in itself. Wholeness is perfection. It lacks nothing. Wholeness is whole. Illusion, maya, is when wholeness appears to fragment to create the universe. It seems to experience limitation. But the unlimited can never become limited. How could it ever be made whole again? Holiness is the sacredness of wholeness.

Yoga gives access to wholeness as a direct and immediate experience, except that it is a non-experience, as experience depends on fractured awareness, for what would there be to experience anything when there is only one thing everywhere? It needs duality for an experience to occur: the experience and the experiencer. There is no outside or other for that which is everywhere. There is no division when there is only singleness. Yoga is the abstracting process. In the end, everything is dissolved in Yoga. When there is no knower, everything is known. Now ain't that strange? We can know our own knowingness through expansion of consciousness and intensification of awareness and by going beyond the parts so that we come to know that awareness of wholeness, by going beyond experience, beyond thought, by experiencing mind empty of its contents and experiencing the emptiness of the ego. By emptying the mind of its contents we go beyond its contents and experience the direct reality of the mind empty of its contents, beyond thoughts and feelings and conceptions. We go beyond all that and experience Consciousness conscious-of-itself. Awareness knows itself as pure aliveness, untainted, unpolluted, uncontaminated, uncluttered of anything but its own reality. It knows the clear state of its own wholeness.

Now, wholeness is of two kinds. There is dynamic, lively Silence; and there is restful Silence, calm and unmoving. There is pure peace and tranquillity, and there is active stillness, stillness that is moving within itself, stillness-in-motion. So there is stillness as a state of rest, and there is creative stillness. That dynamic stillness is Intelligence, which gives rise to all the laws of nature and to all creation. So pure stillness underlies all creation, all motion, and all the laws of the universe. It remains untouched by anything while, still and silent, yet it is also active while remaining within itself. During meditation one can experience both these forms of stillness. Dynamic stillness is sometimes experienced as sound and sometimes felt as a liveliness or as impulses within awareness or as reverberations of tiny movements spread everywhere. That activity is felt as subtle bliss. That bliss is activated through meditation; sometimes it is felt as deep, profound stillness, and sometimes as activated bliss, joy or elation.

That silence moves and this movement is bliss. Bliss gets set in motion from the place where bliss is. In yoga and Vedanta they speak of a bliss sheath. Awareness can function through it by contacting subtle areas of feeling. If silence remains inactive it is not actually bliss, but latent bliss. Actually it is a mass of slumbering bliss. Some people talk of Bliss Consciousness as a state to be experienced. Dormant bliss can get active, it can come alive. Ah, to be happy; the one permanent desire of humanity. So we can know that bliss as dynamic joy, and we can know that bliss as contentment, satisfaction, peace. When peace becomes joy we do not lose the underlying peace, as all things are contained within wholeness. All spiritual experiences are inherent within the state of wholeness. If we cannot experience that wholeness, if we cannot live wholeness, if we cannot know it within our own minds, then the ego becomes a rudderless ship. It is weak and flimsy; the structure is weak and unsound, as it loses its mooring. All there can be for the ego is selfishness. It is not newly made. Wholeness infuses fresh life into it. Without it the mind does not have interior strength. Wholeness brings infinite flexibility. Experience makes the mind rigid and narrow. Through the experience of wholeness the mind is expanded and refreshed.

### **Yoga – A View of the Imperishable**

For well over two thousand years the yoga sutras of the sage Patanjali have been regarded as the summation of vedic wisdom, a practical path of knowledge leading to direct experience of the yogic path: the discovery of the eternal principle underlying the basis of all creation contacted in the individual awareness.

Religion, without spiritual experience, is meaningless. Any faith without direct contact of the Reality behind it leaves room for doubt. And if we are not dull, not stupid, we must doubt, we must wonder, we must ask what life is about and we must challenge the unquestioned authority of others, of those who profess to know. And as we see beauty fade and flesh wither and age exert a heavy burden, and as death claims those we love and know, and as we are confronted by our own death in the coming winters, must we not ask why?

But the Vedic rishis, the seers of old, went a step forward, a step further. They enquired into the nature of life, and their own natures, seeking to know not only creation, but also that which gave birth to it. They sought that which underlies both life and death, which gives deliverance from both. Their equation was simple, exquisitely acute: if there is an absolute state which survives every fluctuation in creation, every state of consciousness and all activity, and if that selfsame state could be permanently established in awareness so that it was never lost, then no change of any kind could long affect man, as ripples in a lake do not detract from the water; then eternity would be lived here and now on earth, and ever after, and with the falling away of the body it would remain. And death would not claim the awareness rooted in the Eternal. No, sir. Or so they reasoned. Then set out to prove it.

The method for attaining this state was called Yoga. The highlights of this way shine best and most clearly in the Yoga Sutras. Patanjali called the philosophy of integrated wisdom which he presented, Yoga-darshana, which means view – his view of the wholeness of life, his view of union; and that view was of one who stood upon the mountain of attainment, the view of one who shone in the fullness of illumination. The view of the yogic philosophy, the depth of understanding, the sweep and range of the ideas and their relation to each other in the whole work and the systematic presentation of technique is amazing. And all this in just a few pages. Every great sage of India went to the treasury which Patanjali left, a signpost for the ages, a beacon in the dark centuries of ignorance to follow. The sutras, though simple (sort of) and short, contain a lifetime's study for most people, as their stream runs deep.

Some commentators have suggested Patanjali was simply a compiler of available knowledge. That is both true and incorrect. To think of him as a mere compiler is to say Rembrandt was a painter or Homer wrote some adventures or Longfellow penned a poem about some Indian called Hiawatha, or Casanova liked women. Certainly Patanjali used all available sources of knowledge. As a sage the path of yoga was known to him, the teaching familiar, the philosophy part of his awareness. But the wisdom was his, and the words were his alone. His was the vision, his the perceptions. Part of his genius was that his work covered the whole journey of yoga, end from beginning, even though various details were left out. He had been this way before and knew the way. He must have trekked this land.

Numerous have been the commentators and interpreters of the sutras; many, too, the translations into other tongues. Too many of them have added to the dungheap of ignorance, unfortunately. A few have flown the pure flag of truth. The great majority have been toys in a spiritual kindergarten, baubles for the foolish and superstitious to play with. Some have been trivial, if not downright stupid. Where are the commentaries of any worth?

English renderings of the sutras fall into two main groups. There are those who have tried to faithfully reproduce Patanjali's words, which usually sound clumsy in English, while trying to explain their meaning in their comments. At least one could see what he actually said. The second group have given an interpretation of what they thought Patanjali was saying, and have followed this with their own understanding in their comments. Question is, though, how clear and accurate was their understanding? Usually, not very.

Translating the Sanskrit sutras into English while retaining their exact meaning is not an easy thing. One word may have several unrelated meanings. Until the Indian grammarian, Panini, came along, a Sanskrit word could mean practically anything you wanted it to. One word wrong could put the meaning of the sutras one of joint. For example, one sutra speaks of the effect of purity in relation to the body. The word used for this effect is jugupsa, usually translated as disgust of the body. But the word also means protection, and the correct meaning of the sutra is that purity results in protection of the body, not in disgust of it. One problem is that Patanjali uses technical terms;

without knowing exactly what he meant, one may be led astray. Thus, for all the many, many yogic books, the highroad to yoga has been blocked, or at least missed, apart from a few individuals century after century.

It seems rather unfortunate that Patanjali did not go into more detail. Yet, perhaps his terms were well understood in his day (else why use them?), and perhaps the sutras were directed at the leaders and teachers of the yogic community. Patanjali discussed the subtle strata of creation, the mechanics of going to the boundless, the fine art of trekking the spiritual Self. Some of those who studied his words read from the level of the gross, trying to force their way into a sublime region, thinking they could crash through into the abstract by the strength of their will and the intensity of their desire. But all their efforts must have met with failure and futility, and the end result must have been one of frustration and despair, and feeling they were too weak to reach up into the spiritual world, too loaded with sin to progress in this life, too impure to reach that other shore, too unevolved to reach the goal of yoga.

And around the world, from time to come, the teachers came, and the prophets, and the saviours of men, the spiritual leaders. The wheel of time turned, and things were pretty much the same. Men came, and endured, and died. Suffering continued. Chaos and confusion and ignorance still ruled. Men at large still did not function from their centre of stillness as the undying Self. Of all these teachers, Patanjali alone left a clear indication of the path of deliverance from suffering. Unfortunately that very ignorance warped, misinterpreted and misunderstood his teaching. And those who did this were regarded as authorities of his teaching!

It was a tradition in Patanjali's day that spiritual truth was handed down in crisp, short sentences. For one thing, they were easier to commit to memory, being handed on generation after generation by word of mouth, learning by rote. These germs of spiritual wisdom were then commented on and developed by the yogic teachers. This method was followed by Patanjali. However, with the decline of knowledge and the rise of ignorance, illumined sages became fewer; and their followers, themselves lacking in wisdom, as they became teachers in turn, interpreted the sutras in the only way they could – from the level of their own understanding, making the light of knowledge a mere gloom.

Some Western translators have called the sutras aphorisms. This is not correct. Sutra means thread. A sutra is a thread, a stitch. The title, Yoga Sutras, turned into English, should read Threads of Unity. There are two reasons for this. One is that the many threads of thought form a wholeness of comprehension, a total completeness of understanding, a fullness of view. The second reason is that the practice of yoga is designed to establish the wholeness of the absolute in the awareness, so that the individual mind merges and becomes immersed in cosmic mind.

Yoga, the state of unity, is when all things are seen as extensions of the Self – the only sensible basis for love, the real platform of brotherhood. Unity prevails when the wholeness of life, found



in awareness, is also found to be the same thing everywhere; though diversity is still perceived there is yet cognition of the underlying basis of everything. The wholeness of awareness, discovered in meditation, is found to persist outside of meditation, and this glorifies and transforms life. This is the destiny, the heritage, indeed the natural true state of everyone. Or should be.

This is more than the birthright of every person. It is the very basic nature of a being. Hence it is called Being. The very essence of Being is Bliss – the bliss of stillness. Therefore it is simply madness to be without it, if you have a choice. The yoga sutras exist to guide one to full recovery of that state. Just a pity it can't be done without a Master. But the sutras can indicate how one can return to that state which has been hidden.

We have been seeing through a mist. But before us is the possibility of standing in the full light of day. That which has blocked our vision can be removed. What has been obscure and darkly shadowed can be known. The pain and woe of bygone days can be lifted. That which held us a prisoner in the gloom of yesteryear may be banished in the light. The leech of time may be torn from our heart. We have been conditioned by the past, by old impressions, by old experiences. We have been fastened in time, caught in the noose of limiting concepts. Now, by a non-experience, just by dwelling in a timeless interval, we can undo time, uncondition the consciousness which appears to restrict the unlimited. So the Yoga Sutras affirm. So, too, our experience will confirm, if put to the test.

What Patanjali teaches, more or less, is that yoga is the practice of withdrawing the mind from gross objects of attention and establishing the steady intellect in stillness, called Samadhi, where the mind is anchored to silence. Repeatedly doing this, over time, establishes the pure state of Yoga where the undying Self is never lost to sight. This is the goal of yoga, where all impurities have been removed which obscured access to the Imperishable. It is not just a matter of going to it, knowing it; but of having become it, of being it, of learning all along that one was it, nor ever was not. This total identification is called moksha, or liberation. For then the consciousness, like a snake sloughing off its old skin, stands free of the shackles of the past; it stands alone, naked in its own light, pure in its own glory, empty of conditioning, free of limitations. This is brought about by meditation, the practice of going to the abstract, as taught by the Master. So the yogis say. Sounds good to me. Better try some.

One learns the steady holding back of the senses. This means the attention is brought under the control of the mind so that the senses do not drag the mind away, as the Hindus are fond of saying, like wild horses. But, also, the mind itself must be restrained or held back, or at least suspended and its activity slowed. Yet how can the mind remove itself? Ah. And what is this mind?

### **The state beyond stress**

When we live and move in fullness, the wholeness of life is achieved and the goal of yoga is attained. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna defines yoga as deliverance from pain and suffering. Pain is the result of ignorance – of thinking that we are other than the Self. Identifying ourselves with that which can be hurt, we take on its pain as our own. When we cling to something we fear its loss; losing it, we crave its return. As we associate with something – things, people, ideas, bodies, mind or ego – we become attached to it. Thus arises pride in it, the sense of possession, protectiveness of it, desire for its continuance, a fear of losing it. Separation from happiness is pain. Pain is aversion, a retreat from something, a refusal to experience. Suffering is lack of fulfilment. Sorrow is being cut off from that which provides joy. When we cannot obtain the joy we want, suffering results. As a result of frustration we feel anger.

Without satisfaction of desires, there is discontent. With discontent there is frustration, resulting in anger and anxiety, and then violence. From violence and aggression there is resistance. When nature itself resists our efforts, then life becomes very difficult indeed. When there is contentment there is satisfaction and none of this arises. More than anything else, suffering arises from a partial view of reality.

The yogi does not get bogged down in problems. He deals with life as he meets it, before problems arise. He is not overcome by the field of problems. He goes where there are no problems, no suffering, and no ignorance. He leaves the dark for the light. He goes to the Beyond, to Brahman. He follows the most ancient command of the Veda: Go beyond.

Brahman lies beyond, the ground of Silence, the source of all creation and activity. Hence, it is often spoken of as THAT. And that is the field the yogi enters, a field of perfect order, the Absolute unmanifest. In physics they talk of a field of perfect, unbroken symmetry out of which issues all the creative impulses giving rise to the manifold activities of existence, in man and nature, the laws governing evolution of the universe.

This level is a field of deep, deep peace. Bliss is found on the way to it. When blotting paper is dipped in a pool, it comes away saturated with water. When the mind is taken to the well of bliss, time after time, it becomes soaked in bliss. In the presence of bliss, suffering fades and problems disappear. When a man meditates deeply, his mind is filled with beauty. He touches the glory of life. And something within him – could it be love? – sings in his heart. He bathes in a pool of contentment. Hence he walks in joy, and misery finds no footing. For where would it stand?

Life should just flow. Where it does not, it indicates some kind of resistance. Man should be in harmony with nature, the friend of nature, and nature a friend to him, his ally. Man and nature should be unified, harmonious. And then life is lived naturally. Unfoldment occurs. A sense of rightness then prevails. Virtue should flourish. Life gains nothing from suffering. Suffering is opposed to growth. And struggle blocks natural unfoldment.

If life is a struggle, then strain and more strain is needed. Strain is asking too much of the body or mind. Strain weakens the system. Strain surely implies conflict, and that means dis-unity. The pressure of accumulated strain is stress. Tension and stress shadow the sunshine of living. They darken the brightness of the day. They cloud a clear view of reality.

Tension is an overload on the system. When there is too much strain the body cannot handle it. When something is not handled it remains. So tension remains; it accumulates. It is deposited in the body, on the level of the cells. Somewhere in the body there is a warping, a twisting. A drop of poison exists. Chemically, impurity is embedded in the system, according to yogic texts. Nerves are frayed. Nerves are jangled and torn. There is therefore a coarsening of the system, a dulling, a decrease in sensitivity.

Think about it. Every time you get upset, each time you feel fear or anger or any negative emotion, the activity of the system is excited and chemicals are generated till we calm down again. But what happens to the chemicals generated? Are they eliminated or are they deposited somewhere in the system? And this happens over and over again, countless times, in minute amounts, but over time it accumulates.

As the result of stress the body is put into an excited state. And remains excited, at some level, however fine. The pressure of stress affects its functioning, puts tendencies and resistance into it, malforms it. The quality of consciousness is affected, too; the level of awareness is reduced. The mind is narrowed, restricted. Stress stands between the man and his happiness like a great wall. Hence the seeds of sorrow are sown.

The ancient rishis, experts in consciousness, saw this very clearly. They came up with a very simple conclusion: As the body has been put under stress, all it needs to recover is rest. But the rest of sleep is neither long enough nor deep enough. And stress keeps on mounting. What was needed was a way of intense resting and deep relaxation.

Mind and body are closely related. Consciousness functions through the brain. Hurt the body and you depress the mind. When the mind is tired so is the body. The nervous system is the meeting ground between body and mind. Hence therapy in psychiatry is ninety percent physical. However, the problem of stress in the physical body cannot be resolved on a physical basis, as it runs too deep. The solution is rest. Yet sleep does not give enough rest to alleviate all stress. Light, superficial tensions are handled in a night's sleep, but it cannot cope with deep levels of stress. There is just too much stress for the body to handle.

Therefore the problem must be handled from the mental side. If an almost infinite level of rest was needed, then the attention needed to be taken to the infinite. If the body needed adjustment, then attention had to be taken where it could be renewed. For purification, the mind had to be taken to the realm of the Pure.

Of course this same problem can be explained in terms of etheric, pranic, psychic and chakric forces, which is what tantra and similar things, such as Taoist Yoga, seem to do; but we are only concerned here with yoga and a simpler and more obvious connection. I explained in the first chapter how the trauma of a lifetime can be lodged in certain chakras which can block the path of kundalini, according to yogic teachings. Subtle forces are not obvious to most of us, but we have all been hurt and can understand the damage that stress may cause.

Brahman is a level of infinite rest. In this state rest is absolute. It is a state of total silence, a living silence, of zero activity, utter stillness. As long as man is in contact with this level, body and mind are in a state of very deep rest. In this relaxed state, tension does not easily enter. Stress is not so easily embedded in the system, just as a line drawn in water leaves no trace. By directing the mind back to this state, the pioneers of yoga found, stress could be eliminated. Just take the attention back to its own natural, native state, a condition of peace, and trouble-causing tensions are thrown off. When you are content, where is stress? Where is dis-stress when you are unstressed?

This does not mean that the body rectifies itself and becomes super-healthy. It is not as simple as that. There is still genetics at work, as the body has certain inherited weaknesses and tendencies. And of course, as always, there are habits which cause stressful reactions to certain events.

Atman, the living spirit, contains and consists of all the rest you could ever need. As a result of that rest, tensions are dislodged. Tensions act as a dam, holding back the river of life. Once the dam is broken, life flows free. Then the yogi finds out what the natural state of man is. Hidden areas of his life stir.

At the same time as deep rest is given to body and mind, awareness is given access to Brahman. One does not have to wait till all stresses are gone, nor till perfection is gained. This is a very important point. If you get on a bus you do not have to wait till the end of the journey to know what a bus ride feels like. This is the beauty and glory of yoga. Today you can feel what is to come tomorrow. Or at least you get a taste of it. That is one reason why a Master is so important.

So, then, as the result of the practice of yoga, the state of yoga is attained. The attention arrives at Being. Stresses are weakened. As the result of this journey to pure consciousness, Being comes to be lived in the heart and mind, say yogic writers. One acts more freely, more naturally. Then action does not bring misery.

The Self, itself, does not act. It just is. But it can make actions in life successful. Behind all that we know, veiled by outer seeming, is the Cosmic Nature, responsible for all manifestation. By the action called yoga, we come into harmony with this nature. This is so subtle that the form it takes is silent Being. However, it is abstract and impersonal; it is not individualistic. Though it may seem to be distinct and stand on its own, in a very abstract sort of way, yet it is merged forever in

the sea of Brahman. What we know as nature, with all its works and all its laws, is supported and nourished and resides within the Cosmic Nature. Some yogic texts say we can contact this level through the Self. Then we can, some claim, influence nature. But we have to take that with a pinch of salt. Will being enlightened make you rich? Nah.

The more tensions a man has, the more coarse he becomes. The more gross he is, the further away from the Self he is. The further away from the Self, the more effort he uses in doing things. The more he tries, the more nature seems to resist. The more life resists his efforts, the more tension he has. The more tensions he has, the weaker his actions seem to be. More stress, less ability. Then hatred, resentment, confusion, malice and bitterness increase.

When life is unkind to man, he turns sour. Just like milk. Full cream, of course.

But yoga reverses all that. When tensions are weakened, then negative traits are reduced. Sourness is sweetened. Strange attitudes tend to fall away. Experience of the glory of life tends to soften the heart. Mind becomes less brittle.

Enjoying contentment, desires are not so all-consuming. Action is free and easy.

One of the effects of contacting pure awareness is that the yogi comes into ownership of a sense of power. This is not egotism, but simple recognition, as the power is impersonal. The might of creation seems to touch him. At times, as he moves on his way, all things seem possible to him. Nothing seems beyond his reach. Doors may open.

As man becomes less coarse by contacting finer levels of his nature, he does not try so hard. He makes less effort. As he tries less and less, yet he seems to flow; actions are easy and seem more fruitful.

As you read what I have written about yoga, remember that the personality does not get enlightened, nor will it ever. The mind is limited. The sense of self is false. It is not permanent. It will never be free. It is only that our awareness recognises what was always free. In a sense nothing changes, except that we see the false as false; we see what was always there. We do not develop a supermind; we do not come to own a superself. Indeed, we see how futile the self is.

Also bear in mind that the enlightened do not walk through walls, do not fly through the air, do not turn invisible, cannot read minds, nor urinate out their left ear. However it is said that a yogi can develop supernormal powers by turning his attention to them, and the third section of the Yoga Sutras deals with how to do this; and the Buddhist scriptures also claim that certain unusual powers can be developed as the result of meditation on them. You can feast on this supernormal stuff if you wish, but remember to always add a pinch of salt.

Now, the question may be asked: If we come into possession of the Absolute, if we attain the very highest state, if we can go no further than enlightenment, then why do we not gain control of the whole of creation and order it to do our will? Because it is the will and desire of the small mind, not of the Absolute, which has no desire to master and control anything. Brahman is apart from anything. Control over nature relates to Atma, not to Brahman. Brahman is absolute silence and unmoving stillness. It does not do anything. It does not need to. There is no lack in it, no desire. What can it gain from something less than itself?

So, now, all we can think is: Don't let me die before I find the answer. Let me get to the end of this. Let me discover what I really am. Let me find freedom. I must find freedom. Let me go beyond death. Let me complete the search. Let me know.

Did you ever think like this?

Now let us sketch an outline of what Patanjali taught.

### **An Outline of the Yoga Sutras**

He begins by saying: Yoga chitta-vritti nirodha – cessation of fluctuating mental states is yoga. This simply means bringing the mind to a state of rest. The term chitta-vritti means disturbances upon awareness or currents of consciousness or mental waves or movements of the mind. In fact the mind is these currents, otherwise there is only motionless awareness devoid of content where only its own value and nature is evident. Nirodha means control or discipline or mastery. It means mastery of active mental currents. This is done through easiness. It is not done through effort or will. It means restraint through easiness.

If the controller is himself conditioned, influenced by the past, subject to every impulse, passing mood, whim or sensation, how can he control the mind? And which part is controlling what other part? If he is not free, how can he produce freedom through effort? And if the mind is fragmented, one part trying to control another, how can it produce wholeness? The fragment cannot contain the whole, nor can contraction of the mind produce expanded awareness.

Effort is violence and disturbs the mind, setting it into motion. Patanjali says that meditation is the practice of motionlessness. The key to yoga is simply put:

Find the stillness. Sit in the stillness. Remain in the stillness.

The key word here, as I have said before, is **allowing**. You allow meditation to happen. You allow the stillness to be. You allow yourself to be what you are. If you can do this you can make any meditation technique from any tradition work. The secret is stillness, not technique.

Chitta is the substance of the mind and the area in which thought takes place and consciousness functions. It is mind plus awareness. It is the field in which consciousness moves, and upon which it plays. We call it mind, but it is not so much the analytical, critical faculty, not mind in the sense of discrimination, or selection, but that in which images are stored, in which memories are left and impressions and content placed. Chitta is mind-stuff, the medium which is impressed, as plasticine or wax is impressed. It is like the plastic or rubber which is going to be moulded and shaped into the appropriate form, the substance which is going to be used to form into the right pattern and design for understanding to occur.

Chitta may be thought of as a great lake, from gross to subtle. All impulses pass through this lake. The lake itself is still, but impulses pass through it and quicken it. There is the great universal ocean of chitta, and there is the individual portion which a person uses for what seem to be his own thoughts. As this is part of the whole ocean, it can be seen that there must be a point of connection between minds, and access to all knowledge. Chitta is the plastic substance which takes on the form of all things perceived. As it reflects them, imaging them, all things become known to us.

A vritti is a whirlpool, an eddie, a current, an agitated movement. Such a movement may be either subtle or gross. The more the motion, the more gross it will be; the less agitated it is, the finer will be the vibration, and the more sattva will come to function. When a movement takes place in the mind, it is called chitta-vritti. As chitta is stirred or disturbed, so there is desire, thought and memory. An impression is made on the mind. We recognize the impression. Thus there is thought, desire, memory and knowledge. Concepts and understanding arise.

The basic nature of life is Silence, deep, profound, total, absolute, unmoved. Far back beyond the darkest night of time, before Time was, the universal **SELF** moved **within itself**; **within that wholeness, motion arose**; **an impulse was spawned**; **a spark was struck**. Diffusion gave rise to a point. The point moved. Vibration stirred. Sound arose, and Light. Hence creation began. But the silence remained within the Wholeness. The Self remained with itself. The more motion there was, the more gross life became; the more manifest it became, the further away it moved from its Source. Further accretions were added.

With manifoldness and multiple creation, it became possible for the subtle to inhabit and know the gross. Thus could arise knowledge of otherness. With Trishna (the desire for embodied existence), experience began. The Self entered into contact with the not-Self, say the old books. In course of time, the embodied aspect becomes associated with that which it inhabits and indwells, the self of intellect, thought, feeling, the senses, the body. So awareness of the Self is lost.

How does the self lose contact with its infinite source? Because it is not real, just a sense we have of existing based on identification with forms, mind, body, sensations.

The Self does not act itself, but remains ever aloof from the field of action. Action does not belong to the Self. The Self belongs to the Self alone. That is why the apparent individual exists, to act through the mind and senses. Obviously, doing so, he or she gains experience. Question is, does the experience do any good? Generally, actually, not a lot! Now, so long as the individual self remains in contact with the real Self, everything is fine. He lives in wholeness, breathes the air of the divine and acts in fullness.

For some reason the everyday experience of the average person becomes greater than the experiencer, and overshadows it. The experiencer gets lost in the experience. That which lies beyond the experience and the experiencer, the observer, is not known. Lying deep, subtle, it remains unfathomed. Acting in a gross way – meaning the state of awareness, not the action itself – takes the mind out of itself and leaves a mark on it. In the state of pure awareness, mind remains unmarked and free. Action is simple and easy. Experience should wash over one, as the sea washes over a rock. When it does not the mind is left stained, stamped and imprinted. Because of that, because a mark was left on the mind, the self was conditioned by the experience, bound by the action and limited by the deed performed. In the compounding of such experiences lies bondage. Not for the ever-free spiritual Self, but for the individual person.

It would be interesting to look at the mechanics of this process, according to yogic teachers. A desire arises in the mind (actually, in the astral body), and, acting on that desire, the person loses himself in the act; if he is not in contact with Being, the process overwhelms him. The experience is on a gross level of experience, more or less, and because of that, a deep impression is left on the mind. So the desire is there, and the feelings of the time, the feel of the event and the resulting thoughts are there; the whole record is reproduced in chitta. Memory fades, but the ‘image’ is not forgotten. It is lost to sight, but the image remains in its seed form. And the impression has a message: one is impressed to act that way again, in a similar situation. So there is the desire which led to action, the act itself, the mood of the time, the state of consciousness and the conclusion drawn at that time. Now a similar event comes up, which stimulates that earlier impression. Memory may not act, but the former desire arises, along with all its associated impressions acting as tendency or inclination. Therefore action cannot be as free as it ought to be. Perception is influenced, as a man looking through coloured glass sees things as the colour of that glass. Action is through the past. The former event is conditioning present behaviour. There may be hundreds, thousands, maybe millions of these impressions, covering every situation. And each time we act we add to the burden.

All this stuff is covering up our true nature.

Between us and the Self is this wall of impressions. They bind us, hem us in and cut us off from the light of day. They limit and condition us. They weaken us. They make us prone to ills. They tell us wrong. They make us violate our higher nature. They violate our peace and our happiness.



They hurt us. They tend to make us hurt others. They are responsible for erratic behaviour. Nasty, nasty. Just ask the local psychiatrist. They keep him in a job.

We must be free of them, or aloof from them. Yoga promises us that freedom.

These impressions of action are called samskaras. After desire or an action, these impressions are reduced to seeds. The impressions of desire are also known as vasanas or mental tendencies. A slight impression is left deep in the mind, say the yogic books, where they lie dormant if they are not stimulated. In this dormant condition they cause no trouble. It is in their activated state that trouble is found.

A thought is a disturbance on the lake of chitta, awareness. A ripple runs through it. Thought is chitta in motion. But when chitta is set in motion, it often disturbs other areas of chitta. When a thought arises, coming as it does from the deepest level of the mind, it passes through the field of impressions. As an impulse of thought takes place, it stimulates related desires or impressions of thought it is related to, and chitta trembles as these impressions come alive. Then the arising thought is shaped by and impressed with these impressions. The thought is conditioned by them. If this is going on all the time, wave after wave rising and subsiding, thus always giving rise to new impressions, we can see that the mind must always be in a state of excitement, like a strong sea. Now add to this the fact that each impression has an accompanying state of mind, so one is bobbing around on myriad states of consciousness so close to one another that no distinction can be seen between them. Moreover, many impressions are so subtle and their movement so minute that they hardly touch the conscious mind at all, yet they are very real, and the fact that they are hidden makes them powerful. All this makes for a lot of stimulation, a lot of agitation and motion.

When an excitation occurs in the mind, it carries awareness with it. In order to know it, the mind must be aware of it. Consciousness follows the excitation. The further the excitation is from Being, the more dense it is; the more dense, the greater the excitation; the greater the excitation, the more removed from Being it is. So the mind is always going outwards, away from Being. Because of all these dancing shadows, the light of Being is not perceived. Reality is not seen. Brahman is obscured. Yet, to be happy, to be free, to function at our best, we must return home, to Atman, the eternal Self.

We must discover pure Consciousness. And even go beyond that.

Then how is this to be done?

We have to stop dancing with shadows and be still. Patanjali tells us: Control the excitations in the mind: desist now from exciting the mind; let fluctuating thought come to an end. The utterance is apt: Be still and know you are God. Plotinus spoke of the flight of the alone to the Alone. A person must make that flight. To be naked in emptiness.

Control cannot involve force. To force silence is so boring to the mind. We need something to fill the gap of silence. And Being does that very nicely. Being fills the void. Then there is contentment. Then the attention is happy to stay there. Control by force does not allow the mind to function at a subtle level. The mind cannot be forced into a subtle realm. The more we try the more gross, the more excited is awareness, which makes things worse. And such control, as well, involves taking one impression and tries to use it to subdue other impressions. But attention remains in the field of impressions. Whereas yoga takes a single, simple impression and lets it fade, then picks it up again, very easily, again letting it fade out beyond perception. Eventually no discernable impression is left in the mind and only pure awareness is left, untarnished and clear. Control is violence – the violation of innocence; an affront to tranquility. Yoga is the easy practice of the utmost tenderness, a lover's caress in the mind. Try it. To be happy the mind must be comfortable and relaxed, in its natural state, otherwise it will cause stress.

Love is acceptance, not minding how things are, granting the beingness of everything, being open to everything, not rejecting everything, letting life flow on in its own way, being easy about everything. That is being in tune with the infinite, as Ralph Waldo Trine expressed it. To accept everything, to include everything, and also to be totally accepted is not only comforting, but also an amazingly beautiful experience. It is a wonderfully expansive feeling. It is also very freeing. It is that which you can always rely on, whereas human beings will always let you down, one way or another, and they will always judge you, will want you to conform to their idea of how you should be, while this Vastness will always support you, always bless you, just as the sun cares not on whom it shines but shines on all. That Presence does not withhold anything; it gives off love like the perfume of the flower.

The practice of yoga opens the door to this.

When all excitations are brought to a lull, when awareness is brought to rest, when all impressions are reduced to their essence, this is Samadhi – the intellect is established in peace. The mind becomes even, balanced, unruffled. The mind makes contact with the most sublime level of relative existence, functioning from the atomic level of creation, the level of causation, balanced on the borderline of time and eternity, then crosses over into infinity. From the finest level of thought, attention leaves the domain of thought and passes into boundless awareness.

The mind – what was mind – finds a gloom brighter than light.

Man enters a deep Dark. Abstract is this state. It is nothing, yet everything, for in this emptiness there is fullness. In this night there is day; in this darkness there is light. The whole of creation seems at rest. In this rest there is nothing else: it is totality. The void is full. This is nirodha-samadhi, control through ease, through gentleness, through surrender to the Self. What is

surrendered? Thought is. Effort is. Intention and volition are. Ego is. Self-will is. Grossness is relinquished; mental agitation is let go of. You die to yourself.

The result is peace. Deep rest is found. Contentment, too. When the mind ends its motion, that which is the source of mind is found. The whirlpool of thought, when slowed down, no longer veils the Self. It begins to unveil itself. The endless river, deep and clear, is revealed. Reflecting nothing, undisturbed, it shows itself truly. Then, say the sutras, the experiencer knows himself in his true nature. He knows himself as he is. He is unhidden.

When the yogi has becalmed the rising tides in his or her mind, when the sea of thought is still, when the waves of ego no longer disturb the quiet state, when the intellect is not trying to do anything, nor does desire stir, then it becomes possible to discover what lies beyond thought. When many thoughts are clamouring for attention, when the senses constantly feed us information, we miss that which underlies them. In a noisy crowd a quiet person is hardly noticed. When a lake is emptied we get to see what lies at the bottom of it.

The rising tides of mentation need to be quelled, and the impressions suspended. When the mind is quietened down to a steady state through a process of meditation, disengaging attention from the outside world (including the mind) and engaging it inwards, the Self begins to reveal itself. Pure awareness begins to appear. We start to become aware of Being. The Self abides in its own pure state. It always did, but we could not see it. And now we, too, enter our awareness into that state. We gain access to the abstract; we take on the nature of the unconditioned. We find stillness.

It is very easy. All we have to do is not to try anymore. We just go where Being is, where peace is. We let go and give up and arrive there. We simply do less, less, less. Of course it helps to have a teacher. Without the excitations of the mind, the Self dwells in its own nature. We peel the images away from the mind; we strip the mind of its many layers. When the impressions and excitations of the psyche have been thinned, silent unbounded awareness is obtained. And we find that this is our own nature, that we are the very Self we sought; it is truly our own being, the very essence of us, the heart of us. Nor is it this looking at that. Oh no. The experience is: I am. There is one – not two. We call it Yoga, Unity, this singleness of Self.

Sounds easy, dude. I'll take some. Thank you very much.

Only, as it turns out, it is a bit more difficult than that. It is not all that easy to be simple. It is only when you are simple that meditation is easy. Currents in the mind get in the way of the journey inwards. If we could let go, completely, then we would all be enlightened right now. End of story. But we are not able to become so light and easy that we could just float away, in a manner of speaking. But it is rather like becoming weightless. We just need to lay our burden down. It is the obstructions we have which confine us. It is our attachments and aversions which create problems, and these have a kind of mass. The old Hindus called them impurities, and the Jews were fond of

the word sin. There seem to be a few rare individuals who are able to let go spontaneously, but that does not work for, nor account for, the rest of us. Even the intention to let go gets in our way of letting go. That is why there are techniques such as yoga, and why there have always been Masters able to elevate us, when we could not find the way on our own.

Patanjali says: The perceiver has been caught in the chitta-vrittis.

Like a spider caught in its web, man has been trapped in his own thoughts – the prisoner of his own creation. The activity in his mind has concealed the quiet centre of his being. Hearing only noise he has not heard the silence because he has not listened to it, as he has been blind to it. Or should I say, deaf to it? Because of the horde of impressions he has been like a cork always bobbing about on the surface. He has not been able to plumb the depths, to plunge into his own consciousness.

Trapped in the confines of a limited mind, man has thought that limitation was his nature. He has thought that is all he is. So there has arisen egotism and illusion. Identified with this partial view of himself he has been blind to his own wholeness. He has failed to remain in contact with his Self.

The seer has been lost in seeing. The perceiving awareness, in the act of perceiving, has been overcome by the perception. The object of attention has dwarfed the observer. Experience has become more important than the one who experiences, who thinks and feels and knows. The act of attention has swallowed up the knower.

In going out to things he has lost contact with his own inwardness. This has created a gap between the individual awareness and the universal Self. As a result, impressions have lain heavily on the mind. The link between the individual awareness and the Self is a very delicate, tenuous one. By operating at more coarse, surface levels, carried on waves of mental agitation, that link is not used.

The more manifest the thought the less the light of Being shines through the consciousness.

Man is overcome by the violence of his own consciousness. The impressions keep on throwing up images. When not in the state of Yoga, man is identified with the waves in his mind. And what they do to his awareness, he calls 'me'. Chitta-vrittis keep man at a superficial level. He must reverse this by de-exciting the mind, functioning at levels of lesser perturbation; then, surpassing these, the yogi abides in infinite stillness, the motionless silence of the self.

Patanjali says: Nirodha through abhyasa and vairagya.

Nirodha means control of mental states, suspension of excited mental activity and of subtle mind-states also. Abhyasa and vairagya mean practice and non-attachment. To hold the mind steady, the

Gita also advocates practice and dispassion to fluctuating mental conditions. By constant, continuous practice of these, the pure state of silence is experienced. *Abyhasa*, practice, is the attempt to ground the mind in the state of stillness.

### **A little effort goes a long way**

Practice of yoga takes the attention to the subtler states of our nature, eventually resulting in familiarity with experiencing Being. The Self opens to the awareness and man discovers what he really is. To subdue the mind, go to where it is most calm, most gentle; take the attention to where the mind is least disturbed, least agitated; let the mind rest in its most basic state. It is interesting that experiencing the state of freedom produces freedom; by the practice of going to where freedom is, where the Self abides, one becomes free. The practice of yoga results in the condition of Yoga. By doing this awareness opens and awakens; awareness becomes established in Atman. By going to the well one learns the nature of water. By going to where Being is, Being is lived. Taking the attention to the Self, the silent softness of Being begins to permeate awareness. Fullness enters the awareness. It becomes known, familiar, common. We go to the market and bring something back with us. We bring something back from the well. After a while it begins to mount up. We go where beauty is, then come back with a little bliss, a little niceness. We bring a drop of water back from the well.

The old dead guy says: It becomes stable when practiced long, regularly, seriously.

Perhaps the first thing a beginner in yoga should be taught is: Persist! Naturally, as one begins to meditate, one looks for results. These may come fast or very slowly, nor may they be the kind one is looking for. There are no certainties, except that tensions will be destroyed, impurities eliminated, the Self will eventually be contacted and one will begin to live more naturally, more in tune with nature. Not expecting results tends to eliminate disappointments.

Change, in yoga, tends to be gentle and slow, and has to be, otherwise instability will result. When change is too fast it can be overwhelming. I have heard of a few people who, undergoing rapid change, have felt their old values and sense of self threatened, and thought they were going mad. I have also heard it said that psychiatrists, particularly in America, think that spirituality is a form of mental illness and that those who follow it should be treated for insanity and even locked away. Just like in the old days. Conformity equals sanity. Be sane or suffer.

Brahman is an extremely subtle state, the most sublime of all. It is beyond everything. It is not perceived by the senses, although it may be reflected in chitta. Higher awareness is such a delicate thing that – when first contacted – it may seem like nothing. We are used to feeling, to sensations, to the impact of the senses, to craving and satisfaction. These are more or less on the gross level of existence. Experience is mostly in terms of forceful impacts, of fairly intense stimulation.

But, in meditation, we call the attention in, withdraw from the senses and begin to retreat from the gross levels of thought. Then, for a moment, we are empty of content and bereft of sensation. There is an interlude in the flow of the psychic stream, a gap, a period of rest. Suddenly the mind is not in motion and we encounter a no-experience. And it seems like – nothing. We have always had experiences, but now we find no experience. Ever and ever have we been in a conditioned state, yet now we come to an absence of relativity. What are we to think? How are we to interpret it? We know what we have never known before, or maybe what we have always secretly felt we knew, or maybe forgotten. It is not a conscious state, some level of the known; it is unknown. The mind is blank, void, nil. Coming back to relativity again, we may associate this state with sleep. As, at the same time, breath is in its most delicate state and the body in a very deep rest, the condition may feel like tiredness. Sometimes the level of mental exhaustion (which is only apparent, as it is really deep rest) is so complete that, as one comes out of it, one may feel the rest to be so deep that one can hardly be bothered to move the mind, and there is a profound laziness. This may sometimes register as a deep fogginess. Of course it may not be like this.

Naturally one does not usually think: Oh good, now I have gone beyond mind. No. Rather the feeling is: My attention has broken, I have drifted off into nowhere and slipped out of meditation. There may be a sense of boredom. Doing nothing is not very exciting! One may not recognise this area as a field of bliss. On the other hand there may be a feeling of profound contentment and immense easiness and freshness. As attention moves into deeper areas of awareness one encounters bliss in an unmanifest form. It has to be stirred into motion. When bliss moves in a wave from its latent state, we call it joy. But the ocean of bliss is formless, potential gladness. To experience gladness we must activate sleeping bliss; it must be excited; we must set the wave of joy in motion.

When we cannot maintain awareness at this pure level, we tend to fall towards sleep or unconsciousness. Because of stress the body is in an impure state. Due to this the nervous system is not able to hold more than one state of awareness at the same time. Through cultivation and purification it becomes possible to uphold awareness of Silence (which underlies all states anyway) with ordinary waking consciousness. Hence some meditators may find themselves in a no-man's-land of awareness. Identity may seem to be wiped out for a while as it feels like we are walking through mud as our awareness gets foggy. We can meditate for a few minutes, settle deeply, then – extinction. Wiped out; very tired. A bit groggy. Sometimes we have to go through this.

Awareness at subtle levels can be so pure and slight, so fragile, so delicate, that we do not at first see it for what it is. We expect such an overwhelming experience, a powerful event, and it comes out so, so mild, almost nothing, vague and vague, a blurred and diffused thing, a mere stir of awareness. The impression on consciousness is minimal. With experience, as we become more accustomed to functioning at this level, the beauty, richness and glory of it grow. Peace! How

beautiful to march into the fullness of our own wholeness. What a delight to rest in the softness of the Self, to merge in tides of warming love.

So Patanjali says: *Abhyasa*. Practice. Gain familiarity with Being. Get in the habit of functioning at this subtle level. Know it well. Go there and go there, and go back again. Be regular.

As we do this the nervous system is cultured to support Being as a conscious experience, as of course it is always self-existing. As we meditate, tensions in the body are eliminated and, in course of time, the nervous system tends to purify itself. The brain cells become refined. Adjustments are made. Body and nervous system adopt a more normal style of functioning. The relation between body, brain, mind and Being becomes closer. So one becomes more integrated.

When one walks over the same area of grass many times, a path is soon worn. Consciousness is registered by the brain. The state of consciousness depends on the brain. Pure awareness is a specific condition in the brain. By habitual responses, or learning to do the same thing many times, the brain adopts familiarity of function; it acts automatically in a particular manner; neural pathways are facilitated in a line of least resistance. Specific ways of behaving become instinctive. Patterns develop in the brain.

By frequently going to where the Self is found, the brain gets used to being in a coherent, orderly state. An ease-of-function is structured in the nervous system which supports the experience of Being, an experience which becomes stronger, clearer and smoother with use. The more we go to Being, the easier it is to contact Being, or some higher level of awareness. The body gets used to being in a state of rest.

By gaining familiarity with the Self, Being becomes a friend. It is a haven of rest which becomes a pool of joy. It becomes home to us. As we go to it, it comes to us. At first it may be shallow; and often we may feel it is just out of reach, like a wave collapsing just before it reaches the shore; but by practice its contentment seeps into the mind, and its love comes to live in the heart.

Being without desire for things or experience is dispassion.

On the surface it might seem that such a state is hard to attain and would take a long time to achieve. This has been the attitude of writers of popular yogic books. In practice, however, it is very easy; one simply goes to an area where there is no desire, and that is where the Self is. One does not in any way hold an attitude of detachment (which is really a form of attachment). No attitude of any kind is adopted. Nor is there any rigorous discipline. One abides with the Self, as the Self, the mind settled, at rest, ego subdued, desire inactive and attention relaxed. This state is not meant to be held all day, but only during yogic meditation.

The Hindu word for dispassion used here is Vairagya, which literally means ‘uncolouredness’ or to be without any emotional colour, to be untainted, unaffected by desire. If a mirror were made of coloured glass, it would not reflect truly; it would always be tinted by the colour of the glass. If the mind is tinted, it cannot reflect the pure nature of consciousness. The contents of the mind distort the pure awareness of the Self. To reflect the nature of Being, the mind must become empty. Then it can gain the fullness of the Self, just as a dirty pool, emptied, can be filled with clean water.

Desire is on the level of the senses and the mind. An object is seen and the senses go out towards it. It is desired. Desire gives rise to action. As the result of action an impression is made on the mind, which becomes a germ in the mind. Later, as the awareness is stimulated, the impression germinates, becomes desire and leads to action. However, as one goes below the level of the impressions, taking the attention to silence, as impressions are not activated, desire does not arise.

**When all forms of desire subside, the Self alone remains.**

In the pure Higher Self there is awareness without desire, Being without impulse. One (or no one) is merged in Self; there is only Self.

Then, of course, there is freedom from every form of desire. But, first, desire must end so one can reach the Self. It is on the vehicle of desire that desires are brought to an end – an amazing idea. By slowing down mental impulses, as it were, they are brought to a stop. When all colours are removed from the mind, the Self shines clean and pure; desires do not hide it. Remove the clouds and the sun appears. Normally the clouds of desire hide the sun of the Self.

Vairagya, defined as non-attachment, is loss of craving when, by perceiving a thought at progressively rarified levels of existence, or contacting finer levels of awareness the mind settles down to more quiet areas of function, awareness moves toward being. The first manifestation of Being is bliss-consciousness. The closer one gets to the Self, the more are waves of bliss and contentment felt, and the deeper into stillness one goes, as awareness is carried to Being, so pure unmanifest Bliss is stirred. As one approaches Being, the mind is saturated in waves of contentment. As contentment seeps into awareness, a sense of completeness arises. With the coming of fulfilment, the ego is satisfied. What happens to craving then? It simply subsides, does it not? When you have fed, you are not hungry anymore.

Non-attachment begins when awareness leaves the relative phase of life, when attention is taken out of the field of the senses. Then, as the mind does not now associate itself with the temporary phase of existence, it desires nothing within it, for it has taken itself beyond it. Going beyond any experience, it does not crave any experience. The Self does not crave any experience, but dwells ever yonder of experience and sensation. When awareness is carried to the Self, awareness becomes Being. The Self is not attached to the world of forms.



In the Hindu yoga books the word Atman is used a lot to describe the Self, and in the Upanishads the word mostly used is Brahman. So it is of interest that in the sutras Patanjali has selected the word Purusha, a word used in the Vedas and symbolically in the old legends and ancient stories sometimes. Purusha (meaning the 'indwelling divinity' or godhead) can mean person and is sometimes translated as Spiritual Man. Purusha is the spiritual 'person,' a sort of abstract, intangible individualized portion of the absolute unmanifest Brahman. Properly speaking, Atman is the Higher Self, and Brahman the Absolute.

It might be said that Purusha is our own Being, our very Self, yet it is apart from Brahman. Meditation experience indicates two things: first, that our very core and essence is rooted in Being; second, that Being seems to have no boundaries, but is limitless, eternal, infinite, whole and self-contained, not subject to time, cause or condition, nor does it change, nor does it seem distinct from anything, for it is unity, and it encompasses the essence of all things. The only limitation is the inability of our mind to fathom it, and the weakness of our awareness in not being fully able to reach and know it. Our own impurity fails to give us full access to it.

Did we wish to engage in mental gymnastics (as if we would!), we could make a fine distinction and say whereas Being IS, the Absolute is not anything at all; that Being is pure existence, but the absolute Brahman is a pure VOID. Shankara pointed out that Brahman is not an object to be known and so it cannot be seen, may not be perceived, so you can never find it. You can only be it.

The Vedic Tradition states that out of the emptiness of the All, from out the slumbering Dark, the Absolutely **Absolute**, there arises Hirenyagarbha, 'the golden seed,' the first manifestation of godhead in the universe-to-be. The germ of creation floats on the waters of the Deep. This is Brahma, the creator, the 'personalised' aspect of Brahman, seeing as Brahman never creates anything, being the Apartness. From this seed of manifestation the universe springs forth. Hirenyagarbha, though a projection of the Absolute, yet retains its contact with Brahman. It is a mere shadow in this world, the slightest manifestation on the most subtle level of creation. It gives rise to manifold creation, we are told, but is not involved in it.

Just so, Purusha is an extension of the Absolute, yet is still merged in it, for it is its very essence. Though manifest, it is yet unconditioned spirit, as the wave is still the sea. If distinct, it remains unified – a mystery! In India a whole philosophy of union, Advaita, has been built around this fact. And in theoretical physics it is postulated that the most minute particle is both manifest and unmanifest, here and not-here. Likewise, Purusha is here and not here; in fact it is nowhere. It is uninvolved with activity. When attention arrives at the level of Being, it becomes uninvolved with sensory experience. When the senses rest in themselves, undisturbed, and the mind is not excited, desire does not operate.

Samadhi is the uncolouring of the mind. By refining the mind, taking it to a basic level of attention, it becomes gentle and more orderly. Randomity is reduced and simplicity increased.

Peace is introduced into the mind. The normal narrowness of the mind is expanded to a state of essential awareness, a condition of simple alertness where the attention rests in itself, a state of zero where the ego tends to be voided. This quiet mind then begins to reflect the silence of the Self, an unrestricted wholeness.

There is Samadhi with form and formless Samadhi, which is greater than the first. Samadhi with form means Samadhi with an object on which attention rests. It gives attention a focus. That focus allows the mind to refine itself by perceiving thought in less manifold stages of development. This is also known as Samadhi-with-support. Attention supports the mind as it settles down into its simplest state; conversely, Samadhi supports an idea without breaking the contact of the awareness with this settled state of quietness.

This is commonly known as bija Samadhi. Bija means seed. A seed is the basic root of a thing, the infant state of development, the least aware state. The first appearance of a tree is the seed. A seed gives rise to the tree. A seed is the first manifestation in nature. Samadhi with seed suggests that a mere seed of thought is going to maintain Samadhi. The more any thought is refined to its seed state, the more Samadhi will exist. The fainter the thought, the more pure will be the state of awareness. What is the seed of thought? The molecular level of creation.

Dhyana, or authentic meditation, is a simple system of attention where the object of meditation is allowed to become refined. Awareness settles to a calmer, subtler, more basic level. In whatever state one happens to be in, one must pass from there through all lesser levels of manifestation (in reverse order) to the unmanifest level of Being, in order to produce pure Samadhi, the state of perfect Yoga. One must travel through all strata of creation, from the dense to the atomic, from verbal levels of thought to the vaguest feeling, from the gross to the weakest impulse, to the very origin of thought. For some this only takes a moment.

Correctly speaking, Brahman is not an aspect of creation. Brahman seemingly gives rise to creation, yet remains ever apart from it, the unmanifest cause. According to yogic tradition, manifestation arises out of root-matter, an undifferentiated substance called prakriti, which is nature. It consists of three strands or qualities, strings of nature called gunas. When these are in a state of balance or rest, there is an unmanifest state of matter, called Mulaprakriti, the undifferentiated state of substance in its inactive state. As the equipoise of the gunas is disturbed, so that one guna predominates over the others in any way, the Formless moves. When nature moves, then manifestation occurs. Laws of nature are set in motion.

The gunas are known, individually, as sattva, rajas and tamas. These are the subtle, the active and the gross. Sattva is the essence of a thing, purity, calmness and order – the purest state of mind. Rajas is motion, excitement, turmoil, effort, violence, force. Tamas is inertia, laziness, tiredness, resistance. As these are found in nature in every form, so, too, they are found in individual human awareness.

The first tendency of prakriti towards human manifestation is Mahat, the Great Principle. Cosmic intelligence is stirred, and the universal awareness of creation moves. With Mahat, or Universal Mind, prakriti is given a direction; it is the first move outwards, the will-to-be of prakriti.

Mahat becomes individualized and further immersed in manifestation by passing first through buddhi or pure reason, the basis of intellect responsible for discrimination and selection; then through Ahamkara, the sense of individual existence, the I-principle which gives rise to ego.

Next, awareness passes through Manas, the substance of thought and memory. These technically compose chitta, the mind-stuff. Manas is mind, that which gives knowledge to the individual self, by which the outer world, via the senses, is contacted, known and understood. This knowledge is via the indriyas, the senses of hearing, sight, touch (including sensation on the skin), smell and taste, and the five organs of action: tongue, hands, feet, organs of procreation and elimination.

The tanmatras have been called the five atom-builders. They are the subtle essence of sound, taste, sight, touch and smell, lying at the grossest level of interior existence, and the most subtle level of physical manifestation. They are the inner realities of the objects of perception. As they combine in different ways they give rise to the whole of manifest creation through the mahabhutas, the elements of fire, earth, space, air and water constituting objective existence.

To attain the state of Yoga, we must pass through all these states, even if but for a split second, in our awareness. We make a simple impression on the mind and use it in such a way that it becomes the sole active impression on consciousness, superceding all other impressions, which become dormant; then, as that impression passes away – there being now no impression to colour the mind left – only the Self remains. There is an undisturbed flow of calmness, a deep immersion in a sea of silence. The state is one of steadiness, a profound condition of utmost simplicity. In almost meaningless (yet exact) jargon, the experience is of the fullness of emptiness.

There is contentment – yet nothing to be content about! Ever felt happy for no reason?

All we have to do is to allow attention to lapse into silence. This is both simple and difficult. Simple, because we just think a subtle thought – or put our attention on vibration, in the case of Shabda Yoga, the Yoga of the Energy Current. Difficult, as that is not so easy. Without some experience we cannot just go to the source of thought and think a very subtle thought. A subtle thought cannot be forced, as then it would not be subtle. We are not accustomed to thinking on subtle levels of creation. We are too used to thinking in a violent, concrete way. We have to learn the art of subtle thinking. This takes time. So Patanjali tells us – practice! The ability to function at the very finest levels of thought develops in stages. In the case of Sound and Light Meditation, we need someone who can connect us to it, someone who is familiar with it.

On the other hand it is relatively simple to put your attention on the inner Vibrational Energy, providing you have a Master able to connect you to it; then you simply rest your attention on it, and that holds the attention still, and you become immersed in it, and stillness ensues from it.

It would be reasonable to ask: Why cannot we by-pass these stages and go straight to the source of thought? Apparently our own awareness will not allow us to do so. It will not at first function on these very delicate levels. It will not admit that such a tender germ of the mind can really be a thought. Its tendency is to go to the finest thought and to lift it to coarser levels of mind, the better to perceive it. This is because of the coarser gunas.

Samadhi-with-thought is really a contradiction in terms. Samadhi is an inactive state and a thought is mental activity. Activity is contrary to a state of no-motion. Thought seems to be opposed to Samadhi. Activity carries Being out of its own nature, to become something else. Hence manifestation takes place. But now we want to put these two together, activity and inactivity, the silent and the relative, bringing them toward each other.

Yoga consists of restraining the mind, not by rigid control, but by giving the mind a specific direction in which to flow. It inhibits the mind by turning attention inwards toward its own natural state, not by creating an artificial, forced condition which seeks to starve the senses. When a pleasant condition is found, the senses are content to rest there. Attention rests where it finds enjoyment, or at least comfort. The mind is happy when it finds contentment. If a thought has to be thought (or 'thunked'), rather than thinking itself in an easy manner, naturally entering the awareness, then it is not evolutionary, whatever that means. If it is stilted, forced, it becomes boring. But when it flows effortlessly, then it is very beautiful, enriching awareness. And the more basic the thought, the more subtle, the more gentle, then the more pure it is, the more beautiful and the more flowing. When a thought is subtle, so, too, is awareness. And when it flows and flows, we find it seems to be streaming out of the heart, out of the fullness of the heart and mind; the thought seems to be hardly anything, yet the awareness appears to be everywhere, full and deep, an effusion of love, almost! When a thought is so weak that it dissolves even as it is thought, when there is no resistance to awareness from awareness, then there is harmony with nature, for it is struggle which creates friction, and ease which dissolves it.

As the coarser levels of awareness are peeled away, the perfume of the heart of the Self becomes stronger. The pure light of the Self shines more clearly. One can appreciate the light of the sun without being in its full glare. So, it is enough to move nearer the Self in order to enjoy the sunshine of its bliss.

As one does so one moves nearer to asmita, I-am-ness, knowing the Self to be I, being identified with that which one is, pure consciousness. The Self is known as silent awareness, as basic being. As thought and silence approach each other, thought does not disturb inner stillness. When thought is so fine that it hardly comes out of the silence, being similar to silence, when thought and silence

are found together, then the Self is known as Self, as myself. Identified with that, life is known as wholeness.

In deep meditation one sometimes senses the might and majesty of the whole creation, exults in a fresh sense of the All and enjoys the glory of sheer Existence far above the comprehension of intellect, way beyond the capacity of words to convey. Meditating, self becomes void. Individuality merges in the universal, in the cosmic abstraction; the ego passes beyond experience into an infinite state of wholeness. The centre of life becomes everywhere. When the wave becomes merged in the water, it could be said to be the sea itself. On the way to this state, divinity is sensed. The practice of this could be said to be devotion to God, the sensing of the Supreme.

What can be done to enhance steadiness? And the answer is –

### **Practice One Truth**

To steady the mind, to overcome obstacles, practice one truth. Put your attention on one thing. Hold the mind where it does not waver, a single aspect of truth. When that steadiness exists, the obstacles to Samadhi and their effects disappear. Initially putting the attention on the breath or a mantra is one way of doing this, which keeps directing the attention along a single path.

Also this refers to a single Truth underlying everything else – Brahman, the eternal truth, the indivisible Reality. As Samadhi is the experience of the One Truth of BEING, Absolute Existence, putting attention on it is supposed to steady the mind. This was the main teaching of Shankara, at least in his written works; in his private teaching he may have taught other things. He called this resting the mind steadfastly on its Goal, Brahman. By experiencing Brahman the obstacles to it are removed. Just that act of going toward being, going deeper into silence, removes impurities. The classic of Vedanta, Yoga Vasistha, says that just the attempt to dwell in stillness is enough to remove mental conditioning.

A distracted state during meditation indicates tension in the system or the agitation of an impression in the mind. By taking attention to a deeper area of truth, that which impedes the experience of pure Truth is weakened. Then the light of truth shines brighter and clearer in awareness, and more fully reveals itself.

We become calm by the cultivation of happiness and friendliness, by compassion for the sorrow of others, and by becoming impersonal in the face of wrongness, by allowing life to flow very lightly without always trying to find fault with it or to control it.

Experience of the inner radiance settles the mind. Quelling the tides of the mind, awareness becomes transparent like a crystal, able to reflect knowledge, knowing or the knower. When the

vrittis in the mind are weakened, awareness becomes very clear and lucid. It is like a clear mirror. The mind is able to reflect higher states of awareness.

Yoga consists of holding awareness still. The less the mind is agitated, the more gentle it is. The more gentle, the deeper the level attained. The deeper levels are ones of greater impersonality. These are areas of deep stillness, where awareness experiences its own stillness, tastes the sweetness of its timeless fullness. These are also areas of greater comfort, a bit like lying on the beach in the sunshine, except no one kicks sand in your face and laughs about it, so you don't have to send away for the Charles Atlas bodybuilding course, and seven days later, as you flex your muscles and flatten that bully... you wonder why your boyfriend didn't do it.

Through very deep Samadhi the spiritual light of the Self dawns. There is a level or state called Ritambhara, where consciousness directly perceives the truth. This is the level of intuition, direct perception through light.

Ignorance is the cause of suffering, based on mis-perception, mistaking the ego for the spiritual Self. Without being identified with the impressions of past experiences, events will flow over us without making a mark. Without attachment we will not suffer loss, anxiety, despair. In free being there is no pain. Does sorrow strike the limitless? Of course there will be sorrow for the personality, for the mind will always make identifications and attach itself to them. That is the human condition.

As the wave, rising, yet remains the sea, so enlightened awareness remains in contact with its source. For the ordinary person, however, interest in the external world means his basic nature is overshadowed by his perceptions of things and events. In other words, his experiences make him forget his basic nature. He gets lost in his own experiencing. Knowledge of the Self is lost to him.

Yet why should that produce misery? Because life is constant change, moving from one state of awareness, one mood to another; there is uncertainty about life; there is stress from it; fate seems to move us around; our desires are thwarted; life challenges us; we are influenced by our body, and dictated to by society; we become old or ill; life seems so short; death calls to remind us of our mortality; we seem to be fragmented, now this, now that. Where is the real me? We go through a host of feelings. We lack love. We get lost in petty concerns. In all this there are the seeds of sorrow. The silly sod who invented ageing deserves a kick up the backside, as a lot of people don't seem to like it. You gonna get old, weak, feeble, forgetful. And life don't care. Nor does the Self.

The unified Self is bliss. It is felt as profound contentment or great peace. It is wholeness. Thus, if Being is anchored in our awareness, we will find satisfaction. It is felt as something detached from experience. As one knows oneself to be Purusha, the inner Seer, the source of pain in life is lessened. One starts to become disassociated from mental and emotional pain. If we can live as the Self we will not get so enmeshed in our activities, as we will always be the Watcher. We will be

distant from our actions. We act, then it is over. Our actions are light and easy. Life seems to flow in harmony. It is almost as if we were not here, and yet, on the other hand, fully here and fully present, and fully alive, dynamic because of our aliveness, while being empty in our stillness.

An old Taoist text says:

The stillness in stillness is not the true stillness; only when there is stillness in motion does the universal rhythm manifest.

All the many experiences in life, all the perceptions, from gross to most subtle, the many states of awareness, all the cognitions or thoughts – this is the area of the known, or of what can be experienced. There are the objective and interior worlds; then there are the inner organs of perception, the senses or cognitive abilities and the mind.

It is taught that we are very fortunate to be born in a human body. Only a human being can find liberation. It can only be found in a human form, while living. Dead people do not get enlightened. We have all the experience we need – too much. The purpose of life is to find liberation. If we do not try to do that our life is wasted. Otherwise it is all just action and experience. The most that action, or volition, can do is to purify the form to some extent. It does not lead to liberation. Only contact with Brahman can do that. Unless we have perceived Reality, what has been the point of living, except more living? Living comes to an end; liberation does not. It is forever.

It is simple enough. Do you need a Masters Degree to figure it out?

In this chapter I have been more concerned with India's ancient teachings on Yoga than with my own thoughts and experiences; I have tried to convey the attitudes of the great Yogis themselves. It needs to be pointed out that the Indian teachings are mostly concerned with Kundalini. Without a true spiritual Master all one could hope to contact, if one were very lucky, were the highest levels of Kundalini: the state of union with Atma-Buddhi-Manas, the sense of being one with everything, the state of love, the sense of pure Bliss-Consciousness. However, as far as one can tell, this was not Enlightenment, not the true Liberation, which consisted of going beyond all planes and transcending the universe in all its aspects, which means to be beyond Sound and Light itself, beyond the Source of creation, beyond all energy of whatever kind. In this state there are no attributes, no conditions, no values of any kind, no qualities, and no concepts.

Unfortunately, in earlier times enlightenment was not given to a disciple. Instead they were given a push, a strong impulse by an infusion of light where there was a true Master, and an awakening of Kundalini by lesser teachers, and sometimes not even that, in fact most times not that, and meditation could be a difficult process, often somewhat dry, unless one had a good teacher. Even most teachers of Sound and Light were not themselves fully enlightened.

Advanced, yes, but not enlightened. You have only to read the books and talks they left behind to find that out. You will find they are full of superstitious nonsense and silly ideas and old traditional concepts. Either they knew no better or else the books they wrote have been doctored and added to by their followers. A single transmission of energy was given. There was only one initiation into Light and Sound; then the disciple was more or less on his own. States of enlightenment were not given. In no books left by Masters of Sound and Light is mention made of transmission of higher states after the initial Initiation. It is always possible that they did exist, of course, but went unrecorded. Maybe.

Shankara may not have been enlightened. Guru Nanak possibly was not enlightened. Kabir was not enlightened. Patanjali was not enlightened. Dariya was not enlightened. Sultan Bahu was not, nor Ravidas, nor Ramdas, nor Tukaram, Vasistha, Tulsi Das, Amar Das, Janaka, Rumi, Shams-e-Tabriz, Bai Gur Das, Sahjo Bai, Charan Das, Kapila, Jar Bharat, Bulleh Shah, Paltu, Namdev, Vasugupta, Saint Jnaneshwar or a host of other spiritual teachers. This is not to say that most of them were not genuine and authentic spiritual teachers with a mission from the universe to awaken seekers. I do not mean in any sense to lessen the worth of those who built a spiritual bridge over the centuries. These have been my spiritual heroes. They were great men, great teachers, servants of Truth, carriers of Wisdom. They held the door to spirituality open. They spoke from the level of no-self, but they did not always speak from the level of the Absolute. Their own recorded words reveal this. All this stuff about gods, karma, sin and the like. Hooey.

Many of them spoke about sin. What sin is there for the Sinless? The Pure is not tainted by the impure. They spoke of karma. If the ego is an illusion, how can karma be real? How can the unreal cause anything real? What would there be to experience karma? Who or what is bound, and by what? By an idea? Every trap is a concept. To be free, transcend it. If you know how to.

They spoke, these teachers, of a personal God with personal inclinations. If there is no individual self in a human being, how can there be an individual God? An ego would limit any God. It would make that God weak. Then you would have an imperfect God. There can be no personal God. God is a stateless state, the Unconditioned, the Absolute Abstract. Now, either these teachers were blind to the absolute Truth, or they personalised it for the spiritually immature in order to control their followers. Take your pick. It would appear that these Great Teachers were trapped by their own traditions. Of course you can be in a tradition and still remain free. So long as you realise the tradition is a trap.

Oh, you may say, there must have been enlightened teachers. Of course there must have been. But use your common sense. Read the old books, and the new ones, with discrimination. Do not believe the nonsense. Sort the chaff out. There are no scriptures which are completely true. No scripture or ancient writing is exactly in tune with higher spiritual experiences. You have to verify your own truth by finding it in yourself. It has to be said that those who wrote the ancient books were not, could not, have been enlightened themselves. It is not what ancient tomes say that



counts; it is what you experience for yourself. The truth is liveable, and knowable, if you are on a true spiritual path, and there are umpteen paths which are a pile of crap. Find the one which sets you free. Only walk on that one or else your feet are still stuck in the mud.

**The Seer is Consciousness alone; though pure he perceives through the mind.**

Here is the essence of yoga. The seer is Purusha, egoless awareness or divine intelligence. The state of yoga is the state of Being. But this is qualified by experience, the conditioning of life, the stresses and responses to being alive; these form the personality and mind. Purusha adds life and awareness to the mixture. A thin veil thrown over a lamp still allows the light to shine through. But if veil after veil is thrown over the lamp, then pretty soon that light is going to lose its radiance. And so, similarly, the light of the Self is dimmed – or appears to be, though not actually, of course. The Self cannot be lessened, but its radiance is hidden from view. When light passes through coloured glass, that pure light becomes coloured also. As awareness streams through the mind, it is coloured by its contents, the impressions from experience. The content of the mind adds character and form to simple alertness. The content of mind stamps itself on awareness. The content of mind seems to alter awareness, as its purity is restored by emptying its content again. This is the practice of yoga.

Although the sense of self may no longer exist for the awakened, other men still view him as the ego-self. Though he may be rooted in the universal, men still see him as the form, still see his individuality. Indeed, why should they not. They do not know a god walks among them.

There is awareness, and that which makes up its content. It is the content which we call the mind or the self. Remove the content and you remove the appearance of mind. Then awareness alone remains. When only Purusha remains, the purpose of life is attained. Meditate, and the known begins to slip away. The senses are less active as you withdraw from their objects. Thought slows down. Alertness increases, and quietness, too. Purusha is experienced as essential reality and all other things seem to be irrelevant.

There is the Owner and the owned. The reason for the coming together of owner and the owned, say the sutras, is the power of identification. The owner is awareness, that which uses form. The owned is the form, the knowable, thought, feeling and experience. The two things come together, knower and the known, and in this conjunction the knower gets lost in the known. As loud noises drown out gentle sounds, so the subtle Beingness is hidden by the experience of grossness. The knower gets absorbed in his knowledge.

Awareness is able to take on any form or reflect any state. It has the capacity to identify with anything it perceives. When awareness is identified with the mental states, it possesses the personality so completely that it becomes it. It is like an actor playing a part and then forgetting himself.

Ignorance, avidya, is lack of awareness of the real nature of Purusha, the integrated state. Because of that, awareness confuses itself with the form, the ego. When the vibrations of the form-nature become agitated, their excited state hides the delicate nature of pure awareness. Attention is drawn out of itself into the forms of consciousness: thought, emotion, desire, sensation. It then identifies with these things.

I feel anger. I say, I am angry. Anger is angry. Then awareness, identifying with that anger, thinks it is the angry self. There arises the notion of I. But where is this I? Search for it; it can't be found! Now, angry, I hate my wife; later I love her. If the self changes, how can it be the same self? Bondage is when awareness, failing to recognise its own silent nature, mistakenly identifies itself with the ego; when the mind colours consciousness, it assumes it is the self, for that is all it sees, all it knows, at that time.

**Removal of the knower from that association ends it; on account of its disappearance, Kaivalya.**

Kaivalya is singleness, aloneness, the Self abiding in its true nature devoid of anything relative; it stands in its own wholeness, aloof in its own beauty, in its apartness, complete in itself, single in its ownness. It owns itself. It is Self-created, Self-originated. It is the Unborn.

Association of the Self with form, on account of ignorance of its own beauty, leads to identification with the personality as itself. I am what I see. That personality is the mass of thoughts, habits, moods, attitudes arising from active impressions, experience and genetic inheritance which make up the conditioned self. Now, to get at the real being, these must be stripped away. So we start to take the attention to more subtle areas, allowing awareness to settle into its own more basic states.

The sense of self begins to slip away. We ease up on our grip of the mighty me. We take it easy. Tensions slacken. Chemical changes take place. We start to function in a new way. Impurities, lodged all over the body, and patterns in the aura, start to break up. Mind, turning in on itself, becomes more alert. This, of course, indicates change in the brain also.

As the impediments start to fall away, quietness begins to seep into the mind; a vague glow of fulfilment arises, a restful gentleness, a 'physical' sensation of tranquil contentment. This takes time, coming and going in stages, as sensitivity develops and awareness expands. It passes as greater stillness is established and a lasting sense of well-being is felt.

Consciousness evolves. Sattva grows. Thus the gentle state is experienced more often in ordinary life. The conditioned state begins to lose its hold. This is the seed of kaivalya. When only the Self is seen, always, at all times, when it is unflinching, this is total freedom. Yet long, long before that

glimpses of liberation come, forshadowing it with increasing frequency. The Self knows itself. The Goal, liberation, is when this state endures, and when only Unity is known.

**The means of removal is undisturbed discriminative knowledge.**

To end ignorance, develop discriminative knowledge. Discrimination is awareness of the Self. It is to abide in silence. It is resting attention on stillness. It does not mean to be discriminative in your thinking. But that is important too, of course. In fact it is vital.

Undisturbed suggests continuous, meaning existing for some time. Knowledge means awareness. Discrimination is awareness of the real. This is yoga, as described at the beginning of the sutras: Yoga is the motionless mind. Just by taking attention to a quiet state, then holding it steady, discrimination takes place. What is discrimination? Simply the recognition of the Self. It is direct experience of pure awareness. The Self abides in its own nature; consciousness experiences it. There arises pure awareness of the Real. Being cognises itself. Spirit knows its own spirituality; the Void is filled with its own emptiness, and the knowing of it is discrimination. This puts an end to ignorance. The awareness is extricated from the not-self.

From prolonged contact with this level, repeatedly, it becomes common ground. It becomes familiar. The more you step on it, the more familiar it becomes. Awareness becomes suffused with it as a flow of silence or a stream of stillness. A background of stillness is there. We begin to live within that sphere of silence; we start to function from that background in a very gentle way. We have been struggling with life, making an effort for so long, but now we start to flow into action. We act with skill, with ease, with subtle grace. That is the Self in action, flowing through sattva or gentleness.

It is not enough to experience the Self now and then. We must break the bond of ignorance so full awakening takes place. Experience of this state is the way. The way is stillness. As the dark areas are reduced the Self shines more clearly. As the Self shines the negative blocks melt away. In or out of meditation, as the quiet state is felt, purification is going on; meditation is going on on its own because of the open state of awareness. More than that, simplification is taking place. We become more simple all the time; we become more authentic, more real, more direct in our simplicity. Life becomes very simple because we start to function more and more in our basic nature, the Essence.

Now, it does not matter whether these samskaras are real or not; these could be just old yogic ideas. What counts is the effect of meditation in the expansion of awareness.

Everything derives its nourishment from the Imperishable, the level of utter harmlessness, even though it has no quality, being neutral. The Transcendent nurtures life. And going there, returning to its source, consciousness is renewed, made fresh and whole. It is only through the principle of

non-violence, or non-resistance, that there can be movement from the gross to the subtle; that the relative can transcend its own limitations.

Truth, Satya, is changeless existence. If it could change, it would not be truth. What is the permanent? It is Brahman. Its home is the unmanifest, the eternal state. You start meditating and activity settles down. Moods simmer down. Thoughts become fewer, less intense, as the sense of being increases. The feeling of ego decreases. Silence spreads. Then only awareness remains, the fullness of the Deep, an immense joy of freedom, consciousness of absolute existence. That alone, total being, is truth. For when everything else is removed, that alone remains.

This is the detached state of the Self, absorbed in its own nature. Purusha is the all, the silent witness, detached from the gunas, from all activity in form. Thought, desire, activity, is not his; he is devoid of all that. To take the gunas as his/its own is to steal what is not his; the gunas belong to the gunas. And the transcendent belongs to the uninvolved Self. Consciousness is greedy for experience, for pleasure, for life. Thus Self and not-Self become associated, and must disassociate to find freedom. But the Self, on its own level, is forever illumined, for that is its nature.

An interesting question arises. As man transcends, does he experience an individual Self, or does he tap into the universal field of life? The answer, of course, is both. Purusha indicates the universal nature of life, the Whole. If you experience Being then you experience all Being. Purusha is the Higher Self, not actually the Absolute. It is not the absoluteness of life. The Absolute has no individual parts; it is a singleness; the point is the whole. It is whole in all its parts, yet it has no parts, no edges, no divisions, no fragments. You can't divide the whole. The Whole is wholly whole. Self realization brings awareness of the Higher Self, with which we become identified; but God Realization brings awareness of the All-Self, Brahman.

In the yoga books a lot of stuff is talked about action, karma, right behaviour. Brahmacharya, often translated as sexual abstention, means spiritual conduct. Not moral behaviour. What is spiritual conduct? Sitting in silence, just being! It is action in the transcendental field, the sphere of stillness. Correctly understood it means cognizing the Veda, being aware of the stream of infinite stillness. Though void, it is full; though still, it is ever renewing itself. It is barely possible to understand this unless one is an advanced meditator. In that state, though one may function in the ordinary world, his spiritual attention is withdrawn from it. That still part of him or her refrains from activity, as it were, being free of desire, Self-satisfied, removed from lust, sexless. This does not mean that you do not indulge in sensual encounters; it simply means that the still part is always detached, free, pure, untouched by anything, untainted, ever apart, non-involved.

To many Indians, brahmacharya means control of the sex impulse, thwarting your own nature, denying sensual pleasure on the basis of – if you want to, don't. The Christians were not the first to think the body unclean and the sex organs a curse. Many misguided students of yoga have regarded the celibate life as a priority. In that case, all one would have to do is to get so old that

you no longer cared about sex any more. It has been overlooked that many of the early sages were married. And they didn't just do basket-weaving. They lived normal lives. They had children.

It is the ignorant who want to bring their lives to an erotic halt and stunt their emotional bodies. But there is nothing to be gained from it. That is the sad part. It has led to great misery. Sex is a normal function of the body. When you are hungry you eat. Sex cannot interfere with Being. So, if you have nothing better to do right now –

It has been the experience of many that sex, deep, profound sex, feels like a spiritual experience, feels like a communion with nature, with universal forces; and some have found that at the time of orgasm the ego collapses, the walls of the self cave in and a sense of love ensues. Desire dissipates and the mind comes to rest. Some have argued that this is a time of spiritual opportunity. Some say if you could maintain that feeling of orgasm, letting go, and not give in to where pleasure wants to take you, then you could enter into a mystical experience and know yourself more deeply.

So along comes Tantra and says: Shucks, why not? Almost everyone has heard of sexual tantra these days. You will find some book of it in almost any book store. Most of them are trivial nonsense, of course. Tantra is a hard road. Actually, it is a part of the original kriya yoga teachings on energy. It was regarded in India, about a hundred years ago, as a form of black magic and was thought to be evil. Sex of long duration results in a kind of mystical state. It is said to release a subtle energy in the body known as ojas which, if preserved and not used in ejaculation, helps maintain the vitality of the body and increases longevity and gives a feeling of well-being. In ancient China the medical system taught that for optimum health a man should ejaculate rarely, whereas a woman should have as many orgasms as possible. I am sure a few women thought that was a damn good idea. I wonder why Chinese men were such a serious lot? Or were they?

Orgasm creates a state of neutrality within the system. Sex changes the normal flow of etheric currents within the chakra system. Sex is taught as a treatment for headaches (when it isn't causing one!) in Indian and Islamic health systems, as it releases many tensions and also relieves worries for a while. It also harmonises and fuses the auras of those involved in the practice and results in an exchange of energies. Some teach that as the result of conserving sexual energy you will make faster spiritual progress and gain all that extra vitality. However, that will not work out in practice as, nature being what it is, the dam will burst during sleep as the result of sexual dreams. So vitality will still be lost – but you will be asleep during the pleasure. Sounds like a poor rate of exchange to me.

There have been some cases of sensitive women having extraordinary spiritual experiences as the result of orgasm. One woman, discovering her first orgasm (nice, wasn't it, dearie? Oh Wow!) thought she knew everything and could do anything for about two weeks afterwards, which frightened her very much; another lady thought she was at one with everything and felt an overwhelming sense of love for a couple of days. When allied to strong emotions or a sense of

devotion or reverence sex can strongly stimulate kundalini and lead to spiritual-like experiences. Hence tantra and its attractiveness. What would you prefer – three hours of sex or five days on a starvation diet?

Who's that jumping up and down and waving their hand in the back row? Oh, it's Henri's wife. I don't think she wants the starvation diet option.

### **The nitti-gritti of meditation**

The sutras say: Dharana is steadiness of mind. Actually they don't. That is my interpretation. They actually say confining attention to one point is dharana, which means concentration. Binding the mind to one place is the usual translation. This suggests, of course, concentration, which ain't wrong. The term of the sutra, *desa-bandha*, has two meanings: place and holding. Bandha also means lock, locking something in place. The correct understanding is placing the mind under restraint.

The key to understanding is found in a somewhat obscure Vedic text: Holding the mind motionless on Brahman is dharana. It means steadiness of mind, a state of thoughtlessness, stillness of thought, emptiness of mind. It is held empty of content, unmoving, unagitated, still, serene like an unruffled lake, waveless.

Most definitions of yoga amount to the same thing. It consists of control of the mind by holding it still. Yet it cannot be held still by effort, for effort breeds resistance, and resistance shuts out the spiritual. Force means activity from a gross level, and the gross level is the level of motion, of mental agitation. Trying to hold the mind still is a thought. It is still thinking. How can the mind be still if it is thinking? Moreover, the very attempt to do so excites the mind.

All one can do is to allow it to be still, to permit it to come to rest. When the mind flits from object to object, thought to thought, when it wanders in the region of the gross, when it is lost in the senses, it becomes weak and dull. It may be clever, but it loses sight of its own subtleness, its own source. By quieting the mind it withdraws from the field of the senses. It turns within. Then it can be still. When the attention does not waver, resting in its own stillness, abiding in silence, doing nothing, just relaxing easily, merely being, that is dharana. Dharana is directed attention. That's all it is. Then you may catch the aroma of the Self.

As the result of that a current of thought arises, which is dhyana, meditation. Dhyana is the flow of thought. A thought arises easily, naturally. A notion arises in the mind and passes away. An idea comes and falls away. In the silence a thought arises. Paying attention to it is dhyana. It only needs a little attention. Concentrated attention is dhyana, though that concentration may be very slight. It does not require effort to concentrate; it only requires some interest and attention. As the result of mental comfort a flow arises. Trying to force attention breaks that flow by creating resistance.

The sutras state: Shining, as it were, in its own nature, as if devoid of an object, is Samadhi.

Samadhi is the easy, continuous flow of awareness. It is the natural state of the mind, uncoloured, contentless, clear, steady.

Samadhi occurs when the mind becomes empty of all content. It is sometimes explained as the union of the observer, process of observation and the object observed. Samadhi is the Self shining in its own light. When the movement of thought is reduced and slowed down, then the Self can begin to reveal itself. Consciousness becomes pure, uncoloured by any mental activity; the true nature of awareness is found. And it is found to be very, very simple, profoundly gentle. And very good.

Samadhi means the established intellect: the mind held steady in equanimity, firm in placidity. It is the state of being without desire, without passion or care. It is the condition of being neutral. Samadhi is the optimum condition for a human being. In that state wholeness is felt; only then man feels complete and fulfilled. From there the supreme beauty of life is sensed, the glory and grandeur of existence. In that state one becomes existence, one breathes peace. With it one becomes carefree. When the mind is stilled it can be held steady in silence. Being totally beyond the known it is nothingness. It is just stillness. Yet that very stillness becomes immense. It is free awareness. It is the simplest state.

The motionless state of mind lets the Self show itself. Mind becomes formless, unmodified. That unmodified state is the door to expansion, leading to the sense of wholeness. In that state there are no questions to be asked.

### **Echoes of the Ancient Tradition**

Now the core of the great scriptures is this: Be still and experience Divinity. The message in all the yogic texts is the same, restrain the senses, control the mind, remain in a quiet state, dwell in peace with thought subdued. Millions must have read that when thought is curtailed, the Self manifests; thousands must have tried to put it into practice. With what result?

We sit down and try to restrain the mind. We try to remain silent. But thought after thought arises. And the thought of not thinking is still a thought. And one thought leads to one more, and then another. Mind rebels; it resists control, and resists being still. So we have groups coming up with weird, useless techniques for bringing the mind under control by force. The more force used, the more useless the method.

The mind cannot be rendered still from the gross level; to restrain thought you have to go toward its source. It is no good sitting on it, trying to force it down. Sticking a lid on a pan does not stop

the water from boiling. Forcing the mind under control is like trying to keep steam coming out of the kettle.

What the yogi is trying to do is to control samskaras, impressions of experience, thoughts, feelings, memories, tendencies. And what is trying to control them? More samskaras. So mind is divided. And what is mind? Any activity in awareness. When there is motion in consciousness we call it thought. When we identify with that movement, we call it me. Thus we say: I will control that thought. Any movement from the gross level stimulates those samskaras. Any attempt to force the mind under submission to the violent will is doomed to failure. What good is it to fight your own nature, resist your own tendencies, rebel against your DNA?

The mind wants to be active. It is restless. It wanders. Through the senses it seeks pleasure. It gets bored with inactivity. It craves an object of attention, something to interest it. So the problem is: Can attention be stilled? Can it remain steady? For where attention is, there also is awareness.

The early rishis resolved the problem with beautiful simplicity. If you cannot hold the mind still, they said, then just introduce a little delicate mental activity. If you cannot be silent because of the amount of mental noise in your head, then reduce the volume of sound; when the shout becomes a whisper, then you are so much nearer to silence. Have something to rest your attention on.

When the mind becomes softer, more subtle, it gets nearer its own source. You take a simple mental activity and repeat it over and over till it starts to fade away, or you direct awareness along a chosen channel till it becomes easy. Obviously, over the centuries many techniques must have arisen. Yet we are less concerned with specific methods than with the principle, for if the principle is applied then results will accrue. The most common form of thought is language, so the easiest form of meditation is mantra, or sound. In the case of the bhakta yogi, for instance, the devotee will have a picture of his god or guru. He may look at this a moment or recall the object of his devotion to mind, holding the idea in the back of his mind a few moments, then lazily repeat the name of the object of his devotion. Then, as Patanjali says, we make contact with the desired divinity, which is perhaps the purest form of religion, should you need one, for only on the level of the abstract can he meet his god or saviour devoid of ego, heart to heart, as it were, in true spiritual communion. And find it is his own Self. For what else could it be other than imagination?

The intensity of mental activity is reduced by dhyana. It quells the rising tides of mental stimulation. By applying non-resistance to a single thought or line of activity, attention goes to a quieter level. It thins the confusion, creating space in the jumble of thoughts. In the interval between thoughts, stillness is found. As thought slows down, stillness increases. The mind relaxes, stage by stage. It progressively simplifies. The light is seen to shine more brightly as one approaches it.



The mind moves to subtler states, through all less gross states of awareness, through the gunas, through resistance, agitation and the more refined states of mind to the condition of purity. The subtle states are levels of less resistance, less friction, less harshness, less agitation, less effort, less rigidity, greater softness. What was the normal function before now becomes subdued or less active, more delicate.

From the gross level it looks like the only way to obtain stillness of mind is to stop thought, and from that level it looks like intruding thoughts are a problem for the meditator, who thinks of them as getting in the way of his meditation. Can anything be done about thought? By chanting before meditation, if that appeals to you, the mind is slowed down. Also, one may focus attention by easily allowing the mind to rest on a candle flame for a few minutes in a dark room, slightly above eye level, not staring, just looking toward the flame from a few feet away. This refines and calms the mind. Use of a mandala, or visual image, tends to refine the mind through sight, as a mantra does through sound. Or one may simply be aware of breathing.

To the experienced meditator thought does not prove to be an impediment. Operating from a subtle level, thought and silence are in balance. Thought is not gross enough to upset the silence. When thought is subtle one can think at the same time as remaining in a state of peace. Awareness, deeply rooted in peace, is passive to external factors. Thought is not a problem, as it is not resisted when it is subtle.

It is a fact that some people, for various reasons, by virtue of the condition of their nervous system, the type of their innate tendencies or whatever, are not so sensitive to the subtle realms. There are people who have meditated for several years in yoga without experiencing deep steadiness of mind or contemplation of the Self. What they need is a stronger method, one which allows a much longer time in the silent state. They need extended periods of meditation. And it is not unknown in India for serious students to engage in meditation for thirteen hours at a stretch. This is not possible for most of us, nor would we wish to engage in such a feat. But what sometimes happens, particularly with sensitive people, is that one may attain a certain depth and a sense of promise of something more to come, yet have to come out of meditation because of time. It is like a wave in the sea sweeping towards the shore and breaking up just before it gets there, time after time – always just beyond reach. And another half an hour might have brought that wave over us in a surging sea of bliss, letting us have a clear deep experience of that which we long for.

Also, there are those who have clear experiences now and then and wish to make those experiences more consistent and stable. In any case, we all want to move forward as rapidly as possible, and for that we need a more potent technique so we can contemplate the stillness in a deeper way.

How are we going to do that? Can we feel the Self more profoundly? Maybe we can – if we learn to do less. Our thought needs to be weaker, more tender, and with more gaps or longer intervals of

no-thought, intervals of silence. We just lengthen the intervals between thoughts. We cannot remain suspended indefinitely without thinking, permanently beyond the realm of the senses, constantly without any stimulation.

We call this process Samyama, in which the intellect abides in its own depths.

Samyama fulfils the Vedic injunction: Go beyond activity; transcend the senses. It trains the mind to abide in quietness. Residing in silence is Samadhi. Samadhi is the path to the goal. Samadhi destroys imperfections. Samadhi reveals the nature of divinity. Regular practice of samyama will enable us, eventually, to stand in the light. The time will come when we will not meditate in the usual way. We will just sit in Samadhi, shut our eyes and remain in a quiet state; we will be passive yet content, absorbed in Being, immersed in light. Sunk in peace, we will need no mechanical aids, no techniques, no mental tricks. It is not possible to do this till the mind is subtle, cleansed of a certain amount of refuse. Till then we use samyama or something like it.

Simplicity is the key. The easier the better. That disturbs awareness the least.

As beautiful as the tender state is, though it may swell the heart in its softness, even so it is not the ultimate goal nor the final end. It is hard for the mind to see that there is something beyond Purity, something so absolute that it is beyond words. The intellect asks: What can be higher than purity or more subtle than the finest?

It is not easy to draw a line between Purusha, the inner Self, and sattva, the finest state of mind. Many have confused these, thinking they were enlightened. It is like this. You may have a mirror that is flawless and pure so the image in it is perfect, yet what you see is only an image. Polish the mirror all you want, but what you see can never be the real thing. It is a copy. So with sattva.

What we normally regard as spiritual qualities - sincerity, caring, kindness, gentleness, etc – are in truth attributes of sattva. Very nice, too. They make a decent human being. But Purusha, whole in itself, is the formless unmanifest, or pure Awareness. The Indian scriptures make it plain that Brahman has no attributes. Its only nature is Being or Absolute Existence. If it can in any way be said to have attributes or qualities, they are unmanifest, potential, not yet expressed. Purusha is stillness on a lesser level than the Absolute. It is not the actor, nor the doer, nor the thinker. Purusha does not do anything. It is silence, inactivity, motionlessness. It is emptiness. Or fullness. And what we call sattva is the finest expression of the relative. It is purity of mind, emotions and consciousness.

What are we doing with yoga? We are clearing away the dross from the relative aspect. Tapas, or purifying activity, clears consciousness of that which obscures the light. It digs up and purifies the dross. Yoga makes chitta shine and clarifies the mind. At first we start to clear surface tensions, the gross, the crass, the superficial, the inert masses of the mind; we start digging up areas of tiredness,

boredom or lethargy. We should remember that similar-type impressions are connected in chains and we are wiping out whole areas or deposits of stress. Next we would tend to settle the less excited or nervous areas, deposits of emotion, anger, fear, frustration, fear, etc. But we have to keep in mind that things are not as cut and dried as outlined here, and there is much overlapping. We are just considering the general tendency as the contents of mind become refined. So we would end up with more subtle states as awareness is purified, thus working through *tamas* and *rajas*, then clarifying *sattva* as it becomes less and less dense, more sublime, more pure so it better reflects the spiritual light.

*Tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* interact in our lives. There is not just one prevalent at all times. A human being is a complex creature. In the western world the main energy being expressed at this time, but by no means the only one, is *rajas*, for our life is hectic and full of stimulation. We seem pressed for time. The normal person seeks excitement. People are noise-oriented, without regard to upsetting their neighbours...who may be just as noisy anyway! We do not want to be still. People are encouraged to be greedy. Ambition is glorified. Our society glorifies wealth above all else. Politics is based on acquisition. We suffer from stress and nervousness, from fear and aggression. We do not feel safe. We see anger and violence. We are superficial, our lives empty. Society does not care about us. Insane people have power. The inmates are running the asylum. This refers to the general run of men, not to specific individuals who may be well endowed with *sattva*. Such men and women have always existed, else yoga could not have long endured.

In ages past *tamas* ruled. Men were inert. They accepted fate. They did not think much. Not too much happened. Life was slow. The rules of society were fixed. Men knew their place, their work, what was expected of them. More or less simple. Life was more sedate – also much harder. Consciousness was much lower and somewhat dimmer, and intelligence less organized. Some say in future days we will see *sattva* emerge as a major characteristic of the human race. We will see. Don't hold your breath.

The great goal of yoga is to find the Self. That means digging out *tamas*, reducing *rajas* and passing through *sattva*. To aid us to do this in our ordinary life, yoga offers three suggestions: Seek contentment; be compassionate; follow virtue. These tend to bring the nature to peace and settle the mind. But the mind cannot find rest through struggle. We can only do these things in a limited way, according to how evolved we are. We live in a gentle and very natural way – natural to us, that is. We just incline towards happiness, kindness and goodness. If it is hard, we let time and meditation do their work. Meditation is the bedrock.

We change the patterns of our minds by changing ourselves, although that change is limited. Our minds – the ego itself – consists of impressions left over from past experiences. They will remain. We can, however, change the patterns of our thoughts so that less gross memory-impressions get activated. By trying to live at a higher level *sattva* becomes, in time, the major or the predominant

conditioning energy. But we are just juggling with the material of our mind; the contents remain the same. Most human beings are a bundle of habits.

A technique of living never taught in the west is that of non-resistance. We think that effort is the way to do things. Many people, particularly those with heart or nervous complaints, seem to have great faith in the saying: Hard work never hurt anyone. Not much of a comfort to their families.

It may well be that, without prolonged meditation, many of us are incapable of functioning with ease in action, as we are too gross, and we may need practice before we can operate from the tender level of awareness – else we may make an effort not to make an effort. When we act without resistance we act in freedom and our actions do not bind us to them. We act as integrated beings, for conflict arises out of resistance; where there is no resistance, there is no disharmony; discord brings cleavage. All our problems arise from resistance. Let life be your dance. And dance it well. But make sure you meditate first.

This is succinctly put in the Gita: Surrender all actions to Me. This is usually thought to mean that you have the idea that what you do is an offering to divinity. But the only way to surrender action is to let action lightly touch your awareness; it is to give up as we act; it is to sacrifice actions even as we do them. It is frictionless action. It means letting the tendency to try slip away. Letting go is a beautiful thing. The way we act in meditation is the way we must learn to act in life. This fills the awareness with sattva. Cessation of struggle is skill-in-action. This is Krishna's definition of yoga. To act without strain is skill in living. Remember that it is not action that is important, but its effect on awareness. The skill is in acting without moving from the gentle state; we act while resting. The Hindus have a word, Bindu – the point. We act from the point of balance, which is poise, grace in action. Then we dance through life.

As we approach the Self, bliss increases and softness or gentleness becomes more evident. The nearer we are to the Self the more sattva comes into play. Many of the experiences in meditation are manifestations of sattva. Sattva is the best means of growth.

To the ever-unmanifest Self, even sattva must seem like a gross state. The most sublime level of creation is still a form of manifestation. To the ever still silence, any movement, even the most subtle, is a disturbance forever contrary to its nature and must always remain outside itself.

Sattva is the purity of the personality; it is not the purity of the Self. Sattva is the not-Self, the finest aspect of intellect. To discriminate between Self and not-Self, you have to go where the Self is. You have to become the Self. You must know it in your own awareness. That means living as the Self, living in pure awareness, which is unlimited Intelligence.

It does not mean: Here I am, there is the Self; this is me and I am aware of that Self. Rather, it is the knowledge: I am existence, I am being. Being the highest, all lesser states are contained within it. The Self is the master of all states of awareness. All states change, but Purusha remains. It is the universal Self. There is only one Self, in fact. There are no souls or jivas, because the personal self is a fiction. The very nature of divinity is knowingness. To directly know some fact is intuition, but to know knowingness is omniscience. Ultimately it is to know the Absolute, the sense of all-knowing; it is to have cosmic awareness.

Purusha is awareness, silent, deep, indivisible, total alertness; consciousness alive in itself, not aware of anything else, awareness without an object to look at. It is untouched by anything, like an unreflecting crystal. It is untouched by any experience, not even reflecting sattva. When attention is not drawn outwards, the awareness remains settled in its own nature. When even sattva cannot intrude on divine consciousness (actually nothing can touch divine consciousness), nothing can disturb the Self. The mind, without experience of it, can never comprehend this as it is.

Many yogic teachers, ancient and modern, suggest the mind is perfectable, which is not true, and that one can attain lasting happiness, which is also not true. The mind will always be limited, no matter how far it may be stretched. There will always be suffering at some point. Things will always upset us at times. We will get annoyed sometimes, and at times we may feel some resentment or fear, and at other times great contentment and happiness. There will always be change from one state to another. We cannot remain in one state all the time. That is not the nature of the human condition. No amount of meditation will change that, though we will be more wholesome and carefree, which will make life smoother and make us more content. But our basic nature will not change. We will be the same, only more so, and we will feel more alive and more alert. We will react in the same old way, though our awareness will be greater.

The old yogis said mind was the result of past experiences leaving impressions on consciousness, which conditioned it, forming mind and personality, forming tendencies within the sense of self, but these could be removed as the result of meditation, making ego more spiritual. But only the spiritual can ever be spiritual. Ego is ego. Mind is mind. It always will be.

What is mind? It is the summation of past experiences and genetic inheritance, old habits, learned responses. The mind is a conditioned set of patterns. Plus there is alertness, intelligence – which at times may seem to be in hiding! – along with the I-sense. Some believe that without the experiencer there is no experience. They ask: How can there be thought without a thinker? Really? It is the nature of maya that things seem to be other than what they are. Sometimes things are the opposite of what they seem.

Individuality is differentiation. Mind knows itself as the ego. This knowledge sets it apart from the rest of life. Mind is the very self; through the self it acts; in the self it lives. Without mind there is no personal being. And without the sense of self, no mind.

Mahat, cosmic intelligence, is expressed through the individuality as mind. Awareness assumes ownership of the mental faculty. It says: This is mine. It identifies with it, saying: I am the mind. Awareness, as the perceiver, associates itself with movement in consciousness.

Selfhood is the seed around which all attitudes, all thoughts, all experiences gather. Self is the filter for all things. Without the self, we think mind falls apart. For mind still thinks without the knower. It is habitual, automatic, conditioned, part of being human.

All thoughts come from One Mind, one awareness. The mind simply accesses thoughts from that Universal Mind. The One Mind is chitta – not the individual mind, but Universal Mind, from which all minds come. This, the total essence of all mentality, is set in motion by all minds. Mind does not have an owner, simply a user. And the user is false, an illusion. Mind is just like a receiving station that picks up certain thoughts and filters out others.

Individual awareness means individual living; individual experience means individual mind. Those minds function within Universal Mind. Each differentiated aspect of awareness, each ego, appropriates to itself a portion of mental substance from One Mind. This it uses to act on the mental level. The most subtle aspect of this forms the subtle body. The seeds of experience are said to form its content. Mind is its contents, awareness contracting into a form.

As one thinks, not only do thoughts occur in the mental body, but also pass through the One Mind first. The thinking faculty, Manas, brings thought into the awareness.

### **The mind in samadhi is free of impressions**

All our past thoughts and actions or desires have given shape to our mind; dhyana makes it shapeless. Meditation allows the mind to go beyond itself, like a river bursting its banks. Now, by that, the mind is refreshed; it is, as it were, renewed. Attention turns inward to that still place where there are no impressions – or at least to where they are settled for the moment, more or less.

The individual mind, steeped in Samadhi, loses its narrowness and becomes cosmic; awareness, surrendering its individual nature, the seeds of mind, is the desireless state found at its own deeper levels, becoming merged in pure consciousness, as the wave is lost in the sea. Individuality is rooted in the impressions of personal experience; these remnants are the basis of mind. But now awareness, through meditation, abides at the impersonal level, thereby becoming uncoloured, formless, free. It is habit-free, unconditioned. Awareness is expanded, opened, enlarged.

Going to that deep level, the seed of ego, the germ of mind is transcended. What remains is pure awareness. Only that mind is a free mind which has no 'mind' at all, which is empty of content, formless.

Coming out of there, we come back with a drop of infinity. Conditioning has a little bit less effect. By going beyond our conditionings they are lessened. They are less activated in life. So they lose their strength. At least that is what the Yoga Sutras say. We are born with certain tendencies based on our DNA. We develop certain habits. We learn to respond in certain ways. To some extent we can change the script of our life. But not too much.

The impressions left on the mind are of sattva, rajas or tamas, bringing karma of a gross, active or subtle nature; these may also be seen as tendencies, as a strength or weakness, for karma is also what we are as a personality, how we react; it is not just outside events. We find life is threefold: it is good, bad or neutral, a time when nothing seems to happen, when life is slow. The actions of a yogi are neither good nor bad (for him). They leave no deep impression; therefore it produces no deep effect. There is no seed of bondage contained in the act. The yogi acts without attachment. The act does not become greater than the actor; it does not assume great importance. He or she pretty much remains unaffected by life's events.

The experience of a yogi is colourless. That is to say, the effect of experience on his awareness is minimal. The knowledge of unified awareness is not overcome by events. He does not lose his spiritual identity. He is not conditioned by experience. The sea is not lost by the motion of the waves, nor is its nature changed by the fall of the rains.

A word often used in the Yoga Sutras is vasana, often translated as desire, but also meaning latent tendencies. The root of the word is vas, to dwell or abide. It means the smell that clings; the fragrance, perfume or residue that lingers. Thus, it is the essence of experience that lingers, the aroma of action.

Desire leads to action. Thought is more governed by desire than logic. Thought stands beside desire and action. We act. That action leaves an impression on the mind. And that impression, when stimulated, leads to desire or thought. There is a cycle: desire-action-impression-desire.

The ramifications of actions are too great to be comprehended by the individual mind. The factors involved in action are very complex, for actions are endless. All of the manifest world is concerned with action. The field of action is the gunas. It is only beyond the gunas, in the unmanifest realm, that there is freedom from action, and from its effects. We can very carefully plan action, try and foresee all eventualities, yet something completely unexpected happens. We may think our life is going to be a long road of dullness, yet tomorrow it may be entirely changed. Life can be a sneaky devil. Just like a politician.

Desires are endless, action is endless, experience endless, and conditioning is endless. Lives cross, paths cross. Fates mingling for a lifetime, or a few years, or for one event. What is destiny? Colossal must be the psychological patterns which condition a human being. There has been a long

road of experience. Consciousness passes through atoms, through matter, the vegetable and mineral kingdom and animal domains. In each of these realms of life there is the gathering of experience. The subconscious is full of forgotten memories of the far past, filled with the instincts acquired in other kingdoms of nature. We may think we have few urges, but that is not so. Remove one and another takes its place. A human being is so complex; for below the plant lies the roots.

It is the nature of life to manifest, to express its own potential. By living we gain experience. We live because we desire experience. We desire pleasure. We want things in life. We crave sensation. The desire to live is eternal. Consciousness has inherent in itself the tendency to manifest. The mind is motion, images, experience. So we go into a still state, beyond the realm of images and experience. Everything except Reality is an illusion, as it changes, whereas Reality is changeless stillness; everything else is a movement away from that. Only the Absolute is absolutely real. And only the Absolute is absolutely still. Only Stillness is completely real.

The cause of vasanas is ignorance. Ignorance of what? Of the Self. Experience without knowledge of the still state, sometimes called Witness-consciousness, leads to formation of vasanas or latent desires and tendencies, say the yogis. From the experience of limitation without underlying wholeness, tendencies are formed in the mind. Habits are formed. Unconscious actions without attention lead to unthinking patterns of behaviour. When there is no observer observing, when actions lack awareness, when we are not in the present time and alert, habits are formed, and then life runs in automatic gear. We repeat the same mistakes. We run in the groove. Without alertness life becomes monotonous and mundane. We lack alertness when we live in boredom, when the spark of life is dulled, when life becomes dreary and humdrum. Without awareness we are half asleep and half dead. Most people live like that. It is not a good way to live. In fact it is not living. It is merely existing. Existing without a love of life is poor survival. It stinks.

The effect of ignorance is bondage. To be in bondage means to be caught in the delusion that ego is the self, that there is no other self, that nothing lies beyond the mind, and that life is limited, fragmented, producing sorrow. One is bound, therefore, to the limited point of view, to smallness, to narrow consciousness. One is bound by ideas or ideals, by stagnating concepts, by materialism, by body-consciousness. And bondage is attachment to earthly living, not enjoyment of it, no, but attachment to it. Past experiences influence present actions and responses.

It may be said that vasanas or subtle desires rest on the impressions in the mind. Experience leaves its residue or trace in the mind as an impression of the event. These impressions, set in motion as mental impulses, become tendencies which influence behaviour. From the impressions latent in the mind arise notions and attitudes. This develops into psychological conditioning. Awareness is moulded into patterns of response. It inclines the mind to react in certain ways. These subconscious impulses predetermine how one meets the challenges of life. The overall effect of these responses constitute the personality, the mask of a person.



The vasanas centre around objects of experience. By objects is not so much meant concrete things, but rather a state, a notion, a concept, a desire, some feeling that engages attention, an event or situation.

John is hit by his father. John depends on his father for safety. Yesterday his father played with him, cuddled him. Today he is angry with him. John is confused and hurt.

Mary leaves John. He resents it. He wants sex. He wants her affection. He feels deserted. There is fear. What will he do without her? How can he love anyone else? Who will love him? Ah, who the hell cares, anyway?

When the memory of these things is lost, the influence on the mind remains. In themselves, their influence may seem nominal. But what happens when hundreds of related incidents are behind them, affecting consciousness? This package then leans or tends the mind in a certain way. With thousands of such packages, the mind is conditioned to move in definite grooves.

The past is gone. Nothing can be done about it. The future is not yet here. We cannot do half as much as we think we can about that, either. The future is not always as easy to shape as we may think. Life has a habit of presenting the unexpected. While the past lengthens with each moment, the future shortens. And, oddly, the present remains constant, new each moment. As a matter of interest, normal experience is burdened by the weight of the past; Samadhi is completely now, the present-time newness, the freshness of the timeless moment.

The Shiva Sutras say: Unwavering awareness is the knowledge of the Self.

In some yoga books a misunderstanding of what constitutes enlightenment has been fostered. It has been suggested with enlightenment you will know everything. You will be able to do anything. You will have unlimited power. You will gain mastery over life and matter. All illusion. All ego. Fantasyland. Stuff from fantasy writers, and from scientology theory.

Also it is said that when the yogi abides in his own nature, knowing himself as himself, observing himself as the eternal knower, he finds delight, knowing himself as peace. Mindfulness of the Self, awareness of Beingness, is Self-knowledge. Such awareness is knowership; what is known is the spiritual reality. Within that reality attention reposes.

Enlightenment, say the yogis, is continuous mindfulness of the Self, or to live persistently within the sphere of spirituality which shines on the awakened intellect. In fact this is true, but not entirely. There is an awakened state before enlightenment. But enlightenment cannot be owned. It has nothing to do with mind or knowledge. There is no knowing in Brahman; there is only Being. Brahman is apart from everything; and that does mean everything. You cannot know enlightenment: you can only be it. Only the mind knows; all knowing is through the mind. Only

the mind interprets. Only mind understands. Brahman is way beyond that. Way beyond. Brahman only knows Being; it only knows itself. It knows stillness in its fullness. If it is not any thing, the state of being empty of content, what is there for the mind to understand? The mind cannot comprehend nothingness. What is there to know in emptiness? Brahman has no mind.

When mud is stirred, the clarity of a pond is not seen. It is only when the contents are settled that the true nature of the water is perceived in its purity. When mind is disturbed, when awareness is agitated, when consciousness becomes unbalanced, then the true nature of Atman is not known. It is disguised by the waves in the mind. Mind hides what is behind it. The mental fluctuations are too violent for the subtle Self to be seen.

As long as we wander in the realm of the senses, we will fail to experience the deep quiet of the Self. Pursuing the many objects of sense blinds us to the deeper reality which is still and non-active and non-manifest. When the mind is not too busy looking at objects then attention, turning inwards, looks at itself; unmoving, it perceives pure awareness. Doing so the watcher is lost in the looking and looking is lost also; then there is only Being.

The observer, the onlooker, the knower must be lost in that which just is, unknowing. That is real meditation. When there is no meditator there is meditation. Hard for the mind to grasp. For the Unknown itself, what is there to know? For the Perfect, what is there to attain? All the great religious books and spiritual teachings of the world since time's first moment have tried to capture the beauty of this. Great teachers, as well as less than great ones, have wanted to give the Formless a form, and a name, and called it God, the great, the friend, the far. Pretty soon, human nature being what it is, the beloved became the feared. And the dreaded. And religion became awful. God is love, we were told; and he will smite you. Now fancy filling young minds with this nonsense. Nasty. And you can keep your heaven, too. Anyone who wants to play a harp all day has to be unbalanced. What a din. Of course that is just in the Christian religion. Moslems had a better idea. Bring in the houris, pretty maidens to serve you after death. Of course that might not seem such a great idea to female Moslems. What do they get? Well, they get the chance to stuff grapes in the men's mouths. Gratifying, ain't it?

The known is the manifested world, all that can be known by the senses. The knower is the whole area of consciousness. Thus inner and outer converge at the level of the mind. All things which touch the senses are reflected in the mind. Mind is the mirror, reflecting what the senses pick up.

And mind reflects Purusha. Mind itself, in its purest state, may be awareness of spirituality, but is not itself absolute Being. It may reflect it to some extent. An image of the sun may appear in the lake, but the image in the lake is not the sun.

The mind, via the senses, comes into contact with the outer world. Turned inwards it may know all the mental moods, every psychic fluctuation and all states of consciousness. It may reflect,

beyond these, the stillness and silence of inner being. But the mind will always be mind; it will never be anything else. It cannot go beyond its own nature. That will always limit it. The state of Being will always lie outside it. Because of that the mind will never fully understand it. It will always be a mystery to it. The mind can never wrap itself around it to fathom it. It cannot hold it in its grasp. It can only hold limits. The unlimited is beyond it, being formless.

When we hear about the Self, naturally we are curious about it. What is its nature? What is its function? What is the experience of it like? When attention dwells in the spiritual domain, when one functions as the spiritual Self, the distinction is made between the Self and the mind. Abiding thus, there is no confusion about your actual nature. Now you know you are not the mind. There is no question.

When the Self is known, all confusion about it disappears. The time comes, if one is on a true spiritual path, when mind melts in the cosmic ocean.

Most of our lives conform to habits. The spiritual path consists of developing the wide-awake habit of abiding in the Self, the habit of spiritual livingness. Each time we meditate we familiarise ourselves with inner being. We habituate the mind to eternal silence.

Doing so regularly we come to conscious awareness of the Self. We know we are in contact with Purusha. Knowing Purusha, we know that we know it. There is no doubt. From the practice of bringing the attention to stillness, Self-recognition arises. The distinction is made between the spiritual Self and the not-Self. During meditation, after a while, one experiences oneself as Purusha, the unified livingness. When we become the Self, we know with certainty that we are not the lesser self, just as we know we are not the nail on our big toe – at least not the left one. Right?

Sooner or later, in varying degrees, one experiences this silent state during ordinary activity. In normal life this inner balance is felt from time to time and becomes more frequent. Thus it becomes more familiar. It starts to creep into daily life. It becomes more real than anything else.

The normal activities of the mind become subdued and the mind functions more delicately, less violently and becomes less agitated. Silence is felt more and more. It becomes a habit. The brain enters a more restful activity. It is less obvious to itself. Awareness becomes more settled. It rests in a more inward state, becoming more intimate with its own source.

And so, gradually, the mind turns towards the light, easily, spontaneously. There is no effort. It just happens. It takes place in a natural manner. Attention begins to perceive the silent area of awareness. From an occasional occurrence, it becomes a regular event and one becomes more steadfast in the Self. The Self becomes more real.

Contact with the Self comes and goes, but, as time advances, it takes place with increasing regularity and with greater depth. Soon it is a daily event. At the same time the store of sattva is increasing. Sattva may be described as the most subtle and sublime aspect of mind. Properly speaking it is awareness, not mind.

Desires weaken. They are still there, but they do not have the same impelling force. They are now more on the surface of the mind. Desire does not run so deep. Desires are like waves on the ocean of purity. Desire becomes more gentle, more relaxed. And the intellect, less troubled by desire, becomes steady, more anchored in the immortal. For we recognise that is what we are.

Remember, however, although the mind can be illumined, it can never be enlightened. The mind is limited and always will be. Spirit cannot perfect the imperfect. Mind can improve and individuality evolve, but only in a limited way. There is such a thing as transformation, but there is no change for the Absolute. The Changeless remains unchanged.

Identification is made with the Self, less and less with the mind; thoughts are seen to be like images on a screen. There is a distance from the lower self. Opinions and concepts are like shadows which seem to take place on their own – objects in the mind which are perceived by the knower, the witnessing consciousness, but even that implies some sense of self. Which, although greater than the mind, is also limited, but in a bigger way. Increasingly one identifies with that silent Witness. Life is seen in terms of a greater wholeness. As the mind, now functioning in a delicate way, becomes more uncoloured, it provides the ideal condition for wholeness to reveal itself. What was hidden before now reveals itself. As the mirror becomes clearer it reveals more.

From frequent practice of yoga, the mind slows down. Mind is subdued. Thoughts are halted somewhat. What remains, then, is simple awareness. Intellect rests till it is needed. Desires are slowed. There is mainly the feeling of aliveness.

Of course, feelings, thought and desire still exist, but in a much more refined state than hitherto. By refined is meant that thought and desire take place at a more subtle and basic level, where there is less activity, where activity takes place in a less agitated and gentle way, where everything is much softer and easier.

When mind is motionless and undivided attention remains, but not focused in any way, so there is only undirected alertness, this is yoga. The experience is of inner silence, stillness of awareness, the unmanifest core of being. This is the level of greatest restfulness. It is a feeling of being poised and balanced, open and detached from the normal level of consciousness. It is a neutral state. However, there are various degrees of this, depending on how advanced you are, how sensitive you are, the state of your nervous system, how concentrated you are and the extent to which you are able to let go and be nothing. Vamoose, little papoose.

By regularly entering into this refuge of repose, a harbour of peace is found amidst the normal activities of life. Life goes on as it did before. Increasingly, some part of awareness remains in this silent sanctuary, uninvolved with activity and free from the attentions of the outer world. The clamours of normal life do not impose on that area of silence. But, on the surface, you may still be affected like anyone else, for contact with the Self does not stop you from being a human being with its many problems and changes. The personality will still be challenged and will still be at the mercy of fate. That part of you always remains. And if it did not, what would there be to anchor you to earth? With the Self vibrating so fast I suspect, without being grounded by the lesser self, this earth would seem like a slow and dark place, if not actually a dead place, and the people in it, too. From a higher plane, people would probably seem like unreal phantoms. Just as, to us, higher planes seem vague and nebulous. Yet which is the most real?

Inner stillness is the most subtle aspect of reality. Normal human activity takes place on the gross level of life. From the subtle state awareness witnesses gross mental activity. Both can exist at the same time, so there is inner awareness and outer awareness. There can be thought and stillness at the same time.

So one begins to experience the quiet state and its effect, a sense of well-being, maybe at first fleetingly, at first at quiet moments of sitting or walking, then later during the events of daily living till it becomes a regular, common event. It needs to be asked: Once that soft centre is tasted, why is it lost again?

Purusha, being wholeness itself, is almost perfection. It is always there. One needs to become aware of it. For that to happen, there must be changes in the nervous system; it must become more sensitive. Yoga produces delicate but significant changes in the system. A very slight change in body chemistry can affect the mood or change the mental state.

We cannot say we are just the spirit. Maybe we are, but we have to live in the body. We have to function through it. We have to feel through the physical apparatus and to think through the brain. If there is any change in the mind, there must be change in the brain to support it. In order for the system to support inner silence and deep peace, it must function in a very delicate manner. If it is disturbed, then consciousness also will be excited and the restful state will be lost. It cannot be sustained at a gross level.

The yogi is concerned only with abiding in his true nature.

The yogi comes to experience himself as separate from the mind, uninvolved with the senses and detached from action and desire in a way that is nigh impossible for the average man or woman to comprehend, totally immersed as they are in the business of living and in following their own goals and desires, handling problems and pursuing pleasure. Most people are sleepwalking through life, prisoners of their concepts, slaves to their opinions and prejudices and subject to their habits

and patterns of living. They are living on automatic. Not many people are in the habit of asking why when it comes to themselves. They just follow impulses, usually without knowing why.

Meditation trains us in the habit of retreating, withdrawing inwards, finding inner satisfaction. The Self becomes our refuge. It becomes more real than anything else, more splendid. Simply by that retreat we become more detached. We withdraw from the senses, we withdraw our attention from the intellect. We withdraw into the silence; to do that we have to withdraw our attention from outside interests, and from thought. We retreat into the inner haven.

From the regular habit of that, inevitably, some of that stillness remains with us. All that calmness is not lost to us as we come back to activity; a true gentleness is felt as a subtle background. In time, some stillness is found behind the mind.

When awareness can move freely without awareness being lost, there can be no attachment, for the mind is not fixed in any one place. Moving freely, or at least being free to move in any manner, it remains unbound. Having this mobility, it is not forced into any groove. Nor can any thing be forced upon it. For what can bind the wind? When the mind is as subtle as the wind, it encounters no barrier. It flows like the breeze.

When awareness moves with the ease of a bubble floating on water, then a lot of energy is released; tensions are eased. In that smooth flow, the depths of the mind are tapped. And those depths contain a lot of energy and a lot of potential. By acting with ease we get more done with less work. It is as though action takes care of itself and one is simply there, but not really doing anything. The film of life simply unrolls. In this state I do not act: Action simply takes place. And that means I remain free. And I don't mind that at all.

Is it possible, then, in developing individuality, in the growth of ego (I am the actor, I am the doer), that we may have perverted the natural flow of action? Could this be the curse of free-will? Could this be the cause, at least in part, of the human mess, this mass of misery that most call life, this lost, selfish, disjointed society which has so much chaos and causes so much misery? Don't bother answering.

By acting with skill, with grace, with easiness, we encounter no resistance in our own awareness and more easily get things done. Acting with simplicity, rooted in calmness, events are not so upsetting; they do not overpower us or disturb our steadiness. The negative aspect of mind is not so easily set in motion. This is actionless action – action in the state of rest, stressless activity. I heard a rumour that a lot of people want this. From effortless meditation there is brought about, in time, effortless living.

Along with this there is an increasing sense of well-being. Makes you feel like dancing. Sometimes you could jump for joy. And I must confess, without much shame, there were times I

did just that. At least I never did it in the train station. Not on Tuesdays, anyway. The spiritual path is not a straight line. You might take three steps forward, then two steps back. The light comes and goes. The sun may shine all the time, but clouds appear to obscure it. Bliss often wells up from the heart. There may be a feeling of vigour, of freshness. The mind becomes very alert. On the one hand there is the ordinary consciousness of the outer world through the senses; there is sensation, desire and thought. But behind this there is a dawning awareness of silence, a background awareness of inner stillness, even while there is movement in the foreground of the mind. Sometimes one is identified with everyday mundane consciousness; at other times one may be immersed in the higher state of consciousness, the universal sense of unity and harmony. As we advance we will find that both states are present at the same time, the silent state overshadowing the normal activity of the mind.

This silence is the presence of peace, sometimes near and sometimes far. A dual awareness arises – that of the Self and that of the not-self. We live, think, feel, act and behind it all lies the softness of pure consciousness. And this softness permeates the mind and pervades ordinary consciousness. So now the stream of consciousness becomes softer and thought is more relaxed. Thinking becomes less important as it becomes more subdued. We become less attached to the thinking process, more free of it, less bound by the intellect. At times, even, thought seems to just about stop, becoming only an impulse or tendency. This is very subtle. It has been called clarity of mind.

There follows a process of adjustment during which calmness of mind becomes habitual. Mind becomes less prone to upsets. The more settled the mind, the more it can reflect spiritual reality. You will have more presence, more alertness, more I-am-ness. You will have more beingness, meaning that your livingness, your essence, will be more vital, more alive. We come into possession of the awakened mind, awareness knowing itself.

More and more, the mind will slip into an undisturbed, non-anxious, unperturbed state, particularly during quiet moments. If, before, the mind was like a stormy sea, now it is like a gentle brook; where there were tossing waves, now there are delicate ripples. And with equanimity comes contentment and a sense of satisfaction.

One of the effects of the spiritualization of consciousness is to work without strain in an easy and relaxed manner. This occurs most naturally when there is an easy and relaxed flowingness to awareness. The message has come down through the centuries from a long line of yogis: Be innocent. The fixed mind, the hard mind, is stuck. Only the innocent mind can adjust to any situation. The innocent mind neither clings nor rejects. Being free and open, simple and receptive, it allows anything. It lets non-essentials flow through it, like water between open fingers. The mind is subdued because of this simplicity.

It makes living a lot easier and less stressful.

Spiritual unfoldment proceeds on the basis of silence. From silence to deeper silence we move. Some may say enlightenment is the extension and intensification of silence. Our goal is to live always in the light, to become the light, to immerse in the Absolute, to be unified with the Whole. We want to be like salt in the sea, to live the glory of eternity in the Eternal, to find the All-in-all, to remove the mask of godhead, to enter the house of the sun and there abide, to look through golden glass and see everything in a golden haze, so to speak. It is not to be a mind looking at divinity, but to be Divinity itself. This is Brahma Vidya, Unity – to know no other but that; not to exclude other things, but to see That in all. This is the great Peace, according to the yogis, the final liberation, the mountain-peak of spiritual life. Personally, I would buy a bottle of the stuff.

Yoga is described as subduing the restless waves of the mind. To restrain the mind is pleasant, but it is not enough. We can tame the mind, true, but what we really want is to bring in the force beyond the mind and savour the Eternal and to live in the nowness of the moment, to draw out the sap from the divine plant.

In the end there is no power of now, no living in the moment, only eternity - no past, no future, and no now. There is just what is, the flow of no-time. In fact it is not even a flow. There is only the Existence of the Void, boundless, free, eternal, limitless. That is what you truly are.

The subdued condition is the state of sattva, the higher levels of the mind. Beyond that lies the spiritual realm. And that, too, we must know. And we must live it every moment. As long as we live we will always have the mind. How else would we know where the toilet was?

The mind is not subdued by the mind, nor by will. It becomes quiet by approaching its own source. It remains subdued by being close to spiritual reality, remaining in the awakening light.

Life consists of energy. It is the nature of energy to flow. Life is consciousness, and its glory lies in its unhampered flow. But human nature has attachment and aversion embedded in it. We cling to pleasure and try to avoid pain, turning aside from discomfort, which has made the pharmaceutical companies obscenely rich, living off the pain of others. Thus arises fear of losing pleasure or encountering pain, emotional or physical. We have no wish to confront pain or be deprived of pleasure. So we find opposites in many pairs, as one implies the other. Now enters judgement and choice. We find opposing values. We find conflict and resistance. Now, resistance blocks the flow of energy. Being trapped, as it were, energy becomes solidified. Stopped in its flow, it slows other energy, too.

With the condensation of this free-flowing universal energy, ignorance sets in. The individual consciousness, becoming denser, loses its clarity as it becomes less refined and more confined. With densification of experience shadows of impressions are left on the mind, which then interfere with the freshness of further experience. As impressions amass, the light gets fainter. By means of meditation – returning to the state of the uncarved block, as the old Chinese used to say – the



impressions are thinned; then, in the same way as the sun can shine through light clouds, Being can make its presence felt.

That softness tames the mind, which is always looking for something to catch its interest. Liking the warmth of Being, which fulfils its craving for sensation, it becomes quiet. It is subdued by the whisper of divine bliss. It is heaven's kiss. But without the saliva.

When the mind becomes somewhat quiet, self-recognition can arise. When stillness touches the surface of the mind in daily life, then consciousness reflects both the silent state of knowingness and the objects of perception; internal and external awareness, both together. The distinction between the Self and the not-Self is very clearly seen. Then the mind naturally inclines toward Beingness, moving steadily toward spiritual livingness. Moving deeper into spiritual reality, the mind becomes less and less important. The Self becomes all-important. The yogi grows in peacefulness, inner harmony and in a sense of freedom.

It is by inner knowledge of the Self that the yoke of bondage is thrown off. With the rise of knowledge, ignorance drops away. Consciousness is tenderised. The Yogi is safe, permanently established in Yoga. He has crossed to the Other Shore, maybe still a little wet from the swim, and he needs to dry out in the sun, but he has made the Crossing.

Now he is mostly immersed in his Essential Identity, steeped in the ocean of immortality. He is still a human being with faults and foolishness, but the Vastness lies behind him, supporting him. In his life he is not apart from pleasure and pain, as mind and personality, yet he is alone as sheer Beingness, set apart from difference, free of duality, knowing the allness of Beingness, the singleness of existence. This is kaivalya, the soleness of life, for what else is there, other than Life?

How is there singularity? Because whatever we see, wherever we look, we find only life. Enlightenment is the wholeness of life as pure Awareness. Here it is wise to make a distinction between consciousness and Spirit. Consciousness is made up of parts, fragments, limitations, experiences and opposites. Spirit is complete in itself, self-sustaining, self-begotten, unborn and unmanufactured. If there is an experience, it is of the totality of life, the fullness of existence. Yet, if there is only Unity, what is there to experience, and who is there to experience it? In the sea there is only water; what part of the sea can feel that water, apart from the rest of the sea? There can only be awareness of the beingness of Being, yet who is there to know that when there is no distance and no perception, and when being does not stand outside of itself to view itself?

The foreground of your life goes into the background, in a sense, although that is not strictly true; it is more that your attention goes to the background, to the state of stillness, and you pay less attention to the mind and ego, as they seem to be less real; there is just a change in desires and thoughts. Your attention is rooted in the dimension of stillness. You know, as an individual, that you are nonexistent. The individual is imaginary, sort of, and empty of reality in the Ground of

Nothingness. Yet that Nothingness is not empty. You are more alive than ever. In fact you become Life. Life lives itself through you when you are no longer the doer or experiencer; life experiences itself. You just happen to be aware of it, yet there is no 'you' to do so. You may be boringly ordinary, to others, yet you are the cosmic dancer. Yours is the dance. Life is your dance.

When the goal of life is attained, when the gunas are in a state of harmony, in a state of rest (although they cannot be entirely when life is lived, for they make up the personality, and are the cause of action); when the nature is infused with peace, only pure awareness remains, and Purusha remains forever established in its own nature, as in fact it always was, forever stable in the Self, fixed in absoluteness.

This, they say, is enlightenment. Here the Vedas end, for what else is there to know?

Now there is only living in the Eternal.

Or is there? Mind is still mind, but much more subdued, filled with sattva, and now aware of the stillness, but still having its old tendencies, its old patterns and weakness.

Shiva Sutram says: 'Free of the influence of pleasure and pain, he is alone – established in his own true Self.' Actually, no human being can be entirely free of the influence of pleasure and pain. If he or she was, they would no longer be human. It would mean they had lost their sensitivity. In any case, you must be subject to pleasure and pain if you have a body. There are these little things called nerves. Just goes to show, you cannot always rely on these old books, as you do not know what the state actually was of those who wrote them. But the second part of the statement is absolutely correct: 'alone – established in his true Self.' Alone in his own Aloneness, ONE only, no other. And yet – well, this stuff is full of paradoxes and contradictions. Apparently. The Yogi is apart from life in his true nature, yet he needs emotions to feel, the mind to think, and a body to function on the physical plane. His instruments of action condition how he functions. What can he do without them? In his higher nature he is inactive. That is his liberty, don't you know.

One of the things that irritates me is when I read of 'women's spirituality' or 'a spiritual group for women.' What the hell is that? There is no such thing. That is a contradiction in terms. Of course the same applies to 'male spirituality' groups. Spirit is formless and sexless. Enlightenment is not just for one class of people nor for one sex, although women have been excluded from monastic groups for centuries, except in a very secondary role. And a woman getting enlightened before her husband in India – unthinkable! That would be a loss of face. In the future we are probably going to see a lot more spiritual women than men. Many women are better meditators than men. When I use the term 'he' for a yogi, it applies to both sexes. It is simply more grammatical.

Recently there was a case where a western Buddhist monk of the Thai Forrest Tradition ordained women monks in Australia, for which he was excommunicated. Not allowed, you see. Not very spiritual either. The outer form, apparently, is more important than the inner Being.

There is little doubt that we, still touched by ignorance, even though we may have experiences of higher awareness, are not in a position to fully understand the nature of enlightenment. Our understanding can only be based on our own experience of spiritual consciousness, and on the words of others. We can only guess as to what it may imply.

Thought, emotion, desire, ego – these are not the real being of the Self. Purusha is the eternal spirit of the universe, cosmic existence, abstract Being. As one makes progress in yoga, naturally that Beingness is felt in daily life. Then one sees the personality as distinct from the Self, like machinery that runs on its own. But this perception is not a once-for-all cognition; it comes and goes with the experience of Being. Now one is deeply identified with Purusha, now one is not. The problem is to disassociate identity with mind for all time. The mind is the playground of the gunas; there they dance and act and play their games

As the major tendency now is to lean towards Kaivalya, to be alone as the Self, a disinterest in mentality naturally occurs. This does not mean that the mind is no longer used. We need it to function in this world, to make decisions. Attention is shifting to a state beyond mentality. It moves toward freedom. Concepts start to seem silly.

### **Finding Divinity, knowledge becomes infinite**

Knowledge becomes infinite when we gain knowledge of Infinity.

What is it that is to be known? Not facts, not ordinary mundane knowledge, not theory. They are just mind things. Knowledge lies in the realm of consciousness, meaning knowledge of consciousness, being awake to the domain of consciousness, alive to pure awareness. Full knowledge implies being aware of total beingness, living life in its totality. What am I? I am awake, alive, alert, aware. I am the song of life. I am simplicity and I am fullness and I am the ripeness of life. I am the dance of life. I am the flowing sea and the silence of the ocean deep and the vastness of the open sky. I am the mountain high and the freshness of the newest morning. I am the silence of the night and the brightness of the day. I am the morning joy. My mind is crisp snow and my heart is the warming sun. Yet these are not me. I am the stillness that never changes. All is contained within my awareness. I am Silence undisturbed.

The sun, in shining, reveals its own brightness. So, too, awareness, in becoming alert, gains knowledge of itself. Awareness reveals itself by being aware. Moving within itself, it knows itself. It reveals itself to itself. Yet there is still THAT which is beyond knowledge. That means it is beyond awareness, too.

The yogi has established his mind in silence. Stillness and activity exist together. The mind is steadily aware of the Self. Samadhi, at this stage, is a constant spiritual experience, the awareness of stillness. Then the yogi stands in freedom from the burden of the past, free of sorrow. In view of this, what is still to be known? Well, only one thing. Only the Unknown remains to be known. And we know that by unknowing the known. Thus we pass beyond. That is transcendence.

The yogi has established his awareness in stillness. Awareness is aware of the Self through cultivating stillness. From stillness greater stillness emerges.

When the mind is purified and full of sattva, when we know the Self, live as the Self, what room is there for further spiritual advancement? There is, it seems, yet a gap in consciousness. There may be constant awareness of the Self, seeing it, aware of it, yet it is not full unity, knowing oneself everywhere without duality. Sometimes one is the Self, sometimes identified with the mind. That gap must be bridged so that there is nothing other than the Self, and everywhere there is only Beingness living itself, only That, only Unity unified with itself. We might say there should only be wholeness without division, yet spiritual life abounds with paradox, and the reality is that wholeness cannot function on this plane in any absolute sense, and we need the mind to sort things out, to plan life, organise things and to make choices. The Unknown cannot function here. We need knowledge. Silence does not operate the can opener. Stillness does not open the front door.

Of course it is nice to say that life must be lived in wholeness and without division. Krishnamurti said that, but it is not that simple. Was he living in wholeness while he screwed his friend's wife, the very friend who looked after him and shared his home with him for years? Then, after they split, Krishnamurti had the gall to say: 'You may have been my friend – but I was never yours.' Delightful. See: say one thing and do another. So it is OK to say the absolute cannot be made up of parts; on the other hand we see division. In the end, of course, it is One, indivisible. Yes, the ALL must be intimate to us. One must be Divinity, not just close to it, not just knowing it – but living it, being it, as the wave is the sea. I must find myself everywhere, and everything must be mine, yet without me wanting it. All life must be my life, and I must experience everything in terms of my own Self. I must know myself as infinite awareness, which, found in a limited human being, is still infinite, as the wetness of the sea is found in every drop of water, even though as a person we may be wanting. It is not the person who is infinite; it is Infinity itself. So many yogis have tried to perfect the perishable, which can never be done. Nature does not allow it.

Many times, and long before one is enlightened, one knows the glory and the grandness of life, and it is not felt to be any different from the Self, nor is the Self found to be apart from existence. When we have the experience of that, always, what remains to be known? The bliss of the Self and the grandeur of existence are united in the absoluteness of Brahman. Yet Brahman is neither existence nor non-existence. It just is what it is. It ain't nothing else, pal. Or maybe it is. It is entirely something else. Entirely. It is a word which indicates Truth, yet also hides it.

Some truths are difficult to explain. Language is about things on this plane and on other planes of form. It deals poorly with the formless and the unseen and unheard. There are some things that cannot be explained because the symbols for them do not exist that will exactly convey truth to others, even more so when you consider the mind incapable of understanding a direct experience of formless reality, never mind explaining it to another mind. If you say, 'I saw Light,' what does that mean to another? What does formless mean to one entirely confined to form and experience? To say I have no self is meaningless to one whose only reality is the self. Can no-love ever comprehend Love?

In the permanent state of Yoga, the Self is realized as being separate from the business of activity, detached from ordinary life. Although the effects of such contact are real enough, the Self is found in an abstract state. It is like the sun in the sky; it gives light, but it is distant. Yogis talk about bringing it to the level of the senses. Yet is that feasible? The realm of spirit is inactivity, and the realm of the senses is sensory experience. You cannot see silence. You cannot taste stillness. You cannot smell spirit. It is apart from the worlds of form and sense. It is its own reality. All you can do is to be aware of it. You can experience it, but not as the mind, nor as an individual.

From silence to deeper silence the yogi moves. At least if he is a real Yogi, which most are not.

When the Self fills the whole vision then everything is lit by the light of the Self. Everything is seen in terms of the Self. The Self is projected onto all things, like looking through blue glass and seeing everything tinted blue. Blueness tinges the vision. When the sun shines, everything is warmed by it.

The central theme of the Vedas is: Transcend the gunas. That means be without anger, be without desire, and be without craving, without conflict, without tension. In other words be pure, be empty; be the Self, alone, free, untainted. But this is meant for the period of meditation.

We are tainted by the past. It conditions us, modifies our behaviour. What has happened before affects us now. It makes us what we are today. And the question is: Can we be free of the past – past guilt, shame, sorrow, anger, fear, betrayal, mistrust, worry, hate, envy, vanity, greed, lust? Can all past negativity be washed away? Can I stand clear of all this garbage, free, new-born, fresh?

The answer is both yes and no. We come into life with a basic personality which remains relatively unchanged, although the way we respond to things may be affected by circumstances and events in our life. Meditation will not affect certain character traits. They remain as natural tendencies. The basic make-up will not change much. Generally, flaws remain to some extent, although one will become much more open. There are greater possibilities for change after meditation because the nature opens up as awareness expands, making it easier to work on yourself, should you want to. On the other hand, once you realize you are not the ego-mind, you

are not much bothered about the way it is. It is the mind that is bothered by the ego. Beyond mind is stillness. Stillness has no interest in mind or personality. But, because of stillness, it is like everything grows, just as everything in the garden grows as the result of rain and shine. Things become looser, less dense, less contracted.

Some time after the Second Initiation an odd thing happened. I found myself unburdened of the past, free of all past pain and trauma. I didn't care about them anymore. The past had gone into the past. I was free. It was like all that had happened before had been experienced by someone else. And indeed it had. I was no longer that person in the same way. I was the new softer me. I was reborn. Memory faded, as if seen in a mist. I had let go of the drama. I was on a new stage.

As we meditate deeply, mind disappears. Where has it gone? And, having gone, how does it come back? Mind is just the movement within awareness. Mind arises as a thought current passes through empty awareness. When the mind settles down thought diminishes; the psychic stream slows down and great simplicity and stillness arise. Where is mind then? It is transcended.

We find peace. We find bliss. Ego fades. We sense the inner glory, maybe. We soar with the eagle. We float like a cloud. Then we come out of meditation. And we find the burden still on our back. We come back to earth. We begin to act. We find our faults and failings are still there. Sooner or later suffering comes back. Suffering is still there, even though we may have more happiness. Our old responses are still there. Press the button and watch us go. Where is this end of suffering that Buddha promised? We are shadowed by the past. Why? It was wonderful while we meditated. Such a sense of peace and inner calm. There may be an afterglow, a feel-good feeling, but it gradually fades. Life has many problems, to say the least. We have to deal with people, and some are not so nice. Sometimes we find life sucks. And sometimes it sucks like a vacuum cleaner. Why? Because we are still identified with an ego-self, the person who experiences a me and suffers. Because this universe is one of duality, where there is happiness there must be its opposite. Something will always arise to threaten a personal self in some way. That makes us unhappy. Yet we know, we feel, we sense that life should be great, that there must be something wonderful somewhere. And we do find that in meditation. Yet there is no perfection in the personality. The goodness and beauty is in the spiritual Self. Yet that cannot be maintained at all times. Yet the stillness is there in the background of the yogi's awareness and sometimes in the foreground, yet the personality is also there; and the personality will do what the personality does, and the mind will think as the mind usually thinks, and emotions will respond in the usual way. That is the way it is. You can have detached stillness and personal concern over problems at the same time, but the stillness is not happening to the personality. It is the Self that is still, as it is the mind that worries. Still, the mind is subdued and rendered calmer and you become more impersonal and distant to personality reactions. You become more free over time.

The yogi knows he is the stillness of the Self, yet somehow he is also still the personality. The Self will persist while the personality will pass away. It will not endure, yet it is very powerful

while we have it because of our identification with the body-mind, which seems to be us, even while we know it is not. There is no specific ego to be found, no person, yet there appears to be one because of the tendencies and impulses which arise within consciousness. Desires arise so we think there is one who desires; feelings arise so we think we are the one who feels them. It is just different forces acting on each other, which we claim ownership of and say: This is me.

So how are we any different than before? What have we gained by being on a spiritual path?

We still have the same feelings, moods, thoughts and inclinations, but we know they are not us. We witness them from a detached perspective. We see that is not what we are. They are only movements within awareness. We view them from a distance, from the stillness. We know we are not form. We know these things are passing phases. Stillness, not being anything, is unchanging. We taste freedom while still subject to limitation.

We still have tendencies. We have impressions and desires. The shadows of the past linger. As soon as we start to think or act, these old impressions get stimulated, setting up eddies in the mind, exciting consciousness and old habits and patterns of behaviour. We are a jumble of habits, along with inherited tendencies.

Let us not be confused. If we wade in mud, we may become muddy, but we are not mud, which can be washed off. Asking how mud got there in the first place does not solve the problem. And how long to wash the dirt off? As long as it takes! We have picked up a lot of dirt in our journey through life. All we can do is to settle down in meditation as we move toward a still state.

To live is to suffer, one way or another. We can be hurt. There is birth, decay and death. There is attachment. There is fear and loss. There is sickness. There are nasty people. Happiness is followed by unhappiness, pleasure by pain, satisfaction by discontent. Problems confront us at every turn.

The theory of yoga is fairly simple. There is a spiritual reality, Brahman, absoluteness and fullness. From within itself by its own magical creative power, it manifests itself as the field of life, prakriti, which includes mind, ego, and the material world. This is the field of evolution. And into this field enters the life-unit, Jivatma, the reflection of Purusha, evolving through all forms of life. In the human kingdom it becomes possible to directly experience Purusha. However, it is also said that Brahman is totally distinct from creation and plays no part in it; it does not inform creation as its embodiment, that creation itself is an illusion, like a magician's magic trick, and so are all those things we call people. Every individual is unreal. And that includes those other two unrealities, you and me. Oops. Or at least one of us. But which one? Ain't life strange? Or is that just you?

Anyway, to be whole we must go where wholeness is. The Self, Atman, alone is whole. By going to wholeness, opening the awareness to it, wholeness begins to enter awareness; we go to where

wholeness is. We feel its softening effects on the mind. We awaken to another dimension. Stillness comes alive for us. Awareness becomes more simple. We feel the purity of it. We wear the mantle of silence. This is the yogic state.

Welcome, traveller. Come on in.

Yoga is not a religion. It was devised to bring its practitioners to a direct experience of reality. By that it is supposed to reveal truth. Truth does not rely on religion. Religion was founded by someone who had some kind of spiritual revelation, then the followers of that founder tried to interpret their founder's teaching and pretty soon corrupted it by their desire for power. Religion lies. It says it knows the will of God, the design of divinity, the nature and desires of God. It says humans are supposed to behave in a certain way, to avoid sin and worship God, which God, being so inadequate and lonely, has a need to be worshipped and will punish anyone who does not do so. Shucks. Is it not clever of these priests to know the will of some God they have never met and know nothing about? They just think they do. The word arrogant comes to mind, although they say one has to be humble in the face of the vastness of that Presence. It is a strange thing but, while there is unquestionably a fair amount of spiritual truth in all religions, there is a great deal more superstitious waffle. As yoga is set on the platform of Hindu teachings, although its actual foundation may be much older than the Vedas, hidden by time, and by the civilisation which preceded the vedic one, and maybe even much older than that, there are naturally religious overtones to it. The bare bones of yoga is simply as an experience of inner states.

### **An outline of yogic systems**

There are several systems of yoga, probably derived from different times in Indian history. It is reasonably safe to assume that there was originally one system that got corrupted, as there can only be one truth and one ultimate way of realization. There are also several systems of shamanistic, pagan-like practices in India. Some of these probably got mixed in with some of the early yogic techniques.

Laya yoga, the yoga of absorption, consists of listening to internal sounds within the chakras, particularly the heart centre, and also within the sushumna, the subtle energy current within the spine; these sounds are related to the kundalini. In the more basic forms of this yoga, sounds are intoned aloud, sounds like Ru, Hu, Ra, Sha, Ram, Na, Mmm, which reverberate in the head. Closing the eyes, one puts attention at a spot between the eyes and slightly raises the eyes to concentrate. At first inner sounds are a bit gross, sounds of sea, wind, bees, and after a while they become more subtle. By listening to these sounds the attention becomes concentrated on them and the mind becomes still. These are lower expressions of the spiritual light and sound. Some writers have talked of putting your attention on the tip of the nose or looking at the tip of the nose, but this is wrong; some of the old yogic books clearly say your attention should be on the root of the nose behind the forehead.



Hatha yoga is a means of purifying the pranic channels or nadis. The poses relax the body and make meditation easier. By attaining a state of tension, then relaxing it, tension is let go of and one becomes more relaxed. Hatha means force or effort. There are two theories as to its origin: One is that it was copied from watching the movements of animals; the other theory is that ancient sages in trance spontaneously assumed these postures during meditation and were noted by their disciples. Pranayama, or breath control, directs pranic energy in specific ways resulting in a sense of calmness. The Hatha-Yoga Pradipaka says, with the help of a guru, one should listen to internal sounds, look at a brilliant light and also perceive inner space by means of mudras or internal seals or specific hand positions on the body.

The Naths were an early group which combined hatha yoga with mental concentration to raise kundalini. They were known for having psychic powers and claimed to have control over nature. It is said Goraksha-nath invented yoga in the tenth century, but yogic practices existed long before this. They believed, as do many tantric schools, that the body could be made immortal. This is a common theme running through Tamil Siddha teachings, even in some of their advanced spiritual teachings. Their most common mantra is, 'So-ham,' I am He (Shiva, the spiritual essence) which is synchronised with the breath. An ancient hatha yoga manual says nada and bindu, or sound and light, are the remedies against death. But this does not actually mean the physical body can be made immortal; it means the state of immortality can be known while alive.

It is said the Naths concentrated on sixteen points of the body, as well as on three interior spaces and three forms of light. As we do not know where any original members of them are today, I guess the immortality of the body idea was somewhat of a failure.

Bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion, has led to a great deal of misunderstanding, misery and wasted lives, for to whom was the devotion directed, and how did it benefit the devotee? Essentially, devotion has lain at the root of almost every religion, because what else could they give their followers except prayer and worship, as a direct experience was out of the question. And for the peasant mentality of those bygone days, that was no doubt more than enough. People wanted a father figure, some god or goddess they could talk to, trust in and direct devotion to. Their destiny, they thought, was dependent on the Big Guy in the Sky. So for centuries millions talked to nobody. And nobody answered. Anyway, who wants to talk to the Unknown God? Hard to find, you know. Must be in hiding. Or maybe on extended holiday. The average person in India was more concerned with receiving the blessings of the gods than with finding freedom. Make my life good, then secure me a place in heaven.

But in fact what does bhakti actually mean? In a spiritual sense it has to mean more than emotion, and it does. It is not about some nice feeling or desire. It means to give your attention to the object of attention. It means becoming absorbed in the object of attention, namely meditation, and losing yourself in that; thus you become more concentrated and sink deeper into Samadhi and thus acquire

deeper stillness through one-pointedness. This is true devotion to divinity, not some thought or feeling. A thought of devotion is just like any other thought. No one ever achieved any higher state from that.

Many books misinform their readers. They say all paths lead to the same goal. This is arrant nonsense, as I have been on a few paths that led nowhere. Isn't a path supposed to lead someplace? In fact most so-called paths lead one into a ditch of frustration. They cannot lead one beyond the mind, as the mind is used as the guide. So how can all paths be the same or lead to the same place? Well, yea, they can lead to the same place, a useless place; they lead you to where you already are! And who wants to be there? Who wants to be lost in the ditch?

Well, one may ask, what about the traditional devotion to the guru? The true guru is the Spiritual Eagle who carries his followers on his wings. He flies them to the sun. The Master is not aloof. He is the Eternal Friend. His friendship confers liberation. Where will you find a better friend than that? A Master is a human being, and friendship works both ways. So gratitude and appreciation are important.

Shankara once said that swimming in the sea of Brahman is bhakti. Bhakti Yoga is transcendence. It is true that one may arrive at transcendence through devotion, but not in the usual way that is meant or used, which is a gross emotional way. It is also true that devotion may purify the astral body by taking it or allowing it to function on subtler astral realms. Most emotionalism is pretty crass and vulgar, if not a bit sickly when it comes to devotion and blind faith. I would call faith the absence of proof. Like you have faith that you are a person! Till one fine day...

Oops – where'd I go?

There are people who meditate on Sound and Light and yet feel the need for devotion, who feel they need to gear themselves up by playing some emotional music to get inspired first, to create a mood for meditation. I am not one of those. Meditation is its own path to transcendence; it does not need anything else. Plus trying to feel emotional devotion is a strain and a deviation from stillness and rather pointless in my book. Still, each to his or her own.

Now I said devotion in an emotional sense can lead to transcendence. How? In the same way that it applies to any form of meditation, by having a point of focus and then transcending it; giving attention to it and allowing that concentration to slip away, to become vague and indistinct, almost trancelike or dreamlike, as when you daydream and forget about reality. In popular Buddhism the two main techniques are watching the breath and doing a meditation on loving-kindness, which is like sending compassion to all beings. Now to me that sounds cumbersome, yet recently scientists investigating it found it relieved blood pressure and led to a feeling of wellbeing in those who were adept at it. Again, if you want to do that do so in a very gentle and easy way without effort and let the thought and feeling of compassion become very refined and delicate and kind of slip into the

background of awareness. But real loving-kindness, metta-bhavana, lies in accepting people as they are and life as it is without wanting to change anything.

Being devotional does not always indicate that you are a loving or loveable human being. Of course devotion has been the backbone of the Hari Krishna movement. Yet one of the leaders was accused of murder a few years ago. This is not to imply that the average member is not very serious in their devotion. I am just making a point. What one might call the inspiration for the Hari Krishna movement, after the story of Krishna, was Shri Caitanya a few hundred years ago, who wandered all over India to teach his point of view. Unfortunately he had this rather antisocial habit of attacking those who disagreed publicly with him with his walking stick. Not quite what one would expect from one who waxed eloquently about love and devotion. Shucks, and dear me.

See, people talk about love, then act in an unloving way, which means it is just talk. Do not misunderstand me. To love is a wonderful thing. The best we can be is a human being, and the best human is a loving one. Be a human being; don't be an inhuman being. Love your parents and lover, family and friends as best you can. But emotion is just emotion, however sublime. Where is this God you are supposed to love? How can you love something you have never seen? It is so artificial. I once was involved in an esoteric group for eight years. They talked endlessly about love. I thought that was nice. I thought continuously about love. One day I realized I was not loving; I just thought about it. I mainly loved my children. Apart from that I was more or less empty. In fact, I was more loving before I joined this group! You cannot train yourself to love. That is pretense. This wonderful, personal God – what has it done for you? How much love has it? Whoever conceived this idea of a loving god amidst so much suffering? What a farce. Where is this wonderful love? Of course God must be extremely busy baking that pie in the sky you gonna eat when you die. Watch you don't get indigestion.

Sir Richard Burton said that the more he studied religions the more convinced he became that man just worshipped himself. Maybe he was right.

People think Hinduism is so wonderful and India is so spiritual, yet is it spiritual to exploit a group of people, call them untouchable, make them perform menial tasks and make them so poor that some of them have to eat rats to live? In Nepal, which is mostly Hindu, if a married man dies they say it is the fault of his wife for performing bad deeds in a past life, that a widow is bad luck. Her in-laws take away her property and she is forced to live with them, and they usually assault her verbally and physically and treat her like shit. She is shunned by society. How can anyone treat another person like that? Religion? You can keep it. Better to just be a decent, kind atheist. At least they are not a bunch of hypocrites pretending to be something they are not.

Now I do not say there is no God, only that there is no God as a person, and no god as people think of God. Worship of God is God as an idea, an ideal, as a concept. No one knows a God as a person. God is wholly abstract as the Absolute. Krishna, in his transcendent nature, was revealed to

Arjuna as an experience, and Arjuna, overawed, could not stand it. What he saw was too vast. For how vast is the Vastness, how great is the All? Arjuna was the only person Initiated by Krishna, although there is a story in the Sakti Sadhana which says Krishna visited a hermit in a cave who had meditated for many years, and shortly after Krishna visited him he attained realization of divinity. Now you may believe in a personal God if you want to, if you are happy to remain in your delusion, if you want to stick your head in a bucket and ignore the evidence, or rather lack of it, if you want to turn your back on reason and lose yourself in emotion. Do not accept what others have said, even if they have been saying it for five thousand years. Try and find out what is real for yourself, and the best way to do that is through your own inner experience. Think for yourself and use reason, not belief, not hand-me-down ideas. In the end, for humanity, what is God? Just a little name. There are pictures, statues, icons, endless words. But where the heck is this God thing? And of course there are those who will say they have seen God or talked to God in their meditations or prayers (who are they talking to?) or have heard the voice of God or God has contacted them through automatic writing. And there is also something called imagination; there is delusion and talking to yourself and psychological projection. And there is also writing books and making money out of it. And how come they don't give God the money, if he is the one doing all the talking? How much of it is given to poor people? Ahh. You guessed it. As the Rabbi said: I just toss the money collected up in the air and God can take what he wants!

We do not want the wildness of emotion. We want a calmer yoga.

Karma Yoga has been greatly misunderstood in India, probably mainly through a misreading of the words in the Bhagavad Gita. Karma means action and its effects, so this is the yoga of action. To be correct, it means the yoga of non-action. Yoga says every action is a trap; every action binds, unless you are in the state of yoga, which is the state of freedom. From freedom no action can bind. When you transcend identification with ego you no longer act from the perspective of a little self; actions happen on their own. You are simply the perceiver, the open, uninvolved awareness. As you are not the actor, actions happen to themselves; they come and go. You remain the silent witness. You are not the actor of actions. For that reason actions are very light, very easy. There is no constant volition, no intention to do this. Actions just happen. Of course you do what has to be done to get things done, to live your life and solve problems, but that is just the mind doing its job; you do not get caught up in the actions. You simply live and observe. The personality acts, but you know it is not you. You are the wind, not the trees. You blow free. You are behind actions, apart from them.

When we are not the actor, actions still get done, but it is not you doing it; you are distant from the event, non-involved, free. Free action is love. It may not be the love of the romantic magazines, but it is love because it is openness and there is no ego getting in the way. Just call it freedom if you want to. Life simply unfolds and you go along with it. Life flows and you flow with it.

Vedic scriptures talk a lot about Sacrifice, Yajna. The Upanishads talk about an inner fire sacrifice, although that is mainly related to breathing. An oblation means to give one thing to another. In spiritual terms, it means to give a lesser something to a greater thing. It means to sacrifice one thing to another. Through abstraction or transcendence this is done automatically, without volition. In fact volition gets in the way. So meditation is an oblation, a giving of attention. This happens when there is no giver to give, no actor to act, no thinker to think. The process happens on its own when you get out of the way. So, again, it is a matter of letting go. Of what? Of the surface layers of mind. You fall back into the nothingness, the empty space. You are the oblation and the sacrifice.

You throw yourself into the spiritual fire.

Got a match?

Then you start to act from desireless action, which is actionless action, action without a goal, or at least action without a seeker of the goal. There is still desire, but the desire is not you, nor are you the desirer of desires. There are memories of events and feelings, but no 'rememberer' of memories; it is memories remembering, not you. You are behind all that. You are the silent, still background. It is said the early Indian munis were 'mad with silence.' Well, could be worse. Much better than being mad with power.

Krishna said: 'Steadfast in Yoga, perform action, abandoning attachment, remaining the same in success and failure. Yoga is said to be evenness.'

The only thing which is ever the same is stillness, and stillness is the state of Yoga. So, with the mind established in evenness perform action, remaining undisturbed, remaining free. Renunciation of action can only come when one is already established in the state of Yoga, not from a lower mental state which is trying to control action through thought; you cannot pretend to be free; that is just another thought which traps you even more. Renunciation is the state of Yoga itself. It is not the practice of it. From freedom freedom comes, not otherwise. The mind cannot renounce anything on its own level. Renunciation happens; it is not made to happen. Anything the mind does strengthens the mind and increases the trap. Actions are free when awareness is free. When awareness flows actions flow. Actions flow from simplicity of awareness. Then you have the living Tao. You have effortless action. Then you can float through life because the 'gravity' of actions is very light. This is karma yoga. This is what a karma yogi is and does.

Karma, as action, keeps on acting, but – through disidentification with it – it no longer affects you as you reach newer, higher levels. The place of karma is within time, and within the field of action. As you pass out of it, entering into non-doing, into stillness, how can that stillness be related to time? Karma is time-bound; stillness is free. Really, there is only one Yoga, and that is the state of freedom. The idea that you can arrive at Truth through many roads is ludicrous. Don't people just

love their romantic fictions? If you think there are other ways, get free then come back and tell me. I won't be holding my breath. You might as well. There are only other ways of preparation, not of attainment. I know. Been there, done that. And trod in the shit. And there's lots of it.

Action is simply the interplay of the gunas within creation. That is their function. They result in action. They result in all motion. Purusha is the opposite: its one quality is stillness. It is the motionlessness of all motion. There is no doer of doing. Action acts. Action is performed without a performer. This is difficult to understand for anyone with a sense of self, yet it remains true. The performer of actions is one of the illusions of creation. Nor do we think thoughts; mind is simply aware of them.

Indians have talked a lot about withdrawing from the world. You cannot withdraw from the world except by going beyond it. Not by pretending. Not getting involved in life is to hide from it, not to go beyond it. There is only one way out of it, the way of abstraction. You do not withdraw from materiality by denying life; you do so by becoming attached to spirit. You have to become greater than that you intend to give up by expanding beyond it. When you become an adult you give up childish things because you have gone beyond them. No intent is involved. It happens naturally. You grow out of things in a natural manner. You become detached without effort or intent. This has led to the great mistakes of religion, to all that foolish life-denial and sin-based nonsense. It has led to many wasted lives and perverted priesthoods. Yet what is there to withdraw from? Let life be as it is. Let life flow. Let the beauty of life unfold, as it will in any case; but the grossness of the ego and the heaviness of the aura will get in the way of seeing that beauty. And desire will say: Can't I have something else? Something more? Something nicer? Please?

In India they talk about self-sacrificing action or action performed as a gift to the divine. In meditation you can say that. You can't say that in the ordinary state of consciousness. To have such an attitude outside of meditation is just another thought, and a thought inside meditation is still just a thought. It is only in the thought-free state that a real giving-up or sacrifice can take place, that there can be actionless performance or free renunciation to the abstract, never by intention, which is just the mind at work.

Karma yoga also means binding the distracted mind to the state of Yoga, to Samadhi; the repeated action of doing so is the yoga of action.

The Bhagavad Gita says:

'He who sees action in inaction and inaction in action is wise among men; he is a yogi.

'Relinquishing all actions, go to Me alone for shelter.'

That about sums it up, understanding 'Me' as the Transcendent. We will never fathom all action, where it comes from, how it comes about, what it may lead to. It is too abstruse, too complicated and too varied for a human mind to comprehend. All we can do is to be open and go with the flow, letting life happen and not get in the way, experiencing life fully as the personality, yet still being the remote stillness. That makes us a karma yogi. Life makes us a karma yogi, if we are open to it. My brother used to say that life was a meditation. Well, maybe, but not from the average state of consciousness. For many life is just another burden they have to bear. No lessons to learn. Just a bunch of habits which keep repeating.

Kundalini yoga is really a part of Tantra. It is more or less the same thing as kriya yoga. It consists, firstly, of purification of the nadis or channels through pranyama and purification of the aura or subtle body through mantra and visualization. The various chakras are stimulated and one hears the sounds of the chakras, especially the heart and forehead centres. Also, warm and cool currents are stimulated in the spine and sent up and down it (in Kriya Yoga) and kundalini reconciles positive and negative forces to integrate the personality. It can stimulate bliss, but it can also cause agitation and nervousness. Kundalini is always there to some extent, but to stimulate too much too soon can lead to problems, as many people have found. In fact some people have regretted meddling with it. While to some it has been a blessing. It can lead to great states of ecstasy. Read *The Interior Castle* by St. Teresa of Avila. That is kundalini in action.

Kundalini is closely related to the subconscious mind and possibly the racial unconscious, judging by some of the images its arising results in. For instance, particularly with third world countries, but not only them, people have visions of gods, angels, devas and demons. Some see coloured lights or whirling discs or eyes looking at them. Some say they see aliens. Some see dead people. Some hear various sounds. Some experience bliss or other feelings, which may be sexual or fearful, whereas some have a feeling of approaching divinity or overwhelming love. I suspect it is also related to shamanism. In other words, it might result in any psychic event. Most of what is called yoga is simply kundalini and cannot lead to freedom, though it may lead to experiences of higher states.

Raja yoga is essentially the teaching contained in the Yoga Sutras, which we have looked at in some detail. It is the yoga of the mind. Slow the mind down and we will uncover that which underlies thought; we will find that when awareness is taken to its simplest state we will find the Real Self. We can find the stillness and silence underlying all activity. When the mind is concentrated, that awareness magnifies; in that expanded awareness ignorance is seen as illusion and the true is seen as the real. We find what our real nature is. We will find that most of what we now think of as ourself is just an automatic response, an unconscious process. The mind, which is what most of us consider ourselves to be, is just a machine; start it up and off it goes. It looks real, but it is not us. In fact it hides our true nature. The mind masks reality.

Through attention and concentration there is a withdrawal of the senses from the objective world; one's attention withdraws from the senses into consciousness. Consciousness becomes more simple. Thought slows down and mind becomes subdued. Heightened alertness results. One feels light, easy and relaxed. This is raja yoga. However, it does not and will not, of itself, result in the state of liberation because it is the mind working within the field of the mind. It leads to various subtle states of consciousness, but how will it transcend consciousness? How will the mind go beyond its own limitations? How will it reach beyond the ego? How does the self free itself from itself? The self has no idea how to do that. For many yogis, because of this, enlightenment has seemed impossible. Who knows how to do that? How can that which is bound free itself? The Yoga Sutras never answered this question. Because from the level of mind, and raja is the yoga of mind, this question cannot be resolved. Mind cannot, and can never, solve the problem of mind.

The Upanishads mention Adhyatma Yoga, which Shankara says consists of withdrawing the mind from the senses and placing it on the Self, which is hard to perceive as it 'dwells in the deep,' as the Upanishads say. One withdraws mind into the Universal Mind, then attention into the Higher Self. This is done through concentration, till attention runs deep and awareness becomes motionless. In that motionless state of no-thought the Self begins to manifest; then its subtleness may be seen, as one becomes the observer. In silence that which is silent is perceived. But how do you find that spiritual Self in the first place before you can dwell on it or rest in it? How do you find the silence when the mind is so active? Where is the arrow pointing to stillness?

Gnana yoga is the yoga of knowledge; yet it is not the knowledge found in books, nor that communicated by mouth. This cannot be told. It has to be known by becoming, by direct experience, by revelation, by the Higher Self revealing itself. It is not like science. It is not a collection of facts. Nor is it a yoga that is 'done' by action. It is the end result of the practice of yoga, when the yogi knows himself. When the yogi knows him or herself to be the Absolute, that is gnana and that is Yoga. There are plenty of so-called gyana yogis in India who will tell you that gnana is about analysis, mentally reducing everything to its minimum value, saying I am not this, I am not that; ergo, I am the ultimate state, the deathless, eternal one. But that is just thought; thought cannot overcome thought. Only stillness can do that. Mental perception cannot overcome illusion, although it helps. You cannot get free by developing an attitude of mind, which is just the same old thing in another form. Gnana yoga, as taught today, says you have to overcome maya, you have to untrap yourself from the delusion of form. Yet how can you do that when the very thing which seeks to do so is trapped by form, is form itself and subject to the laws of maya? How difficult this is can be judged from the fact that so many have failed to find freedom. I have heard it said that spiritual India is a romantic myth. Plenty of nice ideas and superstitious devotion, but not much real spirituality. Some people do not want real spirituality, they do not want to be free; they just want something to believe, something bigger than themselves, bigger than life to worship. It is true: religion is for the masses. For the unthinking masses. For where is the evidence for all the religious mumbo-jumbo? It all lies in faith and trust. And you can't trust that.



Gnana does not start with belief. It begins with knowing the Higher Self, in the same way that everyone knows they have a mind. It begins with stillness, inner silence and transcendence. It consists of contemplation of the Absolute, the highest form of yoga, pure Yoga. Contemplation of Reality is Gnana or Self-Realization. This is the subject of the Upanishads, the Path of Wisdom. Gnana is the Transcendent Reality. It is freedom itself. It is in fact the subject of Vedanta, the culmination of the popular instruction: Man, know thyself. To quote a popular scripture:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real  
From death to Immortality  
From darkness to Light.

To put this in another way, Gnana is about knowing God. Not as a distant being, not far away, but closer than your own breath. It is about God-realization, knowing you are God, becoming God, and even those words are misleading. When you transcend everything else only God remains. Not God as an object to be worshipped, but to be directly known with no distance involved. Sameness, only One Thing. One thing. Only That, nothing else. Singleness of existence. The Existence before existence. Nameless, formless, transcendent Divinity. The unknown Absolute. That is the ultimate goal of meditation. When you reach enlightenment and everything is contained by you, when you go beyond Sound and Light and every state of consciousness, even beyond the Higher Self, when all states of knowledge are transcended, what remains? What is there to meditate on? God. Only God. Not as an idea or concept or feeling, but as the only thing to be, the only thing there is. You forget yourself and vanish. Then what is left? Your meditation then must be in being God, for what else is there when everything has been left behind? There is no devotion when there is no duality. There is then only the wonder of Being. The Being that is God. Only Love remains as that which accepts everything, encloses everything, contains everything, welcomes everything, and yet there is nothing else than itself in total Stillness. If this does not seem to be a good description, may I remind you that no Teacher, no Master, no awakened person and no scripture has ever been able to give a clear understanding of this state. It is beyond language because beyond the mind, and beyond duality. And I would remind you that I am not in this state myself. Not yet, anyway. I am on the outside looking in. So what can I say about it?

True Gnana is called Brahma Vidya, Divine Wisdom, the state of Enlightenment.

Some of the old rishis in ancient India taught their disciples, in order to know the Supreme, they should have the idea that they were the Supreme, have the idea of the Supreme in mind, in their meditation, concentrate on that and immerse themselves in that idea and by doing so still their mind, still their thought by only having that one thought, that single idea, that sole concept and no other till it became very fine and faint, and then let it go, let it fade, and disappear with it, thus transcending even that concept and so arrive at a conceptless state, the state without the gunas, without desire, without volition or intent of any kind, without anything, thus becoming nothing.

For when there is nothing else, only God remains.

This message is hammered home again and again in the Ribhu Gita, in different ways.

Gnana yoga says: Not this, not this – only That. Look beyond all limits.

The Yoga Vasistha tells you to stop the mind by asking What am I? or How did this universe come into existence?

Zen asks: What was your original nature before you were born?

Nisargadatta Maharaj asked that you grab hold of the sense of self till you find your original nature. That is, put your attention on your own existence.

Shankara asked that you meditate on Brahman, think on Brahman, see only Brahman, know only Brahman, and try to be only Brahman. Hard to do, though.

Sound and Light teachings say put your attention on inner hearing and sight and merge into them and become one with inner space; expand your awareness, enlarge your vision, discover stillness and interior silence; and so become Brahman, and thus become free.

Guess which way I prefer.

Ah, you guessed, didn't you?

## 16

### **THE WRONG WAY**

Deceptive gurus are widespread in the world  
Dariya

You have a duty to perform. Do anything else, do any number of things; occupy your time fully, and yet, if you do not do this task, your time will have been wasted  
Sufi saying

Knowing others is wisdom. Knowing the Self is Enlightenment  
Tao Te Ching

The real form of Love is amrit, divine nectar  
Bhakti-Sutra of Narada

There are those who think that any way is a valid spiritual path, that any path is a legitimate one, on the basis that all roads lead to Rome, but this is manifestly absurd, although very popular. In the first place not all types of meditation are able to produce a spiritual experience, in fact very few are. Many paths are a hard slog. Secondly, unusual experiences do not equate with freedom. A true path must free people, not just give pleasant experiences. How many true ways can there be?

It seems to me as I write this that there have been valid spiritual paths in the past that have not led to total freedom, although their practice has led to higher states of being; and there have been genuine spiritual masters of Sound and Light who have not been fully enlightened, although they had the ability to initiate aspirants into Sound and Light meditation and connected them to higher realms of light. These Masters were at a very high level of awakening but had not gone beyond Sound and Light itself. Those Masters were certainly worthy of our respect and reverence.

In Hatha Yoga there was the tradition of Nada where the inner sound was heard and a light was seen in front of the forehead or a space, akasha, was experienced above the eye area. This was taught by a Hatha Yoga Guru, who again was in a state of wisdom, but not fully liberated. This is mentioned at the end of the Hatha Yoga Pradipaka as the thing to meditate upon.

There has been a long tradition of Sant Mat in India and old Persia. The term, Sant Mat or Way of the Saints, was used by both Kabir and Guru Nanak in the fourteenth century, although there were teachers of Sound and Light long before that. In fact, if Sound and Light is a true teaching, then there must have been teachers of it from the days that men first walked this earth. For men have always wanted to be free, and Something in the universe, based on the Law of Compassion, has always provided the gateway to freedom in the form of certain advanced individuals with a special unique ability or gift to open the doorway of spirituality to their fellows.

Lau Tzu put it like this:

‘Without opening your door  
You can open your heart to the world.  
Without looking out your window  
You can see the essence of Tao.’

Now a Master can place the energy of Sound and Light in the aura of an advanced disciple in such a way that he is able to initiate others in the Master’s name. This has led to the mistaken notion that before he dies a Master may pass his masterhood on to another to carry on the work. This led to a whole heap of trouble on the death of Nanak, where his sons claimed they should have taken over from him, whereas he had expressly forbidden them to take his place, considering them unworthy, and had passed the mantle to his eldest disciple, and it passed from him to nine other gurus, till the last one said it could not be passed to another.

Now there have been many groups of Sound and Light, even in more or less the same time-frame, but in the 1800's there was one teacher named Tulsi Sahib who initiated Shiv Dayal Singh, later known as Soami Ji, who later started the Radha Soami faith, although he was not the only one of Tulsi's disciples told to teach his path. It spread from there till now, when there are many different groups around the world, including offshoots like Eckankar, Master Path and Ching Hai, until now it is all but useless. Why?

Unfortunately the idea has been spawned that mastership can be passed on from Master to disciple. It cannot be. A light can be placed in a person's aura so he can initiate others, but this does not confer masterhood in itself. Only the Principle of Enlightenment can do that under cosmic law. What happens if you keep on watering down milk? Eventually it will just taste like water. What has happened in Sant Mat is that the ability to initiate has been watered down and adulterated time after time till there is no power left to initiate; it has fizzled out and been reduced to a very low level of perception and experience. There are no true Masters left in Sant Mat, nor in any of their groups, and they must know this fine well. They are either deceiving their followers or deceiving themselves. They are not leading their people to Truth. There are no free people in Sant Mat. That being so, how can it free anyone?

Radha Soami is only one branch of Sant Mat in India, and not even the original one, yet it has millions of followers. But it is the blind leading the blind. Sawan Singh, who was known as the Great Master, confessed that he did not expect anyone to see Light when he initiated them, although a few did, and those few were only seeing astral light, not the Great Spiritual Light. In one book, *Spiritual Gems*, consisting of letters and his reply to his students, one disciple said he had never had any spiritual experience in over thirteen years (I forget the exact figure), and another said progress seemed to be at a snail's pace. How fast can you go if your initiation is false? Sawan Singh's teacher, according to the erudite and informative Dr David Lane, was not regarded as a master by those close to the original Sant Mat teacher. In fact, according to David Lane, the whole history is strewn with lies and misinformation. So the whole succession idea is based on falsity. You cannot give what you do not have. I do not believe any of these teachers had the real Light. Why not? Because in every case the so-called masterhood was passed on from the previous teacher. To be a Master means to be Self-realized and to have been given a transmission by the Principle of Enlightenment under the cosmic Law of Compassion, by that Law, and that alone, and therein lies a mystery. I do not mean to imply that these men were unspiritual or less than great teachers, but a teacher is not a Master. And no human can make you a master.

There have been people who have left Sant Mat bitterly disappointed that they never got what was promised them, although people have left many paths. There is an internet site, Exsatsangi, where many people are very bitter about Sant Mat because of the things they were led to believe. But, hey, if you choose to subscribe to ideas based on nonsense and superstition, whose fault is that if you choose to give up your natural intelligence and discrimination? Whose fault is it if you believe without evidence and experience? There is no doubt that those who taught the myths of

Sant Mat believed them themselves. So who have you got to blame? However, there is a lot in Sant Mat that is based on fear and is very negative. That is not healthy.

We now need to compare the teachings of Sant Mat with real spirituality, but first we have to ask what a true spiritual path is. It would be indicated by the following facts.

There would have to be a real spiritual Master able to connect the disciple to spiritual realms where spiritual Energy is felt/seen/heard/experienced.

It should be easy to concentrate on what is revealed without effort. At the same time the mind will get in the way and throw up doubts as it is uncertain what to do. The most difficult thing is to understand the simplicity of the process.

There should be a real sensing of Divinity over time, if not immediately. In fact there must be the revelation of Sound and Light.

A sense of peace and stillness should ensue. There should be a detachment from mind and emotions, and later from the sense of self. The ego should be weakened to some extent. Awareness should be steadily expanded with practice. At the same time alertness should increase as one becomes aware of awareness itself and some distance is developed from the mind. It should allow you to transcend all form. You have to feel more alive, more yourself.

The meditator should be developing all the time. He cannot remain in the same place. He has to change, yet he slowly develops awareness of the changeless. He or she becomes more the observer and the witness of both changing mental states and thoughts, and also of the unchanging state itself. There must be transformation.

Stillness becomes increasingly real to the meditator. As the result of this, inner space opens up.

One learns to surrender to the meditation. Over time one steps outside of oneself and sees oneself in an impersonal way. One must see that one is not the personal self.

One develops a sense of utmost certainty and extreme conviction as to the reality of the path by means of direct experience. This conviction grows out of the daily state one is in, not out of some mistaken notion. It becomes your reality, not that imposed by another. You become your own authority based on your own sense of spiritual presence. It is what you are.

Finally, and obviously, a true spiritual path must free you. The final goal of any spiritual path must be Enlightenment.

Now does Sant Mat do all this? Huh? Not according to what one hears. One is told in Sant Mat that liberation will not be possible in this life, but maybe in the next, or in three, or seven, or maybe eleven. Take your pick. The old carrot and the stick trick. And the donkey keeps falling for it. It makes an ass out of it. When you realize that you cannot survive death and return in another life as the same person as you now are, when you know that the person that you think you are is unreal, just a collection of parts put together, you see what a sham the above promise is. And yet it is held by many spiritual traditions, so universal is the delusion. Now that tells you what? That even spiritual traditions are based on maya. To some extent. Which is why no scripture or spiritual book is entirely correct and why so many errors creep in.

Sant Mat says there is a kind of Personal God at the highest level of reality. This God wants certain things in creation to be brought about so that a certain amount of beings, 'marked souls,' can be saved and go to live in the place where he abides, the True Home. Yea. Does it have a shingle on the door?

Or as um Holy Bible says: Jesus!

In the first place there are no souls to be saved. As there are no permanent entities, no constant person who flits from life to life, rising ever higher in evolution as he or she is increasingly purified and perfected, so there is no soul. The idea of the soul is an illusion, as any awakened person knows. Form is a trap. A person is a form. But no form can trap the free. As there is no soul or jiva, as the Indians call the embodied consciousness, so there can be no marked souls to save. Only a deluded person would think an unreal soul could be saved. This is just ego-fodder to make a person on a spiritual path, on this path in particular, feel special and elite. It is also taught that at the highest level there is no colour, no sound, no shabd, no form, yet it says souls dwell there; yet what is a soul if not a form? Does this make sense? To make matters worse, Sant Mat says souls were created. If they were created, they could not be eternal. All created things must pass away, on whatever plane, for what is created must be a form, so how can a form ever abide with the Formless? It goes against reason. But I guess if you created a non-existent soul you could call it formless. What does not exist does not have form! O formless me.

Secondly, this presupposes a personal God. Now, if there is no soul as such, how can there be a person called God? Desire, will, interest, effort belong to the lower planes. If there were a personal God such a God would have to be unenlightened and tied to form! The highest state has no form and nothing else. It is just stillness. What does, what can, stillness do? It can remain still. If it could change, then it would not be the Changeless. God would have to be of the same nature, unchangingly unchanging. Furthermore there are no beings in highest heaven, if you wanted to call it that. There is only God as the Absolute. If there were beings, if any being entered that state, they would become God, as only God could exist there and God is Pure Existence. That is the Formless Form of God and any being entering there becomes formless also. Nirvana has no form.

As the basic nature of the universe is one of Intelligence, which overlooks and directs manifestation through its many processes and laws, leading to creation, maintenance and ending of things, so the mind assumes there must be Someone who has that Intelligence; hence the idea of a god arises as the manipulator of destiny and the arbiter of our fate. Whereas in fact no human mind has ever understood what it is that God is, for what God is is outside of creation and hence outside of understanding in any way whatsoever. For how can the frog in the well comprehend the ocean that lies outside its existence? No can do. So if we try to describe God in terms of our own existence, our own needs and wants, in terms of our own ego, in human terms, in terms of God wanting something from us, needing us, being like us, of having some task to perform, some need for perfection, a longing for devotion or comfort, all the nonsense that is religion, that is just delusion on our part. It means we have come to a conclusion concerning something we know absolutely nothing about.

If God were a person, he would be laughing. What a joke!

Sant Mat also talks about Kal, the negative power. This is kind of like the devil, but not so evil. Not so good, either. Kal is supposed to be in control of the created regions. Creation is his domain, given to him by God, and he wants to keep all souls trapped in his province so he has dominion over them. It is his task to keep them deluded and enslaved to matter. He is supposed to send false prophets into the world, apparently to free men through various religions, but actually to ensnare them in deeper maya. I would guess that a lot of satsangis, the name given to followers of Sant Mat, are pretty much scared shitless by the idea of Kal, as he also is in charge of karma and death. Kal is supposed to have come from the highest spiritual regions, being the son of God, according to Kabir. Kal is supposed to be the brother of Brahma, the creator. Souls are supposed to have come from the same place as these did, in which case they should be perfect, so why should they need to incarnate? Also, coming from there, how could they have had any karma to work out? Is it me or does this sound juvenile and primitive? Does it sound silly? Would you believe it?

Kal literally means Time and Death and is actually universal mind, so it is responsible for the machinations and processes of the universe. Sant Mat has embodied and personified cosmic law into an individual to make it seem frightening. In the Bhagavad Gita Arjuna is given a vision of the universe, where everything is seen as consumed by destruction; all created things end. That vision so terrified Arjuna, seeing everything swallowed by the maw of Time, that he wanted it to stop. As there cannot be an individual God, so there is no individual called Kal. It is a personified abstraction. It is for a peasant mentality. It is just more superstition. Some of the old Light and Sound Masters were in culturally religious territory where people were very narrow-minded and they had to use fear to break up attachment to the religious mood of the day. Hence old Kal. Good old Kal.

Kal was also responsible for karma and what happened at death, where angels of death were supposed to beat the sinners for every misdeed. For a faith that is supposed to be based on love,

they talk a lot about fear. The experience of death is not recommended. It could kill you. How could people be so thick and stupid to believe this rot? By not thinking for themselves, I suppose.

Ah, dear old Kal. No one loves him. Ahgh.

The problem is, in Sant Mat, there is implicit faith in the guru. If he is perfect, then every word coming from his mouth must be true. There is an interesting point to be made here. The Sant Mat guru is supposed to be infallible. He is not. He is supposed to know everything about you, and everything else. He doesn't. A guru of Sound and Light is a man with a unique gift. He thinks like everyone else. He goes to the toilet. He has opinions and preferences, likes and dislikes. He can believe untrue things like the rest of us. He can come to wrong conclusions, which is why their writings are full of weird superstitions and strange ideas, which were accepted in their time, and still are. In other words, they accepted the religious doctrines of their time. They believed what they had been told themselves. Remember the mind does not get enlightened. What men believe is unbelievable. And their behaviour more so.

Let me say at this point that I do not fundamentally disagree with the basic tenets of Sant Mat as a spiritual practice. It is the superstition it has accumulated and worn-out ideas that I take issue with. It is the fear-inducing ideas and methods of control that I take exception to. It is things which cannot be proven, and things in meditation which don't work, and a so-called master who cannot free people and the fact that it wastes time when one could be with a real Master. It is small-mindedness that I do not like and people pretending to be a Master when they know they are not. On the other hand Sant Mat has steadily reminded people that there is more than this material life and that there is a path to freedom. Only, at this time, it is not Sant Mat that can lead you there anymore. It has seen its day, and that day is passing, and it will become an empty shell just like every religion has. Each age has a new Master, and he is never appointed by the old one. Yes, the old Master can transfer power but that power wears out. A dead Master does not free people. He may appoint a leader, but not a new Master; the new leader must have less power and he can only give what has been put in his aura and its shelf-life is limited. Spiritual energy remains more or less dormant unless awakened by a real spiritual Master. It is true that lesser levels can be accessed, but these do not normally lead to high spiritual states. Right now, how many people in Sant Mat are enlightened? How many have become liberated in the last fifty years? How many are happy with the results from their practice? It seems to me, today, that Sant Mat is more a faith than a practice leading to freedom. I have the impression, although I could be mistaken, that many satsangis in India do not even meditate, and given the very hard lives of many there, working hard for many hours a day, I can understand that, as they must get very tired. But I am not talking about the general Sant Mat population in their millions who want to go to some safe heaven after death, protected by their Master. I am concerned for those who really want to be free of their shackles.

This is not to deny that some people in Sant Mat do have experiences that seem to be unearthly, but at the same time many do not, even after long periods. Meditation is not solely about amazing



experiences of light and sound, of seeing personages of saints and gods, of seeing strange lands or hearing sounds and voices, even singing or music, some of which may be rather beautiful. It is about holding the mind still, of inner silence, of discovering what lies behind the experiencer, of who and what you really are behind the mind, of the Witness itself, of expanding your inner space, finding stillness and abiding in nothingness. If meditation does not do this it is not real meditation and it is not leading anywhere significant. It is not leading toward the ultimate. This is because the light and sound are of a lower order that will not break out of boundaries, hence will not free you. So how far can you go without a true Master and the real Light that created the universe? A lower light can only lead you to lower planes. And the question is: Does your meditation make you feel more alive and more perceptive? Do you feel good about yourself? Do you feel more real or less? Have you got a greater sense of personal worth? Do you feel more confident? Do you feel the simplicity of awareness? Do you feel you are making progress? Do you feel happier than you did before and more complete?

A true spiritual path is not about faith; it is about experience and awakening. It is not about imagination. God knows there is enough of that in the world.

Sometimes being in a spiritual-type group can make a person's psychological problems worse. Being in such a group can increase feelings of isolation and alienation, as one thinks one knows something the rest of the world does not, and hence one feels elite. Plus it can lead to an unhealthy sense of introspection where one dwells constantly on the gloomier side of life, thinking how bad things look. That is kind of depressing. One can turn inside too much, but not toward a deeper level. In fact it can make one a bit shallow. Being in such a group can lead one to resort to easy and superficial answers to complicated problems. One does this by accepting pat answers instead of thinking for oneself. Spiritual groups often attract damaged individuals who are all too ready to accept the ridiculous and fantastic, which feeds a need in them for some kind of romance when their own lives are so dull and drab and empty.

Karma deals in many lifetimes as the soul takes on a fantastic adventure. It breeds a sense of comfort to know if this life is crap the next one may be better. Sant Mat subscribes to this mistaken theory in a big way. There is always the Big Promise there; salvation in the future. Unfortunately it also spawns a strong sense of guilt and shame. The idea of karma is used like a club: do this or else. The Master is watching me. Why can't I live up to the high aims of Sant Mat? Why can I not be a better person? Why can I not overcome the material needs of the ego? Why can I not control anger, lust and fear? Why am I all too human when I am not supposed to be? Sant Mat contains a strong dose of outdated morality. It makes a person feel unworthy. A sense of sin is cultivated. Bad things are going to happen. Natural needs have to be brought under control. Emotions have to be subdued, desires and appetites hidden. This does not make for mental health and a sense of the wonder of life. Many people who have left Sant Mat have said they felt an immense sense of relief on leaving, as if a weight had been lifted from them. Many also felt a sense of guilt and fear at leaving. What if they were wrong? What if the teachings of Sant Mat were true? It took some

people over fifteen years to get to this point. Where is the sense of wholesomeness in all this? Spirituality is supposed to make you feel more whole and integrated, more content and more satisfied with your life and with what you are, not more fragmented and afraid. There was an elderly gentleman at a big meeting in America where the then Master, Charan Singh, was giving a talk. The elderly gent was a bit annoyed that he had never gotten anything from Sant Mat meditation in over seventeen years. Charan gave him this piece of sagely advice: ‘Try Harder.’ After seventeen years. Try harder.

I would have said: Try something else. Try somewhere else. Because this is useless, see. And trying is the one thing that gets in the way.

On the other hand, some satsangis do claim to have had good experiences from meditation, but has it made a major impact on their lives? Are they nicer, more helpful, more sure of themselves? Do they feel they have found their place in life? Have any of them gone beyond the personality and known themselves as infinite beings? Now you have to be a bit careful of satsangis, as they start saying ‘I believe’ or ‘Master says’ or ‘the teachings tell us’ instead of telling us exactly what they have realized for themselves, instead of what they think, and they come loaded with a lot of concepts, a ton of superstition and buckets of mental junk and emotional baggage.

Now you may think: Why does he need to knock these groups and find fault with them? I’ll tell you why. Because they waste time and distract people from a true spiritual group. I want to wake people up. I want to save them from years of wasted effort and disappointment. I know about that.

If a meditation does not take you to the ultimate destination, then it is not much use. Having nice experiences does not free a person. If you are not any more free from meditating, then you have wasted your time. You do not have time to waste. You only have this life. I wasted years in useless groups. I do not want to see anyone else doing the same thing. This Path is unique. This is it, the real thing. As to other groups, none of them are freeing people in any systematic way. In a few rare cases a person may realise they are more than their mind, but it is very hit-and-miss, and there are still miles to go. Get on a bus that goes all the way. Of course it is nice to say nice things, but to refrain from speaking out in the face of ignorance is dishonest. You deserve the truth. It is up to you what you do with it. You do not want to feel in ten years or more that your spiritual life is a failure. Let me make this plain: All groups are not the same; all systems are not equal; all roads do not lead to Rome. A lot of lost people thought that! Only ignorant people claim all ways are the same. Such teachings are misguided and not founded on facts. Well, yea, most paths may be the same and lead to the same result – but it is cold down there in the ditch.

The lower mind is childlike. There are many grown-ups, but not so many adults. You cannot do much damage to an adult, as they will not allow you to, but children are easily swayed and influenced. A child-mind is trusting and easily accepts, thinking authority knows best. If you think

this does not apply to you, take a look at your dreams; watch your emotions; observe your thoughts for a few days. Still think you are a fine and noble creature? Actually you are, only not in this part of your nature. There is a reason why the lower mind is called lower. There are all kinds of guilts and shames and fears and regrets there. This is just the way the mind is. There is no point to some guru bashing on about how you should be better, purer, nicer and telling you there are nasty places you could be going to if you don't change. The mind is the way the mind is. Sometimes you need to work on yourself in a gentle way to iron out major flaws and drawbacks, but none of us are perfect. Plus what judges the mind and behaviour? The mind does. Yet we are not the mind. We are that which accepts everything just as it is, including our lesser nature, mind, ego and emotions. If we could accept more and judge less life would be a lot simpler. It does not help to waffle on tirelessly about how dark things are. It just makes us pessimistic. Also putting one part of the mind, the good, against another part, the bad, only creates conflict in the mind without resolving anything. This is a lesson Sant Mat teachers need to learn. That, and the fact that control of the mind is unrealistic. No one ever masters mind-control. You allow the mind to be the way it is and it is not a problem. It is only a problem when the mind makes it one. Morality is the biggest white-wash that religion ever conceived. It has not stopped people from being unethical and selfish and it has done a lot of harm to people who could not live up to the standard set and bred guilt in them. I am not in any way decrying a sense of right and wrong, for a sense of ethics, of right behaviour, of consideration of others is most vital. But let it be your rightness, not that imposed by others. Be good because you are good. Be your own judge.

How is your conscience, by the way? Can you remember a time you would rather forget?

A person cannot help their desires. One acts according to one's nature. How can one do otherwise? Of course one is not supposed to hurt anyone. Other than that you cannot much blame a person for being what they are. Hasn't life and genetics made them that way? So why go on banging a soapbox about purity of thought, desire and action? To make someone feel guilty about being the way they are, for not changing, does not usually help them to change. Plus the fact that such advice is so superficial and useless, not to say insulting for an adult. It is like telling a nervous person not to be nervous or a person in fear not to be afraid. Do they have any choice in the matter? You might as well tell an imbecile to be more intelligent. Or politicians to be honest.

The idea that you can act and give up that action to God or divinity by keeping divinity in mind is ridiculous. It is just another thought. It means nothing. Divinity could not give a toss, not a rusty farthing's worth. Nor can one develop detachment; that is only the mind playing with itself. Desirelessness arises as you go beyond desire, and detachment as you rise above attachment. For hundreds of years religion has deceived itself and its followers with these kinds of ideas, although they may seem logical on the surface. You cannot kill desires because they are deeper and stronger than the mind is. You cannot perform action in the name of God, any more than you can for Ghengis Khan. There is no such thing as conquering the mind. For what would do so? Not the mind itself, and that which lies above the mind is not interested in the mind.

Action for God is like praying. Who would you pray to? What would you talk to? To your own mind. Do you think anything as puny as your thought could reach anything so vast and far away? If anyone thinks prayer is a spiritual activity then they are sadly deluded. No thought has any worth except to the mind. Chatter-chatter. God, give me this, give me that; make my boils go away; I need a new dress for the dance, just like that bitch Beatrice has. Anyway, what do you say to someone who does not exist, something you know nothing about? Gimme, gimme. There is nothing real except you. You are the only thing you know for sure, and most of us know nothing about that either. Find out about yourself, then find out if there is a God. Or will you let another tell you what to think, and feel, and do all your life? That is not what adults do. Might as well pray to the bank manager. You won't get anything from him, either.

God does not talk. God does not sing. God does not dance. If you hear God talking it is probably schizophrenia. Either that or you are interpreting something from a lesser plane than the Absolute. Maybe you are listening to your own mind. If you channel Mother Mary or the Goddess of Atlantis, how useful could that be? I guess great divine beings are so bored they have to find Somebody Important to chat to. Great messages like everyone should love each other. Sure. Very helpful. Have to try that next Monday. Or maybe we should do a course on Angel Healing. Shee. What will people not believe? Nothing!

Sant Mat teachers talk a lot about surrender. But surrender to what? They are fond of Kabir's saying: Give up your head, meaning give up ego, the sense of self. Do you think you can do that just by deciding to? Can the mind forget itself? Can apples become bananas? The only way to surrender is to go to the Transcendent, go toward that which is greater than yourself; but you cannot just decide to do so and arrive there. Thought, desire and will do not take you there. No amount of wanting to does the trick. That is still ego. Yet you have to let go, to surrender volition; you have to sink; you have to die to your normal state; you have to become vague. You have to relax. Are satsangis good at that? Do they know how to renounce themselves in meditation? Can they surrender to the light, and even surrender holding on to the light and sound? Can they just be? The only surrender to God there is is giving yourself to the Transcendent, not holding the idea of it in your mind, not clinging to the concept of it. God has no interest in you, your sins or what you do whatever. God does not have a mind. God does not have emotions. God does not judge. God is not a person. God is just God. God is not anything else. God is not anything the mind can fathom. God told Moses: I AM THAT I AM. Just that: God is what God is. The only way to surrender to that is to give up everything you think you are and just be. God is God alone. Give up control. Fall into the beyond. Find the way to do that. Do Sant Mat meditators know how to do that? If not, why not? And if they do, then fine. They should be happy with their meditation. Are they? And remember, when I say Sant Mat, I mean every kind of sound and light meditation there is. Most of all, though, do they experience inner silence? Do they abide in stillness, and after meditation, as they move about in the world, does stillness remain with them? Do they live a life worth living?

Do they feel complete? Have they realised themselves? Do they act with actionless action, with simplicity of living? Are they kind and well-meaning? Are they glad to be alive?

Sant Mat as it stands today is outdated. You cannot teach old-fashioned ideas from the middle ages to today's modern world. There must be a new teaching for each age, as well as a new teacher to keep truth fresh. Sant Mat has become a faith, a religion. The Path of Light and Sound is not a religion; it is a spiritual path, a living way to Reality. It depends on the present, not on some past teaching, some dead Master. And those leading Sant Mat today, if they do not know themselves, if they do not know their own Being, are dead teachers, too, for they are teaching dead teachings. If you only know yourself as a personality, if you do not know yourself as stillness, if you do not reside in the Void, then you are marked for death, for extinction. You can only take so much on trust. In olden times people believed whatever they were told by an authority. Sin and evil and all that are not helpful today. And they are still being told the same things. Many teachers have said that meditation would cure all ills, solve all problems and develop psychic abilities, leading to perfection. It doesn't. It awakens spiritual awareness. It is not to make you sleep better, live longer or to make you more friendly. It is about stillness, about spirituality, about Being. It is about finding God. The Unknown God. No other. It is not about being successful or rich.

And yet, looking at it from the other side, what choice did the teachers of Sant Mat have? I suppose they thought better some light, better some spirituality than none at all. The problem is, though, that they lied about what they were, what they knew and what Sant Mat meditation could lead their followers to. In the twentieth century it never led to liberation for anyone, although it promised it in some future life. What good was that, or is that, to sincere seekers? Some of the proclaimed masters, though at a high level, were still trapped by creation at higher levels of maya. For there are more traps than that of a mind, of a personal self, of the delusion of materialism. For the creation is great and vast, and maya is long-reaching, and it goes from higher form to higher form, and even Light is a form, and Existence mocks the puny understanding of man living on his little planet, a speck in time of the endless cosmos; and freedom lies outside of all of it. There is something wrong with a mind that does not reel at the enormity of it.

There is some slight variation in the various Sant Mat meditation methods, but essentially they are the same. They are as follows:

Simran or repetition, also known as recollection. In some cases the term Radha Soami was used as a mantra, but usually, and traditionally, five mantras are used. These are repeated one after another, slowly, time after time. Actually they are supposed to be the names of various entities said to rule over the five inner planes and to allow access to them. Done while focus is held at the eye centre, this is supposed to make the body numb from the feet up. However, Guru Nanak mentions five different mantras than the ones used in present day Sant Mat. What do they do? They simply focus attention and produce concentration. Those who give them claim they contain spiritual

power. Funny, I always thought it was sleeping power, as they are so boring. On the other hand, we have to acknowledge they were used by real gurus for hundreds of years.

This leads to Shabd or hearing the Sound-current. Listening focuses the attention. Sant Mat claims there are five sounds to be heard, one for each plane; this in fact is not true. However, almost all teachers have taught this. I suspect that repeating five sounds or Names results in the hearing of one of these sounds, or the mental echo of it. Also, these are sounds of the astral plane, not the Names themselves, but the sounds which are heard. The thing is, if they are on various levels of the astral plane, how far can they pull you up to higher levels? Another question that must be asked is to what extent people in Sant Mat today are experiencing deep and profound states of inner stillness. I do not question the fact that beautiful sounds may be heard, but do they seriously influence a person's state of awareness? Are people experiencing profound spiritual states? Are they digging deeper into their own nature? I am not saying they are not, but simply asking the question. In Sant Mat one adopts a crouching posture and rests the elbows on the knees and covers the ears and eyes with the fingers to aid sound and vision. Obviously this is uncomfortable. One is better off using a T-shaped instrument to rest one's elbows on, as in Self-Realization Kriya Yoga. If you look at pictures of the God Shiva you find him sitting with a trident; this is to rest the arms on during meditation. Less tiring, you know, when you are the Lord of Yogis meditating throughout eternity. In old China they used to rest the right elbow on the right knee and cover their right ear with their palm.

Now comes Dhyān or contemplation on what is called the Radiant Form of the Master. You remember what the Master looks like and bring that form to mind, focusing on the image. You are supposed to see that as radiant light with the master's face in it. Of course a psychologist might say it is just imagination, seeing what you expect to see, creating the image in your mind as the result of intention or desire. Although this method of meditation has been in use for centuries it does not mean you are seeing the actual inner form of the Master; it does not mean it is real. Disciples may have been fooled and deluded for hundreds of years. The thing is, once again, does this lead to a higher level of awareness or is it just pleasant to see? The Sant Mat teacher, Faqir Chand, himself said it did not mean anything, that it was self-projected and illusory. He said when people claimed to see his inner form he knew nothing about it. So what is its value? The only value of it is that it may hold the attention still. I believe anyone in Sant Mat could dispose of its use without losing anything. I also happen to believe that you could just meditate on Sound and Light and ignore the Names, for all they do is concentrate the mind. A person should be able to meditate OK without them. I can. They are just tools. Is it true that a workman is only as good as his tools? Actually, in this case, I think a workman is better, as that is what you should be putting your attention on. Find out what you are; be aware of yourself, not some old mantras.

So, then, you could just as easily imagine seeing Jesus (even if 'he' is just a composite of different teachers, as some say, and did not actually exist) or Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Kali or any image you are attracted to, or you can just imagine white light in front of your face. Take your

pick. With a real Master you do not have to imagine anything: Light appears. But a few people find it hard to see light, in which case they just gaze into the space before their closed eyes and rest in the stillness. Remember that light is a phenomenon, and it is not like you can't meditate without it. Of course there is a vast difference between an imagined light, which is a thought-form, and Light from spiritual realms. You know what mentally-induced light looks like whereas spiritual Light is beyond our control and unworldly and hence we cannot conceive of how it will look. But, in the absence of a true Master, one could imagine light in order to focus the attention.

In Eckankar intoning the sound HU borrowed from Sufi teachings is supposed to open the ability to perceive light and sound, and to this is added the ripped-off teachings of Sant Mat, mainly from Kirpal Singh, with a lot of imagination added; and in turn Gary Olsen ripped the Hu practice from Eckankar and set up on his own and created Masterpath. And so it goes.

So, assuming I know what I am talking about, what is my best advice for a Sant Mat meditator who is not getting from his or her meditation what was promised? My first recommendation, and of course you might think I am bound to say this, is that you transfer to this, the real Path of Light and Sound, and put yourself on track for getting enlightened in this lifetime. I know of no other path which does this, so stop wasting your time and get on the bus. Come in out of the cold. Of course there are people in Sant Mat who have experiences of sound and light, but I believe these are a lesser form of the real sound and light, and simply experiences of the astral plane, which is a huge plane.

However, if you are not prepared to do so, if you want to remain where you are, if you are not able to let go of Sant Mat, yet you want to get better results from your meditation, what should you do?

The first thing, I would say, is to learn to relax, and to do this by awareness of breathing, as the stomach expands and contracts as you breathe in and out. This tends to create neutrality and space within the aura.

The most important thing is to find stillness. You do that by letting go.

Some Radha Soami satsangis have claimed they were just given the five mantras and no instructions on how to meditate. When they mentioned this to others, they were told they were being negative, that they should not be asking about it, and if they could not meditate, then there was only one answer: Try harder. Not what I would call helpful. In fact it reveals ignorance of the true nature of meditation. It is plain silly. You do not leaving people hanging in confusion.

I read an email yesterday from someone who had been in Sant Mat a long time. When in the Sant Mat place in India, the Dera, he was talking to someone who had practiced Sant Mat over thirty years, who said: 'I was a better person before I came to Sant Mat.' Just then three people came

along who also had been in Sant Mat as long as he had, and he said: 'Not one of those has changed through Sant Mat.' Not one?

Makes you think.

Do you need five outdated mantras? What about using only one to settle the mind as the sound arises, or even using none as you listen for the sound? Maybe you only need to centre your attention in the forehead. Or the middle of the head. Or maybe the ears. And just listen.

In Sant Mat you may hear sound and see light, but you need to be connected to the very highest spiritual regions, and only a true spiritual master can do that and there are no real spiritual masters in Sant Mat today. Otherwise these are just phenomena, nice to see and hear, and they can give you access to higher planes, but they will not lead to the end of identification with lower forms, to the ending of the sense of self, to the transcending of mind, and to final liberation. So nothing I say here can lead to that, only to the purification of mind and the refinement of consciousness. It may improve the technique, but it cannot supply the energy. Only a Master can do that. A true one.

What you need to do in order to meditate is to find a comfort zone. You must be comfortable, not only physically, but especially mentally. You cannot relax if you are tense. You have to find the greatest simplicity in awareness. The more simple you are the better you meditate. Easiness is the key to good meditation. Sometimes a person can find greater relaxation by feeling a sense of lightness. This is not a forced sense of lightness, but just allowing the feeling of lightness either in the body or the mind in a very soft sort of way. This can have a strong effect on consciousness. It can lead, while doing it, to a mild sense of well-being. Feeling light is really based on non-resistance, not so much on the idea of being without weight; it allows a flowingness to take place. It is more about letting go. It is a sort of an aid to meditation if the mind cannot settle into a relaxed state on its own. It is by letting go that you can forget yourself; by forgetting yourself you transcend your normal state. You become concentrated by becoming vague, paradoxically. You concentrate, then allow the concentration to fade. Kind of like being almost asleep.

However, awareness of lightness is only an aid to meditation, a tool for letting go and sinking deeper. The purpose of meditation is to find stillness, to reconcile opposites, to transcend all concepts and to bring about a state of balance and to just be. It is not to have moods, no matter how nice, nor to hang on to any kind of attitude or concept. Meditation is about finding the nothingness, falling into a greater space, reaching a greater area of the unknown. It is to settle into the most settled, basic state.

Now, even if you do not have the living Energy of the true Master, if you can meditate in the way I have described, you can reach a very deep state of rest and find subtle areas of mind, and in fact you can reach the level of Atma, although you will not go beyond that, for there will always be a



barrier there; there will be a chasm between the limited and the Unlimited Absolute, and you will not be able to cross that on your own, unaided. But you can still have some nice meditations.

Meditation depends on concentration, but you cannot keep your attention fixed through effort, as you will find you have to continuously re-establish your attention on the object you focus on. It keeps slipping out of focus. The object fades from attention. That is the way the mind works. You use this process in meditation by allowing attention to become vague. You start with concentration, let your focus become soft and subtle, and then focus on the vagueness. If you are looking at the light, where the light should be, even if you have never seen it before, you should look vaguely at a vague space. Is that vague enough for you? You cannot remain in the same place, at the same point, and transcend at the same time; you have to let go to transcend, you have to stop clinging. You have to give up to arrive. And this applies to any form of meditation. An experienced meditator can take any form of meditation, even one never used before, and make it work and get results from it. If you are listening to the Sound, you should be listening vaguely, in an abstract sort of way. The Sound is not just heard in the ears; one can put one's attention around the head and listen to the aura of sound, or to the aura of silence. Sound and silence amount to the same thing. So you are kind of listening outwardly to an inner stillness; you are listening to an inwardness projected outside the form of the head. You are projecting space beyond that area which has always confined your consciousness, and you are filling that space with your own attention; you are expanding the extent of your awareness.

Now most sound and light teachers will tell you not to listen to the sound from your left ear. Sant Mat and most traditional teachings say that sound from the left side is either wrong, bad, evil or just plain negative, that it produces bad results. My own attitude has always been: do what works, not what someone says will not work. Just as most so-called spirituality is either superstitious hogwash or secondhand and unproven, just hearsay, so we should use in meditation what works for us and not depend on the words of another. We should experiment and find out for ourselves. When I began on this Path, particularly in the first couple of years, I mainly heard Sound from the left side, so that is where I put my attention – where I could hear it, not where I couldn't hear it. It did not appear to do me any harm. It allowed me to hold the attention steady. Later I simply listened around the outside of the head. One should experiment, listening to the Sound at the left, at the right, at the centre of the head, at the forehead and above the head or at the top of the head, or focus in the space around the head. The one who knows you best is you. You do not have to be a slave to doing things one way. Find out what works best for you. Find what you are most comfortable with. The Energy of Light and Sound is in your aura, not in some technique, as helpful as that may be. Techniques are important to focus attention and energy, but one can still experiment with awareness. After all, it is your awareness, and your path. If it doesn't work for you, what good is it? If something doesn't work, stop doing it. Find out what does work. You should at least feel comfortable with what you are doing. You should feel happy about it. True, at times meditation can be hard, but you should feel some satisfaction from it. You should feel you are getting somewhere, that you are improving. Look for the comfort level. Look for easiness.

Where is the guru who has reached the absolute state? In Sant Mat no guru says this. No teacher describes their own experiences of attainment in Radha Soami. Why is that? Guess.

So do you reckon the current leader will recommend that satsangis read this book, or will he ban it, as he has banned the reading of others? And what does that say about Sant Mat?

There are millions of people in Sant Mat, in all its various forms and paths. How many of those will find enlightenment? Not a one. How can they? They are on an incomplete spiritual path. It cannot take people to the end of the journey. There should be millions on the real Path of Light and Sound. Yet there are not. I invite real seekers to take up the challenge of this Path. Yet most will not. Why is that?

The simple answer is that most people are too stupid, too self-satisfied, too beghamoured and tricked by their own mind. They prefer the known and familiar, the romantic and traditional. They would rather have that than be free. Rather than be on a path where they can meet enlightened people, they would prefer a group where they will never meet one! You see, people lack discrimination and think they know best, even in the face of reason and logic, and even proof of a path that works and a system that frees. What is the tradition? They ask, after finding themselves in a hole, and you offer to drop down a rope and pull them out, how long you have been standing there and what kind of rope it is and where did you get it. You say you have pulled many people out of holes. They don't care. They want to know about different kinds of rope. And they are stuck there, but do not see that it is imperative that they get out of that damn hole.

I just hate to see people throw this opportunity away when it will never come again. Of course it is their choice. Just like suicide. They prefer stupid ideas like all paths are the same, all lead to the Goal. So how many in all these paths have found the Goal? You can only shake your head sadly.

These people protest: What about loyalty? What about respect? What – to a false path and a false teacher? So what do you owe to yourself? How can you be loyal to someone who has conned you? What respect should you have for someone who lies? What about self-respect?

Now I admit it is better to find some way to spirituality than no path at all. When you are hungry you just want to eat. I know what it is like to crave a real spiritual experience. In the absence of a real path almost any path will do. Earlier teachers who taught people how to have access to higher planes than the physical performed a valuable service. It is just that they brought a load of superstition with them, more often than not. But they did keep the door open. But there remains the fact that these paths do not lead to liberation. And that means you have lost your chance. Too bad.

I admire people like the prolific James Bean who has opened a wealth of sound and light material on the internet. The Door must be kept open, and someone must bear the torch of truth.

Now, for a short time, the Door is wide open, waiting for people to step through. Who knows when it will close again, for a human life is short, and the opportunity will be lost. Get this while you can. Or never get it.

As Mira Bai said: Soak yourself in the drizzle of Divine Consciousness.

And he walked all his days in the presence of the Lord  
Torah

Well, I hope he had a good pair of shoes.

It's a long walk.

And it's a long way to Tipararee, too.

## 17

### **Vedanta: The Final Chapter**

For I am the first and the last...  
I am the silence that is incomprehensible...  
I am the utterance of my name  
The Thunder, Perfect Mind text

Just as the same all pervading space exists within and without a jar, so the eternal, everlasting Brahman exists in the totality of things  
Ashtavakra Gita

The intelligent man should meditate on his own Self devoid of all conditioning.  
He who knows this in reality becomes Brahman itself.

Now I speak of the true essence of all Vedanta: dying to oneself, becoming Oneself, one yet remains One Self

Katharudropupanishad

He is never seen, but is the Seer; He is never heard, but is the Hearer...never known, but is the Knower.

Unknowable and constant, It should be realized in one form only. The Self is free from taint, beyond space, birthless, infinite and unchanging

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

He lies hidden in the Upanishads, which form the essence of the Vedas. Him the Hiranyagarbha (the First-Born or Universal Mind) knows as the source of Himself and the Vedas. Those gods and seers who realized Him in former days became identified with Him, and verily became immortal

Svetasvatara Upanishad

How could Brahman, the Absolute Reality, which is not an actor, action or instrument, which is causeless, without a seed, and not suitable to be discussed or understood, become a creator?

Yoga Vasistha

How wonderful it is that in the Infinite Ocean of myself the waves of living beings arise, collide, play and disappear, in accordance with their nature

Ashtavakra Gita

I am not evident to any, veiled as I am by the machinations of My own Maya

Smrti

Home is the hunter

Home from the hill

And the sailor

Home from the sea

Robert Louis Stevenson

Vedanta concerns the Final Mystery. People talk about Self Realization and God Realization, but there is also God Identification. Aham Brahmasi: I am God. On the Path it is said: You cannot know God; you can only be God. God or the Absolute is not a state you can know. What would be used to know it? Mind cannot go there. Understanding is based on distance, not on being. Thus throughout all time no enlightened person has ever been able to describe enlightenment. The person hearing the description would pervert it to his own limited understanding. That is just the way it is. What can you say about stillness? Only that it is still. You may describe the effects of enlightenment, how it impacts on your life, but not the state itself. How can you describe love to

someone who does not know it? That which is subject to illusion, which is itself illusory, how could that understand the nature of reality? If it looks at life through a veil of delusion, through a self that is not real, how can it perceive the real as it is?

Vedanta is the end of the spiritual journey, its completion. Vedanta literally means the end of the Veda, and Veda means knowledge. Knowledge is lost in being. Knowledge requires a knower or self, an object to be known, and the act of knowing it; knowledge requires distance and duality, more than one thing. In Being there is only one thing and hence no distance. In God there is only God. As one becomes God, there is only God. No language can describe that, because language is about plurality, about things, about form, about attributes and qualities. In Unity there is nothing else. Unity is sameness. I am everywhere. One thing only.

In India Vedanta is pretty much regarded as commentaries upon the Upanishads. Upanishad means to sit near, to approach to divinity, to sit near a guru, to receive teaching. An Upanishad is thought to be a commentary and explanation of some part of the Veda. But Vedanta is not just a commentary on the Upanishads. Vedanta is also an explanation of Enlightenment, so far as it can be explained, and a pointing to the nature of the Real, of what the Absolute is. The teaching of Vedanta is very well put in the Bhagavad Gita. Vedanta is the supreme revelation. It is to go as far as one can go. Veda is really about creation and manifestation, the expression of Intelligence in its many forms. Veda is the expression of Sound and Light, but Vedanta is about what lies beyond, in the Beyond. And what lies Beyond? The God-state, that which knows Itself, and only Itself. Vedanta is the Endless Ocean without its waves and currents, the depths of the deepest sea. When there is only one thing, Sameness, Singleness, Aloneness, what is there to know, and who to know it?

I would point out that, at the time of writing this, I am not enlightened and so I am at a disadvantage. I can only rely on my present state, my own experience, on talks with many enlightened beings, and on conversations with my Master. What I have to say, then, is limited and conditional.

Enlightenment is the realization of the Absolute, about which nothing can be said, except abstract things like it is wholeness, it is complete in itself, it has nothing it needs, nothing to gain, etc. Enlightenment is not the Absolute itself, but the state through which it is known. In other words, enlightenment is the door flung open. There is no self which realizes enlightenment. There is no permanent self, no soul apart from the One Soul, which is everywhere and is one thing. This is the only reality. There is no soul which is evolving. The One Soul does not get trapped in matter, being forever free. It is Infinity. Being formless, how could it get trapped in form when it is so much greater? The idea is laughable. How could a little thing trap the Infinite? It is not logical. What would be the point, if it chose to do so? The Absolute does not choose to do anything. It just IS. The Absolute is complete in itself and there is nothing for it to do except to Be. Before the Beginning and after the End, I AM.

I am the Silence that is incomprehensible... I am the mighty sea and the shoreless ocean. I am the endless sky. I am infinite space. I am the Unknown God. Etcetera, and so forth...

How can the mind make sense of that?

Infinity does not embody itself in any form. What form could it fit into? How could Infinity limit itself? The Absolute is perfect. It cannot be made more perfect. Not a trillion lives could make it one dot more perfect. Could the Perfect become more perfect by first becoming imperfect? That would be double-dutch. That horse won't ride. Just plain silly.

People are often very mixed up when it comes to spiritual matters. The Absolute is absolute. The relative is not, obviously. But people confuse themselves by thinking the relative self is actually the Absolute Self trapped in a body like a butterfly waiting to burst free of its shell. It is to assume the ocean is trapped in a bottle. Not likely. Many paths have taught that the Absolute embodied itself in creation. If the Absolute is absolute and whole, it is whole everywhere; it can have no parts. If it put a part of itself into creation, it would splinter that wholeness. It cannot be born and unborn at the same time. Having no desires, why would it want to? Would you build a prison and then lock yourself in it? Evolution? Ridiculous!

There are two things – the Absolute, and everything else. Everything else is creation. Creation does not impinge on the Absolute. The Absolute has its own reality, in that it never changes and is constant; creation has its reality as that which constantly mutates and changes. Now the self, the form, is born of creation. Creation is a process that is ongoing. Nothing in creation is self-created, it is an automatic process, and that applies to a cat or a human being. Only the source of creation itself is Self-aware. Everything else is automatic, under law. A law is a cosmic habit, an automatic process. A human being is just a bundle of impulses and reactions, born of DNA and modified by experience. There is no soul, no permanent entity. It is a collection of parts, a set of responses and a collection of energies. Now how can that be permanent, when its very nature is change?

However, the Absolute permeates creation, otherwise unity would not be possible. If, after Liberation, there is one sameness everywhere, where does that sameness come from? Not out of nowhere. How can you suddenly feel you are the chair, you are the door, you are everything and everyone, unless there is something that is the same everywhere that resonates with the sameness that is you?

How is Enlightenment possible? How can I, a limited human being, full of faults and frailties, thinking I am this puny thing, this conditioned thing, full of complexes and fears, desires and compulsions, how could I possibly become enlightened? How could a genetically programmed self, modified by experience, although capable of learning, possibly become free and become the Absolute?

A human being has awareness and is capable of self-awareness. The essence of his being is awareness, and it can be expanded. Spirituality is the act of expanding awareness toward its ultimate state. Now, how is that expansion possible, beyond normal physical consciousness? Because awareness is found at every level, and each level can be transcended. A human being has chakras, all contained within him, and these are gateways to other areas of awareness. Energy can be stepped up or down by means of the chakras, by which a human being can contact higher planes, more subtle energies and finer substance. Expansion becomes possible. Also it becomes possible for all levels to be contained within awareness at the same time, a prerequisite for enlightenment. Then ultimate expansion becomes ultimate realisation. Awareness becomes the All.

And yet, does it? We think that consciousness keeps expanding till it includes everything, till it becomes totality, the Whole. And yet consciousness is itself limited, so how can the limited reveal the unlimited? Upon enlightenment the realisation comes that all awareness, all states of consciousness, are illusory; they are not real; they are part of the illusion of creation. Consciousness is not part of enlightenment. Consciousness is a trap! To have consciousness you have to have boundaries, you have to have limits to enclose that of which you are conscious of. Consciousness is a manifestation, not that which was there before creation. It is a phenomenon.

Only the Real is real. Really? Yep.

Brother, I am That! So say the enlightened.

Creation is automatic and eternal. There is a certain amount of energy in creation; this undergoes change, gaining and losing mass, seeming to expand and contract, but the energy remains the same. Creation is limited, so where could that energy go to? It is either subtle or gross, latent or manifest. It simply gets re-cycled. Hence there is expansion and contraction without losing or gaining the total energy amount. The basic essence of root-matter, in the Hindu model, is known as Prakriti or nature, or as moola-prakriti, the ground of creation, which becomes everything through the interaction of the gunas or qualities of nature. In the Chinese model it is the interplay of Yin and Yang, positive and negative, or feminine and masculine energies. In the Hindu model you have the three attributes of creation, continuance and destruction, playing over and over, beginning with the god Shiva as the Cosmic Dancer setting creation into play. It is all, everything, just an interplay of energies and forces, and a reaction to various events, personal or cosmic. Everything reacts to some higher thing or force as well as to the things around it.

This is the background of Vedanta. Unfortunately, some of the vedantic writers have mixed up religion, superstition and fact, either because the writers were still ignorant, or in order to appeal to the masses. Furthermore, some of the Upanishads do not talk of the absolute truth, but of a lesser state. Hence the great spiritual confusion that exists today in India. And, in fact, everywhere else. And why? Because Maya rules. Mis-perception leads to misunderstanding and to wrong teaching,

to ignorance and to a partial view of reality. That is then presented as the complete truth. How can the unenlightened present the complete truth?

My truth versus your truth – we could always start a war over it. Another one. And the wheel turns. And turns again. Thoughts to kill by. What a jolly world. Fundamentalists are evil little buggars. They are locked in the mind, knowing they are right and everyone else wrong. Clever sods. Dickheads.

Now it must be remembered that it is the mind, through discrimination, that interprets and seeks to understand reality. It is not Reality itself that explains itself. Reality just is, in an ultimate sense. It does not do anything, for action concerns the worlds of form and manifestation. The Ultimate is still in its non-doing. So the mind just sets up a model it can comprehend. The mind bases the model of reality on perception, insight, intuition and experience, yet Enlightenment is not an experience, as an experience needs duality; it needs a perceiver and an object to be perceived. Enlightenment is concerned only with unity. Unity has no parts and hence there is no distance and no perceiver nor object perceived. There is only the isness of one thing everywhere and no witness to witness the nothingness of its fullness. There is the infinite simplicity of sameness. In Unity there is nothing else. There is no mind to be enlightened, and no one to realise enlightenment. Enlightenment realises itself. No soul or self does so. In fact it is the end of the sense of selfhood.

After the second initiation only the seed of mind, the essence of ego, remains. It really is a baptism. One is reborn into an identity with non-ego. One loses the centre, expands beyond the previous limits of the personality and sees from that new perspective. The self is still there, of course, but it has become very small and insignificant compared to the new state, which one can call either the sense of Presence or Nothingness, the sense of being nowhere at all, as it seems one is formless and unconfined and nonspecific and non-localised, as one is born again into a different dimension and into a wider sense of being, a greater sense of being alive. A greater freedom results. You see through maya. You start to see through the illusion called me.

There are three things to bear in mind in terms of awareness:

1. The ordinary self, the ego or personality aspect. This consists of body, emotions and mind. This may be weak or strong, in terms of awareness or aliveness. Some 'human' beings seem barely alive. Their intelligence, alertness and interest is low. What a person is depends on the constitution of his or her vehicles, drawn from the reservoir of material stuff, and by material is also meant the astral and mental plane material that makes up these bodies, left over after the death of previous personalities and disintegration and the reuse of that substance, resulting in the general personality. Thus Patanjali, when speaking of an aspirant's spiritual state, says it is either weak, middling or intense, and results will accrue accordingly, based on the constituents of the inherited material. Energy gets recycled.



2. The Higher Self, consisting of atma-buddhi-manas, or abstract mind, intuition and deeper selfhood. This has often been misunderstood as spiritual reality, but, as it still has a personal element to it, albeit very subtle, it is not spirit, as spirit is totally impersonal and there are no differences in it, no this self and that self, but it is just unity, and in unity there are no distinctions, surfaces, edges or boundaries. In other words, although it is a relatively high state, it is not the ultimate. Nor even close to it, even though it may look similar.
3. Unity, Ultimate Reality, the One Self. Spirit is infinite, endless, beginningless, timeless, boundless, omnipresent. It is Divinity, God, Truth, the Unspeakable, the Nameless. What can be said of it? It is beyond words. Even if I could use words which might correspond a little to its reality, if I understood it, the reader might give those very words a different meaning if he or she had not directly experienced the reality of it themselves. In this sense language is limited when it comes to subtle concepts. The mind will always pervert subtle meaning to its own limited view and experience. Your orgasm and mine may be different (I hope mine is better), although the same word is used for it. You can never know spirituality without tasting it yourself. The concept and the word are not the same thing as the actual living of it. Many people have mistaken the Higher Self for this ultimate state. Some have claimed to be enlightened when they were not. They were stuck halfway up the mountain. They could not see the highest peak. Yonder yet lay the supreme ultimate.

It lies further, deeper, out of sight.

The enlightened say it cannot be explained.

Vedanta is the Knowledge of which it is said 'knowing which, nothing remains to be known.'

### **Gaudapada's Teaching**

Gaudapada, in his Karikas, put forward the first systematic presentation of Vedanta. Of course Vedanta existed before that. It existed from the time of the first liberated person on this planet. For Vedanta is the knowledge of the Self. Some have corrupted that into a knowledge of God, into a path of devotion. The general teaching is that there is a personal God and an impersonal God, but there is neither in terms of an Entity with a sense of selfhood. There is the Absolute and there is creation, with no relationship between the two. The Absolute is, and will always be, apart from anything else. Because in Unity there is only unity, no division anywhere, no second to see any distinction between one thing and another. There is not anything else. Unity is everything, and there is no perceiver to see it. There is no distance, no separation, no this and that. In the unity of God there is no space for a secondary, manifest God. In Unity there is no lesser or greater, no time for anything to manifest from the One Self, and there is no portion of itself that can be put in matter. A portion of Unity is unity. How could Unity disunite from itself? How could the greater ever be put into the lesser? If God is already everywhere, where could it put itself? It is already

there! And everywhere means everywhere. Such ideas as God manifested, that the Unmanifest put a portion of itself into manifestation, that the One became many, is just bad philosophy. You cannot have it both ways. Either God is infinite or God is not. Where can you put infinity if it is already everywhere? There is a saying: Spirit alone can know Spirit.

Yet we find that there is the Absolute (or we will upon enlightenment) and there is creation, consisting of all the planes of existence. We experience them both. How is that possible? In actual fact we do not experience enlightenment; we only get a whiff of it, the scent of it, the flavour and taste of it. It hangs above us. There are certain ideas that tax the mind, that call for convoluted thinking, that do not dovetail nicely. Just remember that it is the mind, plus intuition, that offer explanations. Some things can't be explained in a neat way, and then the mind searches for reasons to make sense of them. In other words, the lower tries to make sense of the higher. The Absolute has no need to explain itself.

And the lower state cannot explain the higher.

Creation is there. We say it must have been created and it must have had a time of origination, a big bang moment when all the planes came into being. Yet must it? What if it was always there? Now Creation is run by cosmic Intelligence, which originates and organises everything in existence, including all movement and time, and which originates countless laws. So maybe the idea of a personal God was confused with the idea of this Intelligence, which is also compassion and love and things like that; and men thought this was the creator, which it is in a way, as it gives rise to Sound and Light, which bring everything into being. This Intelligence connects to a Master, which imparts its nature, its redeeming nature and its compassion to him, making him a Master and a redeemer, allowing him to carry men to freedom on its wave, and so maybe the old Masters of Sound and Light, and maybe others as well, thought of this Intelligence as God.

Now, again, there is the Absolute and there is creation, or God and Existence, and there is no relation between them, although you may see that Intelligence as a bridge. But teachers in old India thought there must be a relation somewhere, and some clever sod came up with the idea of Maya and said it was all a dream, this life we live, as it is only temporary, and they said just as we wake up from a dream and realise it was an illusion, so one day we will be waking up from this dream of wakefulness into a higher reality and be amused that we did not see what we thought of as reality to be an illusion. Maya does not mean that things are unreal, but more that they may not be what they appear to be, that they are not really substantial, for instance that matter is just a bunch of molecules, that the self you have is not permanent, and in the end all that really exists is Brahman in its everywhere-ness and its completeness. The old Indian philosophers were fond of discussing the nature of reality in terms of dreams. Personally, I always found it rather boring and pointless. The level of dream is not the same as Brahman. The analogy may be useful, but incorrect. The human mind at the ordinary mundane level of wakefulness will never be able to comprehend maya, except as a shadow of reality, so how much less is it able to understand

Brahman from a lesser level? How can you understand maya when you are immersed in it, lost in it and completely identified with it? How is it possible for a man to understand he is not this little self? How can a woman explain her femaleness to a man identified with his male persona? We will never know the reality of the Self till we become it. Being is only known by being it. How can the finite mind encompass the reality which is God? It is like a grasshopper understanding a human being. No can do.

Gaudapada said that the immortal can never be born as that would be to change its nature. The Immortal can not put on mortality. He said Brahman alone is real; all else is emptiness, except to itself. Asparsha Yoga is that spacelike awareness of non-contact, of free untouched awareness. All objects come into being by means of prana. How can God have will or desire? Asparsha has been called the yoga of non-opposition because, like space, it accepts everything, welcomes everything, makes no judgement, takes you as you are, and does not seek to change anything. It simply is, unchanging. How can there be division in Unity?

Turiya, the Transcendent, is the all-pervading source. On knowing it, duality ceases. On knowing duality, the transcendent disappears. Know one and you cannot experience the other. Upon enlightenment both are known together. What did not exist at the beginning and will not exist at the end is unreal. All things seen are changeable and so cannot be real, in a lasting sense.

The ego is not a product of the spiritual Self; the little self is not part of the Self. All composites are the result of maya. It is through maya that the Birthless appears to become differentiated. If it were really born, the Immortal would become mortal! How can the Unoriginate take form and limit itself to mortality? The Unchanging cannot change, as that would be to deny its nature. The Real cannot become unreal, anymore than the unreal can become Real. The Prime Cause cannot become an effect, as that would be to change its eternal nature. The nature of things, their characteristics, are inherently empty. The Existent already exists: how can it come into being? Can it exist twice? What does not exist cannot come into being, either. The non-existent cannot come into existence. If there is only Cause, argued Gaudapada, what can cause it to become an effect, when there is nothing but it? No soul can be born of the Birthless. When one is empty, all is empty. The Self permeates everything, for how else would unity be possible? The Self is already everywhere, as the space outside is the same as the space inside a jar. No individual differences affect stillness. It is always one and the same. No individual is a modification or a part of the Supreme. Birth and death have no impact on the spacelike Self. It is as it is forever. That which exists already cannot be born, and what does not exist also cannot be born. You cannot be eternal and subject to change. If there is just eternal stillness in the Unborn, how could it suddenly give rise to creation without a cause or reason to do so? The unreal cannot be born from the Real. The Real can only beget the Real (actually it can't, as the Real is already everywhere), yet the Real does not give rise to anything. Why would the Changeless suddenly change when there is nothing to change it and no reason for it to change itself? That would be absurd and pointless.

So nothing in the Absolute can give rise to this creation and there are no easy, glib explanations to satisfy the mind. The universe exists under its own laws. The Absolute is not pulling any strings. Creation comes into being because that is its nature, to manifest. It does not manifest because there is a Manifestor but because of its own impulses, tendencies, forces and motions.

For the Absolute there is no path. It was always and will always be what it is. Enlightenment was always enlightened. Enlightenment means to realise the state of enlightenment. In a sense, there is no enlightenment; there is only realisation of it. Enlightenment is not the Absolute itself, but the state through which it is realised. You do not attain the Absolute; you simply realise it by becoming it. But what is it that becomes it? Certainly not you! The ego does not get it. There is no sense of self in enlightenment. The mind cannot go there. You do not become free; you realise freedom. Awareness becomes aware of being free. It becomes aware of Infinity. It becomes aware of ultimate Love. It becomes aware of Unity. It knows it is the unbounded sea, and always was. There is the feeling that everything is right, that things are just as they should be, even if they seem awful from a human perspective; but in the end all things are just waves on the sea. What can time mean to the Absolute? Look at the vastness of space one night. See those endless stars? Some of them are planets. How long have they existed? Kind of makes a human being look rather puny and small, a dot in time. And that is only part of the physical universe.

Gee, see that – was that my life whizzing past? Then gone, just like that. Game over. Not fair. Too quick. Things still to do. People I want to spend time with. Just too darn late. Was it well spent or did I waste it? Or does it matter?

Since time first dumped something like a human being on some planet in some galaxy in some unknown past there have been incalculable problems, vast suffering beyond human comprehension, century after century, and also lost opportunity beyond measure.

As long as we are alive it is important to have a good life. How do we do that? By being fully alive, fully aware, by feeling the beauty and grandeur of life, by not going through life in a trance, hypnotised by creation, lost in materialism; and by knowing our own inner splendour. If we do not know ourself, what do we know? And knowing the mind isn't enough. We have to fathom our deeper nature, to find the part of us that has been hidden, to find the light within. We have to find the way to the Absolute, we have to uncover the Great Mystery, to find the answer to our very being. For what could be greater or more significant than that? What is of more import than to know the root and source of our very life? As a living person we should want to know what underlies our life. Not only that, but how can we be fully alive if the major part of us is hidden out of sight?

Vedanta can be simply put: Abide in your true nature. Yoga is abidance. It is easier said than done when we are identified with the small self. For, we do not even know what our true nature is. It is a mystery to us, and spiritual people follow that mystery. We are looking for something we are

not sure about. Spiritual seeking, in a sense, is a question mark. Of course it is the mind which gives meaning to spirituality, and the desire for it which gives it value. There is no meaning in the Absolute. There is no interest in the Absolute in our attaining enlightenment. To the Absolute everything is perfect, as for it there is only One Thing, which is itself. In Unity there is only unity. There is no second thing. There is only, one might say, the First Cause; there is no second, and no effect.

But we cannot know that before we are enlightened, though we may catch glimpses of it. If our discrimination is clear, if our intuition is active, if we are sensitive to spirituality, if we feel there is more than the eye can see, then we will actively seek spiritual reality. We will start meditating. We will seek a spiritual path. Alas for us, we will find a true spiritual path hard to find; we will find that most do not lead far, and after years we might find we are just the same, or just a little better, and that enlightenment is as far away as when we started. So, in order not to waste time, it is important to find a genuine spiritual way. The only successful one I know of is the Path of Light and Sound. That is the only guaranteed way to enlightenment. If a path cannot show you enlightened people, do not trust it, as it is a failure, for the goal of spirituality is Liberation, nothing less. You cannot become free on a path that does not lead to freedom, that has not led others to freedom. For what can such a path lead to? It leads to nothing. A path without an end, without a destination, is no path at all. The misguided can only mislead you, even if they mean well. Don't follow the blind.

Of course some will say: I can do it on my own; I will find my own way. (Was that me laughing?) That is just arrogance. It is also stupid. How many thousands have failed to do so, even with help? It is about as likely as finding a diamond in a pig-stye. Or in a pig's eye. So very, very few have done it. And they were mostly exceptional people. It is a bit like driving a nail into your head in order to become more intelligent. You might as well get a pair of skates for a trip around the world. Plus, you don't need to. The Path exists; the bridge to freedom is there; all you have to do is start on it. The trail has been blazed; all you have to do is follow the tracks. The Guide is there; the way is sure. The route has been mapped. You go where love is, where truth is, where insight is, where the heart expands, where silence is found; you become stillness; you go where awareness is unbound. You go where the heart is free.

Do you know how to do that? Millions have lost their way on that lonesome trail without a guide.

You will never get there by shaking a rattle, beating your drum or doing an animal dance. You will never get there with devotion or ritual or by chanting. That is wasting your time. You will not get there by reading books or by thinking nice thoughts. You will not get there by becoming a monk or wearing a robe or following an old tradition. The mind will trap you. As the mind is itself trapped by its own limitation, how can it find freedom on its own? We need help. A limit cannot step outside itself to see itself, find itself or know itself, let alone what lies beyond it.

Now, there is the Absolute and there is creation. Is creation projected by us? Was it always there? Is it a never-ending cyclic process? Do we create our own reality? Are all ideas about creation just myths and theories? Were the first humans unthinking animals? Were they giants? Did the human race exist on the moon? Are there other beings in the universe or outside it? Are there spiritual beings on higher planes? How the hell would I know? What does it matter, in the end? A true seeker is only occupied with the truth of his own being – what can be directly perceived and experienced. Know yourself, and let the rest take care of itself. Leave fancy and superstition to others. Find the Way. Forget the fantasy.

The way is simple. You get connected to the stream of Light and Sound. You see the Inner Sun. You hear the Inner Vibration. You just meditate. The guide, the Inner Guru, leads you up the mountain to the highest peak. That is the surest and most direct way. And for most of us it is the only way, the one sure way. Do you really want to be free or just to play at being a yogi? Do you want the romantic version or the real thing? Do you want fiction or reality? How many yogis do you think are free? Not how many have raised kundalini, not how many have seen they are not the mind. The sage Gaudapada said: Yogis are afraid of this Yoga. Afraid of what? Afraid of being nothing, afraid of being apart from all things and forms and all planes and conditions, afraid of the ultimate Unmanifest, afraid of being alone in the Great Void, afraid of being without their cherished god to worship. Most yogis want a god to worship. The Bhagavad Gita says the same. It says hardly any yogis seek the Unmanifest. They are looking for something different. If you think I am being unfair or unreasonable I would point out that when Suzanne Segal lost her sense of being a person she spent many years trying to desperately get it back, and U. G. Krishnamurti said the state of nothingness was a state to beware of and would come as a shock.

So do not assume yoga will free you. It will not. Real Gyanis, knowers of Truth, are extremely rare. They do not grow on banyan trees. Likewise the true Vedanta is rarely realised. Vedanta is not to think ‘I am Brahman,’ and try to keep that image in your mind. It is not to imagine that you are the Supreme or to repeat: I am free, I am free, when you are not. All that is just the mind. To say, I am already perfect and nothing can touch me, is sheer nonsense. That leads to further delusion. And pain. You cannot transcend the mind with the mind. How can you pull yourself up from where you are? Thought will never do it. Never. How can thought raise you above thought? To think that is to misunderstand the nature of the Ultimate Self.

The Katha Upanishad says: ‘Soundless, formless, intangible, undying, tasteless, odourless, without beginning, without end, eternal, immutable, beyond nature, is the Self. Knowing him as such, one is freed from death.’

### **AFTERWORD**

It was a balmy British summer afternoon, mid-June of 2006. The Master drove through the Yorkshire countryside. There was an enlightened lady, Hazel, in the front seat, and myself and my friend Paul in the back.

The Master said to me: ‘What do you think of the scenery, Arthur?’

I said: ‘It’s very nice,’ in an understated way.

Then he turned to me and said: ‘You are going to Mark’s to sit for two weeks on 27<sup>th</sup> July.’

I just looked and quietly said, ‘Oh.’ Actually this meant that I was going to be given the initiation for enlightenment. I guess I should have yelled Yipee! I had waited eight years for this on the Path and searched for it most of my life. Although I was pleased, I was not much excited. After attaining the second initiation and going beyond the mind, losing the centre of a personal self, the almost compulsive need for enlightenment fell away to a large extent. Of course it was still the most important thing to have, a vital thing, but the great desperate hurry for it was greatly lessened. The desire for it was a lot more subdued and sedate than before, a more gentle longing. Now I am detached, watching the film of life unfold, the onlooker, the impersonal Witness abiding in stillness. I guess, after so long, it seemed a bit unreal to me.

Yet I am aware, without Enlightenment, there will always be something hidden; there will always be a mystery, something uncovered, a secret unseen; and maybe after Enlightenment there will still be a mystery, but of a different order, and within creation, not as of something out of reach and strange, for in Unity there cannot be something else, otherwise it is not unity. There cannot be two things, otherwise there is duality and division. And what can lie beyond freedom? What can lie beyond the Absolute? Nothing, obviously. Man, God is da greatest.

Now here I am being offered the most amazing opportunity by my Master, the goal of my life, the jewel beyond price. If the Master can grant this at will, what kind of being is he? The rarest kind, I would say.

When I was young I read *The Sea Priestess* by Dion Fortune. It contained a supposed chant from ancient Egypt:

‘Waft thou my soul down the river of Naradek:  
Bring it to Light, and to Life, and to Love.’

Oh, yea. Through the instrumentality of the Master that prayer can be realised. We can find freedom. We can find Enlightenment. The Master can reveal real Spirituality to us. If real seekers really knew what this Master could convey, many hundreds would be beating a path to his door; they would be writing letters begging for Initiation. The problem is, most people like the enchantment of their own ideas more than they want Truth. Their beliefs and preconceived notions are more important than finding Enlightenment. They say the Path, of which they are completely

ignorant, must be a certain way; the Master must be a certain way; and enlightened people must conform to their own petty expectations. And they will remain where they are. Pity the poor sods.

The Path is there; the Master is ready. What are you waiting for? There is only one real thing to do in life – to find freedom, to find the reason for your life, the meaning of life.

Do you really want to be free? Come along. Or remain where you are, a seeker never finding. It is up to you.

Now I am at the end of the Path, and there is no Path, only me, the Silent Self, unborn. I am free, the beginning and the ending. There is no time here (which is everywhere) because there is no movement. I am the silent one. I am uncreated, before creation. I, the silent stillness, am forever untouched. There is only me. I am unity before time. I am Life without change. I just am, the utmost simplicity. I will never end, for how can the unmade end? No mind will ever understand this.

Oh, did I mention that I am now enlightened?

I am the Stillness that never moves. As the Stillness I empower eternity. I always was. I always am. No state of consciousness has ever entered here. Beyond sound, beyond light, I am. No tongue can describe this; words are futile here. No listener will understand this, for every mind-state is a limit, and everything heard is filtered by experience. Every understanding is a limit, a condition. Anything you can know has a beginning and an end whereas the Unlimited does not. It is Self-created, Self-perpetuating, Self-existing. It begins nowhere and ends nowhere. It is Now, and Now, and Now. I cannot speak its Name. It is the smallest and the greatest. It is nothing yet everything. It contains all possibilities. It is outside everything. Men call it God, for it cannot be known, yet it is nothing to worship. Do I need to worship my Self, when it is me, and there is nothing else? To the Great Self, there is no lower self. There is just one thing. Only God. Only the divine stillness, the One Presence. Only That. There is only freedom in liberation. Only the eternal Silence.

Years ago I read books that said to be free you should stop thinking and hold the mind still, remaining in silence. All you have to do is try it and you will find how ridiculous that is for the average mind, how impossible it is. In a classic of Vedanta, the Ribhu Gita, Sage Ribhu tells his disciple to remain without thinking, to be without prejudice, free of ideas, without notions, utterly motionless, without tendencies, free of concepts, utterly still. How many people can do that, even experienced meditators? I never could. Yet now that is how my meditation is. It is so easy to be still, so natural to be simple. How wonderful it is to just sit, to abide, to dwell in stillness, to simply be without effort. Yet I have only been able to do that after being given the final Energy for Enlightenment. Then, suddenly, the nature of meditation changed. There was just the stillness beyond Sound and Light, nothing to do, just being me. Just me, all alone with the Self. Only the Self, alone. Complete relaxation. No great orgasm, no cosmic explosion, no fireworks for me. Just



simplicity: the easiest thing. Peace. Freedom at last. I am. For the mind it is still a mystery. Mind cannot reach there. Mind, based on movement, cannot understand stillness. The flower does not understand the soil. Mind and personality is all about becoming; it is about getting, about achieving. What I am is Being. As Being there is nothing to become. I know, but I cannot explain what I know. I am, yet I cannot explain my Existence. What is, is. I am that Isness. The rest is illusion. Very pretty, but still maya. Wonderfully diversified and attractive, but still illusion. After all, there is only me. Me without a self, without a centre. Me, with the taste of the sweetness of living in my being, the nectar of the heart.

It is a little odd that, after years of meditating to reach a higher state, wanting something, expecting something, seeking the Mystery, now when I meditate there is just me being me. What is there to reach for? What is there to attain? I am the Answer. Just li'l ole me. Ah, shucks, Granma, tain't nothing to it.

I will never manifest. I was never born. I was never bound. I was always free. Once, I thought I was this little self. Now I know I am unlimited. I am the eagle and the hawk, the Brahman-bird in the Brahman-sky. I fly free without moving.

I walk down the street and there is no distance between me and anything else. Wherever I look, I am already there. I am the trees and the houses, the cars and the walls. I am the sky and the birds. Yet it is all natural. A Zen master one said: 'Enlightenment is the path of being nothing special,' and so it is. A modern teacher used to say, 'I am more normal than normal,' just before taking one of his three girlfriends to bed. Well, there wasn't room for all of them.

An eastern saying has it that Pure Truth can only be found in the Stillness. And that pure stillness is that Truth. That is it, friend. Just that. Just stillness. The simple answer to mankind's ancient search. Seek that. Be that. Live it.

Is that all, Arthur? Is that it? Is that the great secret?

So the biblical phrase states: Be still, and know that I am God. I did, and I know. Well, really, I don't know; I just am. For what mind can know God? Only God can know God. No mind can know the unknowable, can it? It remains unknown. But you can be it. Yet it is not an experience. It is beyond logic. The Ultimate Truth is ultimately unknowable. It sits over you and does not drop into the mind, as knowledge does. You cannot know it. You cannot do anything with it. It is just there. You can feel it. You can meditate on it. You can feel the stillness of it. But you can never own it. It is not yours. It is its own. It is too vast to own. Too impersonal to call it mine. Now are you any the wiser for me telling you that? Not much of a comfort, is it? In some ways the experience of lesser spiritual states seem more real and more significant, more solid and more profound. However, this is just from the perspective of the little self; and you can still work on the personality if you wish. There is more than one way of meditating. The ultimate meditation is to be

in the stillness of enlightenment, yet you can still work on lesser levels of spirituality, and you will still be in the stillness. But you will only be playing with that which will pass away. The deepest meditation is when you pass away into nothing. The mind does not meditate – it only thinks. That is what it was made for. That is what it does.

There are no differences in Enlightenment. No one is more enlightened than another. To be the Absolute is Enlightenment, and there are no degrees in it. Liberation is liberation, and when you are free you are free. There cannot be more than one ultimate state. There is just freedom, and it is the same for all. However, there are different degrees of consciousness, and it may appear to manifest differently in different people, but this is just because everyone does not have the same mind or mental makeup and so express themselves in different ways, and also because various people have different levels of knowledge or are better able to express their state in words. Yet it is all the same. Unity is unity. There is only one Absolute. Some understand it better than others.

At enlightenment the sound and light go within, all inside you, yet you can still meditate on them, but now you are greater than they are, which does not make them any less beautiful or less interesting. In Nirvana you can move your attention from the Great Void to a lesser state, yet still have the Void in the background as the substrate and support of awareness. My Master says it takes about ten years to integrate the state of enlightenment with the personality, and a friend says it takes about two years to get used to the state. Now I can see why. It is wholly abstract for the mind. What can the mind do with stillness? It wants sensation and phenomena. Where are the fireworks? The mind can't work with abstraction. It wants something to think about, imagine and play with. I have only had this awakened state for nine months, at this time, and I am looking for the language to explain it to others, as far as it can be explained. Not that it can, actually.

We all have various identities through which we view life, centres that we use to know with, and every centre is a limitation, and through these limited centres we try to view the unlimited, to confine it in a little box of knowledge, and the abstract just won't fit into a small concrete box. This is what religion does with Truth, and why it fails, and must distort the Real, making of religion a tomb for Truth. Looking through a centre of knowing, you can only know what that centre allows. It is like looking through red glass and seeing red. It is like expecting a cat to understand a human being. Every centre has a prejudice and an expectation. What do you expect from spirituality, from a spiritual path? What do you expect from enlightenment?

Understanding or comprehension is the result of confining an area of knowledge into the cage of the mind. That means you have to get outside of something and contract it and define it and limit it to the size of the mind. That is what consciousness does and is. Consciousness is not unlimited. You can only be conscious to the degree that you can surround and hold something within it. Any state of consciousness is a limit and a condensation of bits of energy and information and experience pulled together.

If this centre, this person, this me, is unreal, as it surely is, then is not the world it perceives also unreal? Can the unreal see the Real? What is real, if everything changes? Will unreal eyes not see unreal objects? After all, it is just a bunch of molecules. What is reality? How can I be the thing I am looking at? But who is looking, and who or what becomes the thing looked at? You look at the world but you don't see it. The brain does. The brain interprets reality. What can the fatty lump inside the brainbox see? It must be dark in there. The sense of sight comes from the eyes as a message to the brain. How do you know you have an itch on your left buttock? The brain says so. It can do so because of an electrical impulse.

I am not the song singing through the cosmos. I am beyond that now. I am cosmos. No – I am that which lies beyond it.

I am enlightened. So what should I do now? Er – oh, I know what! Chop wood, carry water. Only my fireplace does not burn wood. Oh. And I have taps for water. Oh, well. I am free. So what should I do? Just be free. There is nothing to do. All I can do now is to live, and integrate my vehicles of expression with the inner state, and maybe help a few people along the way. Hence this book. Maybe I can reach a few real seekers like myself. I have tried to share at least some of my journey with you. Maybe I have revealed too much, which may cause confusion in the minds of some. Sorry for that. But I have tried to be as honest and informative as possible. I have told the truth, unlike most writers who have preferred to use imagination, mainly because they did not know.

I have never read a book which contains the whole truth. Maybe the nearest have been Nisargadatta and Robert Powell, Guru Nanak and Kabir, Tukaram and Dariya, Ribhu, Shankara and Patanjali. Yet there was always something missing. There are a handful of good spiritual books in the world. Most are nonsense. None are true. Not completely.

Nonsense about bloody angels around every corner, for christsake. Nonsense about ascended masters and other crap. Messages from Mary, and from the dead just dying to speak to us. Meditations which do not work. Nutters who give themselves fancy names. Why are these people never called Jane or Bob? No, they have to have Greek or Egyptian or Indian names they were not given at birth. It is just conceit and ego. The Master Abraha-El has a message for the world. Sure he does. Guff that is utterly useless to you. The Princess Tu-Tamon-Ra brings you a message from beyond the stars. Love everyone, she says. Original, eh? But she don't say how. And she ignores the fact, as they all do, that we have a whole heap of complexes and survival-mechanisms and fears and conditionings which will not allow us to love everyone. Prepare yourself, they say, for a new world is coming. And so is the stuff out of a bull's backside. In shitloads.

People do not want to be transformed. They do not want to turn their life around. They do not really want to change. Too much like hard work. They do not want to confront their pain and weakness. They do not want to feel their wounds. They do not want to face their own death. They

want comfort, safety and security. They want a path to make them feel warm and cozy. They want emotional sweetness and a pat on the head. They want something to trust in. They want something to believe in, not something to do which will free them. They do not want to challenge themselves or to be challenged. They do not want to think for themselves or look at life as it really is. They want to view life through rose-tinted glasses. They want a promise of a better life. They don't want upheaval or turmoil. None of us do. They want to sail away into the sunset. But freedom does not come cheaply. It takes discipline and dedication. Desire for freedom has to burn like a raging fire in the heart. It must come first. It has to batter at your consciousness all the time.

I look at my books, collected over many years. What good are they to me now? They are just entertainment. I am the Truth. I am the book of Truth. And people are writing guff about angels and fairies, spirits and religion as if they were important. What is an angel except imagination? What is a spirit except a dead person? And those dead people are really dead. And religion is dead, too. It is dead truth. I am Life. I say that without any pride or ego. A simple fact. I am the Presence. What can religion do for me? What dead person can reach where I am?

I am an ordinary person, nothing special. Yet I have this extraordinary state of Being. I know I could never have gotten it on my own. Yes, I did a lot of meditation, but I did not know where to look, where to go to get it, what to do. I was lost. In fact I did not get the state for three months after the Energy for Enlightenment was given to me, and then only after being guided to it. I was looking in the wrong place; looking over there, I did not see what was in front of me. Expecting one thing I did not perceive the subtle Reality. Paul Taylor and then my Master had to lead me there, after Clem Winter helped to clear up some of my confusion. Of course most people get this very fast, in a matter of days, sometimes in hours. I happened to be a bit slow. No matter. As my Master says, everyone gets enlightened at the same time. I think in Zen they call it enlightenment outside of time. Enlightenment is outside of all traditions.

The sense of self is gone now. It is like no one is at home. The house is empty. There is so much stillness. Not just that the mind is still or that awareness is still, but I am so still. There is nothing to move. I am still. Everything is still. There is only stillness. This is beyond the Higher Self. This is the One Self. There is no: I am That. There is only That. The illusion is over.

After enlightenment, as the Gita says, the Vedas are only flowery words.

Shankara, in his Viveka Cudamani, put it like this:

‘I am without activity, changeless, without parts, formless, absolute, eternal, without any other support, the One without a second.

‘I am the universal, I am the All, I am transcendent, the One without a second. I am Absolute and Infinite Knowledge, I am Bliss and indivisible.’

By meditating after enlightenment, so I am told, you can develop an identity to function on the higher planes after death. Otherwise, being enlightened, at death you would simply merge in the Absolute. Having an identity on the higher planes means you can serve humanity after death. You create a formless form. The vehicles left behind, now purified, vibrate magnetically. They can have a positive influence on the lower planes, helping to weaken age-old glamour.

Where is Arthur Naylor now? I don't know. Where is the mind? I can't find it. I can't find a self. There are just impulses from habit, experience, patterns of energy, DNA and so forth, but none of this is me. My memories do not touch me. There is humour, affection, friendship, but behind these there is the Witness of everything, and behind even that there is just the Isness that is the Absolute. Because I am that I cannot see it; I cannot look at it, just as the eye cannot see itself. I simply abide. In this homogenous state there are no contractions, no small bits, no differences, no separations, no divisions, no limits, nothing to get hold of, nothing to understand, nothing to pull apart. Everywhere is equal. There is no imbalance within it. It is just...there, everywhere, yet nowhere that a mind can understand. You cannot fathom this, and you cannot explain it to a mind. You cannot hold the wind, cannot grasp a cloud. Words just fail to touch the reality of it. A Vedic scripture says: 'Verily, I am that and that alone.'

This is beyond the Alpha and Omega of the Bible, beyond the Beginning and the End. Since the dawn of civilisation, maybe even before, men have wanted this, sought this, talked about it, prayed to it and worshipped it. Century after century mystics have longed to contact and merge with this Ocean. That is a sobering thought.

What else is there to say? In the end life does not matter very much – except for mine, of course. It is an automatic, cyclic process that has been going on since the beginning of time. How many countless human beings have been and gone in that time? The mind gives meaning to life. Being alive is a wondrous process. I have attained the Goal. I am free. All beings will die. But how many are free? A few - very few. And that is a pity. It is a tragedy greater than any Greek play.

In the end all that matters are those people we care about and our own life. And those, too, will go, as we all must, and all too quickly. Other than that there is the vast panorama of life, its endless diversity and variety that allows endless fun and too much pain, if we are identified with this small self. The things which give us joy do so because of desire, the mental significance we give to them, and the importance we attach to our identification with them. If we are enlightened we can be on the inside of joy, and also on the outside looking in. Then we can feel joy welling up in the heart. And why? Because we are peace, and peace, and peace. We are the stillness at the centre of the storm. We are the still spindle around which things spin. We are the still centre of the hurricane. We are at rest. Then we are not getting in the way of the flow of life, and at the same time we are outside of it and untouched by it. We are not involved in it. We are free. We are that which never touches creation and is untouched by it. It strikes the mind numb. It cannot understand it. All it

finds is nothing. There is just silence. What is it? In the end, reluctantly, all the mind can say is: I don't know. It looks at the last mystery, and it remains a mystery. It is the Great Void. It is the great unknown. It is a shoreless ocean without boundaries reaching into forever.

It is what we have been looking for. Nothing! What made the gods laugh? It has been said that some, on becoming free, just laughed. Some have said: Is that it? Ah, well, as we all know, it is good to laugh, and even better to be light-hearted and easygoing. As Willy Shakespeare said, no doubt after taking a quaff at the local village inn, a light heart lives long. At least it certainly lives better.

Ah, the simplicity of it. What could be simpler than just being? Yet for most of us it is the hardest thing - the hardest thing, in the state of ignorance; and the easiest in the state of liberation. When it comes to the utterly formless, there is nothing to see, nothing to know. If it is formless, what is there to comprehend? There is nothing to grasp, nothing to hold. There is no knowledge involved. How can the mind dissect the formless? What is there to discriminate? The mind works with geometries, shapes and forms. It cannot detect patterns in the formless.

The mind is not my mind. The mind is like a passing cloud, nebulous, vague, unreal. There is no focus, no locality for it. There is no attachment to it. There is no meaning to it for me.

It is possibly shocking or confusing for some to become enlightened to discover all their old anchors removed. There is nothing to grab hold of. The old limits are suddenly removed. The sense of self is gone. You feel nebulous and abstract. You can never go back to what you were. There is nothing to define you now. You have to get used to a stillness that the mind cannot comprehend and which is outside its reach, beyond the known. It is not contained within any concept. You cannot confine the river to the pond. You have really, really, gone Beyond. And what is there? Nothing that you have known before. The Mystery is still a mystery, but of a different order. You live it now, yet it is still a mystery to the human mind. It is beyond the knowing of the mind, beyond the reach of ego. It is above you, overshadowing you. Patanjali called it *meghadharmasamadhi* – roughly translating as ‘the state of peace like a cloud of virtue,’ or the ‘cloud-of-truth in Unity.’ We could call it the truth of Being.

I have met many wonderful people in my life. I have met spiritual aspirants who were nicer than me, who were more friendly, more loving, more helpful, and a few who were more intelligent. But they are not enlightened and most of them never will be free, unless they are on this Path. If they meditate for 50 years they still will not be free, for they are meditating with a meditator, with a sense of self, with a goal. There is always that restriction. How can the conditioned become unconditioned? How can bondage become liberation? Most meditators have been conned, which is why there are so few enlightened beings. Spiritual experiences do not significantly change people. They still have the same old habits, the same tendencies and impulses, the same weakness and fears, the same longings and desires, the same complexes. Only a permanent, higher, altered state

of awareness can bring permanent, lasting change. With enlightenment the old is swept away; you say goodbye to old traumas and past pain; you live in the freshness of the moment; and you know what it is to be simple and carefree, and life is okay.

I was looking at a book recently by someone claiming to be enlightened which said the Self hides from itself in form, in ignorance, so that it can find itself again and rise to Self-realization. It imagines life, creates a drama, acts in the drama, learns from life and becomes free again. What arrant nonsense. Can't God find something better to do? How could this state ever hide from itself, when it is so huge? All it knows is itself. To even want to hide from itself, when it has no will, no desire and no mind simply defies logic. The Free cannot be trapped, even by itself, for in that case it could not have been free. The Unconfined cannot be contained. The greatest cannot become the smallest. This is faulty logic. It indicates ignorance. Furthermore it is incorrect to state that you were always the Self, as some followers of Vedanta do. No, you are the ego; you are not the Self. The Self is the Self. Do you think the Self has an ego, a mind, an emotional body? To state, as some do, that the little self is an illusion, and then to say 'you' have always existed as the Self is nonsense. If you are the ego you cannot be the Self. That is bad philosophy. The ego is only here for a lifetime, then that is that. Goodbye, Harry; goodbye, Jane.

You are not here to learn anything. What can you learn from a trap?

The first great realisation is that you are formless, birthless, deathless.

The idea that you can be an incarnating principle, to the enlightened, is simply preposterous. What connection could there possibly be between the Absolute and this little bit of creation called a self? How could That, totally apart from anything, ever come into form? How could it be related in any way to a body when it is a total mystery to the mind? How could the Unknown ever be known to a small self? How to cram the Vastness into a tiny bit called the soul? How can a something hold the Void? That which you would seek to confine is the container of all, on the outside of everything, and yet permeates everything. How would you incarnate that, let alone reincarnate it? Can that learn anything? Outside of time, beyond space, free, formless, complete, what would it need to learn, when every form of learning is a limitation? That has never had a body, never been caught in a centre called a soul, never been trapped by any form. There is no karma, for whom would karma be for? Without a soul karma becomes impotent. As there is no soul, there is no evolution. To evolve one would have to rise to a higher state, to transcend this one, yet the Self is already in the highest state. Man plays his part on the stage, like the bard said, and at the end the curtain falls. Only, in life, you do not get a return performance. The play is finished. Karma is nonsense. People who talk about it are simply teaching what they have read in books. It is never the result of spiritual realization. In fact the only realization you get is that it is unreal, a fantasy. Just like you are. What 'you'? When my son was young I used to ask him if he was sure he was a human boy. But he seemed convinced. We never question our own reality. Why should we? But it can change as we grow, just as a man no longer thinks of himself as a boy. So, as

we advance spiritually, we no longer think of ourselves as the ego. We transcend the personality. We find we are not the form most think they are. We grow out of the illusion. How can an illusion have karma? How can an illusory self reincarnate? How can a spiritual Self learn anything from the experiences of an unreal self? Those 'lessons' would never touch the real Self. And would have no value if they did. For every lesson is still a limit and cannot enrich the unlimited. Nothing can be added to the Absolute. Nor can anything be removed from it. Wholeness is wholeness. It is complete. It cannot be partially complete; you cannot be partially enlightened.

The only karma there is are the laws of nature, and the law of cycles, cycles within cycles, and the laws on various planes. Higher laws affect lower planes to some extent. Enlightenment is the transcendence of all laws, but only for the Higher Self. It was never subject to any laws in the first place, for laws only apply to creation and action within creation.

If you believe in evolution take a look around you. Look at the kind of people there are. Look at Rwanda, at Iraq, at a dozen other recent troubles. Look back at history. Where is the big change? There were cutthroats in Victorian times. Look at the crime today. How has humanity evolved? Okay, we may be more educated, more affluent in the West, have more knowledge than we used to. But are we morally superior to anyone else or any other time in history? Is government more moral, more honest, and more caring? I guess you know the answer to that one. We know who politicians care about. It ain't us! So what lessons have imaginary souls learnt over time? As they used to say down my way: Nix! Not a penny farthing. Not a brass button. Humans are still cheating each other, still killing each other. Lawlessness is just around the corner. Murder is now commonplace. Guess it always was.

Around the world there are a ruthless group of war mongers. This gang are known as politicians. Their hands are drenched in blood, their hearts cold as stone, totally uncaring. Pity Guy Fawkes had been stopped. Or maybe not. Because kings and emperors are exactly the same.

Scum rises to the surface.

We find, at least in Britain and America, that our liberties, hard won in the past, have been eroded, have been stolen by a bunch of men and women who think they know better than we do, who are quite happy to curtail our liberties and spy on us as though we were children, out of mistrust and the darkness of their hearts, who would seek to enslave us little by little. Our democracy, such as it now is, is teetering on the brink. The Magna Carta has been desecrated. A police state is waiting round the corner. The police are not trusted anymore; some of them have become far too heavy-handed with the extra powers given them by government. The rule of law has replaced justice and fairness. Minorities have more rights than the general population in England, and most people think the law is more on the side of criminals than the victims of crime.



Some teachers are teaching that in a few years there is going to be a great spiritual revolution, that the tide will turn, that thousands are suddenly going to get enlightened, that a new day will dawn. I would call that the grand delusion. Human beings are not going to get better. This is the nature of humanity – some good, some bad. It has always been thus. Just look at the mess of the world today. Do you think some outside force is suddenly going to change all this selfishness? Do you?

If it could, that would mean humanity does not have freewill, that people are simply being controlled by an outside energy, hypnotised by a higher power. That is not evolutionary, not spiritual, and it means people are just slaves.

The United Nations was supposed to end wars. Has it? When there was genocide in Rwanda the UN did not give a shit. They had a peacekeeping force there. And what were their soldiers ordered to do during the carnage? Nothing. Let them kill each other. So there were 800,000 dead bodies. The West turned its back. But so did the rest of Africa. Let there be blood. So what do you need to ‘care’ for and run the world? The answer is simple. A total, complete lack of compassion. Hearts of stone have our men. And if you ask them why, they waffle on about nothing. Well, you know, it’s not exactly genocide. Some of them were killed for other reasons. Yea. Dead is dead, and excuses are lies. I tell you, the more I discover about human beings and their leaders the more disgusted I become.

Hitler. Stalin. Adi Amin. Old Haiti. Cambodia. Bosnia. Ethiopia. Ethnic cleansing. So many places – so many deaths. Streets and fields running with blood. Children, women, old people. Monsters with black hearts. So don’t tell me there will be a new dawn, a new day in the morning, a new humanity in a few years. Tell it to the relatives of the butchered. I am sure they will have some good advice for you.

Most modern teachers and many of the old books teach that all is consciousness. No, all is not consciousness. Consciousness is a limitation and consciousness deals in limits. It consists of an observer, an object seen or experienced, and the act of seeing, knowing or experiencing. To know, you have to have a centre; you have to confine and limit something in order to know it. Consciousness surrounds something, envelops and enfolds it, confining it so it can be known. Consciousness therefore limits and condenses. It is by meditation that consciousness is expanded to its ultimate extent; then, mysteriously, upon enlightenment, consciousness is transcended. One becomes that which is outside of consciousness, the unfragmented Whole outside of creation. Consciousness cannot touch that. It cannot be known by knowledge. It is not the object of knowledge because it is outside of all known things. The mind cannot grasp it. Understanding cannot fathom it. It is known only to itself. No observer can observe it, for to see it you would have to be outside it looking in, and there is nothing outside the ultimate. You cannot see something beyond seeing; you cannot know something beyond knowing. You cannot perceive something which has no parts, no form or shape, without characteristics or distinctions.

I realised the other day that this state is not about emptiness, it is not about nothingness, but about FULLNESS. It is the abstract Fullness, but it is only abstract from this lower level. It is full of itself from its own level. In the end there is no emptiness, no space, no void, for I am everywhere as the Absolute; there is nothing to be empty. The silence, the stillness is everywhere present, self-existing, omnipresent.

Nothing in creation can give a spiritual person the answers they seek. Only enlightenment can do that. And then there is no one to ask the questions. So you become the answer. Freedom is the answer. No personality can ever find out how it came to be, as it is just an effect, and effects seek their cause and cannot know the reason for being; personalities consist of limits, parts put together which react to any given situation, and they can never find what made them, for they can never reach there. Stillness is the way and the answer. Meditation is the means. The Master is the guide and the opener of the Door.

My Master led me through the Door to Enlightenment. He gave me freedom. It is available to others who are willing to walk the Great Way.

What am I? I am Life itself. I am the vast mountains and the towering trees and the insect on a blade of grass, yet I am also beyond that. I am more than life. I am That which was before life began, for I am beyond beginnings. I am that which lies outside all endings. I do not know what I am, for no name explains me. Space itself is a form, even inner space, and I am Formless. I am not the I which writes these words or thinks these thoughts. I am not any kind of self.

This does not lead to arrogance, you know. On the contrary, it humbles you. For it is not me who is in this state. I have not done anything. I am the same as before, only with expanded awareness. The Great is great, not I. I am...abstract. I am neither this nor that. I am sort of between two worlds. I barely touch this lower world, yet I am not fully in the other either. Awareness swings both ways. I can be one or the other. Usually I am a bit of both. I can be the Mystery, but I can never understand it. For the mind is too small, too limited. It cannot go outside its own boundaries.

I have said what I could say; I have not said what I couldn't say.

So, after Enlightenment, the work is to bring as much of that Divinity, as much of the Supreme as possible through the personality and into the world, to try and express that state to greater or lesser degree. To fully express it will never be possible. Yet, to some extent, one must try and live it. One can try and teach others something of what you have realised, as those before you taught you, or you can be an ungrateful sod and do nothing and sit on your bottom and forget the time others spent on helping you attain your state. You are free to do either. And you can meditate or not, as you see fit. Although you have attained the ultimate, there are still vast worlds to explore. No one knows all the width and depth of all the planes, as Guru Nanak pointed out. He was a clever one, that old fella. Creation is infinite and endless. How will we come to the end of that exploration

before we die? Yes, in Enlightenment we have gone beyond them all, gone outside their limits, yet there are areas which still await our investigation. Some say that enlightenment is just the beginning. That, now we are free, we can start on a new adventure, a new journey. Some say there is no end to a spiritual journey, even though we are free. Now we are free to really explore, without stress, without anxiety, free of desire, detached, without longing, for now we have what we sought. Now we can really relax into meditation without the ego getting in the way. We can be completely open. And we do not even have to do anything. We abide in our state. We are Being. So what is there to do when there is nothing to be? We are already that. Nothing to do, nowhere to go. Nothing to attain now. There is only being in Unity. There is only living Truth.

Everything is contained within my awareness. It is all me. I am boundless and free.

This can never be undone, once attained. It always was, always will be. The idea of evolution now seems to me laughably absurd. There is no movement in the Absolute and hence no change. There is no higher state to evolve into, nowhere to grow.

There is only the Great Spiritual Sea, still in its stillness, silent in its eternity.

Enlightenment is the essence of life, the essence of awareness, boundless and free.

I am that Essence, the endless ocean, the boundless sky.

I have gone to the farthest shore. Why not join me? It is a good place to be. When you get to the end you realise there was no closed gate, nor, indeed, any path. Everything was just preparation for this one moment of total Transcendence.





