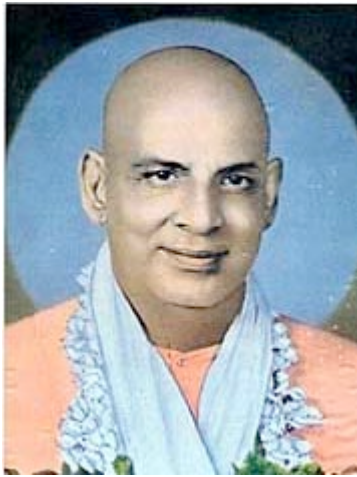


EASY STEPS TO YOGA

By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



**Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society**



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda**

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

Yoga is right living. This definition may appear to be simple, but really it is very significant, for the meaning of right living is very wide. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj explains in an easy and homely style the basic principles that a beginner in Yoga has to understand and follow. These *Easy Steps to Yoga* are laid out with a special view to enable the novice to ascend without much difficulty the heights of spiritual attainment. Ethical and moral discipline forms the foundation of Yoga. Sri Swamiji has beautifully brought together all the fundamentals: good conduct, non-attachment, dispassion, unselfish work, sense-control, meditation and knowledge to form a connected piece of complete information on the practice of Yoga, beginning with bodily health and training, and ending in Self-knowledge. We bring out the sixth edition of this precious volume for the edification of students, both in the East and the West, who have no acquaintance with the technicalities involved in the subject, but are eager to have an adequate grasp of the main guiding principles in living a life of wisdom arising out of *divine discontent*.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

PRAYER TO THE ALMIGHTY

१. दृश्यसे सर्वभूतेषु ब्राह्मणेषु गवेषु च ।

दिक्षु सर्वासु गगने पर्वतेषु नदीषु च ॥

1. drśyase sarvabhūteṣu brāhmaṇeṣu gaveṣu ca |
dikṣu sarvāsu gagane parvateṣu nadīṣu ca ||

Thou art seen (by the pious and the earnest Sadhakas) in all creatures, in cows and Brahmins in all quarters of the globe, in the sky, as well as in all rivers and mountains.

२. सहस्रचरणः श्रीमान् शतशीर्षः सहस्रदृक् ।

त्वं धारयसि भूतानि पृथिवीं सर्वपर्वतान् ॥

2. sahasracaraṇaḥ śrīmān śataśīrṣaḥ sahasradṛk |
tvam dhārayasi bhūtāni pṛthivīm sarvaparvatān ||

Thou art thousand-footed, the glorious, thousand-headed and thousand-eyed Being. Thou supportest all the worlds, this earth and the mountains.

३. ये त्वां देवं ध्रुवं भक्त्या भजन्ते पुरुषोत्तमम् ।

प्राप्नुवन्ति सदा कामानिह लोके परत्र च ॥

3. ye tvāṃ devaṃ dhruvaṃ bhaktyā bhajante puruṣottamam |
prāpnuvanti sadā kāmāniha loke paratra ca ||

Those devotees who zealously worship Thee, the Highest Lord, eternally glorious Being, will always be duly rewarded, and have their desires fulfilled in this as well as the other world.

The Ramayana

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Thou art, O Lord, the Creator of this Universe. Thou art the Protector of this world. Thou art in the grass and the rose. Thou art in the sun and the stars. Salutations unto Thee, O Destroyer of the cycle of births and deaths! Salutations unto Thee, O Bestower of Bliss and Immortality!

O Sweet Lord! May I be free from the bonds of death. May I never forget my immortal nature! May I be able to look upon all beings with equal vision! May I attain the Supreme seat of Brahman! May I be free from impurity and sin! May I know my essential nature!

Adorations to the Supreme Being, who dwells in the hearts of all beings, who is in the fire and water, who is in the plants, herbs and trees, who is in the stone, brick and iron bars, and who is pervading the whole universe.

I bow to Thee, O Secret of secrets! I bow to Thee, O Indweller of our hearts! I bow to Thee, O Silent Witness of all activities of all minds! I bow to Thee, O Inner Ruler of all beings, who pervades and permeates and interpenetrates all things of this universe.

Salutations to Thee, the Supreme Lord! Thou art without beginning and end. Thou art the flower. Thou art the bee. Thou art woman. Thou art man. Thou art the sea. Thou art the waves. Thou art the old man tottering with a stick. Thou art the saint. Thou art the rogue.

Thou art Light Divine. Thou art Light of knowledge. Thou art the dispeller of darkness. Thou art the Supreme Guru. Thou art beyond the reach of mind and speech. Thou art beyond any kind of limitation. Thou art the Self of this universe.

Thou art Self-luminous. Thou art without parts, without actions, without limbs, without any taint or fault, without birth and death. Thou art our Father, Mother, Brother, Friend, Relative, Guru and Sole Refuge! Thou art the embodiment of Peace, Bliss, Power, Knowledge, Strength and Beauty.

O All-merciful Lord! Through Thy Grace May I realise the Truth. May I always entertain sublime thoughts. May I realise myself as the Light Divine. May I serve humanity with Atma Bhava. May I be free from greed, lust, egoism, jealousy and hatred. May I behold the one sweet Immortal Self in all beings. May I realise Brahman with pure understanding.

May that Light of lights ever guide me! May He cleanse my mind of all impurities! May He inspire me! May He bestow on me Power, Courage and Strength! May He remove the veil in the mind! May He remove all obstacles on the spiritual path! May He make my life happy and fruitful. I bow to Thee, O Lord of lords, O God of gods, O Deva of Devas, the Brahman of the Upanishads, the Support for Maya and Isvara, the Supreme Bridge to Immortality!

Om Santih! Santih! Santih!

INTRODUCTION

There is restlessness everywhere. Selfishness, greed, wrath, lust are havocing. Fights, skirmishes, petty quarrels are polluting the atmosphere and creating discord, disharmony and unrest. Bugle is blown and soldiers are marching in the battlefield to kill their enemies. One nation is waging war against another nation for acquiring more dominions and more powers. Side by side peace-movement is working silently for bringing concord, harmony and peace, for eradicating the dire ignorance, the root cause for human sufferings and disseminating Divine Knowledge or knowledge of the Self and infusing devotion into the hearts of people. Mysterious is the universe, still more mysterious is the silent workings of the unseen God, who prompts Rajasic people on one side to wage war and the Sattvic people on the other side to start Peace Centres for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge and for bringing peace to the suffering humanity at large.

The Goal of life is the attainment of Self-realisation or God-consciousness. There is one supreme undying intelligent principle or Essence or Atman or Brahman or the Supreme Self who dwells in the chambers of your heart. He exists in the past, present and future. He is existence absolute, knowledge absolute and bliss absolute. Ignorant man vainly searches for his happiness and peace in perishable external objects, that are conditioned in time, space and causation. He has no peace of mind. His desires are not gratified. He amasses wealth, begets children, gets titles, honours, name, fame and yet his mind is restless. He has no abiding joy and lasting happiness. He is still in want of something. He has no feeling of fullness. This feeling of fullness and eternal satisfaction can be obtained by realising one's own Self through spiritual Sadhana, self-restraint, purity and meditation, and by attaining the highest rung in the Yogic ladder.

Peace and happiness can be found only within. You cannot certainly find it in external objects. Wealth, women, children, property, palatial buildings cannot give you the everlasting Peace. Look within. Realise your oneness with that One Supreme Self, who lives in the chambers of your heart. When you are established in That, which is an ocean of Peace and Happiness, you will not be shaken even by heavy sorrow, loss or failures, inharmonious and disagreeable vibrations. You will tide over all difficulties or crises of life very easily and will come back with triumph in all experiences. Mysterious is this Peace! Marvellous is this Peace! Realise this Peace that passeth all

understanding through Yoga Sadhana and be free. Float in this ocean of Peace and rejoice in the Peace of your own Self.

Why do you, O friend, cling to this material life of disappointments, failures, diseases, afflictions, sorrows and uncertainties? Penetrate into the hidden depths of the vast ocean of eternal life within. The real Kailas and Manasasarovar are within you. The fountain of Joy, the spring of the sacred water of immortality, the vast lake of ambrosial nectar, the celestial jewel that bestows on you whatever you want, are within you. What is this ephemeral existence with all sorts of mundane troubles, this evanescent life like a mushroom or a bubble when compared to the sweet eternal life in the soul within? Will you not start now on a spiritual expedition with determination and an iron resolve to explore the infinite realms of peace and bliss within?

In the present book *Easy Steps to Yoga* I am giving you useful lessons on the practice of Yoga. According to the temperament and capacity of the Sadhaka, the student can select any course of Sadhana given in this book and safely proceed higher and higher in the spiritual path and surely attain the goal of life quickly. Special instructions given in Chapter VII will be of great help to all aspirants. The Chapter VIII containing simple lessons on the practice of Asanas with illustrations will be found highly useful to all. May Peace and Happiness abide in you all!

Sivananda

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CHAPTER I

YOGA SADHANA

1. Yoga for Health

1. Most of the diseases take their origin in over-eating, sexual excess and outbursts of anger and hatred. If the mind is kept cool and calm at all times, you will have wonderful health, strength and vitality. Energy is depleted by fits of anger. The cells and tissues are filled with morbid, poisonous materials, when one loses his temper and entertains deep hatred. Various sorts of physical ailments crop up. The blood becomes hot and thin and consequently night pollution results. Various kinds of nervous diseases are attributable to excessive loss of the seminal energy and frequent fits of explosive anger or wrath.

2. Let any disease remain in your body. Do not bother too much. Do not fret and fume. Develop the powers of endurance and resistance. Strengthen your body, mind and nerves. Take plenty of open-air exercises, substantial nutritious food, medicated oil bath and plenty of rest. Have mental and physical recreation. Lead a well-regulated life. Be moderate in food, drink and enjoyments. Lead a spiritual life. All diseases will leave your body by themselves. All microbes will die, when your vitality, vigour and strength are at a flood tide. This is the secret of health and happiness.

3. Do not be carried away by the pompous advertisements made by quacks and charlatans. Lead a simple natural life. You will become all right soon. Do not spend any money in purchasing the so-called patent medicines and specifics. They are worthless. Quacks try to exploit the credulous and the ignorant. Beware. Do not go to the doctors very often. Endeavour to qualify yourself as your own doctor. Understand the laws of nature and the principles of hygiene and health. Do not trespass against the laws of health.

4. Bask in the sun. Expose your body to the rays of the sun for a short time daily. This is heliotherapy or sun-treatment. Sun is the source of energy and power. You will derive energy and power from the sun.

5. Soak 12 almonds at night. Remove the skin and take the almonds with some sugarcandy in the early morning. Or you can make a refreshing beverage by grinding these almonds with a little black pepper and sugarcandy. This is called 'thandai' by the Punjabis. This is a fine, cooling and strength-giving tonic.

6. Rest in bed is necessary. Adjust your diet. Take simple, wholesome, easily digestible, bland and non-irritating food. Give up hot, pungent curries, chutneys and chilliest. Rest the stomach and the small bowels by taking recourse to partial fasts. If you can fast for a whole day, it is all the better. Fasting eliminates poisons and overhauls the system thoroughly. You can take sago and milk barley water and fruits like sweet oranges, grapes, etc. If you are thirsty, you can take lemon or orange juice with sugarcandy.

7. Observe Brahmacharya. Get up at 4 a.m. and practice Japa of 'Hari Om' or any other Mantra and also meditation for one hour. The Name of the Lord is the best medicine or tonic in the world. You should have intense faith in the power of the Names of the Lord. Incurable diseases are cured by Japa or singing Hari's Name. Meditation creates new, healthy vibrations in all the cells of the body and removes any kind of disease. All the tissues are bathed in the nectar that flows during meditation. All germs that cause diseases are destroyed. The rationale of this kind of Yogic or spiritual treatment is yet unknown to the medical profession.

8. Why do you unnecessarily introduce foreign drugs into the system? Resort to Nature Cure and Yogic Chikitsa. Practise regularly Pranayama, breathing exercises, Asanas, concentration and meditation. This is the ideal treatment. Do not think too much of the disease and too much of the body. Too much thinking of the disease will intensify the malady. Keep the mind fully occupied in some way or the other. This is very important. Take away the mind from the body and think of the diseaseless Atma or Soul within, the bed-rock or substratum for the body and mind. Friend, cultivate this kind of Atma-chintana and attain the Anamayapada or the Painless State Param Dhama or Immortal Brahman. Cheer yourself up. Have a cheerful countenance always. Meditate on Om. Think of Om. Sing Om. Om is thy real name. Om is the best tonic, specific or sheet anchor, panacea or cure-all, 'pick-me-up' or sovereign remedy for all diseases. Smile and laugh. Thou art bodiless, undying Soul. Never, never forget this.

9. May God bless you with perfect health, high standard of vigour, strength, vitality and longevity. May you prosper gloriously! Om Santi!

2. Essence of Sadhana

1. Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.

2. Asana: Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.

3. Japa: Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namoh Narayanaya, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.

4. Dietetic Discipline: Take Sattvic food (Suddha Ahara). Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any chutney. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.

5. Have a separate meditation room under lock and key.

6. Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six paise per rupee.

7. Svadhyaya: Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Aditya Hridaya, the Upanishads or the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara.

8. Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.

9. Get by heart some prayer-Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.

10. Have constant Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.

11. Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.

12. Have Japa Mala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.

13. Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.

14. Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.

15. Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.

16. Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).

17. Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.

18. Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).

20. Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Saranagati).

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas. This will lead you to Moksha. All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.

3. Gist of Karma Yoga

1. Karma Yoga is selfless service unto humanity. The important point is to serve humanity without any attachment or egoism. The central teaching of the Gita is non-attachment to work. Lord Krishna says: “Work incessantly. Your duty is to work but not expect the fruits thereof.”

2. The mind is so framed that it cannot work without expectation of fruits or anticipation of rewards or even appreciation. You will have to train the mind to work disinterestedly. Worldly people cannot understand the spirit of Nishkamya Karma Yoga as their minds are charged or saturated with impurities. Do vigorous service for some time. You will grasp the spirit of Nishkamya service.

3. A Karma Yogi should be absolutely free from greed, lust, anger and egoism. Then only he can do real useful service. Even if there are traces of these Doshas, he should try to remove them one by one.

4. A Karma Yogi should have an amiable, loving, social nature. He should have perfect adaptability, tolerance, sympathy, cosmic love and mercy. He should be able to adjust himself to the ways and habits of others. He should have an all-embracing and all-inclusive heart and equal vision. He should have a cool and balanced mind. He should rejoice in the welfare of others. He should have all the organs under perfect control. He should lead a very simple life. He should bear insult, disrespect, dishonour, censure infamy, disgrace, harsh words, heat and cold and the pain of diseases. He should have power of endurance. He should have absolute faith in himself, in God, in scriptures and in the words of his Guru. Such a man becomes a good Karma Yogi and reaches the Goal quickly.

5. The man who serves the world really serves himself. That man who helps others really helps himself. This is an important point. When you serve a man, when you serve your country, always think that the Lord has given you a rare opportunity to improve, correct and mould yourself by service. Be grateful to that man who has given you a chance to serve him.

6. Karma Yoga prepares the mind for the reception of Light or Knowledge. It expands the heart and breaks all barriers that stand in the way of unity or oneness. Karma Yoga is the effective Sadhana for Chitta Suddhi.

7. By doing selfless service you purify your heart. Egoism, hatred, jealousy, idea of superiority and all the kindred negative qualities will vanish. Humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance, and mercy will be developed. Sense of separateness will be annihilated. Selfishness will be eradicated. You will get a broad and liberal outlook of life. You will begin to feel oneness and unity. Eventually you will attain knowledge of the Self. You will realise ‘One in All’ and ‘All in One.’ You will feel unbounded joy. World is nothing but manifestation of God. Service of humanity and country is service of God. Service is worship.

8. Generally people are impatient and they expect Siddhis after doing a little service. The real Karma Yogi who serves the people with humility and Atma Bhava (seeing God in every face) becomes a real ruler of the world. He is honoured and respected by all. The more service you do with Atma Bhava, the more power, energy, and capacity you will get. Practise this and feel.

9. When the thought of doing good to others becomes part and parcel of a man's very being, then he will not entertain any least motive at all. He takes immense delight in serving others, in doing good to others. There is peculiar joy and Ananda in the vigorous Nishkamya service. He gets inner spiritual strength and power by performing motiveless and selfless actions.

10. Never grumble or murmur when you do service to others. Take delight in service. Be ever ready to serve others. Watch for opportunities to serve. Never miss a single opportunity. Create opportunities. Create field of good service.

11. In the practice of Nishkamya Karma Yoga, there is no loss of effort. There is no harm. There is no transgression also. Even a little of this practice can protect you from great fear of birth and death with its concomitant evils. You will reap the fruits of Karma Yoga, viz., Jnana. There is no uncertainty here. The path of Karma Yoga eventually leads to the attainment of Bliss of the Self.

4. Bhakti Yoga Sadhana

1. Bhakti is the slender silken thread of Prema or Love that binds the heart of a devotee with the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Bhakti is intense devotion and supreme attachment to God. It is the spontaneous outpouring of love towards God. It is pure, unselfish, Divine Love or Suddha Prema. Bhakti is sacred, higher emotion with sublime sentiment that unites the devotee with the Lord. It has to be experienced by the Bhaktas.

2. Human love is all hollow. It is mere animal attraction. It is passion. It is carnal love. It is selfish love. It is ever changing. It is all hypocrisy and mere show. The wife does not care for her husband when he is in the role of unemployment. She frowns at him. The husband dislikes his wife when she loses her beauty on account of some chronic diseases. You can find real, lasting love in God alone. His love knows no change.

3. Bhakti is the basis of religious life. Bhakti destroys Vasanas and egoism. A life without Bhakti, faith, love and devotion is a dreary waste. Bhakti softens the heart and removes jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. It infuses joy, Divine ecstasy, Bliss, Peace and Knowledge. All cares, worries, anxieties, fears, mental torments and tribulations entirely vanish. The devotee is freed from the Samsaric wheel of births and deaths. He attains the Immortal Abode of everlasting Peace, Bliss and Knowledge.

4. Sakamya Bhakti is one where the Bhakta worships God for getting riches, son or for removal of sufferings from diseases. Vyabhicharini Bhakti is one in which the devotee worships or loves God for some time and then his wife, children and property for some time. To love God and God alone for ever and ever is Avyabhicharini Bhakti. Prahlada in the advanced stage of devotion meditated on his own self as Lord Hari. This is Abheda Bhakti.

5. The Bhakta remains in the Loka where Lord Vishnu resides like an inhabitant of a state. This is Salokya Mukti. In Sameepya Mukti, the Bhakta remains in close proximity with the Lord like the attendant of a king. In Sarupya Mukti he gets the same form like that of the Lord like the brother of a king. In Sayujya Mukti, he becomes one with the Lord like salt and water. Thus there are four kinds of Mukti for the Bhaktas.

6. Out of love the formless Brahman assumes the form of Lord Hari to please His devotees. God is an embodiment of mercy. The Lord runs after His devotees with food and water in His hands to the forests. He becomes a slave of His devotees. Lord Vishnu says to Prahlada: "Dear, you are too tender of age and too delicate of body to stand the terrible tortures inflicted on you by the hot-headed father. A parallel of his atrocious deed I have never seen before. Pray, therefore, excuse Me if I was late in coming to your rescue." Again Lord Krishna says: "I am not in My control. I am under the complete control of My Bhaktas. They have taken entire possession of My heart. How can I leave them when they have taken entire possession of My heart? How can I leave them when they have renounced everything for My sake? He who seeks Me in all things, and all things in Me, to him I am never lost, nor he to Me."

7. By following the following nine modes of worship (Navavidha Bhakti), you can develop Bhakti and attain God-realisation: Sravana (hearing the Lila of God); Kirtana (singing His praise); Smarana (remembering His Name); Padasevana (worshipping His Lotus Feet); Archana (offerings); Vandana (prostration); Dasya (service); Sakhya (friendship) and Atmanivedana (complete self-surrender). Study the Gita, the Ramayana and the Bhagavata. Have Satsanga. Visit holy places (Teertha-Yatra). Do Japa. Meditate. Sing His Name. You can develop Bhakti and have His Darsana.

8. Do you really want God? Do you really thirst for His Darsana? Have you got spiritual hunger? You may deliver thrilling lectures on Bhakti. You may write several volumes on Bhakti, and yet you may not possess a grain of true devotion. He who thirsts for Darsana of God will develop Bhakti. If there is sincere demand for God, then the supply will come. By regular, steady Sadhana may you attain Peace, Bliss, Knowledge, Perfection and God realisation!

9. The Name of God chanted in any way, correctly or incorrectly, knowingly or unknowingly, carefully or carelessly is sure to give the desired result. The Glory of the Name of God cannot be established through reasoning and intellect. It can certainly be experienced or realised only through devotion, faith and constant repetition of the Name. Every Name is filled with countless potencies or Saktis. The power of the Name is ineffable. Its glory is indescribable. The efficacy and inherent Sakti of the Name of God is unfathomable.

10. Just as fire has the natural property of burning inflammable things, so also the Name of God has the power of burning the sins, Samskaras and Vasanas and bestowing Eternal Bliss and everlasting peace on those who repeat the Name of the Lord. Just as burning quality is natural and inherent in fire, so also the power of destroying sins with their very root and branch and bringing the aspirant into blissful union with the Lord through Bhava-Samadhi is natural and inherent in the Name of God.

11. O man! Take refuge in the Name. Nami and Name are inseparable. Sing the Lord's Name incessantly. Remember the Name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. In this iron age Namasmarana or Japa is the easiest, quickest, safest and surest way to reach God and to attain Immortality and Perennial Joy. Glory to the Lord. Glory to His Name. Sing 'Hari Om,' 'Sri Ram,' 'Radheysyam,' 'Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.'

5. Pearl-drops of Prema

1. Every aspirant in the spiritual path becomes a victim to the mood of depression in the beginning of the Sadhana period. You will have to overcome this mood through discrimination, reflection, Vichara, singing Hari's Name, prayer, etc. This mood is like a passing cloud. You should not be unnecessarily alarmed. It will pass off soon if you are vigilant.

2. Do not mistake emotion for devotion. Whenever you get the mood of depression, sing Hari's Name vigorously by sitting alone in your room with a melting heart. You may sing silently. This is an easy method to drive away this undesirable mood.

3. Try to control wild outbursts of weeping. This is a weakness and negative state. But allow the pearl-drops of Divine thrill or ecstasy to trickle down occasionally when you are in a profound prayerful mood or meditative state.

4. Shed the precious tears of Divine Prema when you are alone, when you are in communion with the Lord. Do not weep in the presence of others. The rare pearl-drops of Divine Prema are the outcome of melting of the heart by the fire of devotion and the fire of Viraha or painful separation from the Lord. Many people develop a habit of weeping and tears flow on account of frequent irritation of lachrymal glands that secrete or manufacture the tears but not on account of devotion.

5. Sometimes man feigns to be a devotee and sheds false tears just to make his neighbours think that he is a great devotee and on account of sympathetic action his neighbours also begin to weep. You will witness a nice scene of a band of weeping people in a Sankirtan gathering but in the case of heart there will be not an iota of devotion. Devotion is a very rare gift from God. Weeping is not by itself a criterion to judge the devotional nature of a man or a woman. Do not mistake the crocodile tears of a hypocrite Bhakta for the genuine pearl-drops of Divine Prema which inspire and elevate the bystanders. One may not weep outwardly and yet he may be a genuine silent devotee.

6. Open the doors of your heart. Let the lightning spark of love arise in your heart. Let the love pierce you through and through. Let the heart sing to heart. Let your soul mix with the Supreme Soul. Let the heart-lotus blossom and waft its sweet Divine fragrance. Let the Divine thrill strike the strings of your heart. Let the tears flow now on your cheeks. Let the Divine ecstasy fill your whole being.

7. Lord Hari is an ocean of mercy. He has boundless love for His devotees. He is a purifier of the sinful and the fallen. He accepted even Ajamila and that fallen woman Pingala. He drove the chariot of Arjuna in the battlefield. He ran to save Draupadi and Gajendra. Though He is the master of the three worlds, He is a slave of His devotees.

8. Sit silent. Collect the dissipated rays of the mind. Become serene. Repeat God's Name: 'Hari Om' or 'Sri Ram' or 'Om Namah Sivaya.' Your happiness will know no bounds. God will dwell in your heart.

9. May Lord Narayana take you to His bosom and bathe you in the sacred waters of Divine Prema and transcendental Bliss!

6. How to Spend Your Holidays

1. In the whirlpool of fleeting sensual pleasures you have forgotten the purpose of life and goal. You live more for the body than for the soul. In your pursuit after the phantom shows of worldly vanities, you have annihilated the spiritual instincts and longings of the soul. What a sad state! Mysterious is Maya! Mysterious is Moha! Open your eyes now. Wake up from the long slumber of ignorance. Realise the ultimate Reality and enjoy eternal bliss.

2. Spiritual wealth is the real inexhaustible wealth. Spiritual knowledge is the real knowledge. Spiritual life is the real life. Aspire. Know the Self and be free. Regain the Divine Glory. Meditate and realise the Immortal Atman the Indweller of your heart, the Inner Ruler, the self-existent, self-contained, self-luminous imperishable Soul.

3. Raja Janaka realised his Self within the twinkling of an eye. Raja Khatwanga attained Self-realisation within a Muhurta or forty-eight minutes. Raja Parikshit achieved the final beatitude of life within a week. You can also have Self-realisation within a week if you thirst for God and if you apply yourself diligently to spiritual Sadhana in right earnest with the right attitude of mind.

4. Holidays are not meant for playing cards, idle gossiping, feasting, sight-seeing or aimless wandering. It is very difficult to get a human birth. The aim of life is to attain God-consciousness. Holidays must be well spent. Every second must be utilised in worship and meditation. Delay in Self-realisation is practical death. You have wasted already your life till now. Will you waste the remaining portion of your life also? Will you waste your holidays also? Now wake up. Gird up the loins. Whenever you get holidays start your Sadhana with zeal and enthusiasm and march direct to the goal.

5. Here is a daily routine for you. Follow this tenaciously with faith and earnestness. You can select a quiet solitary room for you in your own house. If you can conveniently manage, you can do your Anushtana either in Rishikesh, Prayag, Benares or Nasik or you can select any convenient place on the banks of Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada or Kaveri. You will have pure spiritual vibrations in these places. These vibrations will help a lot in your spiritual practices. The mind will enter into the meditative mood without any effort. You can put a small grass hut here. Live on milk and fruits. If you find it difficult to live on the regimen, you can take a little rice, vegetables, Dhal and bread. Live alone. Observe complete silence for a week. Shut yourself in the room. Plunge yourself in Japa and meditation. You can do Japa of either Om, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Hari Om, Sri Ram, Gayatri, according to your taste or temperament or repeat your Guru Mantra. Have sleep for three to four hours. You must get up at 3 or 4 a.m.

6. If you are not able to spend the whole time in Japa and meditation, you can combine Kirtan and study of religious books such as the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, the Upanishads, etc. Whenever the mind gets tired take to Kirtan for one or two hours. Then study religious books. Then write your Ishta Mantra in a notebook for one hour. This will be a sort of relaxation for the mind. Again sit for meditation. Then again have Kirtan, study of books and Mantra-writing. Rotate in this manner. Have as many sittings as you can. You will have good spiritual experiences.

7. Wake up from your long sleep of ignorance. Get knowledge of the Self. O wanderer in the quagmire of Samsara! Go back to your original abode of eternal peace the fountain of infinite Joy and power, the spring of boundless ecstasy, the source of life, the origin of light and love, the immortal blissful Brahmic seat of illimitable splendour and pristine glory. Fill the mind with thoughts of Self. Saturate your feelings with purity and divinity. Let the Light of lights shine in every hair on your body. Let the infinite Godhead vibrate in every cell of your body. Let every breath sing the song of infinity and eternity with Soham or Shyam or Ram!

8. On some holidays you can arrange for a Sankirtan Sammelan or Religious Conference. You can invite great men, Sadhus and Sannyasins for Kirtan and lectures. On such occasions feed the poor, Sadhus, Sannyasins, Mahatmas, Brahmins and students. Publish some leaflets and pamphlets on Bhakti, Yoga and Vedanta for free distribution. Thousands of people will take part and get spiritual benefits. This is a wonderful way of spending the holidays by which the whole city will be spiritually benefited.

7. Message to Retired People

This is a good practice for retired people. After retiring from service you should live for one or two months in Prayag or Rishikesh or in a solitary place on the banks of the Narmada or the Ganga or Yamuna where you can get Satsanga of Mahatmas. You should live alone. If you do not know how to cook your food, and if you can afford you can have a cook. Then only you can destroy Moha or attachment for your wife and children. Then only you can have good concentration and solid spiritual practice. You can return back to your home. Live now in a solitary place that is situated a mile away from your house. Construct a small Kutir. Ask your people to send the food to your place. Sometimes you can take your food in your house. Then again come back to the bank of the Ganga. By so doing you and your family people will be used to separation. They will not get any shock. Eventually you can stay in seclusion for any number of years without any difficulty. Do not write any letters to anybody when you are in seclusion. Spend the pension in charity. Plunge yourself in Japa, meditation, Kirtan and Pranayama. Draw a daily routine and stick to it tenaciously. Sri R.S.S., Mr. T.R.V. and others are following this plan. They have derived wonderful spiritual benefits.

O old man! What is the use of getting a human body if you do not utilise even the last portion of your life in divine contemplation, Bhajan or worship? It is very difficult to get a human body again. Wake up from the slumber of ignorance. Start this practice at once. Rejoice In Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman. Realise the Self and be free in this very birth!

8. A Dynamic Yoga

1. It is due to the veil of ignorance that you have forgotten your real essential nature, the Sat-Chit-Ananda state. It is not at all necessary for you to renounce the world and run to some Himalayan cave to regain your lost divinity. Here is an easy Sadhana by which you can definitely attain God-consciousness, even while living in the world amidst multifarious activities.

2. You need not necessarily have a separate Meditation Room or fix some time for meditation. Close your eyes for a minute or two once in every two hours and think of God and His various Divine qualities such as mercy, love, joy, knowledge, purity, perfection, and so forth during work, and mentally repeat: “Hari Om,” or “Sri Ram,” or “Ram Ram,” or any other Mantra according to your taste.

3. This should be done even during night whenever you happen to get up from bed to micturate or on any other account. Though you are not in the habit of getting up from sleep, you should do this practice at least occasionally when you slightly change your posture during sleep. This sort of habit will come only by repeated practice.

4. Feel all along that the body is a moving temple of God, your office or business house is a big temple or Vrindavan, and all activities such as walking, eating, breathing, seeing, hearing, reading, etc., are offerings unto the Lord. Work is worship. Work is meditation, when done in the right spirit.

5. Work for work’s sake without any motive without the idea of agency (I am the doer, I am the enjoyer), and without expectation of fruits. Feel that you are an instrument in the hands of God and that He works through your organs. Feel also that this world is a manifestation of the Lord or Visva Vrindavan and your children, wife, father, mother and other relations are the images or children of the Lord. See God in every face and in every object. If you develop this changed angle of vision and Divine Bhava by protracted and constant practice, all actions will become Puja or worship of the Lord. This is quite sufficient. You will have God-realisation soon. This is a dynamic Yoga. This is an easy Sadhana. Hereafter do not bring your old lame excuse: “Swamiji, I have no time to do spiritual practices.” Even if you practise this dynamic Yoga for three months, you will become an entirely changed being altogether. Realise right now your identity and intimate relationship with all beings, with ants and dogs, elephants and tigers, Muslims and Hindus, Jews and Christians. There is only a degree of difference in manifestation or expression. All forms belong to God or Saguna Brahman. When you look at a tree or a shrub, a Sikh or a Muslim, endeavour to behold behind the veil of form, the real hidden Consciousness. If you do this for some time, you will feel inexpressible Joy. All hatred will cease. You will develop Cosmic Love or unity of consciousness. This will be a magnanimous experience.

6. Write daily for half an hour in a notebook your Ishta Mantra observing Mouna and without turning to this side or that. Write down in bold types on slips of paper:

- * SPEAK THE TRUTH
- * OM COURAGE
- * OM PURITY

- * I MUST REALISE GOD NOW
- * TIME IS MOST PRECIOUS
- * I WILL BE A TRUE BRAHMACHARI
BRAHMACHARYA IS DIVINE LIFE
- * I AM AN EMBODIMENT OF COURAGE,
PURITY, MERCY, LOVE AND PATIENCE

and fix them in the bed room, dining hall, front room and verandahs. Keep some slips in your pocket and diary also. This is an easy way for developing virtuous divine qualities.

7. Here are some Mantras, formulae, for effecting ungrudging and total self-surrender. Repeat them mentally several times daily with Bhava: "O Lord, I am Thine, All is Thine. Thy Will be done. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything." This practice will remove egoism and mineness and the idea of agency also.

9. Way to Bliss

1. God is the dispeller of ignorance, sorrow and fear. He is the bestower of Eternal Happiness. Know Him. He ever dwelleth in thee.

2. Cultivate a very strong faith in God. Faith is the gateway to God. Faith can work wonders.

3. Put your heart, mind, intellect and soul even in your smallest act. This is the secret of success.

4. Be temperate in eating, drinking, sleeping, amusing and in all other things.

5. Follow the correct principles of living. Strive for health, strength, success and God-realisation.

6. Give. Give. Give. Give freely and spontaneously. Give everything. Here lies the secret of abundance.

7. Always act with faith and determination. Be firm in your resolve and fiery in your determination. Have an iron will.

8. Let bygones be bygones. Let the past be buried. There is a brilliant future for you. Exert. Exert. Exert.

9. Be always cheerful and smile away your worries. Develop your will by eradicating desires, egoism and hatred.

10. Sensual indulgence leads you to destruction. Renunciation leads to Immortality. Give up clinging and attachment.

11. Right thoughts make right deeds, right actions and an admirable character. Therefore develop right thinking.

12. Keep the reason pure. Free yourself from egoistic notions. Destroy I-ness and mine-ness. Attain liberation. Be free. Enjoy Bliss.

13. Serve. Love. Give. Restrain (the Indriyas and mind). Be good. Do good. Be kind. Be pure. Be patient.

14. Grow. Expand. Evolve. Destroy separateness. Mix with all. Develop cosmic love. Become selfless.

15. Be vigilant and diligent. Watch and pray. Fast and meditate. Persevere. Destroy fear, worry and anxiety.

16. Serve Sadhus. Have Satsanga. Sing the Names of the Lord. Live in seclusion for a month. Live on milk and fruits. Meditate.

17. “Who am I? What is Samsara? What is Brahman? What is bondage? What is freedom? What is Maya? What is Avidya?” Do Vichara.

18. Become dispassionate. Calm the mind. Have a one-pointed and a balanced state of mind always.

19. Embrace spirituality. Practise purity. Do charity. Develop nobility. Cultivate magnanimity. Attain Divinity.

20. Have purification. Do concentration. Cultivate reflection. Practise meditation. Achieve perfection.

CHAPTER II

IMPORTANCE OF BRAHMACHARYA

1. What Is Brahmacharya?

1. It is only within recent years, practically the last forty, that the scientific attention has been brought to bear upon the subject of the nature and evolution of the sexual impulse in man. Psychologists and clinical students have made careful investigations into the phenomena of normal and abnormal sexual life among the civilised populations of the present day.

2. The close connection of the subject of sex with religion, both in social evolution and individual psychology, renders the study of chastity an extremely important chapter in the past and future sociology of the race.

3. The gratification of every worldly desire is sinful. Man was created for a life of spiritual communion with God. Moral goodness consists in renouncing all sensuous pleasures, in separating from the world, in living solely after the spirit, in imitating the perfection and purity of God. Sensuality is inconsistent with wisdom and holiness. The great business of life is to avoid impurity.

4. Man has degraded himself to a great degree by becoming a puppet of passion. He has become an imitative machine. He has lost his power of discrimination. He has sunk into the most abject form of slavery. What a sad state! What a lamentable plight indeed! If he wishes to regain his lost divine state and Brahmic glory, his whole being must be completely transmuted by entertaining sublime divine thoughts and practice of regular meditation. Transmutation of sex-desire is a very potent, efficacious and satisfactory way to realise eternal Bliss.

5. Brahmacharya is the vow of celibacy in thought, word and deed, by which one attains Self-realisation or reaches Brahman. It means control of not only the reproductive Indriya but also control of all senses in thought, word and deed. The door to Nirvana or perfection is complete Brahmacharya. Complete celibacy is the master-key to open the realms of elysian Bliss. The avenue to the abode of Supreme Peace begins from Brahmacharya or purity.

6. “Rasad raktam tato mamsam mamsanmedhah prajayate; Medasosthi tato majja majjayah sukrasambhavah—from food comes juice or chyle, from chyle blood, from blood flesh, from flesh fat, from fat bones, from bones marrow and lastly from marrow semen.” Semen is the quintessence of food or blood. One drop of semen is manufactured out of 40 drops of blood according to the medical science. According to Ayurveda it is elaborated out of 80 drops of blood. Just as sugar is all-pervading in the sugar-cane, butter in milk, so also semen is pervading the whole body. Just as the butter-milk is thin after butter is removed, so also semen is thinned by its wastage. The more the wastage of semen the more is the weakness. In Yoga Sastras it is said: “Maranam bindupatanat jivanam bindu-rakshanat—falling of semen brings death; preservation of semen gives life.” Semen is the real vitality in man. It is the hidden treasure for man. It imparts Brahma-Tejas to the face and strength to the intellect.

7. If the spermatic secretion in men is continuous, it must either be expelled or reabsorbed. As a result of the most patient and persevering scientific investigations, whenever the seminal secretions are conserved and thereby reabsorbed into the system, it goes towards enriching the blood and strengthening the brain. Dr. Dio Louis taught that the conservation of this element is essential to the strength of body, vigour of mind and keenness of intellect. Another writer Dr. E.P. Miller writes: “All waste of spermatic secretions, whether voluntary or involuntary, is a direct waste of life-force. It is almost universally conceded that the choicest element of the blood enters into the composition of the spermatic secretion. If these conclusions are correct then it follows that a chaste life is essential to man’s well-being.”

2. Glory of Brahmacharya

1. Abstinence or continence is the corner-stone or foundation on which the pedestal of Moksha stands. If the foundation is not very strong, the superstructure will fall down when there is heavy rain. Even so if you are not established in Brahmacharya, if your mind is agitated by evil

thoughts, you will fall down. You cannot reach the summit of the ladder of Yoga or the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

2. “Brahmacharyena tapasa deva mrityumupaghnata—The Vedas declare that by Brahmacharya and penance the Devas have conquered death.” How did Hanuman become a Mahavir? It is with this weapon of Brahmacharya that he acquired unsurpassable strength and valour. The great Bhishma, the grandfather of Pandavas and Kauravas conquered death by Brahmacharya. It is only Lakshmana, the ideal Brahmachari who put down the man of inestimable prowess, the conqueror of three worlds, Meghanada, son of Ravana. Even Lord Rama could not face him. It is through the force of Brahmacharya that Lakshmana was able to defeat the invincible Meghanada. The valour and greatness of emperor Prithviraj was due to the strength of Brahmacharya. There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be attained by a Brahmachari. The Rishis of yore knew fully well of the value of Brahmacharya and that is the reason why they have sung in beautiful verses about the glory of Brahmacharya.

3. The Srutis declare: “Naayam Atma balaheenena labhyah—This Atman is not attainable by a weak man.” In the Gita you will find: “Yadichhanto brahmacharyam charanti—That desiring which Brahmacharya is performed” (Chap. VIII-11). “Trividham narakasyedam dvaram nasanamatmanah; kamah krodhastatha lobhastasmad etat trayam tyajet—O Arjuna! Triple is the gate of the hell, destructive of the Self; lust, wrath and greed: therefore let man renounce these three” (Chap. XVI-21). “Jahi satrum mahabaho kamarupam durasadam—Kill this powerful enemy, passion, by the observance of Brahmacharya” (Chap. III-43).

4. Just as the oil come in a wick burns with glowing light so also the Veerya or semen flows up by the practice of Yoga Sadhana and is converted into Tejas or Ojas. The Brahmachari shines with Brahmic Aura in his face. Brahmacharya is the bright light that shines in the house of human body. It is the fully-blossomed flower of life around which the bees of strength, patience, knowledge and purity and Dhriti wander about humming hither and thither. In other words he who observes Brahmacharya will be endowed with the above qualities. Scriptures declare emphatically: “Ayustejo balam veeryam vidya shrih kirtireva cha; punyam cha satpriyatvam cha vardhate brahmacharyaya—By the practice of Brahmacharya, longevity, glory, strength, vigour, knowledge, wealth, undying fame, virtues and devotion to Truth increase.”

5. Brahmacharya is the basis for the attainment of Kaya Siddhi. Complete celibacy must be observed. This is of paramount importance. By the practice of Yoga the semen becomes transmuted into Ojas-Sakti. The Yogi will have a perfect body. There will be charm and grace in his movements. He can live as long as he likes (Iccha Mrityu). That is the reason why Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: “Tasmat yogee bhava Arjuna—Therefore, become a Yogi, O Arjuna.”

6. Women who are chaste can be called as Brahmacharinis. Through the force of Brahmacharya only, many women of yore have done miraculous deeds and shown to the world the power of chastity. Nalayani, by the power of chastity has stopped the rising of the sun to save her husband's life. Anasuya has turned the Trimurtis—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara as babies when they wanted Nirvana Bhiksha. It is through the power of chastity only, she was able to turn the Great Deities as babies. Savitri has brought back the life of Satyavan, her husband, from the noose of Yama by her chastity. Such is the glory of womanhood. Such is the power of chastity or

Brahmacharya. Women who lead a householder's life with chastity can also become an Anasuya, Nalayani or Savitri.

7. Real culture is establishment of perfect physical and mental Brahmacharya. Real culture is the realisation of identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul through direct experience. For a passionate worldly minded man the terms: 'Self-realisation,' 'God, Self Vairagya, renunciation, death, burial ground,' are very revolting and terrifying, because he is attached to objects. The term singing, dancing, talks of ladies are very pleasing. The attraction for objects will gradually vanish if one begins to think seriously of the unreal nature of the world.

8. If one clearly understands the serious damages that come through an impure life and if he determines to attain the goal of life by leading a pure life, he must keep his mind busily engaged in Divine thoughts, concentration, meditation, study and service of humanity.

3. Power of Lust

1. Bhartrihari says: "For food, I have what begging brings and that too tasteless and once a day; for bed, the earth; and for attendant, the body itself; for dress, I have worn out blanket made up of hundred patches; still alas! lust does not leave me."

2. A gentleman who had given up smoking, drinking, though married, wants to practice Brahmacharya. His wife has no objection, but he himself finds hard this discipline, especially the trouble seems to be in the control of sight. "The street is my chief enemy," he said to me recently. This means that the eyes are attracted to well-dressed ladies. An aspirant says: "While I practiced vigorously Pranayama, Japa and meditation, my mind was not polluted even if I saw half-nude young ladies. But when I left the practice I was not able to control my sight and I was attracted by well-dressed ladies in the streets and half-nude pictures that are pasted in front of picture houses. The sea beach and Mall Road are my enemies."

3. Jerome writes to the virgin Eustochium about his struggle for abstinence and the power of lust: "Oh, how many times when in the desert, in the vast solitude which, burnt by heat of the sun, offers but a horrible dwelling to monks, I imagined among the delights of Rome: I was alone. My limbs were covered by a wretched sack, and my skin as black as an Ethiopian's. Every day I wept and groaned, and if I was unwillingly overcome by sleep, my lean body lay on the bare earth. I say nothing of my food and drink, for in the desert even invalids had no drink but cold water. Well, I who out of fear of hell had condemned myself to this prison, companion of scorpions and wild beasts, often seemed in imagination among a band of girls. My face was pale with fasting; my mind within my frigid body was burning with desire; the fire of lust would still flame up in a body that already seemed to be dead." Such is the power of lust.

4. There is no hope for you to have Self-realisation or knowledge of the Self if you are not well established in Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the master-key to open the realms of eternal bliss. Brahmacharya is the very foundation of Yoga. Just as a house that is built on a rotten foundation will surely fall down, so also you will fall down from your meditation if you have laid no proper foundation, viz., the attainment of perfect Brahmacharya. You may meditate for a period of twelve years and yet you will have no success in Samadhi if you have not destroyed the subtle lust

or the craving-seed that lingers in the innermost recess of your heart. You will have to search out carefully this dire enemy — lust, that lies hidden in the various corners of your heart. Just as the fox hides itself in the bush, so also this lust hides itself in the substratum and corners of the mind. You can detect its presence only if you are vigilant. Intense self-examination is very necessary. Just as powerful enemies can be conquered only if you attack them from all sides, so also you can keep the powerful senses under control if you attack them from all sides, from within and without, from above and from beneath.

5. You must not labour under the delusion that you have eradicated the lust completely by adjusting the diet a bit, by practicing Pranayama and by doing a little Japa, and that you have nothing more to do. Temptation or Mara may overcome you at any moment. Eternal vigilance and rigorous Sadhana are very essential. You cannot attain perfect Brahmacharya by limited effort. Just as a machine gun is necessary to kill a powerful enemy, so also constant, rigorous, powerful Sadhana is necessary to annihilate this powerful enemy, lust. You must not be puffed up with pride for your little achievement in celibacy. If you are put to test you will hopelessly fail. You must be ever conscious of your shortcomings and you must constantly strive to get rid of them. Highest effort is necessary. Then only you will have sanguine success in this direction.

6. It is easy to tame a wild tiger or a lion or an elephant. It is easy to play with the cobra. It is easy to walk over the fire. It is easy to devour fire and drink the waters of ocean. It is easy to uproot the Himalayas. It is easy to get victory in the battlefield. But it is difficult to eradicate lust. But you need not despair even a bit. Have faith in God, in His Name and in His grace. Lust cannot be completely rooted out of the mind except by the grace of the Lord. You are bound to succeed if you have faith in Him. You can destroy lust in the twinkling of an eye. The Lord makes a dumb man to speak and a lame man to ascend a steep hill. Mere human effort alone will not suffice. The Divine Grace is needed. God helps those who help themselves. If you do total self-surrender, Mother Herself does the Sadhana. Regular meditation and Japa of Mantra, Sattvic diet, Satsanga, practice of Pranayama, Sirsha and Sarvanga Asanas, study of religious books, Vichara or enquiry into the nature of Atman or 'who am I,' seclusion for three months on the banks of any holy river, will entirely annihilate lust, however powerful the old Samskaras and Vasanas may be. Positive always overcomes negative. You need not be discouraged at any rate. Plunge yourself seriously in meditation, kill Mara and come out victorious in the struggle. Shine as a brilliant Yogi. Thou art ever pure Atman. Feel this, O Visvaranjan!

4. How to Keep Up Brahmacharya

1. A Brahmachari should avoid looking at a woman with lustful eyes. He should not have a desire to touch her or go near her with evil intention. He should not play, cut jokes or talk with her. He should not praise a woman's qualities within himself or to his friends. He should not talk to her secretly. He should not think of a lady. He should not have a carnal desire to have sexual enjoyment. A Brahmachari should, without fail, avoid sexual intercourse. If he breaks any of the above rules, he violates the vow of Brahmacharya.

2. For protecting the semen, it is essential to wear always a strip of (black-coloured) cloth over the private part; for there will be no night emission and growth of testicles. It is befitting for a

celibate to wear always wooden sandals as thereby the semen will be conserved, eyes will be benefited, life prolonged and holiness and lustre will increase.

3. The vow of celibacy will give you sure protection against temptation. It is a strong weapon to attack lust. If you do not take a vow of celibacy, the mind will tempt you at any moment. You will have no strength to resist the temptation and you will become a sure victim. He who is weak and effeminate is afraid of taking the vow. He brings in various excuses and says: "Why should I be bound by a vow? My will is strong and powerful. I can resist any sort of temptation. I am doing Upasana. I am practicing will culture." He repents in the long run. He has no control over the senses. That man only in whom the subtle desire for the object to be renounced lurks in the corners of his mind brings in such sort of excuses. You must have right understanding, discrimination and dispassion. Then only your renunciation will be lasting and permanent. If renunciation is not the outcome of discrimination and dispassion the mind will be simply waiting for an opportunity to get back the object that has been renounced.

4. If you are weak, take a vow of celibacy for a month and then extend it to three months. You will gain some strength now. You will be able to prolong the period to six months. Gradually you will be able to extend the vow for one or two or three years. Sleep separately and do rigorous Japa, Kirtan and meditation daily. You will hate lust now. You experience freedom and indescribable joy. Your partner in life also should do Japa, meditation and Kirtan daily.

5. You may be able to stop copulation for months and years, but there should not be any sexual craving or attraction for ladies. Evil thoughts also should not arise when you look at a lady, when you are in the company of ladies. If you succeed in this direction, then you are established in perfect Brahmacharya. You have crossed the danger zone. There is no harm in looking at a woman, but you must have a chaste look. You must have Atma Bhava. When you look at a young lady you can think within yourself: "Prostrations unto thee, O mother. Thou art an image or manifestation of Mother Kali. Do not tempt me. Do not allure me. I have understood now the secret of Maya and Her creation. Who has created these forms? There is an omnipotent, all-pervading and all-merciful Creator behind these names and forms. This is all decaying false beauty. The Creator or God is Beauty of beauties. He is an embodiment of undecaying beauty. He is fountain-head of beauty. Let me realise this Beauty of beauties by meditation." You will have to cultivate feelings of devotion, admiration and awe when you look at a beautiful form by remembering the Creator of this form. Then you will not be tempted. If you are a student of Vedanta, think and feel: "Everything is Self only. The names and forms are illusory. They are Mayaic pictures. They have no independent existence apart from the Self."

6. Aspirants should not indulge in talk about ladies. They should not think about ladies. Bring the image or your Ishta Devata in your mind, if thought of a lady crops up. Repeat the Mantra vigorously. If sexual feelings arise in your mind when you look at the mating of animals and birds or at the bare bodies of ladies it indicates that lust is still lurking in your mind.

7. Even advanced aspirants who have made great progress in Yoga should be very careful. They should not mix freely with ladies. They should not foolishly imagine that they have become great adepts in Yoga. A great saint of repute had a downfall. He freely mixed with ladies made lady disciples and allowed them to shampoo his legs. As the sex-energy was not completely sublimated

and turned into Ojas, as lust was lurking in a subtle form in his mind, he became a victim. He lost his reputation. The sexual desire was only suppressed in him and when a suitable opportunity came, it again assumed grave form. He had no strength or will-power to resist the temptation.

8. Another great soul who was regarded by his disciples as an Avatara became a Yoga-bhrashta. He also freely mixed with ladies and committed serious crimes. He became a prey to lust. What a sad misfortune! Aspirants climb with great difficulty by the ladder of Yoga and they are irrecoverably lost for ever on account of their carelessness and spiritual pride.

9. Remembrance of the skeleton and dead body of a woman, will induce Vairagya in your mind. The body has come out of the filthy discharge. It is full of impurities. In the end it is reduced into ashes. If you remember this, Vairagya will dawn in your mind. Attraction for ladies will gradually vanish. If you place before your mind the sickly figure of a lady, or the picture of a very old lady you will develop Vairagya. Remember pains of Samsara, the unreality of objects and the bondage that comes from attachment to wife and children. Try any method that suits you best.

10. One should try to get Viveka or discrimination between the real Self and the unreal, impure body. He should hammer the mind and point out to the mind the defects of a sexual life, viz., loss of energy, innovation of senses, disease, birth and death, attachment and various sorts of miseries, etc., the parts of the body of a woman, viz., flesh, blood, bone, excrete, urine, pus, phlegm, etc. He should always think of the ever-pure immortal Atman and the glory of the spiritual life, viz., the attainment of immortality, eternal bliss, supreme peace. Gradually the mind will be weaned from looking at a woman however beautiful she might be. The mind will shudder to look at her with evil thought.

11. An aspirant complains: "As I continue meditation. layer after layer of impurities are rising from the subconscious mind. Sometimes they are so strong and formidable that I am bewildered as to how to check them. I am not perfectly established in truth and Brahmacharya. The old habits of speaking lies and lust are still lurking in me. Lust is troubling me vigorously. The very idea of women agitates my mind. My mind is so sensitive that I am not able to hear or think of them. As soon as the thought comes in the mind, my Sadhana gets disturbed and also the peace of the whole day is spoiled. I advise my mind, coax it, frighten it, but it is of no avail. My mind revolts. I do not know how to control this passion. Irritability, egoism, anger, greed, hatred, attachment, etc., are still lurking in me. Lust is my chief enemy and it is a very strong one too. I request you to be kind enough to advise as to how to destroy the same."

12. When the impurities emerge from the subconscious mind and come to the surface of the conscious mind with formidable force, do not try to resist them. Repeat your Ishta Mantra. Do not think of your defects or evil qualities much. It is enough if you introspect and find out your defects. Do not try to attack the evil qualities. Then they will show their long faces. Do not worry yourself often: "I have got so many defects and weaknesses." Cultivate Sattvic virtues. Through meditation and by the development of positive qualities, through Pratipaksha Bhavana method all the negative qualities will die of themselves. This is the right method.

13. Passion will subside by protracted Japa and meditation and Chintana on Atman. Do not try to run away from ladies. Then Maya will chase you terribly. Try to see the Self in all forms and

repeat the formula 'Om Eka Satchidananda Atma' often. Remember that the Atman is sexless. Mental repetition of this formula will give you strength.

14. You should remain far away from ladies in the beginning of your practice. After you are perfectly moulded and well-established in Brahmacharya, you should test your strength by moving with ladies very cautiously for some time. If your mind is very pure now also, if there is no sex-idea, if the mind ceases to act through the practice of Uparati, Sama and Dama, remember you have gained real spiritual strength and made considerable progress in your Sadhana. You are safe now. You should not stop your Sadhana thinking that you are a Jitendriya Yogi. If you stop it you will have a hopeless fall. Even if you are a Jivanmukta and a dynamic Yogi, you should be very careful when you move with worldly persons.

15. Thirsty aspirants who are treading the path of Self-realisation who are householders and forty years of age should give up contact with the partners in life. They should observe perfect physical Brahmacharya, if they want rapid spiritual progress and Self-realisation in this very birth. There are no half way measures in the spiritual path.

5. Mental Discipline (Bhava)

1. It is the mind that really does all actions. A desire arises in your mind and then you think. Then you proceed to act. The determination of the mind is put into action. First there is Sankalpa or thought and then comes action. Therefore do not allow the sexual thoughts to enter the mind. No space is empty at any time. This is the law of nature. If one thing is removed from a place immediately another comes to fill its place. The same law holds good in the case of the inner mental world also. Therefore it is necessary to entertain sublime divine thoughts to replace evil thoughts. As you think, so you become. This is the immutable psychological law. The vicious mind is gradually divinised by entertaining divine thoughts.

2. Vasanas grow from lustful look. You have no lustful look when you see your mother or sister although they are well-dressed and decorated with ornaments and flowers. You look at them with affection and pure love. This is Suddha Bhavana. There are no lustful ideas. You will have to develop such a pure love or Bhavana when you look at other ladies also. Looking at a woman with lustful heart is tantamount to sexual enjoyment. It is one form of Maithuna. That is the reason why Lord Jesus says: "If you look at a woman with lustful heart, you have already committed adultery in your hearts." Though the first seven kinds of Maithuna do not cause the actual loss of semen, yet the semen is separated from the blood and tries to escape when opportunity comes either in dreams or in other ways. In the first seven kinds man enjoys mentally.

3. You should have the Bhava that ladies are manifestations of World Mother. They should be adored. This practice is for a beginner in the spiritual path. Later he should develop the Atma Bhava, i.e., that everything is Self. Otherwise he will begin to hate ladies and will not develop cosmic love. The above mental picture is kept up to annihilate lust. It is a mental discipline.

4. When you are in the company of ladies, try to identify yourself with the sexless, all-pervading Soul. Constantly make the endeavour. The sex-idea will gradually vanish and with it the attraction and lust also.

5. You should entertain the mother Bhava or Isvari Bhava or Atma Bhava towards women. Sister Bhava will not suffice. You may fail. Ladies also should entertain Pitru Bhava or Isvara Bhava or Atma Bhava towards males. Enquire 'who am I?' There is no lust in the sexless Atman.

6. One student writes to me "The impure flesh and skin appears to me as very pure and good. I am very lustful. I try to develop the Bhava of mother. I prostrate before a lady mentally, thinking that she is an image of Goddess Kaali and yet my mind is externally lustful. What shall I do now? I want to have a glimpse of a beautiful lady." Obviously Vairagya and discrimination have not dawned in his mind. The old vicious Samskaras and Vasanas are very powerful.

7. The cultivation of the Bhava is very difficult. You may fail to develop the Bhava that all women are your mothers and sisters one hundred and one times. It does not matter. Stick to your practice tenaciously. You are bound to succeed eventually. You will have to destroy the old mind and build a new mind. But you will have to do it if you want to attain immortality and eternal bliss. You will surely succeed if you are fiery in your resolve and if you have iron determination. The Bhava will gradually manifest by constant practice. You will be soon established in that Bhava. Now you are safe.

8. The mind will again try to do some mischief inwardly. It is very diplomatic. It is very difficult to find out its ways and secret underground operations. It demands subtle intellect and careful repeated introspection and vigilant watch. Whenever the mental image of a lady crops up in your mind with evil thoughts, repeat mentally: "Om Durga Devyai Namah," and do mental prostration. Gradually old evil thoughts will die. Whenever you see any lady entertain this Bhava and repeat mentally this Mantra. Your Drishti or look will become chaste. All ladies are manifestations of World Mother. I wish, you practice the same Sadhana with your wife also. Make mental prostration and repeat the same Mantra mentally. You must give up the idea of wife. It is high time now. Then you will have quick progress in spirituality. You must become a perfect Brahmachari now. She also must observe fast on Ekadasi. Do not say now: "Swamiji, What will I do? I am a householder." This is a lame excuse. How long do you want to remain as a passionate householder? Is it till the end of life? Is there not a nobler mission in life than eating and sleeping? Do you not want to enjoy the eternal bliss of the Self? You have tasted enough of the mundane pleasures. You have passed the stage of a householder. I can excuse you if you are a young man, but not now. As soon as a son or daughter is born, the wife becomes your mother, because you yourself are born as a son or a daughter. Now get ready for the stage of Vanaprastha and mental Sannyasa while remaining in the world. Colour your heart first. This will be a noble life indeed. Prepare yourself. Discipline the mind. Real Sannyasa is mental non-attachment. Real Sannyasa is destruction of Vasanas, 'I-ness,' 'mine-ness', selfishness and Moha for children, body, wife and property. You need not retire into the Himalayan caves. Attain the above state of mind. Live in the world with family and children amidst peace and aplenty. Be in the world, but be out of the world. Give up worldliness. This is real Sannyasa. This is what I really want. Then you will become a King of kings. I am shouting at the top of my voice like this for many years. But only a few persons follow my teaching.

9. Thou art very dear to me, O Krishna, because thou art treading the path of Truth. Thou art sincerely struggling. Thou art on the path of Self-realisation too. Hence I am giving you this advice.

6. Sadhana for Success in Brahmacharya

1. Brahmacharya is freedom from sexual thoughts and desires. It is control of all Indriyas in thought, word and deed. It is for both men and women. Bhishma, Hanuman, Lakshmana, Mira Bai, Sulabha, Gargi are all Brahmacharins. Sri Sankara says: “Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of all penances. Such a celibate is God indeed.”

2. Through Brahmacharya get over the miseries of mundane life and attain health, strength, peace of mind, endurance, bravery, material progress, psychic advancement, clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory, abundant energy, power to face difficulties in daily battle of life and Immortality. One who has perfect control over sexual energy attains powers unattainable by any other means.

3. By the practice of Siddhasana, Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Mula Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha, Maha Mudra, Yoga Mudra, Nauli, etc., a Hatha Yogi transmutes his seminal energy into Ojas-Sakti. By the practice of Navavidha Bhakti (Sravana, Kirtana, Smarana, Padasevana, Archana, Vandana, Sakhya, Dasya, Atmanivedana) and Japa, a Bhakta destroys the impurity of his mind and fixes it on God.

4. By the practice of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana, a Raja Yogi conquers lust and attains Kaivalya. A Jnana Yogi becomes pure by Viveka, Vairagya, Vichara, Sama, Dama and Titiksha. Constantly think of the sexless Atman. Destroy the sexual Vasana. See Atman in all. Reject the names and forms and take the underlying Essence—Sat-chit-ananda.

5. Anything that brings impure thoughts in the mind is bad company. Fly away from the worldly-minded persons. You will be far away from the danger zone. The magnetic aura and powerful thought-currents of developed adepts produce a tremendous influence on the minds of lustful people. Have constant Satsanga.

6. Give proper attention to food. Have Mitahara. Take Sattvic food. Pungent articles, garlic, onions, meat, fish, alcohol. etc., kindle passion. Fasting checks passion, calms emotions, controls Indriyas and helps Brahmacharya. Avoid long fasts.

7 Remember the pains of Samsara. Think of the component parts of body, viz., flesh, bone, blood, excreta, urine pus, etc. Have a strong desire for liberation. This will decidedly help you to destroy lust. Develop ‘Mother’ Bhava towards all ladies.

8. Have cold hip bath. Get up at 4 a.m. Do not think of a lady. Do not look at a lady. Avert the sexual thoughts by sublime Divine thoughts. Keep the mind fully occupied. Render your will pure, strong, irresistible. When once the Veerya is lost, it can never be recouped by taking any amount of Badam, nervine tonics, milk, cheese, etc. Veerya, when preserved, serves as a master-key to open the realms of Divine Bliss and to obtain all sorts of higher achievements in life.

9. Constantly remember: “Through the Grace of God, I am becoming purer and purer every day, in every way.” “Pleasures come but not to stay. Mortal flesh is only clay. Everything will pass away. Brahmacharya is the only way.”

7. Garland of Brahmacharya

1. Brahmacharya is abstaining from all kinds of Maithuna or sexual enjoyment forever, in all places and in all conditions, physically, mentally and verbally.

—Yajnavalkya

2. Thinking of a woman or her picture, praising a woman or her picture, sporting with a woman or her picture, glancing at a woman or her picture, secretly talking to a woman, thinking of a sinful action towards a woman actuated by sensuality, determining upon the sinful action, and bodily action resulting in the discharge of semen are the eight characteristics of copulation; and Brahmacharya is quite contrary to all these eight indications.

—Daksha Smriti

3. Know that in this world there is nothing that cannot be attained by one who remains from birth to death a perfect celibate. In one person, knowledge of the four Vedas, and in another, perfect celibacy—of these, the latter is superior to the former who is wanting in celibacy.

—The Mahabharata

4. Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of all penances; a celibate of such spotless chastity is not a human being, but a god indeed. To the celibate who conserves the semen with great efforts, what is there unattainable in this world? By the power of the composure of the semen, one will become just like myself.

—Lord Sankara

5. And those students who find that world of God through chastity, theirs is that heavenly country; theirs, in whatever world they are, is freedom.

—Chhandogya Upanishad

6. A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coals. From the contact comes sensation, from sensation thirst, from thirst clinging; by ceasing from that, the soul is delivered from all sinful existence.

—Lord Buddha

7. These sexual propensities, though they are at first like ripples, acquire the proportions of a sea on account of bad company.

—Narada

8. Sensuality destroys life, lustre, strength, vitality, memory, wealth, great fame, holiness and devotion to the Supreme.

—Lord Krishna

9. Death is hastened by letting out semen from the body; life is saved and prolonged by preserving it.

10. There is no doubt that people die prematurely by letting the semen out of the body; knowing this, the Yogi should always preserve semen and lead a life of strict celibacy.

—Siva Samhita

11. Caution in diet is of threefold value, but abstinence from sexual intercourse is of fourfold value. The Sannyasi had, and has, a rule never to look at a woman.

—Atreya

12. Let not a Brahmin see a woman naked.

—Manu

CHAPTER III

YOGA OF RIGHT CONDUCT

1. Sadachara

1. Ethics or ethical science treats about Sadachara or right conduct, morality or duty. Ethics is the science of morals, that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human character and conduct.

2. Conduct is behaviour. Deportment, carriage, demeanour, conduct, behaviour are synonymous terms. The way in which rational beings should behave towards each other as well as towards other creatures is dealt with in the science of morals or ethics.

3. To speak the truth; to practice Ahimsa; not to hurt the feelings of others in thought, word and deed; not to speak harsh words to anyone; not to show anger towards anybody; not to abuse others or speak ill of others and to see God in all beings is Sadachara. If you abuse anyone, if you hurt the feelings of others, really you are abusing yourself and hurting the feelings of God only. Himsa (injuring) is a deadly enemy of Bhakti and Jnana. It separates and divides. It stands in the way of realising unity or oneness of Self.

4. That act or exertion which does not do good to others, or that act for which one has to feel shame should never be done. That act on the other hand, should be done for which one may be lauded in Society. This is a brief description of what right conduct is.

5. Lord Manu says in the Smriti: “Achara (good conduct) is the highest Dharma, declared by the Sruti and by the Smriti. Thus beholding the path of Dharma issue from Achara, the sages embrace Achara as the root of all Tapas.”

6. Righteousness, Truth, good works, power and prosperity all originate from conduct. You will find in the Mahabharata: “The mark of Dharma is Achara (good conduct). Achara is the mark

of good. Higher than all teaching is Achara. From Achara, Dharma is born, and Dharma enhances the life. By Achara man attains life; by Achara he attains prosperity; by Achara he attains fair fame, here and hereafter. He who is the friend of all beings, he who is intent on the welfare of all with act, thought and speech—he only knoweth Dharma.”

7. Dharma is extremely subtle (Ati Sukshma) intricate and complex. Even sages are perplexed. Dharma gives wealth, satisfaction of desires and liberation in the end. Dharma tops the list of the four Purusharthas, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Dharma is generally termed as duty, righteousness, etc. Any action that is best calculated to bring Sreyas (Moksha) is Dharma. That which brings well-being to human beings is Dharma.

8. All that is free from any motive of injury to any being is surely morality. For, indeed the moral precepts have been made to free the creatures from all injuries. Dharma is so called because it protects all. Indeed morality saves all creatures.

9. The conduct is the root of prosperity. Conduct increases fame. It is conduct which prolongs life. It is conduct which destroys all calamities and evils. Conduct has been said to be superior to all the branches of knowledge.

10. It is by conduct that one acquires a long life, and is by conduct that one acquires riches and prosperity. It is a means to attain the goal of life. Without good conduct no one can achieve the goal. Good conduct brings in fame, longevity, wealth and happiness. It eventually leads to Moksha. It is conduct that begets virtue, and it is virtue which prolongs life. Conduct gives fame, long life and heaven. Conduct is the most efficacious rite of propitiating the celestials.

11. The good and virtuous are so on account of the conduct they follow. The marks, again of good conduct are afforded by the deeds of those that are good or righteous. Indeed, it is by conduct that one acquires the fame that depends upon great deeds both in this world and in the next. For sooth, one may, by his conduct alone, conquer the three worlds. There is nothing which virtuous persons cannot obtain. A person of good deeds and good, pleasant and sweet speech has no peer. People regard that man who acts righteously and who does good acts even if they only hear of him without actually seeing him.

12. The man whose conduct is improper or wicked never acquires a long life. All creatures fear such a man and are oppressed by him. If therefore one wishes his own advancement and prosperity, one should in this world, follow the path of righteousness and conduct himself properly. Good conduct succeeds in removing the inauspiciousness and misery of even one who is sinful.

13. The man of right conduct has ideals, principles and mottoes. He strictly follows them, removes his weaknesses and defects and develops good conduct and becomes a Sattvic man. He is very careful in behaving with his elders, parents, teachers, Acharyas, sisters, brothers, friends, relatives, strangers and others. He attempts to know what is right and wrong, by approaching Sadhus and Mahatmas and by studying scriptures very carefully and then treads the path of righteousness or Dharma.

14. The man of right conduct always cares for the welfare of all beings. He lives in harmony with the neighbours and all people. He never hurts the feelings of others, never speaks lies. He practices Brahmacharya. He checks the evil tendencies of the mind and prepares himself through the practice of right conduct to attain the Bliss of union with Paramatman.

15. An aspirant went to Veda Vyasa and said: “O Maharshi, Avatara of Vishnu, I am in a dilemma. I cannot properly comprehend the right significance of the term ‘Dharma.’ Some say it is right conduct. Others say that which leads to Moksha and happiness is Dharma. Anything, any action that brings you down is Adharma. Lord Krishna says: ‘Even sages are puzzled to understand perfectly what is Dharma, what is Adharma. Gahana karmano gatih—Mysterious is the path of action.’ I am bewildered. O Maharshi, kindly give me a very, very easy definition of Dharma to enable me to follow Dharma in all my actions.” Maharshi Vyasa replied: “O aspirant! Hear me. I shall suggest an easy method. Remember the following sayings always with great care when you do any action. ‘Do as you would be done by. Do unto others as you wish others do unto you.’ This is the whole of Dharma. Attend to this carefully. You will be saved from all troubles. If you follow these wise maxims, you can never give any pain unto others. Practice this in your daily life. Even if you fail one hundred times, it does not matter. Your old Samskaras Asubha Vasanas are your real enemies. They will come in the way as stumbling blocks. But persevere. You will succeed in the attainment of the goal.” The aspirant strictly adhered to Vyasa’s instructions and attained liberation.

16. This is a very good maxim. The whole gist of Sadachara or right conduct is here. If one practices this very carefully he will not commit any wrong act. ‘To work in accordance with the Divine Will is right; to work in opposition to the Divine Will is wrong.’

17. God, Religion and Dharma are inseparable. All human beings are characterized by righteousness, and they in course of natural progress and improvement attain to the dignity of God. Man evolves through practice of Dharma according to his caste and order of life and eventually attains Self-realisation, the ultimate goal of life, which brings infinite Bliss, supreme peace, unbroken joy, highest knowledge, eternal satisfaction and Immortality. Ethical perfection is a prerequisite to Self-realisation.

18. Metaphysics rests on morality. Morality rests on metaphysics. Morality has Vedanta as its basis. The Upanishad says: “Thy neighbour, in truth, is thy very Self, and what separates you from him is mere illusion.” Sadachara is the basis for the realization of Atmic unity or oneness of life or Advaitic feeling of oneness everywhere. Ethical culture prepares you for the Vedantic realization of: “Sarvam khalvidam Brahma—All indeed is Brahman.”

2. Ethical Discipline

1. ‘Atman or Self is one. There is one common consciousness in all beings. All Jivas are reflections of the one Supreme Soul or Paramatman. Just as one sun is reflected in all pots of water, so also the one Supreme Being is reflected in all human beings. One cannot become many. One appears as many. One is real. Many are illusory. Separateness is illusory. Separateness is temporary. Unity is real. Unity is Eternal. One life vibrates in all beings. Life is common in animals, birds and human beings. Existence is common.’ This is the emphatic declaration of the Upanishads. This primary truth of Religion is the foundation of ethics or Sadachara. If you hurt

another man, you hurt yourself. If you help another man, you help yourself. On account of ignorance one man hurts another man. He thinks that other beings are separate from himself. So he exploits others. So he is selfish, greedy, proud and egoistic. If you are really aware that one Self pervades, permeates all beings, that all beings are threaded on the Supreme Self, as the row of pearls on a string, how can you hurt another man, how can you exploit another man?

2. Who of us is really anxious to know the Truth about God or Divine Life? We are more ready to ask ourselves: “How much money you have got in the Imperial Bank? Who said that against me? Do you know who I am? How are your wife and children doing?” and questions of this sort than questions like: “Who am I? What is this Samsara? What is bondage? What is freedom? Whence have I come? Whither shall I go? Who is Isvara? What are the attributes of God? What is our relationship to God? How to attain Moksha? What is the Svarupa of Moksha?”

3. The beginning of ethics is to reflect upon ourselves, our surroundings and our actions. Before we act we must stop to think. When a man earnestly attends to what he recognises as his duties, he will progress and in consequence thereof his comfort and prosperity will increase. His pleasures will be more refined; his happiness, his enjoyments and recreations will be better and nobler. Happiness is like a shadow; if pursued it will flee from us, but if a man does not trouble himself about it and strictly attends to his duties, pleasures of the best and noblest kind will crop out everywhere in his path. If he does not anxiously pursue it, happiness will follow him.

4. The increase or rather refinement of happiness, however, cannot be considered as the ultimate aim of ethics, for pain and affliction increase at the same rate because man’s irritability, his susceptibility to pain grows with the growth of his intellectuality. The essence of all existence is evolution or a constant realization of new ideals. Therefore the elevation of all human emotions, whether they are painful or happy, the elevation of man’s existence, of his actions and aspirations, is the constant aim of ethics.

5. The Socratic formula: “Virtue is knowledge,” is found to be an adequate explanation of the moral life of man. Knowledge of what is right, is not coincident with doing it, for man, while knowing the right course is found deliberately choosing the wrong one. Desire tends to run counter to the dictates of reason; and the will, perplexed by the difficulty of reconciling two such opposite demands, tends to choose the easier course and follow the inclination rather than to endure the pain of refusing desire in obedience to the voice of reason. Hence mere intellectual instruction is not sufficient to ensure right doing. There arises the further need for chastisement or the straightening of the crooked will, in order to ensure its cooperation with reason in assenting to what it affirms to be right, and its refusal to give preference to desire or the irrational element in man’s nature when such desire runs counter to the rational principle.

6. The pure reason urges a man to what is the best. The Asuric nature of a man fights and struggles against the man. The impulses of a man who has not undergone the ethical discipline runs counter to his reason. All advice, all rebuke and exhortation, all admonition testify that the irrational part is amenable to reason.

7. The basis of good manners is self-reliance. For such reasons have the great founders and eminent teachers of all religions repeatedly proclaimed the need for recognising the Godhead

within and for self-reliance in the last resort rather than any texts and persons and customs. Self-reliance is the basis of behaviour.

8. Self-control is the greatest in the man whose life is dominated by ideals and general principles of conduct. The final end of moral discipline is self-control. The whole nature of man must be disciplined. Each element requires its specific training. Discipline harmonises the opposing elements of his soul. The self-control will enable the aspirant to know the Truth, to desire the good and win the right and thus to realise the Reality.

9. Discipline is the training of our faculties, through instructions and through exercise, in accordance with some settled principle of authority. You must discipline not only the intellect but also the will and the emotions. A disciplined man will control his actions. He is no longer at the mercy of the moment. He ceases to be a slave of his impulses and Indriyas. Such mastery is not the result of one day's effort. One can acquire the power by protracted practice and daily self-discipline. You must learn to refuse the demands of impulses. A self-controlled man will be able to resist the wrong action to which a worldly man is most strongly impelled.

3. Ethics is a Means to Yoga

1. All aspirants commit mistakes now in jumping to Samadhi and Dhyana all at once as soon as they leave their houses without caring a bit for ethical perfection. The mind remains in the same condition although they have practiced meditation for fifteen years. They have the same jealousy, hatred, idea of superiority, pride, egoism, etc. Meditation and Samadhi come by themselves when one has the ethical perfection.

2. Sadachara or right conduct is the foundation of Yoga. Yoga is rooted in virtue. Ethical discipline is very necessary for success in Yoga. Ethical discipline is the practice of right conduct in life. One should be well established in Sadachara to begin with. Sadachara is the practice of Yama-Niyama. Yama and Niyama are the two moral backbones of Yoga, which the aspirant must practice in his daily life. These correspond roughly to the ten commandments of Jesus or to the noble eight fold path of Lord Buddha. Practice of Yama-Niyama will eradicate all impurities of the mind.

3. Yama is the very foundation of Yoga, without which the superstructure of Yoga cannot be built. Yama is the practice of Ahimsa (abstinence from injury and killing), Satyam (truthfulness), Asteya (abstinence from theft or falsehood), Brahmacharya (continence) and Aparigraha (abstinence from avariciousness or greed). Patanjali Maharshi mentions the above five chief items for practice in Yama. In every religion you will find this to be the foremost. Great emphasis is given in every chapter of the Gita on the practice of Yama.

4. Niyama is the observance of the five canons, viz., Saucha, Santosha, Tapas, Svadhyaya and Isvara Pranidhana. According to Sandilya Rishi, the practice of Saucha, Daya, Arjava, Dhriti and Mitahara is included in Yama. Saucha is external and internal purity. Washing the hands, taking baths, etc., are for external purity. Filling the mind with pure divine thoughts is internal purity.

5. "The mind becomes pure by cultivating habits of friendliness, compassion, complacency and indifference towards happiness, misery, virtue and vice." Whosoever shows friendliness towards all those who are found in the enjoyments of pleasures, the dirt of envy leaves him. When the mind shows compassion towards those who are suffering from pain and the wish to remove the miseries of others as if they were his own, the dirt of the desire to do evil to others is removed. Whoever shows complacency towards those who are virtuously inclined beings, the dirt of envy is removed from his mind. Whoever shows indifference towards the vicious and taking to the middle path and not taking sides, towards the viciously inclined, the dirt of the impatience is removed from his mind.

6. By this removal of the characteristics of the qualities of disturbing energy (Rajas) and inertia (Tamas), the characteristic of essential purity (Sattva) manifests itself. He becomes possessed of a very high manifestation of essential purity. His mind becomes inclined to the side of the restraint of mental modifications, because this enlightenment is natural to that state. When the mind becomes pure it attains the state of steadiness and becomes one-pointed. If these moral qualities are not cultivated, the means cannot lead to steadiness. Therefore, one should be well established in Sadachara if he wants to attain perfection in yoga. When one is established in it perfectly, then Samadhi or Nishtha will come by itself.

4. Glory of Sadachara

1. A man, who has attached ethical perfection by the continued practice of right conduct or Yama and Niyama, has got a magnetic personality. He can influence millions. Character gives a strong personality to man. People respect a man who has good character. Moral people command respect everywhere. He who is honest, sincere, truthful, kind and liberal-hearted always commands respect and influence at the people. Sattvic virtues make a man Divine. He who speaks truth and practices Brahmacharya becomes a great and dynamic personality. Even if he speaks a word there is power in it and people are magnetized. Character building is of paramount importance if a man wants to develop his personality. No development of a strong personality is possible without celibacy. Personality can be developed. But the practice of virtue is indispensable.

2. A man may die but his character remains. His thoughts remain. It is the character that gives real force and power to man. Character is power. They say knowledge is power but I say with all the emphasis at my command that character is power. Without character the attainment of knowledge is impossible. That man who has no character is practically a dead man in this world. He is ignored and despised by the community. If you want success in life, if you want to influence others, if you want to progress well in the spiritual path, if you wish to have God-realisation, you must possess an unblemished or spotless character. The character of a man survives or outlives him. Sri Sankara, Buddha, Jesus and other Rishis of yore are remembered even now because they had wonderful character. Character is a mighty soul-force. It is like a sweet flower that wafts its fragrance far and wide. A man of noble traits and good character possesses a tremendous personality. Personality is character only. A man may be a skillful artist, a clever songster, an adorable poet or a great scientist, but if he has no character he has no real position in the society.

3. You must be polite, civil and courteous. You must treat others with respect and consideration. Good manners and soft words have brought many a difficult thing to pass. He who

gives respect to others gets respect. Humility brings respect by itself. Humility is a virtue that subdues the hearts of others. A man of humility is a powerful magnet or loadstone.

4. Note carefully how the Rishis had given instructions to their students when they had finished their course of study: “Speak the truth. Do your duty. Do not neglect the study of the Vedas. Do not swerve from Truth. Do not swerve from duty. Do not neglect your welfare. Do not neglect your prosperity. Do not neglect the learning and teachings of Vedas. Do not neglect the duties towards God and forefathers. May the Mother be thy God (Matri-devo bhava). May the Father be thy God (Pitri-devo bhava). May the preceptor be thy God (Acharya-devo bhava). May the guest be thy God (Atithi-devo bhava). Do such actions as are blameless. Those that are good works to us, they should be performed by thee, and none else. Those Brahmins that are superior to us, they should be comforted by thee with seats, etc. Give with faith. Do not give without faith. Give with joy, with modesty, with fear, with kindness.”

5. Righteousness is eternal. Do not leave the path of righteousness even if your life is in danger. Do not leave righteousness for the sake of some material gain. A virtuous life and a clean conscience give great deal of comfort to a man while living and at the time of death also. A holy man with piety is far superior to the mighty potentate. God is much pleased with a pious man. Lord Krishna says: “Even if the most sinful worshipeth Me, with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous, for he hath rightly resolved.” There is a great hope even for a cutthroat, if he makes a strong determination and takes up the spiritual path.

6. Dear friends! Do your duties in a satisfactory manner in accordance with Sadachara. Apply yourself diligently to all kinds of your daily duties. Consult the Sastras and Mahatmas whenever you are in doubt. Build up your character. This will give you success in life. Practise daily to remove old evil habits. Establish daily virtuous healthy habits. Character will help you to attain the goal of life. Character is your very being. Evolve. Expand. Grow. May the character take you to the Atmic Bliss and Self-realisation.

7. Nectar’s sons! Children of Immortality! Shake off all weaknesses. Stand up. Gird up the loins. Have Sadachara satisfactorily in accordance with your caste or stage in life. Evolve quickly in spiritual path. Eternal Bliss, Supreme Peace, Infinite Knowledge can be had only in God (Atman). Practice of Sadachara will surely lead you to the attainment of God-consciousness. There is no happiness in finite objects. Infinite alone is Bliss. Understand the Truth through the practice of Sadachara. This world is unreal. It is like a mirage. Senses and mind are deceiving you at every moment. Wake up. Open your eyes. Learn to discriminate. Do not trust your Indriyas. They are your enemies. It is very difficult to get a human birth. Life is short. Time is fleeting. Walk in the path of Sadachara. Those who cling to unreal things of this world are verily committing suicide. Struggle hard to practice Sadachara.

Keep up the ideal always before your eyes. Attempt to realise the ideal. Stick to Sadachara with leech-like tenacity. Practise it and realise Sat-chit-ananda state right now in this very second.

CHAPTER IV

MIND, ITS MYSTERIES AND CONTROL

1. Facts About Mind

1. Mind is not only daily made, but hourly made. In every minute it changes its colour and shape like a chameleon. It is very wavering and unsteady (Chanchalam and Asthiram).

2. The mind had a pernicious habit of externalization from time immemorial. The constant utterance of Holy Names of God as Hari Om, Narayana, Rama, Siva, etc., purifies the mind-stuff and helps to make the mind introspective (Antarmukha-vritti).

3. Time is but a mode of mind. It is Kala-Sakti. It is also illusory like the objects. When your mind is deeply concentrated, a period of two hours appears like five minutes. If the mind is distracted and wandering, half an hour appears as two hours. This is everybody's experience. In dream also many events that last for fifty years take place within ten minutes. Through the play of the mind, a Kalpa is considered by it as a moment and vice versa.

4. Perception through the finite mind or cognition of experience takes place serially and not simultaneously. Simultaneous knowledge can only be had in Nirvikalpa Samadhi where past and future merge in the present. A Yogi only will have simultaneous knowledge. A man of the world with a finite mind can have a knowledge in succession only. Though several objects may come in contact simultaneously with the different sense-organs, yet the mind acts like a gate keeper who can admit only one person at a time in the gate. The mind can send only one kind of sensation at a time into the mental factory inside for the manufacture of a percept and concept.

5. There are secretions from endocrine glands which are ductless. viz., Thyroid, Thymus, Parotid, Pineal, Suprarenal, etc. These secretions are directly absorbed into blood. They play a vital part in constituting the temperament of every individual. The temperament of a man can be greatly modified by environments, education and experience. It can hardly be changed in toto. That is the reason why the Gita says: "Sadrisham cheshtate svasya prakriter jnanavanapi—Even the man of knowledge behaves in conformity with his own nature" (Chap. 111-33).

6. It took me many years to understand thoroughly the secret subtle workings of the mind. Mind havoc through the power of imagination. Imaginary fears of various sorts, exaggeration, concoction, mental dramatization, building castles in the air, are all clue to the power of imagination. Even a perfect, healthy man has some imaginary disease or other due to the power of imagination of the mind. A man may have a little weakness or Dosha (fault). When he becomes your enemy you at once exaggerate and magnify his weakness and Dosha. You even superimpose or concoct many more weaknesses and Doshas. This is due to the power of Imagination. Much energy is wasted on account of imaginary fears.

7. Belief, reasoning, knowledge and faith are four important psychic processes. First you have belief in a doctor. You go to him for diagnosis and treatment. He examines you and then

prescribes certain medicines. You take them. You reason out: "This is the disease. The doctor has given me Iron and Iodide. Iron will improve my blood. The Iodide will stimulate the lymphatics and absorb the exudation and growth in the liver." Then the disease is cured by a course of these drugs for a month. Then you get knowledge and perfect faith in the medicine and the doctor. Then you recommend to your friend this doctor and drugs: "Dr. James is a clever man. He is an expert. Huxley's tonic is a very good nervine and blood tonic."

8. The mind wants always to be doing something and when it attaches itself with the objects it cherishes, it feels amused and happy. A play at cards has nothing in it but the attachment and attention gives pleasure. It is difficult to divert the mind which from infancy has fallen into the pernicious habit of seeking pleasure outwardly and it shall ever persist in doing so, unless you give it something superior to be amused with, a greater form of pleasure to delight in.

9. The mind in the vast majority of persons has been allowed to run wild and follow its own sweet will and desires. It is like a spoiled child who is given to much indulgence by its parents or a badly trained animal. The minds of many of us are like menageries of wild animals, each pursuing the bent of its own nature and going its own way. Restraint on the mind is a thing unknown to the vast majority of persons.

10. You know the experience of a tree through the mind only. You must have an intellectual grasp, intellectual conviction and comprehensive understanding of Brahman first through the purified mind. The help of the mind is always needed either for perfection of an object or the understanding of Brahman. Meditation proceeds from the mind only.

11. Mark how one Sankalpa expands into many Sankalpas (Vistara) in a short time. Suppose you get a Sankalpa to have tea-party for your friends. One thought of tea invites instantaneously the thoughts of sugar, milk, teacups, tables, chairs, table cloth, napkins, spoons, sweetmeats, salted things, etc. So this world is nothing but the expansion of Sankalpas. The expansion of thoughts of the mind towards the objects is bondage (Bandha). Renunciation of Sankalpas is liberation (Moksha). You must be ever watchful in nipping the Sankalpas in the bud. Then only you will be really happy. Mind tricks and plays. You must understand its nature, ways and habits. Then only you can control it very easily.

12. The mind assumes the shape of any object it intently thinks upon. If it thinks of an orange it assumes the shape of an orange. If it thinks of Lord Krishna with flute in hand, it assumes the shape of Lord Krishna. You must train the mind properly and give it proper Sattvic food for assimilation. Have a Sattvic background of thought or mental image.

13. If you tasted Ovaltine for a month, 'mental adhesion' to Ovaltine comes in the mind. If you are in the company of Sannyasins, if you read books on Yoga, Vedanta, etc., a similar mental adhesion takes place in the mind for attaining God-consciousness. Mere mental adhesion will not help you much. Burning Vairagya, burning Mumukshutva, capacity for spiritual Sadhana, intense and constant application and Nididhyasana (meditation) are needed. Then only Self-realisation is possible.

14. The form which the endless Atman (Supreme Spirit) assumes through Sankalpa is Manas (mind). The mind attains the quiescent state of Para-Brahman through its enemy of discrimination. It first turned its back upon discrimination and hence entangled itself in the folds of Vasanas of objects.

15. Mind is ever changing and wandering. This wandering habit of the mind manifests itself in various ways. You will have to be on the alert always to check this wandering habit of the mind. A householder's mind wanders to cinema, theatre, circus, etc. A Sadhu's mind wanders to Benares, Vrindavan and Nasik. Many Sadhus never stick to one place during Sadhana. The wandering habit of the mind must be controlled by making it stick to one place, one method of Sadhana, one Guru and one form of Yoga. A rolling stone gathers no moss. When you take up a book for study you must finish it before you take up another. When you take up any work, you must devote your wholehearted attention towards the work on hand and finish it before you take up another work. "One thing at a time and that done well is a very good rule as many can tell." This is Yogi's way of doing.

16. If all the thoughts are eliminated, then there remains nothing which can be called the mind. So thoughts are the mind. Again there is no such thing as the world independent of and apart from thoughts.

17. The mind is generally attracted by brilliant light, beauty, intelligence, varied colours and pleasant sounds. Do not be deceived by these paltry things. Enquire within. What is the Adhishtana or background for all these things? There is one Essence at the back of the mind and all objects of this seeming sense-universe. That Essence is all full (Paripurna) and self-contained. That Essence is the Brahman of the Upanishads. That Essence verily you are. 'Tat Tvam Asi,' my dear readers.

2. Thought-culture

1. When you sit for meditation thoughts of your friends and office work, memory of conversation that took place in the previous evening with your friends and relatives will disturb your mind and cause distraction. You will have to withdraw the mind again and again, cautiously from these extraneous worldly thoughts and fix it again and again in your Lakshya or point. You will have to disregard and ignore the worldly thoughts. Be indifferent. Do not welcome these thoughts. Do not identify yourself with these thoughts, ideas. Say within yourself: "I do not want these thoughts. I have nothing to do with these thoughts." They will vanish gradually.

2. The mind is a mischievous imp. It is like a jumping monkey. It must be disciplined daily. Then it will gradually come under your control. It is only by the practical training of your mind that you can prevent bad thoughts and actions from arising and can prevent bad thoughts and actions that have arisen from recurrence. It is only by the practical training of your mind that you can encourage good thoughts and actions to arise and can maintain good thoughts and actions when they have arisen.

3. Watch your mind always very carefully. Be vigilant. Be on the alert. Do not allow waves of irritability, jealousy, anger, hatred, lust to arise from the mind. These dark waves are enemies of

meditation, peace and wisdom. Suppress them at once by entertaining sublime and divine thoughts. Evil thoughts that have arisen may be destroyed by originating good thoughts and maintaining them by repeating any Mantra or Name of the Lord, by doing good actions, by dwelling on the misery that arises from evil thoughts, by abstracting the mind, by analysing the origin of the thoughts, by enquiry of 'Who am I?' or by the force of the will resolving to suppress the evil thought. When you attain the state of purity, no evil thoughts will arise in your mind. Just as it is easy to check the intruder or enemy at the gate, so also it is easy to overcome an evil thought as soon as it arises. Nip it in the bud. Do not allow it to strike deep root.

4. In the beginning all sorts of evil thoughts will arise in your mind as soon as you sit for meditation. Why does this happen during meditation when you attempt to entertain pure thoughts? Aspirants leave their spiritual practices of meditation on account of this. If you try to drive a monkey it attempts to pounce on you with vengeance. Even so the old vicious Samskaras and old evil thoughts try to attack you with vengeance and redoubled force only at the time when you try to raise good, divine thoughts. Your enemy endeavours to resist you vehemently when you try to eject him out of your house. There is a law of resistance in nature. The old evil thoughts assert and say "O man! Do not be cruel. You have allowed us to stay in your mental factory from time immemorial. We have every right to abide here. We have helped you up to this time in all your evil actions. Why do you want to oust us from our dwelling place? We will not vacate our abode." Do not be discouraged. Go on with your practice of meditation regularly. These evil thoughts will be thinned out. Eventually they will all perish.

5. Positive always overcomes the negative. This is the law of nature. Negative evil thoughts cannot stand before positive good thoughts. Courage overcomes fear. Patience overcomes anger and irritability. Love overcomes hatred. Purity overcomes lust. The very fact that you feel uneasy now when an evil thought comes to the surface of the mind during meditation indicates that you are growing in spirituality. In those days you consciously harboured all sorts of evil thoughts. You welcomed and nourished them. Persist in your spiritual practices. Be tenacious and diligent. You are bound to succeed. Even a dull type of aspirant will notice a marvellous change in him if he keeps up the practice of Japa and meditation for 2 or 3 years in a continuous stream. Now he cannot leave the practice. Even if he stops his practice of meditation for a day, he will actually feel that he has lost something on that day. His mind will be quite uneasy.

6. If you place a big mirror in front of a dog and keep some bread in front, the dog at once barks at its reflection in the mirror. It foolishly imagines that there is another dog. Even so, man sees his own reflection only through his mind-mirror in all the people but foolishly imagines like the dog that they are all different from him and fights on account of hatred and jealousy.

7. You will be able to enter into deep meditation only if you lead a moral life. When you have led the moral life, you may further try to build up discrimination and the other steps in your mind. You can cultivate the mind in concentration and can finally devote yourself to meditation. The more you lead the moral life, the more you meditate, the greater likelihood will then be for you to enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi which can liberate you from the round of births and deaths and can confer on you eternal Bliss and Immortality.

3. Control of Thought

1. The mind is like a wheel which revolves endlessly with tremendous velocity. It generates new thoughts with every revolution. This wheel is set in motion by the vibration of psychic Prana or subtle Prana. The practice of Pranayama lessens the velocity of the mind and slows down the wheel gradually. Perfect control of Prana will bring the wheel to a standstill.

2. Alcohol, meat, Rajasic foods, cinema, novel-reading, obscene songs, obscene sights, evil company, obscene talks will make the wheel of mind revolve very rapidly whereas fruits, Sattvic food, company of Mahatmas, study of religious books, solitude, Japa, Kirtan, concentration, meditation, enquiry of 'Who am I?' will slow down the wheel and eventually bring it down to a standstill.

3. Identify yourself with the Immortal Self. Enquire 'Who am I?' whenever thoughts arise in your mind. All the thoughts will gradually die.

4. Fewer the desires, lesser the thoughts. Become absolutely desireless. The wheel will stop entirely. If you reduce your wants, if you do not try to fulfill your desires, if you try to eradicate your desires one by one, your thoughts will diminish in frequency and length. The number of thoughts per minute will also decrease. Fewer the thoughts, greater the peace. Remember this always. A wealthy man who does speculation in a big city and who has a large number of thoughts has a restless mind, in spite of his comforts, whereas, a Sadhu who lives in the cave of Himalayas and who is practicing thought-control is very happy in spite of his poverty.

5. Concentration will increase by lessening the number of thoughts. Certainly it is an uphill work to reduce the number of thoughts. In the beginning it will be taxing you much. The task will be very unpleasant. But later on you will rejoice as you will get immense strength of mind and internal peace by reduction of thoughts. Armed with the patience, perseverance, vigilance, fiery determination and iron will, you can crush the thoughts easily just as you crush a lemon or an orange with ease. After crushing, it will be easy for you to root them out. Mere crushing or suppression will not suffice. There may be again resurrection of thoughts. They should be totally eradicated, just as a loose tooth is rooted out.

6. When you give a blow on the head of a snake with a stick and crush its head, it remains absolutely motionless for some time. You think it is dead. All of a sudden it raise its head and runs swiftly. Even so the thoughts that were once crushed and suppressed by you regain strength and raise up their heads. They must be destroyed totally beyond resurrection.

7. It is very difficult to fix the mind on one thought in the beginning. Diminish the number of thoughts. Try to have thoughts on one subject. If you think of a rose you can have all sorts of thoughts connected with rose only. You can think of different kinds of roses that are grown in different parts of the world. You can think of the various preparations that are made out of roses and their uses. You can allow even thoughts of other kinds of flowers to enter; but do not entertain thoughts of fruits and vegetables. Check the aimless wandering of the mind. Do not have thoughts at random when you think of a rose. Gradually you can fix the mind on one thought. You will have to discipline the mind daily. Eternal vigilance is needed in thought-control.

8. Fewer the thoughts, greater the mental strength and concentration. Suppose the average number of thoughts that pass through your brain within one hour is one hundred. If you succeed in reducing them by constant practice of concentration and meditation to ninety you have gained ten per cent of power of concentration of mind. Every thought that is reduced adds strength and peace to the mind. Reduction of even one thought will give you mental strength and peace of mind. You may not be able to feel this in the beginning as you do not possess a subtle intellect; but there is a spiritual thermometer inside to register the reduction of even a single thought. If you reduce one thought the mental strength that you have gained by this reduction will help you to reduce the second thought easily.

9. In rubber plantation, planters take recourse to the method of thinning out the rubber trees by cutting the small surplus trees which stand in the vicinity of big trees. By so doing they can tap more milk or rubber juice from the big trees. Even so you must thin out the thoughts by destroying them one by one to drink the ambrosial milk or nectar of Immortality.

10. When the tail of a lizard is cut, the cut end will flutter about for some time, as there is still a little residual Prana in the tail. After one or two minutes all motion will cease. Even so, even after thinning and reduction of thoughts, some thoughts will move about like the tail of the lizard. But they are powerless. They cannot do any serious havoc. There is no vitality in them. Just as the drowning man tries to catch anything to save himself, so also these lifeless thoughts try their level best to come back to their previous state of life and vigour. If you go on with your daily practice of concentration and meditation regularly, they will die by themselves like a gheeless lamp.

11. In the beginning of your practice of thought-control you will experience great difficulty. You will have to wage war with them. They will have to struggle their level best for their own existence. They will say: "We have every right to remain in this place of mind. We have a sole monopoly from time immemorial to occupy this area. Why should we vacate our dominion now? We will fight for our birthright till the end." They will pounce upon you with great ferocity. When you sit for meditation only all sorts of evil thoughts will crop up. As you attempt to suppress them they want to attack you with redoubled force and vigour. But positive always overcomes the negative. Just as darkness cannot stand before the sun, just as a leopard cannot stand before the lion so also all these dark, negative thoughts, these invisible intruders, enemies of peace, cannot stand before the sublime divine thoughts. They must die by themselves.

12. Just as the warrior chops off the heads of his enemies one by one, when they come of a fortress through a trap door, so also chop the thoughts one by one when they emerge out through the trap door to the surface of the mind.

13. The substitution method is very easy and effective in the destruction of evil thoughts. Cultivate positive virtuous thoughts of mercy, love, purity, forgiveness, integrity, generosity, humility, etc., in the garden of your mind. The negative vicious thoughts of hatred, lust, anger, greed, pride, etc., will die by themselves. It is difficult to destroy the evil thoughts by attacking them directly. You will have to tax your will and waste your energy.

14. Suppose the evil thoughts stay in your mind for twelve hours and recur every third day. If you can make them stay for ten hours and recur once in a week by daily practice of concentration

and meditation that is a decided improvement. If you continue your practice, the period of stay and recurrence will be gradually lessened. Eventually they will disappear altogether. Compare your present state of mind with that of last year or year before last. You will be able to find out your progress. The progress will be very slow in the beginning. It will be difficult for you to gauge your growth and progress.

15. Thoughts gain strength by repetition. If you entertain an evil thought or a good thought once, this evil thought or good thought has a tendency to recur again. Thoughts crowd together. Just as the birds of the same feather flock together, so also if you entertain one evil thought all sorts of evil thoughts join together and attack you. If you entertain any good thought, all good thoughts join together.

16. Like attracts like. If you entertain evil thought that thought attracts all sorts of evil thoughts from others. You pass on that thought to others also. Thought moves. Thought is a living dynamic force. Thought is a thing. If you allow your mind to dwell on a sublime thought, this thought will attract good thoughts from others. You pass on good thoughts to others. You pollute the world with your bad thoughts. You help the world with your good thoughts.

17. When you reach the spiritual summit of thoughtlessness you will reach the abode of Immortality and eternal peace and supreme bliss. O Ram! Start your homeward journey. March boldly in the spiritual path. Be not afraid of difficulties. Be bold. Ascend peak after peak. Cross the deep ravines of subtle Moha and pride that come on your way. Take a long jump and cross the mystic frontier of Avyaktam. Chop off the thoughts that wage again and again a guerrilla war. Enter now the infinite domain of pure bliss and highest knowledge. Regain your old pristine divine glory. Rest in your Sat-chit-ananda Svarupa.

4. Purification of Mind

1. You must have a pure mind if you want to realise the Self. Unless the mind is set free and casts away all desires, cravings, worries, delusion, pride, lust, attachment, likes and dislikes, it cannot enter into the domain of Supreme Peace and unalloyed felicity of the Immortal Abode.

2. Mind is compared to a garden. Just as you can cultivate good flowers and fruits in a garden by ploughing and manuring the land and removing the weeds and thorns and watering the plants and trees, so also you can cultivate the flower of devotion in the garden of your mind by removing the impurities of the mind such as lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, etc., and watering it with Divine thoughts. Weeds and thorns grow in the rainy season, disappear in summer; but their seeds remain underneath the ground. As soon as there is a shower, the seeds again germinate and sprout out. Even so the Vrittis or modifications of the mind manifest on the surface of the conscious mind, then disappear and assume a subtle seed-state, the form of Samskaras or impressions. The Samskaras again become Vrittis either through internal or external stimulus. When the garden is clean, when there are no weeds and thorns you can get good fruits. So also, when the mind is pure, when the mind is free from lust, anger, etc., you can have the fruit of good deep meditation. Therefore cleanse the mind of its impurities first. Then the current of meditation will flow by itself.

3. If you want to keep a garden always clean, you will have to remove not only the weeds and thorns and other small plants but also the seeds that lie underneath the ground which again and again germinate during rainy season. Even so, you will have to destroy not only the big waves or Vrittis of the mind, but also the Samskaras which are the seeds for births and deaths, which germinate the Vrittis again and again, if you want to enter into Samadhi and attain liberation or perfect freedom.

4. If you apply fire to a green wood it will not burn, but if you apply fire to a piece of dried wood it will at once catch fire and burn. Even so, those who have not purified their minds, will not be able to start the fire of meditation. They will be sleeping or dreaming or will be building castles in the air if they sit for meditation. But those who have removed the impurities of their minds by Japa, service, charity, Pranayama, etc., will enter into deep meditation as soon as they sit for meditation. The pure ripe mind will at once burn with the fire of meditation.

5. If you do not clean a plate daily, it will lose its lustre. It is the same with the mind too. The mind becomes impure if it is not kept clean by the regular practice of meditation. Meditation removes the dross of the mind in an effective manner. Therefore practice meditation in the early morning regularly.

6. Do not cause pain or suffering to any living being from greed, selfishness, irritability, annoyance. Give up anger or ill-will. Give up the spirit of fighting, heated debates. Do not argue. If you quarrel with somebody or if you have a heated debate with anybody, you cannot meditate for 3 or 4 days. Your balance of mind will be upset. Much energy will be wasted in useless channels. The blood will become hot. The nerves will be shattered. You must try your level best to keep a serene mind only. A serene mind is a valuable spiritual asset for you.

7. You must practice austerity of speech if you really want to attain quick progress in meditation. You must always speak sweet, loving words. You must speak truth at any cost. You must not speak any harsh word or any indecent word that is calculated to hurt the feelings of others. You should weigh your words well before they are spoken. You must speak a few words only. This is austerity of speech or Vak-Tapas that will conserve energy and give you peace of mind and inner strength.

8. Examine your character. Pick up the defects in it. Find out its opposite. Let us say that you suffer from irritability. The opposite of irritability is patience. Try to develop this virtue by meditating on the abstract virtue of patience. Regularly every morning sit down at 4 a.m. in Padma or Siddha Asana in a solitary room for half an hour, and begin to think on patience, its value, its practice under provocation, taking one point one day, another on another day, and thinking as steadily as you can, recalling the mind when it wanders. Think of yourself as perfectly patient, a model of patience and end it with a vow: "This patience which is my true Self, I will feel and show from today."

9. For a few days probably there will be no change perceptible. You will still feel and show irritability. Go on practicing steadily every morning. Presently you see an irritable thing, the thought will flash into your mind: "I should have been patient." Still go on in practice. Soon the thought of patience will arise with the irritable impulse and the outer manifestation will be checked.

Still go on practising. The irritable impulse will grow feebler and feebler until you find that irritability has disappeared and that patience has become your normal attitude towards annoyances. In this manner you can develop various virtues such as sympathy, self-restraint, purity, humility, benevolence, nobility, generosity, etc.

10. It is the actions of the mind that are truly termed Karmas. True liberation results from the disenthralment of the mind. Those who have freed themselves from the fluctuation of their minds come into possession of the supreme Nishtha (meditation). Should the mind be purged of all its impurities, then it will become very calm and all the Samsaric delusions attendant with its births and deaths will be soon destroyed.

11. Concentration of the mind on God after purification can give you real happiness and knowledge. You are born for this purpose only. You are carried away to external objects through Raga and Moha. Dive deep. The Divine Flame, the Light of lights is burning there. Plunge deep. Merge within.

5. How to Steady the Mind

1. The external objects are continuously acting upon the brain. The sense-impressions reach the brain through sense-avenues and produce mental stimuli. Now you are conscious of the external objects. Consciousness may be caused by an awakening either by external stimulus, i.e., stimulus from a sense-impression or an internal stimulus through memory. Each simple sense-impression is a highly complex bundle of afferent stimuli. 'Afferent stimuli' mean stimuli that are carried from outside towards the brain. A stimulus is an awakening in the substratum of the mind. The associations of awakenings which arise from a single sense-impression are very complex.

2. When you meditate, disregard the substratum awakenings in the mind that arise out of the senses. Avoid carefully the comparisons with all other cross references and memories of ideas. Concentrate the whole energy of the mind on the one idea of God or Atman itself without any comparison with any other idea.

3. Avoid all other sense-impressions and ideas. Prevent the complications that arise out of correlated action in the substratum of the mind. Abstract the mind and the one idea alone. Shut out all other process of mentation. Now the whole mind will be filled with the one idea only. Nishtha will ensue. Just as the recurrence or repetition of a thought or action leads to perfection of that thought or action, so also does recurrence of the same process on the same idea lead to the perfection of abstraction, concentration and meditation.

4. You will find very often these terms in the Gita: "Ananya-chetah, Machitta, Nitya-yukta, Manmanah, Ekagram Manah, Sarva-bhava." These terms denote that you will have to give your full mind, entirely 100 per cent of mind to God. Then only you will have Self-realisation. Even if one ray of mind runs outside, it is impossible to attain God-consciousness.

5. You cannot enjoy peace of mind and cannot practice meditation if there is Vikshepa (tossing) in your mind. Vikshepa is oscillation of mind. Vikshepa is Rajas. Vikshepa and desire

coexist in the mind. If you really want to destroy Vikshepa, you must destroy all mundane desires and cravings through dispassion and self-surrender to the Lord.

6. To practice meditation or contemplation in a mind unprepared by non-adherence to the moral precepts is like building a house on a rotten foundation. You may build up the house, but it will surely fall. You may practice meditation for many years but you will not realise any tangible result or fruit, if you have no ethical foundation. You will fall down. Therefore mental purity through ethical training is of paramount importance, if you wish to achieve success in meditation and Samadhi. Before you attempt to practice meditation, you must lead the necessary correct moral life. You must have the necessary right understanding. Then only you will have sanguine success in meditation. Much more time is required in the preparation of the mind for meditation than for the actual practice.

7. Drive off negative thoughts. Become positive always. Positive overpowers negative. You can do nice meditation when you are positive.

8. If the mind constantly dwells on sensual objects, the conception of the reality of the universe will surely increase. If the mind ceaselessly thinks of Atman (Absolute), the world appears like a dream.

9. Free yourself from the base thoughts of the mind, the various useless Sankalpas (imaginings). Make ceaseless enquiry of Atman. Mark the word 'ceaseless.' This is important. Then only there will be dawn of spiritual knowledge. The Jnana Surya (the sun of knowledge) will arise in the firmament of Chidakasa (knowledge-space).

10. Just as you render the turbid water pure by the addition of clearing-nut (strychnos potatorum), so also you will have to make the turbid mind filled with Vasanas and false Sankalpas, pure by Brahma-chintana (thinking and reflection on the Absolute). Then only there will be true illumination.

11. Just as the man who foolishly runs after two rabbits will not catch hold of any one of them, so also a meditator who runs after two conflicting thoughts will not get success. If he has Divine thoughts for ten minutes and then worldly conflicting thoughts for the next ten minutes, he will not succeed in attaining the Divine Consciousness. You must run after one rabbit only with vigour, strength and one-pointedness. You are sure to catch it. You must have only Divine thoughts at all times. Then only you are sure to realise God soon.

12. Just as you saturate the water with salt or sugar, you will have to saturate the mind with thoughts of God and Brahman, with Divine glory, Divine presence, with sublime, soul-awakening spiritual thoughts. Then only you will be established in the Divine Consciousness always.

13. In Nididhyasana (meditation) you will have to develop the Sajatiya-vritti-pravaha. Make the thoughts of Brahman or Divine Presence flow like inundation of flood. Do Vijatiya-vritti-tiraskara. Renounce the thoughts of objects. Drive them away with the whip of Viveka and Vichara. There is struggle in the beginning. It is trying indeed. But later on as you grow stronger and stronger and as you grow in purity and Brahma Chintana, Sadhana becomes easy. You

rejoice in the life of unity. You get strength from Atman. Inner strength grows when all the Vishaya Vrittis are thinned out and the mind becomes one-pointed (Ekagrata).

14. During meditation note how long you can shut out all worldly thoughts. Watch the mind very carefully. If it is for twenty minutes, try to increase the period to thirty or forty minutes and gradually to two or three hours. Fill the mind with the thoughts of God again and again.

15. The mind can be controlled by continuous practice. You must keep it always occupied in Divine contemplation. If you slacken your efforts, idle thoughts will at once enter. Continuous practice can bring the mind under control, quite easily. Samadhi is possible by the practice of continuous meditation with a light diet.

16. Put a piece of iron rod in the blazing furnace. It becomes red like a fire. Remove it. It loses its red colour. If you want to keep it always red, you must always keep it in fire. Even so, if you want to keep the mind charged with the fire of Brahmic wisdom, you must always keep it in contact or touch with the Brahmic fire of knowledge through constant and intense meditation. You must keep up an unceasing flow of the Brahmic consciousness. Then only you will have the Sahaja Avastha (natural state).

17. Sit at ease. Close your eyes. Look within. Withdraw the rays of the mind. Silence the thoughts. Meditate on Atman or the Absolute. Chant Om. Sing Om. Feel Om. Mentally repeat Om. The mind will move now to its centre or source slowly. You will forget the body and the world. The breathing will become very slow. The breath will move within the nostrils. Your heart will be flooded with joy and bliss. Divine nectar will trickle down. Drink it to your heart's content and attain Immortality. Divine peace, eternal tranquillity will roll over your head, wave after wave. Plunge deep in the ocean of peace. Swim freely and rejoice. What a magnanimous, happy state! What a blissful freedom! What a wonderful perfection and independence!

18. The fight between old, evil Samskaras and new Sattvic Samskaras will come to an end now. The eternal war between Sattva, Rajas and Tamas will cease. The rebellious mind and senses will be obedient captives now. The conflict between evil and sublime thoughts will terminate. Impulses and emotions will vanish in toto. How pleasant and delightful is the eternal life in the Atman! How sweet and enjoyable is this Divine Life! Realise this and be free.

6. Control of the Senses

1. Many aspirants fail to enter into Samadhi or Brahmic Bliss on account of restlessness of any one of the Indriyas (senses). Control of Indriyas is indispensably requisite for spiritual Sadhana.

2. Develop Vairagya. Without Vairagya and restraint of Indriyas no meditation or Samadhi is possible. Energy will leak out if Vairagya wanes. Vairagya is non-attachment to sensual objects. It is a mental state.

3. Control the Indriyas. Through introspection find out which Indriya is troubling you and curb it ruthlessly. Give up the objects which the particular Indriya tries to grasp. Destroy the

thirsting for objects and sense-enjoyments. Then you will be established in Samadhi or Supreme Peace.

4. Discipline the Indriyas. Speak truth. Talk little. Observe Mouna for two hours daily. Speak sweet, loving, soft words. Do not utter harsh words. Do not abuse anybody. This is the discipline of Vak-Indriya, the organ of speech.

5. Do not go to cinemas. Do not look at ladies with a lustful look. When you move in the streets look at the tip of the nose or big toe and walk. Do not look hither and thither. This is the discipline of eye, the organ of sight.

6. Do not attend nautch party and do not hear vulgar music. Give up musical entertainments. Do not hear worldly topics. This is the discipline of ear, the organ of hearing.

7. Do not use scents. This is the discipline of nose, the organ of smell. Give up salt and sugar for a week. Live on simple food. Fast on Ekadasi days or live on milk. This is the discipline of tongue, the organ of taste.

8. Observe Brahmacharya. This is the discipline of the reproductive organ. Sleep on a hard mat. Walk bare-footed. Do not use umbrella. This is the discipline of the skin, the organ of touch.

9. Fix the mind on your Ishta Devata. Bring it back again and again when it wanders and fix it on the image. This is the Sadhana for checking the wandering mind and developing concentration. By constant, regular practice, you can fix the mind on God steadily.

10. You may think or falsely conjecture that the senses are under your control. You may be duped. All of a sudden you will become a victim or a slave. You must have not only control of one Indriya but also Parama Vasyam or supreme control of all the Indriyas. **The senses may become turbulent at any time. Reaction may set in. Beware!**

May the Lord bestow on you Vairagya, Viveka and inner spiritual strength to control the senses and enter into Samadhi.

7. Conquest of Mind

1. The mind can be controlled by Abhyasa and Vairagya. Abhyasa is constant effort to fix the mind on God or Atman. Vairagya is dispassion or non-attachment to sensual objects.

2. Enquire 'Who am I?' Do Vichara. Do mental Japa of Om and meditate on Atman. All thoughts will die by themselves. You will rest in Sat-chit-ananda Atman.

3. Sit alone and watch the Vrittis of the mind. Be indifferent. Remain as a Sakshi. Do not identify yourself with the Vrittis. The mind will come under your control.

4. Destroy the fuel of desire; the fire of thought will be extinguished. With the annihilation of Sankalpa, the reality of Brahman will shine.

5. Cultivate Divine qualities such as friendliness, mercy, gladness and indifference towards happiness, pain, virtue and vice. You will get peace of mind.

6. Do not think of the past. Do not plan for the future. Do not allow the mind to build images. Live in the solid present.

7. Do a thing which the mind does not want to do. Do not do a thing which the mind wants to do.

8. Do not try to fulfil your desires. Do not hope. Do not expect anything. Destroy the vicious desires through virtuous desires and destroy the virtuous desires also through one strong desire for liberation.

9. Practice of Pranayama destroys Rajas and Tamas; make the mind steady and one-pointed.

10. Study of religious books, Tapas, charity and Satsanga with Mahatmas, Sadhus and Sannyasins overhauls worldly vicious Samskaras and paves a long way in the control of mind.

11. Japa of any Mantra and Upasana destroy the impurities of the mind, make the mind inward, induce Vairagya, help concentration and eventually lead to control of mind and attainment of God-consciousness.

12. 'Kalau Kesava-kirtanat.' In this Kali Yuga the easiest way for controlling the mind and attaining Moksha is Kirtan or singing the Name of the Lord.

13. Food has influence over mind. Sattvic food (milk, fruits, etc.) calms the mind. Rajasic food (meat, alcohol, etc.) excites the mind. Take Sattvic food. Have Mitahara (moderation in diet).

14. Destroy evil habits by establishing new good habits. Control the lower instinctive mind through the higher Sattvic mind.

15. Constant selfless service with Atma Bhava is highly efficacious in purifying and controlling the mind.

16. Do not wrestle or struggle with the mind. Be regular in your concentration and meditation. May Peace, Joy, Bliss and Immortality abide in you for ever and ever! Om Santi, Santi, Santih!

CHAPTER V

VEDANTA

1. Gist of Vedanta

1. The Veda exclaims from time immemorial: “Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti—Existence is one; Sages call It by different names” Rig-Veda I-164-46. God, Brahman Allah, Isvara, Jehova, Ahurmazda, etc., are one. I offer my worship to that Supreme Being, One Eternal homogeneous essence, indivisible mass of bliss and intelligence—whom sages describe in a variety of ways through diversity of intellect.

2. Vedanta is the religion of the Upanishads. It is the property of all. It has no quarrel with any religion whatsoever. It preaches universal principles. It inculcates the idea of that universal religion which is the fountainhead of all the religions of the world. It unites all. It shows the easy means to attain the Eternal Happiness, Peace and Bliss, the goal of human existence.

3. The fundamental principles of Sri Sankara’s system of Vedanta are beautifully summarised in the following couplet: “I express in half a verse what has been said in crores of books: Brahman is real; the world is phenomenal (unreal); and the soul (Jiva) is none else than Brahman.”

4. Realisation of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul eradicates totally the miseries born of the relative existence and removes the veil of ignorance in the individual soul. This realization can come by meditation or the right enquiry into: “Who am I? What is this universe? What is Atman or Soul? What is the relation between individual soul and the Supreme Soul? Whence have I come? Whither will I go?”

5. Self is pure, eternal, unchanging, Immortal, Self-luminous, Infinite and all-pervading. He is Bliss Absolute. But the body is impure, changing, perishable, insentient and finite. It is composed of flesh and bones. And yet the ignorant man equates the two. Can there be any ignorance worse than this?

6. The eye cannot perceive Him. The mind cannot reach Him. The gross worldly intellect cannot grasp Him. The speech cannot describe Him. The speech returns back along with the mind, as it is not able to describe Him in adequate terms. Sages declare: “We are baffled in our efforts to describe Him. His glory is indescribable. To describe Him is to deny Him.” How can a finite mind grasp the Infinite? But He can be directly realised by that aspirant who is equipped with the four means of salvation, who does constant meditation, who has a sharp, subtle and pure intellect.

7. The notion of duality of the apparent world of names and forms must be dissolved. The names and forms should be sublated and the hidden essence must be grasped. See the Self in all. Ignore the names and forms. Unite with all. Love all. Destroy all differences. Serve the Self in all. See the Self in all, in all actions. This is the Vedantic Sadhana.

8. Behind this world-show, behind these physical phenomena, behind these names and forms, behind the feelings, thoughts, emotions and sentiments there dwells the silent Witness, thy Immortal friend and real well-wisher, the unseen Governor or Master, the invisible power of Consciousness. He is called the Supreme being, Atman, Brahman or the Infinite Self or the Immortal Soul. Know: Thou art That— ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ and be free for ever. You should live in the very spirit of Vedanta by destroying I-ness and mine-ness, selfishness and attachment. Then alone you can be really happy even while discharging the duties of your daily life. All-embracing, all-inclusive love must be cultivated and developed. That is all. Then you can feel the Self in all, the One in all. Vedanta is not a mere concept or a dogma. It is neither mere theory nor dry philosophy. It is a living experience, the melting of the individual soul in the ocean of Divine Consciousness or the Supreme Soul. Negate the body, identify yourself with the eternal Soul. Repeat mentally Om. Meditate on the Self and rest in your own Sat-chit-ananda Svarupa. May you live drowned in the Ocean of Brahmic Bliss in an illumined state!

2. Practical Vedanta

1. You must be a practical Vedantin. Mere theorising and lecturing is only intellectual gymnastics and lingual warfare. This will not suffice. If Vedanta is not practicable, no theory is of any value. You must put Vedanta in daily practice, in every action. Vedanta teaches oneness or unity of Self. You must radiate love to one and all. The spirit of Vedanta must be ingrained in your cells or tissues, veins, nerves and bones. It must become part and parcel of your nature. You must think of unity, speak of unity and act in unity. If you deliver a thrilling lecture on the platform on Vedanta and say: “I am the all. I am the one Self in all. There is nothing but myself,” and show in action next moment a different attitude of selfishness and separateness, you will not produce any impression on the public. You will be called a dry Vedantin only. Nobody will care for you.

2. See how Raja Janaka lived. He lived the life of a practical Vedantin while ruling the kingdom. You cannot conceive of any man busier than Raja Janaka. He was ruling over millions of people and yet he was a sage, deep thinker, profound philosopher and practical Vedantin. He had no attachment to his property, body or his family. He shared what he had with others. He moved with all. He had equal vision and a balanced mind. He had a very busy life amidst luxuries. He was not a bit affected by external influences. He always kept up a serene mind. He held discussions with various sages on transcendental matters. That is the reason why he still lives in our hearts.

3. Vedanta of knowledge of Self is not the sole property of Sannyasins or recluses who live in forests or caves of the Himalayas. Study the Upanishads and you will find that many Kshatriya kings who were very busy in their daily affairs of life were in possession of Brahma Jnana. They gave instructions to Brahmin priests even.

4. Svetaketu Aruneya (grandson of Aruni), repaired to the assembly of the Panchalas. Pravahana Jaivali (the king of Panchala, a Kshatriya) asked him: “Boy, has your father instructed you?” “Yes, Sir,” he replied.

5. “Do you know to what place men go from here?” “No, Sir,” he replied. “Do you know how they return again?” “No, Sir,” he replied. “Do you know where the path of the Devas and the path of the Fathers diverge?” “No, Sir,” he replied. “Do you know why that world (that of Fathers)

never becomes full?” “No, Sir,” he replied. “Then why did you say that you had been instructed? How could anybody who did not know these things say that he had been taught?” Then the boy, troubled in mind came to his father’s place and said: “Though you had not taught me, you said you had instructed me. That fellow of a Rajanya (King, Kshatriya) asked me five questions, and I could not answer even one of them.”

6. Then Gautama went to the king’s palace and when he reached the palace, the king offered him proper respect. In the morning, he went to the king in his assembly. The king said to him: “Sir, Gautama, ask a boon of such things as belong to the world of men.” He replied: “Let such things as men possess may remain with you. Tell me the same speech which you address to my boy.”

7. The king was perplexed. He commanded: “Stay here for some time.” Then he said: “As to what you have said to me, Gautama, this knowledge did not go to any Brahmana before you; and therefore this teaching belonged, among all the people, to the Kshatriya alone.”

8. Suka Deva had to go to Raja Janaka to have confirmation of his knowledge and realization. He was tested by Janaka in his Durbar. Raja Janaka arranged for music and dancing parties all around his palace to distract the attention of Suka Deva. There were various kinds of show and entertainments. Suka Deva was asked to carry in his hand a cup of milk that was filled to the very brim round his palace, and to make three rounds without allowing a drop to overflow and fall on the ground. Suka had complete success in his attempt as he was fully established in his Self. Nothing could distract his mind.

9. An Englishman, a collector of a District, saw a sick patient on the road side in a dying condition. He was a very sympathetic man. He carried the patient to the neighbouring hospital on his own shoulders. Look at his feeling of oneness! He is a practical Vedantin whether he knows Upanishads or not. Many people and Sannyasins say: “Mahatma Gandhiji was a simple Karma Yogi only. He was not a Vedantin.” There is no practical Vedantin greater than Gandhiji. He lived in every moment of his life the life of a practical Vedantin. He lived for the well-being of the world only. He was a nerve-centre for this world. He was one with all. He embraced all with pure love. Self-sacrifice, service, non-violence, truthfulness, purity, unity were his creed. But he had never put a label of a Vedantin. He never advertised: “I am Brahman. Aham Brahma Asmi.”

10. The sun, the flowers, the Ganga, the sandal trees, the fruit-bearing trees, the cows—all teach practical Vedanta to the world. They live for serving the humanity in a disinterested spirit. The sun radiates its light alike over a cottage of a peasant and a palace of a Maharaja. The flowers waft their fragrance to all without expecting anything. The cool, refreshing waters of the Ganga are drunk by all. The sandal tree wafts its aroma even to the man who cuts it with an axe. All fruit-bearing trees behave in the same manner. They please the gardener who nourished them as well as the man who cuts them. The cows live to nourish the babies, the children the invalids and the convalescents. Imagine for a moment that the world is devoid of cows for six months or the race of cows has become extinct. How miserable and weak you will become! The world will abound with anaemic patients. O selfish ignorant man! Learn lessons from these practical Vedantins and become wise.

11. If a Yogi or Sannyasi who is able to keep up serenity of mind while living in the cave of a forest, complains of disturbance of mind when he lives in the bustle of a city, he has no control of mind. He has no inner spiritual strength. He is not a practical Vedantin. He has not Self-realisation. He has not attained the goal of life. He is still within the domains of Maya. A real Yogi or a practical Vedantin is one who can keep perfect calmness of mind while performing intense activities amidst the bustle of a city. This is the central teaching of the Gita. Lord Krishna says: “Remember me at all times and fight.” Lord Krishna imparted His instructions to Arjuna in the battlefield. Though Arjuna was despondent in the beginning, he gained spiritual strength and fought in the battlefield with perfect tranquillity of mind. He became a practical Vedantin eventually.

12. Behold the one homogeneous Self in all. Mentally repeat the formula or Mantra: “Om Ek Sat-chit-ananda Atma” whenever you perceive any form. Negate the illusory name and form and try to be one with the underlying, immortal essence. Serve all with Atma Bhava. Melt all illusory differences. Annihilate separateness. Destroy all unreasonable dislikes or prejudices. Mix with all. Include all. Embrace all. Share what you have (physical, mental, moral, spiritual) with all. Never remain idle even for a moment. Lead a life of intense activity, but in the midst of it keep always a calm mind and thus become a practical Vedantin. Glory to such practical Vedantins! May they radiate Joy, Peace and Love everywhere! May they move about as torch-bearers of Truth, Divine Light and Divine Splendour! May they demonstrate a life of practical Vedanta by their very exemplary living!

3. Who Am I?

I

This is a world of diversity. Intellects are different. Faces are different. Religions are different. Sounds are different. Faiths are different. Colours are different. Faculties are different. Tastes and temperaments are different. But one thing is common in all. Everyone of us wants Nitya Sukha (eternal happiness), infinite knowledge, immortality, freedom and independence. These things can be obtained by knowledge of the Self alone.

Everybody wants eternal happiness that is not mixed with sorrow and pain. Every effort is to achieve this happiness. But he does not know the place wherefrom he can get this supreme bliss. If you want to enjoy supreme bliss you will have to realise the Self, or get knowledge of Atman. The best means to acquire this knowledge is the enquiry of ‘Who am I?’ This enquiry has the potentiality of producing the quiescence of mind which will enable it to wade through this ocean of Samsara. It demands a subtle sharp, pure intellect, bold understanding and gigantic will. Enquiry of ‘Who am I?’ is the Vedantic method or Atma-Vichara.

This common place ‘I’ that everyone is glibly talking about and relishing acutely every moment of his life, from the babbling baby to the fabulous old man must be clearly analysed.

II

The physical body or the Sthula Sarira is not the ‘I’. It is the product of food. It comprises the material sheath. It is called by the name Annamaya Kosa or food-sheath. It lives on food and dies

without it. It is made up of seven components or Dhatus or five elements. It is a bundle of skin, flesh, fat, bones, marrow, blood and a lot of other filthy things.

It does not exist before birth or after death. It lasts only for a short intervening period. It is transient. It undergoes change such as childhood, youth and old age. It has the six changes (Shad Vikaras), viz., existence, birth, growth, modification, decay and death. It is not of one homogeneous essence. It is manifold, inert or insentient (Jada). It is an object of perception like the table or chair. You continue to live even when hands and legs are gone.

How can the body, a bundle of flesh, bone, fat and filth be the self-existent, eternally pure Atman, the knower, the silent witness of changes that take place in the body and all things, the inner ruler of all? That the Atman is certainly different from the body, its characteristics, its activities and its states is self-evident and needs no demonstration.

This perishable body is not 'I'. It remains as a log of wood after the Prana has departed from the body. It decomposes and disintegrates. It cannot move. It cannot talk. In dream or sleep state the body remains like a log of wood on the bed. Even if the leg is amputated, the 'I' still remains. The body is ever changing. It is Jada. It has a beginning and an end. It is the result of Karma. It is an effect of Avidya. It is a modification of Tamo-Guna. It is an object of Drishya (that can be seen by the physical sense). It has a cause. You say always: 'My body.' This indicates that you are different from the body and the body is your instrument. It indicates that the body is your property and the possessor is distinct from the body. You are holding it just as you hold a walking stick in the hand. Occultists have demonstrated in the West of their existence apart from the physical body by separating the astral body from the physical and showing it to the audience. In dreams you operate through the astral body without having any concern with the fleshy body. Sri Sankara, Hastamalaka and Vikramaditya had separated themselves from their physical bodies and entered other bodies (Parakaya Pravesha). Spirits materialize. Various photographs of spirits have been taken. They possess media and prescribe medicines as doctors in clinics in England. They typewrite and do various sorts of activities. These instances demonstrate that you are entirely distinct from the physical body and have mistaken it for the real 'I' which is ever pure, all-pervading, self-existent, self-luminous and self-contained, which has neither beginning, middle nor end, which is changeless, which is beyond time, space and causation and which exists in the past, present and future (Sat, Satta-samanya, Chit-samanya).

Yogi Sadasiva Brahman of Karur, Tamilnadu, who is the author of Advaitamanjari and who has written a Vritti or gloss on the Brahma Sutras, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, the Sufistic Fakirs of Multan, practically demonstrated their existence apart from the body. A Nawab cut one hand of Sadasiva Brahman. He was not the least affected as he was dwelling in Brahman or Supreme Self. He went away in a laughing mood. When Mansoor was skinned out, he did not express any pain at all. He uttered 'Analhaq' which corresponds to the Hindu 'Soham' (I am He). Every drop of blood that fell on the ground produced the sound Analhaq. So body is not 'I'. Body is like the shell of a coconut. It is a house in which the Atman lives.

Hence this body is not 'I'. How can you apply the term 'I' to the body which is inert and ignorant? If the body is the soul, your hopes and expectations must increase or decrease if the energy increases or decreases on account of good health or disease. But this is not so. Even if you

are in a dying condition your hopes do not come to an end. You still hope to get better. You do not like to part with your possessions. This clearly indicates that the soul in the body must be quite distinct from the body itself. It does not come to an end even if the body perishes.

You say, “I am a Brahmin. I am a householder. I am a Hindu. I am a Raja. I am a doctor.” This clearly proves that ‘I’ is a separate entity. Brahmin, householder, Hindu, Raja, doctor are various descriptive epithets. How can ‘I’ be a ‘Brahmin’ or a ‘householder’? ‘I’ is one thing. Brahmin, is entirely another thing. ‘I am’ gives the clue to the existence of the real Immortal Self or Atman. All the epithets are added by ignorance to ‘I am.’ There is an inherent feeling in everybody ‘I am,’ ‘I exist,’ ‘Aham Asmi.’ You can never think of your entire annihilation. No one feels ‘I am not,’ or ‘I do not exist.’ ‘I am’ is always constant. Body only always changes. It does not shine by itself. It only shines by the light of the ‘I am.’ It appears in the Jagrat state or waking condition and disappears in sleep.

The stupid man thinks he is the body. The man of book learning takes himself for a mixture of body, mind and soul. The sage who has Self-realisation knows he is distinct from the body, looks upon the eternal Immortal Atman as his own Self and feels ‘I am Brahman.’

You may know the whole Vedanta Sutras and the Upanishads by heart and yet there is no hope of salvation for you if you identity yourself with the physical body and if you do not attain the knowledge of the Self.

The identification of ‘I’ with the body causes the bondage. After the idea of the little ‘I’ vanishes, the mind beholds all things casually. After this idea of ‘I’ is destroyed through Atma-Jnana or the enquiry of ‘Who am I?’ this idea which is the source for all pains, the seed for birth and death—then this very destruction is the seat of stainless Jivanmukti state.

O foolish man! Do not identity yourself with this bundle of flesh, fat, bone, skin, blood and filth. Destroy this strong Deha-Adhyasa. The identification with the body is the root cause for human sufferings and for birth and death with its concomitant evils. If you give up this identification you will be freed from the rounds of births and deaths. Identify yourself with the self-effulgent Atman, the Self of all, the Inner Ruler of all beings, and thus attain eternal bliss and supreme peace.

III

Again, can the term ‘I’ be applied to the ten organs which vitalize the body, the five organs of knowledge, viz., ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose, the five organs of action, viz., organ of speech, hands, feet, genitals and anus? No. The ten inert organs are moved by the mind. They are the products of the Tanmatras. They are inert. They are not self-luminous. They are not self-sustained. They cannot work without the help of the mind. They have a beginning and an end. The five organs of knowledge are the effects of Sattva Guna. The five organs of action are the effects of Rajo-Guna. Even if the eyes, hands or feet are removed, the ‘I’ still remains. In deep sleep the senses do not function. Yet when you wake up you say: ‘I enjoyed a sound sleep last night.’ This blissful experience is not possible if the senses go to constitute the ‘I’. You say: ‘my eye.’ This gives the

clue that the organs are the instruments or the property and the possessor is distinct from the senses. Therefore organs are not the 'I'.

IV

Again, can the term 'I' be applied to Prana or the life-breath which vitalises the body? Prana also is not the 'I'. It is an effect of Rajo-Guna. It is Jada or insentient. When you are sleeping, your breath cannot welcome your friend and say: "Take your seat Mr. Ramakrishna." It does not welcome either its own weal or woe or those of others. The physical body permeated by Prana engages itself in all activities as if it were living. Prana has a beginning and an end. You can control or suspend the breath by the practice of Pranayama. This indicates that the controller is distinct from the controlled. Some Yogins bury themselves underneath the ground for a month. Their breathing gets completely suspended. Yet they wake up with a continuing sense of personality. Yogi Hari Singh who was buried in a box in Ranjit Singh's court for some months woke up with a continuing sense of individuality. The drowned man in whom there is total suspension of breathing is resuscitated by artificial breathing. He comes back to life with the continuing sense of personality. You say: 'my Prana.' This indicates that Prana is the instrument or property and the possessor is distinct from the Prana. Therefore Prana is not the 'I'.

V

Again, can the term 'I' be applied to the mind? Mind is also not the 'I'. It is Jada. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. All the thoughts are connected with the personality. The root of all thoughts is the 'I' thought. There is no thought without a thinker. All the thoughts are centred round this 'I' thought. Mind gropes in darkness. It forgets. It is changing every second. If food is withdrawn for a couple of days, it cannot think properly. There is no functioning of the mind during deep sleep state (Dridha Sushupti). It is full of impurities, Vasanas, Trishnas (cravings). It gets puzzled during anger. In fear it trembles. In shock it sinks. How can you take the mind then as the pure Self?

The mind is an effect of Sattva Guna. It is your instrument. You say: 'my mind.' The mind is therefore different from the 'I'. It has a beginning and an end. It is full of changing ideas. It is subject to modification. It is characterised by pain and suffering. It is an object cognisable by the self. It can never be identified with the object of knowledge. Again you can control the mind and the thoughts. The controller is different from the controlled (mind). It is as much your property and outside of you as the limbs, hands, etc., or the dress, tables, chairs or the house you live in. In sleep there is no mind. Yet, you wake up with a feeling of continuing sense of personality. In coma or state of unconsciousness you wake up with a feeling of continuing sense of personality. Watch the cases of delirium and those cases wherein partial and complete paralysis of mental functions take place. They lose their memory and other faculties partly or entirely, yet 'I' remains. Sometimes they regain their lost mind.

When your mind goes in the wrong direction to do some evil action it is checked or threatened by conscience or Self. This goes to prove that you are distinct from the mind. So the mind also is not the 'I'.

VI

Buddhi is subject to change. It is insentient. It is a limited thing. It is an object of the senses. It is not constantly present. It is not present during deep sleep. It has a beginning and an end. It is the effect of Sattva Guna. It is not self-existent or self-sustained. It borrows its light from the Self within. Therefore it cannot be the 'I'. Intellect is not the essential being of a man. It is an instrument only. It is finite. It is conditioned in time, space and causation. It is not self-luminous. It borrows its light from the self-luminous Atman within. It cannot solve the riddle of life or the riddle of the Universe. It will take you to the door of intuition. It will guide you sometimes. It may betray or mislead you at other times.

VII

Anandamaya Kosa is the Karana Sarira or causal body. It is also known by the name Moola Ajnana. This has its fullest play during deep sleep. When you return from sleep you have no illumination of spiritual knowledge. During waking and dreaming state also the Anandamaya Kosa has a partial play. This is a modification of Prakriti. It is endowed with changeable attributes. It is the effect of past good. It is Jada or insentient. It has a beginning and an end. Therefore Anandamaya Kosa is not the 'I'. When I say 'I', I really feel 'I am' or 'I exist,' (Sat aspect). I understand or comprehend that 'I am.' I feel: 'I am pure consciousness.' (This is Chit aspect). I feel: 'I am all bliss' (Ananda aspect). By careful analysis and by introspection this little 'I' dwindles into an airy nothing just as onion is reduced to nothing when the different layers are peeled off. But we get at the 'core' or 'essence,' the big infinite 'I', Sat-chit-ananda Brahman, the substratum or background for all these appearances, many little 'I's.

There is no 'I' for a block of stone. Thus proceeding with the analysis of 'I' and endeavouring to discover the core of the 'I' by peeling off, as it were, the gross sheaths, and then the fine, finer and finest sheaths, just as you peel off the different layers of the onion, we have found out now that the core or essential nature of 'I' is Sat-chit-ananda. The little 'I' or ego that was troubling you from time immemorial has dwindled now into an airy nothing and we have come across a very big infinite 'I' which exists in past, present and future, which is changeless, birthless, deathless and decayless, which is beyond time, space and causation. This is your real nature. That is your Svarupa. Just as you have forgotten the chain on your neck, so also you have forgotten your real nature. You have to know now your essential nature by removing the veil of Ajnana. That is all. It is not a thing to be achieved.

VIII

Albeit everything is transitory in this world, people purchase enormous plots of land, build bungalows in various places and erect multi-storeyed houses. They want to establish eternal life in this sense-universe. This is the Sat-aspect. This indicates that in essence they are immortal. Owing to Anyonya Adhyasa or mutual superimposition they have mistaken the Anitya (non-eternal) for the Nitya, Asuchi for Suchi (purity, pure Atman), Duhkha (misery) for the Sukha (happiness), Anatma (non-self) for Atman (pure Self). This Anyonya Adhyasa is due to Avidya. This is the reason why a man thinks 'I am holy, I am beautiful' even though he knows that the body is full of impurities. Even though a man knows that he will die at any moment, still he thinks that he will live

forever and makes very grand arrangements to perpetuate his life here. This is also the Sat-aspect of the essential Sat-chit-ananda.

Even a fool thinks he is very wise, because in essence he is all wisdom. This is the Chit-aspect of Sat-chit-ananda. A growing child is full of curiosities. It worries the mother whenever it comes in contact with any new thing, “Mamma, what is this?” There is an intense craving for knowledge. This is also the Chit aspect. Everybody desires for knowledge. This is Chit-aspect.

Everybody wants eternal life, infinite knowledge and infinite Ananda (bliss). This is Sat-chit-ananda. Everybody runs after pleasure. This is Ananda-aspect. You love a mango fruit because it gives you pleasure. Amongst all things, you love your Atman most. This gives the clue to the fact that the nature of the Atman must be Ananda Svarupa (bliss), Ananda Ghana (mass of bliss). Brahman is Sat-chit-ananda. Sat is Truth. That which exists in the past, present and future is Sat. It has no beginning, middle and end. It is Svayambhu (self-existent, self-created). It is that which never changes (Nirvikara, Kutastha). In Truth the world abides, from Truth the world comes forth, and in Truth the world is again dissolved. Truth is the only Essence or Substance that underlies and pervades this world of beings. Truth gives immortality and fearlessness (Amritatvam, Abhayam of Upanishads). Chit is self-knowledge. There are no Indriyas in Chit. It is self-luminous and imparts light to mind, Buddhi, Indriyas, skin of the body, sun moon, stars, fire, lightning and all objects. Ananda is Bliss itself or Self-delight. There is no enjoyer in Ananda. It is enjoyment itself. This ‘I’ is connected with existence, knowledge and bliss.

Everybody wishes to be independent. Everybody wants to be a supreme ruler. Everyone wishes others to be guided by and follow his wishes. No one likes to be guided by the wishes of others. Everybody in his heart of hearts really desires to rule over all others, if only he could. Everybody wishes to have no rival to himself. The real cause is that there is in you the immortal, self-effulgent soul or Atman which is one without a second, which has no rival, which is Inner Ruler, which is the support for the whole universe. In reality you are this Atman. That is the reason why you have such a feeling and desire. Suzerainship is quite natural to you. Suzerainty is an attribute of Atman. On account of ignorance you have mistaken the body for Atman, and you try to have no rivals in the body, in business, in office, in college, in games, in dominions and in any field of activity. You can have absolute suzerainty only by realising the Atman. Atma-svarajya only can make you absolutely independent. Atma-svarajya only can make you supreme ruler or absolute monarch of the whole universe. Therefore realise this wonderful Atman and become a veritable, mighty potentate of three worlds.

IX

What varies not nor changes in the midst of things that vary and change is different from them. Therefore the ‘I’ consciousness which persists unchanged and one throughout all the changes of the material body and of all its surroundings is different from them all. ‘I’ who played and leapt and slept as an infant in my parent’s lap so many years ago have now infants of mine. What unchanged and persistent particle of matter continues throughout these years in my physical organism? What identity is there between that infantine and this adult body of mine? But ‘I’ has not changed. It is the same. Talking of myself I always name myself as ‘I’ and nothing more or less. The

sheaths in which I am happy, I am young, I am old, I am black, I am white, I am a Brahmin, I am a Sannyasin, are incidents in the continuity of the 'I'. They are ever passing and varying. The 'I' remains the same. Conditions change, but they always surround the same 'I', the unchanging amidst the changing.

The house, the town, the country, the earth, the solar system which 'I' live in and with which I identify myself persist unchanged through all their changes. 'I' am never and can never be conscious of myself as having ever been born or dying or experiencing, a beginning or an end. 'I' is indeed the very foundation of all existence.

Ask anyone and everyone in the dark, behind a screen through closed door: "Who is that?" The first impulsive answer is: 'It is I.' Thus potent is the stamped impress, the unchecked outburst, the irresistible manifestation of the common 'I' that is expecting others to recognise it as surely as it recognises itself.

The immortality of the 'I' necessarily follows from and is part of the very nature of the 'I'. What does not change, what is not anything limited, of which we know neither the beginning nor end, that is necessarily immortal.

We say, "Our world, our consciousness." That another has a consciousness, that another has a world, that there is another at all, is still only our consciousness. As this holds true for every point, it follows that all these 'every ones' are only one, that all these 'one' consciousness, which makes all this appearance of mutual intelligence and converse possible is really only the one taking to itself in different guises.

Everybody has an innate feeling: 'I exist—Aham Asmi.' Close your eyes and imagine for a moment that you are dead. You can never do so. You will be still watching the dead body of yours that is lying down. This clearly shows that you are always the Sakshi or Drashta or the subject.

Birth and death belong to the physical body. Hunger and thirst are Dharma of Prana. Harsha and Soka (joy and grief) are attributes of the mind. Sleep belongs to the Anandamaya Kosa (Karana Sarira). You are entirely different from these sheaths.

You dream sometimes that you are dead and that your relatives are weeping. Even in that supposed death state, you see and hear them weeping. This clearly indicates that even after apparent death, life really persists. You exist even after the physical sheath is thrown out. That existence is Atman or the big 'I'.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (II-4, 13), you will find: "Then by what should we see whom?" This clearly indicates that Atman is not an object of perception. It is always the knowing subject. There is neither an agent nor an object of action, nor an instrument. In the physical plane only there is the Triputi or the triad, viz., seer, sight and seen. Who can know the knower? How should one know him by whom all this is known? You could not see the seer of sight; you could not hear the hearer of hearing; you could not perceive the perceiver of perception; you could not know the knower of knowledge.

Believe in the glory of your own Self. “Thou art That.” This Atman was never born and will never die. Abandon all superstitions and doubts. Scorch out all wrong Samskaras and wrong suggestions. Man or woman can realise this Atman. Burn all false differences. There is no low, no big, no great, no superior, no inferior, no animate, no inanimate. Behold your own Self everywhere. There is nothing but Self.

X

If you are equipped with the fourfold discipline, Viveka, Vairagya, Shad-Sampat and Mumukshutva, you will be able to make enquiry of ‘Who am I?’ If you have proper ethical training only you will be able to practice deep meditation. If you possess moral qualification, you will be able to comprehend the deep truths of the true ‘I.’ If you have moral stamina only you will be eligible to approach Brahman or the Absolute. Ethical discipline is an indispensable requisite for the enquiry of ‘Who am I?’ You can be a wonderful scientist or a philosopher of great repute without any moral qualification but you cannot be a student in the path of knowledge without ethical discipline. An immoral man can never realise his Self.

Give up identification of yourself with the physical body. Identification of one’s self with the body is the greatest crime. Give up planning and scheming. Abandon speculation. Relinquish cherished hopes and expectations and worldly ambitions. Give up completely thinking about yourself. Do not expect appreciation or approbation. Burn the desire for name and fame. Scorch the fears of disease and public criticism. Do not hoard up wealth or anything. Do not care for tomorrow. Do not pay any attention to insults or staging remarks or abuses. Become impervious to ridicules and rebukes. Give up your rights and claims to worldly possessions. Burn all worldly attachments. You can enter now the vast domain of eternal bliss or kingdom of Truth. You will be the emperor of the three worlds. All Devas will pay their homage unto you now.

Wake up from the dream of forms. Give up this clinging to false names and forms. Do not be deceived by these illusory names and forms. Always cling to the solid, living Reality only. Love your Atman only. Atman or Brahman is the living Truth. Atman only persists. Live in Atman. Become Brahman. This is real life.

XI

The mind is like a wheel which revolves endlessly with tremendous velocity. It generates new thoughts with every revolution. This wheel is set in motion by the vibration of psychic Prana or subtle Prana.

The idea of ‘I’ is the seed of the tree of mind. The sprout which at first germinates from this seed of Ahamkara originates without form and is ascertainable only by internal experience. This sprout is Buddhi or intellect. From this sprout the ramifying branches called Sankalpas or thoughts take their origin.

Mark how one Sankalpa expands into many Sankalpas (Vistara) in a short time. Suppose you get a Sankalpa to have tea-party for your friends. One thought of tea invites instantaneously the thoughts of sugar, milk, tea-cups, tables, chairs, table cloth, napkins, spoons, sweetmeats, salted

things, etc. So this world is nothing but the expansion of Sankalpas. The expansion of thoughts of the mind towards objects is bondage. Renunciation of Sankalpas is liberation (Moksha). You must be ever watchful in nipping the Sankalpas in the bud. Then only you will be really happy. Daily chop off the branches of this dire tree of mind and finally destroy the tree at its root completely. If you destroy the idea of 'I' at the root of the tree (mind), then it will not again spring up. The chopping off of the branches is only a secondary thing. The primary thing is the eradication of the tree at its root.

Sankalpa only is Samsara. Its destruction is Moksha. It is only Sankalpa destroyed beyond resurrection that constitutes the immaculate Brahmic seat. As the cause of bondage is Sankalpa you should root it away from you as completely as possible. This destruction of Sankalpa should be intelligently practiced. Do not become of the form of objects or the knower enjoying the same. Where there exists conception of the objects and the enjoyer of the same, you should gradually and at all times destroy this Sankalpa. After destroying all Sankalpas become That which remains.

Thoughts gain strength by repetition. If you entertain an evil thought or a good thought once, this evil thought or good thought has a tendency to recur again. Thoughts crowd again. Just as the birds of the same feather flock together, so also if you entertain one evil thought all sorts of evil thoughts join together and attack you. If you entertain any good thought all good thoughts join together.

Like attracts like. If you entertain an evil thought that thought attracts all sorts of evil thoughts from others. You pass on the thoughts to others also. Thought moves. Thought is a living dynamic force. Thought is a thing. If you allow your mind to dwell on a sublime thought this thought will attract good thoughts from others. You pass on that good thought to others. You pollute the world with your bad thoughts. You help the world with your good thoughts. When you reach the spiritual summit of thoughtlessness you will reach the abode of Immortality and eternal peace and supreme bliss.

Therefore this 'I' should be identified with that which remains after eliminating all the above five illusory sheaths. It is by nature Sat-chit-ananda. This is the Immortal Soul, Atman or Brahman. Through ignorance, through superimposition you have mistaken these five illusory sheaths for the pure immortal Atman. Transcend the five sheaths by attaining knowledge of the Self and be free. Rest in your own Sat-chit-ananda Svarupa by knowing 'Who am I?'

4. Silence

1. Once the disciple Bhaskali approached his Guru, Bhava, and asked him where that eternal, the Supreme Infinite, the Brahman of the Upanishads is. The master spoke not. The disciple asked him again and again but the master did not open his mouth. He kept perfect silence. At last the teacher said: "I have been telling you again and again but you do not understand me. What am I to do? That Brahman, the Infinite, the Eternal cannot be explained but by deep silence know it. There is no other place for Him to dwell in, but the one eternal deep silence! Ayam Atma Santah—This Atman is silence."

2. Silence is Atman. Silence is Brahman. Silence is Truth. Silence is immortal Soul. Silence is God. Silence is the substratum for this body, mind, Prana and senses. Silence is the bliss or background for this sense-universe. Silence is Power. Silence is a living Force. Silence is the only Reality. The peace that passeth all understanding is Silence. The goal of your life is Silence. The aim of life is Silence. The purpose of your existence is Silence. Silence is within. It can be felt or realised by silencing the boisterous mind. If you can feel it within, you can surely express it without.

3. The message of the desert Sahara is Silence. The message of Himalayas is Silence. The message of the Avadhoot who lives stark naked at the icy Gangotri or Kailas is Silence. The message of Lord Dakshinamurthy to his four disciples Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanatkumara was Silence. When the heart is full, when you get overjoy, there is silence. Who can describe the glory of this silence?

4. There is no healing balm better than silence for those persons who have a wounded heart from failures, disappointments and losses. There is no soothing panacea better than silence for those who have wounded nerves from the turmoil of life from friction, rupture and frequent domestic quarrels.

5. In deep sleep you are in close touch with this stupendous silence, but there is the veil of Avidya. The silence that you enjoy during deep sleep and the silence that you experience at dead of night give the clue to the existence of that ocean of Silence or Brahman.

6. Silence is golden. Silence is more eloquent than words. Seers and sages do not talk. Silence is the means of communication. This is strange but powerful mode of conversation. Real aspirants who are pure and who live with sages only know this unique language of Silence. In that stupendous silence you will find the proof of the existence of God. Learn to enter into the silence daily in the morning at 4 a.m. for one hour, by withdrawing the senses and mind from the external objects. The language of God is silence. Try to learn this language of silence. Listen to its soundless voice by stilling the mind. Hear the voice of the silence with rapt attention. It will guide you. It will remove your doubts. It will inspire you. Learn all about Silence from the new-born babe and become wise.

7. In the beginning when darkness was rolling over darkness there was Silence only. This Silence is Sat. This Silence is Chit. This Silence is Ananda. This Silence is pure, all-pervading, invisible Consciousness. Maya lies hidden in a corner of this Silence in a seed-state during cosmic Pralaya. In the beginning of Maha Kalpa, Brahman wills and a vibration (Spandana) arises. The equilibrium of three Gunas is thereby disturbed. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas manifest. Then the Samsaric wheel is set in motion. It is the Rajas that generates much activities and much noise in the world.

8. In common parlance to sit quite without talking to anybody is silence. If your friend does not write to you for a long time you will say: "My friend is keeping icy silence. I do not know why?" If anybody does not talk in a big lecture hall for some time when there is a thrilling lecture, you say: "There was pin drop silence last evening when the philosopher delivered a lecture." When the boys make much noise in the class, the teacher says to the boys: "Silence please." When you come across

two Sadhus, one Sadhu tells: “The other Sadhu is a Mouni. He is my friend. He is observing the vow of silence for the last six years.” This is all physical silence.

9. If you do not allow the eyes to see objects and if you withdraw them from objects through the practice of Pratyahara or Dama, this is silence of that particular sense, eye. If you do not allow the ears to hear any sound it is silence of that particular Indriya. If you observe complete fast on Ekadasi days without taking even a drop of water, it is silence of the Indriya tongue. If you do not perform any work and if you sit on Padmasana for three hours, it is silence of the feet and hands.

10. What is really wanted is silence of the bubbling mind. You can observe the vow of silence but the mind will be building images. Sankalpa will be cropping up. Chitta will be developing memories. Imagination, reasoning, reflection and various other functionings of the mind will be going on continuously. How can you have real peace or silence now? Intellect should cease functioning. The inner astral sense should be at perfect rest. All the waves of the mind should completely subside. The mind should rest in the Ocean of Silence or Brahman. Then only you can enjoy real everlasting Silence.

11. Of course much depends upon the practice. You know that practice makes man perfect. Feel the thrill of extreme joy that dawns when you near the goal. You will experience a wonderful calm now. Drink the nectar in the deep silence. In the profound silence, mysteries of Atman will be revealed unto you like an Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. Avidya and Maya and their effects, Moha fear, etc., will take to their heels. There will be light, knowledge, purity and bliss only everywhere.

12. Purify the mind and meditate. Be still and know that you are God. Calm the mind. Silence the bubbling thoughts and surging emotions. Plunge deep into the innermost recess of your heart and enjoy the magnanimous Silence. Mysterious is this Silence. Enter into Silence. Know that Silence. Become Silence itself. Become a Maha Mouni. You are a Jivanmukta or liberated Sage now.

CHAPTER VI

PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

1. Auxiliaries

(a) What Is Meditation

1. Meditation is the flow of continuous thought on one thing or God or Atman. Meditation is the keeping up of one idea of God alone always like the continuous flow of oil (Taila-dharavat). Yogins call this ‘Dhyana.’ Jnanins term this ‘Nididhyasana.’ Bhaktas style this ‘Bhajan.’ Concentration is fixing the mind on a point or object, either internal (in the body) or external (on any outside object or image). Meditation follows concentration. In Dhyana all worldly thoughts are

shut out from the mind. The mind is filled or saturated with Divine thoughts, with the Divine Glory, the Divine Presence.

(b) Place

2. Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key. Do not allow anybody to enter the room. Keep it holy. Burn incense in the morning and evening. Keep a photo of Lord Krishna, Siva, Rama, Devi or your Ishta Devata or Guru. Place your Asana (seat) in front of the picture. Keep some books also such as the Gita, the Ramayana and other scriptures. When you repeat the Mantra or the Name of the Lord, the powerful vibrations will be lodged in the ether of the room. In six months' time you will feel peace and purity in the atmosphere of the room. Whenever your mind is disturbed by worldly influence, sit in the room and repeat the Name of the Lord for half an hour; then you will find an entire change in the mind immediately. Practise and feel the soothing spiritual influence yourself. Nothing is like spiritual Sadhana. You will find a local Mussoorie, Himalayas, in your own house.

3. Solitude and intense meditation are two important requisites for Self-realisation. The banks of the Ganga or the Narmada, Himalayan scenery, lovely flower-garden, sacred temple—these are the places which elevate the mind in concentration and meditation. Have recourse to them.

4. A solitary place, spiritual vibratory conditions as at Uttarkasi, Rishikesh, Badri Narayan, a cool place and temperate climate—these conditions are indispensably requisite for concentration of mind. Just as the salt melts in water, the Sattvic mind melts in silence during meditation in Brahman, its Adhishthana (substratum).

(c) Time

5. Get up at 4 in the morning in Brahmamuhurta. It is very favourable for spiritual contemplation and to start worship of God. In the early morning the mind is calm pure and quite refreshed after slumber. The mind is like a blank sheet of paper and comparatively free from worldly Samskaras (mental impressions). It can be moulded very easily at this time. The atmosphere also is charged with more Sattva at this particular time. Wash your hands, feet and face with cold water if you find it difficult to take a bath. This will suffice.

6. Always choose that part of the day or night when your mind is clear and when you are least likely to be disturbed. You can have a sitting just before retiring to bed. The mind will be calm at this time.

7. You can have good meditation on Sundays because this is a holiday, and the mind is free. Do vigorous meditation on Sundays. You can have good meditation when you live on milk and fruits alone or when you fast. Use your commonsense always and try to bring out good result in meditation.

(d) Where to Concentrate

8. Concentrate gently either on the lotus of the heart (Anahata Chakra) or at the space between the two eyebrows (Trikuti). Close your eyes.

9. The seat of mind is Ajna Chakra at Trikuti. The mind can be easily controlled if you concentrate on Trikuti. Bhaktas should concentrate on the heart. Yogins and Vedantins should concentrate at Ajna Chakra.

10. Crown of the head (Sahasrara) is another seat for concentration. Some Vedantins concentrate here. Some Yogins concentrate at the tip of the nose (Nasikagra Drishti). Stick to one centre in concentration. Cling to it tenaciously. If you concentrate on heart, stick to it. Never change it. Guru will select the centre for concentration, if you are a student of faith. If you are a man of self-reliance, you can select it for yourself.

(e) Yogic Diet

11. Take Mitahara, Sattvic diet. Overloading the stomach with rice, vegetables, Dhal and bread brings sleep and interferes with Sadhana. A glutton or a sensualist, a dullard or a lazy man cannot practice meditation. A diet on milk renders the body very, very light. You can sit on one Asana for hours together with ease and comfort. If you feel weak, you can take for a day or two a little rice and milk or barley and milk or any light diet. Those who are in the field of service and who do platform lectures and other intense spiritual propagandic activities need solid, substantial food.

(f) Asana

12. Asana steadies the body; Bandhas and Mudras make the mind firm; Pranayama makes the body light; Nadi-suddhi produces steadiness of the mind. Having acquired these qualifications you will have to fix the mind on Brahman. Then only meditation will go on steadily with ease and happiness. For meditation, concentration and Japa, Padmasana or Siddhasana is prescribed. For general health and keeping up of Brahmacharya, Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Matsyasana, Paschimottanasana are good. A short description of these Asanas and the benefits that are derived by the practice of them are given in Chapter VIII of this book.

2. Benefits of Meditation

1. This world is full of miseries and sufferings. If you want to get rid of the pains and afflictions of this Samsara, you must practice meditation. Meditation is the pathway to Divinity. It is the royal road to the Kingdom of Brahman. It is a mysterious ladder which reaches from earth to heaven (Vaikuntha or Kailasa or Brahman) from error to truth, from darkness to light, from pain to Bliss, from restlessness to abiding Peace, from ignorance to Knowledge, from mortality to Immortality. Meditation leads to knowledge of the Self which brings about the eternal peace, supreme Bliss. Meditation prepares you for the integral experience or direct intuitive knowledge.

2. Truth is Brahman. Truth is Atman. Truth is quite pure and simple. You cannot realise the Truth without reflection and meditation. Be silent, Know thyself. Know That. Melt the mind in That.

3. Without the help of meditation you cannot attain knowledge of the Self. Without its aid you cannot grow into the Divine state. Without it you cannot liberate yourself from the trammels of the mind and attain Immortality. If you do not practice meditation, the supreme splendour and faceless glories of Atman will remain hidden from you. Tear the veils that cover the soul by practicing regular meditation. Rend asunder the five sheaths that screen the Atman by constant meditation and then attain the final beatitude of life.

4. The fire of meditation annihilates all foulness due to vice. Then suddenly comes knowledge or Divine Wisdom which directly leads to Mukti or final emancipation.

5. There are many valuable trainings of the mind which are essential to mental culture, for instance, the training of the memory, the cultivation of reflection, discrimination, Vichara or enquiry of 'Who am I?' The practice of meditation itself is a potent clarifier of memory. The practice of memory-culture powerfully helps the attainment of meditation.

6. Meditation is a powerful tonic. It is a mental and nervine tonic as well. The holy vibrations penetrate all the cells of the body and cure the diseases of the body. Those who meditate save doctor's bills. The powerful, soothing waves that arise during meditation exercise a benign influence on the mind, nerves, organs and cells of the body. The Divine energy freely flows like Taila-dhara (flow of oil from one vessel to another) from the feet of the Lord to the different systems of the Sadhaka (aspirant).

7. If you can meditate for half an hour, you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual strength in the battle of life for one week through the force of this meditation. Such is the beneficial result of meditation. As you have to move with different minds of peculiar natures in your daily life, get the strength and peace from the meditation and you will have no trouble and worry then.

8. A Yogi who meditates regularly has a magnetic and charming personality. Those who come in contact with him are much influenced by his sweet voice, powerful speech, lustrous eyes, brilliant complexion, strong healthy body, good behaviour, virtuous qualities and Divine nature. Just as a grain of salt dropped in a basin of water dissolves and becomes distributed throughout the whole water, just as sweet fragrance of jessamine pervades the air, so also his spiritual aura becomes infiltrated to the minds of others. People draw joy, peace and strength from him. They are inspired by his speech and get elevation of mind by mere contact with him.

3. Kinds of Meditation

1. There are different kinds of meditation. A particular kind is best suited for a particular mind. The kind of meditation varies according to taste, temperament, capacity and type of mind of the individual. A devotee meditates on his tutelary deity or Ishta Devata. A Raja Yogi meditates on the special Purusha or Isvara who is not touched by the afflictions, desires and Karmas. A Hatha

Yogi meditates on the Chakras and their presiding deities. A Jnani meditates on his own Self or Atman. You will have to find out yourself the kind of meditation that is suitable for you. If you are not able to do this, you will have to consult a teacher or preceptor who has attained Self-realisation. He will be able to know the nature of your mind and the correct method of meditation for you.

2. The mind assumes the form of the object it cognises. Then only perception is possible. A Bhakta constantly meditates on the form of his tutelary deity. The mind always takes the form of the deity. When he is established in his meditation, when he attains the stage of Para-Bhakti or supreme devotion he sees his Ishta Devata only everywhere. The names and forms vanish. A devotee of Lord Krishna sees Lord Krishna only everywhere and experiences the state described in the Gita: “Vasudevah sarvam iti—Everything is Vasudeva (Krishna) only.” A Jnani or a Vedantin sees his own Self or Atman everywhere. The world of names and forms vanishes from his view. He experiences the utterances of the seers of the Upanishads: “Sarvam khalvidam Brahma—All indeed is Brahman.”

3. Meditation is of two main kinds, viz., Saguna (concrete) meditation and Nirguna (abstract) meditation. In concrete meditation the Yogic student concentrates on the form of the Lord Krishna, Rama, Siva, Hari, Gayatri or Sri Devi. In abstract meditation he concentrates the whole energy of the mind on one idea of God or Atman and avoids comparisons of memories and all other ideas. The one idea fills the whole mind.

4. When you see the concrete figure of Lord Krishna with open eyes and meditate, it is the concrete form of meditation. When you reflect over the image of Lord Krishna by closing your eyes, it is also concrete form of meditation but it is more abstract. When you meditate on the infinite abstract light it is still more abstract meditation. The former two types belong to Saguna form of meditation, the latter to Nirguna form. Even in Nirguna meditation there is a concrete form in the beginning for fixing the mind. Later on this form vanishes and meditator and meditated become one. Meditation proceeds from the mind.

5. Saguna meditation is meditation on a Murty or form of the Lord. This is a concrete form of meditation for people of devotional temperament. This is meditation with Gunas or attributes of God. Repeat the Name of the Lord or pure Om. Think of His attributes Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, etc. Your mind will be filled with purity. Enthroned the Lord in the lotus of your heart amidst a blazing light. Mentally think of His feet, legs, chest, head, hands and the ornaments and dress and again come to His feet. Again and again repeat this process.

6. This is one kind of meditation for beginners. Sit on Padmasana in a solitary room. Close your eyes. Meditate on the effulgence in the sun, splendour in the moon, glory in the stars, beauty in the sky.

7. Meditate on the magnanimity of the ocean, its infinite nature. Compare the ocean with the Infinite Brahman, the waves, foams and blocks of ice to the various names and forms. Identify yourself with the ocean. Become silent. Expand. Expand.

8. This is another kind of meditation. Meditate on the Himalayas. Imagine that the River Ganga takes its origin from the icy region of Gangotri, near Uttarkashi, flows through Rishikesh,

Benares and enters the Ganga Sagar in the Bay of Bengal. Himalayas, Ganga and the sea, these three thoughts only should occupy the mind. First take your mind to icy Gangotri, then along the Ganga and finally to the sea. Then again take it to the icy Gangotri. Rotate the mind in this manner for 15 minutes.

9. Imagine that there is a fine garden with lovely flowers. In one corner there are Jessamine flowers. In another corner there are beautiful cabbage roses. In the third corner there is the 'lady of the night.' In the fourth corner there are Champak flowers. First meditate on Jessamine. Then take the mind to the rose, then to the 'lady of the night' and finally to the Champak. Again rotate the mind as above. Do this again and again for 15 minutes. Gross meditation like this will prepare the mind to finer abstract meditation on subtle ideas.

10. Have the figure Om in front of you. Concentrate on this. Do Trataka also with eyes (steady gazing without winking till tears flow profusely). This is both Saguna and Nirguna meditation (with and without attributes). Keep a picture of Om in your meditation room. You can do Puja for this symbol of Brahman. Burn incense, etc., and offer flowers. This suits the modern educated persons.

11. This is abstract meditation on Nirguna Brahman. Repeat Om mentally with Bhava (feeling). Associate the ideas of Sat-chit-ananda, Purity, Perfection, 'All-joy I am,' 'All-bliss I am.'

12. 'There is no world. There is neither body nor mind. There is only one Chaitanya (pure consciousness). I am that pure consciousness.' This is Nirguna meditation (without attributes).

13. Meditation on Mahavakyas is tantamount to meditation on Om. You can take up either 'Aham Brahma Asmi—I am Brahman' or 'Tat Tvam Asi—That thou art.' These are the Mahavakyas or the great sentences of the Upanishads. Meditate on their significance. Deny or negate or throw out the Kosas and identify with the one Essence that lies behind them.

14. Meditate. Purify your mind. Practise concentration in a solitary room. Then squeeze out the Upanishads and the Gita from your brain. Do not depend upon imperfect commentaries. If you are sincere you will understand the real Sankalpa (thoughts) of the Rishis of the Upanishads and Lord Krishna, what they really meant when they uttered those wise Slokas (verses) in scriptures.

15. Unfold the Divinity that is lurking in your heart by concentration and meditation. Do not waste your time. Meditate. Meditate. Do not lose even a single minute. Meditation will remove all the miseries of life. That is the only way. Meditation is the enemy of the mind. It brings about Mano-nasa or the annihilation of the mind.

4. Obstacles in Meditation

1. Laziness (Alasya) and fickleness of mind are two great obstacles in meditation. Light Sattvic diet and the practice of Pranayama will remove laziness. Do not overload the stomach. Walk briskly in your compound hither and thither for half an hour. As soon as you have made a firm resolve, you must carry it out promptly at any cost. You will remove fickleness of mind and develop willpower.

2. Pray. Combat lust and ambition, the two chief obstacles in Yogic practices. Discipline the body, mind and Indriyas. Sit. Abstain from worldly objects. Concentrate. Meditate. Realise.

3. Social nature is good for doing Karma Yoga. But it is extremely bad for practicing Dhyana Yoga. It drags you out. It makes your mind restless. It invites many friends who disturb you in a variety of ways.

4. Rajas and Tamas try to obstruct meditation. The mind that was calm owing to the preponderance of Sattva during the course of meditation begins to tremble and quiver owing to the entry of Rajas in excess. Sankalpas (thoughts) increase in number. Restlessness increases. Thoughts of action manifest. Planning and scheming come in. Take a little rest. Again do Japa. Pray and meditate. Take a little walk.

5. Laya, Vikshepa, Kashaya and Rasasvada are the other four obstacles. Laya is sleepiness. Vikshepa is excessive tossing of mind from one object to another object. This is the excessive monkey-nature of the mind. Kashaya is Goodha Vasana (hidden subtle desires). Rasasvada is the bliss of Savikalpa Samadhi (lower Samadhi). This itself is an obstacle so long as it prevents you from enjoying the Highest Nirvikalpa Bliss. Vichara, discrimination, prayer, Pranayama, further earnestness and struggle in meditation will remove the above four obstacles.

6. Samsaya Bhavana (doubt), Asambhavana (another kind of doubt) and Vipareeta Bhavana (wrong feeling that 'I am the body') are three other obstacles. Sravana (hearing of the scriptures) will remove Samsaya Bhavana. Manana (meditation) will remove Asambhavana. Nididhyasana (meditation) and Sakshatkara (realisation) will remove Vipareeta Bhavana.

7. Disease, indifference in the mind, Bhranti, imaginary fear, tendency of the mind to run outside to enjoy objects, drowsiness, falling from a particular elevated state in spiritual Sadhana are some other obstacles. Carefulness, thoughtlessness, increased Vairagya, rest, intense application of Sadhana will obviate these obstacles.

8. Just as clouds screen and obstruct the sun, the cloud of sickness, the cloud of gloom and despair will stand on your way of practice. Even then you must not leave the practice of Japa, concentration and meditation. These small clouds of sickness and despair will pass off soon. Give the suggestion to the mind: 'Even this will pass away.' Just as you do not leave your food even for a day, so also you should not leave off your spiritual practice even for a day. The mind is ever ready to deceive you and to stop you from the practice. Do not hear the shrill voice of the mind. Hear the sweet, silent voice of the soul.

9. Never wrestle with the mind. Do not use any violent efforts in concentration. Relax all muscles and nerves. Relax the brain. Gently think of the Lord. Slowly repeat your Guru Mantra with Bhava and meaning. Still the bubbling mind. Silence the thoughts.

10. Make no violent efforts to control the mind, but rather allow it to run along for a while and exhaust its efforts. It will take advantage of the opportunity and will jump around like an unchained monkey first, until it gradually slows down and looks to you for orders. It may take some time to tame down at first, but each time you try, it will come around to you in a short time.

11. If evil thoughts enter the mind do not use your will force in driving them. You will lose your energy only. You will tax your will only. You will fatigue yourself. The greater the efforts you make, the more the evil thoughts will return with redoubled force. They will return more quickly also. The thoughts will become more powerful. Be indifferent. Keep quite. They will pass off soon. Or substitute good counter thoughts (Pratipaksha Bhavana method), or think of the picture of God and the Mantra again and again forcibly or pray.

12. Dash cold water in the face to drive off drowsiness. Stand up for 15 minutes. Or lean upon an improvised swing for 10 minutes and move yourself to and fro. Do 10 or 20 mild Kumbhaka Pranayamas. Do Sirshasana or Mayurasana. Take only milk and fruits at night. By these methods you can combat sleep. Stroll about for 10 minutes. Keep light burning if sleep comes.

13. Very often depression comes in meditation in neophytes owing to the effect of previous Samskaras, influence of astral entities, evil spirits, bad company, cloudy days, bad stomach and loaded bowels. It must be removed quickly by cheerful thoughts, a brisk walk, singing, laughing, prayer, Pranayama, purgative and a dose of carminative mixture.

14. When the bee finds itself that its feet are stuck in the honey, it slowly licks its feet several times and then flies away with joy. Even so extricate yourself from the mind's sticking and clinging to this body and children—owing to Raga and Moha (attachment and attraction) through Vairagya (dispassion) and meditation, and fly away with joy from this cage of flesh and bone to the source, Brahman or Absolute.

15. No more words. Enough of discussions and heated debates. Retire into a solitary room. Close your eyes. Have deep silent meditation. Feel His Presence. Repeat His Name Om with fervour, joy and love. Fill your heart with Prema (love). Destroy the Sankalpas, thoughts, whims, fancies and desires when they arise from the surface of the mind. Withdraw the wandering mind and fix it on the Lord. Now Nishtha, meditation, will become deep and intense. Do not open your eyes. Do not stir from your seat. Merge in Him. Dive deep into the innermost recess of the heart. Plunge into the shining Atman (Soul) within. Drink the nectar of Immortality. Enjoy the silence now. I shall leave you there alone. Nectar's son! Rejoice. Rejoice. Peace. Peace. Silence. Silence. Glory. Glory!

5. Hints on Meditation

1. What does a passionate man do? He repeats the same ignominious act again and again and fills his stomach as many times as he can. What does an aspirant with burning desire for Self-realisation do? He takes a little milk and repeats the process of meditation again and again whole day and night and enjoys the eternal bliss of the Self. Both are busy in their own way. The former is caught up in the wheel of births and deaths (Samsara Chakra), and the latter attains Immortality.

2. A glutton or a sensualist, a dullard or a lazy man cannot practice meditation. He who has controlled the tongue and other organs, who has an acute acumen, who eats, drinks and sleeps in moderation, who has destroyed selfishness, lust, greed and anger, can practice meditation and attain success in Samadhi.

3. Just as you require food for the body, so also you require food for the soul in the shape of prayers, Japa, Kirtan, meditation, etc. Just as you are agitated when you do not get food in time, so also you will be agitated when you do not pray in the morning and evening at the proper time if you keep up the practice of prayer and Japa for some time. The soul also wants its food at the proper time. The food for the soul is more essential than the food for the body. Therefore do your prayers, Japa and meditation regularly.

4. When you are a neophyte in meditation, start repeating some sublime Slokas, Stotras (hymns) for ten minutes as soon as you sit for meditation. This will elevate the mind. The mind can be easily withdrawn from the worldly objects. Then stop this kind of thinking also and fix the mind on one idea only by repeated and strenuous efforts. Then Nishtha will ensue.

5. You must have a mental image of God or Brahman (concrete or abstract) before you begin to meditate.

6. When you start a fire you heap up some straw, piece of paper, thin piece of wood. The fire gets extinguished quickly. You blow it again several times through the mouth or the blow-pipe. After some time it becomes a small conflagration. You can hardly extinguish it now even with great efforts. Even so, in the beginning of meditation, the neophytes fall down from meditation into their old grooves. They will have to lift up their mind again and again and fix it on the Lakshya. When meditation becomes very deep and steady, they get established in God eventually. Then the meditation becomes Sahaja (natural). It becomes habitual. Use the blow-pipe of Teevra Vairagya and intense meditation to kindle the fire of meditation.

7. You will have to note very carefully whether you remain stationary in the spiritual path even after many years of spiritual practice or whether you are progressing. Sometimes you may go downwards also if you are not vigilant and careful, if your Vairagya wanes and if you are slack in your meditation. Reaction may set in. Some practise meditation for a period of 15 years and yet they have not made any real progress at all. Why? This is due to lack of earnestness, Vairagya, keen longing for liberation and intense, constant Sadhana (spiritual practice).

8. During meditation when your mind is more Sattvic you will be inspired. The mind will be composing fine poems and solving some problems of life. Stamp out these Sattvic Vrittis also. This is all dissipation of mental energy. Soar higher and higher to Atman only.

9. You will get the full Ananda of the Divine Glory only when you dive deep, when you merge deep into silent meditation. When you are on the borderland of Divinity or God, when you are at the gate or threshold of God, when you are in the outskirts, you will not get the maximum peace and bliss.

10. Before saturating the mind with the thoughts of Brahman you will have to assimilate the Divine ideas first. Assimilation first and then saturation. Then comes realisation at once without a moment's delay. Remember the triplet always: 'Assimilation—Saturation—Realisation.'

11. There is always a complaint amongst the aspirants: "I am meditating for the last 12 years. I have not made any improvement. I have no realization." Why is it so? What is the reason?

They have not plunged themselves in deep meditation, into the innermost recesses of the hearts. They have not properly assimilated and saturated the mind with the thoughts of God. They have not done regular systematic Sadhana. They have not disciplined the Indriyas perfectly. They have not collected all the outgoing rays of the mind. They have not made the self-determination: "I will realise this very second." They have not given the entire cent per cent of their mind towards God. They have not kept an unceasing flow of Divine Consciousness.

12. Meditate for 2 or 3 hours. If you get tired, take rest for half an hour. Take a cup of milk and then again sit for meditation. Repeat the process of meditation again and again. You can have a stroll in the verandah in the evening. You need not go for a walk when you are meditating seriously. Do not allow the mind to have any worldly thought even for a few minutes. The above method will keep the mind very, very busy and entrap it within a short period. Practise this and you can enter into Samadhi within forty days. Householders can convert a room into a forest and can achieve this end at their very threshold. You will be able to sit continuously even for 14 hours at a stretch after some time.

13. You will have to pass through six stages of meditation and finally you will enter into perfect Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious state. Form-perception and reflex-perception will totally vanish. There is neither meditation nor meditated now. The meditator and the meditated have become one. You will attain now the highest knowledge, eternal and supreme peace. This is the goal of life. This is the aim of existence. This is the final beatitude of life. You are an established sage or illumined Jivanmukta now. You are liberated while living. Hence you are called a Jivanmukta. You are absolutely free from pain, sorrow, fear, doubt and delusion. You have become identical with Brahman. The bubble has become the ocean. The river has joined the ocean and has become the ocean. All differences and distinctions will totally vanish. You will experience: "I am the Immortal Self. All indeed is Brahman. There is nothing but Brahman."

CHAPTER VII

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. When your house is on fire how daringly you enter the house to take your child who is sleeping in the room! Even so you must be very courageous when you tread on the spiritual path. You must be absolutely fearless. You must not have the least attachment to your body. Then only you will have Self-realisation quickly. Timid people are absolutely unfit for the spiritual path.

2. If there are mangoes on the top of a big tree, you do not jump all at once to pluck them. It is impossible. You gradually climb up the tree by getting hold of different branches and then reach the top of the tree. Even so you cannot jump all at once to the summit of the spiritual ladder. You will have to place your foot with caution on each rung of the ladder. You will have to practice Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana. Then only you will reach the highest rung of the ladder of Yoga, viz., Samadhi. If you are a student of Vedanta you will have to equip yourself with the four means. First you will have to do Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. Then only you will attain Brahma Sakshatkara. If you are a student of Bhakti Yoga, you will have to

practice the nine modes of Bhakti, viz., Sravana, Kirtana, Smarana, Padasevana, Archana, Vandana, Dasya, Sakhya and Atma-nivedana. Then only you will attain the state of Para-bhakti.

3. If the chicken and fowls run hither and thither to eat various sorts of rubbish, what does the owner of the poultry do? He gives a slight tap on their heads and throws before them some grains to eat. Gradually they leave their dirty habit of eating filth. Even so this mind runs hither and thither to eat filthy things and enjoy five kinds of sensual objects. Give a tap on its head and make it taste gradually the spiritual bliss by practice of Japa and meditation.

4. It takes a long time for the charcoal to catch fire but gun-powder can be ignited within the twinkling of an eye. Even so it takes a long time for igniting the fire of knowledge for a man whose heart is impure. But an aspirant with great purity of heart gets knowledge of the Self within the twinkling of an eye, within the time taken to squeeze a flower by the fingers.

5. Maya is a very huge saw. Lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy, hatred, egoism, etc., are the teeth of this huge saw. All worldly-minded persons are caught up in the teeth of this saw and are crushed. Those who are endowed with purity, humility, love, dispassion, devotion and enquiry are not hurt. They escape through the divine grace. They pass smoothly below the saw and reach the other side of immortality.

6. Winter is very congenial for vigorous meditation. You will not get tired even if you meditate for hours together at a stretch. But in the morning hours laziness tries its level best to overpower you. If you cover yourself with one or two warm blankets you feel quite comfortable. You do not want to get up in the early morning even though the repeated alarm wakes you up again and again. You decide now: "Let me sleep for fifteen minutes more and then let me start my meditation." Then you begin to cover nicely, with the blanket, certain exposed parts of the feet. You feel quite pleasant now. What is the net-result? You begin to snore nicely and get up only after the sun has arisen. Days, weeks and months will roll on like this. Every winter also will pass away in this manner. Just at that time which is quite favourable for meditation, mind deceives you and overpowers you by sleep. Mind is a master-magician. He knows several tricks and illusions. Maya operates through mind. Mysterious is Maya. Be on your alert. Be vigilant. You can control mind and Maya. Throw away the blanket as soon as you hear the alarm. Sit on Vajra Asana. Do 20 Pranayamas. Drowsiness will disappear.

7. O friends! Wake up! Sleep no more. Meditate. It is Brahmanuhurta now! Open the gate of the temple of the Lord in your heart with the key of love. Hear the music of the soul. Sing the song of Prema to your Beloved. Play the melody of the Infinite. Melt your mind in His contemplation. Unite with Him. Immerse yourself in the ocean of Love and Bliss.

8. Just as you remove at once a pebble in your shoes that troubles you, so also you must be able to remove any tormenting thought from your mind at once. Then only you have gained sufficient strength in control of thought. Then only you have attained some real progress in the spiritual path.

9. An aspirant says: "I am able to meditate on one Asana for three hours. In the end I become senseless but I do not fall down to the ground." If there is real meditation, you will never become

senseless. You will experience perfect awareness. This is a negative, undesirable mental state. You will have to get over this state by keeping up perfect vigilance.

10. Suppose the mind runs outside during meditation forty times within one hour. If you can make it run only 38 times it is a decided improvement. You have gained some control over the mind. It demands strenuous practice for a long time to check the mind-wandering. Vikshepa Sakti is very powerful. But Sattva is more powerful than Vikshepa Sakti. Increase your Sattva. You can very easily control the oscillation of the mind.

11. When there is deep concentration you will experience great joy and spiritual intoxication. You will forget the body and the surroundings. All the Prana will be taken up to your head.

12. If you find it difficult to concentrate your mind within a room, come outside and sit in an open place or terrace or by the side of a river, or in a quiet corner of a garden. You will have good concentration.

13. When you are lying down in your bed, sometimes a big light will pass along your forehead. As soon as you try to behold the light by meditating in the sitting posture it may disappear. You may ask: "How is it that I fail to catch the light by exertion, whereas it comes by itself when I am lying down, without an effort?" The reason is you lost the concentration as soon as you sat for meditation by entry of Rajas.

14. It is very difficult to fix your mind in the beginning on the whole picture of Lord Krishna, because all the rays of the mind are not collected. Sometimes you can visualise the face, sometimes the feet, sometimes the eyes. Fix the mind on any part of the picture which the mind likes best.

15. The mind has attraction for certain new words or names of towns or persons. Suppose you have come across certain new words or names of towns or persons such as 'ecstasy,' 'Fyzabad,' 'John Herbert.' If you sit for meditation the mind will repeat 'ecstasy,' 'Fyzabad,' 'John Herbert.' Sometimes it will sing some songs, repeat some old poems or Sanskrit Slokas which you got by heart during your boyhood. Watch the mind carefully and try to bring it back to the point or centre.

16. When you meditate with open eyes you may see a friend in front of you and hear his voice also; but you may not be able to make out the person and his voice because the mind is not attached to the ears or the eyes. If the mind is entirely withdrawn from the sensual objects, if the thoughts are annihilated, if likes and dislikes are destroyed, how can you perceive the world at all? You will become mindless. You will behold the Self only everywhere. All names and forms will vanish.

17. It is very difficult to fix the mind all at once on a point. The mind moves with a tremendous velocity. Just as the horse in a circus runs in a circle again and again, so also the mind runs in a circle again and again. Instead of allowing the mind to run in a big circle, make it run in smaller and smaller circles. Eventually it can be fixed on a point. You will have to catch hold of the mind through intelligent methods. Mere coercion and force will not do. It will make matters worse.

18. Sometimes you may become despondent and feel, “I have many weaknesses and defects. How can I eradicate them? How can I control this strong and impetuous mind? Will I get liberation or Nirvikalpa Samadhi in this very birth? I have not gained much even though I have practised meditation for the last 8 years.” Do not be disheartened. Even if you have controlled one or two Indriyas, even if you have controlled some thoughts, half the battle is won. Control of even one thought or destruction of even one Vasana will give you mental strength. Every thought that is controlled, every desire that is destroyed, every Indriya that is subdued, every defect and weakness that is eradicated will add strength to the mind, will develop your will and take you one step nearer to the goal. Friends! Why then lamentations and despair? Fight bravely in the Adhyatmic battlefield. Become a spiritual soldier. Come out victorious and wear the spiritual laurels of divine wisdom, eternal peace and supreme bliss.

19. Sometimes the mind will be sluggish or slothful. You cannot concentrate. It will refuse to work. The same vigorous mind may become sluggish in the latter part of concentration, just as the horse that was running with good speed in the beginning of the journey becomes sluggish in the end. Just as the driver freshens the horse by giving a little grass and water, so also you will have to freshen the mind with some elevating thoughts and discipline it with undistracted attention.

20. If the mind is restless or wandering sit in a quiet room. Or lie down in Savasana like a dead man for 15 minutes and relax the body and mind completely. Entertain some pleasant thoughts. Think of some beautiful flowers, the glaciers of the Himalayas, the blue expansive sky, the vast ocean or some beautiful scenery in Himalayas or Kashmir or in any other place. Now you can sit again for meditation.

21. When you enter into deep meditation, you will have no consciousness of your body or surroundings. You will have equanimity of mind. You will not hear any sound. There will be stoppage of up-going and down-going sensations. The consciousness of egoism also will gradually vanish. You will experience inexplicable joy and indescribable happiness. Gradually reasoning and reflection also will cease.

22. When you enter into deep meditation, the pulse-beats may come to 30. The on-looker may not be able to perceive the breathing. The breath may not come out of the nostrils. In Jada Samadhi of Hatha Yogins the breathing and heart-beats will entirely stop. In Chaitanya Samadhi the lungs and heart will be functioning very, very slowly.

23. Advanced aspirants should stop all sorts of work and study of religious books even, if they want to enter into Samadhi quickly. They should observe Mouna and remain in a solitary place on the banks of the Ganga, Yamuna or Narmada or any other river. They should live on milk alone or milk and fruits. They should plunge themselves in Sadhana in right earnest. They should reduce sleep to 2 to 3 hours. They should start the practice in the beginning of winter, in November. There is real rest in meditation. This rest is far superior to the rest that is obtained from sleep even for half an hour or one hour and will suffice.

24. The aspirant or Yogi in the cave in the Himalayas or a silent meditator in the plains thinks that he is very much advanced spiritually. He looks with contempt at his brother who is plodding to reach the goal through untiring selfless service and meditation combined. The former

may be rich in Vairagya and Titiksha. He may be proficient in the study of scriptures. He may be able to bear cold. He may be able to live on bread and Dhal alone. He may be able to sit on one Asana at a stretch for a longer time. But he may be lacking in mercy, cosmic love, broad tolerance, generosity, courage, etc. He may not be able to bear heat, he may complain of strong Vikshepa, he may not be able to keep up a balanced mind when he comes to the plains, while the latter may possess his own special virtues and balanced mind and may excel the Yogi of Himalayas or the silent meditator of the plains in many respects. One should have excellence in all virtues. Then only he will become a perfect sage. Equanimity is Yoga.

25. A worldly man has Abhimana for his wealth and position. He has great Moha for his children and wife. But a Sannyasi or Yogi has great spiritual and moral pride. He thinks: "I am superior to a householder. I am a great Yogi. I can meditate for 12 hours. I possess great purity, renunciation and dispassion." The Abhimana of a Sannyasi is more dangerous and powerful than the Abhimana of a worldly man, and so more difficult for eradication.

26. Be cautious. Study the nature of people. Move very carefully with people. Do not be deceived. Have a knowledge of psychology. Know people by their behaviour, talks, look, smile, gait. Know them by the food they take, the books they study, and the companions they keep.

27. Sometimes the mind will revolt seriously. You will feel: "I have not gained much through Tapas, discipline and meditation. Let me break the vow of Brahmacharya. Let me give up entirely all dietetic discipline. Let me revel in sensual objects. Let me eat sumptuously." Do not yield. Coax or cajole the mind. Do vigorous Japa and Kirtan. Study my book 'How to get Vairagya' or Bhatrihari's 'Vairagya Sataka' again and again. Remember the pains of Samsara and the defects of the sensual life. Remember the saints and their teachings again and again. Stand adamant. Be cautious. Be vigilant. Watch and pray. The rebellious mind will cool down gradually.

28. Even a pure Brahmachari will be troubled in the beginning by curiosity. He will be curious to know and feel what sort of happiness will the sexual enjoyment give. He thinks sometimes: "Let me have the carnal knowledge of a woman once. Then I will be able to root out this sexual impulse and desire completely. This sexual curiosity is troubling me very much." Mind wants to delude this Brahmachari. Maya hawks through curiosity. Curiosity is transmuted into a strong desire. Enjoyment cannot bring satisfaction of a desire. Just as the tiger, man-eater, runs after human flesh only if it tastes once human blood, so also the mind which has once tasted sexual pleasure will be ever hankering after it. The wise way is to kill the wave of curiosity by Vichara or enquiry of that pure sexless Atman, renunciation of sexual desire, totally eradicated by constant meditation, by thinking over the glory of Brahmacharya and the defects of an impure life.

29. Even in a blind man who is a celibate, who has not seen the face of a woman, the sexual impulse is very strong. Why? This is due to the force of Samskaras or impressions of previous births which are imbedded in the subconscious mind. Whatever you do, whatever you think, all are lodged or printed or indelibly impressed in the layers of the Chitta or subconscious mind. These impressions can be burnt or obliterated only by the dawn of knowledge of Atman or the Supreme Self. When the sexual Vasana fills the whole mind and body, the Samskaras assume the form of big Vrittis or waves and torment the poor blind man.

30. Thought is the real action. But there is a great deal of difference between the actual shooting of a man and thinking to shoot a man, between actual copulation and thinking to have intercourse with a woman. Philosophically speaking thinking to shoot a man, thinking to have copulation is the real act. Desire is more than the act. God gives fruits according to the motives of the man. Be pure in your thoughts. Then only you can enter the kingdom of God within. Then only the Lord will be enthroned in your heart.

31. An aspirant writes to me: "Somebody tapped at my door at 3 a.m. I woke up and opened the door. I saw Lord Krishna with crown on His head. He disappeared soon and I went through the lane in search of Him. I was not able to find Him out. Then I came back to my house and sat in front of my door till day-break to see Him again." Cases of somnambulists or sleep-walkers are not uncommon. They dream even while standing and walking also. The above case might have been a pure case of somnambulism. You will have to be very careful in ascertaining the true nature of your spiritual experience, whether it is a dream or an actual reality. Darshan of Lord Krishna is not so very cheap. Aspirants make mistakes in the beginning.

32. A piece of ordinary white paper or coloured paper has no value. You throw it away. But if there is the stamp or picture of the king or the emperor on the paper (currency notes), you keep it safe in your money purse or trunk. Even so an ordinary piece of stone has no value for you. You throw it away. But if you behold the stone-Murty of Lord Krishna at Pandharpur or any other Murty in shrines, you bow your head with folded hands, because there is the stamp of the Lord in the stone. The devotee superimposes on the stone-Murty, his own beloved and all the attributes of the Lord. Image-worship is very necessary for beginners.

33. How sweet is the Name of the Lord! How soothing and elevating are the Names of Hari, Rama, Krishna, Siva. The Name drives away your fear, anguish, sorrow and pain; and fills your heart with joy, peace, strength and courage. The Name is a healing balm to your wounded heart and tired nerves. The Name is a panacea or divine elixir that confers immortality and eternal bliss. Remember the Name of the Lord always. Sing His Name and associate it with your breath; you will be freed from the round of births and deaths.

34. You must have the Bhava that Atman, Isvara, Devata, Mantra are one. With this Bhava you will have to repeat your Guru Mantra or Ishta Mantra. Then alone you will have Mantra-siddhi or God-realisation quickly.

35. The best flower that can be offered to the Lord is your heart. Penetrate more deeply into the infinite domain of Kailasa, the Kingdom of illimitable bliss and boundless peace within.

36. May you be in direct communion with the Lord, thy Ishtam, Guide, Supreme Refuge and Solace!

CHAPTER VIII

YOGIC EXERCISES

1. Yogic Alphabet

Asanas make you strong and healthy and eradicate many diseases.

Bhastrika Pranayama develops lungs, destroys the germs of tuberculosis, augments lung-power and lung-capacity.

Constipation is removed by the practice of Bhujanga, Salabha and Dhanur Asanas.

Dhanurasana is a combination of Bhujanga and Salabha Asanas.

Eating in moderation, plain living and high thinking help the Yogic student in attaining his goal quickly.

Fasting eliminates poison, purifies the system and invigorates the cells.

Garbhasana augments the digestive power, increases the appetite and removes many intestinal diseases.

Halasana makes the spine very supple and elastic.

Indriyas should be controlled by the practice of Pratyahara.

Japa of 'Om' or 'Hari Om' should go hand in hand with Asanas and Pranayamas.

Kumbhaka helps to attain longevity and awakens the Kundalini.

Lolasana strengthens the muscles of the arms and forearms.

Mind can be controlled by Vairagya, Abhyasa, Satsanga Vichara, eradication of Vasanas, destruction of egoism, Pranayama, meditation, and cultivation of virtues, such as mercy, complacency, self-denial, Santi and Santosha.

Nadi Suddhi can be obtained by the practice of Pranayama.

Oordhva Padmasana checks wet-dreams and transmutes the sexual energy into Ojas.

Paschimottanasana removes fat, increases the gastric fire and eradicates diseases of the stomach.

Quetta earthquake is nothing when compared to the agitation caused in the mind by the turbulent senses.

Regularity in the practice of Asana and Pranayama is indispensably requisite for quick and solid progress.

Sirshasana is the king of all Asanas. It transmutes seminal energy into Ojas, develops memory and intellectual capacity, and removes a host of ailments.

Trataka helps concentration of the mind and removes diseases of the eyes.

Uddiyana Bandha imparts beautiful health, strength, vigour and vitality and removes the disorders of the alimentary system.

Vajrasana removes drowsiness, strengthens the spine, helps digestion and is very useful for meditation.

Winter is the best time for rigorous practice of Yoga.

Xerostomia (abnormal dryness of the mouth) can be removed by the practice of Sitali and Sitkari Pranayamas.

Yoga Mudra removes the disorders of the abdomen and awakens Kundalini.

Zerosis is the disease of the eye owing to the deficiency of Vitamin 'A'. This is removed by the practice of mild Trataka and Sirshasana.



2. Padmasana

You must be able to sit in an Asana quite steady at a stretch for full three hours. Then only you will get mastery over the Asana (Asana Jaya). Without securing a steady Asana you cannot get

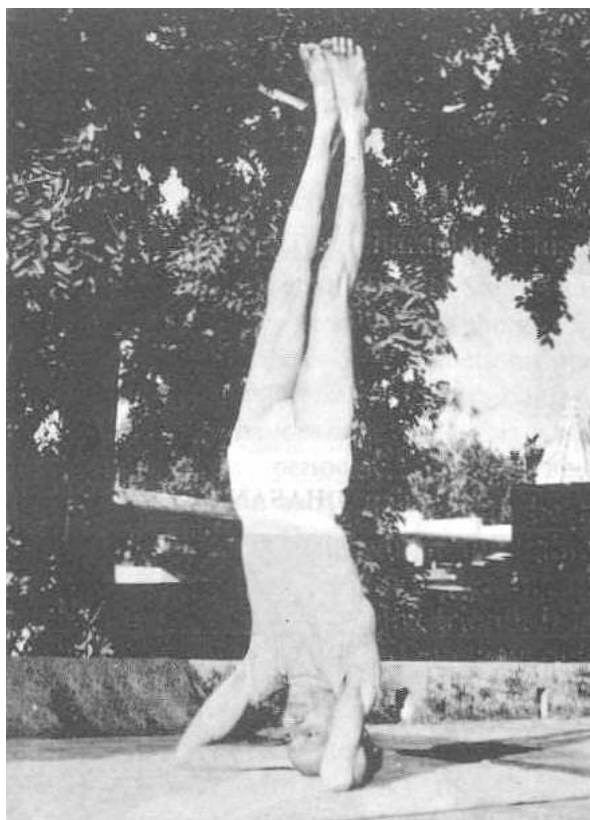
on well in meditation. The more steady you are in your Asana, the more you will be able to concentrate and make your mind one-pointed. If you can be steady in the posture even for one hour, you will be able to acquire one-pointed mind and feel thereby infinite Peace and Atmic Bliss inside. Four Asanas, viz., Padmasana, Siddhasana, Svastikasana and Sukhasana, are prescribed for meditative purposes. Rishis like Gheranda, Sandilya and others speak very highly of Padmasana. This is highly agreeable to householders.

Spread a seat on the ground and take your seat facing North or East. Spread the legs forward. Take hold of your right foot and keep it on the left thigh and then place the left foot over the right thigh. Place the hands on the knees. You can make a finger-lock and keep the hands over the left ankle. Sit erect, keeping the back, neck and head in one straight line. Close your eyes and begin your Japa and meditation.



3. Siddhasana

Next to Padmasana comes Siddhasana in importance. Young Brahmacharins who attempt to get established in celibacy should practice this Asana. Sit on your seat. Spread the legs. Take hold of your left foot and keep the heel at the anus and then place the right heel at the top of the generative organ. Hands can be placed as in Padmasana.



4. Sirshasana

Sirshasana, Sarvangasana and other exercises are intended for general health, for an all-round development of the body and for maintaining Brahmacharya. Sirshasana is king of all Asanas. The seminal energy is transmuted into Ojas-sakti. In this Asana alone the brain can draw plenty of Prana and blood. Great benefit is derived by sitting for meditation after the practice of Sirshasana. All diseases of the eyes, nose, head, throat, stomach and other organs are removed. The advantages that are derived from this Asana are incalculable. This is a powerful blood-purifier and nerve tonic. Memory-power improves admirably.

Spread a four-folded blanket. Sit on two knees. Make a finger-lock by interweaving the fingers. Place it on the ground. Now keep the top of your head on the ground between the finger-lock and raise your legs slowly till they become vertical. Avoid jerks. Learn this Asana by the side of a wall and get the help of your friend, till you learn balancing.



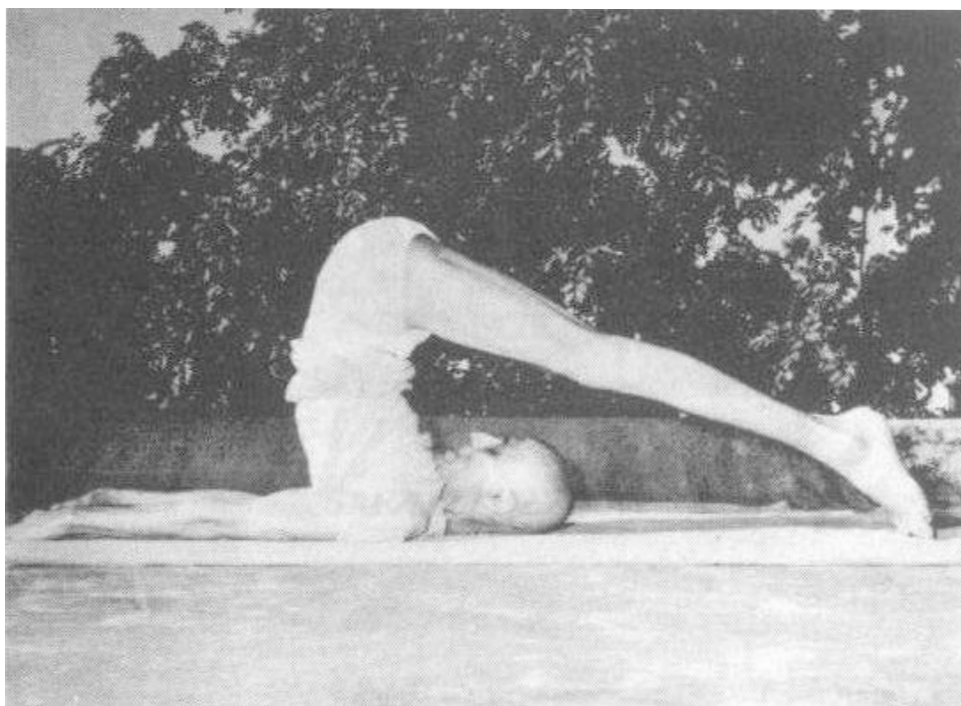
5. Oordhva-Padmasana

Perform-Sirshasana. Slowly bend the right leg and keep it on the left thigh and then the left leg on the right thigh, forming a foot-lock as in Padmasana. Do this slowly and avoid jerks or a fall. When you know the balancing in Sirshasana perfectly, you can attempt for this Asana. This Asana helps the practitioner to maintain Brahmacharya. All other benefits of Sirshasana are derived by the practice of this Asana.



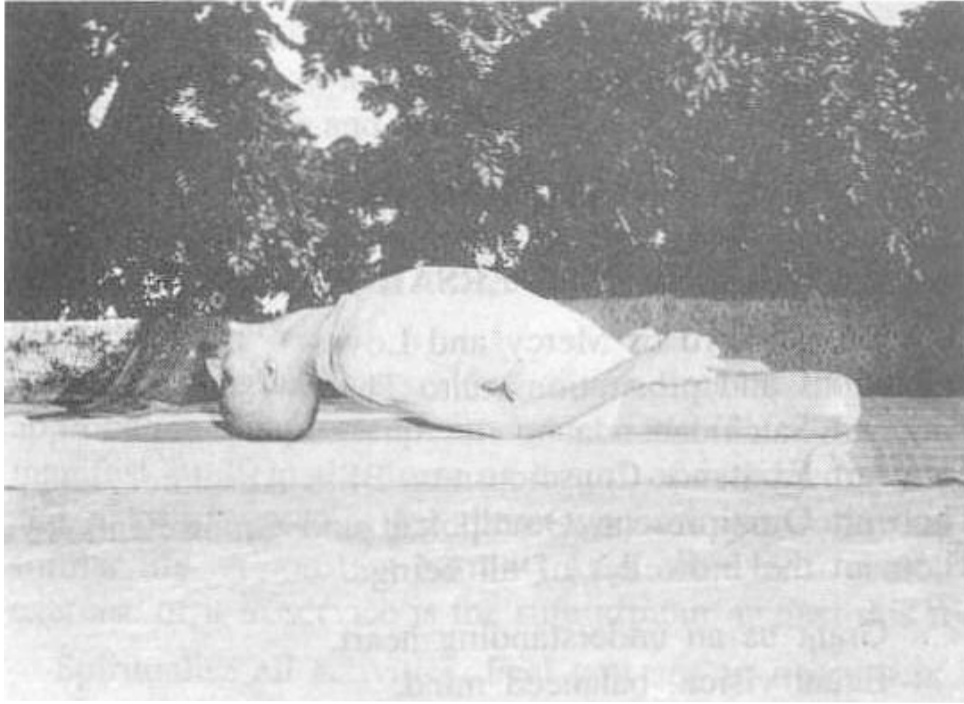
6. Sarvangasana

Spread a blanket on the floor and lie on the back quite flat. Slowly raise the legs, hips and trunk. Support the back with the two hands and rest the elbows on the ground. Press the chin against the chest. Remain in the Asana for 5 seconds and slowly bring the legs to the ground. Gradually you can increase the period to 20 minutes. This Asana gives wonderful benefits. It keeps the spine elastic and helps you to maintain Brahmacharya. Elasticity of spine means everlasting youth. After performing this Asana, do Matsyasana. You can derive the maximum benefit of Sarvangasana.



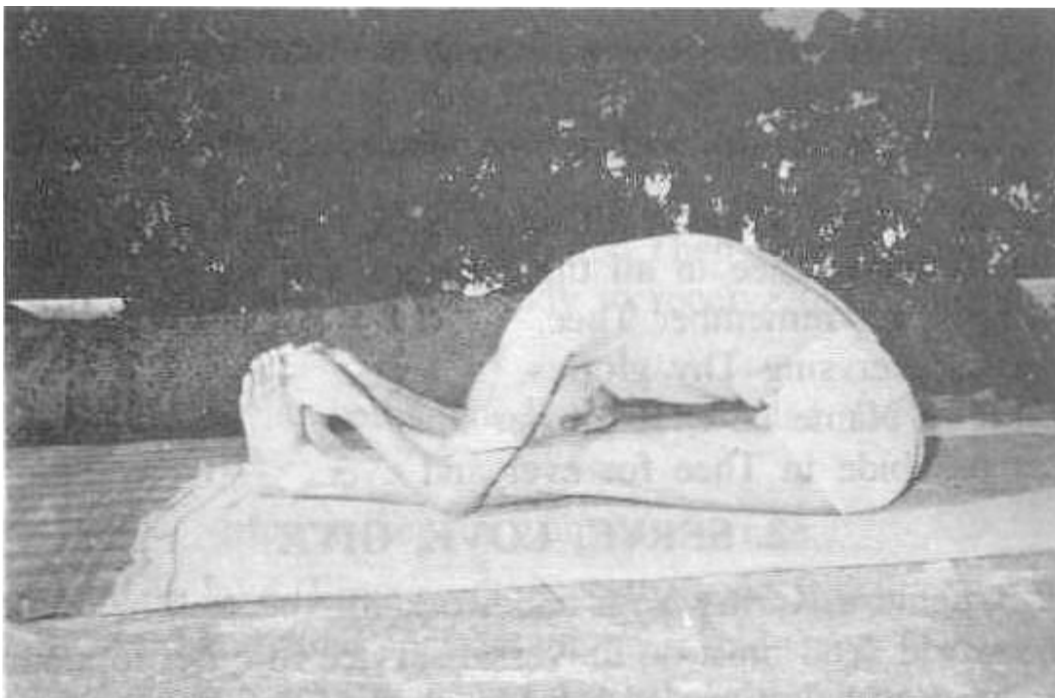
7. Halasana

Spread a blanket on the ground and lie flat on your back. Keep the hands at the sides on the ground with the palm facing the ground. Join both your legs. Lift the legs slowly up as in Sarvangasana. Do not bend the legs. Do not raise the hands. Then slowly lower the legs until the toes touch the ground above the head. Keep the knees close. Remain in the Asana for 5 seconds and increase the period to 5 minutes by gradual practice. Then raise the legs slowly and come back to the original position.



8. Matsyasana

Sit on the blanket and form the foot-lock as in Padmasana. Then lie flat on the back. Stretch the head back so that the top of your head rests on the ground firmly on one side and the buttocks on the other, thus making a bridge or an arch of the trunk. Place the hands on the thighs or catch hold of the toes. Remain in this Asana for 3 seconds or half the period that you devote to Sarvangasana. This Asana must be done immediately after performing Sarvangasana. This Asana destroys many diseases and removes constipation.



9. Paschimottanasana

Sit on the ground and stretch the legs stiff like a stick. Catch the toes with the thumb, index and middle fingers. While catching, you will have to bend the trunk forwards. Exhale. Slowly bend without jerks till your forehead touches your knees. You can keep the face between the knees also. You can bend the hands and rest the elbows on the ground. Retain the pose for 5 seconds and gradually increase to 5 minutes. This is an excellent Asana. This Asana relieves constipation, removes sluggishness of liver, dyspepsia and gastritis. Muscles and organs of the abdominal viscera are toned up completely.

APPENDIX

1. The Universal Prayer

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Satchidananda.
Thou art Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

2. Serve, Love, Give

Become a Karma Yogi and work for the well-being of the world. You must do universal service in order to attain the state of being one with the universal consciousness.

It is only through selfless activities, unattached work and loving service that one can acquire the precious gem of purity, patience and humility.

Wherever there is distress share what you have and alleviate human suffering wherever it is possible. Thus you will be able to achieve the goal for which God has given this human body.

While doing selfless service, an insidious feeling of self approbation may creep in unnoticed. This may later manifest itself in the form of a sort of indulgent attitude and a lofty contempt for those who are not following, a similar life. A constant humility kept alive by a ceaseless exercise of it in service is the sure armour against this foe.

Spiritualise all activities. Feel you are an instrument in the Lord's hands and that all the Indriyas (senses) belong to Him. Repeat the formula 'I am Thine; all is Thine; Thy Will be done.'

Feel that the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord and you are serving the Lord in all names and forms. Whatever you do—your actions and the results thereof—consecrate them all to the Lord at the end of each day. Do not identify yourself with actions. Then your heart will be purified and you will be ready to receive the divine light and grace.

Rest not with being good. Do good also. Be kind. Be compassionate.

Let not virtue wither for want of exercise.

God is love. Love is God. Selfishness, greed, egoism, vanity, pride, hatred contract the heart and stand in the way of developing universal love. Feel that the whole world is your body, your own home. Melt and destroy all barriers that separate man from man. Idea of superiority is ignorance. Develop Visvaprema—all-embracing love. Unite with all. Separateness is death. Unity is eternal life.

God is love. The only true religion is the religion of love or the religion of heart. Feel for others as you feel for yourself.

Love expects no reward. Love knows no fear. Love Divine gives—does not demand. Love thinks no evil; imputes no motive. To love is to share and serve.

Do charity—amounting to at least one tenth of your income or six Paise per Rupee.

Happiness comes to him who gives happiness to others.

Give, Give. Give in plenty, in humility and with joy. Thus in the very process of giving enrich yourself too.

If a man, who has not removed jealousy, backbiting, hatred, pride, selfishness says, “I am meditating for six hours daily,” it is all nonsense. Excel. There is no hope of getting into a meditative mood even after a year unless a man removes all these Vrittis and purifies his mind first by selfless service at least for six months.

Excel in Service,
Expand in Love,
Advance in Knowledge.

Service is Love in expression,
Love is concentrated Knowledge,
Knowledge is diffused love.

3. Purify

Spirituality means growing into the form of Divine Ideal. It is the transformation of your nature from human to Divine. This is brought about by Abhyasa, i.e., spiritual practice or Sadhana and Vairagya leading to renunciation.

Conscious attempt to merge ourselves in the Supreme Reality is called spiritual Sadhana, which should be the common aim of all, though the process may be different.

If you wish to evolve quickly, you must have the right kind of Sadhana. If you are a student of the path of self-reliance, you can select the Sadhana for your daily practice, yourself. If you are a student of the path of self-surrender, you should get the right kind of Sadhana from a Guru and practice it with intense faith.

Constant Satsanga with the wise and study of the Srutis under a Guru will slowly wipe out the wrong and worldly Samskaras.

Make intense inner Sadhana the keynote of your life. Base your life upon the ceaseless remembrance of the Divine consciousness and constant feeling of His presence.

Sadhana is at first mechanical and it is only in the later stages that it becomes a part and parcel of one's own life. It appears as a drudgery in the beginning, but later on it imparts joy, peace, strength, courage and freedom.

Do not be slack in your Sadhana. It is Sadhana that will help you in the long run. It is the only asset in this life.

Be regular in your Sadhana—and attain Self-realisation in this very birth.

Never mind repeated failures in your Sadhana. Nil desperandum. Despair not. Do not give up the struggle or the Sadhana. Stand up and fight again. Struggle again. You are nearer to success each time. Every failure is a steppingstone to success. You are sure to succeed in the long run.

Only when you have purified the heart, silenced the mind, stilled the thoughts and surging emotions, withdrawn the outgoing senses, thinned out the Vasanas, you can behold the glorious Atman during deep meditation.

The practical method of realising one's divine nature is the complete transformation of the base animal nature, transcending the human nature and awakening fully the dormant spiritual traits within.

This is done through perfect ethical evolution, self-restraint, self-analysis, self-purification, concentration, meditation, practice of selfless love and service to all and systematic inner culture through right speech and right conduct. This alone is the pathway to Yoga and inner unfoldment.

Never complain against bad environments. Create your own mental world wherever you remain and wherever you go. Do not try to run away from bad unfavourable environments. God has placed you there to make you grow quickly.

The world is not a hindrance to your spiritual path. The world is your Guru. The world is a training school. The world is Virat or Isvara.

Perfect serenity, cultivation of divine virtues, entertaining holy thoughts, discipline of diet—all these pave the way to success along spiritual path.

Right from the very beginning of your spiritual life, you must understand clearly that in true humility, sincere desire to root out gradually pride, egoism and jealousy, earnest and increasing introspection to find out one's own defects and improve oneself, lies your hope of progress.

The nature of the mind is such that it becomes that which it thinks upon intensely. Thus if you think of the vices and defects of other man, your mind will be charged with those defects and vices at least for the time being. He, who knows this psychological law, will never indulge in censuring others or in finding faults in the conduct of others. He will always praise others. He will only see good in others. That is the way to grow in concentration, Yoga and spirituality.

No man is absolutely bad. Everyone has some good trait or other. Try to see the good in everyone. Develop the good-finding nature.

Examine your character. Pick up some distinct defect in it. Find out its opposite—let us say that you suffer from irritability. The opposite of irritability is patience. Meditate on it regularly every morning for a few minutes taking one aspect of it—such as its value, its practice under provocation on different days.

Choose one virtue for every month and keep it before you as an ideal to be achieved throughout. Meditate on it morning and evening just after getting up from bed and just before retiring at night.

There is no easy path to salvation except through small improvements, correction, purity, Japa and celibacy.

If you are established in Ahimsa or non-violence, you will never be harsh, rude and haughty even for a moment. No thought of evil or of injuring others will ever occur to you, even for a moment. Your heart will be filled with love, kindness and affection.

Not to hurt others is not so difficult as not to be hurt by others. You will have to become mindless. You will have to kill your egoism in toto. You will have to develop patience to a maximum degree if you wish not to be hurt by others.

Adapt, Adjust, Accommodate

Bear insult. Bear injury. This is the essence of all Sadhana. This is the most important Sadhana.

Forgive those who slander or speak ill of you. Do not harm any one who injures you. If anybody from aversion speaks disparagingly of you, greet him courteously without minding those disagreeable words.

Wrath is the daughter of ignorance, the sister of jealousy and the mother of hard-heartedness.

With boldness, manliness and self-reliance, combine humility, softness of speech and behaviour and self-denial. Be ready to serve others. Put up with provocation and abuse without retaliation. Remove all harshness and rudeness from your nature. Courtesy and politeness must become part of your very nature.

While coming in contact with Raga, Dvesha, lust, anger and greed, we have to see that the friction does not ignite us. Let us always keep handy the cooling balm of Bhagavan's Divine Name and His reflection.

Do not argue much. Speak only measured words. If anyone abuses or insults, keep quiet. Identify yourself with the Atman. Atman is the same in all. It can never be hurt or be insulted.

Watch your thoughts, words and actions very carefully. Know the power of words and use them cautiously. Respect all. Speak sweet measured words. Be kind. Cultivate patience, love and humility. Enquire 'Who am I?'

He who gives respect, gets it.

Be serene and tranquil under all circumstances. Cultivate this virtue, Shama (serenity), again and again through constant and strenuous endeavour. Serenity is like a rock; waves of irritation may dash on it, but cannot affect it. Meditate daily on the ever-tranquil Atman or the Eternal which is unchanging. You will attain this sublime virtue gradually. The divine light will descend only on a calm mind. An aspirant with a calm mind only can enter into deep meditation and Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He alone can practice Nishkama or selfless Karma Yoga.

Each Sadhaka should bear in mind that divine life is to be lived in small details. If you are divine in small details, you can be divine in big things. Unless you are careful in your day-to-day life and mould your life in accordance with your idealism, it cannot bear fruit.

Doubt or uncertainty is a great obstacle in the path of Self-realisation. It bars the spiritual progress. This must be removed by Satsanga, study of religious books, Vichara and reasoning. It will again and again raise its head to mislead the aspirant. It should be killed beyond resurrection by certainty of conviction and firm unshakable faith based on reasoning.

Doubt is your great enemy. Doubt causes restlessness of mind. Destroy all doubts through Vichara and Jnana.

Introspect regularly. Practise self-examination for ten minutes before you go to bed. Sit comfortably on a chair. Close your eyes. Think of all actions—good and bad—that you did during the course of the day. Think of all the mistakes that you committed consciously or unconsciously.

A man, who has no life of introspection, whose mind is of outgoing tendencies, cannot find out his own mistakes. The self-conceit acts as a veil and blurs the mental vision. If an aspirant wants

to grow, he must admit his defects when they are pointed out by others. He must try his level best to eradicate them and must thank the man who has pointed out his defects. Then he can grow in spirituality.

Do not brood over your past mistakes and failures as this will only fill your mind with grief, regret and depression. Do not repeat them in future. Be cautious. Just think of the causes which led to your failures and try to remove them in future. Strengthen yourself with new vigour and virtues. Develop slowly your will-power.

Every temptation that is resisted, every evil thought that is curbed, every desire that is subdued, every bitter word that is withheld, every noble aspiration that is encouraged, every sublime thought that is cultivated, adds to the development of will-force, good character and attainment of eternal bliss and immortality.

Subconscious life is more powerful than your ordinary life of objective consciousness. Beneath your conscious life there is a very wide region of subconscious life. The subconscious life can modify and influence your conscious life. Through the practice of Yoga you can modify, control and influence the subconscious depths. All habits are imbedded in subconscious.

The mind is a product of experience. It is the result of past thinking and is modified by present thinking.

From experience you get Samskara, from Samskara you get Vasana, from Vasana you get Vritti. Then imagination (Kalpana) makes the Vritti into a desire (Iccha). Ego attaches itself to the desire and it becomes then an urge (Trishna). Then you are forced to do Cheshta or action to fulfil the desire. Action gives rise to experience and so the cycle is repeated.

Samskaras or impressions you have created during your Sadhana period within a closed room, will be wiped out if you are not careful or vigilant during your period of activity in the world. So constantly dwell on these ideas, "The whole world is my body. All bodies are mine. All lives are mine. All pains are mine. All joys are mine!" Jealousy, anger, hatred, egoism, all will vanish.

The mind is the creator of all fancies, concepts and through these of worries. A little control over the mind should be exercised when small ripples of disturbance pass over the surface. Sit calmly and watch the mind-wanderings carefully. Find out what are its habitual likings and thoughts.

Just as you remove at once from your shoes a pebble that troubles you, so also you must be able to remove at once any tormenting thought from your mind.

All your troubles and miseries are due to your egoism. It is egoism that has limited you. The cause of your misery does not come from without. Annihilate this egoism. You will enjoy infinite bliss and a life of expansion.

The secret of renunciation is renunciation of egoism, mine-ness and desires. Objects do not bind you. It is mineness (Mamata) that binds you to this Samsara or cycle of births and deaths.

Free yourself from the base thoughts of the mind, the various useless Sankalpas. It is the actions of the mind, that are truly termed Karmas. True liberation results from the dethronement of the mind. Those who have freed themselves from the fluctuations of their minds come into possession of the supreme Nishtha (meditation). If the mind be purged of all its impurities, it will become very calm and all the worldly delusions attendant on its births and deaths will be soon destroyed.

Destroy the fuel of desire, and the fire of thoughts will be extinguished.

In every thought, in every action, you have to assert your mastery over your Vritti. Then Yoga is fulfilled, divine life is lived.

Detach and attach.

Yoga is the dissolution of thoughts in eternal awareness or pure consciousness without objectification, knowing without thinking, merging finitude in infinity.

The process of Yoga embodies an ascent into purity and into that absolute perfection which is the original state of man. It implies therefore the removal of the enveloping impurities, the stilling of the discordant vibratory tempo of the lower Kosas and establishment of a state of perfect balance and harmony.

Mastery over mind should be the object of Yoga Sadhana. If you can remain unshaken by grief and loss, anger and malice, lust and greed, hatred and jealousy, if you are able to curb egoism and selfishness, if you are not swayed by likes and dislikes, if you have equal vision, a broad heart and a catholic mind, if you possess a sterling character and good manners under all circumstances, if you value the need of others above your own, and if your mind is ever engaged in contemplation of His all-pervading presence, then you can assure yourself that you are practicing true Yoga.

Signs of Spiritual Growth

Sadhana or spiritual practice should make you ever cheerful, more concentrated, joyful, balanced, peaceful, contented, blissful, dispassionate, fearless, courageous, compassionate, angerless, 'I'-less, desireless, mineless. Sadhana should give you rich inner life, introspective inner vision and unruffled state of mind under all conditions of life.

These are the signs of your spiritual growth. Seeing of visions, lights, hearing of Anahata sounds, Divya Gandha, etc., have not much spiritual value, although they indicate you have attained first degree of concentration.

Man can never separate himself from God, for God is the Cosmos and man its component. There is only one God, the Self of all beings. There is only one law, the law of cause and effect. There is only one religion, the religion of Self-realisation. Religion is the most rational science of life, the science of man as he essentially is, the science which shows him how he is a part of Cosmos, how he ought to abide by the law of the Cosmos, and aim at the fulfilment of the evolutionary process of the Cosmos.

Religion is practical philosophy. Philosophy is the understanding of the ultimate Principle that governs life. Religion is the art of practicing it, i.e., living the spirit of philosophy.

Surrender to the Lord

Bhakti is essential for everybody however strong the individual efforts may be. It is impossible to eradicate the subtle Vrittis in the mind, viz., subtle form of lust, anger, jealousy, Moha or delusion, pride, etc., without the help of Divine Grace.

Open yourself to the Divine through purity, faith, devotion, aspiration and total ungrudging self-surrender. The Divine grace will descend on you.

Approach the Lord with ‘Sarva Bhava’ with all your heart, mind and soul, with your whole being. Do not keep any reservation. The mind, Chitta, intellect and ego should all agree to do the surrender wholly. You will be supremely blessed. You will obtain His full grace.

Feel that the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord and you are serving the Lord in all names and forms and whatever you do, your actions and the results thereof—consecrate them to the Lord. Do this regularly after the day’s work is over. Do not identify yourself with actions and thus be bound by them. Feel that you are doing your duty as a detached instrument of the Lord’s benevolence. Then your heart will be purified and you will be ready to receive the Divine light and grace. Repeat the formula, “I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy Will be done.”

Mantra-writing

When you write the Mantra, always observe Mouna or silence. Feel that the divine Sakti is entering your whole being. Do not change your seat till you have finished the day’s number of pages. There is an Achintya Sakti (indescribable power) in Mantra-writing. It helps the concentration in the Sadhaka. If the two join together, a thrill of joy pervades the whole being. The inner calm is then felt by the Sadhaka. He feels himself lost in the one thought of God often.

Do not be dejected. You have got immeasurable strength and power within. There is a glorious future awaiting you. Face all difficulties with a smile. Pain is the real eye-opener and real guide. God is putting you to this severe test to make you more strong and more powerful. Understand this secret well. Never be despondent. Ever laugh, jump, whistle and smile.

Keep yourself in positive state. Overcome negative thoughts by entertaining positive, divine thoughts. Rise from impurity, impotence and faintness of heart. Be bold. Be cheerful always.

A real devotee knows that God does everything for his (devotee’s) own good. The loss and suffering, a man undergoes, will produce Vairagya in him and turning his mind more and more towards God will develop in him power of endurance, patience and a strong will-power.

Pain, suffering, misfortune and ill-luck are all mental creations. In fact, they do not exist there at all. Everything is done by the Blessed Lord, our Beloved Father and Mother, for your own good. Try to meditate on this great truth, and realise the wonderful results. When you learn to react

in the same way to pain and pleasure, when you greet both as blessings from the Lord showered on you for the purpose of reminding you of Him, and when you use both as God-sent opportunities for remembering Him and repeating His Name and singing His Glories, then Infinite Bliss and Supreme Peace will be yours.

Broad Principles of Divine Life are: Truth, Compassion and Purity. Divine Life is a life based upon Yoga and pervaded by a spirit of Vedanta. It is made up of selflessness, service, spiritual practices and Self-realisation.

4. Meditate

Meditation is the keeping up of the one idea—be it of Nirguna Brahman, Saguna Brahman, image or an abstract idea. It follows concentration where all the rays of the mind are focussed on to a single thought.

Ultimately even this single thought gives place to Awareness—just awareness and illumination—where all problems dissolve themselves.

When you enter into deep meditation, you will have no consciousness of your body or surroundings. You will have equanimity of mind. You will not hear any sounds. The consciousness of egoism also will gradually vanish. You will experience inexplicable joy and indescribable happiness. Gradually reasoning and reflection give place to awareness.

If you can meditate for half an hour, you will be able to engage yourself with peace and spiritual strength in the battle of life for one week through the force of this meditation. Such is the beneficial result of this meditation. As you have to move with people of different natures in your daily life, get the strength and peace from meditation and you will have no trouble and worry then.

Sit down with a composed mind. Assert your mastery over the body and mind. Plunge deep into the chamber of your heart and enter into the stupendous ocean of Silence. Listen to the voice which is soundless.

5. Realise

The realization of oneness in all existences, manifested and unmanifested, is the goal of human life.

Until man recognizes the fact that in essence he is the immortal soul, he will not know himself; through ignorance he identifies himself with the body. When knowledge dawns through annihilation of ignorance, identification with the body vanishes. He becomes one with the Supreme Soul and attains knowledge of Brahman.

When the electric lamp is covered by many wrappings of cloth, there will be no bright light. When the cloth is removed one by one, the light grows brighter and brighter. Even so, when the self-resplendent Atman which is covered by the five sheaths is stripped off, by meditation on the

pure Self and the practice of 'neti neti' doctrine, the self-luminous Atman reveals itself to the meditator.

All religions are equally good. God is the fruit of any religion truly practiced. Make no mistake about it. God is one. Truth is one. The colour of the cows may be different, but milk is white.

Do not run from sect to sect. Do not jump from creed to creed. You will derive no peace. Peace does not come by fretting and fuming. Out of calmness and strength ensues peace. Acquire calmness and strength by living your religion and by practicing its precepts.

Dive within; introspect. Search within. See if you are practicing the tenets of your own faith. If the answer comes 'No,' make a firm resolve 'I will be true to my faith right from this moment' and live up to your resolve. Peace of mind is bound to follow as day follows night.

6. Peace Chant

Peace be to the East! Peace be to the West!
Peace be to the North! Peace be to the South!
Peace be above! Peace be below!
Peace be to all creatures of this universe!
Peace be everywhere.

Om Santih, Santih, Santih.

TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

By H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

1. Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.

2. **ASANA:** Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.

3. **JAPA:** Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namō Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.

4. **DIETETIC DISCIPLINE:** Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any chutni. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.

5. Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.

6. **CHARITY:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six paise per rupee.

7. **SVADHYAYA:** Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama. Lalita-sahasranama, Aditya Hridaya, Upanishads or Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara.

8. **BRAHMACHARYA:** Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.

9. **PRAYER SLOKAS:** Get by heart some prayer-Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the Mind quickly.

10. **SATSANGA:** Have Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.

11. **FAST ON EKADASI:** Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.

TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

12. **JAPA MAALA:** Have Japa Maala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.

13. **MOUNA:** Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.

14. **SPEAK THE TRUTH:** Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.

15. Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.

16. **NEVER HURT ANYBODY:** Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).

17. **DO NOT DEPEND UPON SERVANTS:** Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.

18. **SELF-ANALYSIS:** Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. **FULFIL DUTIES:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).

20. **SURRENDER TO GOD:** Think of god as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Saranagati).

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas.

This will lead you to Moksha.

**All these Niyamas or spiritual canons
must be rigidly observed.**

You must not give leniency to the mind.