

YOGA

THE ART OF INTEGRATION

THE STATE OF YOGA - SAMĀDHI PĀDA

THE INSTRUMENTS OF YOGA - SĀDHANA PĀDA

THE ATTAINMENTS OF YOGA - VIBHŪTI PĀDA

THE FULFILMENT OF YOGA - KAIVALYA PĀDA

Rohit Mehta



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BY

THE AUTHOR

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THE ART
OF
INTEGRATION

(A COMMENTARY ON THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI)

ROHIT MEHTA

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FIRST SECTION

CHAPTER I

THE ACQUIRED NATURE

THE fundamental need of the modern civilization is the integration of man at all levels of his being. Man is today broken up from within, and this inner disintegration is reflected in the disorganization at the outer or the social level. The problem of integration is essentially a psychological one. It is, therefore, natural that in recent times the study of human psychology has assumed a position of great importance in the affairs of men. In the course of the last one hundred years, science and technology have succeeded to a large extent in dealing with physical and economic problems. It is this success of science and technology that has exposed the modern man to a relentless impact of the unresolved psychological tangle, visible in the life both of the individual as well as the collective. In this age, while physical and biological sciences have progressed enormously, psychology has lagged behind, so that the subjective instrument of man is utterly inadequate to tackle effectively the rapidly moving phenomena of objective conditions. A careful inquiry into the fields of modern psychological research and study would convince anybody that modern psychology seems to be moving only on the periphery, unmindful of the very core of man's psychological being. All its efforts are concentrated on studying the behaviour of man without probing the being of man. It is quite obvious that without

comprehending the "being" of man all efforts at understanding his "behaviour" would be self-defeating.

It may be asked, and rightly: Is not the being of man reflected in his behaviour? Where else can one go to understand "being" save to the fields and areas of behaviour? But the question is: Can a mere analysis, however extensive it may be, of the behaviour of man reveal his being? Is the being of man a synthetic product arrived at by putting together different parts of behaviour? Can the breaking up of the constituents of behaviour and synthesising the relevant features found in the process of analysis bring one to the understanding of the being of man?

The being of man is not something inert; it is throbbing with life and therefore intensely dynamic. It is obvious that the living cannot be understood by adding up the parts. The being of man is a "whole" which is more than the sum of the parts. From the net of analysis, no matter how closely woven it is, this "more" will inevitably escape. It cannot be captured by synthesis either, for, a synthesis is only the piecing together of the parts that have been carefully analysed. An analysis of the behaviour-patterns, both individual and social, is necessary, nay, imperative, but this will be of no avail if one does not perceive the limitations of analysis and synthesis. In behaviour-patterns the being of man is no doubt reflected, but then a reflection is not identical with the substance. To speculate about the substance on the basis of reflection is like trying to understand a person by seeing his picture.

It is true that by a process of analysis with reference to behaviour-patterns, much information can be gathered regarding the functioning activities of the being. Facts so collected are very useful and significant. But having collected the

facts, one must look rightly at them. It is this "looking" which is of fundamental importance, and to which modern psychology has not turned its serious attention. Having collected the facts of behaviour-patterns through intricate analysis, modern psychology has looked at those facts with the norms and standards of interpretation. It has not only perfected its process of analysing the behaviour-patterns, it has also evolved an intricate system and technique of interpretation. And so it looks at the facts collected by its analytical process through this machinery of interpretation. In this lies the effort of modern psychology to understand something that is dynamic with an approach that is static. The norms and standards of interpretation, however scientific they may be, are based on the empirical knowledge of the past. But that which is living exists in the present—in fact, the livingness of anything can be experienced only in the present. Thus the livingness of a human being can be perceived only in the moment of the present. The facts of behaviour are in the present, but if one looks at them through the glasses of the past, how can one comprehend what these facts indicate and convey? And so to the facts of behaviour-patterns one must bring a perception which is free from the norms of interpretation, for, thus alone can one know what the facts indicate. By understanding what the facts indicate, one is enabled to comprehend the nature of the being. In these indications lie the intimations of the being of Man.

It is hardly necessary to point out that modern psychology has developed a complex technique of interpretation and without this framework of interpretation, the facts collected through analysis seem utterly meaningless. But if interpretation alone makes the facts meaningful, is it not possible that even while collecting facts this interpretative mind, rooted in the

norms and the standards of empirical knowledge, may tend to project itself? If we recognize this possibility then we have to admit that the facts collected by such a mind are no facts at all. An interpretative mind is always selective in all its operations, whether it be the collection of facts or the looking at those facts. Engaged in this process of selectivity it is obviously not a free mind. It is a mind tethered to certain conclusions represented by its norms and standards of interpretation. It arrives at so-called facts by a selective process and it looks at them by a further selective process. Physical scientists recognize the possibility of the mind's selectivity in arriving at facts of physical phenomena. At the level of physical phenomena such selectivity may not matter much, and this is evidenced by the readiness of the physical scientist to revise his assumptions which are held very tentatively.

But this is not so when we enter the field of psychological research, for, here two additional factors have to be noted. Firstly, the field of research itself is very fluid, showing forth a flux of intense rapidity. So one cannot deal with the problems arising from this flux with an approach that is static. Any selective approach, based as it is on norms and standards of interpretation, is undoubtedly static. But there is also a second factor which needs to be considered when one enters the psychological field of perception. This factor is one's mental and emotional involvement in the very object of perception. This involvement stands in the way of a clear and an undistorted perception of men and things. Due to this involvement the selective process is all the more intensified, and so, any interpretative perception, based as it is on a selective process, prevents one from seeing men and things as they are. If the perception is defective then any action emanating from such a perception is bound to be wrong.

For right perception, a complete elimination of the subjective factor of interpretation and selection is imperative. So long as there is a subjective projection in the act of perception there is neither the gathering of true facts nor is there a looking at the facts without interpretation. The elimination of the subjective factor is absolutely essential when one deals with psychological phenomena of human relationships and the activities pertaining to those relationships. But modern psychology has not turned its serious attention to this all-important aspect of perception. In right perception it is not a change in the scale of observation that is important—what is important is the elimination of the observer himself. The observer comes into the picture of observation as an interpreter and as an evaluator. The elimination of the observer implies an act of observation without interpretation and evaluation.

But a question may arise: Is it possible to observe anything without interpretation and evaluation? And is not interpretation and evaluation necessary for any pattern of action? How can one act without selection and judgment? But an action which does not arise in the background of right perception has no validity at all. Such action can be described only as a reaction. Right perception must precede right action, and right perception is possible only when all conceptual interpretations and selections have ceased. So unless modern psychology concerns itself with the problem of right perception, its conclusions have very little validity. It is obvious that such conclusions cannot lead one along the path of integration. Needless to say right perception has to be completely objective. Such objectivity is possible only when the subjective projection of interpretation and evaluation has come to an end. Modern psychology is a complete stranger to this idea of a perception without a

perceiver, of an observation without an observer. And yet this is the crux of the whole psychological problem of man's inner integration. Modern psychology knows depth only in terms of extended analysis. It is an approach of dissecting further and further the object of perception. In this, it is not dissecting the object either—it dissects only what it regards as an object—in other words what it observes as an object through the glasses of interpretation, selection and evaluation. Its diagnosis is not of the object or the person, but of the object and the person as seen through its scale of observation, and this scale denotes its interpretation, evaluation and selection. There is no wonder that through such a diagnosis one cannot find a way to the fundamental core of the person, for in this the object of study is not the person but the person as seen from the angle of interpretation and evaluation. The approach of modern psychiatry and psychotherapy may at best bring about a patch-work in the psychological living of man, but it can never bring about a fundamental transformation in the psychological realm of the human individual. It may at best retard the growth of illness but it can never bring to man an experience of real health. Health surely is not just an absence of illness—it is something positive. This positive nature of health does not lie along the path of modern psychotherapy and psychiatry. For this it must explore the whole problem of right perception—right not in the sense of moral attributes, but right in the sense of a completely objective perception from which the perceiver has been eliminated. But the question still arises: Is this possible? An answer to this is found in the psychology of Yoga, for, it is here alone that the problem of the perceiver and the perceived is discussed without any ambiguity. It is here that one discovers the way to the elimination of the

perceiver so that right perception may come into existence. The psychology of analysis and synthesis has brought us face to face with many deadlocks. These can be opened only with the key vouchsafed to man in the psychology of Yoga.

If man is to find freedom from stress and strain of modern living, if he is to resolve the incessant conflict of inner contradiction, he must add to the psychology of analysis and synthesis a new dimension of understanding—and this is to be found in the way indicated by the psychology of Yoga. Nowhere do we find the principles and practice of the psychology of Yoga expounded with such precision and exactitude as in the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali. These *sūtras* are an unfailing guide in the new realm of Psychology which Yoga unveils before the gaze of man. Here man is enabled to stand on his own feet in dealing with his simple or intricate psychological problems. There is no need for him to go anywhere for the resolution of his psychological ills, not even to a psychiatrist or a psychotherapist. Each man can heal himself—that is the fundamental tenet of the psychology of Yoga. Here he is enabled to find his freedom both from the professional psychologist as also from the spiritual guru. It indicates to man that he can be a lamp unto himself. While modern Parapsychology and Extrasensory perception call our attention to the new frontiers of the Mind, the psychology of Yoga invites us to a new dimension of living where the mind has no limitation of frontiers at all. In the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali one sees a very comprehensive discussion of the psychology of Yoga, and that too in a manner which combines the strictly scientific approach with the deep and penetrating insight of philosophy.

The whole subject of Yoga is presented here in the form of *sūtras*. Now *sūtras* contain profound statements expressed in a language using the minimum number of words—in fact,

they are so minimum that not even a syllable can be removed. Such economy of words with such clarity of expression is nowhere to be seen for expounding a subject of such deep import as in the Sūtra literature.

Patañjali begins his treatise on Yoga in a traditional manner. The very first *sūtra* with which the treatise begins is:

atha yogānuśāsanam

1. Now begins a discussion on Yoga.

The Sanskrit word *atha* is very significant. The *Brahmā-Sūtras* and the *Narada-Bhakti Sūtras* also begin with this word *atha*. It denotes auspiciousness or more truly appropriateness. By using this word Patañjali says that it is now appropriate to start a discussion on Yoga. This appropriateness suggests that the student having come properly prepared would be able to understand the discussion which follows. Nowhere is it stated as to what this prior preparation is, but it can be surmised that a state of inquiry—not mere curiosity or inquisitiveness—is most assuredly the preparation of the student which lends appropriateness to the discussion on such a profound subject as Yoga. One of the meanings of the Sanskrit word *anusāsana* is persuasion. And so the above *sūtra* indicates that the teacher has no intention of giving instructions by laying down the law but wishes to follow the persuasive method of discussion while dealing with the subject of Yoga. After this opening *sūtra*, Patañjali plunges straightway into the subject of Yoga by stating:

yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ

2. Yoga is the dissolution of all centres of reaction in the mind.

This is one of the most famous *sūtras* of Patañjali and it strikes the very keynote of the whole treatise on Yoga. Here Patañjali has given a very clear definition of Yoga. According to him, Yoga is a state of mind completely free from all reactive tendencies. The mind in this context has to be considered not merely as an instrument of a thought-process but as a field where thought and emotion function together. By its thought-emotive activities it builds up certain tendencies which have been described in the above *sūtra* as *vṛttis*. These tendencies are the grooves of the mind into which the thought-emotion current inevitably flows. These tendencies could more appropriately be called the habits of the mind. It is needless to say that these habits are the centres of reaction formed in the mind. By the formation of these habits the mind and its activities show forth characteristics of reactive impulses. Even a casual examination of the activities of the mind would convince anybody that our thoughts are our reactions to impacts that impinge upon our consciousness. When we say that we are thinking, all that we are doing is engaging ourselves in a process of reaction. With the passage of time these centres of reaction become stronger and stronger. There is built within the mind a chain of reactions. These reactive tendencies become our habits. We become so completely used to these reactive tendencies that we begin to regard habit as our second nature. In fact the second nature becomes our only nature, for, we are unaware of any condition of the mind which is free from reactive centres. It is obvious that this second nature is our acquired nature—acquired through repeated reactions in the course of time. It does not matter what the pattern of these reactions is. Patañjali says that Yoga consists in breaking up these centres of reaction. We must remember that Yoga does not mean

development of new habits as against the old. It demands the dissolution of the very centre of habit. A mind in which there is no centre of reaction or habit is truly a free mind. Yoga is therefore the state of a completely free mind—not a mind freed from certain so-called bad habits. Any habit, whether good or bad, conditions the mind. If Yoga is freeing the mind from all centres of habit then surely it indicates a state of rendering the consciousness pure and innocent, with no trace of conditioning at all. It is not only an uncorrupt mind, devoid of all corrupting tendencies of reaction, but a mind that is incorruptible. If a mind is freed from certain habits then it may be uncorrupt for the time being—but if centres of habit are still in existence then such an uncorrupt mind will soon get corrupted. To have a mind that is incorruptible is to suggest that there is no centre of reaction or habit present in it. It is such a mind that is established in Yoga. Having no centre of habit, it is ever fresh and new. When all the tendencies of an acquired nature are negated then does the mind come to its original state of innocence. To bring about a reunion with this original state is indeed the aim and purpose of Yoga. Patañjali makes this abundantly clear in the next sūtra wherein he says:

tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam

3. In this state, the seer is established in his own original nature.

Thus Yoga is a journey from the acquired nature to the original nature of consciousness. All through the *Yoga-Sūtras*, Patañjali uses the term “seer” for the human individual. Since Yoga is fundamentally a right perception of men and things, the term “seer” is most appropriate. If the seer could see things rightly then he would become naturally and spontaneously a performer of right action.

Man develops in his journey through time an acquired nature which is built out of his resistances and indulgences, his acceptances and his rejections, his encounters and his endurances. These are his reactions, both positive as well as negative. These reactions are his defence-mechanisms which he develops in order to meet the challenges of life. They supply him with a standard with which to measure the impacts of life. This standard contains both the norm of measurement as well as the norm of action for dealing with the challenges of life. So he identifies himself with it—in fact, he is unable to visualise life without it. Patañjali says that when the very centre of reaction or habit is broken up there comes to view the original nature of man. And Yoga is that way of life whereby man is established in his original nature and is therefore able to function from there in the entire sphere of human relationship. Being established in *svarūpa* whatever he does is in line with the *svadharmā*. This clearly shows that Yoga is not an escape from action—on the contrary, it enables man to discover the right starting point of action. When the seer sees his true and original nature then his action has a quality of uniqueness in it, for, the action emanates from himself and not from his acquired nature. It is hardly necessary to point out that the original nature is that nature which existed prior to all the modifications with which it was later overlaid. To free the mind not only from all modifications but from the very centre which may give birth to future modifications—this is indeed the aim and purpose of Yoga. Patañjali has emphasised this point in the next *sūtra* which states:

vṛitti-sārūpyam itaratra

4. With the centres of reaction undissolved, the seer remains identified with the acquired tendencies of the mind.

Here our attention is pointedly drawn to the essential requirement if one wishes to journey on the path of Yoga. According to this *sūtra*, the dissolving of the centres of reaction is a pre-requisite for coming to the experience of Yoga. The maintenance of the acquired nature and the experience of Yoga cannot go together. In other words, it is the acquired nature which constitutes the biggest hurdle on the path of Yoga. To act from the base of one's acquired nature is to be identified with the modifications of one's mind. In this, one regards oneself as the modification itself. Thus the modification becomes one's nature. This is what is known as one's second nature in which one does not even admit the possibility of any other nature. It is because of this that what is habitual is regarded by the individual as natural and so there is a complete identification with this acquired nature. It is to this that the above *sūtra* refers. It is only when the acquired nature is dissolved that one can be established in one's true nature. How is this to be done? It is to the *modus operandi* of the dissolution of the acquired nature that Patañjali turns in the subsequent *sūtras*. But before this, one must understand the process by which the modifications of mind come into existence, for, unless one knows how the modifications arise, one cannot find out the way to their dissolution. And so Patañjali says:

vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ

5. The centres of reaction are the begetters of pain or pleasure; they can be grouped in a fivefold manner.

All reactions of the mind are rooted in the pleasure principle. The avoidance of pain is also a part of the same principle. Pleasure and Pain are inseparable—where pleasure is,

there is sure to be pain lurking somewhere in its vicinity. The very formation of the acquired nature is rooted in the pleasure principle. And so it appears that as long as the acquired nature persists so long must one remain bound to the functioning of pleasure and pain. To come to an experience beyond the pairs of these opposites is to seek the way to the dissolution of the acquired nature or the centres of reaction functioning in the mind. The joy of life can be found neither by pursuing pleasure nor by avoiding pain. But the modifications of the mind impel one either to pursue pleasure or to avoid pain. One may ask: Is there a way where there is neither seeking of pleasure nor avoiding of pain? If so, what is that way? How can one find it so long as the motivating factors of modifications remain? The modifications arise out of the centres of reaction. How can these centres be dissolved? For this one must understand how they come into existence and what is it that sustains them. To do this it is necessary that one inquires into the source from whence they emerge. Such a total inquiry leading the student right up to the source of these modifications would indicate a way to their complete dissolution. The question is: How does one inquire into the source of the modifications of the mind? Patañjali gives a clear hint in the above *sūtra* regarding this inquiry. He says that there are five regions of mental activity where the source of modifications can be found. In other words the modifications or centres of reaction can be grouped in a fivefold manner. This fivefold grouping is nothing but the five principal regions of mental operations. In the next *sūtra* Patañjali explains what these five regions are, knowing which, one can direct one's inquiry into the very source from where these modifications arose. The sixth *sūtra* tells us:

pramāṇa-viṣayaya-vikalpa-nidrāsmṛtayah

6. The tendencies of reaction are formed out of reason, unreason, fancy, sleep and memory.

These five regions of mental activity cover the whole range of the mind's operations, the conscious as well as the sub-conscious levels of the mind. The problem of modifications or reactions cannot be fully understood by noticing only the conscious mental activity. It is necessary to understand the intimations of the subconscious and even of the unconscious. After all the mind is one and cannot be divided into watertight compartments of the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious. These divisions flow into each other, and so there is a constant interaction between them. So for a clear understanding of the reactive urges of the mind it is essential that one comprehends the activity of the total mind. The fivefold region about which Patañjali speaks in the above *sūtra* covers the totality of the mind. But what are these regions? How does the mind function there? And how do various centres of reaction get formed in the soil of the mind? It is to these questions that Patañjali turns in the next five *sūtras*, each *sūtra* dealing with one of the aspects of the fivefold region of the mind. And so we are told:

pratyakṣānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni

7. Reason has its roots in sensorial cognition, in inference and in the testimony of recognized authority.

In this small *sūtra*, Patañjali has summed up the entire scope of logical thinking. It is hardly necessary to point out that rational thinking is governed by the laws of logic. Reason

moves along the pathway indicated by logic. But what are the guidelines of logical thinking? Patañjali says that they are sensorial cognition, inference and recognized authority. The above *sūtra* uses the word *pratyakṣa*, but this is not in the sense of direct experience of which the mystics speak. It means sensorial cognition. Unless there is a sense data gathered by the inquirer himself there is no starting point of rational thinking. This is the crux of scientific thinking and reasoning. After having gathered the sense data, the process of thinking starts, and that which gives impetus to such thinking is inference. Now inferential knowledge is a comparative knowledge arrived at by sorting out similarities and dissimilarities. All logical thinking is comparative because it is based on a movement between two opposite points. One infers about something when similarities or dissimilarities are seen. And the seeing of these is possible when the mind moves between two opposites. But Patañjali says that rational thinking is not only based on sensorial cognition and inference but also on recognized authority. After all whatever the logical thinking may have found, to have validity, it must be corroborated by some recognized authority which may be a scripture or an expert or one's own past experience. The authority of one's own past experience is the most determining authority, for, it is this which examines the injunctions of scriptures, laws of science as also the opinions of the expert. This is the real *āgama* in all logical thinking.

All our knowledge arrived at by rational thinking is an inferential knowledge. Even scientific knowledge is an inferential knowledge. While the material for inference is given by senses, its guidelines arrive from authority or testimony. Thus our inferential knowledge is supported on the one hand by sense data and on the other by authority or

testimony. Now the Sanskrit word used for testimony or authority in this *sūtra* is *āgama*. The very meaning of this word is "arrival," and so *āgama*, represents the arrival of the mind. The arrival of the mind is its conclusion. It is the conclusions of the mind which are our highest authority—that which gives or does not give validity to an inference. This being the case, in all logical or rational thinking, our mind moves from conclusion to conclusion. A conclusion is a centre formed in the mind and with the formation of the centre, a modification has taken place directing the thought current along its pathway. Our thought-process indeed moves from conclusion to conclusion and that is why one can never cognize something entirely new by a thought-process. All our thinking moves round a circle, the centre of which is the conclusion or the *āgama*. Thus it is that logical thinking is only structural, keeping the content of the centre intact. Through rational thinking one may bring about a structural change in the pattern of conclusion, but it cannot lead one to the discovery of something entirely new. Logical thinking can know only a modification of the old. Thus rational thinking, which is inferential thinking, functions within the limits of sensorial cognition on the one hand and the *āgama* or the testimony of conclusion on the other. Its movement is obviously not the movement of a free mind. It is this which makes it the factor of generating reactive tendencies in the mind. The function of reason is to build a perfectly symmetrical structure of thought but it cannot change the content of the mind. For the same content it can build new structures and with that the function of reason ends. But it is the content which constitutes the centre of reaction. It is because of this that in the problem of *vṛttis*, or the reactive tendencies, Patañjali has put reason first. From reason he moves to

unreason declaring it also as one of the modifying centres of consciousness. He says:

viparyayo mithyājñānamatad-rūpapraṭiṣṭham

8. When facts are covered over with the superimpositions of the mind then is seen the functioning of unreason.

When the perception of a thing bears no resemblance to the thing as it actually is then is one under the influence of unreason or *viparyaya*. The word *viparyaya* really means something that is contrary. In this context it is contrary to *pramāṇa*. Thus it is contrary to reason, and therefore it can be defined as unreason. The above *sūtra* says that when one sees something completely different from what that thing actually is then is there a functioning of unreason. It means the seeing of that which one has superimposed. To mistake the projected as the actual is a condition which is devoid of reason. Surely such activity arises from the centres of reaction formed in the mind. So Patañjali describes this as another region of mental activity where reactive tendencies find their sustenance. If both reason and unreason are the cause of modifications and also the sustaining factors of those modifications then what is one to do? Is there something other than reason as well as unreason? If so, what is it? This is the third Way which has to be discovered in the moment of Yoga. To this we shall turn in the latter part of the book.

To regard that which is projected to be the actual is to be caught in illusion or *māyā*. It is a case of mistaking the reflection for the reality, the shadow for the substance. In illusion or *māyā*, it is not suggested that the substance does not exist, nor does it mean that the shadow is nonexistent. It is the mistaking of the one for the other which is the basis of

illusion. In rational thinking it is the principle of selectivity that functions—a selectivity in terms of *āgama* or conclusion. But in unreason it is the principle of projection that functions which regards the superimposed as the actual. Both reason and unreason arise out of reactive tendencies, and they, by their functioning, sustain the centres of modification. But there is still a third category of mental activity to which Patañjali refers in the next *sūtra* which says:

śabda-jñānānupātī vastu-sūnyo vikalpaḥ

9. Fancy is the image conjured up by the stimulation of words without any reality behind them.

The activity of *vikalpa* or Fancy is of that category where the actual is nonexistent. In the above *sūtra*, the phrase used is *vastu-sūnya* meaning the absence of any reality whatsoever. But then what is the basis of this mental activity? It is the stimulation of a mental image arising as a result of hearing a word. One may hear the word “cow” and then there is formed immediately an image of the cow. When this image, which is entirely the product of the mind, is taken as reality then is one indulging in a mental activity called Fancy. Now fancy and imagination are not identical. In imagination the mind carries on its image-building activity on the ground-work of facts. Here the mind is expanding the range of facts. But in fancy there is a complete non-existence of facts. In other words, a mental structure without any foundation of facts is to be regarded as Fancy. One may ask: Where lies the source of this Fancy? Surely it is in the subconscious layers of the mind. When the mind seeks a fulfilment of some subconscious urge then is expressed a mental activity which can be termed as Fancy. And so its reactive tendencies lie

at the subliminal level, and not at the level of the conscious mind. The selective activity of *pramāṇa* and the projecting activity of *viparyaya* are obviously the expressions of the conscious mind. But when the mind is engaged in image-building activity without any factual foundation then it is impelled by centres of reaction that reside at the subconscious layers of consciousness. Sometimes such centres have a more impelling force than those functioning at the conscious level. This activity is provoked by a word, expressed or unexpressed. It may be a mere inarticulate verbalization or it may be result of an articulated word. This articulation may be by oneself or it may be by another. It needs to be remembered that Fancy is a form of mental activity which is provoked by verbalization. With this *sūtra*, Patañjali has indicated the existence of reactive centres at the subconscious level. He speaks of the subconscious centres further in the subsequent *sūtras*. In the tenth *sūtra*, he says:

abhāva-pratyayāmbanā vṛttir nidrā

10. The activity of the mind which is devoid of meaning and content is likened to the condition of Sleep.

Here Sleep is not to be understood in the usual physical sense, but a condition of consciousness. In the above three states, discussed in *sūtras* seven, eight and nine, one sees at least a meaningful activity where the conscious and the subconscious layers of the mind are seen seeking some objective for the fulfilment of their urges. But when the mind just drifts without any meaning or content then is consciousness in a condition of sleep or stupor. The state devoid of content has been described in the above *sūtra* as *abhāva-pratyaya*. The word *pratyaya* denotes content, and its *abhāva* indicates a condition

completely devoid of content or meaning. This may be likened to a drift of the mind. A drift has obviously no aim, no meaning. But then what impels such a drift? Evidently it must be something deep down in consciousness whether at the subconscious or the unconscious level. The drift obviously is a reactive movement in answer to something deep down in one's consciousness. In order to understand the problem of *vrittis* or the reactive tendencies causing modifications, one must clearly perceive the nature of drift, for such an inquiry may reveal hidden centres of reaction.

But this is not all. The inquiry into the centres of reaction and their source leads us further to a function of the mind which is perhaps more powerful than any that we have so far considered. It is to this that Patañjali refers in the eleventh *sūtra* of the First Book:

anubhūtaviśayāsaṃpramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ

11. An attempt to give continuity to an experience even after the event has passed away is Memory.

Without exploring the whole field of memory, one cannot understand fully the problem of reactive tendencies or the *vrittis*. But what is memory and how does it function? According to the above *sūtra*, memory is not just the remembrance of an event that has passed away. Such remembrance is only the memory of a fact—the fact of an event that has passed away. It is not the factual memory which produces reactive tendencies in the mind. Patañjali speaks here of psychological memory which he describes in a very apt manner. He says “not allowing an experience which one has had to be stolen” is memory. In other words, to give a

continuity to an experience even after the event pertaining to that experience is over, is memory. Why does one do this? Obviously because even though the event has gone, the experience pertaining to it has remained psychologically incomplete. In such incompleteness there is naturally a craving for a repetition of the same or a similar experience. This craving left in the region of psychological memory is one of the most powerful centres of reactive tendencies. No other factor is more powerful in producing *vrittis* in consciousness than psychological memory. Man constantly reacts to outer impacts of life from this centre of craving, and craving is born in the soil of psychological incompleteness experienced with reference to an event. In fact, this craving colours all other regions of mental activity. Whether it is the selection of the rational mind or the projection of unreason, whether it is the fanciful image-building or a meaningless drift—there is behind it all this craving born of trying to hold on to an experience even after the event has passed away. The mind does not want the event to be stolen, for, round about the event which is chronologically over, it builds a stupendous structure of psychological craving. If the event which is chronologically over, is also completed psychologically then there would not be formed a reactive tendency of memory. It is because of the gap created between chronological completion and the psychological incompleteness that the pulls of reactive tendencies centering round memory come into existence. And these are the most potent factors of modification setting into motion countless *vrittis* of an extremely powerful nature.

Thus has Patañjali described to us the source and motivating factors of the *vrittis* or reactive tendencies, in these five *sūtras*. Unless there is brought about a complete cessation of

the reactive tendencies, a dissolution of the very centre of modification, one cannot come to the experience of Yoga. And without this experience of Yoga one cannot know what inner integration is. Without the dissolution of the very centre of reactive tendencies, those forces which are the begetters of the habits of the mind, there cannot come to man Right Perception. And without Right Perception, how can there be Right Action?

But the question is: How to dissolve this very centre of reactive tendencies? How to come to a complete cessation of the *vrittis*? How to render the mind pure and innocent, free from all modifications? It is to these practical questions of Yoga that Patañjali turns in the subsequent *sūtras* of the First Book.

CHAPTER II

THE CENTRES OF HABIT

THE fundamental theme of the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali centres round the idea of *vrittis* or reactionary tendencies and their cessation. It has to be remembered that this inquiry into the problem of *vrittis* does not aim at inhibiting the arising of thoughts in the mind, for such inhibition would mean rendering the mind utterly dormant, if not dead. It is not the arising of thoughts which constitutes a problem in the field of Yoga. It is the giving of a continuity to thought which is the main obstacle in the path of Yoga. And *vrittis* are essentially a continuity of thought, for how can grooves and tendencies be formed in the consciousness save by a process of continuity? In fact, continuity of thought and tendencies of the mind are identical because when thought is given a continuity then a reactive tendency is born in the mind. It is only when the mind gives a habitat to thought that the vested interests of thought begin to be established. And the vested interests of thought are indeed the *vrittis*. When thought establishes its sphere of influence in the mind then is *vritti* born. If thoughts would come and go without forming any permanent centre in the mind then there would be no difficulty at all. Such a mind would always remain free and uncommitted. In such a mind no centres of habit would come into existence. So the problem is not to stop the awakening of thought but rather to prevent a continuity

being given to thoughts that may come and go in the field of human consciousness.

In the last chapter we saw how *vritti* or continuity of thought is born in the course of mental activities centering round reason, unreason, fancy, sleep and memory. This fivefold region of consciousness is the source of all *vrittis*. It is there that a continuity is imparted to thought. The fundamental question therefore is: How to prevent this continuity with reference to thought-emotion from coming into existence? Can thought-emotions subside naturally and spontaneously after completing their functions? It is the hang-over of an experience even after the event has passed which causes stress and strain in one's psychological living. The *vrittis* are indeed the products of this hang-over. If an experience is not to leave a hang-over behind then surely it is necessary that its psychological completion should synchronise with its chronological completion. If one moves on in life with each experience psychologically completed then the consciousness would remain unmodified and therefore ever fresh and vital. To experience such a state of consciousness is to come to the ecstasy of Yoga. How does one come to such a state?

The First Book of the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali is called the *Samādhi Pāda*. In this Book the author gives us an overall picture of Yoga. Having first formulated the problem of *vrittis*, he gives us an indication as to how the problem can be approached and what would happen when the problem is solved. On a wide canvas he draws a picture of Yoga for all to understand. He, as it were, gives us a map of the new country to which we aspire to go. To study a country through a map is completely different from actually traversing it. However the consulting of a map is of very great

value before undertaking the actual journey. A map is a two-dimensional portrayal of a three-dimensional reality. It tells us of the general lay-out of the country. But the study of a map, however detailed it may be, cannot give to the student the joys of discovering the country. The map may point out the direction in which to move but it cannot tell us what the traveller will discover while moving in that direction. The First Book of the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali serves as a map for the traveller who wants to undertake a journey in the land of Yoga. And like a good map it gives us various details indicating the nature of the terrain. It is in the Second Book, as also in the Third, that Patañjali is concerned with the actual travelling in the new land. The map of a new country is like the finger pointing the way. This is what the First Book does. The Second and the Third Books are concerned with the equipment and the adventures of the travel. But before going into these, one must acquaint oneself with the map of the new country which denotes quite a number of important land-marks. And what about the Fourth Book? The Fourth Book contains the harvest of the journey.

In the first chapter we discussed the general nature of the *vrittis*, what they are and from where do they arise. In other words, we saw where the *vrittis* get their sustenance and how their stream of continuity is augmented. The stream of continuity gathers more and more current as the mind functions in the fivefold regions of its activity. The next question is: How can this stream of continuity be halted so that thoughts come and go without creating any *vrittis* in consciousness? A general hint regarding the cessation of *vrittis* or reactionary tendencies is given in the following *sūtra*:

abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyāṃ tan nirodhaḥ

12. The dissolution of the reactive centres of the mind is achieved by Practice and Dispassion.

The formula of Practice and Dispassion appears again and again in the spiritual discipline of the Hindus. We find it in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and also in the Upaniṣads. It is a formula of great revolutionary import. However, in examining this formula, one point is very often missed and that is the co-existence of Practice and Dispassion. They have to be together at the same time and not one after the other. Usually in understanding this formula one introduces a time-interval between the two which divests it of all meaning and significance. It is necessary to realize that Practice and Dispassion are two contradictory approaches—one denotes effort while the other signifies effortlessness. While in Practice there is the putting of effort, in Dispassion there is obviously the cessation of effort. How can these two exist together when they contradict each other? And yet it is in their Co-existence that the secret of freeing the mind of all *vrittis* lies. Their co-existence denotes a state of relaxation in the midst of tension, of inaction in the midst of action, of silence in the midst of noise. The experience of practice and dispassion with a time-interval is known to most people. It signifies the carrying on of one's activities in life so long as there is physical and mental energy. When this energy is completely depleted so that we are no longer able to put in any effort, we turn to *vairāgya* or dispassion. Thus there is dispassion at a time when no passion is left. Such dispassion has no value whatsoever. It has to be in the midst of Passion.

But what are practice and dispassion—*abhyāsa and vairāgya*? It is about these that Patañjali speaks in the subsequent four *sūtras*. Speaking about *abhyāsa* or practice, Patañjali says:

tatra sthitau yatno 'bhyāsaḥ

13. Practice denotes an effort for the purpose of being firmly established in a state free from all reactive tendencies.

Thus practice is an effort in the direction of establishing oneself in the state of Yoga which is free from all *vrittis* or the reactive tendencies of the mind. It is a purposeful activity moving in a particular direction. Patañjali says, in terms of this *sūtra* that one has to put in tremendous effort in order to come to a spiritual experience such as Yoga. Apart from effort being a well-directed movement, it has certain other characteristics about which Patañjali speaks in the next *sūtra*. He says:

*sa tu dirgha-kāla-nairantarya-satkārāsevito dṛḍha-
bhūmiḥ*

14. Practice has to be prolonged, uninterrupted and filled with earnestness or enthusiasm.

Practice demands an effort that is prolonged, stretching over a long duration. One cannot expect quick results on this path. There is nothing like instant Yoga. It requires a continuous effort spread over a number of years. Moreover this effort has to be uninterrupted. A spasmodic effort can never lead a person anywhere. To put in an effort for some time and then to retire in hibernation in order to rest on one's oars is of no use at all if one is really serious about journeying into the land of yoga. But there is something more about this effort regarding which Patañjali speaks. He says it

must be filled with earnestness or enthusiasm. The Sanskrit phrase used here is *satkār-āsevita*. The effort must have a quality of cheerfulness about it. Yoga is not a Path of Woe; it is indeed a Way of Joy. If the effort is prolonged and uninterrupted and yet lacks this quality of joy then it is hardly of any worth at all. The effort must have an element of passion about it, for one cannot go to the door of Reality like a skeleton, completely squeezed out. The journey on the path requires great energy. The word *satkār* in this *sūtra* denotes such energy which is comparable to a feeling of passion about what one is undertaking. Without this passion the prolonged and uninterrupted effort will seem exhausting. One will soon get tired of the effort as is the case with many aspirants on the path of Yoga. When this passion or cheerfulness is not there then the other two conditions of the effort being prolonged and uninterrupted cannot be fulfilled. But can one maintain this quality of passion and cheerfulness in the midst of hard, prolonged and uninterrupted effort? Normally our effort becomes mechanical and monotonous. When this happens the joy of the effort is gone. One may carry it on because either one is pledged to it or one has formed a habit of it. Any effort done by duty or by habit is utterly frustrating. The question is: How to keep the effort free from becoming a habit and also free from a sense of doing one's duty or fulfilling one's pledge or obligation? Normally our spiritual effort emanates either from the point of habit or from the point of duty, and an effort emanating from either of these points lacks the quality of passion or of cheerfulness. The question is: How to avoid these motivations? It is in this context that Dispassion or *Vairāgya* seems essential for an effort that is prolonged and uninterrupted but at the same time full of joy and passion.

Without dispassion existing along with practice effort becomes tiring and therefore frustrating. But then one must inquire as to what this *Vairāgya* is. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

*dr̥ṣṭānuśravika-viṣaya-vitr̥ṣṇasya vaśikārasaṃjñā vai-
rāgyam*

15. Dispassion is a condition free from all motives, whether arising from a desire for something that has been experienced or for something that has not yet been experienced.

Dispassion is a condition free from all motives. Emphasizing this fact still further, Patañjali says there can be neither the motive for repeating something which one has experienced nor the motive for attaining something about which one has only heard but not actually seen. It is the motive which brings a feeling of tiredness in any effort. Both duty and habit arise from the functioning of motive. In duty lies the motive of attaining something which one has not seen but only heard about. In habit lies the motive of doing again and again that to which one is accustomed. So long as either of these motivating factors operates, so long must effort become mechanical and monotonous, devoid of the quality of passion and cheerfulness. We had said earlier that *abhyāsa* or practice is a movement in a particular direction. It is a well-directed movement. Is it possible to move in a particular direction and yet have no motive whatsoever in that movement? Does not direction involve a motive? A movement without a direction would be just a drift. But a movement with a direction has surely a motive behind it. And yet if the presence of motive makes our effort mechanical and therefore

devoid of passion, how can one have direction and yet not contaminate that movement with any motive? Is this possible?

In the above *sūtra*, Patañjali suggests that *vairāgya* cannot be defined; it can only be indicated. And its indication is a state free from all motives. Why cannot *vairāgya* be defined? Because a definition always sets a limit to anything that is defined. But *vairāgya* which has a limit is no *vairāgya* at all—when defined, it would mean a dispassion from something. How can this be called dispassion at all? It would mean that one is detached from something, but such detachment would involve an attachment for something else. In the above *sūtra*, Patañjali makes this abundantly clear, and that is why he says that dispassion can only be indicated. To make this point still clearer he says that *vairāgya* is a condition in which there is neither a motive for the repetition of the past nor of the anticipation of the future. It thus has no roots either in past or in the future. It is a state of living in the present—not so much the chronological as the psychological present.

It is true that *abhyāsa* is a movement with a sense of direction. But direction in the psychological sense cannot be static just as a geographical direction is. In the psychological sphere, direction is intensely dynamic. Such a direction is not located in the future for any location would make it static. It is a direction which has to be discovered constantly in the present. To live in the present is not to drift on the current of time. The present is timeless. It is not a passage from the past to the future. If it were so one would hear in it the echoes of the past and the future. To live in the present is to discover one's direction from moment to moment. The dynamism of life precludes the existence of a static direction. *Abhyāsa* is a well-directed movement, and *vairāgya* is that

dynamic state of living in the present where the direction is discovered from moment to moment. And so when these two co-exist there is movement of life in which is displayed the remarkable phenomenon of discontinuity in the midst of continuity. *Vairāgya* is a state of psychological discontinuity even as *abhyāsa* is a phenomenon of continuity. It is in dispassion, that the effort involved in practice discovers its purpose from moment to moment. But can one come to such an experience of the co-existence of practice and dispassion, two diametrically opposed states of the mind? If so, how does one come to such an experience? Patañjali discusses this in the next *sūtra* which runs as follows:

tat paraṃ puruṣa-khyāter guṇavairṣṇyam

16. In dispassion, due to the state of awareness there is a complete detachment from the activities of the three attributes or the *guṇas*.

The way to the co-existence of practice and dispassion suggested by Patañjali is the awareness of the thinker and his movements of thought. The thinker and the thought are not two different entities. Thought seeking continuity is the thinker. All activities of the thinker are to the end of giving a continuity to thought. The thinker exists only by such a continuity. And so to be aware of the thinker is the same as being aware of thought-continuity. The continuity of thought occurs through the activities of the three *guṇas* or the attributes. Thus in the functioning of the *guṇas* we see the activity of the thinker. The *guṇas* are the functioning attributes of life. If they are allowed to function without imposing any continuity to their specific functions then no psychological problem is created. It is when the thinker interferes with

their functioning that the current of life gets obstructed. It is this interference by the thinker which constitutes a negation of Dispassion. It is significant to note that Patañjali in this *sūtra* does not use the word "seer" for the human individual; he describes him as *Puruṣa*. Now *Puruṣa* is Man, and the distinguishing quality of man is his mind and the process of thought. That is why *Puruṣa* in this context has to be understood to mean the human mind. The *sūtra* says that by being aware of the mind and its activities one comes to a state of real *vairāgya*. This obviously means that the mind does not interfere in the functioning of the *guṇas*. To allow the *guṇas* to function without the intervention of the mind is the highest form of detachment. In the normal functioning of the three *guṇas*—*Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*—what are displayed are the characteristics of stability, mobility and harmony respectively. These characteristics are needed for the furtherance of life. But when the mind interferes with the functioning of the *guṇas* then are distortions brought into existence so that stability becomes stagnation, mobility becomes restless activity and harmony is changed into self-satisfaction. These distortions—not the *guṇas* themselves—create for the consciousness of man various conditioning factors. When the *guṇas* are allowed to function without the interference of the mind then is seen a co-existence of Practice and Dispassion, of Action and Inaction. Then is right perception of things possible, and it is this which becomes the right starting point of action. True *vairāgya* is called the transcending of the three *guṇas*, but it does not mean that the *guṇas* cease to function. If this were to happen life would cease to exist. To transcend the three *guṇas* is to come to a state where the mind does not interfere with the normal functioning of the *guṇas* so that *Tamas*, *Rajas* and

Sattva are allowed to function in their respective spheres without any intervention of thought. To detach the mind from the functioning of the *guṇas* is what is described as *vairāgya*. In order to bring about this detachment, one must become aware of the activities of the mind with reference to these *guṇas*. In this awareness comes the Dispassion about which Patañjali speaks in the above *sūtra*. The reactive tendencies are born, when, in the functioning spheres of *guṇas*, mind establishes its own centres. It is with this that stability becomes stagnation, mobility becomes restlessness and repose or harmony becomes self-righteousness.

To be aware of these centres of thought formed in the functioning spheres of the *guṇas* is not only the way to the co-existence of Practice and Dispassion but also a way to the dissolution of those very centres which are the begetters of *vṛttis*. To break up these centres formed in the region of *guṇas* is the very purpose of Yoga. In the subsequent *sūtras* of the First Book, Patañjali gives us an understanding of the dissolution of these centres in the form of the threefold *Samādhi* or what may be called the triple nature of spiritual experience.

CHAPTER III

THE INERTIA OF THE MIND

IN the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* which contains the basic tenets of the Hindu Psychology there is a very clear exposition of the different states of consciousness known as *Jāgrat* or the waking, the *Svapna* or the dream and the *Suṣupti* or the deep sleep. It is only after *suṣupti* that one comes to the transcendental state which can be compared to *Samādhi* or Spiritual Illumination. These three states have essentially to do with the functioning of the three *guṇas*. We saw in the last chapter that it is not the normal functioning of the *guṇas* that creates conditioning factors but it is their distorted functioning which brings into existence conditions that warp the consciousness of man. We also discussed how the distortions in the functioning of the *guṇas* comes because of the intervention of the thought process.

There is nothing wrong in the normal and natural functioning of the *guṇas*. In fact, it is by their functioning that life can manifest itself. *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* are necessary for the emergence and the continuance of life. It is only when the natural flow of the *guṇas* is interfered with that the psychosomatic problems arise. This interference is done by the mind for the purposes of its own psychological fulfilment, thus creating vortices in the otherwise smooth and easy flow of the *guṇas*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of the *guṇas* functioning among the *guṇas*. The *Gītā* says that when this happens, the problems of attachment do not arise.

Yoga aims at releasing the current of life caught in the vortices of the *guṇas*. These vortices are the centres formed by the mind in the functioning sphere of the *guṇas* and so are obviously psychological centres. They have to be broken one by one if man is to come to the integrating experience of Yoga. The centres are mainly threefold—one in the region of each of the *guṇas*. Of course there can be any number of ramifications of these main centres. But if the main centres are destroyed then their attendant ramifications would automatically wither away. It is to the breaking up of these main centres in the sphere of *guṇas* that Patañjali is concerned in the *sūtras* beginning from the seventeenth in the First Book. He discusses this problem with reference to the threefold nature of *Samādhi* or the triple nature of spiritual experience. This triple nature has much to do with the three states of consciousness about which mention has been made in the earlier part of this chapter. The *Jāgrat* or the waking state is that condition where the distortions of *Tamas* are removed. Similarly the *Svapna* and *Suṣupti*, the dream and the deep sleep states, refer to the breaking up of the distortions in the spheres of *Rajas* and *Sattva*. The three centres of the mind creating vortices in the stream of *guṇas* are located in *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* from where they must be removed enabling the *guṇas* to function among the *guṇas*. Patañjali tells us in the seventeenth *sūtra* that:

vitarka-vicārānandāsmiṭānugamāt saṃprajñātaḥ

17. Dialectical thinking, Active mentation, Abundance of interests and Distinctive individuality are the factors constituting *Samprajñāta Samādhi* or an experience with thought-habit functioning as a centre.

When the functioning of *Tamas* gets distorted then stability degenerates into stagnation and indolence. The body and the mind become sluggish. Complete dullness overpowers the functioning of the mind. The spiritual aspirant has to be awakened from this as otherwise he will be caught in the *virtis* arising out of this condition. The Rāja Yoga of Patañjali demands that mind must exercise its influence over matter—not the other way round. So it is the mind that must be awakened from the condition of stupor and dullness. An active mind is one which has its distinctive individuality or *asmita*. The minds of most of us are amorphous, without any definite shape, because of the indolence and stagnation in which they are caught. But how to awaken the mind? Surely by the mind taking abundant interest in all that exists round about it. It is our common experience that a dull mind is hardly interested in anything, and this lack of interest makes it even more sluggish. It is therefore necessary for the activation of the mind that one must get interested in something, no matter what it is. Patañjali therefore says that before the mind can attain to its distinctive individuality, which is the coming of the mind to its full stature and therefore capable of handling various situations, it must discover its areas of interest. It must be able to be abundantly interested in something. This is called by Patañjali as the *ānanda* of the mind. When the area of interest is discovered then the mind can start its active mentation about it, i.e. it can begin to apply its thinking faculty upon it. Patañjali indicates this by the simple word *vicāra*. It is quite obvious that thinking cannot start unless one is interested in the object to be thought about. When interest is there some sort of simple rudimentary thinking can easily start. But this is only the beginning, for this simple thinking must move into dialectical thinking or

vitarka. Dialectical thinking is that logical thinking where opposites pertaining to the object of thinking are clearly defined and perceived. We must remember that the three stages of mental activity, namely dialectical thinking, active mentation and abundance of interest lead to the development of the *asmita* or distinct individuality of the mind. It is true that Yoga is a movement beyond the frontiers of the mind, but it is useless to talk of "beyond the mind" unless and until one has developed the mind to its utmost possibilities. One can understand the limitations of the mind only when one has explored the possibilities of the mind. *Samprajñāta Samādhi* is indeed the exploration of the possibilities of the mind. It is a condition where the mind is rendered tremendously active. But we must realize that to explore the possibilities of the mind is to see its movements with reference to a centre from where it functions. The mind in *Tamas* functions from its centre of thought-habit. The thought-habit is the vortex created in the functioning of *Tamas*. It is this which causes stability to degenerate into stagnation. So before this centre of thought-habit is broken, a fresh activity within the campus of the thought-habit has to be created so that the mind may awaken from its dull and sluggish state. The activation of the mind within the confines of the thought-habit is indeed the purpose of *Samprajñāta Samādhi*—a spiritual experience with thought-habit functioning as a centre. To attempt to break the centre forthwith with a mind immersed in dullness would be an impossible task. That is why there should be first the awakening of the mind within the campus of thought-habit. This can be done by first arousing mind's interest in something and then starting an elementary thought process round about it so that there may emerge clear dialectical thinking imparting to the mind a distinct individuality

or *asmita*. Patañjali has given here an intensely practical way for the activization of the mind. It is very simple and yet tremendously effective. From a dull mind to a dialectically active mind—that is the way suggested in the *Samprajñāta Samādhi* and that too by moving step by step with no ambiguity in the process.

But man must move further so that the vortex of thought-habit itself is broken up rendering the functioning of the *guṇas* smooth and easy. *Tamas* must no longer remain a stagnating factor—it must become a stabilizing factor of life. But for this the centre of thought-habit established by the mind has to be dissolved. It is to this that Patañjali refers in the next *sūtra*:

virāma-pratyayābhyāsa-pūrvāḥ saṃskāra-śeṣo'nyah

18. When consciousness retains only impressions of facts without their psychological associations then is attained *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* or an experience without any centre of thought-habit.

Patañjali here speaks of the retentive as against the psychological memory. It is retentive memory which gives stability to life, and without it life would be utterly unstable—in fact, it would be impossible to exist without it. It is the associative memory which distorts the stabilizing factor of life. Patañjali says in the above *sūtra* that when consciousness retains only impressions of facts without their psychological associations then is one brought to the experience of *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*. It may be noted that the associative memory moves under the compulsion of thought-habit. All associations of thought are impelled by habit. In the activated mind these associations

are all the more intensified. If one is to be free from the distortions of *Tamas* then one has to break up this associative centre of thought-habit. *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* brings one to the *Jāgrat* or the waking state. One comes to the waking state only when one is free from the compulsions of the associative process of habit. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali uses the word *virāma-pratyaya* which is very significant. *Pratyaya* is the content of the mind and its *virāma* means its cessation. The cessation of content can take place only when the associative process of habit is broken. But the elimination of the associative memory does not create a condition of amnesia or loss of memory. Lest a misunderstanding may arise Patañjali says there is the *saṃskāra-śeṣa*, meaning the retention of impressions. In other words, while the associative memory subsides there is the clear functioning of the factual memory. And it is the factual memory which surely is the factor of stability in one's life. While mind stagnates through associative or psychological memory, it shows forth great stability in its functioning due to factual or retentive memory. It may be noted that while in *Samprajñāta Samādhi* there is an effort to stimulate the associative process, in the *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* there is the cessation of the associative memory.

In the First Book, Patañjali is not concerned with the methods of achieving this. To that problem he turns in the Second and the Third Books. Here he only gives us an indication of the various aspects of life as viewed by Yoga. How to be established in retentive memory and yet be completely free from the distortions of psychological or associative memory will be dealt with when we come to the instruments of Yoga.

One may ask a question: Does not mind become utterly passive when it moves about only with the retentive memory?

Does it not become colourless by divesting itself of the psychological counterpart of memory? Patañjali is not oblivious of this fact and therefore he turns to it in the next *sūtra*.

bhava-pratyayo videha-prakṛtilayānām

19. Mediumship whether natural or caused by some material or physical factors is not to be mistaken for *Samādhi* or spiritual experience.

Patañjali has here made a distinction between the Psychic and the Spiritual. It is true that the associative memory appears to impart to life certain amount of colourfulness. But it is not the natural colour of things or happenings. It is a colour projected by the centre of thought-habit. As anything that is projected by habit is dull and stale, lacking the freshness of newness, the colourfulness of associative memory has something stale about it. But if the associative memory vanishes there comes to view the natural and fresh colour of men and things. In the latter part of the book, Patañjali gives an illustration of a transparent jewel which gets fused with the colour of the surface on which it rests. When the associative memory is silenced then the consciousness becomes like a transparent jewel which never lacks in colour because of its fusion with the colour of the surface on which it rests. This transparency of consciousness is brought about when the centre of thought-habit is destroyed and there functions only the retentive memory. This is the condition of *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* with no centre of thought-habit.

But there is a great danger of regarding this transparency of consciousness as identical with the passivity of consciousness. They are not only not identical but are poles apart.

The transparent consciousness is negative but not passive. That is why Patañjali speaks first of the activization of the mind and then rendering the mind free from all associative memory. In the negative mind, the associative memory has subsided in the moment of its great activization. In an active mind there is a conscious association stimulated by the awakening of interest, by active mentation and by dialectical thinking. In such an active mind, when associative memory subsides there is alertness without activity. It is this which renders it negative. It has no resemblance with the passive condition of the mind. A passive mind is open to mediumistic tendencies. In this *sūtra* Patañjali speaks of the *videhas* and the *prakritilayas* who outwardly appear to be established in spiritual experience but in fact are only mediumistic. They have not gone through the activization of the mind, the prior preparation of the *Samprajñāta Samādhi*. The *Samprajñāta Samādhi* takes the mind from a passive to an active condition. In *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* the mind comes to a state of pure alertness—not alert in terms of a particular activity. Such an alert mind faces no danger of being mediumistic. A passive mind is always exposed to mediumistic trends because it is impressionable but not sensitive. The *videhas* and the *prakritilayas* show forth only psychic tendencies. Patañjali tells us that these mediumistic tendencies should not be mistaken for real spiritual experience. Such mediumistic tendencies may be inherited by birth or may be stimulated by certain external factors. The distinguishing marks of the spiritual and the psychic are that while the first is born in the soil of a negative mind, the other is the product of a passive mind. But one may ask: How to distinguish a person who has experience of a real spiritual nature? It is to this that Patañjali turns in the next *sūtra*:

śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka itareṣām

20. Spiritual experience of a true nature arises when the consciousness is impregnated by Faith, Energy, Recollection and Intelligence.

Patañjali says that the spiritual man is a man of intelligence—not one of mere intellect. The word used for intelligence in this *sūtra* is *samādhi-prajñā*. This is not mere intelligence but an illumined intelligence. According to this the spiritual man is an Enlightened one. Patañjali has also given the characteristics of such an enlightened individual. He is a man of recollection, of energy and of faith. Here a man of recollection obviously means one who has right memory, that is one who has a clear memory of facts, not a memory that is overlaid with psychological associations. Strange though it may seem, right memory releases one's energy which is otherwise locked up in the tangle of psychological associations. Psychological memory drains away much of the energy of man, for it centres round a craving. It is sustained by an unfulfilled desire seeking fulfilment. This frantic effort at fulfilment takes away the energy of man with the result that the man caught in the network of psychological memory is a tired and an exhausted man. And it is this energy released through right memory which enables the spiritual man to come to the experience of faith. An intelligent man is inspired by faith while the un-intelligent man is devoid of it. Faith is surely not blind belief. It is a sensitive response to the intimations of the Unknown. It has no relevance with regard to the known. It awakens only when the whisper of the Unknown is heard. The whisper of the Unknown can be heard only when the mind is completely silent—not superficially but deeply silent. But silence demands tremendous

energy. Thus the spiritual man rooted in right memory and possessing immeasurable energy is inspired by faith. Such a man is rightly described in this *sūtra* as a man of illumined intelligence. Regarding the spiritual experience of this nature, Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

tīvra-saṃvegānām āsannaḥ

21. Such spiritual experience comes to one who is afire with intensity.

To be afire with intensity is to be filled with passion—here the word passion is used not in a vulgar sense but in the sense in which Christ's passion is used. The spiritual man is indeed a man of passion, akin to what the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* calls the *alukṣa*. To the door of Reality one must go with an intensity of thought-emotion, for this is like the Lover meeting the Beloved. Patañjali uses the word *tīvra-saṃvega* meaning a great intensity of impulse. Patañjali then continues:

mṛdu madhyādhi-mātratvāt tato 'pi viśeṣaḥ

22. It is the nature of intensity which determines the pattern for the means employed, whether mild, medium or strong.

Here Patañjali gives us a very clear indication as to why we are not able to move rapidly in the direction in which we want to go. He says that it is the intensity which determines the nature of the means employed. Very often we change the means, we sharpen the instrument, but nothing works because there is no intensity of thought-feeling behind it. Patañjali says that when there is first the awakening of intensity, the rest follows automatically. If the intensity is not there,

one's movement will be slow or mild. But if we are afire with intensity then we shall employ such means as would impart great speed to our movement. Spiritual endeavour without intensity of thought-feeling is greatly exhausting. In such an effort one often complains of difficulties and obstacles. But when intensity is there, its very current will sweep away all obstacles and difficulties. We have seen in the earlier *sūtra* that this intensity or energy comes when there is right memory. It is the psychological memory which brings stagnation into the stability of *Tamas*. There is no point in undertaking the stupendous journey into the land of the Spirit if one has no intensity—not one stimulated by outer factors, but that which wells up from within. Enthusiasm which needs an external stimulus or even a stimulus of one's own memory will be of no avail, for it will be short-lived and will need repeated doses of outer stimulation. The intensity must arise as a result of right perception which is a perception not vitiated by the devitalizing touch of the psychological or associative memory. Such intensity leads one to a sudden awakening, and real spiritual journey can be undertaken only in that moment of sudden awakening. It is to this that Patañjali refers in the next *sūtra* where he says:

Īśvara-praṇidhānād vā :

23. True spirituality is characterized by a sudden turning in the direction of God or the Ultimate Reality.

The idea of sudden awakening is to be found in all mystical approaches. It is found in Zen Buddhism, as also in the *Bhagavad Gītā* where in the thirty-first verse of the Ninth Discourse, the Lord speaks of the sudden spiritual transformation of man.

One may ask: Where does the question of suddenness come in this *sūtra*? This would be clear if we were to explore the significance of the word *vā* used in this *sūtra*. This word means “or”, but what is the significance of this word here? It has to be seen in the context of earlier two *sūtras*. Patañjali has been discussing the question of intensity and how that intensity determines its own instruments of action. These instruments, according to him, may be mild, medium or strong. After this the above *sūtra* is introduced with the word “or”. Obviously what Patañjali means is that there are instruments which are mild, medium and strong, or there is a still more effective instrument. Its effectiveness lies in the fact that it is even more intense than the earlier instruments thus representing a means faster than the fastest, and stronger than the strongest. And this is *īśvara-praṇidhāna*. An instrument faster than the fastest obviously indicates one that brings about an instantaneous transformation—one that acts with a remarkable suddenness. There are two words in this *sūtra* which need to be understood correctly. One is *praṇidhāna* and the other is *Īśvara*. Now *praṇidhāna* really means attending to or turning towards. And so *īśvara-praṇidhāna* means turning towards God. But God is not used in these *sūtras* in any anthropomorphic sense nor in the sense of a personal deity. This will be clear when we examine the subsequent *sūtras*. Speaking about the intensity of urge and the employment of appropriate means, Patañjali says that there is an intensity which can be described only by sudden turning towards God. There cannot be any action more intense and swift than this. This is turning in a new direction in the course of one’s spiritual endeavour. God in this context is the Ultimate Reality or the Ultimate Principle of Life. This is evident from what Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*.

*kleśa-karma-vipākāśa yair aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣa-
viśeṣa Īsvaraḥ*

24. God is that distinctive Principle which remains untouched by afflictions of life or by fruits of action, or by any motivation.

The word used in this *sūtra* is *puruṣa-viśeṣa*—this obviously refers to the Transcendental Being as differentiated from the Immanent. The Transcendental is above Time and Space, and is not of the world of relativity. It is because of this that It remains unaffected by anything. It is the Being without attributes that can remain so unaffected, for the entity with attributes would by the very nature of its existence get affected by all that pertains to the relative world. The Supreme Being, God, about whom Patañjali refers in this and the other *sūtras* is clearly the Transcendental Principle of Life. In the next *sūtra*, Patañjali says:

tatra niratiśayaṃ sarvajña-bījam

25. The Ultimate Principle represents the unsurpassed quality of Omniscience.

The *sūtra* speaks of the Ultimate Principle as *sarvajña-bījam*. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Sri Krishna describes himself as the eternal seed of all beings. Here Patañjali says that Īsvara or the Ultimate Being is the very seed of omniscience. The seed contains all manifestation, and so the Supreme Being is the container of all that is to be manifested. Described as the very seed of omniscience, He is the container of all that was, is and will be. It is quite obvious that the Īsvara of the *Yoga-Sūtras* is not a personal Deity, much less an anthropomorphic entity. Patañjali speaks of the Supreme Being, the container of all manifestation and which is above all the

limitations of Time and Space. This is made all the more clear in the next *sūtra* where Patañjali says:

sa pūrveṣāmapi guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt

26. It is the ancient of the ancients, for, It verily is Timeless.

And so *īśvara-praṇidhāna* is turning to that Timeless Principle which is ancient of the ancients, for, It has neither beginning nor end. The sudden turning towards the Timeless Being—this indeed is the instrument of instantaneous transformation. The intensity of spiritual urge is to be tested by this criterion of sudden turning in a different direction. Our so-called intensity and earnestness in spiritual endeavour are only for a modified continuity. In these there is no dimensional movement. They represent an extension on the same plane of dimension on which the individual lives, moves and has his being. By introducing the word *īśvara-praṇidhāna*, Patañjali says that a truly intense spiritual endeavour is one in which there is movement not in extension but in expansion. Turning towards the Supreme Being is an act of expansion. A movement in extension is bound to be gradual, whereas a movement in expansion has to be sudden. A jump can never be gradual, for a jump is not rapid walking. However fast one may walk, it still is not a jump. A jump is sudden and instantaneous. Having spoken about intensity functioning in the field of extension, Patañjali speaks of intensity in the dimension of expansion—and that indeed is what is meant by *īśvara-praṇidhāna*—which is turning in a new direction altogether. The act of turning is in the relative world but that to which one turns is the Transcendental Being. How can one, remaining in the immanent world, turn to

the Transcendental Being? Is this possible? Patañjali tells us in the next *sūtra*:

tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ

27. In the field of Time, It is symbolized by
Om or *Praṇava*.

The Christian scriptures say: "In the beginning was the Word." The Hindu scriptures speak of the manifestation being the breath of the Supreme. In the growth and evolution of the cognizing faculties *śabda* is put first, for the first awareness of man with reference to the external world is through the faculty of hearing. Thus the Word is the very first stirring caused in space, and from this the entire manifestation comes into being. The first intimation of the Unmanifest is the Word, and it is this word which is described as *Om* or *Praṇava*. The above *sūtra* says that the Transcendent can be recognized in the world of manifestation through its symbol which is *Om*. *Om* or *Praṇava* gives one an indication of the presence of the Intangible in the tangible, of the transcendental in the immanent.

So *īśvara-praṇidhāna* is the turning towards the Unmanifest in the manifest, towards the Intangible in the tangible. So long as one functions only on the plane of the manifest, modifying and changing its expressions, so long is one functioning on a lower dimension of living. When one turns to the Unmanifest in the manifest then has one turned to a new direction, one has almost taken a jump, moved away from mere extension of consciousness to expansion of consciousness. Yoga is fundamentally concerned with the expansion of consciousness. It is in this that it differs from the usual moral and religious endeavours. Morality, including the

traditional religious disciplines, seeks to bring about extensions in consciousness. It is Yoga that enables one to come to a mutation of the mind. And the first signs of this mutation are to be seen in *īśvara-praṇidhāna* or turning in the direction of the Unmanifest in the manifest. But what does this communion with the Symbol of the Unmanifest in the manifest—the *praṇava* or *Om*—do? What is the nature of transformation that such communion brings? Patañjali discusses these questions in the *sūtras* that follow.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF DISTRACTION

IN the *Bhagavad Gītā* in the seventh discourse, Sri Krishna speaking about himself says: "I am the syllable *Om* in all the Vedas". In the *Kātha Upaniṣad*, Yama addresses Nachiketas thus:

The Approach which all the Vedas declare,
which all austerities indicate, and which
men accept when they lead the life of the
spirit, I will tell you briefly—it is *Om*.

Why has *Om* been regarded so significant? As we said in the last chapter, it is the first indication of the Unmanifest in the manifest. It is, as it were, a window giving a glimpse of the Unmanifest and the Transcendental. It is true that the Unmanifest cannot be seen but can certainly be experienced. It cannot be grasped but it can be felt. Such an experience does not require any superphysical sight. It is only through a sensitivity of consciousness that one can come to the experience of the Intangible in the tangible. Since *Om* is the whisper of the Spirit it needs a remarkable sensitivity of consciousness to listen to its still small voice. *Pranava* represents the Voice of the Silence, the Soundless sound. How can one listen to it without rendering the consciousness utterly pure and infinitely sensitive? Patañjali says in the following *sūtra* that:

tajjapas tad arthabhāvanam

28. In the repetition of *Om* there has to be a reflection in the midst of repetition.

To have reflection in the midst of repetition seems to be a contradiction in terms. How can these two remain together? The repetition of *Om* signifies an attunement with the Soundless Sound. But how can this be possible unless there is a complete cessation of the meaningless chatter of the mind? It is only when the noise of the mind subsides that an attunement with the Voice of the Silence is possible. And repetition is utterly meaningless if through it an attunement with the Voice of the Silence is not brought about. It is because of this that Patañjali speaks of reflection in the midst of repetition. He uses the word *tad arthabhāvanam*. Now *bhāvanam* is a state of total attention. And so the phrase indicates that there has to be a total attention to the content of the Soundless Sound. A mere repetition of *Om* is a mechanical process. The very utterance of the Word must bring about an attunement with the very content of it. But this is possible only when the mind is in a state of attention. In the attunement one is communing with the Timeless in time, for *Om* is indeed the symbol of the Eternal in the process of time sequence. Such attunement is a vitalizing spiritual experience which gives to man a strength and a vision to face the situations of life. It is to this that Patañjali refers in the next *sūtra*:

tataḥ pratyak-cetanādhiḡamo 'pyantarāyā-bhāvās ca

29. This enables the consciousness to turn inwards resulting in the elimination of all obstacles.

The consciousness of man has two aspects—*pratyak* and *parāṅga*—the former is inward turned and the latter is outward

turned. Our consciousness is mostly *parāṅga* or outward turned. It functions only on the periphery. It has a fragmented view of life. It sees only the manifoldness. But the turning of consciousness inwards is to move from the periphery to the centre. This movement alone represents integration. An attunement with the Voice of the Silence in the moment of mind coming to a state of complete quiet, indicates an inward turning of consciousness. This is *Īsvara-praṇidhāna* in the right sense of the term. This is a movement from the circumference to the centre. This is the vision of the Whole. It is in this vision that the obstacles of life are eliminated. The word used for obstacles is *antarāya* which really means an obstruction. When the obstruction is removed then there comes the vision of the Whole. When the veil is rent asunder then there is the magnificent vision of Reality itself. To have reflection in the midst of the repetition of *Om* is to remove this veil, for it is an attunement in the moment of total attention of the mind. To commune with the Voice of the Silence, which is the meaning of reflection in the midst of the repetition of *Om*, is to come to the vision of Reality. This is the vision of the Timeless. After this vision when one returns to the realm of Time, one experiences the elimination of those obstacles which had seemed difficult to resolve prior to this vision.

But the question is: What are these obstacles to which Patañjali makes a reference in this *sūtra*? A comprehensive list of these obstacles is given in the following *sūtra*:

*vyādhistyāna-saṁśaya-pramādālasya-virati-bhrānti-dar-
śanālabdha-bhūmikatvānavasthi-tatvāni cittavikṣepas-
te 'ntarāyāḥ*

30. The obstacles are distractions caused by disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, craving, delusion, non-attainment of desired objective and unsteadiness.

Patañjali calls these obstacles as distractions, meaning thereby that obstacles exist only for a distracted mind. The mind that is free from distractions and is attentive has no problem of obstacles. In this background of distractions the various obstacles enumerated assume a new significance. What he calls obstacles are therefore those factors which cause distraction to the mind. If we scrutinize the above list we will find that while the first five obstacles arise out of the distractions of the mind caught in *Tamas*, the next four arise out of the conditions of *Rajas*. Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness and laziness are obviously the distracting conditions of a mind steeped in *Tamas*. For disease, Patañjali uses the word *vyādhi* which is purely physical as against *ādhi* which is mental. The purely physical condition of disease obviously arises from the *Tāmasic* attributes of the body. These five are therefore distractions of mind caused by the distorted functioning of *Tamas*. Similarly the obstacles of craving, delusion, non-attainment of desired objective and unsteadiness are rooted in the distortions of *Rajas*. One may ask: Are there not distortions caused in the functioning of the attribute of *Sattva*? If there are, then surely there must be distractions arising from them. Why has Patañjali not referred to them? It is true that there are distortions in the functioning of *Sattva* also, but the obstacles arising out of them are so subtle that Patañjali considers them in the latter part of the Book. The awareness of the *Sāttvik* distractions demands a further deepening of

consciousness, and unless one comes to it one cannot understand the problem of *Sāttvik* obstacles. For the purposes of the above *sūtra* Patañjali talks only of those hindrances that arise due to distorted functioning of *Tamas* and *Rajas*. All the above obstacles represent the conditions of stagnation and restlessness so far as man's consciousness is concerned. From another standpoint they represent the body-mind phenomenon. In that sense all the obstacles indicate a psychosomatic condition. The distortions arising out of the wrong functioning of the attribute of *Sattva* are so completely psychological that their discussion must be taken up later in the context of deeper thinking. Patañjali must have been a very keen observer of human nature, for, otherwise he could not have given such a subtle description of *Tamas* as he has done in the above *sūtra*. *Styāna*, *śamśaya*, *pramāda* and *ālasya* refer to the state of inertness, but each word gives a distinct variation of this *Tāmasic* condition. Similarly craving, delusion, non-attainment and unsteadiness are also very subtle descriptions of the variations of the *Rājasic* condition. In order that we may not miss this essential point, Patañjali gives in the next *sūtra* certain characteristic features of distractions. He says:

*duḥkha-daurmanasyāṅgamejāyatva-śvāsa-praśvāsā vik-
ṣepa-sahabhavaḥ*

31. The symptoms of a distracted mind are morbidity, boredom, nervousness and hardness of breathing.

To be directly aware of distractions is a difficult proposition. But here Patañjali makes the work easy for detecting the distractive factors. Sometimes we are morbid for no reason

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whatsoever. An unconscious feeling that something inauspicious or unpleasant is going to happen—this is indeed a sign of morbidity. We feel sad although there is no ostensible reason for feeling sad—this is what most of us have experienced. Or there is a feeling of sheer boredom, of being devitalized and therefore not wanting to do anything. This is also a part of our common experience. Or sometimes there is unnecessary nervousness, an uncanny feeling of fear overtaking us so that we are all the time fidgety as also jittery. There is also another symptom which is a certain amount of hardness in breathing. For some reason or the other breathing does not follow the usual rhythm. Patañjali says this is due to the mind's distractions. Even here, while describing the symptoms of distractions, he has indicated that morbidity and boredom arises out of the distorted functioning of *Tamas* while nervousness and hardness of breathing are the reflections of the attributes of *Rajas*. Behind these bodily and mental tendencies there are the workings of distractions which in their turn produce the ninefold obstructions about which he has spoken in the earlier *sūtra*. Having talked about the symptoms and the disease, Patañjali now indicates a way of treating this physical and mental malady. He says:

tat-pratiṣedhārtham eka-tattvābhyāsaḥ

32. The removal of these obstacles demands
- * one-pointed attention.

Having given the symptoms of distractions, Patañjali tells us, as it were, that no mere symptomatic treatment will do. Usually in traditional moral and religious disciplines there is seen this symptomatic treatment where the effort is to suppress the symptoms. In following the usual disciplines

meditation >

one would bring the exercise of one's will by taking a resolute attitude of mind. With such a resolute attitude one can, for the time being, keep these symptoms under suppression. But such suppression cannot last long; besides the effort would be so exhausting that the treatment would be worse than the disease. Patañjali warns us against this superficial approach of suppressing the symptoms. He tells us that only by one-pointed attention can one be free from the ailment and therefore be free also from the symptoms. But what is this one-pointed attention? The phrase used in the *sūtra* is *eka-tattva-abhyāsa*. Does this mean that one must take up a thought and concentrate upon it? This would indeed be like begging the issue, for, when concentration itself is the problem inherent in distraction, what is the use of saying that one must concentrate on some thought or idea?

The word *eka-tattva* is significant, for it means the principle of oneness. To explore this principle of oneness is what is indicated here. It is not concentrating on a thought, but an exploration of the very condition of oneness. This would obviously mean one-pointed attention. And so the *sūtra* says that the whole field of one-pointed attention needs to be explored in order to be free from distractions and the obstacles arising from them.

One may ask: How is this to be done? For this we have to go to the Second Book of the *Yoga-Sūtras* where Patañjali is concerned with the instruments of Yoga. In the First Book he is dealing with the *what* of Yoga; in the Second Book he is concerned with the *how* of Yoga. Here he only formulates the problem—the problem of obstacles and distractions. It is necessary to understand the problem before attempting to solve it. In this *sūtra*, he shows that it is not a question of concentrating on any particular idea or principle;

rather it is the exploration of the whole question of one-pointed attention, i.e. an attention which is total and undisturbed. He speaks of the Flame of attention which does not flicker. It is only when this subject of total attention is explored that one will be able to be free from these and many other hindrances.

But here Patañjali draws our attention to the fact, namely, as to what will happen when the field of total attention is explored and one has freed oneself from the pulls of distractions? He tells us that an entirely new approach to human relationship will open up. In other words man will be able to be rightly related to life without any effort whatsoever. Patañjali says in the following *sūtra*:

maitri-karuṇā-muditopekṣāṇām sukha-duḥkha-puṇyā-puṇya-viṣayāṇām bhāvanātaś citta-prasādanam

33. When the obstacles are removed, a new approach to human relationship is revealed and is symbolized by friendliness, compassion, cheerfulness and a consideration towards another's happiness or misery, virtue or vice.

This *sūtra* clearly indicates to us that Yoga is not an escape from the obligations and responsibilities of life. In fact it enables us to return to the work-a-day world with an acquisition of the secret of right relationship with men and things.

In this fourfold statement of human behaviour Patañjali has summed up the whole problem of human relationship. He talks of happiness and misery which refer to material prosperity and social status or lack of them. Similarly he speaks of virtue and vice which refer to spiritual attainments or lack

of them. This fourfold description of human situations covers the whole problem of man's living. Patañjali says that right relationship indicates a sense of intense friendliness towards one who is happy. Usually there is a feeling of envy or jealousy or there is a desire to exploit the prosperous condition of the other person for one's own benefit. It is a fact that a materially prosperous person has no real friends. With such a person there is a relationship of usage. He has many hangers-on who move round him with a feeling that they are the would-be-beneficiaries! To be able to be a real friend of the materially prosperous—in property or in status—without any idea of usage, is indeed to show forth a remarkable quality of human relationship. Patañjali says that when the consciousness has come to a quiet in the moment of total attention, there arises a new fragrance in human relationship, and that is being genuinely friendly to one who is a worldly success, in power, status or material wealth. Similarly one who can show forth real compassion for those in unhappy situations of life has known the secret of right relationship. There are many who would pity such unhappy persons; there may be others who may look upon them with a show of benign condescension. But to be really full of compassion is a rare quality in human relationship. The word used by Patañjali in this *sūtra* is *karuṇā*, meaning tenderness. To be tender towards one who is unhappy is indeed to understand the sufferings of the other. It is a relationship where one places oneself in the condition of the other. In tenderness there is no showing forth whether of pity or of generosity, but a respect for the other person. One is so sensitive that neither by word nor thought nor act would a person, even unconsciously, cause any offence to the person who for the time being is under the weather. This *karuṇā* is very much

needed to establish right relationship between human beings living in different strata of society. In tenderness there is no humiliation caused to the other—not even in a veiled manner.

While happiness and unhappiness refer to conditions pertaining to material and social status, *punya* and *apunya*, virtue and vice, refer to moral and spiritual spheres of life. Patañjali says to be really cheerful on meeting a spiritually successful person is indeed something very beautiful. Ordinarily when one meets a man of moral and spiritual virtue, one has a tendency to pull him down, or at least to indicate the small failings of such a person. If these cannot be found then one is ready to impute motives with reference to the virtuous behaviour. Most people are unable to bear with grace the material or moral success of the other person. The word used by Patañjali is *rudita* which is much more than cheerfulness—it denotes a real delight. To be delighted at seeing the moral and spiritual status of another is to show forth a real transparency of one's nature. We see the virtue of another under numerous motivations projected by us. To be delighted to see at least one person moving onwards to spiritual life when thousands have failed is a rare quality. We also see in life many who have come to moral failure or to moral degeneration. What about them? Here Patañjali uses the word *upekṣā*. Now the meaning of this word is “to overlook”, “to have a regard for”, “to show a consideration for”. The word is usually translated as indifference or neglect. In the context of this *sūtra* this surely is not the meaning. *Upekṣā* is not indifference. To show a real regard and consideration for those who may have failed or may have fallen—this is the meaning of *upekṣā*. Usually we overlook our failings, many of them; but we are unable to overlook even a slight failing of the other. To make the

person who has failed feel quite at ease in our company is a great spiritual virtue. Most people look down upon such a person; that is because one feels very self-righteous. And surely there is no failing greater than self-righteousness! There is nothing so immoral as moral superiority. In *upekṣā* there is not even an unconscious tinge of moral superiority.

But these virtues of *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *mudita* and *upekṣā* are not the products of conscious cultivation. The virtue that has been consciously cultivated is no virtue at all. One can cultivate a virtuous pattern, but then it is a pattern containing no fragrance of virtue. The four virtues about which Patañjali speaks constitute the very foundation of a truly virtuous life. All other virtues emanate from this essence of a truly virtuous state. But real virtues are the overflow of one's normal life. And an overflow is always natural and spontaneous. That is why Patañjali speaks about them immediately after referring to one-pointed attention—attention without any flicker. Such a state of total attention is the state of inaction to use the terminology of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. It is a state of *samatva* which is one of the essential conditions of Yoga described by the *Gītā*. Now *samatva* is a state of a deep quiet where no movement of the mind exists. By one-pointed attention Patañjali seems to be referring to that state. And after indicating this state of attention, he speaks of the four basic virtues of human relationship. Do these virtues of right relationship emanate naturally from the state of attention? Although Patañjali does not deal with the problem of how to come to this state of attention in his First Book, he nevertheless explores the state. He opens up the subject so that the implications of this state can be understood. It is to the exploration of this state of attention that we shall turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE DEEPER INQUIRY

THE one-pointed attention to which Patañjali has made reference is not to be mistaken for concentration. In concentration, because of the process of selection and resistance, there is no possibility of giving a one-pointed attention to anything. Attention has to be in a condition of total relaxation. How can one see anything unless one is completely free from all tension? It is obvious that in concentration there is a building up of tension because of which a clear perception is impossible. Since Yoga is the right perception of things, totality of attention is one of its pre-requisites. Patañjali discusses the problem of attention in the latter part of his *Yoga-Sūtras* when he comes to the question of meditation. But before one moves on to a discussion of meditation, it is necessary to understand what is meant by attention and its implications. In this chapter we propose to discuss what Patañjali describes as the indications and implications of attention. He has already said in one of the earlier *sūtras*, —discussed in the last chapter, that for the removal of all obstructions and obstacles, one-pointed attention is the only way. He calls it by the term *eka-tattva-bhāvanam*. While *eka-tattva* signifies one-pointedness, *bhāvanam* indicates a state of attention. A state of attention is that condition where *vṛttis* do not exist. Thus the state of Yoga and the state of a totality of attention are identical as to meaning and content.

When the cessation of *vyrttis*, or the reactive tendencies of the mind comes into being then that indeed is the condition of total attention. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* describes this as *ananya-bhāva*, i.e. a state in which the other does not exist. Here the mind is freed from a sense of other-ness. The *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* while discussing the problem of fear says that it is the presence of the other which creates a sense of fear. It says that a state of aloneness knows no fear at all. Now the consciousness from which the sense of the other has vanished represents a state of supreme aloneness. Totality of attention is thus an experience of aloneness, not loneliness. Yoga is indeed a flight of the alone to the Alone. It is only in a state of aloneness that one can journey into the Land of the Spirit. And the experience of aloneness comes in the moment of total attention. Thus attention is the principal theme of Yoga. One must understand its implications as also note its indications before one considers the question as to how one comes to it. In the *sūtras* discussed in this chapter, Patañjali is concerned with showing the indications of attention and its implications. He says:

pracchardana-vidhāraṇā-bhyāṃ vā prāṇasya

34. The tranquillity of one-pointed attention is made possible partly by the regulation of breath.

Patañjali here says that by exhaling and retaining the breath one can to a certain extent know what tranquillity is. The word *vā* indicates various alternatives. This matter of breath-control is a part of *Prāṇāyāma* which Patañjali discusses at length in the Second Book. But here the purpose is to give certain indications. By regulation of breath one can to a certain

extent know what tranquillity is. It is very necessary in understanding the basic tenets of Hindu psychology to bear in mind the fact that the physical brain and the mind are not identical. The brain is only an instrument of the mind. But before one can tackle the problem of mind's tranquillity, one must know how to come to the experience where the brain is quietened. In this and the next *sūtra*, Patañjali deals with the quiet of the brain. By the regulation of breath one can for oneself experiment to see how the brain becomes free of tension and therefore is enabled to come to a state of quietness. This does not mean that the brain ceases to function—such a condition would amount to physical death. It only means that the brain is able to function with greater efficiency because of the lessening of friction and because of the removal of heaviness. When the brain feels light then it is able to function with great efficiency. The brain has a dual task: one, to co-ordinate the sense data so as to transform them into perceptions, and second, to become an instrument for the communication of the instructions of the mind. In the interval between these two functions, the brain attains its highest state of efficiency. The regulation of breath tends to create this interval; it does not matter what the duration of that interval is. This question will be understood more clearly when we consider the subject of *Prāṇāyāma* in the Second Book. The control of breath, even in its simple form, does create an interval in the brain's activity and in that interval the brain renews itself. Its heaviness and congestion are removed making it very vital in its functioning. A congested brain is a source of great distraction and is therefore a hindrance in coming to a state of attention. This is why Patañjali in discussing the indications and the implications of one-pointed attention gives first place to the regulation of breath. But this is not

an end in itself as is supposed in some schools of Haṭha Yoga. It is a means to the renewal of the energy of the brain so that it does not cause any distraction in the deeper experience of attention. After this, Patañjali speaks about another factor which gives an interval in the activity of the brain, and this is indicated in the following *sūtra*:

*viṣayavatī vā pravṛttir utpannā manasaḥ sthiti-
nibhandhani*

35. The steadiness of the mind is also made possible by the senses moving away from the sensual to the sensuous.

Just as the last *sūtra* is a prelude to *Prāṇāyāma*, this *sūtra* is by way of introducing the subject of *Pratyāhāra*. In the whole subject of perception there are three agencies involved: the senses, the brain and the mind. The senses are concerned with bringing sensations from the outer world. These reach the brain where they are transformed into percepts. It is with the coming in of the mind that the percept becomes a concept. This is the normal chain of perceptive activity. At the moment of breath control, the door between the sense report and the brain for the time being is closed. This is the interval about which we spoke in the last *sūtra*. In breath control the brain has to function with a limited supply of oxygen. It is because of this that it is not ready to receive fresh sense data. This interval gives a little respite to the brain to clear up its congestion and heaviness and enables it to revitalize itself. Even a little experiment in breath control or even deep-breathing will prove how the brain becomes fresh again as a result of this interval.

But in the *sūtra* which we are now considering there is implied an interval of another nature. It is not the door

between the senses and the brain that is sought to be closed, but the door between the brain and the mind. In other words it is an interval between the formation of percepts and the formulation of concepts. When the mind with its concept rushes in before the brain has completed its percept then what takes place is the indulgence of the senses. The indulgence is not because of the activity of the senses; it arises because of the intervention of the mind in the perceptive activity of the brain. That which is sensual is the product of sense indulgence. In this process of self-indulgence, the villain of the piece is the mind and not the senses. Senses by themselves do not linger on their objects; it is the coming in of the mind which induces activity of clinging to or holding on to objects. In this the mind, as it were, forcibly takes over the normal functioning of the brain, not allowing the latter to complete its act of percept making. When this happens the brain is naturally agitated and excited due to the frustration caused in its normal functioning. Without the completion of percepts, the formation of concept is incomplete and therefore wrong and defective. When the senses are led towards the fulfilment of defective concepts then is sense indulgence brought into existence. The mind forces the brain to give instructions for action even before the percept is completed. The brain is both the receiver of sense impacts as well as the transmitter of instructions to the senses. This transmission must however happen after the full report of the senses is received. It is the premature transmission done at the behest of the mind which creates the problem of sense indulgence, thus bringing into being what is known as the sensual activity. In this the *vastu* is transformed into *viṣaya*, i.e. the act is overlaid by mind's projection. When the senses are required to roam about in the mind's projections then is sense indulgence born.

This is surely the major cause of distraction imparting to the brain a sense of frustration. The above *sūtra* says that for the experience of quiet and tranquillity, the senses should move away from the sensual to the sensuous. While the sensual represents the act of sense indulgence, the sensuous indicates a great receptivity in the sphere of sense activity. When there is sensuality, then the receptivity of the senses is greatly marred, for it makes the brain heavy due to its frustrations. To take this movement away from the sensual to the sensuous is to grow in the sensitivity and refinement of sense responses, because the brain is enabled to assimilate more and more sense data thus urging the senses not to settle down anywhere but move on to gather more and more of the sense impacts. Patañjali here uses the word *viṣayavati* which suggests that the senses are not possessed by the objects, but are in control of the objects. When the mind projects its desired ideations on incomplete sense perceptions then are created objects which have no intrinsic existence. In this condition the mind forces the senses to linger in the field of objects which have no real objectivity. Here the senses are possessed by the objects of the mind. It is this which creates the sensual activity. But when the senses, instead of being possessed by the objects of the mind, become their possessor then do they free themselves from their clutches. When this happens the brain once again functions at its full potential enabling the senses to move on bringing more of the sense data and not to settle down anywhere. This point is further developed by Patañjali while discussing *Pratyāhāra* in the Second Book. He gives us an indication that when an interval comes into being between the formation of percepts and the formulation of concepts, which is the movement from the sensual to sensuous, then the brain comes to a quiet with its congestion and

heaviness removed. This revitalization of the brain is of great help in dealing with the problem of distractions and therefore of one-pointed attention.

Patañjali further says in the next *sūtra*:

viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī

36. A calmness and a clarity of mental perception enables one to move towards one-pointed attention.

When the brain functions at its full potential then the perception is clear and unruffled. The earlier two *sūtras* have stated that breath control and a movement from the sensual to the sensuous enable the brain to be revitalized so as to function at its full potential. When this happens the percept formed by the brain is clear and unruffled. The two words used here are *viśoka* and *jyotiṣmatī*. Now *viśoka* means an unruffled condition, a state of calmness. And *jyotiṣmatī* signifies clarity and brilliance. By breath-control and a movement towards sensuous perception the brain is rendered more efficient so that it is capable of functioning without a feeling of heaviness. When this happens there is not only calmness in the sphere of brain-activity, but also a remarkable clarity of perception. The percepts made by such a brain are clear and well-defined. In Hindu Philosophy there is a constant reference to *nāma* and *rūpa*, the name and form, characterizing the outer world. It is the function of the brain to clearly define *rūpa* or form even as the function of the mind to assign *nāma* or name. If the form is not clear the name obviously will be defective and false. And the form can be clear only when the brain functions with calmness and clarity. This quality of brain-functioning goes a long way

towards coming to the experience of one-pointed attention or the *eka-tattva bhāvanam* as Patañjali calls it in the *sūtra* we have already discussed. When the qualities of *viśoka* and *jyotiṣmatī* are imparted to the functioning of the brain then the perfect defining of form or percept is assured. The brain is able to function without the intervention of the mind in the task of building percepts. From the calmness and the clarity of the brain it is possible to understand the *modus operandi* of bringing the mind to a condition of alert passivity—in other words to a state of negativity where alone the dawn of a new consciousness can be vouchsafed. The next two *sūtras* indicate a way to arrive at the state of true negativity with reference to the mind.

vītarāgaviṣayam vā cittam

37. One is enabled to move in the direction of the one-pointed attention by visualizing that condition of the mind which is free from the pulls of the opposites.

It has to be only a visualization, for the actual experience of the mind free from the pulls of the opposites comes only in the moment of meditation. Since the First Book is only concerned with the mapping out of the new country of Yoga, one can with reference to the above *sūtra* speak only of visualizing the state of a free mind. When the sensorial distractions causing disturbance in the smooth functioning of the brain are eliminated then it is possible for one to consider the question of psychological distractions. And the psychological distractions are indeed the two opposites of the mind. The term *vītarāga-viṣayam* is really that condition of the mind where it is free from the play of the opposites. The attachments

of the mind are of a twofold nature. Not to be attached to something may be the result of being attached to its opposite. *Vītarāga* is a state of being attached neither to this nor to that. Such a state comes only in the moment of meditation, but it is possible for one to visualize it even before one comes to it. It is an intellectual recognition of the fact of non-attachment but such a recognition is not the same thing as actual realization. Nevertheless man can examine such possibilities intellectually. This demands an extraordinary clarity of intellectual perception, which comes when the brain is working at its full potential so that there is no hindrance in its process of completing the perceptive act. In the calmness and the clarity of brain-functioning, one can intellectually perceive a condition of mind freed from the play of the opposites. In coming to this intellectual perception, an association with those who have come to such an experience certainly helps. Such association enables one to come to a greater intellectual clearness in one's perception. Since Patañjali only deals with indications of a state of freedom from opposites, one of those indications can be seen by an association with those who know such a state by their own experience. But this is only a recognition by the intellect and should not be mistaken for realization. An intellectual clarity is verbal and conceptual. If one knows this limitation of intellect, then one can derive necessary help from it without expecting from it more than what it can give. So it has to be realized that this intellectual recognition is only the starting point in the process of understanding it. From that point, one must move further. But how? Patañjali gives us an indication of this in the following *sūtra*:

svapna-nidrā-jñānālambanaṃ vā

38. This requires an inquiry into the functioning of the subconscious and unconscious layers of the mind.

In order that the mind may come to a state of freedom from the pull of the opposites, it is necessary to examine the total functioning of the mind. The mind is like an iceberg, for only a small portion of its functioning is on the surface while the major part is below the surface. The subliminal layers of the mind reveal the real motivations of the conscious mind. In the above *sūtra*, the words *svapna* and *nidrā* refer to these levels below the threshold of the conscious mind. Patañjali speaks of the knowledge that is dependent upon these layers of *svapna* and *nidrā*—the condition of dream and also that of sleep. Dream indicates the functioning of mind immediately below the conscious level, while sleep signifies the mind functioning at a deeper strata of consciousness. Unless one knows what is going on at these levels, a mere outer pattern of *vītarāga* or non-attachment has no significance at all. It is the centre of motives that must be destroyed both at the conscious as well as the subconscious and unconscious levels. Motives are more below the surface than above it. When these centres of motivations are broken up then a state of non-attachment comes naturally so that the pull of the opposites drops away without any struggle whatsoever. To struggle to come to a state of non-attachment is utterly meaningless, for the very existence of struggle shows that the centres of motive are intact. It is only the mind that is free from the play of the opposites that knows one-pointed attention, but this can be brought about only when the subliminal layers of the mind are exposed to view. But is it possible to expose the deeper layers of the mind? Can the

conscious mind understand the unconscious? If so, how? Unless the knots of the unconscious are untied, there is no possibility of straightening out one's psychological nature. But how can the conscious deal with the unconscious? If it cannot, then who deals with it? If it can, how does it deal with it? This question brings us to the fundamental problem of Yoga to which Patañjali turns in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

yathābhimata-dhyānād-vā

39. This is possible only by following that way of meditation which one considers as most convenient.

Patañjali says here that Meditation is the only way to the unravelling of the secrets of the unconscious. And it is by unravelling these secrets that one is free from all motivations which are the driving force behind the play of the opposites. One must therefore explore the way of meditation. But Patañjali makes it abundantly clear to all spiritual aspirants that meditation is not the following of some particular pattern. In fact, he brushes aside the idea of patterns and systems of meditation by using the phrase *yathā abhimata*, which means according to one's inclination. One must evolve one's own approach to meditation in terms of one's inclination and interest. Surely this is a very revolutionary idea in the field of meditation. In the ultimate analysis, in meditation, it is the state of the meditator that matters. And how can the state of the meditator be described by another? It is by following the way of meditation according to one's own inclinations that one discovers for oneself the state of the meditator. Patañjali has brought us step by step to this essential point

of meditation in this chapter. Starting with breath-control and speaking about the movement of the senses from the sensual to the sensuous, he has drawn our attention to the calm and clear state of the brain. From this he has brought us to the intellectual recognition of the state of the mind that is free from the pulls of the opposites. It is here that he tells us that the motivating factors of these pulls of opposites lie in the subliminal levels of the mind and so an inquiry into these fields is absolutely necessary. But if this inquiry alone can bring us to the one-pointed attention where all obstacles and obstructions are removed, how to start that inquiry? In this *sūtra* Patañjali says that it is in meditation that one can carry on that inquiry. There is no path to meditation. To meditate is to move in a pathless region, like sailing on the uncharted seas. It has to be *yathā abhimata*—completely according to one's inclination and interest. By saying this he has thrown the whole responsibility of meditation on the aspirant himself.

But the question is: How to carve one's own way to meditation? If meditation has to be completely in terms of one's own inclination and interest, then the next question is: Do we know our inclinations and interests?

The fact of the matter is that we do not know ourselves. It is not in terms of some abstract or ultimate nature of ourselves that the above statement is made. We have to admit that we do not really know ourselves as we are. In fact we do not know our own acquired nature—that nature by which we act in our everyday life. When we say that we do not know ourselves, we mean we are not aware of our reactions and responses to the situations of every day life. It is this knowledge that will give us information about our inclinations and interests. We must know ourselves as a fact and not

as an idea or as an ideal. Self-knowledge is the knowing of ourselves as we are in our daily relationships. Without this knowledge there is no foundation for our spiritual endeavour. The way of meditation begins here and not in imagining some supreme state and trying to identify ourselves with that imaginary state. In order to go far, one must begin near and in meditation one has to go very very far. It is this beginning from where we are to which Patañjali refers when he says *yathā abhimata*. Begin to tread the way of meditation from the point of one's own inclination and interest. Any approach of meditation that does not begin here is an exercise in futility and frustration.

But the question is: How to come to this knowledge of ourselves as we are? How to discover our points of inclination and interest? It is to this question that Patañjali turns in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE PURIFIED MEMORY

MEDITATION is indeed the very core of Yoga, at least of that school of Yoga which goes by the name of Rāja Yoga of which Patañjali is the great compiler and brilliant exponent. But meditation is not an isolated phenomenon to be considered as separate and distinct from the stream of life. When it is isolated from the stream of life then it poses problems which are incapable of resolution. But when it is considered in the general setting of life then it becomes natural, causing no stress or strain. The greatness of Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtras* lies in the fact that the whole problem of meditation is put in the general background of life. While other schools of Yoga tend to be lop-sided, it is Raja Yoga as propounded by Patañjali which seeks a harmonious development of all parts of the human being. It is truly an integral Yoga where both body and mind are developed fully and in harmony with each other.

In the Raja Yoga of Patañjali it is the mind that is the determining factor and not the body directing the activities of the mind as is the case in certain schools of Haṭha Yoga. Since mind is the determining factor, the rendering of the mind free and unconditioned is of primary import in this practice. But before the mind can be rendered free, it is necessary to know how it gets conditioned. It is because of this that the observation of the mind in all its daily activities becomes imperative. What it does is indicated in the next *sūtra*:

paramāṇu-parama-mahattvānto 'sya vaśīkāraḥ

40. With the removal of obstacles there comes a mastery of cognition and action which ranges from the smallest to the biggest.

Patañjali has been discussing in the *sūtras* referred to in the last chapter the problem of removing obstacles and obstructions—in other words, the elimination of the conditioning factors of the mind. It is quite obvious that he regards meditation as the most effective, and the only way for the liquidation of obstacles and obstructions. The present *sūtra* tells us that when these obstacles are removed through meditation then there takes place a tremendous release of the energy of the mind. The mind is greatly vitalized with the result that it is able to cognize with uttermost clarity anything and everything that comes within its ken. This perceptive range covers the smallest as well as the biggest. The mind comes to a state where it has no frontiers to restrict its movement. It lives in the open spaces, directly under the vast sky, to put it in the words of the great Indian mystic, Kabir. There opens out before such a mind a limitless vision. This is what happens when all obstructions are removed in the experience of the Timeless moment which meditation fundamentally is. This is beautifully expressed by Patañjali in the following *sūtra*:

kṣīṇavṛtter abhijātasyeva maṇer grhīṭṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu 'tastha-tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ

41. In the case of one whose reactive tendencies have been well-nigh eliminated, there arises a fusion of the knower, the known and the

knowledge even as the transparent jewel gets fused with the colour of the surface on which it rests.

When there is a fusion of the knower, the known and the knowledge then it is an experience of absolute non-duality. We must understand that knowledge is indeed a relationship between the knower and the known. And so when the knower and the known have fused in each other then surely there is knowledge of a different dimension altogether. There is an end of the knowledge gathered by the knower. Similarly there ends the knowledge gathered about the known. In such a state there is pure knowledge, knowledge of *what is*, not of what appears to the knower. In that condition the consciousness may be compared to a transparent jewel which is able to reflect the colour of the surface without any distortion whatsoever. Such a mind has pure awareness, for it sees things as they are. In it there is no subject-object relationship, and therefore is utterly transparent reflecting the world as it is.

The fusion of the jewel with the colour of the surface on which it rests is not a characterless condition. In fact, such a jewel has a great integrity of character. What after all is character? Is it something put together in the process of time? Is it the product of one's acquired nature? Is it something cultivated? That which is put together in time can also become disintegrated in time. And so that which exists on the whims of time is no character at all. Character is that which shines in a condition of complete vulnerability. That which is afraid of being vulnerable lacks character altogether. It is the acquired nature which seeks to remain invulnerable. It is the intrinsic nature which prefers to

remain completely vulnerable, for it has nothing to protect due to the fact that it has no accumulations or accretions. The mind that is free from all accumulations is indeed a transparent mind. It can fuse with anything and everything and yet remain completely transparent. Nothing clings to it, and it clings to nothing. To remain transparent even when fused with anything and everything—that surely is the indication of highest character. The mind that is afraid of such fusion lacks character as it is afraid of losing something which it has acquired. Therefore the transparent jewel which fuses with the colour of the surface on which it rests has a sterling character, not only uncorrupt but incorruptible. So long as the duality of the knower and the known remains, the knowledge gathered is utterly corrupt. The observed which we regard as our world is the product of the subject-object relationship. It comes into existence because of that relationship. It is like the rope appearing to be a snake. From where does this appearance come? Obviously it comes from the subject-object relationship. It is only when that relationship ends that the object as it is can be seen. This is the great mastery of cognition about which Patañjali spoke in the last *sūtra*. Such mastery, however, is vouchsafed to man only in the moment of meditation.

But does one come to meditation just by the demolition of the centres and moulds of thought-habit in one's consciousness?

We have already discussed the question of the centres of thought-habit and how they condition the mind. Here the question is: Can one come to the experience of meditation by merely demolishing these centres, or has one to do anything more? It has to be remembered that the three conditioning factors of the mind are *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*.

It is only when these three conditioning factors are made inoperative that there can arise a state of total freedom which is the state identical with meditation. The centres of thought-habit deal only with the conditioning factor of *Tamas*. We have still to inquire as to what are the centres of *Rajas* and *Sattva* that need to be liquidated. Unless this is done one cannot come to meditation and therefore to pure perception where the subject-object relationship vanishes. Patañjali in this Section only indicates what these centres are and how they condition the functioning of the mind. The centre of *Tamas*, thought-habit, is where the current of life gets stagnated. Thus out of stability, a deteriorating condition of stagnation has come into existence. What is it that distorts the smooth functioning of *Rajas* which is mobility? This is discussed in the two subsequent *sūtras*.

tatra śabdārtha-jñāna-vikalpaiḥ saṅkirṇā savitarkā

42. In the Savitarkā Samādhi, which is an experience having Thought-Modification as the centre, there is seen a mental confusion due to the mind alternating between verbal and conceptual thinking.

When mind functions with thought-modification as a centre then there arises a confusion regarding the real meaning of things. This is so because the mind alternates between verbal and conceptual thinking. Verbal and conceptual are the two points of the mind. Verbal is the traditional while the conceptual is the projected. Very often we regard the word as the thing; we also regard the image as the thing. Moving between the word and the image—now regarding one as the real and at other times the other—the mind misses

the real content of the thing. It moves between the habitual and the modified meanings of things and events. In this it settles down first at one point and then at the other. These are the points of continuity and modified continuity, or to use the terminology of biological evolution, they are the points of heredity and variation. The traditional "word" with reference to a thing or a person or an idea connotes a socially accepted meaning. In fact, the very formation of the word arises from this process. Behind the socially accepted word there is an accumulation of meaning or in other words a social history. The verbal meaning is that which arises by usage, but man puts into this his projected meanings in order to modify accepted connotations. This he does so as to get away from the socially accepted world into a world of his own projections. This movement is called the process of Becoming. It is a process of modifying the acquired nature of things. It is not an effort to break up the acquired nature but to modify it so that another acquired nature may come into being. This is the functioning of *Rajas* in human consciousness.

Now one cannot deny the fact of becoming. This process of becoming is going on all the time in nature—the seed becoming a tree, the young child growing into a man or a woman, etc. This becoming is natural and effortless because this is the attribute of *Rajas* functioning in a normal manner. It is mobility which life needs for its existence and expression. While *Tamas* is needed for life's existence, *Rajas* is needed for its expression and *Sattva* which is harmony for its exaltation. When the mind of man interferes with the normal functioning of the *guṇās* then is distortion created. We saw how the attribute of *Tamas* or stability degenerates itself into stagnation by this interference by the mind. This happens too in the case of *Rajas* or mobility. Modification

of continuity at all levels is a normal movement. Nature is engaged in continuous modification. But then the question is: Where does the factor of distortion come? Distortion arises when the mind interferes with the normal movement of modification. One can take the illustration of the biological phenomena of mutation. Nature all the time produces mutations, and nature's mutations are great improvements in natural evolution. But man too produces mutations by scientific processes, and here, very often not understanding the direction in which nature desires to move, he produces horrid distortions, something that is ugly and undesirable. It is given to man to expedite the processes of nature—but this has to be in the direction in which nature intends to move. When nature's direction is not taken into account, then the effort at modification results in distortions and deformities. This is true as much with regard to psychological evolution as it is with regard to biological evolution.

There is a natural process of becoming—this is life's mobility, the river of life continually moving. This is what is known as the flux of life. The speed of the flow can be accelerated. In fact, the purpose of Yoga is to give this acceleration to the natural flow of life at the psychological level. But such acceleration cannot go against the inclinations of nature. It should be remembered that when we speak of the inclinations of nature, it has not to be construed as the inclinations of habit. The habitual and the natural are two completely different things. Becoming must be in the direction of what a thing or a person fundamentally and intrinsically is. One can only become what one intrinsically is—one cannot become what one is not. So long as this principle operates, so long the attribute of *Rajas* or mobility is functioning naturally and smoothly, without any distortion whatsoever.

But when the mind of man comes in, seeking to give a different direction to the stream of becoming, then begins the distorting process with reference to the attribute of *Rajas*: It is this which changes the ordinary normal activity into a frustrating, restless movement of the mind. It is this which introduces that movement of the mind mentioned in the above *sūtra*—a movement which alternates between the verbal and the projected meaning of things and events.

Rajas by itself is a restful movement; but when its normal functioning is intercepted then there comes into existence a frantic and restless activity for “becoming” in terms of the direction set by the mind. It is here that a centre of thought-modification is created in the functioning sphere of the mind. When modification is round about a centre placed by the mind then is distortion brought into existence. The verbal centre is the centre of *Tamas*, for it is only another word for habit. The projected centre is that of *Rajas*. The whole process of becoming tends to move round these two poles. It is obvious that in this the real is never cognized. Thus in the *Savitarka Samādhi* there is an experience round the centre of thought-modification. In other words in this experience the mind moves between the centres of continuity and modified continuity, for the centre of modified continuity is the very base of *Savitarka Samādhi*. It is thus that *Rajas* becomes a conditioning factor of human consciousness. And the journey on the path of Yoga demands that the mind be freed from the conditioning factor of *Rajas* as it has to be freed from the conditioning factor of *Tamas*. We discussed this freedom from the restrictions of *Tamas* while exploring the subject of *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*. Regarding freedom from *Rajas*, Patañjali speaks in the following *sūtra*:

*smṛti-pariśuddhau svarūpa-sūnyevārtha-mātra-nirbhāsā
nirvitarkā*

43. The *Nirvitarka-Samādhi*—that experience in which the centre of thought-modification is non-existent—is attained when due to the purification of memory, mind's subjective projections are dropped.

While discussing the question of *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* we introduced the factor of retentive and psychological memory. The association of ideas by which psychological memory functions is to be seen at the level of the conscious mind. It is at the conscious layer of the mind that one notices this phenomenon of association where one thought calls up another by stimulation of past associations. The association of ideas emanates from the centre of thought-habit by which the stability of *Tamas* is changed into stagnation. Now the associations induced by thought-habit cannot be negated by mere change of thought-habit or by suppressing its expressions. They can be removed only by the purification of memory, for it is in the deeper layers of memory that the motivating factors of association lie. *Tamas*; *Rajas* and *Sattva* cannot be divided in water-tight compartments. They overlap each other and overflow into each other. The problems arising at the level of *Tamas* have their roots in *Rajas*. The problem at the level of *Tamas* is that of psychological or associative memory which resides in the centres of thought-habit. But the root of the problem is to be found at a deeper level—and it is to this that Patañjali draws our attention in this *sūtra* and the one that follows. He says here that one comes to the experience where no centre of thought-modification

exists only by purification of memory which he defines as a state where the subjective projections of the mind have dropped away. Then there is no conflict in the sphere of becoming, for the will of the mind is not sought to be imposed upon the will of nature. The effort of the mind to become something ceases. It does not mean that there is no becoming. It implies that there is only the natural becoming, not a becoming in the direction set by the mind. The centre of thought-modification is really the centre of mind's effort in the sphere of becoming. When this centre becomes in-operative then there is the cessation of mind's effort to seek its fulfilment in the process of becoming. Patañjali in the next *sūtra* explains what is meant by the purification of memory which brings about this cessation.

This *sūtra* speaks of the object being seen because of the elimination of the subjective factor which is in terms of the dropping away of the projections of the mind. Now it has to be understood that the subjective factor exists at various layers—fundamentally at three layers of consciousness. It exists as a centre of habit, it exists as a centre of anticipation, and it also exists as a centre of identity. The centre of habit represents the *Tamas* of the mind even as anticipation represents the *Rajas*. It is this anticipation which we have called the centre of thought-modification. Habit seeks its own sustenance by the repetition of the past, while anticipation finds its nourishment through a movement towards the future. But this movement towards the future is also rooted in the past because the future that is sought is the fulfilment of the unfulfilled past. Thus the associative memory is of a two-fold nature—the repetitive and the anticipatory. In *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* what is sought to be done is the breaking up of the centre of memory which is characterized by

repetitive association. But in this *sūtra* what is suggested is the destruction of that centre of memory which is associative in its anticipatory nature. Memory seeking a fulfilment in the future constitutes mind's effort at psychological becoming. The centre of anticipation is none other than the centre of psychological becoming. But even when the subjective factor as rooted in habit and anticipation is removed, there still remains the subjective factor as represented by the centre of Identity. To this centre and its demolition we shall turn in later *sūtras*.

While discussing the *sūtra* dealing with the *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* we said this *Samādhi* refers to that experience where the centre of associative memory becomes inoperative. This associative memory has two functional bases—one past and the other future. This means that association may be from the centre of the past or from the centre of the future. Both these are aspects of psychological memory. With reference to the *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi*, Patañjali speaks of retentive memory. But for this he has used the word *saṃskāra*. Now *saṃskāra* or impression has a reference to the past. In that *sūtra* Patañjali speaks only of the impressions of the past being retained without their associative memory. The associative memory in the context of *saṃskāra* obviously means the repetitive nature of memory, *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* is therefore that experience in which there is retention without repetition. Retention gives stability but when it is invested with the factor of repetition then stability becomes stagnation. But we saw that associative memory has two centres—repetitive and anticipatory. Here the association is in terms of fulfilling the unfulfilled past by moving into the future. This anticipation is also an aspect of memory. Sometimes memory may be retentive with no pulls of the past; but it

may have anticipations of the future. This happens not at the conscious level but at the subliminal levels. Superficially one may close the chapter of the past in terms of associative memory. But very often it happens that in opening the new chapter there are factors of anticipation which function in the subconscious and unconscious layers of the mind. And since they deal with the future we invest these factors with apparent nobility and outward grandiosity. But when one craves for a psychological future, there is always the functioning of motives which have nothing but self-fulfilment as their functioning base. Unless the motives imbedded in the subliminal levels are rooted out, the movement towards the future is nothing but a process of self-fulfilment. It is the rooting out of these motives which is suggested in this *sūtra*. Patañjali describes this here as *smṛiti-pariśuddhau*, meaning the purification of memory. While *Asaṃprajāñāta Samādhi* is concerned with the clarification of memory—sorting out the retentive and the psychological aspects—in *Nirvitarka Samādhi* there is a purification so that not only is the mind freed from the pulls of the repetitive memory but also from the pulls of anticipation, from the frustrating efforts of psychological becoming. In these two *Samādhis* what takes place is the tackling of the problems of the two opposites. In the first what is attempted is the activation of the mind from the distortions of *Tamas*, while in the second there is a relaxation of the effort caused by the distortions of *Rajas*. By these two categories of experience, the *Asaṃprajāñāta* and the *Nirvitarka* what is sought to be brought about is the co-existence of the states of activation and relaxation. When the mind's effort at psychological becoming ceases then is brought into existence a movement towards natural becoming. This is the purification of *Rajas*. It is the breaking up of the centre

of thought-modification or the process of modified continuity in the field of psychological living. But this purification is an arduous job, for the factors that cause the corruption of memory are deep-rooted. It is to this that Patañjali refers in the next *sūtra*:

etayaiva savicārā nirvicārā ca sukṣmaviṣayā vyākhyātā

44. The problem of *Savitarka* and *Nirvitarka Samādhi*—an experience with or without the centre of thought-modification—indicates a probe into subtler and deeper layers of the mind.

This is so because here we are concerned not with the patterns of memory but with the motives of memory. The patterns of memory are retentive and associative. But the motives of memory are either repetitive or anticipatory. It is in these motives that the urges of psychological becoming lie. This demands an exploration of the whole field of memory functioning not merely at the conscious level but more so at the subconscious and unconscious levels. It is the tendency of the conscious mind to adorn the urges of the subconscious and the unconscious with garbs of respectability so that they appear noble and elevated. It is due to this tendency that a deeper probe into the layers of the mind is necessary, thus revealing the motives underlying this seemingly innocuous movement of becoming. Without this the work of purification cannot be done effectively.

The *Nirvitarka Samādhi* or the experience where the centre of thought-modification has ceased, refers to that condition where the effort of the mind has come to an end. Sometimes this is interpreted as meaning that the movement

of the concrete mind must come to an end, and that the abstract mind must begin to function. This is due to the mistaken belief that abstract thinking is free from the limitations of the mind. Patañjali sets this question to rest in the following *sūtra* wherein he says:

sūkṣmaviśayatvam cālīṅga-paryavasānam

45. Even the most abstract thinking cannot go beyond the field of *alīṅga* or Prakṛti—that is beyond the field of manifestation.

The difference between concrete and abstract thinking lies in the subject matter thought about. Surely by changing the subject of thought, the quality of thinking does not change. This is only a change in the pattern of thinking. In abstract thinking also there is the movement of the mind. In it the pattern of effort may have changed, but the content of thinking remains the same. It matters little whether one is thinking about God or about Mammon, for what matters is not a change in the pattern of thinking, from concrete to abstract; what is of fundamental importance is the transformation in the very quality of the mind. In this *sūtra* the word used is *alīṅga*. Now this word means Prakṛti or manifestation. More truly it means manifestation in an undifferentiated form or manifestation in its subtlest aspect. Whether subtle or crude, it is manifestation. Thinking can move only in the field of manifestation. But it is the Unmanifest which gives meaning to manifestation, and so thinking, however abstract it may be, cannot give us the meaning of manifestation. One may project a meaning but that is not the real meaning. Mind through its thought-activity knows only the projected meanings of things. Even the subtlest and the most abstract

thinking cannot go beyond this. All thinking is within the closed circle of the known. The mind by its processes of thinking can never cognize the Unknown. All that the movement of the mind can do is to bring about modifications in the pattern of the known. The above *sūtra* says that *alīnga* is the limit beyond which even abstract thinking cannot go. And so in the *Nirvitarka Samādhi* even the movement of the abstract mind has to cease. But will not the cessation of the effort of the mind once again lead it to inertness or *Tamas*? We have seen that *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* concerns itself with the activization of the mind. But *Nirvitarka Samādhi* deals with the cessation of the effort of the mind. Does the mind have always to move between these two opposing poles? Of what use is the activization of the mind if that activization is to move in the direction of the cessation of the effort of the mind itself? What is the meaning of this movement between the two centres of the mind? If these two movements, between the poles of the opposites, were all to be achieved they would make no meaning whatsoever. But Patañjali says that there must arise a different movement altogether so that one is not tossed about between two poles. Is there such a movement and if so, what is it? But before we discuss that, it is necessary to examine what Patañjali says in the next *sūtra* by way of indicating that the *Asaṃprajñāta Samādhi* and *Nirvitarka Samādhi* do not by themselves lead us to the solution of the problem of *vrittis*. He says:

tā eva sabījaḥ samādhiḥ

46. Even these centre round a thought-seed.

Even when the centres of thought-habit and thought-modification are eliminated there still remains a centre which is

thought-seed. What is this thought-seed? We have discussed in the earlier part of this chapter about the centres of habit and of anticipation. These are formed in consciousness when *Tamas* and *Rajas* are distorted in their functioning due to the intervention of thought. But even when these two centres are eliminated, there still remains a centre of identity. This is indeed the thought-seed.

This is the seed which gives birth to the whole tree of the thought process. In *Nirvitarka Samādhi* there is a cessation of mind's effort at psychological becoming, referred to as the centre of anticipation. But the cessation of effort by itself is not enough. No doubt it brings about a purification of the memory functioning in the sphere of *Rajas*. While the factors of memory rooted in *Tamas* are retentive and repetitive those imbedded in *Rajas* contain elements of modification and anticipation. In *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* there is a clarification of memory whereby there is retention without repetition. In *Nirvitarka Samādhi* there is a purification of memory whereby there is modification without psychological anticipation. So in these two categories of *Samādhi*, the centres of habit and anticipation are sought to be destroyed. But there still remains the conditioning factor of *Sattva*. The distortions in the functioning of *Sattva* arise when the consciousness of man is centred in identity. This is the subtlest of the conditioning factors and hence mostly overlooked. With the destruction of the centres of habit and anticipation the purification of *Tamas* and *Rajas* are achieved. Is there further purification necessary? Is not the attribute of *Sattva* pure and holy by itself?

Sattva too gets distorted and this happens when the centre of identity is established within its functioning sphere. The centre of identity is indeed the centre of I-ness. With this

centre functioning at the level of *Sattva* there takes place the permeation of I-ness in all that happens. *Sattva* has a quality of harmony or of rhythm. Its essential meaning is goodness. Now goodness by itself is a great virtue. But surely virtue gets corrupted when there is in it the presence of identity or I-ness. Identity is a consciousness of separation, and this feeling of separation is indeed the I-ness. When this enters the sphere of goodness or virtue then there enters a distortion of a very subtle and therefore of a dangerous nature. That is why we stated earlier that it is not enough that the mind's effort at psychological becoming should cease. The effort may cease, but so long as the maker of the effort remains so long the stress and strain of psychological becoming must persist. The centre of identity is indeed the centre from where the maker of the effort functions. It will bring into existence new centres of anticipation and also new centres of habit. So long as purification has not taken place at the *Sāttvik* level, so long *Rajas* and *Tamas* are constantly in danger of being corrupted. Patañjali calls this centre of identity as the "seed". And he tells us that *Asaṃprajñāta* and *Nirvitarka Samādhis* do not by themselves solve the problem of Yoga, for, even after the experience of those two categories of *Samādhi*, there still remains the seed which may sprout any day putting forth roots and branches and leaves. There has to be a *Nirbīja Samādhi*, an experience in which there is no seed and is therefore completely free from the functioning centre of identity. There has to be existence without identity—this alone is the purification of the attribute of *Sattva*. Retention without repetition, modification without anticipation and existence without identity—these are the characteristics of the threefold *Samādhi* about which Patañjali speaks in this Book.

Before we go into the question of how to come to this experience it is necessary for us to understand what Patañjali means by *Nirbīja Samādhi*—the *Samādhi* without a centre of Identity. It is to this, the most fundamental question in the discussion of Yoga, that we shall turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

THE THOUGHT-SEED

IN modern Western psychology we constantly come across the phrase, "Experiments in Depth". The phrase indicates the existence of what is called the Depth Psychology. In this branch of psychology the subjects studied are myths and symbols and the problems of the unconscious as differentiated from the subconscious which forms part of the psychological researches of Freud. It was Carl Jung who spoke about the unconscious and the great depth that it contains. The idea of the racial unconscious was introduced by him in the sphere of psychological research. The subject of myths and symbols is indeed a fascinating subject and tells us as to how the individual consciousness is moulded and coloured by the racial unconscious. The transformation of symbols is an important part of this study. Man is unable to understand the real meaning of myths and symbols because these get altered in the course of their passage through the layers of the individual subconscious and the conscious layers of functioning. Unless the distortions caused by this passage are removed there cannot be the clear comprehension of the meaning and significance of these. The transformation of these distorted meanings of symbols and myths forms part of the study and investigation of modern Depth Psychology.

But how can modern western psychology tackle its problems without the aid of Yoga? Yoga is indeed the Depth

Psychology of Patañjali. That which prevents one from going into the depths of man's psyche are the centres of habit, anticipation, and identity. In the ultimate analysis unless the centre of identity is destroyed, how can one be free from the colouring of interpretation that this entity seeks to give? The centre of identity is indeed the centre of interpretation. And this again is the sense of I-ness. The ego or the I is the interpreter of all impacts of life. How can there be a clear understanding of life and its impulses unless and until this interpreter is made inoperative? It is only then that the object can be seen in its real nature. This demands not only the cessation of the interpretative activity of the mind, but also requires the cessation of the interpreter himself. This is the subject matter of *Samādhi*, which is indeed the depth psychology of Yoga. In the *Asaṃprajñāta* and the *Nirovitarka Samādhis* we are concerned with the cessation of the habitual and modified activities of interpretation. But this is not enough, for the interpreter himself must cease if one is to come to a clear and undistorted perception of men and things. It is the cessation of the interpreter which forms the subject of investigation of the *Nirbija Samādhi*.

It has to be understood that *Samādhi* is a state of awareness, and in the threefold *Samādhi* discussed in this Book, Patañjali deals with the deepening states of awareness. The obstructions to this awareness are the centres of habit, of anticipation or becoming and of identity formed in consciousness. The function of *Samādhi* is to remove these obstructions so that, established in Yoga, one can have a right perception of men and things. These obstructions, as already discussed, arise out of the distorted functioning of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*. We have also discussed at some length the distortions caused in the functioning of *Tamas* and *Rajas* and how *Asaṃprajñāta*

and *Nirvitarka Samādhis* seek to remove these distortions. But the root cause of all distortions lies in the centre of identity or of I-ness. The function of *Nirbīja Samādhi* is to lead one to the destruction of this centre of identity. Now *Nirbīja Samādhi* is a state of *Nirvicāra* and *Nirvikalpa*, i.e. a state where there is no existence of thought and therefore no choice. In other words, *Nirbīja Samādhi* is a state of choiceless awareness. Choice indicates a movement of thought, and where there is no movement of thought there alone the condition of choicelessness can prevail. Patañjali says in the following *sūtra*:

nirvicāra-vaiśāradye 'dhyātma-prasādaḥ

47. In the complete cessation of thought comes the precious gift of spiritual illumination.

There is a difference between *nirvitarka* and *nirvicāra*. In the former there is the cessation of the movement of thought, while in the latter there is the cessation of the very seed of thought. When the very seed of thought is destroyed then there is no existence of choice whatsoever. A choice implies alternatives—it is a condition of *savikalpa*, i.e. an awareness with choice. But when the seed of thought is eliminated then there comes into existence a state which is one of choiceless awareness or what is known in the language of Vedānta as *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*. This is identical with the *Nirbīja Samādhi*, for when there is no seed of thought surely there can be no factor of choice either. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali speaks of *nirvicāra-vaiśāradye*, which means a perfect or a complete cessation of thought. This obviously means a state where not even a seed of thought remains. Thought is verily the centre of identity for it is thought which separates or divides. By such division it gives an identifying mark. This process

of identification is the process of naming. The centre of identity is indeed the name. Surely it is the name which separates and divides. The centre of I-ness is indeed the name. We recognize ourselves by the name we have given to ourselves. The entire I-ness centres round the name. If the name vanishes where is the identity? It is the function of thought to give names to things and situations. But when thought ceases then the name too ceases. It is, however, necessary to remember that the cessation of name does not mean the cessation of existence. There is existence without identity and this is understood only in the state of *Nirbija Samādhi*. The name is the product of accumulation, acquired in the process of time. It is an act of de-limitation, the defining of that which is indefinable.

In this *sūtra*, Patañjali uses a phrase which is very significant. It is *adhyātma-prasada*. This means the gift of spiritual illumination. According to this, spiritual illumination is not attained by any effort of the mind; it comes as a gift or rather as a grace from above. Patañjali says that when there is total cessation of thought then alone this grace of illumination descends. This spiritual illumination is indeed a condition of being established in Yoga. It comes only when the effort of the mind ceases; not only that, but when the maker of the effort also ceases. So long as the mind's effort at psychological becoming persists, so long one remains within the confines of the mind. The maker of the effort is the very seed out of which fresh effort will come into being. So it is only when the maker of the effort ceases that the very seed of effort is destroyed. Into this condition of nothingness the grace of spiritual illumination comes. We have to call it a state of nothingness, for how else can we describe it? When the mind is divested of the very seed of thought, then

surely the consciousness is rendered empty. Patañjali calls this the total or the perfect cessation of thought. One cannot go to Truth. Truth comes to man, but only when the consciousness is rendered completely empty, where not even a seed of thought remains. It is only when there is existence without identity that spiritual illumination comes. An illumined person is a nameless being. Patañjali describes this illumination in the following *sūtra*:

ṛtambharā tatra prajñā

48. It is only then that the Truth-bearing Wisdom dawns upon the erstwhile limited consciousness of man.

This spiritual illumination is indeed the Truth-bearing Wisdom. Wisdom is not a continuation of knowledge. Not even an endless continuation of knowledge can result in Wisdom. Knowledge is gathered by the mind through memory, reason and imagination. These processes at best can lead only to a modified understanding of what one already knows. The gathering of knowledge is a gradual process involving time, but Wisdom is born instantaneously, for it is not the product of time. It is only when mind's processes of gathering knowledge end that there is the birth of Wisdom. It is very difficult to translate the Sanskrit word *ṛta* in any other language; however, the English word Truth comes nearest to its original meaning. The above *sūtra* speaks of "Truth-bearing Wisdom". What does this mean? One may ask: What after all is Truth? Is it something static, standing by itself, unrelated to anything else? If we postulate that Truth is static, then we will have to ascribe to it a position. And to give it a position is to put it in the framework of time

and space. That which exists in time and space belongs to the province of mind's knowledge. So it would be known by the normal processes of gathering knowledge indulged in by the mind. In this context, the question of Wisdom becomes completely irrelevant. It is therefore obvious that by Truth is meant an experience which cannot be put in the straight-jacket of time and space. That which exists in time and space is subject to decay. To speak of decay with reference to Truth is to indulge in words that have no meaning. Truth is the intrinsic existence of things—not dependent existence. It is the original nature of things, and to see things as they intrinsically are is Wisdom in its purest form. One who is endowed with Wisdom sees everything as it is—and not through any coloured glasses. So the phrase "Truth-bearing Wisdom" implies that perception by which one sees things as they are, and not as projected by the mind. To do this is to show forth highest Wisdom. Such Wisdom is born only when all the three attributes of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* are purified. This happens when in their functioning there arises no intervention of thought. And so this requires the experience of the threefold *Samādhi* about which Patañjali speaks in this Book. He clarifies this idea of Truth-bearing Wisdom further in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

śrutānumāna-prajñābhyāmanya-viṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt

49. Direct knowledge is totally different from knowledge derived from inference and testimony, for while the latter is generalized knowledge, the former is the knowledge of the unique and the particular.

Here Patañjali gives us a further clarification of knowledge and Wisdom. Knowledge gathered by the mind is always

of a generalized nature. Even when it talks of the particular knowledge it speaks of it in terms of comparison, in relation to the other. All generalized knowledge is relative, governed by laws of probability. Such laws are the laws pertaining to the averages. They are principles based on statistical calculations. All scientific laws are of this nature, arrived at by quantitative measurements. But Wisdom is not a quantitative understanding of things. It is concerned with the essential quality of things. Its approach is qualitative. By a quantitative approach one may at best know the underlying unity of the phenomenal world. To know this underlying unity is one thing but to know the uniqueness of things is quite the other. The unique is incomparable, and therefore cannot be understood by any process of comparison. This demands seeing each thing as it is—not in comparison with others. This requires a comprehension which is direct, and not based on inference or testimony. All knowledge of the mind is arrived at by an indirect process of inference and testimony. But Wisdom is a direct comprehension of things. Mind knows things by analysis, synthesis, comparison and classification. To classify a thing or an experience, that is to give a name to it, is the highest achievement of mind's knowledge. But Wisdom discovers what Patañjali calls in this *sūtra*, *viśeṣa-arthā*, meaning the particularized significance. To understand anything is to know its uniqueness. In any comparative process by which the generalized knowledge is arrived, the unique and the particular features of things are eliminated. Both in inference and testimony, there is a measuring rod in terms of which an experience is sought to be measured. This can only lead to indirect knowledge. In direct knowledge there is no measuring rod. Wisdom lies in establishing a direct and an immediate contact

with what is. In the last three *sūtras*, Patañjali has been dealing with the subject of spiritual illumination or Wisdom. In complete cessation of the entire thought-process comes the grace of spiritual illumination. This is indeed Truth-bearing Wisdom. And this Wisdom is the understanding of the unique and the particular. A direct knowledge is complete, for it has not to depend upon something that was or something that will be. It is a comprehension in the living present, with no vestiges either of the past or of the future. Any touch of the past or the future would render direct comprehension impossible. The subtle vestiges of the past and the future bring about a distortion of the *Sattva*. So long as the centre of identity is maintained, the distortions of *Tamas* and *Rajas* will recur with all their consequent obstructions and distractions. Patañjali refers to this in the fiftieth *sūtra*:

tajjaḥ saṃskāro 'nya-saṃskāra-pratibandhī

50. When there is a thinking with a centre, the impressions clinging to that centre will prevent new light from dawning upon the consciousness.

Here Patañjali speaks of the centre of identity or the centre of recognition. The mind that recognizes is guided by inference and testimony, and is rooted in the past and the future. Life is new from moment to moment, but when this life is put in the framework of recognition then the screen of the past and the future is cast upon it. That which is recognized belongs to the past. Life at the psychological level is in a state of terrific flux. The speed of this flux may not be as fast at the non-psychological level as it is at the

psychological level. And so the question of recognition applies with special force in the field of psychological happenings. An open mind is that in which there is no centre of psychological recognition. That which is recognized is not new, but the livingness of things and events is ever new. And so this livingness is outside the purview of recognition. Patañjali says that if there is a centre of recognition then it prevents the new from coming in. A mind in which centres of recognition exist is not a free mind. It identifies things because of these centres. This centre of psychological recognition is indeed what we have called the centre of identity. To identify something is to put it in the framework of continuity. The entity that projects this screen of continuity is the ego or the sense of I-ness, for the ego is itself the continuing entity. Since life, in a state of flux, is discontinuous in its quality of expression, it cannot be cognized through the centre of identity. In fact, this centre will prevent the perception of life which is new from moment to moment. The breaking up of this centre of identity is indeed the purification of *Sattva* and is therefore the basis of what Patañjali calls the *Nirbīja Samādhi*. In the last *sūtra* of this Book he says:

tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhān nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ

51. When the very nucleus of identity is destroyed then there is a complete cessation of all reactive tendencies, thus bringing into existence *Nirbīja Samādhi* or an experience in which there is not even a thought-seed functioning as a centre.

Patañjali says in this *sūtra* that *sarvanirodhān Nirbīja Samādhi* meaning that the *Nirbīja Samādhi* can come only when there

is a total cessation of the functioning of all reactive centres with not even a subtle centre of identity remaining. There is absolutely no centre to which impressions of experience can cling. It is a state of experiencing without accumulation. The mind in this condition is ever fresh and vital. It is able to meet life anew from moment to moment. In it there is no stagnation of habit, no restless movement of psychological becoming and no entity to give identifying names to events and experiences. There exists no conditioning factor either of *Tamas*, *Rajas* or *Sattva*.

Here the phrase used is *tasyāpi nirodhe* meaning that even this is to be destroyed. The reference is to the centre of identity round which the vestiges of the impressions of *Tamas* and *Rajas* cling. The mind that goes through life without putting identifying marks or names is a mind which has tremendous energy. It has no conflicts to resolve, for it gives no continuity to the problems that arise in life. The centre of identity is that which ascribes names and identifying marks to life's experiences. When this vanishes, then the mind is transparently clear meeting the impacts of life from moment to moment. And this indeed is the state of Yoga.

Here in this Book, Patañjali has drawn before us a very clear picture of the state of Yoga, particularly in terms of the *Asaṃprajñāta*, the *Nirvitarka* and the *Nirbīja Samādhis*. These relate to the removal of the distorting factors that arise in the functioning of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* respectively. These are the generators of *vrittis* or reactive tendencies in the mind. Yoga is that state where all *vrittis* cease. To know this state one must explore the path of threefold *Samādhi* about which Patañjali speaks in this First Book. But the question is: How does one explore this threefold path of *Samādhi*? What are the requirements for the treading of this

path? What are the pre-requisites for this journey into the land of Yoga? These are the practical questions of Yoga. We must inquire as to what are the instruments of Yoga, the application of which would bring us to the exhilarating experience of Yoga. It is to these practical aspects of Yoga that Patañjali turns in his Second Book of *Yoga-Sūtras*.

SECOND SECTION

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRELIMINARY PREPARATION

IN the first section of the *Yoga-Sūtras*, Patañjali has dealt with the state of Yoga, approaching it from a variety of standpoints, but with a particular emphasis on the three-fold *Samādhi*, the *Asaṃprajñāta*, the *Nirvitarka* and the *Nirbīja*. These three are concerned with the problem of mind's unconditioning, rendering the consciousness free from all *vrittis*. The attention of the student is turned to the breaking up of the three centres namely, of psychological habits, of psychological becoming and of psychological identification, corresponding to *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*, and the distortions that arise in their functioning due to the interference of thought. In this section, Patañjali gives a detailed map of the land of Yoga for those spiritual aspirants who wish to traverse that land. Entitled *Sādhana Pāda*, Patañjali discusses here in the Second section the practice of Yoga, the forging of those instruments by which one can enter this land of Yoga. It is hardly necessary to point out that this is the practical aspect of the whole subject of Yoga. Yoga requires instruments which are precise and delicate like physical science. But while science deals with matter, a comparatively inert substance, Yoga is concerned with mind which is intensely dynamic and therefore tremendously elusive. The genius of Patañjali has, however, transformed Yoga into a veritable science where the elusive mind is rendered an effective instrument, utterly precise and extraordinarily delicate. In this land of Yoga, mind comes to

the experience of deep silence and yet retains its dynamic quality. Intensely dynamic and yet completely still—that is the state of the mind capable of probing the enormous depths of Yoga. Patañjali takes us step by step into this process of mind's fundamental transformation. This is the subject matter of *Sādhana Pāda* where the aspirant is instructed in the way of forging effective instruments for a journey into the land of Yoga.

He says that there has to be a preliminary preparation before one undertakes this stupendous journey leading one to the dizzy heights of Yoga. The second section of the *Yoga-Sūtras* begins with this preliminary preparation. The opening *sūtra* says:

tapah-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ

1. Austerity, self-study and aspiration constitute the preliminary discipline of Yoga.

There has to be a certain preliminary preparation on the part of one who aspires to lead a life of spiritual integrity which Yoga undoubtedly is. Patañjali gives first place to *tapas* which can be translated as austerity, but which truly denotes a life of simplicity. Austerity demands the putting away of all non-essentials. There is a dignity in simple living which one can never find in ostentation. To be simple is not to be tardy or shabby. A life of simplicity is devoid of all encumbrances, a life where needs and wants are separated. A life of ostentation is based on the fulfilment of wants, but a simple life is concerned with the satisfaction of needs. Patañjali here indicates that one who wishes to tread the path of Yoga must turn to the simplicities of life. It is only the man of simple life who will be able to bear the strains of true

spiritual living. Along with this simplicity there must be self-study which is not so much a matter of reading books as of quiet reflection. For most people thinking never starts—they live on what other people have thought about. In our educative process, too, we are generally told “what” to think but never “how” to think. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali asks the spiritual aspirant to begin thinking for himself. This indeed is self-study. With simplicity of living and with the development of a reflective frame of mind, one will be able to formulate one’s aspirations. The word used is *īśvara-praṇīdhāna* which means turning towards God. Here the word “God” obviously refers to one’s highest and noblest aspirations. It is not something anthropomorphic but symbolizes something that is noblest to which one can aspire. So simplicity, reflection and aspiration are the pre-requisites of the preparatory discipline of Yoga. Without these three it would be idle to think of moving into the land of Yoga. He who opts for spiritual living must sooner or later formulate one’s aspirations. These constitute one’s own values of life. The man of spirituality is one who moves along the path indicated by the values that one has discovered and formulated for oneself. One cannot walk on the spiritual path by following the values that belong to others. Simplicity and self-study lead one to the formulation of one’s own values of life—in other words they lead one to *īśvara-praṇīdhāna* or a life of true aspiration.

This preliminary discipline is necessary, for it enables one to steer clear of many difficulties that would arise as one moves along the path of Yoga.

An indication of this is given in the next *sūtra* wherein it is said:

samādhi-bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa-tanūkaraṇārthaś ca

2. Its purpose is to lessen the impact of afflictions, and to lead the aspirant to real spiritual enlightenment.

The preliminary discipline prepares the aspirant to face the problem of afflictions effectively and thus to move along the path of spiritual enlightenment. Here Patañjali does not say that afflictions will not arise—all he says is that their impact can be lessened. In other words, one can bear the impact of afflictions with greater resoluteness if one were to approach the life of Yoga with proper preparation of simplicity, self-study and aspiration. The word *kleśa* which has been translated as affliction really means both suffering and the cause of suffering. The preliminary discipline of Yoga enables one to understand the cause of suffering, and this surely is necessary if one is to find freedom from sorrow. Having given the purpose of the preliminary discipline, Patañjali tells us about the causes of afflictions—those fundamental factors in the psychological functioning of man which are the begetters of sorrow. He refers to this in the following *sūtra*:

avidyāsmitā-rāga-dveṣābhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ

3. The causes of afflictions lie in ignorance, false identification, attraction, repulsion and a desire for continuity.

If one examines the above five factors, one would realize that they are not five different causes of afflictions. They constitute a whole so that one naturally follows the other. Truly speaking, Patañjali has given in this *sūtra* just one and the only cause of suffering. This is *abhiniveśa* which is

usually translated as a "strong desire for life". This is indeed a desire for continuity, being an expression of *Tamas* or inertia so deeply rooted in man's nature. It is from this desire for continuity that attraction and repulsion arise. They are indeed the cause of one's identification giving birth to a false identity. And what greater ignorance can there be than to move in life with a false identity? From identity arises a desire for continuity and the desire for continuity strengthens the sense of identity. It is a vicious circle. To be caught in this vicious circle is indeed the cause of man's suffering. The circle must be broken. But the question is How? Obviously it is the function of Yoga to enable the spiritual aspirant to break this circle of identity and continuity. But before one can explore the ways of Yoga one must clearly understand the full implications of ignorance, false identification, attraction, repulsion and a desire for continuity. In the subsequent *sūtras* Patañjali introduces us to the full psychological implications of the fivefold afflictions. He says:

*avidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṃ prasupta-tanuvicchinno-
dārāṇāṃ*

4. *Avidyā* or ignorance gives rise to afflictions which may be dormant, feeble, spasmodic or fully active—or in all these conditions.

Here an apt description of the feeling of suffering is given. This feeling may be dormant or feeble or spasmodic or fully active. By giving this description, Patañjali indicates that it must be rooted out completely so that it does not persist even in a dormant form. But in order to root it out one has to understand the nature of *avidyā* or ignorance in which

one is caught. It is this ignorance which prevents us from dealing with the problem of afflictions. One may ask: What is this ignorance and whence does it arise? The *Sādhana Pāda* tells us that:

*anityāśuci-duḥkhānātmasu nityaśuci-sukhātmakhyātir
avidyā*

5. *Avidyā* or ignorance is the mistaking of the transient, the compounded (impure), the begetter of pain, the unreal (the acquired) as the Eternal, the Pure, the Giver of happiness, and the Real or the Original.

Here Patañjali speaks of ignorance as a condition of mistaken identity. The transient or the fleeting is regarded as Eternal, the impure or the compounded is regarded as Pure, that which is unreal is regarded as Real. In the course of time, man builds up an acquired nature. This is the product of mind's reactions and resistances. The acquired nature assumes such importance that it completely overlays the original nature. In fact, one knows only the acquired nature. It is needless to point out that the acquired nature is the habitual nature. And the habits are the *vrittis* of the mind, the centres of reaction formed in one's consciousness. To regard the habitual nature as the original is *avidyā* or ignorance. The acquired is obviously the impure, for it is made up of accretions. It is the product of psychological accumulations and is of time. To regard something which has been put together by time as Eternal is to be caught in the greatest illusion. And this indeed is the ignorance to which Patañjali refers. From this ignorance arises *asmitā* or false identification. He describes *asmitā* in the following sutra:

dyg-darśana-śaktyor ekātmatevāsmitā

6. In *asmitā* or the sense of I-ness, the instrument of perception is regarded as identical with the perceiver himself.

The Sanskrit words used in the above *sūtra* are *dyg-śakti* and *darśana-śakti*. These are perceiver and the instrument of perception respectively. To regard these as identical is obviously to be caught in false identification. The instrument of perception is the mind, for it is not the eyes that perceive; but the mind. It is the signature of the mind that renders all perception valid. The act of perception is, indeed, the act of interpretation by the mind. When the perceiver is identified with the instrument of perception then what comes into being is *asmitā*. In the ultimate analysis, in *asmitā*, the I is not different from the mind. If we examine ourselves, we will realize that what we call as ourselves is indeed the mind. We are the mind, for we know nothing beyond the construct of the mind. It is under the influence of *asmitā* that the wish of the mind is regarded by man as his own will. We usually talk of a conflict of two wills, namely the will of the individual and the will of nature. Here the will of the individual is nothing but the wish and the desire of the mind. In this conflict is seen mind's desire to move in its own direction in contrast to the direction in which nature intends to move. Truly speaking *asmitā* is nothing else but man's identification with his mind. This is what the above *sūtra* describes as the instrument of perception being regarded as identical with the perceiver himself. This indeed is false identification and from this arise attractions and repulsions about which Patañjali speaks in the following two *sūtras*.

sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ

duḥkhānuśayī dveṣaḥ

7. *Rāga* or attraction is the seeking of pleasure.

8. *Dveṣa* or repulsion is the avoidance of pain.

Attraction and repulsion, *rāga* and *dveṣa*, are the expressions of the pleasure-principle which is at the root of man's entire process of psychological becoming. To avoid pain is also a part of the seeking of pleasure. In *rāga* and *dveṣa* one seeks pleasure whether positively or negatively. Attraction is the positive search for pleasure, while repulsion is negative seeking of pleasure, that is, by avoiding pain. That which gives a sense of continuity is regarded by the mind as pleasurable, while that which strikes at the root of continuity is considered by the mind as painful. And mind's pleasure and pain are regarded by man as his own pleasure and pain. It is from this that our attachments and denials arise. They are the natural offshoots of the condition of *asmitā*, which itself is the outcome of the state of *avidyā* or ignorance. Our life is based on the pleasure principle in which is included the ceaseless effort to avoid pain. In fact, in all pleasure-seeking there is always cast the dark shadow of pain. And so even in the midst of pleasure, one is concerned about avoiding pain. Thus it is that pleasure and pain always go together. Where *asmitā* or the sense of I-ness is, there can be seen pleasure and pain, attachment and denial. It has to be realized that it is only something that is acquired which needs to be safeguarded. That which is original stands by itself, never afraid of being vulnerable. The original cannot be destroyed. It is only the compounded that can be dissolved; the original or the un-compounded exists by itself. Behind the pleasure-principle there is an effort

to prevent the compounded entity from dissolving itself. Attachments and repulsions are indeed defence-mechanisms seeking to protect that which is the product of time's accumulations. Thus it is that *asmitā* needs the protection of *rāga* and *dveṣa*. The defence-mechanism is kept going by what Patañjali calls *Abhiniveśa* which is ordinarily translated as a strong desire to live, but which truly is a desire for continuity. Regarding *Abhiniveśa*, he says as follows:

svarasavāhī viduṣo 'pi tathā rūḍho 'bhiniveśaḥ

9. *Abhiniveśa* or the urge to live is the desire for continuity which is to be found in all, even amongst the learned.

Patañjali uses the word *svarasavāhī* which means something that is sustained by its own force or something that is automatic. This urge to live or a desire for continuity is so all-pervading that it dominates even those who are learned. In other words, this urge affects not merely the ordinary people but also those who are well versed in knowledge, and are regarded as wise. This desire for continuity is only a desire for security. One feels secure only in the climate of continuity; *abhiniveśa* is thus a search for security. It is one of the strangest things of life that man seeks security and continuity for that which is for ever in a state of flux. Life is eternally dynamic and is therefore ever discontinuous. *Abhiniveśa* is an effort to put the dynamic into a framework of the static; it is an effort to impart a quality of continuity to that which is discontinuous. The acquired nature of man is of the nature of a psychological compound. How can there be a continuity for a compound? It is something put together by time; and so in the time-process it must get

dissolved. And yet this desire for continuity is so universal that even the so-called wise do not remain unaffected by it.

Patañjali is discussing here the causes of afflictions or *kleśas*. He says that *avidyā* is the root cause of all afflictions. And the most all-pervading expression of this ignorance is *abhiniveśa* or a desire for continuity. Thus *avidyā* is the source and *abhiniveśa* the expression of this problem of afflictions. It is in the process of expression that ignorance manifests itself as *asmitā*, *rāga* and *dveṣa*. So howsoever much a person may deal with the problem of attraction and repulsion, he can never succeed because they are but the outer manifestations of *abhiniveśa*. Similarly one may try to change the nature of "I" by substituting it with Soul and Spirit, nevertheless it will mean only a modification of *asmitā*, not the breaking up of the sense of I-ness. That which sustains *asmitā*, *rāga* and *dveṣa* is *abhiniveśa*. *Avidyā* and *abhiniveśa* are two sides of the same coin. One can deal with *avidyā* only by dealing with its obstinate expression which most assuredly is *abhiniveśa*. If the very factor which seeks to give continuity to that which is false is destroyed then one is free from attraction and repulsion as also from the false identification of the "I". With this *avidyā* automatically disappears. And so while the root cause of all afflictions is ignorance, it can be tackled most effectively by dealing with the problem of the desire for continuity.

One may ask: What is the meaning of existence if the desire for continuity vanishes? Are not existence and continuity synonymous? To demand that the desire for continuity must vanish is to ask a human individual to write his own death-warrant. Man seeks freedom from afflictions, but if it requires the giving up of the desire for continuity, then the remedy seems to be worse than the disease. Has man to give up

the very desire for continuity in order to be free from afflictions? Has man to give up existence for the purposes of finding freedom from sorrow and suffering? Our usual thinking tells us that existence and continuity are identical. But if life is in a state of flux then does not living begin only when the effort at established continuity ceases? Life can be experienced, it cannot be held. *Abhiniveśa* is an attempt to hold life in the framework which the sense of I-ness has created. In other words, it is an attempt to catch life in the network of the mind. It needs to be realized that what is caught and held is something dead—it has no quality of livingness in it. As one Sufi saint has said “Life is a bridge, pass over it; do not build upon it”. *Abhiniveśa* is an attempt to build structure after structure on the bridge of life. Such an attempt is futile because it prevents the very movement of life itself. The cause of man’s suffering lies in desire for continuity which is an expression of *avidyā*. *Avidyā* by itself is something abstract; its tangible form is *abhiniveśa*. True living begins only when the desire for psychological continuity ceases. But the question is: How to experience this cessation of psychological continuity? It is to this that Patañjali takes us, step by step, as he explores the vast field of the instruments of Yoga in the *sūtras* that follow.

CHAPTER IX

THE FUNCTIONING-BASE OF KARMA

MORE than twenty-five centuries ago, the Lord Buddha said in the First Sermon, given soon after Enlightenment, something that is so obvious and yet so completely overlooked. He said therein that in life, suffering is greater than happiness. This he described as the First Noble Truth. Even a casual observation of life's happenings would convince anyone that in life there are moments of suffering far more than those of happiness. Enlarging upon this theme, the Lord Buddha said that not only is there suffering but there is a cause to that suffering. This was his Second Noble Truth. And the Lord Buddha said that *tanha* or craving is the cause of all human suffering. Now it is obvious that craving indicates an attempt to give continuity to events that have passed away. Since events cannot be continued, one seeks to give a continuity to the memory of those events. Such memory of events creates in one a sense of anticipation which is nothing but seeking a fulfilment of past events in the future. The *tanha* of Buddhism obviously has a close resemblance with the *abhiniveśa* of Patañjali. In the *sūtras* examined in the last chapter, Patañjali has, as it were, broken up the process of continuity into its fundamental constituents. They are attraction and repulsion. But these too centre round the sense of I-ness or *asmitā*. And the sense of I-ness itself is born out of *avidyā*. These five factors responsible for man's afflictions are the products of man's

desire for psychological security. But such is the strangeness of life that the more the security a man seeks, the more insecure he becomes. Life's security lies in living from moment to moment, and not by seeking to give to the moment a continuity of time-sequence. It is by projecting continuity on that which is intrinsically discontinuous that man has created both life as well as death into a problem, for he has separated death from the process of living. He thinks that living is a process of continuity, while death is a moment of discontinuity. He has failed to realize that life and death are inter-woven. Nature presents to us a mysterious phenomenon which is discontinuity in the midst of continuity. He who does not discover moments of death in the process of living does not know what it is to live. But for this he must understand the whole problem of afflictions or suffering in terms of the defence-mechanism of security so clearly enunciated by Patañjali in the fivefold factors starting from *avidyā* and leading upto *abhiniveśa*. Patañjali in the next *sūtra* says:

te pratiprasava-heyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ

10. In order to resolve all afflictions, it is necessary to find out how they arose.

The Sanskrit term used in this *sūtra* is *prati-prasava* which really means prior to birth. He wants the student of Yoga to go to the root of the matter so as to find out the conditions that gave birth to afflictions. The Lord Buddha is stated to have told his disciples that if they wanted to untie a knot, they must find out how the knot was tied. The above *sūtra* is akin to that instruction. If one wants to find out how the mind can be unconditioned then all that one must do is to see how the mind gets conditioned. The

prati-prasava is indeed a process of going back. In terms of the last *sūtra* it means going back from *abhiniveśa* right up to *avidyā*. This involves going into the What, the How and the Why of the desire for continuity, i.e. what is the factor of continuity that operates in one's life, how does it operate and why does one seek this continuity. This would mean exploring the areas of one's attractions and repulsions. It is in these areas that one shall come face to face with what one calls the sense of I-ness, for the I is nothing but the entity that continues and desires to maintain its continuity. As one induces the mind to go backwards, one begins to move from *abhineveśa* through *rāga* and *dveṣa* to *asmitā* and finally to the point of *avidyā*. This at first will be an intellectual process, but it is necessary. This intellectual process enables one to find out the cause that impels one to move in the direction of maintaining the factor of continuity in one's psychological patterns of behaviour. It is true that by finding out the cause one is not free from afflictions. Nevertheless the finding of the cause leads one to come to an intellectual clarity about the problem with which one is concerned. To come to an intellectual clarity is the starting point in the dissolution of the problem. One may ask: Where does one go from this point of intellectual clarity? This is indicated in the next *sūtra*:

dhyāna-heyās tad-vṛttayah

11. It is only in meditation that a complete cessation of all afflictions is made possible.

It has to be borne in mind that Patañjali prescribes the preliminary discipline known as *Kriyā Yoga* for bringing about an attenuation of the afflictions. This means the lessening

of the impact of various afflictions which come in the life of an individual. He describes this process in the second *sūtra* of this book as *tanūkarāṇa* which really means making the afflictions attenuated. It is only in this condition that one can look into the causes of these. When the afflictions are fully active, one cannot trace their causes. It is only when these become spasmodic or feeble that we can undertake the process described in the tenth *sūtra*. An intellectual examination from *abhiniveśa* to *avidyā* is possible only when the afflictions become attenuated or *sūkṣma* as Patañjali describes them. But an intellectual examination from effect to cause cannot lead to the breaking up of these. As stated above, to know the cause does not bring about the dissolution of the effect. So long as the cause and effect are separated by a distance whether of time or space, as in the case of an intellectual understanding, the problem of bridging the distance remains. For the dissolution of the afflictions, which is freedom from sorrow and suffering, one has to move beyond the intellectual process. Patañjali therefore tells us in clear terms that the afflictions can cease completely only in the state of meditation. The subject of meditation is dealt with in a later portion of the *Yoga-Sūtras*—in the Third Book entitled *Vibhūti Pāda*. We therefore do not propose to go here into a detailed discussion of it. However, it may be mentioned here that it is in meditation that the distance between cause and effect is completely eliminated. Meditation enables one to see the cause in the effect. Needless to say that afflictions can cease only when the distance between the cause and the effect ceases. This becomes clear as we turn to the next *sūtra*.

kleśamūlaḥ karmāśayo dṛiṣṭādṛiṣṭa-jaṇma-vedanīyaḥ

12. In afflictions lies the entire functioning base of Karma, and it is from there that it expresses itself in the present and in the future.

If the entire reservoir of Karma lies in the field of afflictions, then surely the latter indicate not only the effects of Karma but the cause of Karma as well. So afflictions contain both the effect and the cause of Karma. The solution of a problem is in the problem itself. If in suffering lie both its cause and the effect then surely for its dissolution one must look at suffering itself. Our usual notions are that suffering is the effect, and that its cause lies elsewhere. But Patañjali makes it very clear in the above *sūtra*, that Karma which is the cause-effect phenomenon lies rooted in the affliction itself. It is from this reservoir of Karma that we find its expressions coming up both in the present as well as the future. If one is to be free from Karma, then one must discover the cause in the effect itself; one must discover freedom from affliction in the affliction itself. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

sati mūle tad-vipāko jāty āyur bhogāḥ

13. As long as the root of Karma remains, the limiting factors of an objective or a subjective nature will continue to operate with reference to all experiences.

The two words used in Sanskrit in the above *sūtra* are *jāti* and *āyu*. Now *jāti* means the quality of life, while *āyu* means the duration of life. These two words therefore denote the quality and the quantity with reference to life. They are thus the subjective and objective factors concerning man's

living. *Bhoga* in the above *sūtra* obviously means experiences, whether happy or unhappy. As long as man is bound by Karma, he has to function within the limiting factors either of a subjective nature or of an objective nature. He will be fettered either by *jāti* or by *āyu*. His quality of living and the duration of his living will be determined by Karmic factors. These will be the restricting circumstances of his life. So long as Karma remains rooted in afflictions, one cannot come to a fundamental transformation of *jāti* or the quality of one's living, nor can one be free from *āyu* or the quantitative duration of one's living. Patañjali says further in the next *sūtra*:

te hlāda-paritāpa-phalāḥ punyāpuṇya-hetuvāt

14. Due to these limiting factors, whether pleasant or unpleasant, the fruits of Karma, joyous or sorrowful, must needs be reaped.

Functioning within the limiting factors, whether subjective or objective, man cannot hope to find freedom from Karma. If one seeks liberation from all afflictions then one has to be free from both these limiting factors of quality as well as quantity. The objective limitations are caused by *āyu* or by the sequence of time. Man finds this limitation greatly oppressive. It is in time that the changes of environment occur demanding fresh adjustment from the human individual. These constant adjustments to an ever-changing environment is one of the exhausting factors of one's living. But there is also the subjective factor of *jāti* which is the hereditary factor of one's living. In this problem of heredity, one has to reckon with the biological, the social and the psychological heredities. The biological heredity is given by the parents, and the social

heredity by the society in which one is born. Both these are the objective aspects of heredity. The subjective factor of heredity is one's own psychological heredity. It is this which determines one's subjective quality in one's living. *Jāti* is indeed the psychological heredity of man. These limiting factors of *jāti* and *āyu* bring joyous or sorrowful fruits of Karma. In other words, they keep us bound to the pairs of opposites. All changes arise from the play of the opposites, from the play of the *jāti* and the *āyu*, from the interaction of the content and the duration of time. *Jāti* is indeed the content that one projects into time, and *āyu* is the duration of the flow of time. To be free from Karma is to transcend all limitations of time, for time is the field in which Karma operates. Now *āyu*, being duration, is the feeling of time which arises due to the projection of psychological heredity. As we have seen *jāti* is psychological heredity and is the factor which brings into existence *āyu* or psychological time. They tie man to the operations of Karma by subjecting him to the impacts of ever-changing environment, whether subjective or objective. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

*pariṇāma-tāpa-saṃskāra-duḥkhair guṇavṛtti-virodhāc
ca duḥkham eva sarvam vivēkinaḥ*

15. To the wise all changes arising from the conflict of the opposites are repugnant because of the threefold misery that they entail.

The *sūtra* speaks of the threefold misery as *pariṇāma-duḥkha*, *tāpa-duḥkha* and *saṃskāra-duḥkha*. These are obviously the conditions of misery arising from the functioning of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. These arise according to the above *sūtra* due

to the conflict between the *guṇas* and the *vr̥ttis*—between the functioning attributes and the mind. We saw in the First Section while discussing the threefold *Samādhi* that it is the intervention of the mind that produces distortions in the functioning of the *guṇas*. Patañjali speaks here of the conflict between the *guṇas* and the *vr̥ttis*, between the functioning attributes and the mind. This conflict is to be seen in the *pariṇāma*, *tāpa* and the *saṃskāra-duḥkhas*. The *pariṇāma-duḥkha*, being the resultant state of misery, refers obviously to the distortions in the functioning of *Sattva*. *Tāpa-duḥkha* is due to the feverish activity of *Rajas* distorted by the intervention of the mind. And *Saṃskāra-duḥkha* is the distortion caused in the functioning of the inborn tendencies which obviously refer to *Tamas*. The *sūtra* says that the wise regard all modifications arising from this conflict of *guṇas* and *vr̥ttis* as utterly meaningless and begetter of sorrow. This conflict between *guṇas* and *vr̥ttis* is once again the expression of the limitations caused by the operations of the objective and the subjective factors—the *guṇas* being objective and the *vr̥ttis* being subjective. All Kārmic suffering can be traced to this conflict of the *guṇas* and the *vr̥ttis*. This is indeed the play of the opposites, and it is from this that all afflictions come into existence. The changes that take place due to this conflict of the opposites are mere modifications. They change the outer patterns of behaviour. No fundamental transformation can come into existence as a result of this play of the opposites.

Man for ever is concerned with the problem of sorrow and suffering. His one effort is to avoid suffering that threatens to come. Life moves on relentlessly into an unknown future, and man wants to know what the nature of that future is. He goes to astrologers and occultists in order to know what is in store for him in terms of the future. But all these predictions

are of no avail, for all predictions suggest a static approach to life. But is there another approach by which one can know the future, and knowing it, make advance preparations to meet its challenges? To talk of knowing the future is to indulge in confused thinking. To live in the present—that is indeed of fundamental importance. But this living must be such that one needs no psychological future for the fulfilment of the present or of the past. In such a living future there is no problem at all. But what is the nature of this living? Patañjali speaks of this as he takes us into the deeper understanding of the instruments and the practices of Yoga. He tells us that one who is established in Yoga knows how to live in the present with a completeness which is not dependent upon any future whatsoever.

CHAPTER X

THE OBSERVER AND THE OBSERVED

IN any discussion about the doctrine of Karma, one usually finds it described under three categories. They are *Samcita*, or accumulated, *prārabdha* or operative, and *āgami* or the future. The *saṃcita* contains all the accumulated tendencies which become active when provoked by outer stimulations. It is quite obvious that these tendencies do not become active all at once but only when provocations and stimulations arise. The tendencies that have been activated constitute the conditions of *prārabdha*. Man considers *prārabdha* as a great limitation; but this is due to the fact that he has to function under the compelling force of activated tendencies. The *āgami* or the future Karma depends upon the fresh tendencies that one builds up in the course of one's actions in the present. It is hardly necessary to state that the dormant and unripe tendencies do not constitute any problem at all. It is the tendencies that have become active or operative that make *prārabdha* a problem. It is true that one cannot wipe away all the accumulated tendencies, for one does not know what they are. One becomes conscious of them when they are stimulated under external provocations. It is quite obvious that one cannot know what will be the tendencies that may be evoked as a result of outer stimulations. But if one could be in that state of consciousness which makes stimulated tendencies inoperative at the very moment of

their awakening, then surely one need not have any fear regarding the future. Such a state of consciousness at one stroke resolves the problem of Karma with reference to past, present and future. The secret lies in the tendencies being made inoperative whenever they get stimulated under the provocations of outer environment. If man could live under all provocations and still keep the tendencies inoperative then surely he has no fear of what may happen. To such a person the future will cease to be a problem. His action in the present will make him free from the compulsions both of the past and the future. Patañjali discusses this very problem in the *sūtras* that follow. In the following *sūtra*, he says:

heyam duḥkham anāgatam

16. The suffering that has not yet come must be avoided.

But the question is: Is this avoidable? How can one tell what the future will bring? And without knowing this, how can one take any step to avoid the future suffering? Is it possible to know the future, for otherwise how can one deal with the future that is unknown? These are indeed relevant questions. If the future could be known with absolute certainty then surely all problems could be resolved, for one would make necessary preparations to meet that future. Life is so unpredictable that to talk of knowing the future with certainty is to indulge in illusions. But how can one be prepared in advance to meet the unknown? How can any preparation be made against the challenges of the unknown? Any preparation in terms of the known, or, even in terms of the modified known, would be of no avail. What then must one do to avoid the

suffering that may emerge from the womb of the future? For this, it is necessary to understand the whole problem of suffering irrespective of the past, the present or the future. What is suffering, and why does man suffer at all? In the *sūtra* that follows, Patañjali raises a crucial point with reference to the whole problem of suffering. He says:

draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayoḥ samyogo heya-hetuḥ

17. In the observer-observed phenomenon lies the cause of suffering that can be avoided.

The suffering that has not come can be avoided, but according to Patañjali this requires a clear understanding of the observer-observed phenomenon. We hardly realize that we do not live in the actual world, but only in the observed world. We do not know the men and things that surround us as they actually are. The actual has been transformed into the observed, and since we do not know the actual at all, we regard the observed as the actual. The observer-observed phenomenon can be understood if we bear in mind the well-known illustration in Hindu philosophy known as *sarpa-rajju-nyaya* which means rope being mistaken for a snake. The rope is the actual, the snake is the observed. Why does not one see the rope, and why does one mistake it for a snake? It is obvious that the observer, when he sees the rope, from his scale of observation, gets an impression that it is a snake that is lying in front of him. Having observed the snake instead of the rope, one is naturally afraid of it. All the reactions of the perceiver with reference to that object will be of fear. He will not go near it lest he may be bitten by the snake. A feeling of fear and anxiety assails him bringing in his life an element of suffering. He suffers because he does not

know how to get rid of the snake. He is afraid lest others of his family may get bitten by the snake. But the strange thing is: there is no snake at all; there is only a rope. In life, something like this happens all the time. Not seeing the actual, we suffer because of the implications that we imagine with regard to our encounter with the observed. It is hardly necessary to state that the observed is the projection of the observer and so it has no intrinsic existence. The existence of the observed depends upon the observer. To mistake the dependent-existence for the intrinsic-existence is to be caught in *māyā* or illusion. If our actions are based on the perception of the observed and not of the actual, then we shall create for ourselves suffering and sorrow. In human relationships there is to be seen the phenomenon of a rope being mistaken for a snake. Can one prevent the observed from coming into existence? If this can happen then surely we shall be able to see the actual i.e. we will be able to perceive things as they are. How can the observed be prevented from coming into existence? For this one must understand as to how the observed comes into existence. This is what Patañjali discusses in the next *sūtra*.

*prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti-śīlaṃ bhūvendriyātmakaṃ bhogā-
pavargārtham dr̥śyam*

18. The observed comes into existence when the sense impacts are modified by the *guṇās* or the three conditioning factors of the mind for the sake of the mind's fulfilment.

In the above *sūtra*, *prakāśa*, *kriyā* and *sthiti* refer to *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*—the three *guṇas* or the conditioning factors of the mind. The word *apavarga* appearing in the *sūtra* really

means fulfilment, and not liberation as is stated by many commentators. The mind for its own fulfilment distorts the functioning of the three *guṇas*, and it is these which bring about a modification in the sense-impacts. It refers to the intervention of the mind in the midst of the act of experiencing. When thought enters the act of experiencing then the latter is broken up, leading to the fragmentation of experience. When this happens one is unable to see what is; but only that which has been modified by the action of thought. It is obvious that sense impacts are possible because of the functioning of the three *guṇas*. When their functioning is distorted due to the entry of thought then those very sense impacts get modified. And so we perceive what the mind wants us to perceive. It is in this process that the actual is pushed aside and the observed takes its place. And this is done by the mind for its own purposes. Patañjali indicates in this *sūtra* very clearly as to how the observed comes into existence. He discusses the question of *guṇas* further in the next *sūtra*:

viśeṣāviśeṣa-līṅgamātrālīṅgāni guṇaparvāṇi

19. The manifestations of the *guṇas* are in terms of the passive or the active, the crude or the subtle.

This means that the *guṇas* in their manifestation may be passive or active, or crude or subtle, in their qualitative nature. The Sanskrit words used are *viśeṣa*, *aviśeṣa*, *līṅga-mātra* and *alīṅga*. The *aviśeṣa* is general, vague and amorphous and therefore passive, while the *viśeṣa* has a particular shape and behaviour and is therefore active. Similarly *līṅga-mātra* is differentiated and therefore tangible and crude, while *alīṅga* is undifferentiated and therefore intangible

and subtle. Here is given a description of the normal expressions in the functioning of the *guṇas*, when there is no distortion and no modification of sense impacts taking place. But when thought intervenes in their very functioning then a distortion comes into existence and with this the sense impacts get modified. It is then that the actual is not seen because of the super-implosion of the observed. While discussing the threefold *Samādhi* in the First Book, we examined the question of the distortions caused by the intervention of thought in the functioning of the *guṇas*. These distortions come into being, when within the consciousness of man are formed centres of psychological habit, of psychological becoming and of psychological identity. It is through this threefold distortion that the observed comes into existence preventing one to see the actual or the real. Patañjali in the next *sūtra* discusses the nature of this very observer, for, it is only when one understands the observer-observed phenomenon that one is enabled to come to the comprehension of Reality.

draṣṭā dṛśimātraḥ śuddho 'pi pratyayānupaśyaḥ

20. The observer instead of displaying pure awareness sees through the conceptual screen of the mind.

This *sūtra* implies that it is out of the conditioned state of the observer that the observed comes into existence. In other words, it is the observer who creates the observed, for, the observed has no intrinsic existence. The observer does not look at the thing but only through the conceptual screen of the mind which is its image. So the observed is indeed the image of men and things. But is the observer different

from the mind? While discussing the affliction, *asmitā*, we saw that the sense of I-ness, that entity which is described as the I, is not different from the mind. The mind seeking its continuity brings into existence the so-called permanent entity which is the "I". We say "so-called" because it has no permanence at all, being born out of the mind's urge for continuity. The sense of I-ness and continuity are synonymous, for we recognize the "I" through the factor of continuity. So the observer and the mind are identical. This is made clear in the next *sūtra* wherein it is said:

tadartha eva dṛiśyasyātmā

21. The nature and the content of the observed are for the maintenance of the continuity of the observer.

One may ask: Why do we create the observed instead of looking at the actual? The answer to this is given in the above *sūtra*. The observed is the product of the observer. They are not two different things. In perceiving the actual the mind faces the danger of being displaced from its position of security. To see the actual is to be rooted out from the ground of one's conclusions, which obviously threatens the very security and continuity of the mind. The mind is therefore afraid of seeing the actual. Out of this fear it throws a screen of continuity over the impacts of life. Life is new from moment to moment, and so one can never become familiar with it. Therefore life is for ever unknown. The mind of man through its screen of continuity attempts to put the unfamiliar into the framework of the familiar. One can deal with the familiar in terms of the past, and this is always the approach of the mind.

It never looks at the present as it is, but always through the screen of the past. So Patañjali says here that the observer creates the observed for the maintenance of its own continuity. The observer feels safe only in the world of the observed, never in the region of the actual. Conditioned by the past he projects his own conditioning on life's impacts and thus creates the observed. On the rope which actually exists, the observer projects a snake, and then acts on that assumption. One may ask: Cannot one see the actual by changing the scale of observation? If the scale of observation is changed, one may not see the snake, but something else projected by the observer. The problem lies not with the observed, but lies in the observer himself. A change in the scale of observation will only bring about a change in the patterns of the observed. It may at best bring about a modification in the form of the observed. So the problem is not changing the form of the observed but of eliminating the observer himself. The observer is the conditioned consciousness, which seeks its own continuity. In other words, the observer is the *asmitā*, the product of false identification. It is the sense of I-ness built out of the acquired nature of man. It is the conglomerate of *vṛttis* or the habits of the mind. That the problem is the observer himself is made clear in the following *sūtra*:

*kṛitārthaṃ prati naṣṭam apy anaṣṭam tad-anyā
sādhāraṇatvāt*

22. For him who has no purpose to fulfil through the existence of the observed, the observed is non-existent; but for others it continues to exist.

Man normally establishes a relationship of usage with the world in which he lives, whether physical or psychological. It is from this relationship that the observed comes into existence. It needs to be remembered that such a relationship can never be established with something that is living, for the living is in a state of flux and therefore not static. Usage is possible only with something that is static or stationary. So in order to have that relationship the living has to be transformed into an image. The above *sūtra* says that one who has gone beyond the relationship of usage, to him there is no existence of the observed. Such an individual has no purpose to fulfil from the existence of the observed. Hence the observed drops away when this relationship of usage ceases. The *sūtra*, however, says that for others the observed continues to exist. From this it is evident that the observed has no existence *per se*; it is brought into existence by the observer for his own purposes. The image to image relationship is obviously a relationship of usage, in which there is always the desire to own and to possess. In the following *sūtra* this is made all the more clear.

sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi-hetuḥ samyogaḥ

23. The observer-observed phenomenon creates the relationship of possessing and being possessed.

Here the words used are *sva-śakti* and *svāmi-śakti*. The *sūtra* indicates that each tries to fulfil itself. The *svāmi-śakti* is the possessor and wants to possess, either an object or an individual. But that which man seeks to possess in turn wants to possess the possessor. The relationship of the possessor and the possessed is obviously one of usage. It is a

strange law of life that he who wants to possess must also be ready to be possessed. Both are engaged in *svarūpa-upalabdhi* which means trying to fulfil its own end. To possess is to be possessed. They go together. To have one without the other is an impossibility. This is the crux of the relationship of usage. The exploiter and the exploited go together. The need to be exploited brings the exploiter into existence. In the relationship of usage one sees the ugliest form of exploitation of man by man.

Patañjali says in the succeeding *sūtra* that:

tasya hetur avidyā

24. This urge to possess and be possessed is motivated by *avidyā* or ignorance.

Surely such relationship of usage is born of ignorance. Patañjali has been discussing the problem of afflictions. The greatest affliction that arises in man's life is due to unhappy relationships. This is the biggest problem of man. He would be intensely happy if he could know the secret of right relationship. But right relationship can arise only when the shell of *avidyā* is broken. It has to be remembered that the relationship of usage has its source in the desire for continuity. The question of usage arises for one's own continuity. It is this which gives birth to *rāga* and *dveṣa*. But this desire for continuity has no validity unless one knows the entity that wants to be continued. The relationship of usage is motivated by the desire for possession. But before one can possess the other, one must possess oneself. But can Self be possessed? If it is unborn, how can it be possessed? If that which is living is in a state of flux, then how can a flux be possessed? Then what is it that one possesses? Surely one can possess

only one's image and it is this image that one regards as oneself. This is *asmitā* in its true sense. Having formed an image of ourselves we move in the direction of possessing the image of the other. This is what we call relationship. There is no wonder that such a relationship does not lead to joy and happiness. To transform oneself into an image and to regard it as oneself is the highest form of ignorance. The relationship of usage with its attendant misery can vanish only when this colossal ignorance about oneself is removed. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

tad-abhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ tad dṛśeḥ kaivalyam

25. With the dissolution of ignorance, there takes place the disappearance of the observer-observed phenomenon resulting in the emergence of pure perception.

Pure perception indicates seeing things as they are. If we know life as it is at any moment without any projection of the mind then we shall know the secret of right relationship with that life. Pure perception is the very crux of the whole problem of Yoga. From right perception comes right relationship, naturally and effortlessly. But how can there be right perception so long as we are caught in *avidyā*? So the question is: How can one step out of this ignorance, for without its dissolution there is no prospect for man to free himself from sorrow and suffering? Is there a way by which one can dissolve *avidyā*? Patañjali says:

viveka-khyātir aviplavā hānoḥpāyaḥ

26. An un-interrupted awareness is the only way to the dissolution of *avidyā* or ignorance.

The word used in this *sūtra* is *aviplavā* meaning unbroken. But what is it that has to be unbroken? Once again the word used is *viveka-khyāti* meaning that awareness by which things are clearly distinguished. If this awareness which clearly distinguishes things is kept uninterrupted then it will lead to the dissolution of *avidyā*. Patañjali calls this *hānopāyah* meaning an instrument which dispels the clouds of ignorance. It may be asked: What has one to be aware of? It has to be with reference to the observer-observed phenomenon. This means one has to be aware of the whole process of continuity by which *asmitā* or the sense of I-ness keeps itself going. This demands watching the process of attachments and repulsions because they constitute the field in which there is to be seen the *abhiniveśa* of *asmitā* itself. In other words, it is through *rāga* and *dveṣa* that the sense of I-ness seeks to continue itself. There is obviously no greater ignorance than the continuity of something that is prone to be dissolved. In the sense of the I-ness there is a false identity. Seeing how this false identity seeks its continuity through attachments and repulsions is the surest way of dissolving it. But the awareness has to be uninterrupted. When does awareness get interrupted? This happens when thought enters the field of awareness. The entry of thought is deliberate, for the mind does not want the process of awareness to go on in an uninterrupted manner. It realizes that an uninterrupted awareness would cause the dissolution of that very entity which it seeks to continue. This entity, the sense of I-ness, is the product of the mind. The mind has put its entire investment in this entity, and if it gets dissolved, it would be rendered completely bankrupt. In order that it may not have to face this unenviable condition of total bankruptcy, it wants the process of awareness to be constantly interrupted.

But it is only by an uninterrupted awareness that ignorance can be dissolved. Is it possible to prevent the mind from interfering in the process of awareness? This is a question which forms part of meditation, and so its answer can be found only after one has known what meditation is. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali is concerned with showing the way, leading towards the dissolution of avidyā. He further adds in the next *sūtra* that:

tasya saptadhā prānta-bhūmiḥ prajñā

27. This awareness must cover the totality of one's being.

Its area or *prāntabhūmi* has to be *saptadhā* or sevenfold. The word *saptadhā* really indicates a totality, for when one speaks of the total nature of man or of the universe, one speaks of it as sevenfold. Patañjali says that this awareness has not only to be uninterrupted but it has also to be total. This means that one has to be aware of the totality of one's being. In other words, this awareness has to be not merely with cold intellect, but with emotions and also the sensorial mechanism of the body. It must penetrate the entire fibre of one's being. It must not be that of a witness who looks at the flow of continuity from a distance. A witness can be aware only from the outside and such an awareness from a distance is of no avail. To be a participant and yet to be a witness—this alone can be called total awareness. All else is superficial and therefore fragmentary. Total awareness alone can be uninterrupted, for here one's entire being is involved.

One may ask: To be a participant and a witness at the same time—is this not a state of utter contradiction and

therefore of conflict? How can the two utterly opposite conditions co-exist? In Yoga one sees the miracle of the co-existence of the opposites and for this one must acquaint oneself with the deeper experiences of Yoga. Patañjali takes us into the depths of Yoga when he speaks of its eightfold instruments and their full implications. With this we enter as it were the very stream of Yoga and feel refreshed in the totality of one's being.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT VOW

THE problem of discipline seems to be closely related to all questions pertaining to spiritual life, and yet there is no subject on which such confusion prevails as on this subject of discipline. It is commonly supposed that the purpose of discipline is to mortify oneself, i.e. to deny to oneself the normal expressions of living. To many, living a spiritual life means a show of abnormal tendencies. He who aspires to move on the spiritual path is regarded as a "candidate for woe". Very often it is said that the spiritual pilgrim must lead a life of suffering, for he must pay the necessary price of Karma. We are told that moving on the spiritual path is tantamount to running fast, and so the aspirant on this path must be ready to pay off big slices of Karma, meaning thereby that he must face impact after impact of suffering. In fact, when suffering does not come, such an aspirant feels that he is not sufficiently spiritual. He regards suffering as a recognition by the Higher Powers, and therefore its absence is considered as a failure on the spiritual path. Taking a delight in suffering seems utterly abnormal, and so it has brought a strange factor in spiritual perspectives. To accept suffering is one thing, but to crave for it for the purposes of spiritual recognition appears completely foreign to real spiritual living. Much of the so-called discipline on the path is associated with this abnormal factor of suffering. It is this which has imported

into spiritual life such tendencies as mortification, austerities—almost spartan in nature—and a denial of all that appertains to joy and beauty. Needless to say, such notions of discipline do not harmonise with true spiritual life, for spirituality must have a quality of naturalness and spontaneity.

One may ask: Has discipline no place in real spirituality? Is spiritual life an undisciplined life? If so, would this not result in the frittering away of one's energies? And is not energy needed for the living of spiritual life? It seems quite obvious that the frittering away of energy must be eliminated at all levels and that means energy must be conserved. Also, one must know the secret of renewing one's energy if one is to move towards creative expressions of spiritual living.

It is quite obvious that the conservation of energy is possible only in disciplined living. But if the plant of spiritual life flowers in an atmosphere of freedom and spontaneity, how can freedom and discipline be reconciled? Ordinarily freedom and discipline are regarded as contradictory, and therefore mutually exclusive. But the fact of the matter is only he who is completely free can be truly disciplined. Without freedom, discipline is an imposition whether from outside or inside. Often a person says that he does not accept any discipline that is imposed by an external authority, but such a person forgets that the so-called internal authority is also a product of conditioning factors. The inner authority is really a product of social and cultural forces that impinge upon an individual either from society or from the ideological group to which one belongs. Freedom demands a complete elimination of authority, external as well as internal. It is only then that the individual, being on his own, takes complete responsibility for all that he does. Surely it is in the climate of such responsibility that true discipline grows.

When man realizes that no authority can save him—not even the inner authority—then alone is he supremely disciplined. In that realization of self-responsibility he knows that he will need every ounce of his energy, and therefore cannot afford to fritter it away. Without such a sense of responsibility, discipline has no value, and when responsibility is awakened then discipline comes into being, naturally and spontaneously.

When one is fully responsible for oneself then does one begin to live in the true sense of the term. This is indeed the *svadharma* of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Needless to say that an action that emerges from *svadharma* has the quality of true discipline. It is a discipline which emanates from the very act of living. It is not a discipline based on an ideal which one attempts to translate in one's daily conduct. It is a discipline which comes into being in the very process of learning. One learns, and that very act of learning creates its own discipline. It is like the river which, in the very act of flowing, creates its own discipline in terms of the two banks. The banks are not created in advance. One may create such banks and may find that the river has taken a different course altogether. This is equally true of the river of life. If its flow is kept uninterrupted then that very flow creates its own discipline. When the flow is obstructed, disorder starts. It is the mind of man with its conclusions and vested interests that creates obstructions in the flow of life. It is the sense of possession which interrupts the flow of life, bringing into existence chaos and confusion. There is a discipline inherent in the flow of life. One has only to look at nature to know how all its activities are perfectly disciplined. But this is not a discipline which is apart from living. The act of living is a dynamic state. Life's dynamism demands a discipline that comes into being in the very act of living.

In the *Yoga-Sūtras* we come across this dynamism of spiritual discipline. The instruments of Yoga dealt with in the second section, indicate the nature of discipline that is required for spiritual life. But this discipline breathes the fresh air of freedom. All stresses and strains are taken away. This is abundantly made clear in the following *sūtra*:

*Yogāṅganuṣṭhānād aśuddhi-kṣaye
jñānadiptir āvivekakhyaṭeḥ*

28. The purpose of Yoga discipline is to eliminate the impurities caused by the process of conditioning so that the Light of Pure Unconditioned Awareness may shine.

In terms of the above *sūtra*, the purpose of Yoga discipline is negative in its nature. It does not aim at building something of a positive content, for the positive is born naturally in the soil of negativity. The positive is the descent from Above and not the product of the mind's endeavour. Nor is it forged by Will however strong and resolute it may be. And so Patañjali says that the purpose of Yoga practices is to eliminate the obstacles that may have been accumulated due to the process of conditioning. The phrase used is *aśuddhi-kṣaye* meaning the elimination of impurities. When this is done, the Light of pure awareness will shine by itself. When the doors and the windows of the house are opened, the rays of the sun will come rushing in. One does not invite the sun to illumine the erstwhile dark room. There is only one thing to be done—to remove the obstructions which keep the light out. And so the discipline about which Patañjali speaks in this *sūtra* is in the nature of removing the obstructions that intercept the natural flow of life. He says that with

the elimination of impurities there shines the light of wisdom and it is in this light that the awareness of Reality comes. In order to see, one must have light, and when there is light, the thing as it is naturally comes to view. And so the discipline indicated here aims at creating a state of negativity in which alone the positive takes its birth.

In the next *sūtra* is described the eightfold nature of the Yoga discipline.

yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo 'ṣṭāv aṅgāni

29. The eight instruments of Yoga are abstinences, observances, posture, breath-control, abstraction, awareness, attention and communion or absorption.

It has to be borne in mind that these are not eight different instruments. They together constitute the whole of the Yoga discipline. They cannot be separated one from the other; to do so would render them devoid of meaning and purpose. Each by itself has very little relevance, but together they indicate the wholeness of Yoga practice. Sometimes this eightfold discipline is split up into four outer and four inner—the first four being outer and the next four being inner. If one must use this terminology of outer and inner then it would be more true to say that the first four are outer and the last three are inner, and *pratyāhāra* or abstraction is the bridge between the two. In this connection it is worth noting that Patañjali discusses the last three instruments of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*—awareness, attention and communion or absorption—separately, and that too not in the same section but in the *Vibhūti Pāda* or the third section

of the *Yoga-Sūtras*. This suggests that he regards the last three instruments as qualitatively different from the first five. When we discuss *pratyāhāra* or abstraction, we shall notice how this particular instrument constitutes a bridge between the outer and the inner. In the subsequent *sūtras* of this section Patañjali describes in detail various aspects of the first five instruments of Yoga. Speaking of *yama* or abstinence, he says:

ahiṃsā-satyāsteya-brahmacaryaparigrahā yamāḥ

30. Non-injury, non-falsehood, non-stealing, non-indulgence and non-possessiveness are the abstinences.

One who moves along the path of Yoga must possess the health of the body and the mind. With a body that is unhealthy and the mind that is ill one cannot proceed further on this arduous journey. It is for the maintenance of this health of the body and the mind that Patañjali speaks of abstinences and observances, the *yama* and the *niyama*. In abstinence one is concerned with discarding certain unhealthy habits and tendencies of the body and the mind. It is interesting to note that in this *sūtra* Patañjali talks of negations. One may ask what about *satya*? Is it not truth, and, if so, are we not here dealing with something which is positive? What does *satya* mean? Obviously it means that one will speak what one has seen or heard or felt. In other words, one will not say or do what one has not seen or heard or felt. This indicates that one will not say or do anything that is false. When one refers to speaking the truth, all that one means is that one will not indulge in falsehood. One cannot be sure of truth, but one can be absolutely sure of not saying or doing anything

that is false. So *satya* strictly and correctly means non-falsehood. Superficially speaking the above five abstinences are very easy to follow. These constitute the requirements of any cultured individual. It is expected that he will not do any physical injury to others, nor will he indulge in falsehood, nor will he be given to stealing, or indulgence or greed which after all is possessiveness. Looked at superficially it means as if one has nothing to do on the path of Yoga by way of following Yama. But the fivefold abstinence refer to habits and tendencies of the body and the mind and not merely to certain outer patterns of behaviour and conduct such as polished manners so as to be socially respectable. One may not do physical injury to the other, but this is not all that is meant by *ahiṃsā* or non-injury. To indulge in carping criticism, to use a language which gives offence, even to subject the other person to a process of comparison—all these are negations of *ahiṃsā*. To give up all such tendencies and habits is conducive to bodily and mental health. Non-injury denotes a healthy mind the absence of which brings into existence unhappy relationships causing anxiety and nervous tension. Similarly non-falsehood or *satya* has to be considered in a wider and a deeper context. An ordinary cultured man does not indulge in downright falsehood—but there are subtler forms of falsehood which are present in most of us as tendencies and habits of the mind. To exaggerate, to deliberately use equivocation, to be evasive, to use words and phrases capable of diverse interpretations are all expressions of falsehood. One has to be free from these tendencies as otherwise one is likely to bring into one's life unnecessary complications and therefore factors of misunderstanding. The literal meaning of *asteya* is non-stealing. Most of us are not given to stealing as it is usually understood.

But there are deeper aspects of stealing from which we may not be free. For example, any form of imitation is indeed a form of stealing, however subtle it may be. Any relationship of usage is a form of stealing, for here one uses the other person for one's own satisfaction. It is a case of misappropriation, and all misappropriations, whether of money or of persons, come under the category of stealing. The above *sūtra* speaks of *brahmacarya* as one of the abstinences. This word is usually translated as celibacy, but this is a very narrow interpretation of the word. *Brahmacarya* truly means non-indulgence of all kinds. An ordinary cultured man refrains from over-indulgence in food because society looks askance at all forms of gluttony. But this is only a very superficial form of indulgence. Really speaking all display of one's possessions is indulgence, whether it is wealth or beauty or power or human relationship or even virtue and so-called spiritual attainments. *Brahmacarya* really means abstinence from all display, whether crude or subtle. A mind that is given to display is a vulgar mind, for all display and ostentation are crude and vulgar. In the five-fold abstinence indicated above, Patañjali speaks of *aparigraha* or non-possessiveness. This too has to be understood in its deeper context. It is not so much the possession of things as a sense of possession. One may have many things and yet be free from a sense of possession. But it may be that one has very few things and yet may have a tremendous sense of possession. This sense of possession is a characteristic of the mind.

If one studies the psychology of possession one will find that the joy of possession does not centre so much round the object or the person as in the feeling that "I am possessing" the object or the person. It is the sense of my or mine which is at the root of the pleasure that one gets out of any

possession. In other words, it is the enjoyer who is the centre of pleasure derived from possessing objects or persons. So it may be stated that so long as the enjoyer is present there is no non-possession. Non-possession of things, therefore, does not constitute the core of *aparigraha*. Very often the absence of objects or things or persons may become the basis of possession. Austerity also can become "possession" as much as prosperity. There is a possession in denial as much as in indulgence, for all possessions emanate from the enjoyer. To keep the enjoyer undisturbed and yet to talk of *aparigraha* is utterly meaningless.

One may say that the fivefold abstinence examined in this wider and deeper context seems like a gospel of perfection. If one is rooted in this *yama* or abstinence what else has one to do? Is this not the culmination of Yoga? What need is there for other seven instruments of Yoga indicated by Patañjali? One must realize that Yoga discipline is a continuing process. It has no end or a culminating point. When discipline is co-terminous with living, how can there be a terminating point to it? To talk of a culminating point of discipline is to speak of the terminating point of living itself. Just as there can be no end to the act of living so can there be no end to discipline. As the act of living becomes deeper the expression of discipline takes a deeper colour. *Yama* in the beginning may be very superficial; but with the process of living becoming deeper and deeper it assumes depth. The same is the case with regard to other instruments of Yoga. *Samādhi* also, like *Yama* is a continuing process so that one can never say that one has come to the final point of *Samādhi*. The deeper aspects of abstinence have validity as a continuing process of discipline. If life is in a state of flux, then discipline that arises from living also shares this

quality of flux. It is this which makes Yoga discipline intensely dynamic. It is only when we regard them as instruments of reaching some end that they become static. Patañjali's eightfold instrument is tremendously dynamic, emanating as it does from the very act of living. This will become evident as we proceed with the detailed discussion of the eightfold instrument in the subsequent *sūtras*.

In the next *sūtra* it is said:

Jāti-deśa-kāla-samayānavacchinnāḥ sārvaḥmaḥmahāvratām

31. This is the Great Vow in the observance of which neither biological, nor physical nor social factors should come in the way.

The Yoga discipline according to Patañjali is a Great Vow, and he tells us that no excuse for its non-observance can be entertained. It is the common experience of most of us that we find discipline irksome and are ready to suspend it under the slightest pretext. This is so because such disciplines have come from authority, either external or internal. In other words, it is not born from a sense of self-responsibility, realizing that no authority, outer or inner, can solve one's problems of life. When this sense of total responsibility is awakened then discipline becomes a Great Vow for the non-observance of which no excuse is put forward. The mind that invents excuses is immature in the sense that it has not come to the awakening of a sense of full responsibility. The excuses are either biological or physical or social. Patañjali says that the Great Vow must remain unbroken—not to be broken under any pretext. The words used for these pretexts are: *jāti*, *deśa-kāla* and *samaya*. *Jāti* obviously refers to

hereditary or inherited factors. *Deśa-kāla* refers to physical circumstances represented by space and time. *Samaya* denotes social opportunities. One of the meanings of *samaya*, is "occasion" or "opportunity". Most people, when they do not want to observe the requirements of a discipline, complain about biological factors of nature as indicated by inherent weaknesses; or of physical environment not being conducive; or they complain about lack of opportunities provided by society or family or the ideological group to which they belong. Patañjali says that neither the biological nor the physical nor the social factors must stand in the way of following the requirements of the Great Vow. It is obvious that when discipline is born out of a sense of total responsibility then no excuse ever comes. It is in imposed discipline, external or internal, that excuses and pretexts come into existence. But one may ask whether even in a discipline that is free from all authority and therefore completely devoid of excuses there may not arise the problem of distractions? Distractions are indeed the past projecting into the present, and such projections cannot be ruled out so long as the functioning base of associative memory continues. Patañjali is not oblivious of this fact, and that is why he refers to the problem of distractions immediately after enumerating the various aspects of *niyama* or observances. *Yama* and *niyama*, abstinences and observances, indeed go together as they deal with the negative and the positive aspects of Yoga discipline. In the next *sūtra*, he says:

*śauca-saṁtoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni
niyamāḥ*

32. Purity, contentment, simplicity, self-study
and aspiration are the rules of Observance.

Yama and *niyama* are concerned with the habits of the body and the mind. Patañjali tells us that certain of these habits need to be eliminated and certain others maintained so that the body and the mind may function in a healthy manner. What to eliminate and what to keep is a matter regarding which each man has to decide for himself. In order to come to a right decision, one must observe oneself—one's bodily tendencies as also one's mental reactions. From such an observance one will be able to decide as to what hampers the healthy functioning of the body and the mind and what is conducive to healthy living. So *yama* and *niyama* have to be in terms of one's own observation. The fivefold *yama* and *niyama* given by Patañjali are only in the nature of a broad guide-line. They constitute a general framework intended to assist the aspirant in evolving his own abstinences and observances. There can be no rigidity about this. For example, one's bodily requirements may indicate longer hours of rest. If so there can be no harm in fulfilling these requirements. In short, *yama* and *niyama* indicate rules of healthy living, and each aspirant must decide as to what rules would be applicable in his own case. Whatever be the rules it would be best to examine them in terms of the fivefold *yama* and *niyama* given by Patañjali as they constitute dependable guide-lines. Having dealt with the question of abstinences in the last *sūtra*, in the present *sūtra* Patañjali speaks of *niyama* or observances which according to him are: *śauca* or purity, *santoṣa* or contentment, *tapā* or simplicity, *svādhyāya* or self-study and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* or aspiration. Once again like *yama*, these have to be examined not merely from the standpoint of elementary requirements but also from a deeper significance. The aspirant no doubt begins at the elementary level but in the continuing

process of discipline is bound to see their deeper meaning and significance.

What indeed is purity or *śauca*? Or to put it differently what is it that renders a thing impure? It is quite obvious that a thing remains pure so long as something foreign does not cling to it. This is so of consciousness too, which becomes impure when something that is foreign to its nature clings to it. So consciousness in its original nature is always pure; it is the acquired nature which is impure. If there is experience without accumulation then one would remain absolutely pure, no matter what the nature of experience has been. If anything clings to that experience then such clinging would impart to it impurity. If one is aware as to what conditions him then in that awareness one would keep off all touch of impurity. Purity may and must begin with cleanliness; but it cannot end there. Cleanliness is the elementary expression of purity, and one must begin there. But that is not enough. In the continuing process of Yoga discipline one must be vigilant as to how one gets conditioned, as to how foreign substances cling to one's consciousness. It is this which constitutes purity in its essential nature.

Patañjali then speaks of *santoṣa* or contentment. Contentment is not a gospel of passivity nor is it an instruction to resign oneself to one's lot. In such a resignation there is always a sense of inner resentment and discontent. Of what use is outer resignation coupled with inner resentment? To call it contentment would amount to indulging in a gross misuse of words. Contentment implies seeing things as they are. To see things other than what they are is a complete negation of contentment. It is quite obvious that only when things are seen as they are that one can act rightly with reference to them. Thus contentment alone can be the right

starting point for action. Without seeing things as they are, to indulge in action is to show forth reactive tendencies.

Patañjali then speaks of *tapā* or simplicity. It is the simple life that is truly austere. Austerity is not mortification nor is it leading an abnormal life of denial. But simplicity is not concerned with the rejection of things and objects so that one leads a life of severe privations. It is born of a mind that is simple—more truly the mind that is innocent. An innocent mind is never involved in any relationship of usage. Only a crooked or a cunning mind looks at everything from the angle of usage. An innocent or a simple mind is not concerned with accumulations. A spiritual man is one who has a simple approach to life, for he is not caught in the entanglements of attachment or repulsion. He who aspires to walk on the path of Yoga must regain the “child state” —the state of innocence and simplicity. It is only the innocent man who can act rightly, for he alone is capable of giving a total and an adequate response to the challenges of life. His responses have no element of reservation. The spiritual man abandons himself and that is why he can meet the challenges of life with a totality of oneself.

Patañjali next refers to *svādhyāya* or self-study, *svādhyāya* in the elementary sense would mean study of scriptures so as to become familiar with the spiritual lore. But this is only a very superficial meaning. *Svādhyāya* indicates self-study i.e. a study of oneself. Just as the *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*, the Field and the Knower of the Field, similarly *svādhyāya* means the study that can be made of scriptures and also of oneself. It is both *Aparā Vidyā* and *Parā Vidyā* i.e. knowledge and wisdom. That which can be gathered from outside is knowledge, even if it is from scriptures. But wisdom arises out of a study of oneself; it is the knowledge

of the knower. The spiritual aspirant may begin with the study of the deeper literature of life, but that is not enough. The continuing Yogic discipline demands that he should carry the study inwards so that there is not merely the knowledge of the known but of the knower as well. *Svādhyāya* in this sense means the observation of oneself, for it is only thus that the study of the knower or the perceiver can be made. How is one to know oneself except in the mirror of one's actions and thoughts or in the mirror of relationship? As the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* says, even the study of the scriptures, the Vedas, is *Aparā Vidyā* or lower knowledge. Surely it is the knowledge of oneself which is *Parā Vidyā*, the higher knowledge or wisdom. Self-knowledge is the very core of wisdom and it is to this that Patañjali refers when he speaks of *svādhyāya*. Beginning with the spiritual lore one must turn to the knowledge of the self by observing that self in the mirror of relationship. The last of the observances that is mentioned in this *sūtra* is *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* which is often translated as resignation to God or an act of self-surrender. It has, however, to be remembered that Patañjali does not anywhere speak of a personal or anthropomorphic God. In fact, in the first section of the *Yoga-Sūtras*, Patañjali refers to God as an Eternal Timeless Principle. So *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* would truly mean a right orientation to the Real or the Timeless. What is of fundamental importance in spiritual life is right orientation. It is the turning of one's consciousness in the right direction. What is this right direction? How is one to know that one is turned towards the right? It is here that the fivefold observances are interlinked. Right orientation is possible when there is self-observation so that one knows what one is doing and why one is acting in a particular manner. But self-observation is possible only when

the consciousness is rendered simple and innocent. Once again the simple and innocent state of consciousness comes into being when there is contentment or the seeing of things as they are. And this contentment demands utmost purity so that nothing that is foreign clings to it. Thus *śauca* or purity, *santoṣa* or contentment, *tapa* or simplicity, *svādhyāya* or self-study and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* or right orientation are interrelated. Fivefold observance or *niyama* does not suggest the observance of five different things. The aim of *niyama* is to bring the spiritual aspirant to right orientation so that he can proceed further on the path of Yoga.

It may not be out of place to mention here that *yama* also is an inter-related process. Its aim is to bring the aspirant to the awakening of a sense of non-possessiveness. But this is possible only when there is non-indulgence arising from non-stealing which is born in the soil of non-falsehood, and non-falsehood can exist only in the ground of non-injury. So while *yama* aims at bringing one to the awakening of a sense of *aparigraha* or non-possessiveness, *niyama* has as its objective the creation of a sense of right orientation or *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*. While *yama* stops the frittering away of energies in such activities as demand the defending and guarding of one's so-called possessions, *niyama* helps the individual to conserve his energies by turning him in the right direction of life's journey. These are the negative and positive aspects of the Yoga discipline. One has to be divested of all possessions to approach the door of Reality, poor and penniless, not in the material sense, but in the spiritual meaning of those words. While in *yama* one sheds one's burden of possessions it is in *niyama* that one's eyes are turned in the right direction which is the true meaning of *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*.

Patañjali describes the Yoga discipline as *mahāvratam*, the Great Vow. There is a difference between a pledge and a vow. A pledge is given to some one else but a vow is given to oneself, for it is an act of self-dedication. Patañjali says that no excuse, neither biological nor physical nor social, could be considered valid with reference to non-observance of the vow. These excuses are obviously external and therefore objective. But what about subjective or psychological obstructions in the observance of the Great Vow? These obstructions are in the nature of distractions. One finds oneself constantly distracted in the midst of observing the Great Vow, these distractions provide excuses for one to give up Yoga discipline. Such distractions are essentially of a psychological nature and therefore do not come under *jāti*, *deśa-kāla* or *samaya*; they do not emanate from biological, physical or social factors. Patañjali is aware of this difficulty and therefore says in the next *sūtra*:

vitarkabādhane pratīpakṣabhāvanam

33. When the mind is distracted by unwanted thoughts, one must inquire into the nature of the opposite.

Patañjali does not say that when the mind is distracted it should be forcibly brought back to the point from where it was distracted. He says that one must inquire into the nature of the opposite. Here he suggests that one must explore the nature of the distraction. The term used is *pratīpakṣa-bhāvanam*. One of the meanings of the Sanskrit word *bhāvanam* is observation or investigation. Patañjali says that one must investigate the nature of the *pratīpakṣa* or the opposite. This would mean the observation of the movement of the mind as it

inclines towards the opposite of what one wants to think about. To force the mind back to the point from where it was distracted is to engage oneself in a frustrating process, for the mind will again and again move towards the subject of its own interest. And distraction represents the area of the mind's interest. Patañjali says that when the mind moves away, explore the nature of interest towards which the mind seems to be attracted. In other words he asks us to attend to inattention. Discussing this technique of mind control, he says in the next *sūtra*:

*vitarkā hiṃsādayaḥ kṛtakāritānumoditā lobha-krodha-
moha-pūrvakā mṛdu-madhyādhimātrā duḥkhajñānānanta-
phalā iti pratipakṣa-bhāvanam*

34. When undesirable tendencies such as violence appear, whether by indulgence, provocation or connivance, due to motivations of gain, resentment or delusion, expressing themselves in mild, medium or excessive forms, causing sorrow and distorted perception, investigate into the content and the implications of the opposite.

When one is assailed by thoughts of violence, it is necessary to explore the content and implication of one's own concept of non-violence. When thoughts of hatred come it is essential for one to inquire into the nature of one's love. One is reminded here of the words of the great mystic, Mencius:

If you love men and they are unfriendly,
look into your love; if you rule men and
they are unruly, look into your wisdom;

if you are courteous to them and they do not respond, look into your respect.

When reflecting on non-violence, if one is assailed by thoughts of violence then perhaps there is something wrong with one's own thinking about non-violence. In the last *sūtra* Patañjali asks us to investigate into the nature of the distraction; here the investigation is into the very nature of that which seems to distract us. By these two *sūtras* he has suggested that one must explore the content and implication of both the opposites. Sometimes one may be brotherly to some one and yet receive no reciprocation of brotherliness from the other. One must naturally inquire as to why this happens. Our normal tendency is to run down the other person for not responding to our brotherly behaviour. But it may be that our own brotherly behaviour has motives that are the negations of brotherhood itself. If the other person feels that our brotherly behaviour is without a sense of brotherliness then he is quite justified in not responding. So before condemning the other person, it is essential that one investigates into the nature of one's own brotherliness. This is *pratīpakṣa-bhāvanam* about which Patañjali speaks in the above two *sūtras*. In the *sūtra* under discussion, he enumerates the different conditions under which unwanted thoughts may arise. They may arise due to indulgence, or provocation, or connivance, or abetment. The word used for abetment is *anumodita*. Sometimes one may not indulge in unwanted thoughts oneself but may take a vicarious delight in it by conniving at such thoughts indulged in by others. It is indulgence by proxy!

By this technique of *pratīpakṣa*, Patañjali suggests that one must inquire into both the acceptances and the rejections of the mind. An acceptance or a rejection may seem

outwardly very simple and innocuous, but there may be many a hidden motive behind these processes. The motives of the mind are more important than mere modes of behaviour when one is concerned with the problems of spiritual life. If the motives are impure then the mode of behaviour, however ennobling its pattern may be, is obviously not pure. In fact, all motives are impure, for behind a motive the mind attempts to fulfil a purpose. And the purpose of the mind is always for its own continuity. Needless to say, the continuity of the mind is indeed the continuity of the *asmitā* or the I-ness. The motives of the mind are hidden behind its acceptances and rejections, and so Patañjali places before the aspirants a technique of *pratīpakṣa* meaning an exploration into the nature and the content of the mind's affirmations and denials. The student of the *Yoga-Sūtras* will be able to understand the full implication of this when he comes to *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* in the third section of the book. In this connection it is worth noting that *yama* and *niyama* constitute denials and affirmations, but without exploring the motives behind them, a mere code of behaviour on the basis of *yama* and *niyama* has no quality of spiritual perception. It is true that one begins with a code of behaviour, but as one examines one's motives, both hidden and revealed, one is able to bring into *yama* and *niyama* a real spiritual perspective. It is to this that we shall turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE SELF-CONTAINED INDIVIDUAL

IN order to have an understanding of the full implications of the Yoga discipline, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between morality and spirituality. It is hardly necessary to point out that the moral and the spiritual are not identical, which does not mean that they are contradictory. The spiritual is not an extension of the moral. Just as an extension of knowledge does not result in wisdom, similarly an extension of the moral does not bring one nearer to the spiritual. There is a qualitative difference between the two. While morality is concerned with the modes of behaviour, spirituality is concerned with the motives underlying the patterns of conduct. It has also to be remembered that morality functions in the realms of continuity and modified continuity, but the spiritual denotes a discontinuity. In terms of biological evolution, one may say that in morality are seen the factors of heredity and variation, while in spirituality one comes across the mysterious factor of mutation. Morality always seeks a right adjustment with environment, or if the environment changes, seeks a modified adjustment. But in spirituality one is not concerned with adjustment, for conformity is not its motivating factor. The spiritual man is neither a conformist nor a non-conformist. It is obvious that conformism or non-conformism both function from a centre and therefore such a functioning is invariably static.

THE SŪTRAS ARE PRESENTED AS A MORAL CENTER.
 FROM A DEEP EXPERIENCE VS A MORAL CENTER.
 (OF THE MINDS OF SO) (WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG)

The spiritual man does not function from a centre, and literally lives from moment to moment, when each moment is complete and does not need the second moment for its fulfilment. To act from a centre is to translate the requirements of the centre into one's daily living. This is the core of the moral behaviour. Here the effort is to translate the ideal into the actual. But spiritual living is effortless where there is no gap between the ideal and the actual as action arises without the intervention of thought. The spiritual man has a morality of a higher and a deeper nature. It is natural and spontaneous. It is not the morality where thought is sought to be translated in action. It is rather a morality which is in the nature of an expression of the deeply felt experience.

Most people have regarded *yama* and *niyama* as moral imperatives. But Patañjali explores the entire subject in terms of principles. While this is how one normally begins one examines such subjects as are contained in *Yoga-Sūtras*, one has to realize that Patañjali dealt with *yama* and *niyama* not so much from the moral as from the spiritual standpoint. This is evident from the *sūtras* that follow. In terms of morality *yama* and *niyama* are merely certain modes of behaviour, but in terms of spirituality they are expressions of behaviour where all motives have been eliminated. It is only in this latter sense that the *sūtras* that follow become meaningful.

ahiṃsā pratiṣṭhāyāṃ tat-saṃnidhau vairatyāgaḥ

35. When one is established in *ahiṃsā* or non-injury no hostility or resentment can exist in its vicinity.

Here Patañjali says that consciousness cannot be compartmentalized, so that in one compartment resides love and in the other hatred or hostility. Non-violence and violence cannot remain in two different compartments of the mind. It is like wanting to keep poison and nectar in the same cup. It is obvious that even a drop of poison would make the entire cup of nectar poisonous. In the vicinity of *ahimsā*, hostility cannot remain. This has a twofold implication. First, in one's own consciousness love and hate cannot remain side by side; and second, those who come in the vicinity of one who is established in *ahimsā*, discard all sense of hostility and resentment. The two cannot remain together outwardly or inwardly. If the ferocious animals give up their ferocity in the presence of one who is established in *ahimsā*, it is because such an individual has no trace of hostility in his own consciousness. If *ahimsā* is a morally cultivated virtue then it will have a motive underlying it, for everything that is consciously cultivated has a motive behind it. It is this motive which makes the virtue a means to achieving some end. If *ahimsā* is a means to the continuity of oneself then surely it is another form of defence-mechanism. To endow the continuity of the self with high-sounding and ennobling epithets does not alter the fact that there is an urge to satisfy and perpetuate what one calls as one's higher self. This is no doubt a subtle form of defence mechanism, but just because it is subtle it is not imbued less with a sense of I-ness. It is obvious that *ahimsā*, as a morally cultivated virtue, has the sense of "I" seated in its heart. How can the sense of I-ness and *ahimsā* remain together. If one has to protect the "I", even though it may be the ennobled "I", then in that protection lies the seed of all violence. In the presence of such a person, hostility and resentment will not

cease. When *ahimsā* is the natural and spontaneous expression, born out of the elimination of all sense of I-ness, then in its presence no hostility, no resentment, no anger can ever exist. It is evident that Patañjali has given to *ahimsā* a spiritual dimension and has lifted it from the usual moral plane where virtue is cultivated as a means to the fulfilment of an end—the end being the defence of the "I" draped in magnificent costumes.

If one would bear in mind the distinction between thought-action relationship and the experience-expression relationship then there would be no confusion in grasping the distinction between a moral and a spiritual approach. In terms of moral approach, *yama* and *niyama* are a means to spiritual realization, but in terms of a spiritual approach, *niyama* are the expressional modes of an ecstatic experience. This becomes clear as we examine the *sūtras* that follow. In the next *sūtra* it is stated:

satyapratisthāyām kriyā-phalāśrayatvam

36. For one who is established in *satya* or non-falsehood, action itself is its reward.

This implies that for one who is established in *satya* or non-falsehood, every action is complete, leaving no residue behind. Ordinarily we look for the fulfilment of our actions in the fruits that may ensue. Thus our actions are incomplete by themselves; they are sought to be completed by the realization of their fruits. Naturally if the reward does not come, one becomes unhappy. So one has all the time to look to the future for getting psychological satisfaction out of the actions performed in the present. But even the action in the present arises out of an urge of the unfulfilled past seeking

its fulfilment. Hence there is no pure action performed in the present. To the action performed in the chronological present there cling the psychological vestiges of the past and the psychological anticipations of the future. It is this which makes every action incomplete; it is fragmented by the pulls of the past and the future. But for the man who is established in *satya*, every action is complete and is its own fulfilment. There is no other reward except the action itself. The future is divested of all its psychological anticipations as the action is its own reward.

This idea of complete action has been expressed beautifully by Emerson in the following lines:

Teach me your mood, Oh, patient stars,
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving no space, no shade, no scars,
no trace of age, no fear to die.

How does this complete action emanate from the state of *satya*? What is the condition of non-falsehood? Surely it is that state where one perceives what is and not what one has projected. It is projections that create falsehood and the projections arise out of the incomplete past. Why is one not able to see what is? It is because the past seeking fulfilment creates a screen so that one is not enabled to see anything directly. It is obvious that any action that emerges out of this false perception has no relevance with the actual. In fact, under false perception one's action has no relationship with what exists. Such an action obviously cannot meet adequately the challenge of life. Needless to say that an inadequate response to a challenge leaves a residue behind. The unresponded challenges of yesterday prevent one

from meeting the challenge of today adequately. It is thus that one goes on piling up incomplete experiences, which become the cause of distractions in the present. One who is established in *satya* has no distractions, and therefore acts completely from moment to moment. He does not seek any reward away from action, for him action is its own reward. To use action as a means of reaping a reward is to bring corruption in the very performance of action. Its pattern may be the noblest, but as long as action is regarded as a means of attaining something, so long one is immersed in falsehood. When action is its own reward then one is freed from the bondage of time.

Speaking about *asteya* or non-stealing, Patañjali says:

asteya-pratiṣṭhāyām sarva-ratnopasthānam

37. When established in *asteya* or non-stealing, one feels as if one is in possession of all the wealth of the world.

Why does one steal at all, whether in a crude or in a polished manner? It is only when one feels incomplete within oneself that one steals. This incompleteness may be purely physical or it may be psychological. And stealing too has physical and psychological aspects. Stealing impelled purely by physical or material needs does not come within the purview of Yoga discipline. It is a problem of socio-economic organization. With proper organization of society and with sane economic planning this problem in the strict material sense can be eliminated. In Yoga we are concerned with stealing that is impelled by psychological motivations. The feeling of psychological incompleteness is at the root of it. When one moves away from the satisfaction of needs to the fulfilment of wants then has one entered the realm of stealing.

The problem of wants is intimately connected with imitation, for here one wants to live as the other lives. It is obvious that imitation arises from incomplete living. We saw while discussing *satya* that one who is rooted in it moves on in life performing complete action from moment to moment. But why is man unable to do this? It is because he is not established in *asteya*. Without non-stealing there can be no establishment in *satya* and without *satya* there can be no *ahiṃsā*. A person who acts so as to reap a reward is bound to be violent, for he will demand the fruit which another has gained. Thus non-injury depends upon non-falsehood, which in turn depends upon non-stealing. We have said that imitation is an act of stealing, for in imitation one wants to have what the other person has—material goods or beauty or position or so-called spiritual attainments. This trait arises from a feeling that one is incomplete within oneself. And this feeling of incompleteness obviously arises out of a process of comparison. Comparison breeds a feeling of incompleteness and from this arises the tendency to steal, i.e. to possess what the other person has. When a person is established in *asteya* then he feels that he is in possession of all the wealth of the world. He experiences a psychological fullness within. Here it may be of interest to note what verse 55 of the second discourse of the *Bhagavad Gītā* says:

When a man abandoneth, O Partha, all
desires of the mind, and is satisfied in Self by
Self then is he called stable in intelligence.

The phrase used is *ātmanyevātmanā-tuṣṭa* which means satisfied in Self by Self. But this is not a condition of being self-satisfied. A self-satisfied individual is one who clings to his possessions whether physical or psychological. And one clings to one's

possessions when one feels that one may lose them. Since we are concerned here with psychological possessions, one may ask: What are those psychological possessions which one feels one is in danger of losing? Surely that which is acquired can be lost, whereas that which is inherent can never be lost. One need not cling to them as if some one is going to take them away. One seeks to acquire because one feels a psychological incompleteness within oneself. And this psychological acquisition goes on through imitation based on the process of comparison. Patañjali says that one who is established in *asteya* has a feeling that he is in possession of all the wealth of the world. This is possession without acquisition—a contradiction in terms. But this indeed is the secret of the joy that comes in the wake of *asteya*. It is enjoyment without possession. The man of *asteya* alone knows this enjoyment without possession.

So long as one is not established in *asteya*, so long is one engaged in building up one's acquired nature. And since the acquired nature needs protection and defence, one is incessantly occupied with safeguarding one's defence mechanisms. It is hardly necessary to state that one's energies are constantly frittered away in this process. Thus are *ahiṃsā*, *satya* and *asteya* integrally related with one another, for non-injury demands that one be rooted in non-falsehood, and non-falsehood is possible only when one is established in non-stealing. It has to be remembered that the acquired nature and its protection are in the nature of maintaining a falsehood, and to pursue falsehood is to negate the very basis of non-injury. But how can one bring about a dissolution of the acquired nature and thus eliminate the frittering away of energy? It is to this that Patañjali turns in the next *śūtra* wherein he says:

brahmacarya-pratiṣṭhāyām vīrya-lābhaḥ

38. When one is established in *brahmacarya* or non-indulgence, one is endowed with inexhaustible energy.

Brahmacarya is commonly translated as celibacy, but this is not its real meaning. It really means the cessation of the frittering away of one's energies. One's energy is frittered away through resistance and indulgence. It has to be remembered that resistance and indulgence are not two different processes but two sides of the same medallion. It is the presence of the enjoyer that brings into existence this dual process of resistance and indulgence. Caught up in the network of desires, man invariably wants an experience of continuous indulgence. This implies that whatever man does or seeks is motivated by the pleasure principle. When he exhibits resistance, it is in order to avoid pain—and this is another expression of the pleasure principle. Man's life is all the time woven round this factor of pleasure. It does not matter what the field of pleasure is—material or so-called spiritual. To bring to a cessation this pleasure-seeking is indeed what is indicated by *brahmacarya*. To stop pleasure-seeking is not to become a killjoy, to move about with a long face. There is a world of difference between pleasure and joy. Joy comes only when pleasure-seeking ends. It is in this pleasure-seeking that one is caught in the ever-lasting conflict with pain. Pleasure and pain cannot be separated, and therefore indulgence implies resistance. To resist the arrival of pain and to indulge in the experience of pleasure—this seems to be the normal occupation of man. When indulgence ceases, resistance automatically comes to an end.

When there is no pleasure-seeking, pain constitutes no problem at all.

What is meant by the cessation of pleasure-seeking? Does it mean leading a dull, drab life? Does it mean running away from experiences of love and beauty? Does it mean putting a stop to all delights and joys of life? It certainly does not mean this. This would be clear if one were to understand the distinction between pleasure and joy. It is the presence of the enjoyer that turns joy into pleasure, and thereby brings in its train pain and sorrow. Similarly when the enjoyer is removed from the experience of pleasure then one experiences the ecstasy of pure joy which indeed has no opposite. It is the enjoyer that seeks to give a continuity to pleasant experience. When no continuity is sought to be given to an experience, then it ends, leaving one free to meet another experience afresh. Of course, the experience in the sense of an incident cannot be continued, and so the continuity that one seeks is the memory of that incident. Even when chronologically or actually an incident has passed away, one seeks to retain it in one's memory. When this happens one desires to hold on to that experience, and when it recurs, one hangs on to it thereby trying to prevent even its chronological or physical end. But chronologically it must pass—nothing remains the same in the stream of time, and so when this happens one is intensely unhappy. Here one is all the time concerned with controlling the movement of chronological time in terms of the psychological time. But this is a frustrating process, and in this one's energy is constantly frittered away. If with regard to an experience, the psychological end synchronises with the chronological end then there is no struggle and no frittering away of energies. This synchronization of the event and the experience is indeed the

A STATE OF STRIVING IMMEDIATE ON TO SOMETHING
THAT HAS PASSED.

core of *brahmacarya*. It is the giving of a continuity to an event psychologically. This is the crux of the problem regarding pain and pleasure. To refrain from giving a psychological continuity to any event is to come to the great ecstatic experience of pure joy. It is not experience, but giving a continuity to it which indicates a negation of *brahmacarya*. If an experience ends with the ending of the event then is one truly established in *brahmacarya*. Thus indulgence consists in giving a psychological continuity to an event, whether physical, emotional or mental. It is through this imparting of continuity that one builds up one's acquired nature of psychological responses and resistances. This is indeed the real stealing process, for to seek to continue psychologically something that has passed away chronologically is tantamount to keeping a stolen property. That is why *asteya* cannot come into being so long as pleasure-seeking through the imparting of psychological continuity to an event persists. When this process ends then is one endowed with inexhaustible energy. And on the path of Yoga one needs tremendous energy. When the energies of the mind are frittered away then the energies of the body too get depleted. In the old order of the Hindu society, *brahmacaryāśrama* was the first stage to be followed by *grihasthāśrama*—meaning that the first was the student stage and then came the stage of the householder. This order suggested that an individual should, first, as a student, build up one's bodily and mental health by learning the secret of conserving one's energies. Then alone can he enter the life of the householder where in spite of the enjoyments of life he will not be tortured by the conflicts of pleasure and pain. Now a healthy mind is that which sees facts as they are. So it sees the end of an event as it happens without indulging in a psychological continuity. This is

WHEN ONE IS ESTABLISHED IN BRAHMACARYA
ONE IS TRULY ROOTED IN ASTEYA.

brahmacarya in the true sense of the term. It is only when one is established in *brahmacarya* that one is truly rooted in *asteya*. And it is the man of non-stealing who is truly established in non-falsehood. And it is the man of *satya* or non-falsehood who alone is able to show forth true *ahimsā* or non-injury. But the question remains as to how one can come to this synchronization of the event and the experience. It is to this that Patañjali turns as he sums up the problem of *yama* in the next *sūtra*.

Aparigraha-sthairye janma-kathamtā-sambodhah

39. When established in *aparigraha* or non-possessiveness, one begins to understand the meaning of existence.

It may be noted that *aparigraha* is not non-possession, but non-possessiveness. To understand the distinction between the two is absolutely essential. Non-possession is comparatively easy for it involves the discarding of things that one may have. While non-possession may imply the giving up of the home, non-possessiveness indicates the rendering of the mind completely homeless. So long as the mind clings to a conclusion and acts from that centre it has not been rendered homeless. It is this centre or a conclusion from where the mind acts that imparts psychological continuity to events and happenings of life. If the mind acts from no centre then there is complete synchronization of event and experience. The mind acting from a centre is devoid of *brahmacarya*, for it is from the centre that all processes of indulgence emanate. The mind that acts from the centre of conclusion is obviously a reactive mind, a mind given to *vṛttis* or reactive tendencies.

The above *sūtra* says that when one is established in *aparigraha* one understands the meaning of existence. It is necessary to realize that it is only when the mind ceases to project its own conclusions on life, that life unfolds to man its real meaning and significance. The phrase used by Patañjali here is *janmakathamtā-sambodhaḥ*. This is knowledge of the "how" and the "wherefore" of human existence. When man acts from no centre of the mind, then truly he is enabled to know the how and the why of life. The true purpose of life is revealed to one only when one refrains from projecting one's own concept of end and purpose. Life has its own purpose, and the mind that refrains from projecting a purpose, understands this purpose of life, and so is enabled to cause an acceleration of life's movement towards the fulfilment of its own fundamental purpose. It is given to man to accelerate the movement of nature, but this must be in the direction in which life intends to move. If man were to work at cross purposes with life then he is sure to meet with frustrations. He can speed up the movement of nature, but for this he must understand the direction in which nature intends to move. This can happen only when the mind of man ceases to project its own conclusions on the movement of life. We move in a world of projected significances, and because we tend to project idealistic patterns we think we know the intrinsic significance of men and things. It is only when all projections, even the most idealistic, cease that the intrinsic significance of life can be understood. This is vouchsafed only to the man of *aparigraha*. Projecting no continuity, not even the idealistically modified continuity, the mind is free from all conflicts of indulgence and resistance. The non-possessive mind alone knows what true action is, for it has no centre of reaction within it. This true action indeed is *ahiṃsā*. So long as

WITH REACTION ~ ONE IS FAR AWAY
FROM MIND

there is a reaction man is far away from *ahiṃsā*. *Ahiṃsā* or pure action is possible only when the mind is completely free from all centres of conclusions, from all corrupting influence of psychological memory.

Thus *yama* does not mean five different things to be practiced one after the other. It is one negative process where non-injury, non-falsehood, non-stealing, non-indulgence and non-possessiveness are related intimately one with the other making a whole. This is the Great Vow of abstinence where the mind is divested of all its conclusions so that it regains its original pristine nature. To do this man must move forward right upto *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*, for it is only then that he will be able to move away from the mere moral interpretation of *yama* to its spiritual significance. *Yama* and *niyama* are like the second discourse of the *Bhagavad Gitā* where Śrī Kṛṣṇa unveils before the eyes of Arjuna the complete picture of spiritual life. In the *Yoga-Sūtras*, too, Patañjali gives a complete picture of Yoga in terms of *yama* and *niyama*. In order that the picture may become alive we have to move in the direction of understanding the other instruments of Yoga propounded by Patañjali.

But before we can do that we must see the full picture of *niyama* or observance which he portrays in the subsequent *sūtras*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RIGHT ORIENTATION

IN the earlier part of our discussion on *yama* and *niyama* it was stated that out of the eight instruments of Yoga discipline propounded by Patañjali, the first four are regarded as outer. Now among these outer instruments, *yama* and *niyama* are probably the outermost because they deal with the behaviour of the spiritual man. However, behaviour can be looked upon from two standpoints: the pattern of conduct, and the indwelling content. In a moral approach one is fundamentally concerned with the patterns of behaviour. This, no doubt, has its content, which is provided by the ideations of the mind. It is a conceptual or an idealistic content, for a moral pattern is cultivated by the efforts of the mind. But when one looks at *yama* and *niyama* from a spiritual standpoint the content is completely different. The patterns of behaviour are impregnated, not by the content of conceptual ideation but by the joys and thrills of spiritual experience. If in Yoga discipline one does not move up to *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* then the patterns of *yama* and *niyama* remain codes of conduct based on conceptual ideations. There are many students of Yoga who consider *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* as the culminating points of Yoga discipline. Where this happens, one cannot move beyond the moral plane. But those who move upto *Samādhi* bring a new and a refreshing content

into the patterns of behaviour. In fact, *yama* and *niyama* are the fields of communication. This line of communication can become alive only if there is the experience of *Samādhi* or communion. Yoga discipline in its real and fundamental nature constitutes a rhythm between communion and communication, i.e. between *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* and *yama-niyama*. When looked at from this standpoint, *yama* and *niyama* cease to be mere static patterns of conduct which they become when one functions only on the moral plane. It is the spiritual content that makes them dynamic. It is in this sense that we have described them both as points of departure and of arrival—points of departure from the moral and conceptual plane and points of arrival from the experience of *Samādhi*. For the student of Yoga, *yama* and *niyama* must first become points of departure i.e. departing from one's habitual life into a life of moral ideations. This is but natural, for here begins the effort of the mind for bringing about modifications in living. This would be sufficient if one were aspiring to lead a moral or what is commonly known as religious life. But the man of Yoga thinks not merely in terms of mere modifications in one's patterns of living but of functioning on a different plane, for his inner urge is towards a fundamental change—a change of quality and kind, not merely of quantity and degree. This means that *yama* and *niyama* are not two different sets of behaviour-patterns. They are only negative and positive in nature, so that the positive has its reflection in the negative. It hardly needs to be stated that the positive can be seen only in the ground of the negative. So what we see reflected in the negative soil of *ahiṃsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya* and *aparigraha* are *śauca*, *santoṣa*, *tapā*, *svādhyāya* and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*. This will become clear as we examine the following *sūtras*.

śaucāt svāṅga-jugupsā parair asaṃsargaḥ

40. Purity indicates an indifference to the demands of the self and a retreat, from time to time, into a seclusion or solitude.

It is obvious that one cannot know what purity is unless one is indifferent to the demands of the mind and the body, i.e. the self. The demands of the body and the mind are evidently for their own security and continuity. These are rooted in the past, and constitute the past clinging to the present. Anything that clings is impure, and so purity requires that one is freed from all bondage to the demands of the body and mind. For this, it is suggested that one must, from time to time, retire into solitude. It is not enough that one is indifferent to the demands of the body and the mind which is the self. One must be able to listen to the call of that which transcends the body and the mind, in other words, one must be able to listen to the Voice of the Silence. This is possible only when one is just by oneself. This retreat need not necessarily be in the physical sense, although a physical retreat is conducive to a deep experience of solitude. It has however to be remembered that if the physical retreat does not help in the renewal of the mind then it is of little value. A retreat fundamentally has a psychological significance so that the mind is able to throw off the burden of the past and is completely refreshed. It is meaningful only if the body is refreshed and the mind renewed. This indeed is purity in its real sense. If one is not indifferent to the demands of the body and the mind, one will never know what retreat is, for these demands will prevent one from experiencing solitude. It is necessary that the aspirant retires into silence from time

to time. But this silence is not merely a cessation of the outer noise. It must also be a cessation of the inner noise, i.e. the noise created by the chattering of the mind. To experience this silence is indeed to know what retreat is. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali uses the phrase *parair-asam̐sargah*, which means no contact with the other. This condition of no contact with the other is the condition of non-distraction. One must know what this state of non-distraction is, for it is in this state alone that one can know what renewal is. It is only when one does not listen to the demands of the mind and the body that one can know what freedom from distraction is. Real purity lies in this undistracted condition. What happens in this condition of retreat is indicated in the following *sūtra*:

sattuśuddhi-saumanasyaikāgryendriyajayātma darśana-yogyatvāni ca

41. From the purification of the mind arise cheerfulness, one-pointedness, sense-control and a clarity of perception.

As stated above, Patañjali speaks not so much of the physical retreat as of the psychological retreat. From physical retreat we very often return with greater unpreparedness of the mind to face the situations of life. This is because while the body may have rested, the mind has not been refreshed. A psychological retreat does not necessarily imply moving away to a place not peopled by human beings. Such physical conditions of quiet may help, but are not absolutely necessary. What is important is to move away from the association of one's own thoughts. The *asam̐sarga* must be with one's own memory-associates. For it is these which bring in the other, the *anya* or the *apara*, causing distractions. The distracted mind is

obviously tired, for it cannot rest even when the place is physically quiet. But he who can have moments of undistracted quiet, his mind is purified showing cheerfulness, one-pointedness, sense-control and a clarity of perception. Man often suffers from two sets of distractions, the psychological and the sensorial. In the above description, cheerfulness and one-pointedness refer to freedom from psychological distractions, while sense-control and a clarity of perception indicate freedom from sensorial distractions. In sensorial distraction, the brain is unable to come to a clarity of percept, and in psychological distractions, the mind is enervated and therefore irritable and out of mood. From a psychological retreat, one returns with a mind that is cheerful and a brain that is clear due to one-pointedness, which is freedom from psychological distractions, and sense-control which is freedom from sensorial distractions. A distracted man sees only the projection of himself. But *ahimsā* demands extreme consideration for the other. And for this one must see the other, without any distraction, sensorial or psychological. Without purity, non-injury becomes only a pattern without a living content in it. When these two are related, then in the negative soil of *ahimsā* is reflected the positive quality of *sauca*. Patañjali moving on to the next quality of *niyama* says:

saṁtoṣād anuttamaḥ sukha-lābhaḥ

42. An incomparable joy comes when one is established in *santoṣa* or self-containment.

Santoṣa is usually translated as contentment, but its real meaning is self-containment. To be psychologically self-contained is to know the secret of happiness. Patañjali describes this happiness as *anuttama*, meaning incomparable

NOT THE RESULTS.

or unexcelled. It is happiness which remains uncorrupt even in the time-process. So long as man thinks that his happiness lies outside, in external happenings, he is destined to remain unhappy, for he can have no control over the external factors. To be psychologically self-contained is to find happiness within. Such a man shows forth a quality of *satya* because he does not run after the false for securing his own happiness. To strive for an element of non-falsehood in one's behaviour without this quality of *santoṣa* or self-containment is to build a form which has no indwelling life in it. In fact *satya* is the ground of negativity in which the positive content of *santoṣa* expresses itself. It has to be remembered that *yama* must provide this negative soil, for only then the positive plant of *niyama* can grow. So without self-containment the pursuit of non-falsehood is meaningless, and when the former is known then the latter appears in an effortless manner. To allow the positive plant of *niyama* to grow in the negative soil of *yama* is to discover a spiritual dimension of Yoga discipline. Dealing with the third factor of *niyama*, namely *tapa*, Patañjali says:

kāyendriya-siddhir aśuddhi-kṣayāt tapasaḥ

43. Through the removal of impurities one comes to austerity or *tapa* where the body and the senses acquire great sensitivity.

We have indicated earlier that *tapa* is not mortification of the body, nor is it the rendering of the senses unresponsive. It would be well to regard *tapa* as simplicity, that condition of the body and the mind where all ostentation and sophistication are put aside. In such simplicity there arises a great sensitivity in the functioning of the body and the mind.

One is able to respond to the beauty of nature and of man.

In *tapa* all crudities are burnt away, so that the vulgar and the crude evoke no response from the sense organism. It is this which is the life-content of *asteya* or non-stealing. All stealing is vulgar and crude, whether physical or psychological. But non-stealing is not a consciously cultivated attitude of the mind. Such conscious effort would entail conflict and pain. When through *tapa*, the body and the mind have been divested of all that is crude, then *asteya* becomes a natural expression of life. It is not the discipline of effort which Patañjali indicates but that which is natural and therefore effortless. By using the word *kāyendriya*, he refers to the organic and functional activities of the body and mind. These must act with a quality of perfection, and that indeed is the purpose of *tapa* or austerity. To be austere is to be free from all the superfluities of life. Once again this does not mean leading a life of privations. Beauty does not lie in rich decoration or over-ornamentation. That which is simple—not by cultivation, but naturally—is intrinsically beautiful. *Tapa* is to the end that one's natural beauty may shine forth both in the body and the mind. Surely it is by shedding superficialities that one comes to the experience of real austerity. Austerity is not the product of imitation. In fact, in all imitation there is present the ugly factor of stealing. When one is aware of one's needs, and is not concerned with wants, then one shines with the true quality of *asteya* or non-stealing. This comes by observing oneself, when the impurities of the body and the mind wither away. Patañjali calls this *aśuddhi-kṣaya*. When the superfluities and the imitated wants drop away then the body and the mind are rendered clean and simple. This is *tapa* from which arises naturally and spontaneously the quality of *asteya*.

Patañjali next speaks of *svādhyāya* or self-study which naturally follows from the observation of one's superfluities and imitated wants.

svādhyāyād iṣṭadevatā-saṃprayogaḥ

44 Through self-study or *svādhyāya* one discovers the trend of one's highest aspirations.

The actual words used are *iṣṭadevatā-saṃprayogaḥ*. *Iṣṭadevatā* obviously means something that is noblest to which one turns. Really speaking *tapa* and *svādhyāya* deal with the two opposites of the mind. While the one speaks of the superficialities of life, the other indicates one's aspirations. It may be interesting to note that superficialities arise out of the impacts from external or the objective factors. And what are commonly known as aspirations are the products of subjective inclinations. While the one constitutes mind's rejections, the other represents mind's acceptances. In spiritual life, the mind must be free from resistances as well as indulgences. Very often the mind after rejecting the crude and the superfluous, tends to indulge in that which has not been rejected. *Tapa* enjoins upon the student of Yoga to explore the areas of rejection. When this is done there remains the area of acceptance. Investigating of these areas is indicated by *svādhyāya*. Through self-study one is enabled to find out the nature and the content of that which the student of Yoga regards as the highest and the noblest—the *iṣṭa*. This is much more difficult, for here one is concerned with the subtle motivations of the mind. In aspiration there remains in a subtle manner the sense of the "I". How true is the statement that God created man in His image, but man, in turn, created God in his image. The *iṣṭa* or the highest and

ASPIRATION ~ A SUBTLE SENSE OF THE "I"

the noblest is yet the creation of the mind, and therefore it is in the image of the mind. To dwell on this is a subtle form of indulgence. One might feel that it is perfectly legitimate to indulge in the *iṣṭa* which the mind has created out of its own content. This is like renouncing the unpleasant and indulging in the pleasant. Is this not a complete negation of *brahmacarya*? So unless one has explored completely the subtle and the hidden motivations behind the *iṣṭa*, what the mind regards as the noblest and the highest, there can be no *brahmacarya* in one's patterns of behaviour. *Svādhyāya* enjoins us to observe the movement of the mind with reference to the *iṣṭa*. This is to find out how the mind has established its *samprayoga* with reference to the *iṣṭa*. In other words, by what process of thinking has the mind come to the recognition of the highest and the noblest? It is the tendency of the mind that when it is pushed away from one point, it settles down in its opposite, feeling that it would be safe and secure there. In *tapa* and *svādhyāya*, Patañjali asks us to inquire into the nature and the content of both the opposites. A rejection of one opposite is not enough; there has to be a non-indulgence in the other opposite also. *Tapa* may enable one to reject one opposite, but it is only self-study which makes it possible for the student of Yoga to refrain from indulging in the other. Hence self-study becomes the life content of *brahmacarya*. In the positive life-content of *svādhyāya*, *brahmacarya* is completely effortless. Where *brahmacarya* is the result of strain and tension, it expresses itself only in the form of celibacy. But when there is ceaseless *svādhyāya* in which rejection of the one and the non-indulgence of the other exist then *brahmacarya* appears, not only as the conservation of energy, but, as the renewal of energy as well. In the true sense of the term it must contain

the secret of the renewal of energy. One receives this secret in *svādhyāya*, for here the play of the opposites ceases. So long as the play of the opposites remains, *brahmacarya* is negated. But for this play to cease, mind's rejections and acceptances have to be explored so that not merely the *aniṣṭa*, the unpleasant, is discarded but the *iṣṭa* or the pleasant is also dropped. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, in the twelfth discourse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that the devotee who renounces both good and evil, he alone is dear to Him. The verse speaks of *śubhā-śubha parityāgi*. True, non-indulgence arises only when both the good and the evil are renounced, for both have the touch of the mind with its *asmīta* or I-ness.

Dealing with the fifth and the last aspect of *niyama*, Patañjali says:

samādhi-siddhir īśvara-praṇidhānāt

45. Right orientation or *īśvara-praṇidhāna* enables one to come to a state of contemplation.

To contemplate is to view with a totality of attention. *īśvara-praṇidhāna* or right orientation enables a spiritual aspirant to look at everything with total attention. When is such attention possible? It is only when one is not distracted. But why is one distracted? It is because there is something which holds the mind. And the mind is held by its own vested interests, in other words, by its own areas of interest. Instead of saying that something holds the mind, it would be more correct to say that the mind is holding on to something. When this happens one's consciousness is turned in the direction of that something in which the mind is interested. *īśvara-praṇidhāna* indicates a state where the interests or the desires of the mind have dropped away. To be rightly oriented does not mean

turning towards one direction. To do this would create conflicts in the mind, for there may be pulls from other directions. *Īvara* or Reality is not in some one direction. It is all-pervading. So right orientation means opening oneself to Reality, and therefore living in the open spaces. It is a condition of an open mind, not open to something or in some direction, but just open. It is a state of openness. It is hardly necessary to point out that this state of openness is indeed the life content of *aparigraha* or non-possessiveness. Without this openness of mind or right orientation, *aparigraha* becomes only non-possession. But with the life content of openness, it expresses itself as non-possessiveness. Non-possessiveness can exist in the midst of things and objects or it can exist without them. The above *sūtra* says that this right orientation enables one to come to a state of contemplation. The word used in the *sūtra* is *Samādhi* which really means a state of communion. When there is openness of mind then there is a direct perception of things implying a state of communion or *Samādhi*. When nothing intervenes—not even an image—then a direct perception is vouchsafed where there is neither the perceiver nor the perceived but only pure perception. To come to this state the mind has to be divested of everything. To be poor and penniless in the psychological sense is to know what non-possessiveness is. So long as the mind holds on to its own conclusions and images, there is no *aparigraha*. It is only when the mind of man is completely vulnerable, being totally defenceless, that one is able to show forth naturally and spontaneously a quality of *aparigraha* in one's pattern of behaviour. In this, there is no display of non-possession, the vulgar flaunting of simplicity. Non-possessiveness is completely unconcerned about its belongings or lack of them. Thus are *yama* and *niyama* related

in terms of *aparigraha* and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*. In the negative soil of *aparigraha*, the positive quality of *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* shines with all its grandeur.

We have seen, in the course of our discussion of *yama* and *niyama*, that they are not two different things. While superficially they indicate abstinences and observances, the renouncing of unhealthy habits and the maintenance of healthy ones, at a deeper level they reveal to one's gaze the majesty of Yogic living. As the *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of the qualities of the *sthita-prajña* in the second discourse, so does Patañjali speak, through *yama* and *niyama*, about the quality of life that Yoga unmistakably denotes. Starting as a moral discipline they ultimately provide the most effective medium of expression for one who comes to the state of Yoga. But this movement from the moral to the spiritual is possible only when one traverses further in the Yoga discipline reaching up to *Samādhi*. To a man of *Samādhi* or communion, the instruments of *yama* and *niyama* become the most powerful vehicles of communication. Yoga is not a withdrawal from the world; it is a true and an effective participation in the world with instruments of communication unfailing in their nature. It is only the man of true Yoga who can establish a right communication with the world, for he brings to that communication the rich experience of communion. But communion needs appropriate instruments of communication which are indicated by *yama* and *niyama*. Without communion *yama* and *niyama* are mere patterns of behaviour; but with communion they become vehicles of communication irrigating the otherwise dry fields of behaviour with the fresh waters of spiritual experience.

One must now explore other instruments of Yoga discipline which are *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*,

dhyāna and *samādhi* which Patañjali discusses in the *sūtras* that follow. We shall now turn to them so as to understand their full implication with reference to communion and communication.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STEADY AND YET RELAXED

FOR most people Yoga is associated with *āsanas* or various physical postures. In fact, to many Yoga means nothing more than that. Even modern medical science, which has begun to recognize the value of Yoga in the treatment of psycho-somatic diseases, does not go beyond the physical postures. Hatha Yoga, one of the principal branches of Yoga science, lays great emphasis on physical postures and regards the attainment of proficiency in the *āsanas* as an important criterion for perfection of Yoga discipline. It is true that physical postures have their place. But this is in the field of physical culture. It is also true that body and mind react on one another, and for perfect health both the body and the mind have to function with great efficiency. But Yoga is not just physical culture. Through Yogic *āsanas* it is possible to remedy certain physical ailments, but to think of Yoga as nothing more than physical culture is to miss the fundamental basis of Yoga. While the physical body does react on the mind, it has to be understood that in the ultimate analysis, it is mind that is the determining factor in one's living. To seek to control the mind with physical processes is to reverse the course of nature.

In certain branches of Yoga in India, specially in Haṭha Yoga, *āsanas* have been described in great detail. These have indeed a great contribution to make in the science of

physical culture. One can almost spend one's life time in mastering these postures, for they are so many and are very intricate and complex. There have been students of Yoga in India who have mastered these *āsanas* in a remarkable manner. In these *āsanas* the physical body is made intensely pliable so that it can be moulded as one likes. And surely this is no mean achievement. The different systems of Yoga have specialized in certain aspects of Yoga like the Laya Yoga, the Mantra Yoga, the Haṭha Yoga, etc. It has, however, been the contribution of Patañjali to synthesise all the different systems and create an organic whole in the field of Yoga. It is this synthesis of different Yoga systems that is known as Rāja Yoga. From a specialization in any one aspect of Yoga Patañjali has moved on to an integration of Yoga disciplines. In this he has given to each its own place and brought them all under the all-pervading influence of *citta* or the mind. To Patañjali Yoga is fundamentally a movement from mind to supermind. Making the human mind his central theme, he explores the possibilities of transcending the mind itself. In Rāja Yoga, he has enunciated in a clear and a precise manner the science of the mind. He has explored the possibilities of the mind, and has indicated the limitations of the mind as well.

In this science of the mind, Patañjali has given to bodily postures their rightful place, neither exaggerating their importance nor under-estimating their value. Yoga demands a healthy body which functions so smoothly that the mind is required to spend the least amount of its energies for the needs of the body. A healthy body brings about a release of the energies of the mind which otherwise get entangled in the demands of the body. When the body is unhealthy, the energies of the mind are constantly depleted causing nervous

breakdown and mental fatigue. One of the serious ailments of the modern civilization is mental fatigue resulting in boredom. It is this boredom that has led the modern generation to go in more and more for sensational pursuits, whether in the field of entertainments or in the field of social life. However, realizing that sensational pursuits render the mind more exhausted and the body on the verge of a breakdown, men and women of our age have started an inquiry into the problems of real health. There is a new enthusiasm for bodily health giving birth to numerous fads. Modern man is indeed in search of health—and it is in this search that Yoga has attracted his attention. But as in other fields, the demand of the modern man is for “instant Yoga”. He wants a quick and an easy way to Yoga so that his activities in the realm of pleasure-seeking may not get unduly interrupted. He wants to regain his health and retain it as long as possible so that the demands of pleasure-seeking may not cause any breakdown. It is this that has evoked from the modern man tremendous interest in the subject of Yoga as represented by physical postures. If physical postures could enable him to get back his physical health and enable him to be free from mental fatigue then he is all for these *āsanas*.

So this interest in Yoga is very largely motivated by the desire to keep up the continuity of pleasure-seeking. In this feverish search for health, the branch of Yoga which specializes in *āsanas* has become tremendously popular. One sees the craze for *āsanas* growing more and more, and, with it, the specialists along these lines are greatly in demand. But here one must heed the warning of true Yoga which proclaims that by physical postures alone one cannot regain one's health, for in bodily health, mind plays a very important role. To seek to control the mind through physical postures is to enter

a frustrating game. While physical postures may, to a certain extent, help in revitalizing the brain, the operations of the mind are completely outside their purview. And mind can indeed make or mar one's physical health. One can ignore this warning of true Yoga at one's own peril. *Dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* constitute the very core of true Yoga. Any system which ignores these three fundamental constituents has hardly any relevance in the field of Yoga. Rāja Yoga of Patañjali centres round these three constituents and regards all else as subsidiary. Thus *āsanas* have a place in Rāja Yoga but only as an aid to the fundamental theme of spiritual communion or *Samādhi*.

If the above context is borne in mind then one can understand the value of *āsanas* in the whole scheme of Rāja Yoga. Its value lies in toning up the body so that it causes no hindrance to the further movement on the path of Yoga. Its aim is also to see that the body in turn becomes an effective instrument of communication. The experience of communion is such that the totality of one's being is needed for its communication. If the physical body forms a weak link in the chain of communication, then, to that extent, the entire process of communication suffers a set-back. In other words, the *āsanas* serve a twofold purpose: On the onward journey to see that the body is not a hindrance, and on the return journey to serve as an effective instrument of communication. Rāja Yoga, being a synthesis of Yoga, has given to physical postures such a place so that both these purposes can be fulfilled.

In the Hatha Yoga, mainly eighty-four *āsanas* are described, representing a diversity of physical contractions, impossible to be performed except by an expert. These help in the regular functioning of endocrine glands and also the

currents of *prāṇa* or vital breath. As medical science has not been able, so far, to solve the mystery of the endocrine glands and their functioning, and as *āsanas* claim to regulate these, the experts in modern medical science have thought it necessary to explore the possibility of these *āsanas* in treating some diseases. Patañjali is, however, not concerned with these different *āsanas* as is clear from the following *sūtra* in which he says:

sthīrasukham āsanam

46. The posture should be steady and relaxed.

These two words, steady and relaxed, seem somewhat contradictory. Generally when one maintains a steadiness of posture, there is tension all over the body. And when the posture is relaxed, one tends to go to sleep because of the comfort that it gives. Patañjali says that the posture should be steady and relaxed at the same time—not so steady as to cause tension, nor so relaxed that it induces sleep. Very often it is believed that *āsana* or posture has relevance only with reference to the manner of sitting during the period of meditation. It is also commonly believed that during meditation one must sit in *padmāsana* or the lotus-posture. One may or may not sit in this posture—what matters is that there should be steadiness and relaxation at the same time. But *āsana* does not have that restrictive relevance as is commonly supposed. One will not be able to maintain a posture of steadiness and relaxation during the restricted period of meditation, if what is involved in that posture does not permeate the entire field of bodily movements. The posture that is steady and relaxed—*sthīra* and *sukha*—is meant to give a certain dignity and grace to one's bodily movements. It

aims at imparting a proper gait and carriage to one's body. Steadiness denotes strength or dignity in one's carriage and bearing, while relaxation signifies grace. Most of us are sloppy and awkward in our movements and in the manner in which we perform various bodily actions. It is obvious that sloppiness comes due to lack of strength and dignity, while awkwardness is seen because one lacks grace. If there is only steadiness in one's bodily carriage then the movements will seem devoid of any charm. It is also true that if there is grace without steadiness then one's gait is likely to display a trait of weakness. It is because of this that steadiness and relaxation should be together in all movements and actions of the body. Steady and yet not tense, relaxed and yet not weak and sleepy—that is the secret of right posture indicated in this *sūtra*. If this does not become one's normal bodily carriage and gait then sitting in meditation will cause strain and stress or it will induce one to sleep. A man established in Yoga can be easily spotted by the manner in which he walks or sits or lies down or whatever else he does. There is a distinctiveness in his bodily movement or in the condition of bodily rest. This idea of *sthira-sukha-āsana* is further clarified by Patañjali in the next *sūtra* where he says:

prayatna-saithilyānanta-samāpattibhyām

47. This is to be attained by a state of alert passivity.

In this *sūtra* there are two words which need to be specially noted—*prayatna-saithilya* and *ananta-samapatti*, meaning a state of effortlessness, and the state maintained by Ananta or the Great Serpent. Let us first turn to the implication of the second word, namely *ananta-samapatti*. What is this reference

to Ananta? In Hindu mythology there is an idea that the earth is upheld in space by Ananta. The earth is supposed to rest on its hood. Even though it is so delicately balanced on the hood of the serpent, the earth does not fall off but carries on its movement in space without any mishap. Obviously the serpent must be very steady all the time even though carrying a heavy burden on its hood. But its steadiness has no tension about it. This is exemplified by another illustration from Hindu mythology. Viṣṇu is the Second Person of the Trinity, the other two being Brahma and Śiva. Brahma and Śiva are the creator and the destroyer respectively of the universe, and Viṣṇu is the sustainer. Now Viṣṇu, being the sustainer, pervades the entire universe—in fact He is the universe, for He is all-pervasive. One of the epithets of Viṣṇu is Anantaśayana, i.e. one who rests on the Great Serpent, Ananta. This is how Ananta is described as carrying the whole universe on its hood. But Viṣṇu resting on the serpent is completely relaxed, for the Hindu mythology says that while Viṣṇu is so resting His consort, Lakṣmi, is pressing His feet. Now when Lakṣmi is pressing the feet, surely Viṣṇu must feel completely relaxed. In the midst of this relaxation He is lying on the hood of the Serpent. If the Serpent shakes its head then Viṣṇu would be disturbed causing the entire universe to tremble. But obviously the Serpent feels no tension and therefore allows Viṣṇu to rest with a complete sense of relaxation. It is absolutely steady and at the same time completely relaxed. The Serpent, while it is active, holding the great burden of the universe, has a feeling of complete restfulness as if it is not carrying any burden at all. This shows it is in a state of alert passivity. The symbolism of *ananta-śayanam* therefore signifies this condition of alert passivity. The posture combining steadiness

with relaxation, symbolized by *ananta-śayanam*, is to be attained in one's life so that, in everything that one does there is an alert passivity. Completely alert and yet supremely relaxed—that is the meaning of *sthira-sukhāsana*.

Referring to the other word in this *sūtra* i.e. *prayatna-saithilya*, it means a state of effortlessness or more literally relaxing all effort. So this condition of *sthira-sukha* is not the product of effort. One cannot relax by an effort. Relaxation needs the giving up effort. How can one sleep with an effort? Sleep comes only when effort ceases. The state of alert passivity cannot be brought about by an effort. It is only when one is effortless that one can show forth dignity and grace in one's gait and bearing in a natural manner. Grace that is cultivated is mere sophistication which is intensely jarring. Similarly steadiness sustained by effort causes strain and tension. Dignity and grace can exist simultaneously only in a condition of effortlessness. This state of effortlessness is supremely symbolized by Ananta. But how is one to come to this condition of effortlessness? Patañjali explains in the next *sūtra* what this condition of restfulness or effortlessness is.

tato dvamdvānabhighātaḥ

48. It is that state where there are no pulls of the opposites.

It is hardly necessary to state that the condition of the body depends largely upon the condition of the mind. The body can show forth dignity and grace in its movements only if the mind is restful. If the mind is in a disturbed state, the bodily movements have neither the quality of steadiness, nor of graceful relaxation. For the proper Yoga, undisturbed

condition of the mind is absolutely necessary. It is to be noted that Patañjali in his Yoga discussions never allows us to lose sight of the preponderance of the mind. The Haṭha Yoga and the Rāja Yoga fundamentally differ in this regard. Haṭha Yoga is the control of mind through bodily postures, while in Rāja Yoga it is mind that is the controlling factor, so that a restful mind brings about naturally a condition of restfulness in the body. In modern civilization, man has lost the art of relaxation. He needs above everything else relaxation if he is not to break down under the strains and stresses to modern living. It is in search of it that he has turned his attention to Yoga, but wanting quick results, he believes that by Yogic *āsanas* he will be able to come to this much-needed requirement of relaxation. Unfortunately he fails to realize that to think of bodily relaxation without a restful mind, is utterly meaningless. When the mind is free from the pulls of the opposites then alone it knows what rest is. The phrase used by him is *dvandva-anabhighāta*, meaning, not assailed by the opposites. A movement of the mind is always between the opposites, of denial and indulgence, or rejection and acceptance, or pain and pleasure, etc. A mind that is free from the pulls of the opposites is a still mind. According to Patañjali it is only the still mind that can enable the body to show forth dignity and grace simultaneously. The *sthira-sukha-āsana*—the posture of steadiness and relaxation is possible only when the mind is still. Without this stillness any posture taken by a spiritual aspirant will need tremendous effort to keep it up. This effort will cause tension and strain with the result that one will not be able to move away from the thought of the body.

Here one may rightly ask: Has one to refrain from doing *āsanas* until one has come to the stillness of mind? It all

depends upon the end one has in view. *Āsanas* are good, even necessary, for physical well-being. If physical culture is the end in view then one may perform these *āsanas* keeping in mind one's bodily tendencies as also one's age. Bearing in mind these restrictions, one may take up whatever postures one regards useful for one's physical health. In this limited sphere, the various *āsanas* are extremely useful and will have a salutary effect if taught to young people when their bodies are supple and pliable. In fact, they could be introduced in schools and colleges with great advantage. The spiritual aspirant may adopt them if necessary for the maintenance of his health.

If Patañjali were concerned with the problems of physical culture, he would have indicated various *āsanas* in his *Yoga-Sūtras* and the manner and method of performing them. He has not done this at all—in fact, he has dealt with the subject in just one *sūtra*, the other two being only by way of clarification. Even in that one *sūtra*, he does not name any known *āsana*—not even *padmāsana*, the Lotus-posture, traditionally regarded as very important for meditation. So Patañjali's main concern is not with any particular form of *āsana* but with the dignity and grace which must inhere all bodily movements of the spiritual man.

It is true that one may, and perhaps will, perform some *āsanas* which one finds suitable for one's own physical health. There is nothing wrong in this. What is wrong is to regard proficiency in the performance of *āsanas* as mastery of Yoga. So long as *āsanas* are kept at the level of physical culture there is nothing irrelevant about them, but when they are regarded as identical with Yoga, then does a wrong perspective come in. It is true that there must be a healthy body if one is to be established in Yoga, and if one is to convey the meaning

and significance of Yoga in one's relationship with others. This demands above everything else the qualities mentioned in *sthira-sukha-āsana*, namely in all movements, steadiness and relaxation, dignity and grace. But, as Patañjali says, these come into expressional behaviour only when the mind is still. Such a stillness comes only when one is established in Yoga through *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. So once again we find that *āsanas* in the *Yoga-Sūtras* have two layers of meaning: the *āsanas* as understood by the pilgrim on his onward journey, and the *āsanas* as understood by the pilgrim on the return journey. The first is in terms of physical culture, while the other is in terms of spiritual experience. The spiritual man cannot but help expressing himself through his bodily movements in terms of natural dignity and grace. Starting with convenient *āsanas* where one can remain steady and without tension for some length of time, one builds up one's physical health. This is where one must begin. But let no fetish about them be made, for to do so is to import into them a meaning that does not belong to them. Keeping strictly within the realm of physical culture one can become proficient in those *āsanas* which one considers as helpful. Then one can move towards other aspects of Yoga discipline. If this is not done then one will settle down in the mastery of *āsanas*, and regard that as the fulfilment of Yoga. Using them for physical culture one must move on. And when one returns from the realms of *Samādhi* or communion, one will bring a natural expression of dignity and grace in one's bodily movements. These movements will be effortless, showing forth a quality of alert passivity. The mind freed from the play of the opposites, and therefore still, will convey that stillness in the bodily movements. To convey stillness in movement seems contradictory. But this is because the mind by its own

cogitation and mentation can never understand the paradox of co-existence. All efforts of the mind to understand this paradox will be futile. But to the man who returns from the transcendental realm it is no paradox at all. It is the natural behaviour in which the steadiness of dignity co-exists with the perfect repose of gracefulness. Steadiness without grace is rigid and hard, grace without steadiness is weak and fragile. But the co-existence of the two is not the product of the mind's endeavour. The *sthira-sukha*, the perfectly relaxed movement of dignified bearing, is the natural expression of one who is truly established in Yoga.

We must find out what are the further landmarks on this onward journey. Having passed the three landmarks of *yama*, *niyama* and *āsana*, we shall move on to what Patañjali says regarding *prāṇāyāma* or breath-control, the fourth and the last outer instrument of Yoga, for as stated earlier *pratyāhāra* or abstraction is a bridge between the inner and the outer.

CHAPTER XV

THE RE-VITALIZATION OF THE BRAIN

WHILE discussing the subject of *āsanas* in the last chapter, we stated that Yoga demands a maintenance of bodily health. We also saw that *āsanas* in their restricted use and application help in preserving the health of the body. Health, in its true sense, does not mean merely the elimination of disease; this is only a negative view. In its positive aspect, health signifies vitality. It is not enough if the body is strong in its muscular functioning, for such a body may tend to be indolent. Very often it is inclined to become heavy and slow in its movements. A body must be reasonably strong, but it must at the same time possess great vitality. It is with reference to the subject of vitality that we are brought, in the study of *Yoga-Sūtras*, to the consideration of the question of breathing and breath-control. Vitality has very much to do with the way of breathing. Wrong ways of breathing may cause considerable de-vitalization of the body, and a devitalized body affects the functioning of the mind. A student of Yoga has to build up not only a healthy body but also a body of great vitality. Patañjali, therefore, moves on from *āsanas* to the consideration of *prāṇāyāma* or breath-control.

On the subject of breath-control, much confusion prevails in the minds of many students of Yoga. A very large section of these students believes that *prāṇāyāma* is much too dangerous to be practiced except under the personal

guidance of some expert. Another section regards *prāṇāyāma* as the very end and objective of Yoga. It is hardly necessary to point out that truth lies in between these two divergent views. In Haṭha Yoga, and in various Tāntrik schools, *prāṇāyāma* is considered almost as the acme of Yoga, and so has been developed as a very complex science. Its aim is to develop certain latent powers in man by the manipulation of *prāṇa* or the vital breath. Those who hold the opposite view do not desire to touch *prāṇāyāma* even with a long pole. Behind their over-cautiousness there is a fear that this would release such energies as would be difficult to control. There also lurks the fear that due to *prāṇāyāma* one may lose one's balance of mind and may move towards some form of insanity. However, in regard to this it is best to avoid both the extremes—one of rashness as also of over-cautiousness born of fear. *Prāṇāyāma* is a perfectly safe instrument so long as one is not caught in either of the extremes. Patañjali advocates a perfectly sensible approach to this even as he does with regard to *āsanas*. But before we understand his approach, it would be well for the student of Yoga to explore the subject of breathing in its various categories.

It is hardly necessary to point out that one must carefully observe one's breathing before one plunges into the intricacies of *prāṇāyāma*. It is strange that most people have never given any thought to the way they breathe even though there is nothing so near to oneself as one's breath. Breathing has much to do with the functioning of the brain. When breathing is hard a heaviness is felt in the brain. Similarly when breathing is smooth the brain feels much lighter in its functioning. It needs to be remembered that brain plays a very important part in the vitalization of the body. So the efficient functioning of the brain is of great importance

in keeping the body-mechanism in a proper condition. The brain needs a constant and good supply of oxygen and the breathing process enables it to have this. If, however, the breathing is defective then the oxygen supply is to that extent impaired. So the breathing process has great importance in keeping the body-mechanism in good order. It is therefore of highest importance that one clearly understands this process that goes on in one's bodily organism so that one possesses both health as well as vitality, needed so greatly for Yoga practices.

In order to understand the process of *prāṇāyāma*, one must observe one's own breathing. If one watches it, one will find that it has a particular rate, which varies not only from individual to individual, but even in the same individual in relation to his mental and emotional states. What we call our normal breathing is on an average 12-20 times in a minute. This is much too fast for reflective purposes of Yoga. The faster the breathing, the shallower it is bound to be. One can observe oneself when one is angry or agitated, for then breathing becomes faster. The rate of breathing slows down when one is in a quieter state of mind. Those who have observed animal behaviour say that the breathing rate per minute of a hen is 30, a duck is 20, a monkey is 30, a dog is 28, a cat is 24 and a horse is 16. One can notice here that the more excitable a creature is, the faster is its rate of breathing. A dog is certainly more excitable than a cat, and so the cat's breathing is slower. A horse is more reposed, and, so among the animals its rate of breathing seems to be the slowest. This observation indicates that the rate of breathing depends upon one's tendencies towards excitability. In the normal breathing rate of a human being—12-20 per minute—is reflected the fluctuations of the mental and emotional moods. Our

normal life is by no means a quiet life; in fact, it is subject to violent fluctuations so that our breathing rate is more towards 20 than towards 12. Just as mind affects the rate of breathing, the breathing too influences the mind. When the rate of breathing is fast and shallow it is not possible for one to do deep and serious thinking. It is true that breathing does not directly affect the mind, but it affects the functioning of the brain, and brain is the vehicle of the mind. If the vehicle does not function smoothly and efficiently, then the mind is unable to convey what it wishes to convey. When this happens, the mind, too, gets agitated and frustrated. It is thus that breathing affects the condition of the mind. A study of the effects of breathing on the functioning of the brain indicates that for quiet reflection, it is necessary that the normal breathing rate should be within the range of 6-8 per minute instead of between 12-20 as at present. By quiet reflection we mean that condition of the brain and the mind which is required for Yoga discipline. Of course one has to determine one's own rate of breathing by experimentation. In any case, our normal breathing is very abnormal, for it is much too fast and therefore much too shallow. The breathing rate will vary from individual to individual and therefore the student of Yoga must arrive at his own rate by observing one's own breathing processes. That which enables the brain to feel light is the right rate of breathing for oneself. Heaviness and lightness of the brain are relative terms, depending upon the tendencies of the individual. It is *prāṇāyāma* that enables a student to determine his own rate of breathing in relation to the requirements of his own Yogic discipline. One must gradually move towards slower and deeper breathing if one is to do one's reflective and contemplative work effectively. But for this, one must understand

the whole process of *prāṇāyāma*. Patañjali gives in the following *sūtra* a very clear definition of what *prāṇāyāma* is.

*tasmin sati śvāsa-praśvāsayor gati-vicchedaḥ prā-
ṇāyāmaḥ*

49. This having been accomplished, there has to be *prāṇāyāma* or breath-control which is the creation of an interval between inhaling and exhaling.

The phrase "this accomplished" has reference to the *āsana* or the posture discussed in the earlier *sūtras*. Patañjali says that when one has come to a posture which one can maintain steadily for a considerable length of time, without feeling any discomfort, then is one to explore the technique of *prāṇāyāma*. But before one can explore this technique one must know what *prāṇāyāma* is not. It is obviously not deep breathing, necessary and essential even though it is. One may take several deep breaths, drinking in ozone, as it were, but this does not constitute *prāṇāyāma*. Taking of deep breaths, especially in the open air, is very invigorating and essential for one's vitality. It brings in a fresh supply of oxygen so necessary for the functioning of the body and the brain. But while, from one's so-called normal breathing one must move towards deep breathing, it should be understood that it is not *prāṇāyāma*, an instrument propounded by Patañjali for Yoga discipline.

There is another category of breathing which is often mistaken for *prāṇāyāma*, and this is alternate breathing. This is breathing alternately through the right and the left nostrils. Here one inhales through the left nostril and exhales through

the right, and immediately inhales through the right and exhales through the left, and so on—as many times as one wishes to do. This too is a necessary exercise for the vitalization of the body and the brain, but still it is not *prāṇāyāma*. It is true that with alternate breathing one may be able to arrive at a new rate of breathing, but *prāṇāyāma* is something different. One can make one's breathing more normal with the help of alternate breathing, but something more is needed for the vitalization of the brain. In terms of the above *sūtra*, *prāṇāyāma* means an interruption between inhaling and exhaling. It is the interval between inhaling and exhaling which truly is *prāṇāyāma*. And so it is interrupted breathing which is the fundamental basis of *prāṇāyāma*. This means that when the breath is retained after inhaling and before exhaling then is one engaged in performing *prāṇāyāma*. In technical Yogic terms, inhalation is known as *pūraka*, exhalation as *recaka* and retention as *kumbhaka*. From the above description it is clear that *kumbhaka* alone constitutes *prāṇāyāma*. The phrase used in the above *sūtra* is *śvāsa-prāśvāsayor-gati-vicchedaḥ* which truly means an interruption in the movement of inhalation and exhalation. It is in this interruption that the vitalization of the body and the brain are accomplished. In all other categories of breathing, there is no retention of breath. The oxygen which has been inhaled is immediately exhaled. But it is the retention which is essential for the process of vitalization. This retention or *kumbhaka* is associated with a diversity of connotations, and because of this the ordinary man is afraid of it. He feels that *kumbhaka* will damage one's constitution because it will release such energies as would be difficult for him to control. But such fear is based on ignorance of the whole process of *prāṇāyāma*. If *kumbhaka* is over-done then surely

one's bodily organism may get damaged. And so, for understanding the technique of interrupted breathing, what is said in the following *sūtra* is of great importance.

*baḥyābhyantara-stambha-vṛttir deśakālasaṃkhyābhiḥ
paridr̥ṣṭo dīrghasūkṣmaḥ*

50. The interval is regulated by place, time and number, and is deep and quiet.

The breathing has to be deep and quiet—*dīrgha* and *sūkṣma*. One can understand what is meant by deep, but one may ask why has he suggested that it should be quiet? Very often people do their deep breathing with a noise. Patañjali says that breathing, while it should certainly be deep, should at the same time be inaudible. The inhaling and exhaling have to be very quiet so that the whole process is very smooth causing no tension whatsoever. But apart from this, he speaks of place, time and number with reference to the retention of breath. Here place denotes as to where the retention is done—whether it is done outside or inside. It is obvious that *kumbhaka* or retention can be between inhaling and exhaling, or it can be between exhaling and inhaling. It can be *bāhya* or it can be *ābhyantara*, meaning either external or internal. In the above *sūtra*, the word used for retention is *stambha-vṛtti*. Patañjali has suggested that this retention can be done at both these places. One may inhale and then before exhaling one may retain the breath; or one may exhale, and, before inhaling, the breath may be retained. This is the meaning of *deśa* or place. Then he speaks of *kāla* or time. This does not mean that *prāṇāyāma* has to be performed at some stipulated hour, although it is always desirable not to do it on a heavy stomach. Time here

signifies duration. Our attention is drawn to the duration of the stoppage of breath. This needs to be considered although the duration will vary from individual to individual. In fact, each individual must determine the duration of *kumbhaka* for himself and the determining factor should be that he does not feel uncomfortable. The moment any discomfort is felt, *kumbhaka* must be discontinued. Those who have been experts in this have suggested that under no circumstances should *kumbhaka* be carried on for more than three minutes, except when one is being personally instructed by a recognized expert. When one is doing *kumbhaka* by oneself then the safest course would be not to extend the interval beyond three minutes. Even three minutes is quite a long duration and the beginner will never be able to retain his breath for that length of time. Patañjali next draws the attention of the aspirant to *saṁkhyā* or number. He speaks of *paridṛṣṭa*, meaning measured or regulated. What is the significance of *saṁkhyā*?

Samkhyā or number indicates the measurement or ratio between inhalation, retention and exhalation or between *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka*. Patañjali does not tell us what this ratio should be because, strictly speaking, this ratio has to be determined by each student for himself. He suggests that a proper ratio must be arrived at by the student after observing his own breathing and the maximum time up to which he can retain the breath without any discomfort. However, those who are experts in the science of *prāṇāyāma* declare that the ratio between inhalation, retention and exhalation should be 1 : 4 : 2. This means that if inhalation takes two seconds, then the retention should not be more than eight seconds and exhalation not more than four seconds. It is the experience of most people that one tends to do

exhalation faster than one should. This is not desirable. The student should take double the time in exhaling compared to what he takes in inhaling.

It is hardly necessary to point out that before undertaking the *prāṇāyāma* discipline, it would be desirable for a student to move away from his so-called normal breathing and do deep breathing as also alternate breathing as these will help in removing the congestion in the brain. One can derive best results from interrupted breathing, which is *prāṇāyāma*, if one has done both deep and alternate breathing. It has to be remembered that *kumbhaka* or retention is the very core of all disciplines of *prāṇāyāma*. Patañjali says further:

bāhyābhyantara-viṣayākṣepī caturthaḥ

51. When the interval is unaccompanied by inhaling and exhaling then it is an advanced state of breath-control.

This advanced state is here called the fourth state. Here Patanjali speaks of *kumbhaka* in a way different from what we have so far discussed. There are different types of *kumbhaka*, in fact, eight types, according to some Tāntrik books. We are, however, not concerned with all these varieties. Fundamentally there are two varieties: the *sahita kumbhaka* and the *kevala kumbhaka*. The *sahita kumbhaka* is accompanied by inhaling and exhaling. It does not matter where one interrupts the breath, the process of inhaling and exhaling is there. The very word *sahita* means accompanied by. The *kevala* or pure *kumbhaka* is that where there is no accompaniment of inhaling and exhaling. In terms of the different categories of breathing, we have discussed, *kevala kumbhaka* may be called suspended breathing or

non-breathing. In our classification this suspended breathing comes fourth, the other three being deep breathing, alternate breathing and interrupted breathing. In *kevala kumbhaka* one moves further from interrupted breathing and displays a state of non-breathing or suspended breathing. This is an advanced state, and should be avoided by an ordinary student of Yoga unless he practices these deeper aspects of *prāṇāyāma* under the supervision of an expert in this particular science. An ordinary student of Yoga, doing *prāṇāyāma* unaided, would do well to restrict himself to *sahita kumbhaka* which is interrupted breathing. This is enough for the purposes of Rāja Yoga, and here too he must remain within the confines of the ratio stated above. After all, in Rāja Yoga, *prāṇāyāma* is an instrument, and not an end in itself. In those schools of Yoga where *prāṇāyāma* is considered as the very summation of Yoga, students go much further and master all the eight types of *kumbhaka*. In Rāja Yoga, *prāṇāyāma* is only a landmark on the further journey of Yoga. Surely one does not settle down at a milestone—it may be a place to halt but not a place to settle down. Patañjali makes this abundantly clear in the next *sūtra*:

tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśāvaraṇam

52. In the interval there comes a clarity of perception.

The purpose of *prāṇāyāma* is to bring a clarity of perception. Patañjali says that *prāṇāyāma* enables one to dispel the clouds which prevent a clear perception to arise. The word used is *prakāśa āvaraṇa*, meaning the clouding of perception. Now it is the function of the brain to form clear percepts just as it is the function of the mind to form clear concepts. It is quite

obvious that *prāṇāyāma* renders the perceptive work of the brain smooth and efficient. Under this, the brain feels lighter, being free from congestion. And it is this which enables it to come to a clear perception of things. A clear perception indicates a perfect defining of form. It is said that we live in a world of name and form. It is the function of the mind to give to men and things their rightful names, even as it is the function of the brain to define forms in a right manner. It is obvious that the naming by the mind is bound to be wrong if the defining of the form by the brain is defective. When the brain is heavy and congested it cannot define aright. Its perception would be defective being hazy and confused. This is because the brain is subjected to numerous sensorial distractions. While one sense organ is in the midst of sending its sensorial messages to the brain, other sense organs intervene and begin to transmit their sensorial messages to the brain also. This is what commonly happens to most of us. In the midst of seeing something, we pick up certain sounds, and so the message that reaches the brain is a confused one containing sensations half seen and half heard. The work of each sense organ is half done resulting in a confused percept built up by the brain. Through *prāṇāyāma* the brain is enabled to come to a clarity of perception rendering it free from heaviness due to congestion.

The purpose of *prāṇāyāma* becomes still more clear as one examines the implication of the next *sūtra* where Patañjali says:

dhāraṇāsu ca yogyatā manasaḥ

53. It prepares the mind for the state of *dhāraṇā* or awareness.

The Sanskrit word *dhāraṇā* is most often translated as concentration, but perhaps it would be more correct to describe it as awareness which means a state of non-distraction. We have earlier stated that there are sensorial distractions as also psychological distractions. The first set is associated with the activity of the brain, while the second set—the psychological distractions—relates to the activities of the mind. The above *sūtra* says that *prāṇāyāma* prepares the mind for a state of non-distraction. A question may arise: Can the physical process of *prāṇāyāma* affect the mind so that it becomes free of psychological distractions? If one were to concede this possibility then it would be well for us to accept fully and without any reservation the Haṭha Yogic discipline. In Hatha Yoga the contention is that the bodily disciplines of posture and *prāṇāyāma* can bring about a control of the mind, for here the principle is that the body affects and controls the mind. In fact, it is seriously believed in this school of Yoga that one can achieve complete control of mind through intricate processes of *prāṇāyāma*. A control of mind denotes freedom from psychological distractions. To bring about a concentration of mind through *prāṇāyāma* is one of the main planks in the Haṭha Yoga programme. Hence great emphasis is laid on *prāṇāyāma* in the disciplines of Haṭha Yoga. But in Rāja Yoga, the fundamental approach is that it is the mind that controls the body and not the other way. It is not suggested that the body does not influence the mind, but it is the mind which is the determining factor—and not the body—in all matters of purposeful living. To seek to control the mind through the bodily disciplines is to endeavour to control the subtle by means of the crude, the higher by means of the lower. And so while *prāṇāyāma* can be greatly helpful in revitalizing the brain, it cannot deal with the problem of

mind-control; while it can stop sensorial distractions, its influence cannot extend to the areas of psychological distractions. But if that particular handicap is removed then the mind is prepared to tackle effectively the problem of *dhāraṇā* or non-distraction. It is important to note that in the above *sūtra*, Patañjali only says that *prāṇāyāma* can prepare the mind for dealing with the question of *dhāraṇā*. The words used are *yogyatā manasaḥ*, meaning, making the mind fit for *dhāraṇā*. He does not say that through *prāṇāyāma* the mind is able to achieve *dhāraṇā*; he only says that the mind gets prepared for the state of *dhāraṇā*. The word *yogyatā* indicates that the mind has yet to move along the path of *dhāraṇā*. Thus, as indicated in this *sūtra*, *prāṇāyāma* has a limited effect with reference to *dhāraṇā*, for it can only prepare the mind for that state. This it does by re-vitalizing the brain due to the elimination of the problem of sensorial distractions. To bring the brain to a state of clear perception is to impart to the senses a greater receptivity. With this, the senses are able to bring a larger number of messages to the brain. They cannot do this, if there are sensorial distractions, for such distractions would render the brain ineffective in handling the task of transforming sensations into perceptions. It is the function of *prāṇāyāma* to reactivize the brain so that it is capable of handling more and more of the sense reports that are transmitted to it by the different senses.

But one may ask: How does *prāṇāyāma* help in this? Can this happen by merely retaining the breath? If *kumbhaka* alone is performed the brain may be activized but it will not know what to do with this greater activization. In fact, this will make the brain more restless, for it must have greater material in its hands when it has been revitalized. To have more energy and yet not to have sufficient work to do is a

very annoying condition. Such a condition would result in degeneration and demoralization of the individual. So *prāṇāyāma* without an extension in the range of sense data may become a dangerous instrument. It is *pratyāhāra* or abstraction which enables the brain, activated through *prāṇāyāma*, to have ever-increasing material at its disposal from which to arrive at clearer perceptions of men and things. In that state, the perceptions of the brain have a greater variety and a richer content. Without *pratyāhāra*, *prāṇāyāma* is divested of its purpose. And so the meaning of *prāṇāyāma* becomes complete only when one understands the purpose and the technique of *pratyāhāra*.

But before we turn to it, it would be proper for us to realize that like *yama*, *niyama* and *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* too has a twofold functioning base—one, along the onward journey, and the other, along the return journey. *Prāṇāyāma* along the onward journey implies only the retention of breath. It is concerned only with creating an interval between the processes of inhaling and exhaling. Beyond the creation of this interval, it has no further function to discharge. But on the return journey, *prāṇāyāma* is not just the retention of breath, it also indicates the directing of the retained breath. The breath is directed along different centres of the body. In other words, the vital breath or *prāṇa* is given certain directions for its movement. Patañjali turns to this when he discusses the question of psychic powers in the third section—the *Vibhūti Pāda*. But no direction of *prāṇa* should be undertaken unless and until one has come to a state of communion or *Samādhi* through *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*. The direction of *prāṇa* is part of the process of communication. But what will one communicate? If it is just the content of the mind then the direction of *prāṇa* will be used for the satisfaction of

the motives and the desires of the mind. There must be a new content untouched by the motives of the mind. This comes in the state of communion, and so communication is not only effective but also desirable only after the state of *Samādhi* or Communion. Patañjali refers to this in the *sūtras* that form part of the *Vibhūti Pāda*.

But before we can examine that aspect of Yoga discipline which is indicated by *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*, it is essential that we understand the implication and the technique of *pratyāhāra* or abstraction—that factor of Yoga discipline which places before the brain activated and revitalized through *prāṇāyāma*, an ever-increasing material of sense data enabling it to come to a clearer perception of the objective world. And so it is to *Pratyāhāra* that we shall turn in the next chapter, and with that come to the completion of the study of the *Sādhana Pāda* or the Second Section of the *Yoga-Sūtras*.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RE-EDUCATION OF THE SENSES

MODERN physical science in its study of Evolution has begun to recognize the existence of two fundamental factors known as Evolution from below and Evolution from above. When evolutionary changes occur under the influence of heredity and variation then one witnesses in them the evolutionary factor functioning from below. But when one comes to the phenomenon of mutation then one is in front of an evolutionary factor functioning from above. By "above" is meant that factor which is unexplainable in terms of the empirical approaches of physical science. A mutation, even at the biological level, is a mysterious phenomenon not accountable by evolutionary logic. A mutation is not illogical, but it seems to be alogical, meaning outside the purview of logic and reason. In mutation is seen not so much the ascent of the evolutionary effort as the descent of some new factor in the evolutionary field. In some mysterious manner, nature brings a completely unpredictable factor in the evolutionary movement. This new arrival does not fit into the laws of biological predictability. It is this arrival of the "new" which is sometimes described as an evolutionary factor from above. In this twin factor of above and below, we come across a phenomenon known in the field of spirituality, or more truly in the field of Yoga, as descent and ascent. In spiritual life we see the movement of two streams—the ascending stream

and the descending stream. This constitutes the rhythm of true Yoga. Without communion the lines of communication must remain utterly dry, and without effective means of communication, the experience of communion is divested of all elements of practical validity.

In our discussion of Yoga discipline, as expounded by Patañjali, we have emphasised this factor of ascent and descent with reference to *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. We have indicated their relevance in the onward journey as well as in the return journey, in one's movement towards communion and in the movement emanating from the experience of communion. These two movements represent the factors of communion and communication, which together constitute the life of Yoga.

It is obvious that the two streams—the ascending and the descending—must meet somewhere. There must be a point where the ascent ceases and the descent begins. This is a point of convergence where the movement of the onward journey intersects the movement of the return journey. In terms of Yoga this is the meeting point of the outer and the inner disciplines. In the *Yoga-Sūtras* this is described as *pratyāhāra*, which literally means an act of withdrawal. It may also be translated as abstraction, for abstraction is indeed a process of elimination or withdrawal. In any act of abstraction, the superfluities are eliminated so that only the relevant aspects of a situation may remain. In the abstracting process of *pratyāhāra*, one is enabled to move from the outer to the inner. In this movement one is required to shed off unnecessary burden. It is like taking an airflight where one has to be extremely careful in deciding what to take and what not to take as one is bound by regulations not to carry any weight beyond certain limits. In Yoga discipline also, *pratyāhāra*

is the process of rendering one's consciousness as light as possible as otherwise the journey into the rarefied atmosphere of *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* will not be possible. One's consciousness can become air-worthy only to the extent to which the earth-bound luggage is reduced to a minimum. This is what abstraction implies, and constitutes a meeting place between the outer and the inner processes of Yoga discipline.

We have already stated in our earlier discussion that *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* are the outer instruments of Yoga. They are outer because they refer to bodily movements and behaviour. *Yama* and *niyama* are patterns of behaviour and *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* are concerned with bodily postures and movements. This is the role that they play both in the onward as well as the return journey. They are both the points of departure as well as points of arrival. It is from these points that one departs from one's habitual life into a new way of spiritual living. But these are also the points where one arrives bringing the rich content of spiritual experience. The departure and the arrival take place through the common gateway and that is *pratyāhāra*. Thus *pratyāhāra* assumes a unique position in the entire journey of Yoga, for it is the culminating point of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* as well as the starting point of *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. The four outer instruments must lead upto *pratyāhāra*, and the three inner instruments must emanate from the self-same *pratyāhāra*. It is because of this that it is described as the meeting place of the inner and the outer, the converging point of the ascending and the descending streams. But one may ask: How does *pratyāhāra* achieve this twofold purpose in Yoga discipline? This becomes evident as we turn to the following *sūtra*:

*svaviṣayāsaṃprayoge cittasvarūpānukāraḥ ivendriyāṅām
pratyāhāraḥ*

54. When the senses imitate the mind in its act of withdrawal then it is called *pratyāhāra* or Abstraction.

In the above *sūtra* there is a clear emphasis on “ withdrawal ”. But this is commonly understood to mean the rendering of the senses unresponsive to the outer impacts of life. It is stated that when in the midst of sensorial impacts, the eyes and the ears, the touch, smell and taste register no response whatsoever then is one established in *pratyāhāra*. This means that the sensorial organism must be rendered insensitive, so that the outer world is shut off completely. It is suggested that the purpose of *pratyāhāra* is to see that the ever-changing impressions produced by the outer world, through the vibrations impinging upon the sense-organs, are completely eliminated. It has also been stated that through *pratyāhāra* the mind is to be completely isolated from the external world of the senses. One may ask: Does spirituality mean a state of insensitivity? Does it demand a deadening of sense responses? Does one go to the door of Reality with a consciousness that is dull and unresponsive? Surely this cannot be, for Patañjali has already stated in the thirty-fifth *sūtra* of the First Section about *viṣayavati vā pravṛtti*, meaning that the sense responses must move away from their sensual to sensuous base. This implies the refinement of sense responses. If *pratyāhāra* causes dullness of sense responses then surely it is not an instrument leading towards spiritual communion which *Samādhi* fundamentally is. So the above interpretation of the *sūtra* under consideration does not harmonize with the general trend of discussion that one finds

in the *Yoga-Sūtras*. In fact, causing dullness and deadness of sense responses is completely contrary to the real meaning of *pratyāhāra*. Patañjali gives here a clear indication that the purpose of *pratyāhāra* is the re-education of the senses so that they may function with a receptivity that is full and unfettered. This becomes evident as one examines the implication of this very important *sūtra* in the field of Yoga discipline.

A clear understanding of *pratyāhāra* demands a careful study of the whole process of perception. It has to be understood that in the act of perception three factors are involved, namely the senses, the brain and the mind. The senses are the conveyers of sensations to the brain where these are processed and changed into perceptions. All sensations have to be transformed into perceptions. In this process diverse sensations are synthesized, and it is due to this synthesis that we are able to cognize the forms and structures of things. A perception is a synthetic product arrived at by the brain through the processing of the raw materials which are sensations brought to it by the various senses. Will Durant in his book entitled *The Story of Philosophy* says:

... we have a taste on the tongue, an odour in the nostrils, a sound in the ears, a temperature on the skin, a flash of light on the retina, a pressure on the fingers; it is the raw crude beginning of experience; it is what the infant has in the early days of its groping mental life; it is not yet knowledge. But let these various sensations group themselves about an object in space and time—say this apple; let the odour in the nostrils, and the

taste on the tongue, the light on the retina, shape of revealing pressure on the fingers and the hand, unite and group themselves about this thing, and . . . there is perception.

Thus a perception arises only when the various sensations are grouped round a form. A sensation has no form; the form arises only when the sensations are grouped together. To process the sensations and synthesize them into a form is the function of the brain. It is therefore obvious that perceptions depend upon the raw material of sensations supplied by the senses. If the supply is defective then the perception too will be defective. If the senses are interrupted in their functioning then their supply of raw material to the brain is inadequate. It is needless to say that a perception formed out of a short-supply of raw material is bound to be out of shape and form. To put it differently, in such a contingency the image formed by the brain of the external object or happening is defective, for after all a perception is an image formed by the brain. What is transmitted by the senses produces only certain chemical and structural changes in the brain. Out of these changes the brain evolves an image, and it is this image which constitutes perception. It is by the co-ordination of sensations that a percept or an image comes into existence. It is a great mystery how the brain is able to achieve this. It is like a receiving station where information is brought in the form of dashes and dots communicated by the incoming nerve-signals. How does the brain form images of objects in the external world out of such an indirect information is one of the astonishing mysteries of nature. Sir Arthur Eddington, the renowned scientific thinker, says:

Consider how our supposed acquaintance with a lump of matter is attained. Some influence emanating from it plays on the extremity of a nerve, starting a series of physical and chemical changes which are propagated along the nerve to a brain-cell; there a mystery happens, and an image or sensation arises which purports to resemble the stimulus which excites it. Everything known about the material world must in one way or another have been inferred from these stimuli transmitted along the nerves . . . It is an astonishing feat of deciphering that we should have been able to infer an orderly scheme of natural knowledge from such indirect communication.

But this mystery of image formation deepens when we examine the role of the mind in this drama of perception. It has to be remembered that perception by itself does not constitute knowledge. Just as scattered sensations have to be co-ordinated so as to arrive at perceptions, there is need to co-ordinate perceptions to arrive at concepts. If our process of knowledge were to terminate with perceptions then we would have to carry a huge load in our memory to recognize objects and happenings of the external world. Perceptions have to be synthesized into concepts, for thus alone the process of knowledge becomes meaningful. Just as out of hundreds of sensations, the brain formulates perceptions, similarly out of hundreds of percepts the mind formulates concepts. All our

knowledge of the external world is a conceptual knowledge. Dr. Kahn, a German physiologist, says:

Vision is not a physical process like photography, but rather a psychological experience. It is not the eyes that see. . . We commonly believe that we see, but actually we form judgments. . . Just as two people, when they read the same thing, never have the same thoughts while they are reading, in the same way their gaze may fall upon the same object, but each one sees something different.

And so our perception is our interpretation of the world. As Dr. Kahn says, our seeing is our judgment about something that we declare as seeing. This interpretation by the mind is indeed the formation of a concept. From sensation to perception and from there to concept-building—this is the process of gathering knowledge. To build a concept is to give a name to that which has been perceived. The whole structure of conceptual knowledge rests on the transmission of sensations by the senses and the formation of perceptions by the brain. If these two processes are interrupted then the conceptual knowledge has no factual validity. And such is indeed the case with most of our conceptual knowledge. The defectiveness of conceptual knowledge arises due to two factors, namely the interruption in the sensation-perception process, and the limitations imparted to the process of interpretation by the conditioning of the mind itself. For any perception the two essential constituents are clarity of the brain and the unconditioned state of the mind. The clarity of the brain

exists only when the transmission of sensations remains uninterrupted? An uninterrupted flow of sensations to the brain is an assurance for the clear and efficient functioning of the brain.

But this alone is not enough, for, even when there is an uninterrupted flow of sensations to the brain, there is still the factor of the conditioned mind to be dealt with. A clear perception and an absolutely unconditioned interpretation are both necessary for right orientation to Reality which after all is the purpose of Yoga. The process of unconditioning the mind is very essential, for otherwise one will not be able to see things as they are. In this connection the following words of C. E. M. Joad appearing in his book *The Philosophy for our Times* are very significant:

Let us suppose that a human being were born with a pair of blue spectacles permanently perched upon his nose. Whatever he saw would appear to him blue, not because blueness was a quality belonging to the things he saw, but because to see them blue would be a condition of his seeing them at all. We might put this by saying that he imposed blueness upon everything he knew in the course of, or in the process of, or as a condition of knowing it.

So even when the brain is in a position of forming clear percepts due to the uninterrupted flow of sensations, one cannot be sure of seeing things without any distortion so long as the interpreting mind is conditioned. But one may ask: What has all this to do with *pratyāhāra*?

It has to be borne in mind that while the problem of mind's conditioning is dealt with by *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* which is discussed in the Third Section or the Vibhūti Pāda, the question of brain forming clear perceptions is the concern of *pratyāhāra*. Just as *yama* and *niyama* are concerned with the dissipation and conservation of energy, *āsana* concerned with the correction of bodily posture and carriage, and *prāṇāyāma* concerned with the re-vitalization of the body, similarly *pratyāhāra* is concerned with the re-education of the senses. Our senses need to be re-educated so that they grow in extraordinary sensitivity, feeding the brain with innumerable sensations, thus enabling it to be greatly activated. Scientists tell us that our brain cells do not work to their full potential—in fact, only one-tenth of the brain potential is operative and the remaining nine-tenths dormant, if not atrophied. Thus we move about with a brain that is passive and dull, unable to absorb the sensations that come from the senses and transform them into clear percepts. It is true that the brain functions like a computer, but it is equally true that no computer is like the human brain. Nevertheless, the functioning of the brain is very much in the manner in which a computer functions. It is a known principle in computer science that one can get a right answer from the computer if one feeds it aright. If the feeding is not proper then the answer too will not be correct. The same principle applies in the functioning of the brain also. The feeding of the brain is done by the sensations or the sense data that come from different sense organs through the appropriate nerve-channels. This feeding must be uninterrupted; otherwise the perception which is the answer of the brain-computer will be incomplete and therefore defective. The mind which is already heavily conditioned will base its interpretative

activity on this incomplete perception. Needless to say the conceptual knowledge arrived at through this interpretation will be utterly false; in fact, it will bear no resemblance to things as they are. So the right feeding of the brain-computer is a *sine qua non* for seeing things as they are which alone can be the true basis for right action or right relationship with life.

In order that the brain may function to its full potential, it is of the highest importance that the senses be re-educated so that they may feed the brain-computer with right data. It is with this re-education of the senses, and, therefore, with the activization of the brain, that *pratyāhāra* is fundamentally concerned. It is not the shutting off of the senses to the stimuli of the outer world; on the contrary, it suggests a state of greater receptivity of the senses so that they continually feed the brain with sense-data in an uninterrupted manner. This will become clear when we examine the above *sūtra* carefully.

As stated in the earlier part of the discussion in this chapter, the very meaning of the word *pratyāhāra* is withdrawal. This *sūtra* does speak of the withdrawal of or by the senses. But there are two phrases appearing which are significant for the understanding of this process of withdrawal. They are *svaviśaya-asamprayoge* and *cittasvarūpa-anukāra*. The first phrase means dissociation from one's objects of interest, and the second means imitating the mind; i.e. when the senses imitate the mind in its act of withdrawal then is one established in *pratyāhāra*. The implication of this is that the withdrawal by the senses follows the withdrawal by the mind. The mind must first withdraw and then the senses must follow suit; when this happens then does one show forth *pratyāhāra*. What is really meant by the withdrawal of the mind? .

If one watches one's own process of perception, one will find that most often the mind intervenes with its own naming even before the perceptive act of the brain has been completed. On an imperfect perception the mind puts its seal of conceptual knowledge thus declaring the perceptive act as over. The mind never allows one to perceive anything completely and this is more so in the field of psychological experiences. Even before the brain has formed a perceptive image, the mind intervenes and thereby stops the further activity of the brain with reference to any particular perceptive process. It is hardly necessary to point out that when the activity of the brain stops due to the intervention by the mind, there is naturally a stoppage of the sensorial communication to the brain by the various sense organs. In this intervention of the mind, the sense responses also get intercepted. When this happens both the senses and the brain cannot function at their full potential. The senses become lethargic in their responses and the brain too becomes passive in its perceptive activity. In fact, the mind intervenes only to make the senses and the brain extremely dull in their functioning. The sense responses become more and more dim both in range and intensity. When this happens naturally the brain has a reduced sense data to deal with and this renders it passive and inefficient. A fragment of the brain and a fragment of sense responses only function because of the intervention of the mind in the midst of the perceptive process. So habituated does the sense mechanism become to this intervention that the senses lose their initiative and depend more and more upon the mind for their functioning. It is obvious that the senses cannot come into their own unless the mind withdraws from the act of intervention.

It is needless to state that the mind intervenes for its own purposes. It seeks a continuity and a security and these can be assured only if the senses and the brain do not present it with completely new materials. In the presence of something new the mind's security is naturally threatened, for under its impact the mind is compelled to revise its own conclusions. And it is this which the mind all the time wishes to avoid. It is safe for it to remain entrenched behind its own conclusions and judgments. If these are thrown overboard then naturally it has to seek new pastures and avenues for its movements. The mind prevents this by intervening in the perceptive process so that the senses and the brain are prevented from placing before it any new data. As stated above, this process has become so much a part of our lives that the senses all the time depend upon intimations and directions from the mind. The intervention by the mind has resulted in the vast areas of the universe remaining shut off from our ken. We live in a universe which is stereotyped and monotonous. Through the intervention of the mind we are allowed to see only that which the mind considers safe for us to see. This is particularly so with reference to the psychological counterpart of the universe. If we are to act rightly in the physical and psychological environment that impinges upon us constantly, it is absolutely necessary that we cognize rightly that environment. If our perception is defective then surely our interpretation of that which we have cognized, and the action emanating from such cognition, are bound to be defective. But for right perception the senses must reclaim their initiative and the brain must assert its right to function at full potential. This functioning of the brain at full potential is possible only if the senses function independently from the mind. *Pratyāhāra* enables one

to do this and imparts an initiative to the senses. In other words it aims at a complete re-education of the senses so that they cease to depend upon the mind for their functioning. It is obvious that this re-education of the senses must begin not from the psychological but from the non-psychological end, because the intervention by the mind in the non-psychological sphere is comparatively slow and less intense. When the intervention by the mind is prevented in the perceptive processes at the non-psychological sphere, then the stoppage of such intervention in the psychological realms becomes easy. It is hardly necessary to point out that to re-educate the senses is to make it possible for them to function freely without the interference by the mind.

One may ask: How does *pratyāhāra* enable one to move in the direction of re-educating the senses? What is its *modus operandi*? We have stated in the earlier part of this discussion that there are two phrases in the above *sūtra* regarding *pratyāhāra* which need to be clearly understood. One phrase deals with the withdrawal by the mind. As stated, this implies that the mind must withdraw first so that the sensēs may imitate its action. We have seen what is meant by the withdrawal of the mind. We must now examine as to what is meant by the withdrawal of the senses.

The phrase *svaviśaya-asamprayoge* means a dissociation by the senses from the objects of interest and identification. The word *viśaya* has a special meaning in the Sanskrit language. It is to be distinguished from *vastu*. The latter denotes fact while the former denotes something that is superimposed on fact. The mind in its hunt for pleasure transforms facts into fictions. This is done by a process of association and identification. It projects its own associations on the facts of life. The *viśaya* is the mind's projection superimposed upon

the *vastu* or the fact of life. When the senses lose their initiative and function at the behest of the mind then they cease to respond to the facts of life and begin to move in the realm of the *viṣaya* or the objects of mind's pleasure. They are unable to stay where the facts are and tend to gravitate towards the objects of the mind. There are the objects of life and the objects of the mind. The first represent the *vastu* or the fact, while the second represent the *viṣaya* or the projections. The senses working at the behest of the mind are pushed about from objects of life to objects of the mind. Now when the mind withdraws, refraining from all intervention in the perceptive process, then the objects of the mind begin to wither away and the objects of life come to view. It is then that the senses come into their own. However, having been accustomed to function at the behest and under the direction of the mind, the senses at first feel lost when the mind withdraws. They are unable to act on their own, and, so, as the *Bhagavad Gītā* says (II. 60):

*yato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabham manaḥ*

O Son of Kunti, the excited senses of even a wise man, though he be striving, impetuously carry away his mind.

The senses almost forcibly bring the mind back demanding its intervention. This is because the senses have not been re-educated and are unable to act without the direction of the mind. They have to be educated to function in the objects of life and move away from the objects of the mind. Patañjali says in the *sūtra* on *pratyāhāra* that when the senses imitate the mind in its act of withdrawal then is one established

in *pratyāhāra*. But the senses are unable to imitate the mind because they have been habituated to function only at the behest of the mind. If the senses forcibly bring back the mind then what is one to do? How can the senses be re-educated? How can one be established in *pratyāhāra*? One may ask: Why and when does the mind return to intervene in the act of perception? If the withdrawal of the mind has taken place in the psychological realm before such a withdrawal had taken place in the non-psychological spheres then is the mind likely to be forced back by the senses. It has to be remembered that such withdrawal happens only as an exercise of will. The mind that has been forcibly withdrawn can also be forcibly brought back. And that is what the senses do. Nothing forcible has any place in the discipline of Rāja Yoga. *Pratyāhāra* which has an element of force or exertion can never lead one onward on the path of Yoga. It has to be natural and spontaneous. But this can happen only if the mind is withdrawn, to begin with in the non-psychological spheres of life. If one can look at the non-psychological phenomenon without the intervention of the mind then the senses have a chance to function on their own. To put it differently, the senses must be re-educated to look or feel anew the flower and the tree, the cloud and the bird, the river and the sea. With the mind withdrawn, the senses begin to function in a new manner, discovering the objects of nature, dissociated from the objects of the mind. *Pratyāhāra* has to be in the first instance with reference to objects and situations where one's psychological involvement is the least. The senses will in this context be easily able to imitate the mind in its act of withdrawal and will not attempt to forcibly bring back the mind. The re-education of the senses takes place almost effortlessly.

When the senses imitate the mind in its act of withdrawal in these non-psychological spheres then there is brought into their responses an extra-ordinary sensitivity. When the mind intervenes the sense responses tend to be sensual, but when the mind is withdrawn, these responses become sensuous so that the senses respond to finer and subtler vibrations emanating from the objects of life. The phrase *svaviṣaya asaṃprayoge* indicates a movement from the sensual towards the sensuous. *Viṣaya* being the objects of the mind are obviously invested with sensual content. So long as the senses and the mind function conjointly, so long the objects of the mind are also the objects of the senses. The mind forces the senses to linger on its own objects and not to move on to the objects of life or more truly the facts of life. When the mind withdraws then the senses can easily move away from the objects of the mind. If the impacts belonging to the non-psychological spheres are received by the senses without the intervention of the mind then the further movement of withdrawal in the psychological spheres becomes smooth and natural.

When the senses come into their own, because of mind's intervention being intercepted, their range and intensity of response increase tremendously. They are able to communicate to the brain greatly increased data of sensations. This obviously results in the activization of the brain enabling it to function at its full potential. So *pratyāhāra* serves a twofold purpose: the re-education of the senses, and the activization of the brain. In fact, the latter follows the former automatically, because they are a joint phenomenon. The activized brain prevents the interference by the mind in its own perceptive processes. The brain is able to make its perceptive images clear and vivid with no distortion imported into them. And when there is an uninterrupted flow of sensations from the sense organs then

the perceptive images too get constantly renewed. The flux of life conveyed by the ever-increasing sensations is reflected in the newer and newer images of perception formed by the brain. The monotony of sameness is gone enabling it to remain ever fresh and energetic, ever ready to learn. The learning process of the brain remains undiminished, which makes the brain function with tremendous vitality. The greater resilience of the senses and the increased vitality of the brain are the results of *pratyāhāra*. Patañjali in the last *sūtra* of this *Pāda* says:

tataḥ paramā vaśyatendriyāṇām

55. From this comes the greatest resilience of the senses.

The phrase *indriyāṇām vaśyata* means the greater sensitivity of the senses. The senses become intensely pliable, casting away all dullness and rigidity. This is so because they come into their own and are able to function with freedom. It has to be remembered that there is nothing wrong in the free functioning of the senses. The functioning of the senses goes wrong only when the mind intervenes and uses the senses as instruments for its own gratification. It is the senses enslaved by the mind that cause degeneration. When they are freed from the enslavement to the mind then they function naturally and move among the objects of life instead of among the objects of the mind. They move away from sensual to the sensuous. In sensual response are involved mind's indulgence utilizing the sense organs for its own gratification; but in sensuous responses there is no involvement of the mind, they represent the pure activity of the senses. When the flow of the mind is superimposed on the

flow of life then is there indulgence. This is what happens when the mind intervenes. But when that intervention is removed, the movement of the senses correspond with the flow of life. The extreme pliability of the senses is able to reflect the flow and the flux of life. Then the perceptive images formed by the brain have no rigidity about them. In fact, these image are rendered new from moment to moment. This indeed is the re-education of the senses made possible by *pratyāhāra*.

But one may ask: How will the withdrawal of the mind in spheres of non-psychological experiences move into the psychological phenomenon? After all, man's life is predominantly governed by psychological factors. To be able to watch and feel the non-psychological happenings without the intervention of the mind may be interesting but it hardly serves the purposes of man, thrown in the midst of intensely baffling psychological problems. Will the movement of mind's withdrawal into the realm of psychological happenings take place automatically? *Pratyāhāra* is primarily concerned with freeing the senses from the enthrallment of the mind in non-psychological realms. Its fundamental aim is to break the passivity of the brain so that it is greatly activated. This process surely must begin where it is easier, and the non-psychological realms are easier to handle than the psychological. From one standpoint, for man nothing is entirely non-psychological, and so when one speaks of the non-psychological realms, one refers to those areas of life's experiences where the involvement of the mind is less. One must begin there in order to move into the realms where the mind is heavily involved. If the senses could be freed from mind's enslavement in the less involved areas then surely a beginning in the right direction will have been made. And this is all

that *pratyāhāra* indicates. The further movement of the mind in the context of withdrawal comes under the purview of *dhāraṇā* or Awareness. The process of withdrawal is fundamentally an inner process. *Pratyāhāra* is concerned with the withdrawal of the mind with reference to external objects. When this happens then is one ready to turn to the problem of mind's withdrawal with reference to inner images. The problem of images is very complex as the images are mixed up with objects. There are objects with less of image-involvement and there are objects with heavy image-involvement. The first is the subject matter with which *pratyāhāra* is concerned while the second comes within the purview of *dhāraṇā*.

Thus *Pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā* are the obverse and the reverse of the spiritual coin. Both deal with the problem of mind's withdrawal with reference to the outer and the inner workings respectively. It is because of this that *pratyāhāra* is described as the meeting place of the inner and the outer with reference to the instruments of Yoga. If the senses imitate the mind in its act of withdrawal with reference to outer objects or objects with less of image-involvement then is one established in *pratyāhāra*. But the intensely difficult psychological problem of objects and happenings containing heavy image-involvement remains. This brings us to the discussion of *dhāraṇā* to which we shall turn in the next chapter.

THIRD SECTION

CHAPTER XVII

THE DISTRACTION WITHOUT A DISTURBANCE

THE instruments of Yoga as expounded by Patañjali are eightfold as discussed in the last section. It is, however, strange that while he speaks about the first five in the Sādhana Pāda, he discusses the last three in the Vibhūti Pāda. The implication of this is that he does not regard the last three, namely *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* as instruments of Yoga. He puts them under *vibhūti*s or the attainments of Yoga. The meaning of the Sanskrit word *vibhūti* is splendour or magnificence. There is no doubt that *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* are indeed the splendour and the magnificence of Yoga. It is obvious that instruments form part of one's practice, but *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* cannot be practiced. They cannot be brought within the framework of effort and exercise. They thus belong to a different category of spiritual life. It has also to be remembered that *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* constitute the inner core of Yoga, while *yama-niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* belong to the outer range of Yogic life. *Pratyāhāra*, as already discussed, is the midpoint of Yoga discipline because it constitutes a meeting place of the ascending and the descending streams of spiritual life. In the first four instruments of *yama-niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* one moves on the circumference or the periphery of spiritual life; it is in *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* that one comes to the very centre of Yoga. It is because of this that Patañjali seems to have separated the

last three from the earlier instruments of Yoga. In *yama-niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, one is concerned with the problem of ascent but in *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* one comes to the experience of descent. In spiritual life ascent is the *prāpti* or something accomplished and the descent is the *upalabdhi* meaning something that is received. Thus in ascent and descent we see respectively the factors of effort and effortlessness. The spiritual aspirant must know how far he can go with his own effort as also when his own effort must cease so that he may live in the house immortal, not built with hands.

It is here that Yoga differs completely from the life envisaged by moral or religious endeavour. In a religious life built on moral principles human effort is both the beginning and the end. Human effort however can and must remain within the confines of continuity or modified continuity. This is all that morality envisages. It attempts to give to man a new angle of life, not a new dimension of living. In moral or religious endeavour one is concerned with mere modifications in the manner of one's living. But in Yoga we are concerned with the fundamental transformation of man. Here a new dimension of living is explored. It is not with a mere change in degree that Yoga is concerned; it demands an exploration of a new kind of life, a change of species at the psycho-spiritual level. Man by his own efforts can reach great heights of modifications, but a fundamental transformation is outside the purview of human effort. It comes—it cannot be brought about. While man must reach the highest point of his effort, he must also know the point beyond which his effort cannot go. It is at the converging point of the possibilities and the limitations of human effort that the experience of grace comes. It is there that the ascent of man is over and

the descent of the Divine begins. If human effort does not scale its own legitimate heights, or if it attempts to trespass into lands that are out of bounds then the experience of grace cannot be vouchsafed to man. Man must realize the limitations of his own efforts; but this realization can come only when he has reached the utmost heights to which his endeavour can take him. In the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus says: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Blessed, indeed, are the humble for they shall receive the grace from above. Humility belongs not to a consciousness that is passive; it arises only when the consciousness has been rendered completely negative. In the negative consciousness there is search without seeking. The consciousness that seeks has not come to realize its own limitations. The state of search without seeking is truly the state of humility. It is in this state that the experience of descent comes. *Dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* is that condition where exists the state of search without any efforts at seeking. Having dealt with the subject of ascent through *yama-niyama*, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, Patañjali takes us to the experience of descent by revealing the secrets and the mysteries of *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. It is interesting to note that even though this subject is very deep and profound, he devotes only one *sūtra* each to *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

With *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* the aspirant enters the inner domain of spiritual life, the sanctum sanctorum of Yoga. An approach to Reality demands tremendous energy, both of the body and the mind. And it is with the problem of releasing energy that the outer instruments are mainly concerned. In *yama* and *niyama* there is the stopping of the dissipation and the preserving of energy through a regulation of behaviour patterns. *Āsanas* are concerned with

imparting to bodily movements a quality of alert passivity so that the body may be alert and yet relaxed. Similarly *prāṇāyāma* is concerned with the revitalization of the body through the regulation of vital breath. In *pratyāhāra*, the aspirant is concerned with the re-education of the senses and the activization of the brain. It imparts to sense organs and to the brain an extraordinary sensitivity. It is with this sensitive mechanism of the body and the brain that the aspirant is ushered into the sanctum sanctorum of Yoga. On the onward journey of Yoga, *pratyāhāra* has indeed a limited scope functioning as it does effectively only on the non-psychological plane. But on the return journey it has unlimited scope and range, for here the barrier between the psychological and the non-psychological vanishes completely. And the vanishing of the barrier takes place in *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. How does this happen? For this we must turn to the *sūtra* on *dhāraṇa* with which the Vibhūti Pāda, the Third Section, begins:

deśabandhaś cittasya dhāraṇā

1. The defining of the inner range of perception is *dhāraṇā* or awareness.

In the above *sūtra* Patañjali uses the phrase *deśa-bandha* which we have translated as the defining of the range. *Deśa* means a territory or an area, or in the present context a range. Now this range has to be with reference to *citta* or consciousness. It is because of this that we have described this as “the defining of the inner range of perception.” *Dhāraṇā* is very often translated as concentration. But this is hardly the meaning of the above *sūtra*. Concentration implies an exclusion of everything except the thought to be reflected upon. *Dhāraṇā*

as expounded here would really mean awareness. The *sūtra* speaks about the defining of the range of perception. Here the range of perception has relevance more in the psychological rather than in the physical sense. But if one notices even the physical act of perception one will find that normally there is a range within which the eyes function without any tension. If the range is widened then the perception is very diffused; similarly if the range is narrowed down then perception causes tension, bringing tiredness to the eyes. What applies to the physical act of perception applies equally to perception in the psychological spheres. Here one may draw an illustration from what happens in cinema theatres. For many many years, after the introduction of cinematography, the screen used for the projection of films was small which narrowed down the range of normal physical perception. Those who were frequent visitors to cinemas often complained of eye-strain because of being compelled to look at the pictures on a small screen. In recent years cinema technology has undergone a change introducing wide screen or vista screen or cinemascope which enables one to look at films without any eye strain. These wide screens provide to the eyes a range which is more or less normal to its act of perception. What happens in the case of the wide screen is *deśa-bandha* or defining the range of physical perception. In this defining, the principle followed is to establish a range in which the eyes can see comfortably and without any strain. This is exactly what is sought to be done in *dhāraṇā* with reference to perception in the field of psychological happenings. It is *deśā-bandha*, not of the eyes, but, of the *citta* or the mind. The question may arise: What after all must be the principle applied in defining the range of inner perception? It is quite obvious that if the range is

too wide then the mind will tend to drift—in fact, it will have ample scope for such a drifting process. But if the range is too narrow then the mind will experience strain and tension, making it impossible to observe anything. The spiritual aspirant has to discover a middle path keeping clear both from tension as well as drift. The word *dhāraṇā* really means holding, and so it indicates the mind's capacity to hold an object or an image as long as it likes. When there is tension no such holding is possible; similarly when the mind is caught in a drift then too the holding of an object or an image is impossible. In order to steer clear of both drift and tension, the above *sūtra* suggests the defining of the range of perception by the mind.

In the field of meditation, as it is commonly understood, one of the greatest hurdles is concentration. Most students of meditation are unable to move further from their attempts at concentration. It needs to be remembered that concentration is an exclusive process. In some meditation techniques it is suggested that the aspirant should concentrate on a single point. This is known as *trāṭaka* in Haṭha Yoga practices. This effort at intense concentration on a single point often results in nervous breakdown. In any case, such *trāṭaka* practices keep one in a state of perpetual mental tension. Besides they serve no useful purpose, in coming to spiritual communion. They may be useful for the development of psychic faculties—but then the psychic development is not identical with spiritual communion. And in Rāja Yoga our concern is not with psychic development, but with spiritual communion. While concentration on some single point is a physical expression of *trāṭaka*, such concentration on a single thought or an image is only another form of the same *trāṭaka*. It must result in mental tension and nervous breakdown.

In most cases the struggle to concentrate continues for ever, never allowing the aspirant to come anywhere near to the real spiritual experience of meditation. It does not matter what the subject matter of concentration is—whether a point, an object, an image or a thought, for all such isolative and exclusive activities of the mind are only different forms of *trāṭaka*, inducing tension and therefore dullness in the act of observation or cognition. It is in this context that one realizes the true significance of the phrase *deśa-bandha*. Here there is no question of concentrating on a point or an object or an image or a thought. Patañjali does not ask for any exclusive and isolative activity of the mind. But this warning against concentration is not an advocacy of drift. It needs to be understood that while concentration involves resistance, drift implies indulgence. It is only the mind that is caught neither in resistance nor in indulgence than can see clearly. In fact, only such a mind can know what *dhāraṇā* or holding is. In resistance one is concerned about excluding the unwanted or the distracting thoughts or objects or images. In indulgence one is carried away by the distracting factors. And so in neither of the above conditions there is a possibility of holding an object or an image or a thought for sustained observation. It is only by defining the range that one can provide a wide or a vista screen to the mind on which to look without strain or tension at the happenings of life. It is because of this that we prefer to describe *dhāraṇā* as a state of Awareness. This is not an exclusive awareness, but a state of extensive awareness.

If *dhāraṇa* is extensive awareness then a question may arise: Are there any limits to this extension, and if so, who determines the limits and how? We have already stated that awareness which is exclusive creates strain and tension; and we have also seen that the awareness which is too wide brings

diffusion to the act of perception. Obviously the implication of this is that there have to be limits to the extension of awareness and yet these limits must not cause any tension. And so the question is: What are the limits to the area of extension and who sets these limits? We may ask a counter question: When we see something, who sets the limits to the range of physical perception? There is a range of physical perception, for without that the vision would be too diffused or the eyes would suffer a great strain. We have to inquire as to how this range is determined. It is quite obvious that the eyes themselves determine the range of perception, provided they are given a free hand for fixing their range of perception. When the mind intervenes in any act of perception then is the natural range of the eyes disturbed causing either tension or diffusion. At the physical level our vision has fundamentally two constituents, the focal, and the marginal. The focal constituent is that which the eyes want to see and examine. The eyes are naturally turned towards this focal constituent, the object that is to be seen. But in doing this the eyes do not shut out the marginal vision. The vision at the focal level is clear and the vision at the marginal level is not so distinct. Nevertheless the eyes are aware of the objects lying in the marginal area. Clarity at the focal level and an indistinct awareness of the marginal area constitute the natural act of perception by the eyes. The eyes are able to establish their focal and marginal areas of perception in a normal manner if they are given unfettered freedom. But if the mind intervenes then the focal and marginal areas get disturbed, and the mind intervenes for the sake of its own pleasure seeking. Left to themselves the eyes determine the focal and marginal relationships. It has also to be remembered that the focal and the marginal together give a

perspective to one's vision. The vision which is merely focal, with no marginal overtones or undertones, tends to be flat and therefore lacking in perspective. In any perspective, position and distance are the two essential ingredients. In this question of vision while the focal represents the position, it is the marginal that gives the element of distance. Our vision normally has an element of perspective, and it is determined by the free functioning of the eyes themselves. The eyes do not invoke any outer agent to determine its range of perception. The intensity of the focal vision and the limits of the marginal vision are arrived at by the eyes themselves. A distortion in this process of seeing arises only when the mind intervenes for its own purposes.

Now what applies to physical vision applies equally to vision at the psychological level. In *dhāraṇā* we are concerned not so much with the physical act of perception as with the psychological. Here the instrument of vision is not the eyes but the mind. The eyes are able to hold a view easily without strain or tension when they function normally determining their focal and marginal areas of perception. In *dhāraṇā* too the problem is of the focal and marginal areas of vision. At the psychological level the intensity of focal perception increases when the marginal area is properly defined. If, as in concentration, the marginal area is sought to be eliminated then there comes a tension and a strain preventing the mind from seeing what it wants to see. Similarly if the marginal area is unlimited then the vision is utterly diffused because of the factor of drift that gets introduced in the cognitive activities of the mind. A proper relationship between the focal and the marginal is essential for right perception of things. It is this relationship which is indicated by the phrase *deśa-bandha*. The question is: How will this relationship be established?

In physical perception, the eyes after deciding what they want to see, bring into existence the defining of the marginal area. In other words, the awareness at the focal level determines the limits of the marginal area. This is done so automatically that we are not conscious of it. Nevertheless it is true that the focal interest of the eyes creates the right relationship with the margin so that the eyes are neither strained nor too diffused in their vision. In *dhāraṇā* too this is exactly what happens. If the focal interest of the mind is clear and vivid then it creates by itself the marginal limits. In other words, the very intensity of the focal interest defines the limits of the marginal area. This indeed is *deśa-bandha*. The question is: If this is so automatic and easy why are we faced with problems of distractions? We know that in our effort to meditate the marginal factors invariably overwhelm the focal area with the result that we are unable to look at the object or the image or the thought which we have placed before ourselves. In our mental perception there is a constant battle with the marginal forces which are all the time trying to obliterate the subject of focal interest. There seems to be some snag in this focal-marginal relationship at the psychological level. Somehow we are unable to establish a right relationship between the focal and the marginal areas of our mental perception. Why?

There are various factors involved in this subject of mental perception. Our traditional ideas of concentration contribute the greatest impediment in the establishment of this relationship. In concentration the effort is to ignore or eliminate the marginal factors. In this effort, we want to look at something without any perspective. In concentration we tend to make our mental vision completely flat. Now a flat picture is lifeless and it cannot hold our attention. Our

subjects of concentration are sought to be made lifeless by eliminating those factors which alone can give perspective to one's vision. There is no wonder that our efforts at concentrating on lifeless pictures prove utterly frustrating. The place of the marginal area has to be recognized if one is to succeed in *dhāraṇā*. Any effort at *dhāraṇā* without this is bound to fail. And it is this which is happening in our so-called practices of concentration. We want only the focal to remain, bereft of the marginal context; but this can never happen because it violates all laws of perception. In traditional forms of concentration there is a resistance to the marginal inflow because it causes distraction.

Why should the marginal factors cause distraction? There are obviously two reasons. One, because the focal area is devoid of intrinsic interest. When one attempts to meditate on a subject in which one is not really interested then the marginal influx is bound to carry one away. Very often one selects a subject for meditation because it is regarded as holy or because it has been sanctioned by the scriptures. But one cannot hold such thoughts or images in one's consciousness for any length of time without being distracted. And if attempts to concentrate under these conditions are made then there rages a fierce battle between the focal and the marginal. In fact, for most people who are engaged in traditional forms of concentration and meditation, this fierce battle seems unending. How can one perceive anything when one is caught in such a battle? In the midst of this battle *dhāraṇā* has obviously no place whatsoever.

But there is another cause for distraction also. Even if one is seriously interested in the subject matter of one's meditation, one feels distracted. This is because one wants

to shut out all marginal influences which means putting blinkers on the eyes of the mind. These blinkers are a defence-mechanism built for the purposes of so-called meditation. In other words, this is the resistance technique adopted by the mind to keep one's attention fixed on the focal area. But this technique is completely self-defeating, for the more one resists the marginal thoughts and images the more they cause disturbance. It is the experience of most people that this game of resistance is such that one never gets any time to turn to the subject matter of meditation one has chosen for quiet reflection. So concentration fails either due to a lack of intrinsic interest or due to the technique of resistance that one adopts. In fact, even when there is intrinsic interest there takes place a process of unconscious resistance. Resistance, conscious or unconscious, completely defeats all attempts at concentration. But it has become so much a part of concentration that one cannot think of the latter without association with the former. It is regarded as an expression of will-power, and a belief is strongly entrenched in all traditional religious thinking that without the exercise of will-power progress on the spiritual path would be unthinkable. Now an exercise of will-power is nothing but the use of force in attaining to some so-called spiritual height. We fail to realize that spiritual experience is not to be found through violent means. In fact, it comes in a manner in which nature opens a flower. To think of snatching spiritual experience by means of will-power is to negate the very basis of spiritual life. So resistance has no place whatsoever in spiritual discipline. If concentration demands resistance then such concentration has no validity in the spiritual domain. But why does one require any resistance at all? This is because there is a mistaken notion that the focal and the marginal areas are opposed to

each other, so that in order to see what is in the focal area one must put up a resistance against all that impinges from the marginal area.

One of the most simple truths to be borne in mind is that the mind must observe exactly in the manner in which the eyes normally observe. The eyes observe not in a state of conflict between the focal and the marginal areas. For a relaxed and an effective perception by the eyes there is established a right relationship between the focal and the marginal areas. The eyes by their own normal functioning set limits to the marginal extension in order to avoid both tension and diffusion. Perhaps one may contend that this may be possible at the physical level where the marginal areas are not loaded with psychological associations. Can the mind at the psychological level do what the eyes at the physical level are able to achieve? The elimination of all conflict between the focal and the marginal is a fundamental principle of perception at all levels, and so the mind too must function as the eyes do, if it is to come to right perception of things. One must, therefore, move away from all methods of concentration involving resistance. All forms of exclusive awareness create conflict and tension, and concentration takes its unmistakable stand on exclusive awareness. If the mind is to observe rightly—and that is the purpose of all spiritual discipline, including meditation—then it must explore the possibilities of extensive awareness.

One may concede that in extensive awareness there are no strains and tensions but does not one's perception become vague and diffused? Does not the consciousness remain out of focus under conditions of extensive awareness? Is not the elimination of conflict done at the cost of clarity? Here we have to understand how the mind defines its own focal

and marginal areas even as the eyes do. Such defining indeed is *deśa-bandha*. Do we need an outside agency to do this defining by the mind? If we postulate such an agency then the defining will be done under compulsion and will therefore involve resistance and conflict. There is no need for an outside agency, be it the Higher Mind or the so-called Soul, to achieve this defining. No perception is possible under compulsion, whether that perception is physical or psychological. And so the *deśa-bandha*, or the defining, has to be done by the mind even as it is done at the physical level by the eyes.

It may seem strange and paradoxical, and yet it is true, that the very factors comprising the focal area create the conditions where the defining of the marginal area is done almost effortlessly. The focal defines the margin if no interference is done to its natural process. But for this, two factors are essential. First, the focal area must be clear and vivid, and attempts at defining the marginal area must not be intercepted by any form of conscious or unconscious resistance. It has to be remembered that distractions are not opposed to the subject chosen for reflection. They emanate or exude as it were, from the reflections and are not alien to them. It is the overlooking of this fact which has caused the spiritual aspirant unnecessary torture in the form of traditional forms of concentration. If one's subject of reflection is fairly clear and if it holds one's real interest then that focal subject will begin to uncoil itself, thereby releasing those factors which soon will take up their residence in the marginal area. If one allows the focal factor to release its own distractions without any resistance then the marginal area will get automatically defined. It is the experience of most people that when they first start meditating, the **moment**

they have fixed their focal subject, innumerable undesirable thoughts and images suddenly crop up. So long as one does not fix any clear focal subject, there are no mental disturbances. It is only when one fixes a focal subject that all of a sudden there is an invasion by the army of undesirable thoughts and images. The moment this happens a bitter struggle ensues in which one attempts to guard the focal subject against the avalanche of distractions represented by the undesirable thoughts and images. But the struggle gets more and more fierce, depleting the energies of the aspirant. There is no wonder that quite a large number of aspirants leave off all meditational practices because of this fierce and never-ending struggle. In the very fixing of the focal subject the marginal associations are stimulated. And the more vivid and clear is the fixing of the focal subject, the more pronounced is the stimulation of the marginal reactions. In this stimulation of the marginal responses the subliminal factors of consciousness get exposed which is essential for self-knowledge. Our normal answer to these stimulations is to suppress the subliminal tendencies, for one is afraid of this exposure. The result is the building up of a relentless resistance against the marginal stimulations. The more one resists the more powerful does the resisted image or thought become. More than this the exposed tendencies, due to a barrage of resistance, take shelter under perverse and obscure forms of expression. When this happens the distractive force gets more pronounced. When the marginal distractions are resisted, they tend to spread, with the result that the marginal area gets more and more space, rendering the act of observing the focal subject more diffused. Thus resistance itself creates the problem of diffused perception. The subject of focal interest is lost sight of, and all that remains is the meaningless

struggle against the marginal tendencies. Wherever there is exclusive awareness, tensions and diffusions born of concentration must arise and with this there is no solution to the problems of concentration and meditation. Right perception of things is unthinkable along this line, and without that Yoga has no meaning whatsoever.

The *deśa-bandha* to which Patañjali refers in this *sūtra* does not indicate the path of exclusive awareness; it clearly points the way to extensive awareness. In this the mind itself defines the areas of focal and marginal consciousness, even as the eyes do at the physical level of perception. Let the mind select its subject of focal interest, and in this selection let clarity and vividness be imported to the extent to which it is possible. Then let the normal process of marginal stimulation and association arise. If this is allowed to function without any resistance then the defining of the marginal area will take place without any difficulty. Let the mind move freely in this realm where the focal and the marginal areas have been defined. Very often the mind will move on and linger in the marginal area. Let this lingering happen without losing sight of the subject of focal interest. It is not necessary to hold on tightly to the subject of focal interest. But if there is no resistance to the marginal stimulations then the mind will oscillate between the focal and the marginal. There will come into existence a right relationship between the focal and the marginal which will take away all strain and tension. It will be easier to hold the subject of focal interest in this context of right relationship between the focal and the marginal than would be the case if the two areas were pitted against each other as if in a state of war. In this condition both the focal and the marginal will be held very lightly. This is indeed the true state of *dhāraṇā* or holding in the

psychological sense. This holding is made possible because of the defining of the focal and the marginal areas in a natural manner by the mind itself. This is *deśa-bandha* where alone one can know what *dhāraṇā* is.

One may ask: Is this all that is required on the path of Yoga, a movement between the focal and the marginal areas? Is an awareness of the marginal impulses without losing sight of the subject of focal interest sufficient for the purposes of Yoga? In such awareness how will one know the meaning and the significance of the subject of focal interest? Perhaps in this movement between the focal and the marginal one may form an acquaintance with the subject of focal interest, but that would be very superficial, not containing that depth which Yoga demands. Can Reality be comprehended by a mere acquaintance of a superficial nature? If Yoga implies an experience in depth then surely this superficial movement of the mind to and fro in the focal and marginal areas hardly serves the purpose. But *dhāraṇā* is only a part of the continuing process represented by *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. Extensive awareness is to lead to total attention. To be extensively aware of what happens in the margin even while looking at the subject of focal interest is only the starting point. The main purpose of this extensive awareness is to enable the aspirant to look at the subject of focal interest without any hindrance whatsoever. It is hardly necessary to say that hindrance arises when the marginal impulses are resisted. When this hindrance is removed and when one is in a state of extensive awareness, then is total attention possible. *Dhāraṇā* is intended to bring us to this state of total attention, for in that state alone one can comprehend the mysteries of Reality which one intends to probe in Yoga discipline. When there is no conflict between the focal and

the marginal then there arises in the consciousness of man a certain quality of relaxation. In order to see anything one has to be completely relaxed. The purpose of *dhāraṇā* is to create this state of relaxation in which total attention becomes possible. And relaxation is the ground of attention.

But what indeed is meant by attention, and how does one come to it when the focal and marginal are rightly related? The question of attention comes within the purview of *dhyāna*, to which we turn in the next chapter. The function of *dhāraṇā* is to define in a natural manner the focal and the marginal areas of consciousness. When this is done then one is ready to enter into the secrets and the mysteries of *dhyāna*. It is to this deep and profound subject of attention that Patañjali takes us in the course of his discussion on *dhyāna*.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TOTALITY OF ATTENTION

THE subject of meditation has acquired in recent times many a strange connotation. This is perhaps due to the fact that modern man, having tasted the surfeit of science and technology, stands completely disillusioned. He sought happiness but got only physical comfort, and that too after paying a heavy price of surrendering himself to the nerve-racking tensions of modern living. In this condition of disillusionment, present-day man is in search of something that will free him from the strains and tensions of the modern civilization. It is in this search that he has turned to whatever Yoga and meditation may offer. Such is his pitiable plight that he is unable to find out whether what is offered to him is genuine or spurious. He is willing to try anything and everything, provided they give him quick results. So he moves from disillusionment to disillusionment, unable to get the real stuff by which he can assuage his hunger and thirst. There is a demand and supply relationship that has come into existence where meditation is being sold as a commodity, fetching sometimes fantastic price. Exploiting the frustrations of the modern man, quack remedies of meditation are being offered by those who want to make hay while the sun shines. Due to these and many similar factors meditation has become a much loaded word gathering round it strange notions and practices. In the midst of this dangerous confusion, Patañjali seems to be a

safe and an unfailing guide. His approach to meditation is very simple and unsophisticated, and yet intensely scientific. If the modern man, instead of rushing headlong into all sorts of spurious experiments, would pause to consider what Patañjali has to say on the subject, he will find great relief in the midst of enormous frustrations caused by the demands of modern living.

It has to be remembered that meditation as expounded by Patañjali has to be in the background of *pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā*. These two are complementary to each other. While in the first there is the re-education of the senses, in the other there is the re-education of the mind. In *pratyāhāra* the brain is activated, while in *dhāraṇā* the mind is brought to a state of relaxation. For effective perception at any level these two conditions are essential. We know the passivity of the brain and the activated condition of the mind—it is these which have made us utter strangers to the joys of true relaxation. It is through *pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā* that we are initiated into the art of relaxation. And modern man, above everything else, needs regenerating moments of relaxation if he is not to break down under the pressures of modern living. Our act of perception is constantly being marred by distractions. *Pratyāhāra* deals with the problem of sensorial distractions, and *dhāraṇā* is concerned with the problem of psychological distractions. Sensorial distractions arise when the mind interferes with the normal activity of the senses, and psychological distractions arise when there is a conflict between the focal and marginal areas of awareness. In perception are involved the factors both of quantity as well as quality. Our perception suffers when the quantitative intake is reduced, but it also suffers when the very quality of seeing or experiencing registers a decline. The quantitative

intake depends upon the sense-data brought by the senses to the brain, and this in turn is related to the responsiveness of the senses. But our quality of perception registers a decline when awareness becomes exclusive and the perspective is lost. There is a quality in perception when things are seen in their true perspective, whether physically or psychologically. This demands an extensive awareness, and it is *dhāraṇā* that enables us to come to the qualitative perception of things.

As we stated in the last chapter, in extensive awareness there is no conflict between the focal and the marginal areas of consciousness, and the mind is completely relaxed. This state is totally different from the one known under the traditional forms of concentration, which being exclusive create tension. It should be possible for one to be aware of things and events with a sense of relaxation. The importance of relaxed perception is all the more necessary when one is dealing with psychological factors. Our life is mostly concerned with psychological events and happenings. It is hardly necessary to state that our actions in the psychological field go wrong because we are unable to see things and events in a relaxed manner. But there can be no relaxation when there is an effort to concentrate. The mental energies of one who strives to concentrate are bound to be dissipated, for in any attempt of this nature the mind has to be engaged in selecting what to exclude and what to include. In extensive awareness there is a completely relaxed perception, physical or psychological. The purpose of *dhāraṇā* is to initiate a free movement of the mind between the focal and marginal areas. The mind must be able to move freely between the focal and the marginal. In such a free movement while the focal will not be lost sight of, the marginal too will not cause any distraction. It is in this movement that the focal and the marginal get

defined in a natural manner. The very movement of the mind brings about *deśa-bandha* which is the central point of *dhāraṇā*. Here it is not the question of a Higher Mind allowing certain amount of freedom to the lower mind to move in the margin defined by that Higher Mind. Such artificially created margin will bring back conflicts and tensions. It may be stated that the natural defining of the margin comes when the mind is left to move along its own line of associations. It is only in this natural defining of the marginal area that the mind does not lose sight of the focal image. There comes into being a relaxed movement between the two areas. The associative process arises from the focal image itself. In allowing this associative process to function without resistance there is a loosening of the complexes of the mind. The focal and the marginal are both part of the same mind. By allowing the natural process of association to function, the content of the mind gets exposed. The purpose of *dhāraṇā* is to lay bare the contents of the mind. This exposure has a naturalness about it because it is stimulated by the subject of focal interest itself.

A question may arise: Will not the mind be carried away by this movement between the focal and the marginal areas resulting in the obliteration of the focal interest altogether? Since the movement of the mind between two areas comes into being due to non-resistance of marginal impulses, will it not result in the mind getting involved in indulgence of the factors represented by the marginal area? It has to be understood that the limited purpose of *dhāraṇā* is to bring into existence an unfettered movement of the mind between the focal and the marginal areas. Once this movement starts, the specific work of *dhāraṇā* ends. But this movement has no value if due to it one is not able to turn one's undisturbed

attention towards the subject of focal interest. The movement of the mind between the two areas is only to the end that the marginal area may not cause distraction preventing one to look at the subject of focal interest. And the marginal distraction is eliminated by putting up no resistance to the impulses arriving from the margin. It is by this that a natural range of perception is arrived at bringing relaxation to the mind. The extensive awareness of *dhāraṇā* is to enable one to observe with complete relaxation the subject of focal interest. But the question is "Will this extensive awareness not introduce an element of indulgence due to which the focal may be completely eclipsed and the marginal assume the position of the focal interest?" Now if *dhāraṇa* deals with the question of resistance, *dhyāna* is concerned with the problem of indulgence. For attention to the subject of focal interest, non-resistance alone is not sufficient. There has also to be a state of non-indulgence. It is with this that *dhyāna* is concerned. Patañjali says in the one and the only *sūtra* dealing with *dhyāna* as follows:

tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam

2. In that state to watch the flow of thought without any interruption is *dhyāna* or attention.

The phrase "in that state" obviously refers to the state of *dhāraṇā*. *Dhyāna* can arise only in a condition of *dhāraṇā*. We have translated the Sanskrit word *dhyāna* as attention. We shall state later why we prefer this to the usual word *meditation*. It is necessary here to point out that attention comes only in a condition of extensive awareness, because attention is possible when one is completely relaxed. In a

state of tension one cannot observe anything either with clarity or with intensity. And it is in *dhāraṇā* or extensive awareness that relaxation is possible as discussed earlier. The state of relaxation is a *sine qua non* for right perception, i.e. perception of things and events as they are. If *dhyaṇa* awakens a deep comprehension of reality it is because there is a right perception of things in that state. Now right perception is possible only in a condition of attention where one is not distracted by anything. The *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of the *ananya-bhāva* meaning, there is no "other" in one's consciousness. It is the presence of the "other" which distracts, and when this happens one cannot see anything properly. In extensive awareness the mind is free from all resistance and therefore one is in a relaxed condition. In this condition attention becomes easy, whatever the object of attention may be. The concluding verse of the *Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad* says:

With a golden vessel, the face of the Real is
covered over. That do Thou, O Pūṣan,
uncover, that I, devoted to Truth, may
behold.

The implication of the above-verse is that one need not go anywhere in search of Reality, for Reality is in front of us, wherever we may be. But then why do we not see It? This is because Its face is covered over, and all that needs to be done is to uncover the face so that one can see It. Reality is all-pervading but it is our distorted perception that prevents us from seeing It. Our life's problems centre round action and so we are in search of that base of action from where we can act rightly. It is hardly necessary to say that the base of right action is right perception.

Patañjali says that to watch the uninterrupted flow of thought in the condition of *dhāraṇā* is *dhyāna* or attention. The aim of *dhāraṇā* is just to set into motion a movement of the mind, free from all resistance, between the focal and the marginal areas. But the coming into existence of this movement is not enough, for the fundamental problem is to come to a state where one can see the subject of focal interest with a totality of attention. The wooing of the margin is to the end that it may not create any difficulties in the act of attention. One may say that there is already a movement of the mind, and so one does not need the instrument of *dhāraṇā* to initiate that movement. The movement that normally exists in the mind is a mere drift. There is no *deśa-bandha* or defining of the focal and the marginal area. In drift the mind just moves on by habit where indulgence predominates and in such a movement one may be conscious of many things, but there is no awareness in it. It is a *Tāmasic* condition of the mind where one does not have the energy even to resist the obstacles that may be lying in the way of its drift. There is another movement which is of a *Rājasic* nature. This arises in the usual practices of traditional and moral effort where the exercise of will occupies a place of importance. It is a movement generated by one's will power entailing resistance notices in all practices of concentration where what takes place is exclusive awareness. So in drift there is no awareness but in the movement of the mind initiated by concentration there is exclusive awareness. We have discussed at length in the last chapter about its implications. It produces a state of strain and tension where the seeing of *what is* becomes impossible. But in *dhāraṇā* we are talking of a third category of mind's movement the fundamental nature of which is extensive awareness. It is a movement

in which the mind is neither indolent as in drift, nor tense as in concentration, but is completely relaxed. This movement therefore may rightly be called the *Sāttvic* movement where the mind moves to and fro in the focal-marginal area. The question is: How does one come to a state of attention with regard to the subject of focal interest by this relaxed movement between the focal and the marginal? How does extensive awareness create conditions for undisturbed attention?

Here we have to realize that attention comes, it cannot be given. The attention that is given is once again an exercise of will. Such attention may exist in conditions of exclusive awareness, but it is attention with tension, and therefore no attention at all. When we say that attention comes and cannot be given, what we mean is that attention is not a conscious act of the mind. Concentration is a conscious act, but attention comes when one is not even aware that one is attending. It is only in such attention that one can see things as they are because of the uncovering that takes place. One may ask: Who has covered the face of Reality? Surely it is by the projections of the mind that its face has been covered over. In any act of concentration this covering becomes thicker and more opaque, for the mind creates a wall of resistance. Strangely enough it is this very wall of resistance which hides the face of Reality. In fact in this act of resistance which concentration entails one's back is turned to Reality as one is engaged in resisting the incoming thoughts and images emanating from the marginal area. So concerned is one with this marginal invasion that one's eyes are closed to the presence of Reality. It is like turning one's back to light and crying out that it is dark. And so attention that is given is not attention at all. The question is: How and when does it come?

As we have already discussed it comes in the ground of *dhāraṇā* or extensive awareness. In moments of extensive awareness one suddenly finds an experience of total attention. But the question still remains: How does one come upon such an experience? Here the word "how" does not signify a method, for attention is not an experience arrived at by following any particular method. By "how" we mean the process underlying extensive awareness which brings one to this experience of attention. Patañjali indicates in this *sūtra* this process. In watching the flow of thought without any interruption one comes to the condition of attention or *dhyāna*. What does this watching of the flow of thought mean? We have noticed that in the state of *dhāraṇā* there comes into being a free movement of the mind between the focal and the marginal areas. By watching this movement without any interruption one comes to the state of *dhyāna*. In fact, *dhyāna* is the state of watching the flow of thought without any interruption. To observe the movement of the mind in a condition of extensive awareness is, according to Patañjali, the state of *dhyāna*. The focal and the marginal are not two different things—they together constitute the content of the mind. In the usual drifting condition of the mind these two are so mixed up that one does not see them with any clarity. But in *dhāraṇā* they get loosened up and so there comes a certain clarity. In other words, in *dhāraṇā* the two opposite poles of the mind, the focal and the marginal, are clearly perceived. To see these two points together, not one by one, is the condition of extensive awareness. Mind functions in the field of duality, but ordinarily we do not see the dual points simultaneously. We see them one after the other, and therefore wonder why we behave sometimes in a nice manner and at other times in a nasty manner. We

forget that niceness and nastiness of the behaviour exist together—not one after the other. Our so-called niceness contains the elements of nastiness. In fact our so-called good behaviour is based on the foundations of what may be called evil. In the mind they exist together, but because we do not see them together we postulate the existence of two minds—the higher and the lower. And with the help of the higher we strive to control the lower. We, however, forget that the higher contains the lower, they are not distinct one from the other. It is in *dhāraṇā* or extensive awareness that we begin to see them simultaneously—the marginal as the part of the focal, the undesirable as part of what we term the desirable or the noble. To initiate a free movement of the mind between these two points is the aim of *dhāraṇā*. But to watch without any interruption this movement of the mind between the two opposing points is indeed *dhyāna*. What is essential is not just the watching, but watching without causing any interruption in this flow of thought from the focal to the marginal and vice versa.

Here it is necessary to inquire as to what is likely to cause interruption in the flow of thought from one opposite point to the other. It is quite obvious that if in the midst of watching the flow of thought there comes in any evaluation or judgment with reference to any expression of thought then the flow is interrupted. In fact, such a judgment or evaluation causes a disturbance in the entire flow so that what appears after the interruption is not something natural, but something superimposed. A consciously cultivated movement is superimposed on the natural movement of thought. With this the simultaneous perception of the two opposites also disappears breaking up the state of *dhāraṇā*. The mind for the purposes of its own safety and continuity desires to move away from

the simultaneous perception of the opposites as soon as possible. But when the movement between the two is not interrupted by evaluation or judgment then the flow of thought between the focal and the marginal goes on. To watch this without naming it or evaluating it is to know what *dhyāna* is. Thus *dhyāna* is not thinking about anything, not even about God or Truth, but rather watching the movement of thought. It has to be remembered that this movement comes into being due to the subject of focal interest. This subject may be God, Truth, Virtue or any other thing in which one is interested for the purposes of reflection. The subject of focal interest awakens the margin, and when the marginal awakening is not resisted then a smooth, relaxed movement between the focal and the marginal comes into existence. Now *dhyāna* implies watching the flow of thought, or this movement between the focal and the marginal areas.

One may ask: What is that one is likely to watch in this movement? There are fundamentally three things that one can and will watch in this movement. First, the range of this movement. Secondly the nature of this movement, its structure and the manner of moving. This movement is bound to have fluctuating speeds—sometimes fast and sometimes slow. It is this which constitutes the structure of this movement. And thirdly, the motives underlying this movement. The range, the manner and the motive—it is these that need to be watched. *Dhyāna* is indeed the condition of watching the threefold nature of the movement of thought between the focal and the marginal areas without any interruption.

Since *dhyāna* has to be understood in the background of *dhāraṇā*, one may say that this watching is with regard to the flow of thought between the focal and the marginal areas

Now the focal represents the field of attention, while the marginal constitutes the sphere of inattention. And so the flow of thought denotes a movement of the mind between the points of attention and non-attention. Normally all distractions are disturbing. But when a new relationship is established between the focal and the marginal areas, as discussed earlier, then one comes across a phenomenon of distraction without disturbance. *Dhyāna* is an awareness of the distractions of the mind. And this awareness has to be without any interruption; for any interruption would immediately distort the flow of thought. Is it possible to watch distractions without any interruption? An interruption may arise in a diversity of forms. It may be comparison or evaluation or explanation, or it may be just the naming of the distraction. In fact, interruption begins by naming, and with that, the flow of thought gets disturbed. Then it is impossible to watch with any clarity. When the stream of thought is disturbed, the observation of that flow is bound to be diffused. To see with absolute clarity the stream of thought is meditation.

Thus meditation is not a process of thinking; it is a clear and an uninterrupted observation of the thought process. This thought process emanates from the focal point—that subject or problem on which one wishes to focus one's attention. Now if *dhyāna* is an overflow from *dhāraṇā* then this uninterrupted observation of the thought-stream causes no strain or tension. In fact, one's observation is absolutely relaxed, because the mind defines its own marginal area in the state of *dhāraṇā*. As stated earlier, the defining of the marginal area bears relevance to the focal point. Having brought the marginal area into existence with the consent of the mind, and by the mind itself, there ensues a movement

between the focal and the marginal areas which is completely free from all taints of resentment or resistance. The margin no doubt is a distraction from the focal point, but it is a distraction without a disturbance. The state of *dhyāna* is the awareness of this movement of distraction, of the smooth movement between the focal and the marginal areas. One may ask: What is it that one observes in this movement? Is it the focal area or is it the impulsion from the marginal area? It is necessary to realize that distraction is the language through which the mind tells its own story. We have never listened to the mind, in fact we have treated mind as something alien to us. The non-listening to the story of the mind makes distraction into such an enormous problem in all approaches of meditation. The distractions of the mind arise mostly from the marginal areas forcibly established by the mind. This forcible establishment brings into existence a relationship of resistance and distrust between the focal and the marginal spheres of activity. But if a new relationship could come into existence, as indicated in our discussion on the subject of *dhāraṇā*, then the mind can tell its story in the language of distraction without causing any disturbance at all. Distraction is the way of the mind to attract attention to itself. It is like the child wanting to tell his story. It wants to distract the grownups from their work so that they may listen to what it has to say. The mind employs the same method. If a relationship of affection exists then the mind will be able to tell its story. And it has a long tale to tell. Not only that, the mind does not want to be interrupted while it is telling its own story. *Dhāraṇā* is the condition in which a new relationship is established with one's own mind. *Dhyāna* is indeed the listening to the story of the mind without any interruption.

Usually in meditation we create the false problem of attention. It has to be realized that attention is not the problem, it is inattention which is the problem. If the problem of inattention is solved then attention will come naturally and effortlessly. Inattention becomes a problem when one does not listen to the story of the mind without interruption. In listening to this story without any break the mind is emptied of all its contents. And meditation is indeed the emptying of the mind of all its contents. But the mind cannot be emptied, it empties itself. And this emptying happens when the story of the mind is listened to without any judgment or evaluation. When distraction causes no disturbance then surely the listening is easy. It is *dhāraṇā* which makes listening easy, and in *dhyāna* the actual listening to what the mind has to say takes place. Patañjali uses the word *pratyaya* with reference to *dhyāna*. This word really means the content of the mind. To observe the mind does not mean merely looking at the structure of its movement; it implies the perceiving of its content as revealed in its movement. Patañjali says that to see the flow of the mind's content without any interruption is *dhyāna*. It is this definition of *dhyāna* which has induced us to describe it as total or undisturbed attention. Such attention is possible only in a state of extensive awareness and not in a condition of exclusive awareness. It is because of this that *dhāraṇā* is a pre-condition for *dhyāna*.

One may ask: If in *dhyāna* it is the movement of distraction that is observed without any interruption then what about giving attention to the subject of focal interest? If one looks at the flow of thought arising from the margin, then what about looking at the focal point? As stated earlier, an uninterrupted observation of the flow of thought

results in the mind emptying itself. And when the mind empties itself, the thought process automatically ends. The cessation of the thought process is a state of silence. And it is only in the silence of the mind that the focal point can be looked at. Thus attention to the focal point comes; it cannot be brought about by a conscious effort or by will. When the mind has emptied itself, the state of inattention is completely negated. In the negation of inattention, one comes to the experience of attention in an effortless manner. Attention requiring an effort is another word for concentration. And we have seen what concentration implies and how utterly frustrating it is. When the flow of marginal thought activated by the focal point, is observed without any interruption then the problem of inattention vanishes. Attention comes where inattention is not. *Dhyāna* is the state of effortless attention. When the movement of distraction causes no disturbance then that movement, having related its tale, comes to a stop. And when the movement of the mind ceases, then where is the problem of attention?

We have stated again and again that Yoga is right perception. But in this problem of perception there are two fundamental questions which are involved, namely the inability to see and the unwillingness to see. The inability to see arises from sensorial distractions and it is with this that *pratyāhāra* is concerned. But there remains the more difficult problem of the unwillingness to see. This is a psychological problem and is related to mental distractions. Mental distractions are the mind's reactions and responses with reference to the point of focal interest. In being aware of these reactions without any interruption, there comes about a cessation of those reactions. The mind that is free from reactive processes is a silent mind, capable of seeing anything that is in front of

it. There is attention without any stimulation or provocation. Attention that needs outer or external stimulation is only absorption, displaying toy-psychology, and the mind that needs to make an effort at attention is only caught in the frustrating process of concentration induced by internal stimulus. Attention is completely effortless, needing no stimuli from without or within. It is such total attention which truly represents the state of *dhyāna*. And this attention comes when the distracting movement of inattention is watched without any interruption, when the flow of the mind's content is observed without comparison, judgment, evaluation. Patañjali says: "to watch the flow of thought without any interruption is *dhyāna* or attention."

A question may arise: What is it that one discovers in this state of attention? From extensive awareness of *dhāraṇā* one moves on to the state of total attention as indicated by *dhyāna*. But how is one to be sure that in this total attention one really comes to right perception, which is the objective of Yoga? We have seen that in attention the mind is completely free from the resistances involved in concentration, and escapes denoted by absorption. It is only in the negation of both these processes that attention can come into existence. This means that the thought process must come to an end with reference to the point of focal interest because with the intervention of thought the movement between the focal and the marginal will begin once again. It can cease only when thought empties itself. In this emptying the chattering of the marginal area comes to an end and there descends upon the mind a deep silence. If in *dhyāna* one does not come to this silence, then the entire process of *dhyāna* is completely off the mark. Ordinarily the chattering of the mind is a meaningless babble. It is *dhāraṇā* that makes the chattering

audible and meaningful. It is only then that the story of the mind can be heard. We try to listen to the incoherent babble of the mind, and therefore cannot make sense out of it. In disgust we ask the mind to stop talking. It obviously does not stop and continues with its babble. When in *dhāraṇā* the incoherent chatter is given certain coherence then is it possible for one to listen to the story. When one listens to the mind without any interruption then the mind empties itself resulting in silence which is deep and profound. In this silence there takes place a totality of attention so that one can look at the point of focal interest without any distraction at all. But the question is: What is it that one perceives in this state of *dhyāna*? The answer to this question comes as we turn to what Patañjali has to say regarding *Samādhi* in the next *sūtra*.

CHAPTER XIX

THE STATE OF COMMUNION

IN the approach of traditional religion as well as of conventional morality there is always a great emphasis laid on the adoption and cultivation of a right attitude towards life. In this approach the transformation of an individual is judged in terms of mental attitudes. Faced with an unpleasant situation it asks the spiritual aspirant to develop a noble and an elevating attitude of mind. Instead of looking at the evil tendencies in the other person one is asked to look at the good things. This looking is obviously in terms of a changed attitude of mind. The dictionary meaning of the word "attitude" is a "settled mode of thinking". So to develop an attitude is first to determine one's mode of thinking, and then, through that mode, to look at the situations in life. It is hardly necessary to state that in such looking one sees only what one has projected through the settled mode of thinking. And so what one sees is what one wants to see. One does not look at the thing as it is but as seen through the screen of one's mode of thinking. The mode of thinking is only another word for the conclusion of the mind. So in all efforts at developing attitudes, one is required first to determine one's conclusion, and then, making that as one's base, to look at life. If one particular mode of thinking is not acceptable for a given religious or moral framework then one must change over to another mode of thinking. Therefore, in this entire

approach of attitude, all that is required is to change one's scale of observation. But to have an attitude founded on a mere change in the scale of observation is to approach life's situations from the base of modified continuity. All religious and moral approaches are indeed concerned only with modified continuity; they do not address themselves in terms of fundamental and qualitative changes. Any change in terms of attitudes is a change the nature of which is only a modification in the patterns and modes of behaviour. By developing an attitude, however noble it may be, one can never come to fundamental changes. One can bring about variations, but never can one come to the experience of mutations.

Yoga is fundamentally concerned with mutation or total transformation. Real Yoga has no truck with modified continuity. It is in this respect that it differs completely from a moral or religious way of life. So in Yoga discipline what is indicated is not right attitude but right perception. As stated in our discussions in the earlier chapters, right perception denotes an observation that is direct, with no screen obstructing the act of perception. A direct perception does not come into existence by a mere change in the scale of observation. One may change the angle of perception but that does not bring one to direct perception of men and things. While an attitude is concerned with a change in the scale of observation, in right perception, it is the observer himself that needs to be eliminated, for it is he who casts screen after screen in the very act of perception. An attitude denotes a thought process, may be a changed thought process, but in right perception it is the very thought process that has to come to an end. Between an attitude and an action there is always a gulf, a distance that has to be bridged; but in right perception, action and perception are not separated

△ A LETTING GO INSTEAD OF A CHANGE

one from the other—in fact, perception itself is action. Or to put it differently, perception and action are two sides of the same medallion. In right perception there is observation without the observer. Such a perception demands a deepening state of awareness. And it is with this depth of awareness that Yoga is fundamentally concerned.

It is interesting to note that in the eight instruments of Yoga, starting from *yama* and ending with *Samādhi*, Patañjali has indicated this very fact of the deepening states of awareness, moving from the so-called outer to the inner layers of consciousness. In *yama* and *niyama* there is an awareness of the patterns and modes of one's habits; in *āsana*, of tensions and relaxations in bodily posture and carriage; in *prāṇāyāma* of inbreathing and out-breathing; in *pratyāhāra*, of sensorial digressions and perceptive inferences; in *dhāraṇā* of the drift of thought and the mind's action at defining its own range of observation; and in *dhyāna* of the mind's distractions and inattention. This brings us to *Samādhi* which constitutes the last of the instruments of Yoga expounded by Patañjali. Obviously it refers to the deepest layer of consciousness. What indeed is the nature of awareness indicated by *Samādhi*?

While discussing *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* in the last two chapters, we stated that they represent respectively the states of extensive awareness and undistracted or total attention. In *dhyāna*, when one watches that movement of inattention without any interruption there comes into existence naturally and effortlessly a state of total attention. In this state of attention one can look at the subject of focal interest with complete relaxation and without any distraction whatsoever. One is free to look at the subject of one's focal interest without any disturbance whatsoever. There is no tension in this looking and it does not matter what the subject of observation is.

But the question is—what is it that one perceives in this state of *dhyāna*? What is it that one discovers in this condition of total attention? What is that still deeper state of awareness to which the condition of total attention leads us? It is here that one must turn to *Samādhi*, the last of the instruments of Yoga described by Patañjali.

tad evārthamātra-nirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ

3. That truly is *Samādhi* or communion where the object alone is seen, the presence of the observer having been completely negated.

The word used by Patañjali here is *artha* and not *vastu*. Although *vastu* and *artha* both mean an object, in *vastu* the indication is more about the structure of a thing—while in *artha* there is more a reference to the significance or the meaning of the thing. Patañjali says that *Samādhi* is the perception of the object alone. It means that in *Samādhi* one sees the intrinsic significance of the object. In our ordinary observation we see the projected significance of things and situations. The observer in terms of his settled modes of thinking, or in terms of his own conclusions, assigns to things and situations a significance which does not essentially belong to them. We live in a world of projected significances, of meanings superimposed by the observer. In *Samādhi* one sees *artha* alone, meaning the intrinsic significance of things and happenings. Why is this so? While discussing the implications of *dhyāna* we said that it is a state of total attention. But the question that arose in our minds was: What is it that one discovers or sees in this state of total attention? We have already discussed that total attention comes only when the thought

process ceases. *Dhyāna* is an experience of silence, when the chatterings of the mind come to an end. The cessation of thought is obviously a moment of discontinuity, for it is thought which imparts a factor of continuity. Life can be experienced only in a moment, for it exists from moment to moment. Like fresh waters coming into a river from moment to moment, life too moves on, revealing newness each moment.

One can experience life constantly, but never continuously. That which is seen continuously is the image of life formed by the mind. In the continuity of the thought process the image lives, and since the mind allows us to see only the images we regard continuity as the very nature of life itself. This is the illusion cast over our perceptions by the mind. This indeed is the screen through which we perceive, never directly, but always through the glass, darkly. Thought-process and continuity are interchangeable terms. In *dhyāna* one watches this stream of continuity without any interruption. It is continuity which constitutes the factor of distraction or of inattention. To ask for the distraction to go and yet maintain the stream of continuity is to indulge in something that has no meaning whatsoever. To struggle against inattention and yet to cling to a continuity of thought is to engage in a fruitless activity. Continuity is the ground from where distraction and inattention come. It is this very continuity of thought that must cease, and *dhyāna* is the state where the stream of continuity ends. One can forcibly end the process of thought for the time being through the exercise of will. In this condition the mind becomes blank. But this blankness is seething with tension and therefore terribly oppressive. This is because in forcible cessation of the thought process, the thinker is present. And it is the presence of the thinker, almost invisible, which gives a sense of oppressiveness

in the midst of the cessation of thought. This is the condition of blankness from which one desires to run away. Through drugs and repetitive processes one can come to blankness where thought has ceased but the thinker is present. The thinker frets and fumes in this blankness and is concerned with the starting of a new thought-process so as to maintain its continuity of movement. In *dhyāna*, not only the thought process ends, there is also the elimination of the thinker. It is towards this elimination that Patañjali asks one to watch the movement of thought without interruption. When the thought-process is seen without any interruption then the thinker too vanishes. And in this condition what comes is not a blankness, but a deep and profound silence of the mind. This silence has a quietness about it, unlike the oppressiveness that comes when the mind is made blank. It may be noted that while the mind can be made blank, it cannot be made silent. Silence comes in the very moment of watching the thought process without any interruption.

Having formulated as vividly and clearly as possible to the subject of focal interest, one can watch the movement of thought emanating from that focal point itself. There is no need to bother about the focal point, for if one watches the movement of thought without interpretation, then the thought process empties itself. In this natural emptying both the thought and the thinker cease. The thinker who is the interrupter, interrupts by his interpretation. It starts with naming and moves on to comparison, evaluation, judgment, explanation, justification, condemnation, etc. So when there is a watching of the thought process emanating from the focal point without any interruption then not only the thought ceases but also the thinker. It is to this cessation of the thought and the thinker

that *dhyāna* brings the spiritual aspirant. How can there be a state of total attention unless both the thought and the thinker cease. Thus *dhyāna* brings one to the experience of discontinuity. Attention is a flame without a flicker. In *dhyāna* the consciousness comes to a state where the flame flickers not. It creates the condition where the consciousness is as it were in a windless state.

But what is it that one perceives in this state? In this state of attention does one see the focal point? If so, what is it that one sees and discovers? The seeing is not the state of *dhyāna*, it is the state of *Samādhi*. The right perception of things comes in the state of *Samādhi* which has been preceded by *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* where the necessary conditions of extensive awareness and totality of attention have been brought into existence. *Dhāraṇā* deals with the field or the *kṣetra* even as *dhyāna* deals with the knower of the field or the *kṣetrajñā*. *Dhāraṇā* supplies the field for the movement of thought, and in *dhyāna* there is the watching of the knower of the field as he moves in the field created through *dhāraṇā*. To watch the movement of inattention is to watch the activity of the *knower* of the *field*. It has to be understood that the thinker can be watched only in the movement of thought and not away from it. In this watching the thinker relates his own story, and when it is heard without any interruption then the thinker comes to a state of quiet. It is in this quietness emanating from the focal point, that there comes a deep silence which is indeed the condition of total attention. It is only in such a state of attention that seeing is possible. This seeing or right perception is described by Patañjali as *Samādhi* or communion. In the context of what we have discussed so far, it would be worthwhile to examine the description of *Samādhi* as indicated in this *sūtra*.

Patañjali says that *Samādhi* is that condition where the object alone is seen, the presence of the observer having been completely negated. There are two phrases which need to be specially noted: *svarūpa śūnyam iva* and *artha-mātra-nirbhāsam*. The first phrase means that in *Samādhi* there is as it were the negation of one's own form. Obviously this is not the negation of the physical form. It speaks of the negation of the psychological form. It is this psychological entity which is the observer or the thinker. When we speak of the negation of the observer, obviously it does not mean the elimination of the physical form of the observer. That would be meaningless. What is implied is the elimination of the psychological entity which is the observer, the interpreter and therefore the interrupter. Patañjali purposely uses the word *iva*, "as it were". This is to show that it is not the physical form that is meant by *svarūpa*. In *Samādhi* the psychological entity of the observer is non-existent. The phrase *svarūpa śūnya* denotes a complete negation of this entity. While discussing the subject of attention we saw that in the negation of inattention or distraction, attention comes naturally and effortlessly. And so *dhyāna* or total attention is indeed the state where the observer or the thinker is negated. When this happens then one moves into the state of *Samādhi*, for it is only here that right perception takes place. We have discussed that the negation of the thinker and therefore the thought-process denotes a cessation of continuity. And so in *dhyāna* the continuity of the stream of thought ceases; not only that, the continuity of the very thinker ends. Thus the *svarūpa-śūnya* state is arrived at in *dhyāna*.

It is in this state the psychological entity of the observer ceases and right perception becomes possible. *Samādhi* is indeed the state of Right Perception. It is a state of

communion. There can be no communion so long as the observer or the thinker is present. Patañjali says that in *Samādhi* there is *artha-mātra-nirbhāsam*, meaning “only the object is seen”. He emphasises the point by using *mātra* indicating that object alone, and nothing else is seen. So long as the observer is present what is seen is not the object, but the observed which is the projection of the observer. When the observer vanishes, the observed too disappears as it has no independent existence. It is like the shadow cast by a substance. When the substance vanishes, the shadow automatically goes. No effort is needed to remove it. And so in *Samādhi* where the observer is not, what is seen is the object alone—not just the pattern of the object, but its intrinsic significance, as indicated by the word *artha*. In attention or *dhyāna* there takes place the cessation of the stream of continuity both of the thinker and the thought. And so in *Samādhi* or communion there is the awareness of the interval of discontinuity.

When the thought and the thinker cease there is obviously a moment of discontinuity. Right Perception is indeed the awareness of this moment. In this moment is seen the intrinsic significance of the thing or the object or the situation. This interval of discontinuity is obviously a timeless moment. *Samādhi* is indeed an experience of the timeless moment—a moment in which the stream of time constituted by the thought process comes to an end. In *dhyāna* one comes to the timeless moment, and in *Samādhi* there is the awareness of this moment. In this awareness, and there alone, one communes with the intrinsic significance or the quality of things or persons. The timeless moment is a flash. Needless to say that the perception of Reality comes only in a flash, the flash of the timeless moment. It is in a flash that one sees the quality or the intrinsic significance of the things. It is in a flash that one

sees Truth or Beauty or Goodness. What is seen in the continuity of the thought process is only the projected significance, i.e. the observed. The awareness of discontinuity comes when the psychological entity of the observer is non-existent. Then all of a sudden there is the perception of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. There is the perception of the beauty of a face or of a movement or of an object or may be of an idea. If the mind strives to capture that beauty, then, because of the re-entry of the observer, it is gone. This experience cannot be recaptured nor can it be stored in memory. It comes and goes, and if the observer is not allowed to enter then there may be flash after flash. To ask for a continuity of flash is to miss the meaning of the flash. The experience of a flash is always momentary. One may have such flashes from moment to moment—but each flash will have only a momentary existence. How can a timeless moment be measured by time? To measure the duration of *Samādhi* is to display a gross ignorance regarding the nature of *Samādhi*.

Communion or *Samādhi* is a non-dual experience, for here there is neither the observer nor the observed. There is just the object, and the object, when it is divested of all the superimpositions of the mind, is Reality itself. In coming to right perception of things one comes to the perception of Reality itself. The Reality of anything is its Beingness. The Beingness of all things and persons is the Unmanifest. What one sees in manifestation is the process of becoming. The question may arise: Is there any relationship between the Being and the Becoming, between the Unmanifest and the Manifest? That which makes the Becoming alive is the touch of the Being. The moment this touch is lost, the Becoming or the Manifest is dead and lifeless. The meaning of manifestation lies in the Unmanifest; the significance of Becoming is

contained in the Being. The Being is the quality or the intrinsic significance of things. But the intrinsic significance can be perceived only when the movement of the projected significance ends. The Being is the timeless moment, while the Becoming is a movement in time-sequence. It is only when the stream of time stops that there comes a communion with the timeless moment. To commune with the Being of a thing or a person is to have a communion with the timeless moment of discontinuity. Such a communion indeed is *Samādhi*. Very often people ask: Will this state of *Samādhi* last? Now *Samādhi* that remains becomes a part of the continuing stream of time. In such continuity the touch with the timeless moment is lost. *Samādhi* can be constant but it cannot be continuous. The perception of the Being comes in the timeless moment, and therefore in a flash, or in an interval between two time-sequences. In this interval comes the vision of Reality.

But what is the nature of this vision? In this interval is it the Unmanifest that is seen? If the Unmanifest is seen then surely it is not the Unmanifest. Here one experiences the intangible presence of the Unmanifest or the Reality. There is a vision of "something" which can be described only as the intangible. The manifest is tangible; with regard to the Unmanifest one cannot say anything. But one can experience the intangible presence of the Unmanifest in the manifest itself. It is the experience of this intangible which underlies all experiences of love. Any effort to hold the intangible in the net of the tangible is to degrade love into a possession. Love and continuity are contradiction in terms, for continuity is the net of the mind in which it wants to possess love. The experience of love belongs to moments that are timeless. The expression of love may and must

happen in the region of time. But time which has lost the touch of the timeless is a lifeless duration causing boredom and frustration. It is in this condition that one feels the great limitations of time. When the process of Becoming loses touch with the Being, then it is devoid of joy. When the touch of the Being enlivens the process of Becoming then the latter becomes a field for the expression of the former. The Being is the fullness while the Becoming is a partial expression. Any expression will always be partial, for the fullness of experience can never be contained by any form of expression, however noble and elevated it may be.

But how does one come to the communion with the Being of men and things? Is Being away from Becoming? If Becoming can never contain the fullness of Being then how does one come to the vision of the Being? If one watches the stream of Becoming, in oneself or in others, without any interruption, that is without even naming it, then there comes an interval, a timeless moment where the stream of becoming comes to a halt, a momentary repose. The next moment the stream will move on. But it is in that timeless interval that one can have the enthralling vision of Reality, a regenerating touch of the Intangible. This is the moment of Love, of communion, of *Samādhi*. Love and *Samādhi* are not two different things.

The quality of life or the soul of things can be seen not in continuity but in the intervals of discontinuity. Normally we see only the movement of continuity, and therefore we see only the superimpositions of the mind, or at best structural and quantitative modifications. We see only the process of Becoming everywhere. There is no awareness of the interval of discontinuity where alone the vision of Being is vouchsafed. Without the vision of the Being, the whole process

of Becoming is meaningless. We may project a meaning into it, but such projected significance has no quality of livingness in it. Besides the projected significance gets completely shattered under the least impact of life. The intrinsic significance of things can be experienced only in the timeless moment or the interval of discontinuity. It is in *dhyāna* or the state of total attention that, because of the non-existence of the observer, the interval of discontinuity comes. It is in *Samādhi* that there comes an awareness of this interval, the timeless moment. Here, as Patañjali says, there is *artha-mātra-nirbhāsam*, the seeing of the thing as it is. To see things as they are is to come to the state of *Samādhi* or communion where there is neither the observer nor the observed. It is pure perception—the perception of the Beingness of all things. Communion with anything or anyone demands a ground of awareness and attention. There can be no attention without awareness, and surely there can be no communion where attention is not. But for attention to be, there has to be awareness that is extensive, and not exclusive. And for communion to be, there has to be attention which is total, undistracted, not fragmented into the observer and the observed. Where the division of the perceiver and the perceived exists there is no attention. And without attention, how can there be communion? It is in seeing the movement of the observed without any interruption or interpretation that the observer vanishes, and with that the observed too becomes non-existent. It is in this ground of attention, that *Samādhi* is born. In the ground of extensive awareness comes totality of attention, and in the ground of total attention comes the experience of communion. Thus are *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* interrelated. Patañjali refers to this in the next *sūtra*:

trayam ekatra samyamah

4. The three together constitute *samyama* or Meditation.

Meditation comprises this threefold process of awareness, attention and communion. The three together constitute the wholeness of spiritual experience. They are a whole. It is only for the clarity of mental understanding that one may examine the three separately. But in doing so one must not lose sight of the fact that separately their existence has no validity.

Sometimes *Samādhi* is described as a state of ecstasy. Now the real meaning of ecstasy is stepping out of oneself. And this is indicated by the phrase *svarūpa-sūnya*. It is the complete negation of the psychological entity who is the thinker, the observer or the experiencer. When there is perception without the perceiver then the vision of Reality that comes is so enthralling that one is filled with joy indescribable. It is a state of rapture. Such a vision is spiritually intoxicating. The vision is of a moment, but the moment contains the richness of Eternity. One may indeed need the whole Eternity to express the joy of the timeless moment. It does not matter if the process of Becoming is endless, for one is not then seeking fulfilment through time. In fact, time is only a field of expression for one who has seen the fullness of life in the timeless moment. The entire process of Becoming is filled with the joys of communication. And there is no end to communication, for how can the ecstasy of communion be conveyed fully through any form of expression, however perfect it may be? The experience of the Formless, the *svarūpa-sūnya*, cannot be contained even in a myriad forms.

Samādhi or Communion is indeed the experience of the Formless. But such an experience comes only in a flash, in the Timeless Moment. It is in the vision of the Formless that one sees the quality of things, the intrinsic significance underlying all manifestation. There comes a perception of *what is*. This is right perception and this alone is the starting point of right action or right communication.

Having dealt with the problem of the timeless moment in which alone the real spiritual experience comes, Patañjali, in the *sūtras* that follow, concerns himself with the problems of communication. Yoga is not an escape from life. In Yoga man discovers, from moment to moment, the right starting point for action or relationship. *Dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *Samādhi* bring to man this discovery which is not in the stream of time, but in the timeless moment. It is this discovery of the timeless moment that imparts to man a creative joy with which to journey into the endless land of time. Having taken the spiritual aspirant into regions beyond time, Patañjali enables him to journey into time with joy indescribable, not known by him before. In the subsequent *sūtra* we shall undertake this journey into time, for the joys of the timeless moment need the wide canvas of time on which to paint the picture of life with colours brought from the regions far beyond the reaches of time itself.

CHAPTER XX

THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION

THE *Bhagavad Gītā* says in the third discourse that man cannot remain even for a moment without performing action. To live is to act, and therefore action is a part of living itself. But mostly our so-called actions are mere responses to stimuli, outer or inner. Our actions provoked by these stimuli or the challenges of life, are more in the nature of reactions. We react to the situations of life. It is the challenge-response phenomenon that we know. We do not know challenge without a response, nor do we know response without a challenge. In our consciousness have been built innumerable centres of reaction. In fact, our movement in life is motivated by reactive tendencies. Patañjali in the very beginning of his *Yoga-Sūtras* defines Yoga as a condition where all reactive tendencies have ceased. A reaction denotes continuity, and so all such tendencies emanate from centres of continuity. Thought obviously is a centre of continuity. The movement of thought is indeed a movement of continuity. If Yoga is freedom from reactive tendencies then surely it indicates that the consciousness must be freed from the continuing process of thought. We have seen that that which maintains the continuing stream of thought is the thinker. A mere change in the thought process only substitutes one reactive centre for the other. It is only when the thinker vanishes that the very centre of reaction is destroyed. Pure action demands an

elimination of the thinker, or the observer or the experiencer. When this happens then there is a response without a challenge, an action without a stimulus. If love needs a stimulus for action then it is no love at all. Love is a response without a stimulus. And so love alone is pure action—all else are mere reactions. In *Kulārṇava Tantra* there is an aphorism which says:

drśyaṃ vinā sthirā dr̥ṣṭiḥ manaścālam̐banam̐ vinā

Steadiness of perception even without the observed, stillness of mind even without any dependence whatsoever.

What is indicated in this *sūtra* of the Tantrik text is response without a challenge, an action without a stimulus. The aim of Yoga is to lead the aspirant to the discovery of right action. And since life is not static, the basis of right action has to be discovered from moment to moment. This requires a state of consciousness which comes constantly to the awareness of the timeless moment, the moment of discontinuity. It is in this moment alone that no reactive tendency exists, and so whatever emanates is free from all tinge and taint of reaction. In this moment there is right perception, meaning thereby a perception without the perceiver or the perceived.

Usually for our action we need a stimulus of the observed. Any action performed under such a stimulus is obviously a reaction. The stimulus of the observed may be external or internal; it may be an idol or an image, pleasant or unpleasant. Many a time the mind conjures up images which constitute the observed. Stimulated by these images one reacts. One may get completely absorbed in this so-called action, but it is an absorption due to a stimulus. Any action

which is dependent upon such a stimulus is most assuredly a reaction. As the above Tāntric text says the true condition of Yoga is that where the perception is steady even without the stimulus of the observed, and the mind too is free from all dependence on an image or an idea. Steadiness, or freedom from restlessness, which needs an outer stimulus, good or bad, is a condition of absorption displaying as we have mentioned a toy-psychology. The maturity of spiritual life demands that the stillness of mind is not dependent upon any factor, outer or inner. Where stillness is induced by a stimulus there one sees the functioning of the occupied mind. It is the stimulus which gives occupation. But an occupied mind is tethered to a stimulus and therefore is not free at all. And how can a mind that is not free know what silence is? Yoga indicates a completely free mind, for it is only the free mind that can act.

Now Patañjali, having taken the aspirant to the stupendous heights of communion through *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*, poses before him the problems of communication. Without the experience of communion all communication is a reactive process. It may be noted that communication may be expressed in countless ways—by word, or gesture, or thought or even by silence. But a reactive communication always fails to communicate. It may communicate at the verbal level; but communication at deeper levels, where alone it is true, needs a background free from all reactive tendencies. A communication stimulated by an external or internal factor will always fail to communicate. A communication has to be pure, for otherwise it will bring back a reactive response. It is only the spiritual aspirant who comes to the experience of communion in the timeless moment of *Samādhi* that can know what pure communication or pure action is. Such pure

communication breaks up atleast for the time being all reactive centres thus enabling him to be awakened from the stupor of his own modes of thinking. The *sūtras* of the Vibhuti-Pāda that follow lead the student to the understanding of the secrets of right communication or right action. Having dealt with the problems of right perception, Patañjali initiates the spiritual aspirant into the mysteries of right action. He speaks of right action emanating from right perception. Right action is effortless and is born in the ground of communion or right perception. This effortless action is not the outcome of accumulated knowledge. To act from the base of knowledge is to react. It arises in the soil of Wisdom. Patañjali refers to this in the following *sūtra*:

tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ

5. Through the state of meditation one enters the Light of Wisdom.

We have translated *saṁyama* as meditation, for meditation is indeed the state of *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* existing together in terms of the last *sūtra*. Patañjali says that meditation brings one to the Light of Wisdom. Wisdom is not something to be acquired. It dawns upon the consciousness silently in the timeless moments of *Samādhi*. Knowledge is the product of the mind's opposites, but Wisdom is born when the non-dual experience of *Samādhi* comes. It arrives in the innocent and virgin consciousness of communion. It illumines the entire being of man. But it comes only as a flash—one moment it is here, the next moment it is gone. It cannot be captured by the mind. It comes when both the thinker and the thought have subsided. It is not the product of time, but comes with silent footsteps in the moment where time is not. But its

expression needs the sequence of time. It has to be spaced in time, for how can any one form contain its entire majesty? Form after form must arise for the expression of that which is formless because it is comprehended in the timeless moment. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ

6. The experience of *saṁyama* or meditation has to communicate itself gradually in stages or degrees.

The word used for communication in this *sūtra* is *viniyoga* meaning distribution. How can the magnificent experience of meditation be distributed all at once? It has to be properly channelled, for otherwise it may mean nothing to one to whom it is communicated. There are two things involved here. Firstly, the spiritual experience must be distributed; as it cannot be kept to oneself. There is nothing like personal liberation when the liberated man retires into a heaven, away from the din and noise of the world. From the transcendental realms he must return to the regions of the earth in order to distribute what he may have received at the heights of his spiritual experience. Communion cannot be separated from communication. To commune is to communicate. If there is no communication it is because there has not been any communion. There may be verbal communication or a communication by the mind, but such communications have no living quality in them. They need effort and conscious deliberation. But communication that emerges from communion is spontaneous and has a natural charm about it. But to attempt to convey the experience of communion through one channel of communication is to indulge in a self-defeating effort. It

needs finer instruments of expression and it is only in the space of time that one can build such instruments. To communicate all at once has something vulgar about it. This gradualness of experience in which reside grace and charm, does not indicate any intention to hold back or be secretive in the full communication of one's experience. Gradualness is towards communication in a meaningful manner. That is what *bhūmiṣu viniyoga* essentially indicates. It shows a natural hesitancy on the part of one who has come to the experience of communion. Once again the hesitancy is not for keeping back, but for finding out the most effective way of conveying that transcendental experience. Is there not a certain amount of gradualness born of hesitancy in conveying love? It is only through subtler and subtler forms that the experience of love can be conveyed; and even then all communication falls short of the supreme experience of communion. Patañjali makes this idea clear in the following two *sūtras*.

trayam antaraṅgaṃ pūrvebhyah

7. The three (*dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*) are inner compared to the five outer instruments.

This *sūtra* hardly needs to be commented upon. The three instruments of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are obviously inner compared to *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*. These five are more external as they deal with bodily movements and habits, with regulation of breath and the extension of sense responses. The last three, namely *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* deal with the mind and its movements, and so obviously they refer to the inner regions of one's being. While this is easy to understand, what Patañjali says in the next *sūtra* is worth deeper reflection.

tad api bahiraṅgaṃ nirbījasya

8. But even the three, are outer compared to the seedless.

Here the word *nirbīja* is not to be confused with the *Nirbīja Samādhi* which we have already discussed in the first section of the book dealing with *Samādhi Pāda*. In the context of the present *sūtra*, *nirbīja* means just seedless signifying an unmanifest state. The unmanifest is not to be identified with the invisible realms which belong to the world of manifestation even though they cannot be cognized by the five physical senses. A seed is the nucleus of manifestation—one may describe it as the first stirrings of manifestation. But *nirbīja* or seedless is obviously a state of the unmanifest. If in this *sūtra*, *nirbīja* is interpreted as referring to *Nirbīja Samādhi*, then the indication would be that *Samādhi* which arises out of *dhāraṇa* and *dhyāna* is of an inferior nature. It implies that there are higher conditions of *Samādhi* than the one arising out of *dhyāna*. The term *Samādhi* is used in two different senses, and sometimes the two are regarded as identical. It may mean the psychic or the mystic. In the psychic sense, it is concerned with the attainments of superphysical powers. In this sense it has gradations, for the attainments of psychic powers have no limit. But when it is understood as the mystic experience of non-duality then gradations and stages have no meaning. It is a direct experience where the observer and the observed have been eliminated. In the *sūtra* we are considering the term seedless has no reference to *Samādhi* at all. *Nirbīja* refers to a state of seedlessness. The seedless state is the state of the unmanifest, for all manifestation centres round a seed. Therefore *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi*, when expressed and defined, are outer compared to that which is

seedless or unmanifest. But they are inner compared to the five outer instruments of Yoga. The experience of communion is not what is expressed in words. We have to remember that the description is not the described. The word *Samādhi* is not the experience of *Samādhi*. A name or a word is something outer compared to the actual experience. It is only like a finger pointing the way. The finger is not to be mistaken for the way.

It may be interesting to note that three descriptions of *Samādhi* are given by Patañjali in the *Samādhi-Pada*. These three are *asamprajñāta*, *nirvitarka* and *nirbija*. We have discussed in the earlier chapters as to what they mean in terms of the states of consciousness. They deal with the elimination of the centres of thought-habit, thought-modification and thought-seed. These centres have relevance to *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi*. In *dhāraṇa* one is concerned with the moving away from the centre of thought-habit, where mind establishes its own range of perception so as not to be caught in aimless drift. In *dhyāna* one is concerned with the centres of thought-modification so that the movement between the focal and the marginal levels comes to an end. In *Samādhi* the very centre of thought-seed is eliminated so that the *svarūpa-sūnya* condition comes into existence where there is neither the thought nor the thinker, but only the object. In a mystical sense, *Samādhi* is indeed the *nirbija* or seedless state. There can be nothing higher or lower, for it is a non-dual state entertaining no gradations. It is only when it is regarded in its psychic context that one can speak of gradations in the attainment of superphysical powers. But since we have not so far come to the question of psychic powers in the study of *Yoga-Sūtras* the term seedless has only one meaning, and that is the Unmanifest,

The great Chinese philosopher, Lao Tze, said: "The Tao that is expressed is not the Eternal Tao". Patañjali seems to be indicating the same thing in this *sūtra*. The word is not the thing. That which is expressed always falls short of the experience. Compared to experience, all expressions, even the noblest and the subtlest, are mere outer crusts.

The question arises: If all expressions fall short of the experience, then how is one to convey one's spiritual perceptions? What are the effective instruments of communication? And what indeed are the limitations of communication? One has also to inquire as to what purpose does communication serve? Is the experience of communion incommunicable? If so, is not Yoga a gospel of escape? It is to these questions of the effectiveness of communication and the fundamental purpose served by it, that we shall turn as Patañjali takes us further in the *Vibhūti Pāda*.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MIND

THE history of Mysticism is replete with instances where the saint or the mystic has been unable to communicate his or her spiritual experience to others. This inability has resulted in a strange, sometimes perverse, behaviour on the part of such a saint or a mystic. There are instances where the mystic, unable to communicate, has spent days and nights in weeping or in aimlessly rolling on the floor or in conditions of insanity or even in acts of immoral behaviour. If communion brings its own natural communication, then why should there be such instances in the life of saints and mystics? It is true that communion builds up its own instruments and channels of communication. Such building, no doubt, happens in time-sequence, with a naturalness about it. If this be the case, then why are some saints and mystics unable to communicate their spiritual perceptions to others? We have seen that *Samādhi* or communion is a state where both the thinker and the thought are non-existent. In *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi* there is a deep silence that descends on the consciousness due to the elimination of both the effort and the maker of the effort. The cessation of effort is the ceasing of the thought process, whereas the cessation of the maker of the effort is the ending of the thinker. It is only when this happens that there takes place the experience of communion where object alone is seen. This is the experience of Right perception. From this, right action or communication emerges.

It has to be noted that for communion the silence of the mind is a pre-condition, and this silence comes because of the cessation of the thinker as well as the thought. But as we have already discussed earlier, one can forcibly bring the thought process to an end by an exercise of will, or by taking drugs, or induced by certain repetitive processes. In these practices the mind is rendered completely blank, not silent, because while the thought process is suspended, the thinker is still present. The thinker may be over-awed for the time being but he is ready to spring into action any time. In fact, he immensely dislikes being over-awed by drugs or incantations or the exercise of will. Behind the blankness of the mind there is the restless condition of the thinker. The blankness due to ceasing of the thought process is mistaken for the non-dual experience of communion. The visions and experiences in such a state are mistaken for Reality. In such visions one may see the presence of the deity one worships and get greatly intoxicated. But this is not to be confused with the perception of Reality. The seeming non-dual experience in blankness is due to identification and not due to communion. The so-called non-duality is because of the suspended animation of the thinker or the enjoyer. The thinker is very much alive and is biding his time to make his appearance at the opportune moment. Many saints and mystics have mistaken these visions of the blank mind to perceptions of Reality. They feel that they have gone through a spiritual experience of the highest nature. They return to the so-called earthly existence where the thinker, who has been in suspended animation, suddenly becomes alive. It is this thinker who had been seething and boiling within during the entire blank period that becomes the agent of communication. There is no wonder that there are neurotic

tendencies in his communication. The thinker has been suddenly released from the prison-house of blankness in which he was forced to reside. He is the old entity with the entire background of the past. When released from the prison-house of blankness he recoils with great vehemence, having been fortified by the temporary residence at the subconscious levels. He brings with him the subconscious tendencies and gives expression to them. There is no wonder that those who witness the behaviour of these saints and mystics get completely bewildered.

It is true that in communication the thinker and the thought are necessary. But the thinker that comes in the field of communication must be a new entity initiating a new thought process. For this to happen the thinker must have ceased along with the thought process in moments of communion.

The mind that operates in the sphere of communication after the experience of communion is a new mind. This is so because it is only when the old mind is dead that there is the experience of communion. In this there is death of both the thought as well as the thinker. In blankness, induced by drugs, incantations, etc. the old mind remains, because here only the thought process has been forcibly stopped keeping the thinker untouched. And so it is the old mind that attempts to communicate the so-called visions. When the conscious thought-process has been forcibly stopped then the thinker revels in the subconscious currents of thoughts. It is with that he becomes active when the so-called mystic or saint wishes to communicate. It is this which accounts for the strange behaviour of these mystics and saints. When the old mind interprets these psychic visions of the blank mind then its old reactions are bound to become manifest. The lower psychic visions, mistaken for spiritual experience,

bring a certain amount of excitement and even intoxication. The old mind uses them for communication thus resulting in strange and sometimes perverted behaviour. The true mystic who has had an experience of communion would never behave in such a manner. And so what we see in the life of these so-called saints and mystics is not the result of communion but of the mind forcibly rendered blank. In the blank mind the thought process has been forcibly stopped, and, equally forcibly has the thinker been kept under chains. In the silent mind, both the thinker and the thought process have dropped. For communication one does need the thinker and the process of thought. But what emerges after communion is the new mind, and it is this new mind that wields the instruments of communication.

One may ask: What is this new mind? What is indeed the nature of transformation, bringing into existence a new quality of the mind? It is to this that Patañjali refers in the three *sūtras* that follow. They are of profound significance, for they tell us in clearest terms the transformation that takes place in the functioning of the mind.

*vyutthāna-nirodha-samṣkārayor abhībhava-prādurbhāvau
nirodha-kṣaṇa-cittānvayo nirodha-parañāmaḥ*

9. There is a transformation in which the mind is aware of the interval between the cessation and the re-emergence of the thought-process. This transformation is called *nirodha-parañāma* or the awareness of the interval.

The two words used in this *sūtra* are *nirodha* and *vyutthāna* meaning cessation and re-emergence. In this process the

abhibhava and *prādurbhava* of the *saṃskāras* take place. This refers to the appearance and disappearance of thought-tendencies, which is the condition of cessation and re-emergence. But the *sūtra* says that there intervenes momentarily an interval between the two. This is expressed by Patañjali by the phrase *nirodha-kṣaṇa*. It is an interval between *abhibhava* and *prādurbhava*, between the disappearance and the re-appearance of the thought-tendencies or the thought-process. To put it differently there is an interval between two thoughts. And the transformation that takes place during *saṃyama* or meditation is of that nature where there is an awareness in the mind of the interval between two thought-processes. Such awareness is described as *nirodha-pariṇāma*. An interval between two thoughts may, at first, be difficult to understand. But surely one can be aware of an interval between two sounds. When a bell rings there is an interval between two ringings. Ordinarily we are not aware of this interval between these two expressions of sound, because the mind projects a continuity whereby we hear only the continuity of sound. The awareness of an interval demands a great sensitivity of the mind. Ordinarily our mind is so insensitive that it sees only a continuity without an interval, or if it becomes aware of an interval, there is an immediate covering up of that interval with a continuity of thought. We are here not concerned with the covering up of the interval. What is indicated in the above *sūtra* is the awareness of the interval. The mind that can be aware of an interval, even if for a split second, has undergone a great transformation in the very quality of its functioning. It is in the interval that the fullness of life resides. If one could be aware of an interval between two thoughts or between two sounds then there would come an understanding of things

and events as would revolutionize one's behaviour and action. Here we see the quality of a new mind emerging out of the experience of communion. It has a sensitivity which was unknown to the old mind.

Most of us have never known what silence is. The old mind is an utter stranger to it because of its ceaseless chatterings. Even when the outer sound subsides the mind goes on making its own noise with the result that silence is something with which we are quite unfamiliar. The experience of silence is truly shattering, for it demands the death of the mind. The old mind wedded to continuity is averse to coming anywhere near the experience of silence. It cannot change itself into a new mind by conscious effort as the birth of a new mind is not a process of continuity. The new is born when the old dies. It is in the moment of communion that the new mind comes into existence. He who comes constantly to the experience of communion knows also the secret of the renewal of mind from moment to moment. The new mind is the gift of *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi*. It is the instrument of communication forged by communion itself. In that process of communication the new mind grows. It is in this growth that it is aware of the interval between two thoughts. It is the awareness of silence which abides in the interval between two expressions, whether of thought or sound or any other form. It is to the growth of the new mind that Patañjali refers in the following *sūtra*:

tasya praśānta-vāhitā samṣkārāt

10. It grows steadily into greater sensitivity.

One of the characteristics of the new mind is its sensitivity. While the old mind was dull due to the burden of its own past, the new mind, having no burden, is able to grow in

sensitivity. The new mind also may tend to accumulate its own burden if one does not come to experiences of communion constantly. It is communion that blows away the dust that may otherwise gather on its surface because in communion there is experience without accumulation. Due to constant experiences of communion the new mind grows in sensitivity. From the awareness of the silence abiding in the interval, it grows into greater awareness of the experience of silence. In the initial stages the silence abiding in the interval is all that the new mind is capable of being aware of. This is what is described by Patañjali as *nirodha pariñāma* meaning that transformation of mind by which it becomes aware of the interval between the disappearance and the re-appearance of thought, i.e. the awareness of the silence between two sounds. The new mind has a sensitivity unknown to the old mind. We said that this mind grows in sensitivity. Does this mean that sensitivity has gradations, so that one is more sensitive and the other is less? There can be no moreness or lessness with regard to sensitivity. There can be no question of growth with regard to the quality of sensitivity. One is either sensitive or one is not. But one can grow in one's range of sensitivity. And so growing in sensitivity of the new mind refers to its range increase. In the beginning the range is just an interval of silence. The duration of awareness is extremely limited. But with an increase in the perceptive range, the duration of this awareness increases. It is this which is indicated in the next *sūtra*:

sarvārthataikāgratayoḥ kṣayodayau cittasya samādhi-pariñāmaḥ

11. There is a transformation in which the mind is aware of the silence which comes

with the cessation of distractions. This transformation is known as *samādhi pariṇāma* or the awareness of the quiet.

One of the dictionary meanings of *Samādhi* is silence. And since this transformation of the mind is described as *samādhi pariṇāma*, one can define it as awareness of quiet. *Nirodha pariṇāma* is the awareness of the interval while *samādhi pariṇāma* is the awareness of quiet. The quiet arrives with the cessation of all distracting noise. In distractions the mind has a characteristic of "many-pointedness" or as the *sūtra* says *sarvārthata*. In quiet this many-pointedness vanishes and so there is, as it were, the one-pointedness or what the *sūtra* calls *ekāgrata*. This one-pointedness does not exist by itself, for, the condition for its arrival is the cessation of the many-pointedness. Obviously the reference is to the quiet which comes with the cessation of noise. The silence that appertains the interval between two sounds is different from the silence that arises with the cessation of noise. The difference obviously is of duration, for, the range in the latter is greater than in the former. This shows that the mind is able to abide in the silence for a longer duration than was the case with regard to the interval. In *nirodha pariṇāma* the new mind has just a fleeting experience of silence that is momentarily experienced in the interval between two sounds. For effective communication it is necessary that the mind grows in its capacity to abide in silence for a longer duration. The quality of silence is the same in both cases, but the range and duration differ.

To bear the silence of an interval is hard enough, but to experience the silence which arrives with the cessation of noise is harder still. It is this which is indicated in the transformation of the mind known as *samādhi pariṇāma*. Now

Samādhi is a state of extended silence, extended in range and duration. The *sūtra* speaks of the *kṣaya* and *udaya*, meaning the cessation of distractions or the many-pointedness, and the arising of silence or one-pointedness. Thus in transformation of the mind there is awareness of silence which comes with the cessation of noise. In *nirodha pariṇāma* we discussed about silence between two sounds. Here we do not refer to silence between two distractions, but rather the complete cessation of distractions and the arising of silence. We speak of the silence that lasts in the chronological sense. The silence that lasts in psychological time is no silence at all for in that time-sequence the mind is immersed in its continuity of thought. In the field of communication we are concerned with chronological time. If the psychological time persists then there can be no communication at all. In the state of communion all movement of psychological time vanishes and from then on the only time that exists is chronological time. In *samādhi pariṇāma* we refer to the awareness of the mind with reference to silence that lasts in chronological time. In *nirodha pariṇāma* the silence is chronologically of a moment's duration while in the former it has a longer duration, for, here the noise ceases and in that cessation, silence is experienced.

As stated earlier the transformation of the mind cannot be brought about. It occurs in the moment of communion. This transformation is to prepare the new mind for the task of effective communication. Again this transformation occurs when the old mind lies dead in the moment of communion. The old mind cannot be trained for effective communication, for, it lives in the past and projects that past into *what is*. The new mind is extraordinarily sensitive, but its sensitivity has to grow in range and extent. The three *sūtras* dealing

with the transformation of the mind are concerned with the range and extent of sensitivity. In *nirodha pariṇāma* the range extends only upto the interval, while in *samādhi pariṇāma* the sensitivity functions in a larger area. This range and extent are not merely horizontal but vertical too. In other words they are not merely in terms of width or breadth, but also with reference to depth. There has to be both breadth as well as depth in sensitivity. While the first of these *sūtras* refers to sensitivity, in the second we find an indication of the breadth in the range and extent of sensitivity. In the third of these *sūtras* that follows our attention is drawn to sensitivity in depth.

*tataḥ punaḥ śantoditau tulya-pratyayau cittasyaikāgratā-
pariṇāmaḥ*

12. There is a transformation in which the awareness of the mind undergoes no change whether there be noise or a cessation of noise. This transformation is known as *ekāgrata pariṇāma* or awareness of silence in the midst of noise.

The above *sūtra* speaks of *sānta-uditau tulya-pratyayau*. It means that the *pratyaya* or the content of the mind remains *tulya* or unchanged whether there is the subsiding of distractions or emergence of distractions. A mind that is undistracted experiences silence in the noise itself. The silence that comes from the cessation of noise is superficial; it is only the silence that is discovered in the midst of noise that has depth; in fact, such silence has enormous depth. Patañjali speaks here of the sensitivity of the new mind in terms of depth, and not merely breadth. This transformation is

known as *ekāgrata pariñāma* where there is awareness of silence in the midst of noise. For the experience of silence such a mind requires neither the cessation of noise nor the subsiding of distractions. The new mind, if it is to communicate effectively, must have both breadth as well as depth. In *sāmadhi* and *ekāgrata pariñāmas* there is reference to breadth and depth respectively.

By transformation of the mind what is indicated is the birth of a new mind. It is only the New Mind that can undertake the stupendous task of communicating the refreshing experience of communion. In the three *sūtras* dealing with the transformation of mind, Patañjali speaks about the urge to communicate with which the experience of communion is surcharged. Before entering the field of communication, communion must arm itself with appropriate instruments. In the transformation of the mind this new instrument is being created. The new mind has extraordinary sensitivity, for, otherwise how can it effectively communicate? For communion one needs a negative mind, but for communication one needs a sensitive mind. Now the negative and the sensitive are two sides of the same medallion. A positive mind can never know what sensitivity is, and a negative mind can never function in a condition of dullness. As we have stated earlier, communication is action or relationship. How can any action be true or how can any relationship be right if it does not reflect the sensitivity of one's consciousness? It is only the man of sensitivity who can act rightly. And so communion which comes in the condition of negativity emerges into the field of communication with extraordinary sensitivity of consciousness. No better description of sensitivity can be indicated than the threefold transformation of the mind mentioned by Patañjali in the above four *sūtras*. It is only

the mind that knows the breadth and depth of silence that is in a position to communicate, and communicate effectively. In its work of communication, it may use words, gestures and thoughts—but all these will arise from the breadth and the depth of silence. Communication from the base of silence never fails. In the three transformations about which Patañjali speaks, it is this base of silence which is being created so that communication may be most effective. Such a transformation affects the entire being of man, for, with the birth of the new mind a new man comes into existence. The transformation in terms of *nirodha*, *samādhi* and *ekāgrata pariṇāmās* is most fundamental. It is not a mere change of degree, but indeed a change of kind. It is in the nature of the mutation of the mind. And the influence of the mutant mind permeates the entire being of man. It is this which is indicated in the following *sūtra*:

*etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharma-lakṣaṇāvasthā-pariṇāmā
vyākhyātāḥ*

13. These transformations of the mind are reflected in the quality, the tendencies and the behaviour-patterns both at the structural as well as the functional levels of man's being.

The range of influence exercised by this transformation is expressed in the above *sūtra* by *bhūta* and *indriya*. Now *bhūta* represents the basic structure of things, for the five elements are the very foundation of the material world. Similarly *indriya* or the senses represent the functional base of all activities of man. Thus *bhūta* and *indriya* mean the structural and functional levels of man's being. But these are

so powerfully affected by the impact of the new mind that their quality, tendencies and behaviour-patterns undergo fundamental changes. The words used are *dharmā*, *lakṣaṇa* and *avasthā*. They are extremely significant and appropriate, for they cover the whole expressional range. *Dharma* is the quality, and, Patañjali says that with the transformation of mind, the very quality of things is changed both at the structural as well as at the functional levels. This qualitative change is reflected in the *lakṣaṇa* or the tendencies of behaviour and expression. The very expressional tendencies undergo a change with the coming in of the new mind. Now tendency is something general, but *avasthā* or the behaviour-pattern is something particular. Thus the changes at the structural and functional levels are both general as well as particular. In other words, the impact of the new mind is such that the entire being of man in the whole gamut of his expressional range undergoes a fundamental change. There comes into being the new man, and it is this new man that enters into a fresh relationship with life. From the heights of spiritual experience or communion, Patañjali brings the aspirant into the fields of expression or communication. In the next *sūtra* he says:

śāntoditāvya-padeśya-dharmānuṣṭhātī dharmī

14. The Unmanifest is the Ground or the substratum in which all expressions of the past, the present and the future abide.

The word *dharmī* used here denotes the Ground or the substratum of all manifestation. *Dharmī* also means something that holds, or something which constitutes a dependable base. Now this Ground is obviously the Unmanifest, for, the entire

manifestation rests upon it. It is the Unmanifest that permeates the whole manifestation. There is no point of manifestation where the Unmanifest is not, for, without the Unmanifest, the manifest would cease to be. The above *sūtra* says that all expressions of the past, the present and the future abide in the Unmanifest. The past, the present and the future exist in the Unmanifest all at once. The words used for the past, the present and the future are *sānta*, *udita* and *avyapadeśya* which really means that which has ceased, that which is and that which will be, or, the dormant, the active and the potential. All these expressions reside in the Ground of the Unmanifest. The Unmanifest is indeed the Timeless, and the Timeless can be experienced only in the moment of communion. In communion there is the awareness of the moment of discontinuity which is the Timeless Moment. So in communion one sees as it were in a flash, the Ground of all manifestation, the substratum of all expressions of the past, the present and the future. But if the past, the present and the future exist all at once in the Ground of the Manifest, then why is it that we see differences in the realm of manifestation or in the field of expression? Patañjali replying to this question says:

kramānyatvaṃ pariṇāmanyatve hetuḥ

15. The cause of the differences in expressions is due to the factor of time-succession.

That which co-exists in the Unmanifest is seen in the realm of manifestation as existing separately. Patañjali says that it is *krama-anya* which is the cause of *pariṇāma-anya*. Now *pariṇāma-anya* is the expressional diversity or variation, and *krama-anya* is the succession of time. That which co-exists in the timeless state is broken up in time-succession. And

it is this which causes diversities in expressions. When time-succession is seen without the comprehension of the timeless moment then the former makes no sense whatever. It appears to be a frustrating process moving in a seeming aimlessness. Rabindranath Tagore states this beautifully in his book *Sadhana*.

“ if we do not see the Infinite Rest, and only see Infinite Motion, then existence appears to us a monstrous evil, impetuously rushing towards an unending aimlessness.”

The movement in time indeed seems to us utterly monstrous displaying no meaning whatsoever. So the whole process of becoming which is in time-sequence also appears frustrating and almost futile. It is this seeming aimlessness of time-sequence which was given expression to by Omar Khayyam in the following lines:

“ 'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with men for Pieces plays;
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.”

Is the whole process of becoming an aimless movement? Has time-sequence no purpose at all? Is everything a matter of chance? Is there a design in nature? Is there a plan underlying the diverse expressional activities seen in the universe? Religions have talked of the Divine Plan, Science, too, today speaks of the Great Design. But where are the plans and the designs? In life or in nature? Man wants to discover the plan or the design by dissecting and analysing the manifest.

He seeks to find the meaning of time in the time-sequence itself. He breaks up the manifest and expects to see the great design and the Divine Plan. He studies history and mythology, delves into the story of Genesis and the secrets of Occult chronology. Not finding the design and the purpose, he projects a design and a purpose of his own and calls it divine. It is not by dissecting time that one can discover the timeless moment; it is not by analysing the manifest that one can have a glimpse of the Unmanifest. It is only when the manifest drops away that the Unmanifest can be seen in all its glory. And the dropping away of the manifest is the cessation of the thinker and the thought. In this utter silence of consciousness the timeless moment conveys the secret of time; it is in this timeless moment that the meaning of the Time-sequence is comprehended. Whether there is or there is not a plan or a purpose can be understood only when in the cessation of the thinker and the thought, the experience of the timeless moment comes. It is only by communing with life that one can understand the meaning of life. Patañjali speaks of this in the next *sūtra* where he says:

pariṇāma-traya-samyamād atītānāgata-jñānam

16. It is the new mind characterized by the threefold transformation that can comprehend the nature of Time.

Patañjali here speaks of the *atīta-anāgata-jñānam* which means the knowledge of the past and the future. One may ask: What about the present? The past and the future signify the flow of time. The movement of time is indeed from the past to the future. The moment of the present does not belong to the stream of time. The present is the timeless

moment. The mind cannot describe or define the present. Any description or definition of it apertains the past or the future. The present that can be described is not the present. And so in the above *sūtra* by knowledge of the past and the future is meant the flow of time. Patañjali says that the secret and the mystery of time can be known only to the new mind which is characterized by the threefold transformation.

As we have already seen, the culminating point of the threefold transformation is an awareness of silence in the midst of noise. This is the awareness of the Transcendent in the Immanent, or of the timeless in the sequence of time. Where else can the timeless be? If it is away from time, then it belongs to the field of time, for, one would need the instrument of time to reach the timeless. That which is away from time must belong to some space, may be a space of a different category. And that which lies in space can be reached only in time, even though it may be a different category of time. Thus the timeless is in time itself. It is the continuing process of the thought and the thinker that prevents us from seeing the timeless in time. The timeless in time is indeed the moment of the present. In the awareness of the timeless in time there comes an understanding of the entire movement of time with its design and purpose. The timeless moment is the Infinite Rest even as the flow of time is Infinite Motion. Motion becomes meaningful only in the context of rest. It is the timeless moment which gives significance to time. The new mind born in the moment of communion knows the secret of the time process because it comprehends the mystery of the timeless moment.

Surely it is only such a mind that can establish right relationship with life and can communicate effectively the

experience of communion. But how does it accomplish this difficult task? How does the new mind forge effective channels of communication? Patañjali says that this is done by *saṁyama* which we have translated as meditation. In the subsequent *sūtras* Patañjali speaks of *saṁyama* with reference to a diversity of action. In this sense *saṁyama* has to be understood as the action of the new mind. In meditation there is a movement, but it is a movement of the new mind. From the movement of the mind one comes to the state where there is a movement in the mind. *Dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi* brings one to a state where the movement of the mind ceases, and a movement in the mind begins. This movement in the mind is the movement of life itself, or to put it differently it is Life that acts through such a mind. In the *sūtras* that follow we shall see what *saṁyama* or the action of the new mind achieves, and how it is able to forge effective channels of communication to convey the majestic splendour of communion.

CHAPTER XXII

THE EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION

IN our studies of the *Yoga-Sūtras* we now come to that aspect of Yoga which has cast much spell on the minds of most people and is, therefore, greatly misunderstood. This is the subject of psychic or superphysical attainments. Yoga is ordinarily associated in the minds of most people with the performance of so-called miracles or the display of superphysical powers. Most people regard superphysical powers as the very core of Yoga. The craze for these has grown much in recent times. This is due to the fact that the glamour of science and technology seems to be wearing out very fast. Once again this is because of the fact that comforts given by science and technology have not resulted in giving to man a sense of happiness. The so-called miracles of science and technology no longer hold the field of attraction for the modern man, atleast not to the same extent as they did some years ago. It is the miracles of Yoga which have become the new craze and a new fashion. This has created a new interest among the people of our age for things psychic or superphysical. Parapsychology and extrasensory perception have received an academic status which was denied to them in the last century and in the beginning of this century. A scientific study of extrasensory perception and allied subjects is one thing, while the credulous running after psychic phenomena is quite different. It is good that modern man

is turning to a scientific inquiry of the superphysical phenomenon. These scientific students will find much material of great value in the *Vibhūti Pāda* of the *Yoga-Sūtras*. We are not concerned here about the scientific effort to study various aspects of superphysical phenomena such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, hypnotism, psychometry, precognition, retrocognition, etc. Our concern so far as the present discussion goes is with regard to giving to psychic powers their rightful place so that the exaggerated notions with which they are viewed by most people today may be corrected.

It has to be borne in mind that psychic powers are not the core of Yoga, but only incidental to Yoga. They are an offshoot of the Yogic process. They certainly do not belong to the mainstream of Yoga. This can be understood if one clearly distinguishes between the spiritual and the psychic. In the earlier chapters this question has been discussed and so we do not propose to examine these two subjects again. The spiritual and the psychic are completely different, though not necessarily contradictory. It has to be noted that while a spiritual man may come in possession of psychic powers, one who consciously develops psychic powers usually remains an utter stranger to spiritual experience. One need not be afraid of psychic powers. In some quarters there is a fear of these powers, so much so that they are not even inclined to examine this phenomenon in a scientific and an objective manner. To have glamour about psychic powers or to be afraid of them to the extent of showing a disinclination to study and examine them, are both reactions of an immature understanding of spirituality and psychism. Once again spirituality and spiritualism are completely different. Spiritualism belongs to the category of psychism, its main subject

of interest being the establishment of contacts with disembodied spirits and those who have crossed the portal of death. Spirituality is the right perception of men and things, that perception which arises in a state of non-duality, where the frontiers of the mind no longer limit one's vision and understanding.

We said that there is today an abnormal craze regarding superphysical phenomena and the performance of so-called miracles, however insignificant they may be. This craze has expressed itself in running after ochre-coloured Sanyasis who most often give spurious stuff to those seeking unusual experiences. There is today a bumper crop of such Sanyasis who are ready to exploit the present craze for the purposes of expanding their own empires. This craze is also seen in the great demand for certain types of drugs—LSD and many others—particularly among the younger generation in the West and to a certain extent in the East. *Japa* or the repetition of *mantras* is another form in which this craze seems to express itself. There are also the Haṭha Yoga and Tāntrik practices which are being taken to by a large number of people in search of the superphysical. Behind all these efforts there is one common element to be seen—and that is to run away from the ways of the mind and to seek shelter in something which dulls its activity. Mind and its ways have become an anathema to the modern man in search of something different from what science and technology have given him. All processes of mentation are being frowned upon by these seekers after spiritual truths. Any philosophy or approach that asks one to examine the ways of the mind is regarded as a waste of time. Man seems to be regressing into emotionalism where the mind is sought to be dulled. Modern man in search of a soul seems to be deliberately moving

along the path of making the mind utterly blank. Instead of coming to the silence of the mind, he moves towards the creation of a blank mind which is considered today to be the way of yoga.

By drugs and incantations, by repetition of *mantras* and Hatha Yogic practices, by frenzied emotionalism or elaborate ritualism, modern man wants to come to a blankness of mind which he regards as a prelude to Yogic experience. The dangers of a blank mind are immense, for, here the mind is rendered absolutely passive. And a passive mind is a fertile ground in which hypnosis, including self-hypnosis, grows abundantly. Much of what goes on today by the name of Yoga and meditation is an exercise in hypnosis, both outward and inward. A mind that is rendered passive is greatly impressionable, and hypnosis succeeds only in a state of such impressionability. An impressionable mind is not a sensitive mind. It is passive and not negative. It is an absorbent mind, not one that has the alertness of right perception. A passive and an impressionable mind can be made use of in the process of religious exploitation. And that is what is going on today in full intensity. "Bring the mind to a condition of blankness"—this seems to be the undercurrent, the consistent cry, whether articulate or inarticulate, of all the new religious and neo-Yoga movements. They are mostly pseudo-religious and pseudo-yogic. The urge to explore the regions of the superphysical by stimulating the various Chakrās or Centres also functions in this context of the blankness of the mind. As stated earlier, in the blankness of the mind the thought-process is forcibly suppressed while the thinker is at large. And so it is the thinker, which is the old mind, that utilises the conditions created by the yogic practices and the stimulation of the different Centres. It is hardly necessary to state that when the old mind uses

these superphysical forces, there is a tendency to strengthen its own base rooted in psychological security and continuity.

We are witnessing in the psychospiritual field a crisis far more dangerous than the crisis that has come due to the release of the atomic energy. There is a spell of fear cast over the whole human civilization because a minority of people, an insignificant minority, has come in possession of gigantic nuclear powers. While we are aware of this, we seem to be utterly oblivious of the fact that the old and heavily conditioned old mind of man is today toying with superphysical forces released through immature understanding of Yoga and its purposes. It is in this context that a fresh understanding of Yoga in terms of one of the greatest teachers of Yoga, Patañjali, has become necessary. And Patañjali not only gives us a serious warning against what is happening today, he gives also a guidance of great value so that we may steer clear of the pitfalls that lie along our path. Modern man must give heed to this warning if he is not to move headlong down a steep precipice in his journey to spiritual realms.

It is to be noted that Patañjali introduces the subject of psychic powers only after having discussed in all aspects the question of *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi*. He suggests that the spiritual aspirant can turn to these subjects of psychic powers only after he has established himself in a state of communion. Also, he comes to psychic powers only after he has fully discussed the question of the threefold transformation of the mind. Patañjali clearly indicates that the old mind cannot enter the field of psychic powers, and if it does so it will be dangerous and devastating for the spiritual pilgrim. According to him it is only the new mind that can safely go into this question of psychic powers. Patañjali now takes us into a

detailed discussion of the psychic powers. But all along, in *sūtra* after *sūtra*, he uses the word *saṁyama*. Now *saṁyama*, as we have noted earlier, is the action of the new mind. And so Patañjali says that in all matters of psychic powers there has to be the action of the new mind, the mind that has undergone fundamental transformation in the moment of communion. Psychic powers are powerful instruments of communication, but they must be wielded by the new mind, for, otherwise there is great danger to the student of Yoga. The new mind emerges from the silence of communion, and not from the state of mental blankness. A mind rendered blank, when it undertakes a journey into psychic realms, is bound to face danger but the new mind can safely undertake this journey, for it is not engaged in fulfilling the unfulfilled past. And so in the background of the fundamental transformation of the mind, we can look into those *sūtras* where Patañjali explores the subject of psychic powers. In the following *sūtra*, he says:

*śabdārtha-pratyayānām itaretarādhyāsāt saṁkaras
tat pravibhāga-saṁyamāt sarva-bhūta-ruta-jñānam*

17. By communing with the verbal meaning, the projected significance and the real content, the confusion between them is removed, enabling one to comprehend the real meaning of the spoken word by whomsoever uttered.

Usually when we listen to any one there is a confusion of the verbal meaning, the projected meaning and the real meaning of the words spoken by the other. Patañjali uses three words to denote this. *Śabda*, *artha*, and *pratyaya*. Now *śabda* is

the meaning at the verbal level. *Artha* signifies the meaning projected by the mind of the listener. And *pratyaya* means the real meaning or the content which the speaker desires to convey. All these three are confused one with the other. Patañjali uses a significant phrase to indicate this confusion. According to him it is due to *itaretara-dhyāsāt* meaning superimposition on each other. The mind of the listener superimposes his own *artha* or meaning on the *pratyaya* of the other. At the verbal level there is a mere verbal understanding which is no understanding at all. Here it is the superimposition of *artha* on *pratyaya*, of the projected meaning on the real meaning.

Speech is the most powerful means of communication. And yet much misunderstanding is created by the spoken word resulting in unhappy relationship. If one could go behind the verbal meaning and cease projecting one's own meanings on words that are spoken by the other then life would be much simpler causing no strain in relationship. But how is this to be done? Only by an act of communion, which means noting the movement of one's own mind when one listens to the words uttered by others. If one could listen to oneself without interruption while listening to others then the listening will be done in silence. This has to be a simultaneous process—listening to others, and listening without any interruption or resistance to what the mind says. One must listen to oneself while listening to others—that is the only way to know what one's mind is saying. It is only there that the immediate reactions of the mind can be watched.

But this can be done by the new mind alone; the old mind with its enormous burden of the past cannot undertake it. The new mind in a state of communion with the speech of others can come to a true understanding of what the other person says or wishes to convey. The mind capable of such a

communion can understand what any one says. Such a mind can never misunderstand. It communes so that it does not allow the thought and the thinker to interfere in the act of listening. Listening is indeed a great art; he who knows it becomes a centre of happy relationship. It is interesting to note that in dealing with the subject of communication, Patañjali begins with speech or the spoken word, because speech is the channel of communication used by all human beings. Before indulging in the development of intricate psychic powers, Patañjali suggests that the student of Yoga would do well to grow in the art of listening without any superimposition or interference. This will enable him to establish a happy relationship with all—but above all with himself.

Patañjali says the nature of one's past incarnation can be known easily without running after Sanyasis and occultists. He refers to this in the next *sūtra*:

saṃskāra-sākṣātkaraṇāt pūrvajāti-jñānam

18. By communing with one's own inherent tendencies one can have an understanding of the nature of one's previous incarnation.

The tendencies are the *saṃskāras*—those that are inherent in oneself and come out when there is no conscious defence mechanism. One builds up defence mechanisms with the result that the inherent tendencies are hardly seen. If one sees them then immediately they are suppressed or explained away. Patañjali says: *saṃskāra-sākṣāt-karaṇāt*; it means a direct perception of the inherent tendencies without any screen of explanation or justification or condemnation or evaluation. In other words, by a communion with the inherent tendencies in oneself one can easily know the nature of one's own past

We are terribly afraid of our past and therefore can never look it, in the face. It is this which keeps the past unresolved. By communing with the inherent tendencies one will be able to come face to face with the past. And the past will tell the nature of our previous incarnation. The past has two aspects, the events and the reactions to those events. It thus contains both the objective and the subjective factors. Objectively it represents events and happenings. Subjectively it represents tendencies and reactions imbedded in one's consciousness. To know the past in terms of events and happenings requires a special psychic insight, and yet even with that one cannot be absolutely sure of what one sees, because that which is seen is being interpreted by the seer. The seer who looks at past events and happenings sees them through his own scale of interpretation. Many a time what we see with our physical eyes does not tally with what has actually happened. This is because the perceiver disturbs the object of perception in the very act of perceiving. Seeing with occult eyes makes no difference whatsoever in this perceiver-perceived relationship. But the operative nature of the past resides not in events and happenings but in tendencies and reactions that are imbedded in one's consciousness. And so the past in its real sense is not away from us, but is there in the very situation in which we are. The past is in the present, and this can be comprehended by communing with the present. This means seeing one's own tendencies, habits and reactions without any explanation or interruption. Then they themselves tell us the nature of our past. Once again it is only the new mind that can cognize the real nature of one's past.

One may say that thus far the approach of Patañjali to the question of psychic powers seems very tame as he has

not suggested anything exciting as one associates these powers with things unusual and abnormal. What Patañjali has discussed in the last two *sūtras* appears to be very reasonable and far from sensational. It must be noted that throughout the discussion regarding these powers, he is very cautious, and does not allow us to forget that action in this field must be by the new mind. Again and again he brings us to that point, for without the background of communion any movement in the direction of psychic powers is extremely dangerous. He now takes us further into the realm of psychic powers.

pratyayāsyā para-citta-jñānam

19. By communing with the thought-expressions of the other, one can understand how his mind functions.

Behind thought-expressions are thought-images or thought-forms. The entire content of the thought-form does not come down in thought-expressions. An expressed thought has to function under the limitations of words. But howsoever limited the language may be, if one communes with these verbalizations then one can understand how the mind of the other person works. This is the case of thought-reading. From what is verbalized one can visualize what is yet to follow. This brings us to the subject of telepathy. Large numbers of experiments have been carried on with regard to the subject of telepathic communication, where a mind can speak directly to the other mind. One can develop this capacity by communing with what is being verbalized. Such communion implies listening to the other person without judgment or interpretation. If this is done then one can

get an insight into the functioning of the other person's mind. One can almost say what that person is going to say the next moment even though the other person is still to verbalize what he wishes to say. This is the way of putting oneself in rapport with the mind of another. Here Patañjali has indicated, as it has been done nowhere else by ancient or modern writers, the limitation of telepathy. One can know how the mind of the other person works, but not why the mind functions that way. The subject of "why" with reference to the functioning of the mind of the other is entirely outside the scope of telepathy. This is made clear in the *sūtra* that follows:

na ca tat sālambanaṃ-tasyāviśayi-bhūtatvāt

20. This, however, does not enable one to know the motivating factors which sustain and support those thought-images.

The "how" can describe only the structure of the thought-forms. It is only when one is able to probe into the "why" of the thought-forms that one can know the motives behind a particular thought process. Telepathy gives indication only of the structure of the thought-process, not its motivation. This is the limitation of telepathy, and Patañjali expresses this limitation by using the phrase: *tasya-aviśayibhūtatvāt*, meaning, it being not a subject lying within its province. Thus an inquiry into the motivations of thought is outside the purview and the province of telepathy. Nowhere in the vast literature of parapsychology do we find any mention regarding the limitations of telepathic communications.

Patañjali takes the aspirant step by step, into the deeper waters of psychic development. In the next *sūtra*, he speaks

of something which demands a clear thinking lest one becomes a victim of confusion. He says:

*kāya-rūpa-samyamāt tad grāhya-śakti stambhe cakṣuḥ-
prakāśa-saṃprayoge 'ntardhānam*

21. By meditating on the body of form, the consciousness withdraws from its physical focus and attains to an "internal state".

The word *antardhānam* appearing in this *sūtra* is translated generally as being physically invisible. To regard this *sūtra* as indicating a state of physical invisibility would be to interpret it in a very superficial sense. Prof. Earnest Wood, who has been a deep student of Yoga and of Hindu Philosophy, translates the word to mean "an internal state". To us this appears to be a far more correct interpretation than the one which speaks of physical invisibility. Patañjali says that by meditation on the body of form—not on the form of the body—one can come to such an internal state where the consciousness withdraws from its physical focus. The phrase used is *kāya-rūpa* which indicates the body of form, meaning the pure form. By meditation on form, not on any particular expression of it, there takes place a withdrawal of consciousness from its physical focus. Patañjali speaks in this connection of *grāhya-śakti-stambhe* which would mean the suspension of bodily responses so that the light emanating from physical objects remain unresponded to by the eye or the organ of perception.

A meditation on pure form brings about such a withdrawal of consciousness that the physical body is there and yet is not there. Sometimes it happens that a person

is physically near, and yet is far away. A person may be in the midst of a crowd, and yet may be so withdrawn within that his presence there is just physical, the psychological counterpart having moved on elsewhere. By this meditation a person may retire into complete solitude even when physically in a crowd. The invisibility here is not physical but psychospiritual. A real *satsang* or the company of a sage or a saint is possible only when one goes to him with one's physical focus withdrawn so that there is a communion at the psychospiritual level. But one may ask: What is this meditation on pure form? Pure form has no particular shape, in fact, it has no particular form at all. So it is identical with the formless. To meditate on the formless is to enter the timeless moment or the interval of discontinuity. With this entry naturally, there is a withdrawal from the time-focus. So one is invisible psychically or in terms of consciousness. Such a meditation is obviously the action of the new mind, for it is only this that can establish a rhythm of continuity and discontinuity. When the rhythm is broken then it regresses into the old state of insensitivity. It is only in the maintenance of this rhythm that the new mind can retain its quality. In this rhythm there is the phenomenon of withdrawal and return. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali speaks of the moment of withdrawal, for, it is only through such moments of withdrawal that there arises the possibility of effective communication. The withdrawal and return must exist as two sides of the same coin. Where this rhythm is, there man's consciousness remains incorruptible. This withdrawal can be experimented through various channels—like meditation on the formless, it can be on the soundless, and along similar avenues of cognition and perception. In the next *sūtra*, there is a mention about this:

etena śabdādyantardhānam uktam

22. This indicates the attainment of an internal state through meditation on the sound, etc.

The meditation on the body of the sound is really a meditation on the Soundless, it is the hearing of the *anahata-nāda* or the Voice of the Silence. He who would listen to the Voice of the Silence must experience a withdrawal from the focus of physical sound. And he who returns from the soundless to the realm of sound shows forth a greater sensitivity to the subtle nuances of sound than was the case before. H.P. Blavatsky in her priceless book *The Voice of the Silence* says:

He who would hear the voice of Nada,
“the Soundless Sound”, and comprehend
it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana.

Here *Dhāraṇa* means the total state of communion comprising *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi*. In these two *sūtras*, Patañjali speaks of communion with the Formless and the Soundless, or about meditation on the body of form as well as the body of sound. Expounding the subject of communication in the *Vibhūti Pāda*, he suggests that there must happen constantly the phenomenon of withdrawal and return. He alone who constantly withdraws, can return refreshed and therefore undertake the task of effective communication. This withdrawal is the act of making oneself psychologically invisible and inaudible. This is the internal state arising out of meditation on the body of form and the body of sound.

One may ask: Is it possible for everyone to come to such an internal state? Is such a withdrawal-return phenomenon possible for all? Does not one's Karma serve as a handicap

in coming to this state? If so, only very few can come to such states of meditation on the Formless and the Soundless. Patañjali interrupts his discussion here in order to clear up this doubt about karma. Man regards Karma as the greatest obstacle on the path of spiritual perception. Unless one is freed from the restrictive influences of the past, how can one move further? But the whole mechanism of causation is rooted in the past. How can one change the past, and without it, how can one know the refreshing experiences of communion and communication? Speaking about this problem of Karma in the *sūtra* that follows he says:

*sopakramam nirupakramam ca karma; tat samyamād
aparānta-jñānam ariṣṭebhyo vā*

23. Karma is both ripe as well as unripe— one that has produced an effect, and the other which has not. By communing with the effect, one can comprehend by signs and tokens the way to the dissolution of the determining cause.

The two kinds of Karma are described by the words *sopakramam* and *nirupakramam* meaning one that has become operative and the other that is still inoperative. The meaning of the word *upakrama* is beginning, and therefore the two kinds of Karma are, one that has begun and the other that has not begun. The Karma that has not become inoperative poses no problem at all. The problem obviously is centred round that which has become operative—meaning that which has resulted in effect or whose effect has begun. Patañjali speaks here of *samyama* on Karma. This obviously means communion with Karma that has produced an effect.

He says that if one can commune with the effect then in such communion are discovered signs and tokens which show a way to the dissolution of the cause that has determined the effect. The word *ariṣṭa* really means an omen or a portent—a sign indicating an end. This does not necessarily mean death. It indicates, an end of something. This end is explained by the word *aparānta*, meaning the end of the other. By communing on the effect of Karma one discovers signs indicating the end of the other. In this context the end of the other obviously means the end of the cause, for, with regard to the effect, it is cause which is the other. So by communing with the effect one can discover signs as indicating the end of the cause itself. Here Patañjali throws a new light on the problem of Karma, namely in the effect itself lies the end of the cause. If one can look at the effect and its various expressions without any interruption or interpretation, then the effect indicates the way to the dissolution of the cause.

But one may ask: What about the unripe Karma, that which has not become operative? Surely this will become operative some day, and when that happens it will bring into existence an effect. If one knows how to discover in the effect the way to the dissolution of the cause, then the inoperative Karma poses no problem at all. When its effect comes into existence, one will know how to come to the dissolution of its cause also. From the *sañcita* or the accumulated Karma let effect after effect emerge, but each effect will indicate ways for the dissolution of the cause. Thus Karma ceases to be a handicap for the spiritual pilgrim. If he can look at what life brings without any interruption then he will know the way of going beyond. Let the effect tell how it can be transcended, but the story of the effect can be heard only in a state of communion.

One very often talks of lacking in inner strength when faced with the situations arising out of the operations of Karma. Generally one feels that one does not have the inner strength to look at the painful circumstances created by such operative effects. Patañjali refers to this in the following *sūtra*:

maitry-ādiṣu balāni

24. It is by communion with virtue that one discovers the spring of inner strength.

It has to be borne in mind that communion with virtue is completely different from thinking about virtue. In our usual meditative practices we are told to think on some virtue. But can the mind think about virtue? A virtue has a freshness of a living flower. How can the continuing process of thought ever know what is fresh? Freshness and continuity can ill go together. A virtue that is put in the framework of continuity is no virtue at all. Thought can put new garbs on what is known as vice; it can dress it up; it can make it more presentable and therefore more respectable. But a vice made respectable is not virtue. Thinking on a virtue can do nothing else. One may think on virtue for thousand years and yet not know what it is. Virtue is something untouched by thought. Thought pollutes and corrupts whatever it touches. Virtue comes when the continuity of thought comes to an end.

What is then meant by communion with virtue? One can make virtue as the point of focal interest—that is, one can make the word “virtue” as occupying the focal area of consciousness, and then allow it to define its own marginal area. This is *dhāraṇa* about which we have discussed at length in the earlier chapters. When this is done the marginal area begins its movement, which

is the movement of what we call "vice". If one can look at the movement of so-called vice without any interruption, that is without resistance or indulgence, then there comes a silence, a discontinuity due to the cessation of the thought and the thinker. This is *dhyāna*. The awareness of this moment of discontinuity is *Samādhi* or communion. It is in this interval that one discovers the innocent presence of virtue. It is this vision of virtue that evokes in one the inner strength. The strength of virtue lies in innocence, in its total incorruptibility. It is the corrupt that are afraid and talk of a lack of inner strength. The vision of the incorruptible virtue calls out from within a strength one had never felt before, an inner strength about which saints and mystics have spoken. And it is this strength evoked by the presence of innocent virtue which indeed is called character. Character is not storing in one's behaviour-patterns attribute after attribute of what the mind describes as virtue. It cannot be built up. It arrives when the effort and the maker of the effort cease, so that there comes a vision of the innocent and the incorruptible virtue. The new mind permeated by the influence of this vision is truly virtuous. And so Patañjali says that as one communes with virtue there arises an inner strength which is not the product of the earth but a gift of heaven. This gift is available to all in the discontinuous interval of the timeless moment, in the non-dual experience of communion.

We have discussed this *sūtra* in the context of virtue because Patañjali speaks here of *maitri ādi* or friendliness, etc. There is no doubt that Patañjali, by using this word indicates that virtue alone is the foundation for right relationship. It is only the virtuous mind that can communicate effectively; it is only the virtuous mind that can enter into right relationship with life. In the next *sūtra* he says:

baleṣu hasti-balādīni

25. This inner strength releases in one an inexhaustible spring of energy.

Patañjali uses the word "elephant" to denote this spring of limitless energy, for, an elephant is regarded as the strongest animal. This does not mean that man comes in possession of animal strength or that the spiritual aspirant gets the strength of the elephant. To interpret the *sūtra* thus is to misunderstand it completely. It means that one discovers in oneself a tremendous source of energy. The very presence of virtue, untouched by the thought and the thinker, releases in one this inexhaustible energy. What can man do without energy? What can an enervated individual achieve? The path of communication is beset with many a hurdle. If man is devoid of energy then he is likely to get corrupted by the forces that impinge upon him. It is only the inner strength and the energy derived from the timeless moment of discontinuity that can enable the spiritual man to communicate with the world, and in that process of communication not get corrupted.

Surely it is only the man of inner strength who can explore the worlds, physical as well as the superphysical. Patañjali asks the spiritual pilgrim to get fortified with this inner strength so that he can move into the intricate world of relationship without diffidence, and without a sense of overconfidence. A man of virtue is neither diffident nor overconfident. Such a one can move with gentle steps and can approach life with hesitancy. And Patañjali invites us to move into the complex world of the superphysical with the hesitancy of one who is endowed with inner strength. He asks us to travel into these regions with a mind that is truly virtuous, for the virtuous mind need have no fear of what lies before it.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

THE treatment of the subject of psychic powers by Patañjali in the *Yoga-Sūtras* is most remarkable. On the one hand he continually emphasizes the imperative need for maintaining the conditions of communion, i.e. *dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi* or *saṁyama*, for the exploration of psychic powers, and on the other he seems to be deliberately using blinds in the specific *sūtras* dealing with *siddhis* or superphysical powers. Some of the *sūtras* are extremely terse, almost bordering on vagueness. Not only that, in the *Vibhūti Pāda* all that Patañjali does is to merely describe some of the psychic powers without giving their *modus operandi*. He does not reveal the secret as to how the powers are to be developed. In other words, he gives no instruction regarding the way to stimulate the various centres by the awakening of which these powers can be obtained. During the passage of time, the whole science of psychic powers fell into the hands of such groups of people who had nothing to do with spiritual perspectives. In fact, they were not interested in the spiritual aspect of Yoga; they were only concerned with the development of the *siddhis*. For this they took recourse to certain Haṭha Yoga and Tāntrik practices which includes drugs and incantations. While recognizing that the subject of *siddhis* cannot be ruled out of a detailed discussion of Yoga, Patañjali seems to have taken special care to see that the ordinary student of Yoga does not rush

into it. The subject of *siddhis*, even at its best, needs the personal guidance of one who is an adept along that particular line. Without such a guidance, an effort to stimulate the Chakras with a view to gaining these powers is extremely dangerous. So many of the *sūtras* in the *Vibhūti Pāda* contain blinds for the solution of which one must seek the personal guidance of an expert in that particular line.

Psychic powers are not to be derided or condemned. They are a part of occult development. And Occultism is a science which can be mastered like many other sciences. But in mastering occult sciences, it is of the highest importance that one is rooted in spiritual or mystical experiences. Without a proper base of Mysticism or Spirituality, Occultism can prove very dangerous. The history of Tantra, both Hindu and Buddhist, bears ample testimony to this unfortunate fact. Besides occult knowledge has to function within the same limitations as are to be seen in other sciences. Knowledge by occult vision is still knowledge by ideation. It is knowledge of images, for Occultism operates on the plane of duality, whether the field of investigation is physical or superphysical. The duality of the perceiver and the perceived remains even in the highest occult investigation. And so its knowledge is only that of a part, and not of the whole. One cannot cognize the whole by adding up the parts. In knowledge by ideation it is the interpretation and the evaluation of the perceiver that counts. So the occultist sees only the observed, may be at the superphysical level, but the observed is not the real. The only difference between an ordinary perception and the occult perception is that in the latter one is concerned with the modification of the observed. Once again one does not come to reality by modifying the observed. In that modification there is only a change in the

scale of observation. And occult investigation is nothing but an inquiry from a changed scale of observation, wherein the observer remains untouched. While occultism is perception from a changed scale of observation, in mysticism one is fundamentally concerned with the elimination of the observer himself. Patañjali says that when the foundation of right perception is laid then one can explore the field of psychism without any danger whatsoever. Now to lay the foundation of right perception is indeed to lay the foundation of virtue. Then the development of psychic powers involves no danger as in that state of love all personal motives are eliminated. One can notice this extraordinary caution maintained by Patañjali, for, he does not touch the subject of psychism without first laying the proper foundation of right perception.

Now let us see what he has to say on this subject of psychism.

pravṛtṭy āloka-nyāsāt sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakriṣṭa-jñānam

26. By projecting the extended powers of sense perception, one can cognize the small, the hidden and the distant.

Here Patañjali speaks of clairvoyance by which one can perceive that which is distant and that which is not otherwise cognizable, namely the small and the hidden. The words used are *sūkṣma*, *vyavahita* and *viprakriṣṭa*, meaning the small, the hidden and the distant. Patañjali does not say here, or anywhere else in the book, as to how the powers of sense perception are to be extended. It is this which is a blind in the subject of the development of clairvoyant powers. He recognizes the possibility of clairvoyance, and if one can have that power in the mystical background of right perception then one can indeed

greatly increase one's usefulness by having added facility in the realm of communication. Students of modern parapsychology are investigating into the phenomenon of clairvoyance as also of clairaudience. But even here they merely recognize the existence of these powers. The ways and means by which these powers can be developed are still a guarded secret. All that one can say is that such powers do exist and so one need not mock at them with an arrogance which displays more an unscientific frame of mind than scientific. The *sūtra* mentions that it is possible for one to develop powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience by the extension of sense perception.

Now follow three *sūtras* which are extremely mystifying, and the mystery is heightened because of the extreme terseness of the *sūtras*.

*bhuvana-jñānam sūrye saṃyamāt
candre tārā-vyūha-jñānam
dhruve tad gati-jñānam*

27. By reflecting on the solar forces, one can comprehend the nature of the Solar System.
28. By reflecting on the moon one can comprehend the configuration of the stars.
29. By reflecting on the Pole Star one can comprehend the Great Design underlying the movement of the stars.

Here we find a mention about the structure, the configuration and the movement with reference to the Solar system and the universe. Is this an indication of Occult Astronomy? It may be because Occult Astronomy, due to extended perception, must bring more data and facts regarding the Solar System

and the Universe than is brought by investigation through telescopes. In other words by powers of extended perception one can cognize the otherwise invisible counterpart of the universe.

Some versions of the Occult Cosmography say that the structure of the universe has fourteen layers or what are known as Lokas. These Lokas have to be understood as different states of matter. Among these states are the gross physical and six others according to occult theories. Similarly there are states of matter below the gross physical, which are described as Sutala, Vitala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala, Atala and Pātāla. Those above the gross physical are too well known to need any mention here. Today modern science is talking of matter and anti-matter. Can it not be that the Lokas below the gross physical are the anti-matter? The fourteen Lokas, seven above and seven below, maintain the structural harmony of the universe, and we are told today by physical science that matter and anti-matter maintain a balance in a manner which has not yet been understood by scientific investigators of our times.

If the structural campus of the universe is so widened as to include the fourteen Lokas, then surely the configuration of stars and other bodies in the universe would display a pattern not commonly understood. Today modern science is discovering many new objects and their mysterious functioning in the vast universe. There are the Pulsars about which scientists are greatly intrigued. No final picture of the clusters and groups of stars has yet emerged, and the new discoveries upset the earlier conclusions. There may be much in this universe which is invisible to the naked eye as also to intricate and precise scientific instruments. Perhaps the configuration of the universe may be completely different since there are

yet many undiscovered objects. With the structure and configuration existing in a larger context, the movement of the stars and the heavenly bodies would also display different tendencies. A movement is with reference to something that is constant, and it is the speed of light which has been regarded as constant. But even here new theories arising out of new observations are attracting the attention of the scientists. "Is speed of light something universally constant?" is a question which is being asked in scientific circles. If it is not constant and if there are objects in the universe moving with speeds greater than that of light, then surely our theories and concepts regarding movement of stars and heavenly bodies will undergo a change. Thus with the acceptance of a universe vaster than the one that can be perceived by physical instruments, one has to be cautious and hesitant regarding one's pronouncements about the structure, the configuration and the movement in this universe.

In the above *sūtras*, Patañjali speaks of certain psychic faculties by which the structure, the configuration and the movement in the universe can be understood. He says that by concentration on solar forces, one can know the structure of the Universe; by concentrating on the moon one can know the configuration of the stars, and by concentration on the Pole Star one can know about the movement of the stars in the universe. It is true that the configuration of the stars can be seen only in the context of the moon, for, when the sun shines, stars cannot be seen. Similarly the movement can be understood only with reference to something that is constant, or comparatively fixed. And Pole Star denotes this constant point in the universe. But the sun, the moon and the Pole Star here are in the nature of blinds. What is meant by concentration on these, and how is one to do it? Are we

asked to concentrate on the physical form of the sun, the moon and the Pole Star? Or do they mean certain Chakras and Nāḍis in the body? Some people have interpreted sun to mean the *sūrya-nāḍi* which is only another name for *Suṣumnā* running in the centre of the spinal column. But these are conjectures very largely based on Tāntrik and Haṭha Yoga disciplines. Whatever it be, Patañjali in these three *sūtras* refers to the invisible counterpart of the visible universe, and this can be perceived only by psychic faculties. It is the understanding of this invisible counterpart that can give one a better perspective of the visible universe. Once again he does not tell us to concentrate on the sun, the moon and the Pole Star. He only indicates the possibility of discovering a universe much vaster than what is seen by science. In the context of the vaster universe, naturally the configuration and the movement of stars and the heavenly-bodies would also need to be re-examined.

From the structure and constitution of the universe, Patañjali turns to the structure and constitution of the human body. It is a movement from the macrocosm to the microcosm. In this connection he says as follows:

nābhi-cakre kāya-vyūha-jñānam

30. By concentrating on the navel *chakra*, one can understand the appropriate functioning of the body mechanism.

The phrase used by Patañjali here is *kāya-vyūha*. Now *vyūha* is arrangement where each unit or part is given its proper assignment. With reference to the human body it would mean the appropriate functioning of the parts of the body. From this *sūtra* onwards Patañjali speaks of Chakras or Centres

in the body. These centres are not the organic parts of the bodily structure. They are in the nature of functioning centres. It is said that there are seven major and several minor functioning centres. The centre in the navel region of the body is known as the Manipūra Chakra. The navel region is regarded as the very nucleus of the body mechanism. And so concentrating on this Chakra enables one to understand the nature of bodily functioning. Once again Patañjali does not tell us how this concentration is to be done. That is something which one has to find out from experts along this line of Yogic development.

It may be stated here that modern medical science which has made tremendous progress in recent times is still groping its way in the functional mechanism of the body. It speaks with authority on the organic diseases of the body, but is uncertain with regard to functional ailments. This is because of the fact that in the functional mechanism, the Chakras or Centres have much to do. It is through the proper functioning of the Chakras that the currents of *Prāṇa* or Vital Breath can be regulated. And the functioning of the body depends much on the regulated flow of the currents of Vital Breath. *Āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* can help a great deal in the regulation of breath. But when we come to the question of Chakras, the function of *prāṇāyāma* differs from its function as discussed in the chapter on that subject. Here it is not merely the question of holding one's breath as in *kumbhaka*, but rather of directing the breath thus held within the body. It is this direction of breath which forms part of Hatha Yoga and Tāntrik disciplines. By directing one's breath along various Centres or Chakras, one can develop certain psychic powers. In this *sūtra* Patañjali speaks of directing the breath to the Manipūra Chakra or the centre near the navel region. This directing of breath

involves intricate practices which are revealed only by the teacher to his pupil. Perhaps modern medical science would do well to probe into these secrets so that it can develop a therapy for the effective treatment of functional diseases. The functioning of the body can also be corrected by the processes of *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*, the technique forming part of Raja Yoga. In this *sūtra* our attention is drawn to the approach of psychism in regard to this problem. There is no doubt that this field needs to be explored, both through the practices of Haṭha and Raja Yogas, and if medical science can turn to it, it can bring much benefit to humanity by dealing effectively with the functional diseases of man.

Moving further into this field, Patañjali says in the next *sūtra* :

kaṇṭha-kūpa kṣut-pipāsā-nivṛttiḥ

31. By concentration on the throat-pit, one can control the urges of hunger and thirst.

The *kaṇṭha-kūpa* is the throat-pit. This is a meeting place of the movement of vital breaths passing through the channels of the nose and the mouth. This is supposed to be the seat of the Viśuddha Chakra, one of the seven major centres. It is said that this Chakra governs the externalizing mind, or in other words, it controls the expressional activities of the mind. Now hunger and thirst have much to do with these externalizing activities. If the activities are controlled then the urge for hunger and thirst can also be brought under control. This does not mean that a Yogi will not need any food or water to assuage his hunger and thirst. It only means that one can easily bring these bodily urges under control. There are instances, scientifically studied, where persons engaged in

certain Yogic disciplines, have remained without food and water for a considerable length of time. Perhaps this has much to do with the activity of the Viśuddha Chakra. It may be noted that in the new sphere of *prāṇāyāma*, it is the new mind that must move. The sphere of *prāṇāyāma* to which we refer is the directing of the controlled breath. We saw while discussing this subject prior to *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* that it is enough to hold the breath and thus perform what is known as *sahita-kumbhaka*, which means *kumbhaka* associated with *pūraka* and *recaka*. But in the sphere of psychic development, the main emphasis is not merely on holding the breath but on directing it along certain major or minor Chakras. This direction must not be undertaken by the old mind, as it is not safe to do so. It is a recognized fact that Prāṇa or the Vital Breath follows the movement of the mind. So in the directing of the breath, the movement of the mind is of fundamental importance. Once again in the movement of the mind its motivations are of great importance. The old mind functions under various motivations, and so its direction of breath is for the purposes of fulfilling its motives. The stimulation of various Chakras releases vital energy, and if the old mind has been directing the current of breath, then this released energy will be used for the fulfilment of its motives. This may entail dangerous situations both for the body and for the mind. And so the new mind, divested of all motives, is the safest instrument for the direction of the Vital Breath. It does not matter which is the Chakra on which breath is sought to be concentrated, for, every Chakra releases energy. The use of this added energy either debases a man or uplifts him, depending as to whether the old or the new mind has been the controlling factor. One can see how wise is Patañjali in introducing the subject of psychic powers only

after the threefold transformation of the mind. He adds further:

kūrma-nāḍyāṃ sthairyam

32. By concentrating on Kūrma Nāḍi, the nerve channel in the chest region, one attains steadiness of the body.

Kūrma is one of the Prāṇas, and it enables the eye-lids to open and close. It passes through a channel which is located in the chest-region. By concentration on this, one gets a steadiness of body. It gives certain amount of dignity and strength in bodily carriage. Even superficially, one can understand this, for, the chest plays an important part in the carriage of the body. Very often one walks with stooping shoulders. This sloppy movement has much to do with the manner in which the chest is held. Obviously this is connected with the vital current passing through Kūrma-Nāḍi. Once again the old mind engaging itself in this control of the Kūrma Nāḍi will be interested in demonstrating one's bodily strength. To the new mind this control has no demonstrable purpose, and so in his bodily carriage one sees a natural grace and charm. Bringing the subject of psychic powers to a temporary close, Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

mūrdha-jyotiṣi siddha-darśanam

33. By concentrating on the Light in the region of the crown of the head, one gets a perfect clarity of perception.

This *sūtra* has a reference to Brahmaṛandhra, an opening in the crown of the head. Obviously this is not an opening

in the physical sense. It is an opening in the vital regions of bodily functioning. In this opening one can contact a radiance, probably the radiance of pure vitality. Experts say that this radiance is related to the functioning of the Ājña Chakra and not the Sahasrara Chakra which is at the top of the head. This *sūtra* speaks of a clarity of perception, and the stimulation of the Ājña Chakra is supposed to bring a clear perception of things. Its operative point is between the eyebrows, and much of clairvoyant perception has to do with the stimulation of this Chakra. We said that a concentration on the light in the crown region of the head brings a perfect clarity of perception. The word used is *siddha-darśanam*. Usually this is translated to mean that by such a concentration one can perceive the perfected human beings. Now seeing perfected human beings is not a physical process, for the perfected being refers not just to a physical body but to a state of consciousness. Without such a state the particular being is just a physical form. So the word *siddha-darśanam*, in this *sūtra*, would more appropriately mean a clarity of perception, or total perception. Our perceptions, normally, are diffused and therefore vague. A clear perception is that where one is able to have a total view of things. In the light of this radiance, spoken of in this *sūtra*, one's perception becomes so clear that one is able to see the totality of things. Thus a clarity of physical perception is what is indicated in this *sūtra*.

In the *sūtras* considered in this chapter, Patañjali has drawn our attention to some of the simple psychic attainments to which man may come as a result of concentrating on certain Chakras or vital centres. These *sūtras* are mainly concerned with extended spheres of clairvoyance and with bodily movements and urges. It is in the last one just

considered Patañjali takes us a little deeper and speaks of a clarity of perception where a totality of things is seen. This question of a clarity of perception is carried further by him in the *sūtras* that follow.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE INTUITIVE INSIGHT

THERE is a fundamental and a qualitative difference between totality and wholeness. That which is total is made up of parts; it is by the addition of parts that the total is arrived at. But the whole contains no parts, and so it can never be fragmented. Even when broken into bits, the whole continues to remain the whole, for the whole is indivisible. The whole is indeed the quality of things, and how can the quality be fragmented? The *Bhagavad Gītā* describes it by saying *avibhaktam vibhaktesu* meaning even when divided, it remains indivisible. And so, while the total is the sum of the parts, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. There is something which escapes even when all the parts are added up to form a totality. And so a total view of things is completely different from the perception of the whole. In a total view all the different parts are seen, and then they are brought together to form a totality. But the whole is seen all at once, as it has no constituent parts. These two categories of perception need to be clearly understood. In the last chapter, we were discussing about the clarity of perception. Now clarity of perception has gradations. The perception through scientific instruments is clearer than the one with the naked eye. Similarly occult perception may

be clearer than the scientific perception. A clarity of perception requires more facts and more data. In other words perception functions at a quantitative level. Scientific instruments bring more facts, and so, that perception has a greater clarity than what is achieved by sensorial activity. Psychic faculty, known as occultism, is supposed to bring more facts and so has even a greater clarity. But there is a difference between clear perception and right perception, i.e. between *siddha-darśana* and *samyak-darśana*. *Siddha-darśana* is perception through psychic or occult faculties, referred to in the last *sūtra* of the previous chapter. By concentration on certain Chakras it is possible for one to have a clear perception. But in this, as discussed earlier, there is the duality of the observer and the observed. In the occult view of things, this duality persists. In clear perception one is enabled to examine a thing from many points of view. This does not necessarily give right perception. In every point of view, the observer, looking from several windows, is present. This perception from many points of view will no doubt bring more facts but it is the observer, with his conditioned background, that is going to interpret what he sees. Not only that, even the selection of windows, through which the viewing is done, is the act of the observer. Unless the interpreting entity, the observer, vanishes from the act of perception, there cannot arise *samyak-darśana*. While a clear perception is based on the principle of totality, *samyak* or right perception is governed by the principle of Wholeness. The first is a quantitative approach, while the latter is a qualitative understanding. Now Occultism or psychism, whether lower or higher, is concerned with quantitative approach to life like physical science. Its conclusions and assumptions are governed by quantitative measurement. Once again this is

based on the duality of the observer and the observed. Right perception is that where the observer-observed phenomenon is no more, and therefore things are seen as they are, not as interpreted by the observer. So there is no doubt that right perception is more dependable than clear perception. If clear perception exists in the background of right perception then one has a qualitative as well as a quantitative understanding of things. So psychism must have a background of Mysticism, for without it, the quality of things will be completely missed. The dependability of the spiritual or the mystical view of things is indicated by Patañjali in the next *sūtra*:

prātibhād vā sarvam

34. But intuition enables one to get insight into everything.

The word used in this *sūtra* is *prātibhād*, meaning "through intuitive insight". One must notice the word "but" used by Patañjali here. This word has reference to the earlier *sūtra* where he speaks of *siddha-darśana* or clear perception. The word "but" signifies that even though by certain psychic faculties one may come to a clarity of perception, intuition enables one to get insight into everything. He speaks here of the greater dependability of intuition than of clairvoyance. While clairvoyance may give clear perception, it is intuition which enables one to have right perception. People seem to regard intuition as something erratic and therefore undependable. Some people mistake it for some sort of a subjective feeling while others brush it aside as a mere "hunch", not to be taken seriously. There is also a general feeling which regards intuition as something unscientific.

In this, the scientific approach and the approach of intuition are placed in opposition to each other. This is so because most often impulsiveness is mistaken for intuition. To act on an impulse is not to act under the direction of intuitive insight. In an impulsive approach it is emotion that predominates. It contains an emotional reaction of the habitual pattern, for impulse arises from the accumulated past. It is true that in any impulsive approach there is a negation of the scientific attitude. But intuition has nothing to do with impulse. It is neither emotionalism nor the cold logic of the intellect. It arises when all mentation ceases, in a state where there is neither the thinker nor the thought. It is not rapid thinking nor is it abstract thinking. Its arrival demands a complete cessation of thought as well as the thinker. It is believed that intuition is erratic and therefore undependable. It is not erratic but comes in flashes, because it arrives in the discontinuous interval of the timeless moment. It can neither be ordered nor cultivated. It comes when the mind is extremely sensitive, and the sensitivity of the mind can exist only in the interval where the thinker and the thought are not. The mind that expects or anticipates is not a sensitive mind, for such a mind is burdened by the past, anticipating a future. Patañjali says that intuition gives one an insight into everything which indicates an understanding of the quality of things. To it comes an understanding of the whole, to be distinguished from a knowledge of the total. Such an understanding is indeed right perception. By occult powers of clairvoyance one may have a clarity of perception, but it is only an intuitive insight which gives to one a right perception. One may ask: How does one come to this intuitive perception? In the following *sūtra* Patañjali gives an indication as to how intuition is awakened.

hṛdaye citta-saṃvit

35. By meditation in the heart, there comes an awareness of the functioning of the whole range of consciousness.

Citta-saṃvit means an awareness of one's consciousness. And the *sūtra* says that it comes by meditation *in* the heart. This is not meditation *on* the heart, for that would strain the functioning of the heart. What does meditation *in* the heart mean? Here heart is not to be understood as a physical organ. It is the midpoint between intellection and action. So meditation in the heart really means meditation on that midpoint which, in the true sense, is an interval between thought and action. In our life we constantly experience a gulf between thought and action, which is sought to be bridged by greater activity of thought. But such a bridge can never be constructed by thought. It is only when thought subsides and with it all efforts to translate it into action that an interval comes. This interval is the heart and it is meditation in this interval which awakens intuition. In an intuitive approach action precedes thought, and when this happens the problem of bridging the gulf does not exist at all.

But how will thought and the effort to translate it into action cease? It is by being aware of the whole range of consciousness. That is why Patañjali says that in meditation *in* the heart there comes an awareness of the whole range of consciousness. The whole range of consciousness obviously means the effort of thought to translate itself into action. To be aware of how thought attempts to transfer its concepts into action is indeed to know what meditation in the heart is. In this awareness is born intuition, in the light of which the whole problem of bridging the gulf between thought and

action ceases. An entirely new action arises which is not the product of thought, but which comes into existence without the intervention of thought. It may be noted that communication which emerges from the state of communion is action preceding thought. In the field of communication thought will be necessary but its starting point is action preceding thought. Such an action may be in any form of communication—a gesture, a word or even silence. Beginning from a point untouched by thought, there may be extensions of communication where thought needs to function. Action preceding thought is indeed the state of love. An intuitive action is an action which is not polluted by the touch of thought. And the intuitive insight comes when there is an awareness of the whole range of consciousness. This is meditation in the heart where intuition is born. Patañjali further elaborates this question of awareness in the next *sūtra* which is a little difficult to understand when superficially examined. It says:

*sattva-puruṣayor atyantā-saṃkīrṇayoḥ pratyayāviśeṣo
bhogaḥ parārthāt svārtha-saṃyamāt puruṣa-jñānam*

36. In normal experiences, the observer and the subject are indistinguishable even though they are absolutely distinct, one from the other. It is by understanding the self-motivation of the observer that the distinction between the two is cognized and therefore there comes the knowledge of the subject.

In this *sūtra*, *sattva* means the modified consciousness, while *Puruṣa* is the unmodified state. We have used for these the

words the observer and the subject. The observer is indeed the modified consciousness, and it is this that creates the observed. As discussed earlier, to the observer the observed is all that exists. He cannot see the real object. The observer-observed phenomenon hides the subject-object reality. The observer arrogates to himself the role of the subject. He is really the pretender, what Patañjali calls *asmitā*. He is the I-consciousness. The *sūtra* says that the observer and the subject, the *sattva* and the *puruṣa*, are absolutely distinct. The phrase *atyanta-asamkīrṇayah* means, they are wide-apart. But in our normal experiences there is no awareness of this distinctness; in fact, the observer and the subject are regarded as identical, for there is no "I" separate from the *asmitā* or the I-consciousness. This *sūtra* says that there is a clear distinction although in one's normal experiences this distinction is not seen. Now *sattva* is the third and the most refined condition of *Guṇas* or the conditioning factors of consciousness. Because it is the most refined, one is normally not aware of its conditioning factor. One regards it almost as the unconditioned state of consciousness. Its main role is to synthesize, but this effort to synthesize is motivated by the conditioning factors with which the *sāttvic-guṇa* is impregnated. It is this highly refined quality of *sattva* that prevents one from seeing the distinction between the conditioned and the unconditioned states. Patañjali says that this is due to *pratyaya-aviśeṣa*, meaning non-distinction of thought-content. The content of thought projected by the *sāttvic* condition of consciousness appears so noble and pure that one tends to regard it as free from all conditioning. This is merely the casting of a noble form but hiding the motives of a conditioned mind. It is only by *parāthāt-svārthasamyamāt* that one can come to *puruṣa-jñānam*. This means that

instead of seeing the apparent motivation of the observed or the *parārtha*, if there is an awareness of the motivations of the observer or the *svārtha*, then in that awareness will come the understanding of the conditioned nature of *sattva*. In that awareness also the unconditioned state or the *puruṣa* comes into existence.

The *parārtha* is the conscious motivation with which the observed is overlaid. In the observed one may see such noble sentiments as service and sacrifice but these are only the outer cover hiding the selfish motivations of the observer. Once again Patañjali says that it is not the observed that is the problem but the observer, for it constitutes the real factor hiding the Reality from one's view. The observed has no independent existence. As stated in the earlier part of the *Yoga-Sūtras*, *tadārtha-meva-draṣṭaya-ātmā*. According to this the *draṣya* exists only for the *draṣṭa* or the observer. The motives seen in the observed are what the observer himself has cast. And so instead of concentrating on the projected motives of the observed one should turn one's attention to the intrinsic motives of the observer. The nobility and purity may be only a projected goodness existing as an outer polish. Inwardly one may be seething with selfishness. One has to be aware of this conditioned entity which is the *sattva* or the observer. The distinction that exists between the conditioned state and the unconditioned state is indeed the distinction that separates the *sattva* from the *puruṣa*. It is only by being aware of the activities and the movements of the observer, that there will come into being the unconditioned state of consciousness or the *Puruṣa*.

In the last *sūtra* while dealing with meditation in the heart, Patañjali spoke of the awareness of the whole range of consciousness. Here he elaborates this idea. When in this awareness

the unconditioned state comes into being then that indeed is the ground where intuition appears. Intuition is indeed the consort of *puruṣa* or the unconditioned consciousness. The conditioned consciousness knows not what intuition is. In the awareness of the activities of the conditioned consciousness there takes place the birth of intuition, and when this happens the entire being of man is illumined by its light. This is indicated in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

tataḥ prātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedanādarśāsvāda-vārttā jayante

37. Then is imparted to sense-experiences the dimensional quality of intuition.

Patañjali speaks here of the various sense responses. They are the *śrāvaṇa* or the auditory, *vedana* or the tactile, *ādarśa* or the visual, *asvāda* or pertaining to taste, and *vārttā* or the olfactory, pertaining to smell. All these sense responses get the quality of *prātibhā* or intuition. The literal meaning of the *sūtra* would convey the idea that there comes intuitional hearing, intuitional seeing, intuitional touching, intuitional tasting and intuitional smelling. What does this mean? What is meant by imparting to sense responses the dimensional quality of intuition? It means that the senses become intensely sensitive capable of responding to even the subtlest vibrations. It indicates that they are able to respond to the subtle and the intangible in the entire field of activity. This shows that when intuition is born then the entire being is permeated with a new quality of cognition and response. There is a refinement and a sensitivity in all aspects of one's living when the touch of intuition comes. An intuitive approach is a mystical approach; it alone is a true spiritual approach. Without the ground of Mysticism or Spirituality,

all efforts in the direction of developing psychic powers or acquiring *siddhis* is fraught with immense danger. Before going to the second aspect of psychic powers, Patañjali once again gives a warning to those who desire to move along the path of *siddhis*. He says:

te samādhāv upasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ

38. The psychic powers are a great obstacle when consciousness is not mystically oriented.

He says that a consciousness which is outward-turned or in a condition of *vyutthāna* must not play about with *siddhis* or psychic powers. These *siddhis* are an obstacle for one who wants to come to a state of communion. This indicates that prior to communion, all efforts at developing psychic powers would prove dangerous. The phrase used by Patañjali is *samādhāv-upasargā*, meaning obstacles in the way of *Samādhi* or communion. It is made abundantly clear here that for a true Yogi the question of *siddhis* must come after communion and not before it. *Siddhis* may be useful along the path of communication, but they are most assuredly great obstacles in the path of communion. It is communion that brings a new orientation to consciousness, and so with this re-orientation one may explore the field of *siddhis* if one likes—but certainly not before that. This *sūtra* puts psychic powers in their rightful place removing all exaggerated notions about them, commonly found among many students of Yoga. With this short interlude in which Patañjali has expounded the basis and the potentiality of intuitive approach, he once again takes the student of Yoga into further fields of psychic development. The psychic powers about which he speaks

in the *sūtras* that follow are of a different category than those discussed in the earlier ones. But before we turn to them it is necessary to bear in mind the warning given by Patañjali regarding these powers. This warning becomes all the more necessary because of the new category of *siddhis* to which he refers in the *sūtras* that follow. Such warning was necessary for the earlier *siddhis* also, but for those that follow the background of mystical orientation is most imperative.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ACTION OF MIND OVER MATTER

PARAPSYCHOLOGY has in recent times become a subject of intense scientific study. Vast literature is available on its various aspects, or what is known as extrasensory perception. In the last century this subject was being studied in its most limited expression and was called Psychism or Psychical research. The scientific interest in this subject has been aroused in recent times due to the observation of certain phenomena which could not be explained in terms of sensorial experience. Now parapsychology is being studied broadly in two sections. One is known as Psi phenomena and the other as Pki phenomena, or what is called Psycho-kinesis. Psi phenomena is concerned with extra-sensory cognition, while psycho-kinesis is concerned with extra-sensory motion. In extra-sensory cognition or perception there is a reference to acquiring information or data without the use of senses. In psycho-kinesis there is a reference to movement and physical action without the use of the limbs of the physical body. Under extra-sensory perception clairvoyance, clair-audience, psychometry, etc. are studied, while in the field of psycho-kinesis are considered phenomena like materialization and dematerialization, and also the movement of physical objects without the intervention of the bodily limbs. To be able to move physical objects without bodily intervention seems incredible, but there are any number of

instances, scientifically examined, which prove the existence of such a phenomena. There are also cases of objects being produced as it were from air. This miracle of psychokinesis has attracted the attention of many who grope after Yogic *siddhis*. This phenomenon, known as PK in the literature of parapsychology, indicates that the mind can operate on matter without the intervention of the body. Thus psi- and pki- phenomena form the two important branches of parapsychology.

If one turns to Patañjali, one finds that he too has classified psychic powers into these two broad divisions. They are all a part of the *siddhis* acquired by the stimulation of certain Chakras or functional Centres in physico-etheric organism. These centres are storehouses of tremendous energy. In *siddhis* man comes in possession of this energy which he can use for good as well as for evil purposes. In order that this may not be used for evil purposes, Patañjali has indicated that *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*, or the state of communion arising from it, is the only safe ground for the awakening and utilising of this energy. It may be noted that while he gives detailed instructions regarding the awakening of intuition, he does not say even one word as to how the Chakras can be stimulated. He only tells us as to what will happen when certain Chakras are stimulated and what would be the nature of the *siddhi* that one would acquire. Beyond this he does not say anything. But there is ample literature in the Haṭha Yogic and the Tāntric literature where one can find detailed instructions with regard to these psychic developments. However, since it is not the subject of Rāja Yoga, Patañjali only mentions these powers, remaining silent over their technique. This is because of the dangers involved in awakening the Chakras and the Kuṇḍalinī without a proper

background of communion or *Samādhi*. In the *sūtras* that follow, he describes certain *siddhis* which fall under the category of psycho-kinesis.

*bandha-kāraṇa śaithilyātpacāra-saṃvedanāc ca cittasya
para śarīrāveśaḥ*

39. When one is able to dissociate oneself from the *kārmic* effects of one's own past, and when one knows the required technique, one can enter into the consciousness and the body of another.

This is the phenomenon known as *parakāya-praveśa* or *para-śarīra āveśa* as is mentioned in this *sūtra*. The word *āveśa* may mean entrance or influence. So this would suggest that there may be an entry into another's body or there may be the influencing of the body of the other person. But for the performance of this phenomenon, Patañjali lays down two conditions. One is the knowledge of the required technique, and the other, freedom from the *kārmic* effects of one's own past. The first condition regarding the technique, one can understand; for to know the exact passages from which the mind moves out and enters the body of another, and also to know how to leave the body of another and re-enter one's own body, require the mastery of a complicated technique. Patañjali does not say what this technique is. He only says that the person who wishes to perform this *siddhi* must know well the technique from those who are experts along this line.

But he talks of another condition, which is freedom from the *kārmic* effects of one's own past. The phrase used is *bandha-kāraṇa-śaithilyāt* which means the relaxing of the

bonds that bind one to the chain of cause and effect. Why has Patañjali mentioned this as one of the conditions to be fulfilled before one seeks to acquire this *siddhi* of entering another's body? One may ask: Why should one enter the body of another at all? Obviously it must be to influence him. It may be asked: Would not the influencing of the mind of the other person do? Why should one think in terms of entering the body of another? There are apparently two reasons why the proposition of entering another's body may be considered. One reason may be that the other person has a body which is difficult and that the person concerned is unable to manage it for the purposes he may have in view. Or the other reason may be that the person entering another's body may want to do it for purposes of self-indulgence. If it is the second reason which motivates the person to attain this *siddhi* then surely it is extremely dangerous. By the use of powers endowed by this *siddhi* such a person would become utterly degenerate.

One may ask: After all what is meant by *parakāya-āveśa*, entering another's body? Surely it is not the body of the one that enters the body of another. It is the mind of the one that enters the body of another. The consciousness of one who enters the body of another must withdraw from his own body, but not without keeping a link. If the link with one's body is not kept then it would be impossible for that person to re-enter his own body. So the body of such an individual is in a state of suspended animation. It is in this condition that his consciousness withdraws in order to enter the body of the other. But how can the consciousness or the mind enter the body of the other person? Surely through the mind of that person. It is only when the mind of the person is brought under one's influence that an entry into his body is possible. This means that the

other person must be rendered so passive that he as it were steps aside and allows his own mind to be taken possession of by the other person. So by possessing the mind of the other person it is possible to enter his body. To enter the body really means to control the sensorial, the nervous and the muscular activities of the body of the other. The body normally functions under the behests of the mind, and so through the possession of the other person's mind his bodily activities can be controlled.

What indeed is the purpose of such a *siddhi*? It may be done either to derive pleasures of enjoyment, i.e. self-indulgence, or it may be for helping the other person who may be unable to correct certain tendencies of the body. This can also be done for vicarious experience. If this *siddhi* is used for self-indulgence then surely there is nothing more debasing. If it is for vicarious experience then one has to be extremely careful so that one does not linger on, as doing so would result once again in self-indulgence. It is said that Ādi Śaṅkarācārya used this *siddhi* for certain vicarious experience. But he could see that he did not step over the limits. Leaving aside these two reasons of vicarious experience and self-indulgence, one may ask: What is the nature of help that one can render to the other person by this *siddhi*?

As we have said there may be cases, though very rarely, where a person may find his own body too obstructive due to certain tendencies gathered by it or imparted to it by parental heredity. The mind of such a person may be too weak to handle effectively the situations created by the body. And so for the taming of his own body he may invoke the help of a Yogi well-versed in the *siddhi* of *para-kāya-praveśa*. Such cases are likely to be very rare. The normal course even then would be to help the other person to strengthen

the powers of the mind. If he cannot do that then a Yogi may enter the body of the other by possessing his mind. Now here too the danger is that the Yogi in possession of this *siddhi* may not like to give up the hold on the mind of the other. In that case the other person will remain enslaved to the so-called Yogi. Such a Yogi may permanently establish himself in the mind of the other person. If this happens then the remedy will be worse than the disease. So considering all aspects associated with this *siddhi*, it is better for all concerned to keep away from it. If one must move along the line of this *siddhi*, then the condition prescribed by Patañjali should be strictly followed, namely freedom from the *kārmic* effects of one's own past. This freedom comes in moments of communion where there is a complete break from the psychological past. If one can come constantly to moments of communion, where the *kārmic* effects of the past are obliterated, then one may use the powers of this *siddhi* for helping a person who may be in real difficulty. Without such constant experiences of communion or Samādhi, it would be wise to keep oneself away from the acquirement and the use of this *siddhi*.

In the next *sūtra*, Patañjali discusses another case of psycho-kinesis.

udāna-jayājjala-paṃka-kaṇṭākādiṣuasaṃga utkrāntiś ca

40. By control over *Udāna* or the upward *Prāṇa*, one can acquire the powers of levitation.

Levitation is a comparatively common psychic faculty. The word used for it in this *sūtra* is *utkrānti*. Patañjali describes this *utkrānti* by the phrase *jala-paṃka-kaṇṭaka-adisu-asaṃga*, meaning non-contact with water, mire, thorns, etc. This is

a power to walk without touching either water or land. And so it indicates walking in the air. To walk in the air is to act against all laws of gravitation. In the movement of aeroplanes there is a counter-acting of the gravitational force. The birds by instinct do this. But how is man, unaided by machines, to do this? Patañjali says that by controlling the vital breath known as *Udāna* one can achieve this *siddhi* of levitation. The Yogic literature speaks of the fivefold nature of the vital breath. This does not mean that there are five different vital breaths. But according to the bodily region in which it functions, it is given a name. There are many sub-divisions of the one vital breath, but there are only five major divisions. These are *Prāṇa*, *Apāna*, *Vyāna*, *Udāna* and *Samāna*. The Vital Breath covering the area between the nose and the heart is known as *Prāṇa*. That which covers the area between the heart and the navel regions is *Samāna*, that which moves between the navel region and the feet is *Apāna*, that which moves in the area between the nose and the head is *Udāna*. And the one which is generally all-pervading is known as *Vyāna*. Now control of *prāṇa* does not mean merely holding the breath, but directing it into the regions spoken above. The present *sūtra* says that if the vital breath is controlled and directed along the functioning area of the *Udāna-vāyu* then one can develop the powers of levitation. Patañjali does not say how this is to be done. He only says that if this is done, one can come in possession of this *siddhi* of levitation. The control of *Udāna-vāyu* must be able to counteract the force of gravitation, so that man can remain in air unaided without falling down under the pull of gravity.

In the next *sūtra*, Patañjali says:

samāna-jayāj jvalanam

41. By control over *Samāna*, the vital breath covering the region between the heart and the navel area, the body becomes fiery and effulgent.

The fiery effect produced by a control over this *Samāna-prāna* may also indicate the awakening of the *Vaiśvānara* which helps in the digestive process. When *Samāna* is brought under control the body becomes surcharged with energy. There are many Yogis whose bodies look greatly effulgent and do not show signs of age. It may be due to this control over the movement of the vital breath in this particular region. By this effulgence we are not referring to what are described as halos seen around the heads of individuals. The word *jvalanam* means shining. One who controls *Samāna* may find his body shining with a new effulgence. In the next *sūtra*, Patañjali says:

śrotrākāśayoḥ sambandha-saṃyamād divyaṃ śrotram

42. By establishing a relationship between the organ of hearing and *Ākāśa* or Space, one can develop powers of divine hearing.

Ākāśa is the substratum of all sounds. If one could commune with Space then one would be in a position to hear sounds of varying intensities. Now there is a space within an object and space without an object. The former is the space created by objects. In this, the interval or seeming vacuum existing between two objects is considered as space. It is space circumscribed by an object or objects or relative to an object. But there is a space without an object which may be called

the Absolute Space. What we normally call "space" is only relative. It is round about the observed and can be cognized by the mind of man. It is circumscribed by thought and in this space what one hears is the voice of the observer or the thinker. This *sūtra* speaks of *divyam-śrotram* which means "divine hearing." In the space round an object or thought what is heard is the sound projected by ourselves. We hear what we want to hear. But it is only in Absolute Space—space without an object or thought—that one can hear something other than one's own sound. One can hear the music of the spheres. What is the music of the spheres? Each object in the universe has its own note and to be able to hear the note of each object or individual, is to hear the music of the spheres. This needs the attuning of the ear to the Space that is absolute, what the *sūtra* calls *Ākāśa*. One can listen to the song of life only when the song of mind subsides. One may say that this is a mystical meaning of the *divya-śrotram* or divine hearing. But what about the power of this hearing in terms of *siddhis*? It is to this Patañjali turns in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

*kāyākāśayoḥ sambandha-saṁyamāl laghu-tūla samāpat-
teś cākāśa-gamanam*

43. By establishing a relationship with space relative to the body, and by rendering the mind as light as cotton one is enabled to move in outer space.

Our age has developed a technology of space travel. One of the essential factors in this is achieving a state of weightlessness of the body. In this *sūtra* Patañjali speaks about the body rendered weightless comparing it to *laghu-tūla*, signifying

as light as cotton. Here he speaks of body-weightlessness being achieved through *siddhi*. It is most interesting to note that Patañjali refers to this state of body-weightlessness for travel in space, signified in the word *ākāśa-gamanam*. Can man travel in space by the power of psychic attainments? If levitation is possible then surely *ākāśa-gamanam* is only an extension of it. Cases of levitation have been noted and studied under scientific conditions. *Ākāśa-gamanam* poses the problem of gravitational pull. If this could be counteracted then travelling in space should be possible by psychic development.

But the essential point is not whether such travel can be done, but what is the purpose of such space travel? Is it for satisfying scientific inquiry? If so, there may not be much harm. But travel today is not just an expression of scientific inquiry. Today, it has accumulated round it much of political and military motivation. It is this which spells danger to humanity. The added technique of space travel may land humanity into political and military alignments which may prove greatly destructive for human life. One may ask: What is the purpose of space travel through psychic means? Is it a display of power or does it have some other purpose? If the element of egoism and the display of power are not eliminated then one cannot view space travel by *siddhis* as resulting in man's spiritual upliftment. Let man go into outer space by scientific technology or by Yogic technology, but not before he has conquered the realms of Inner Space. If he has not probed the secrets of Absolute Space, then his travels in relative space will be hazardous for individual as well as collective living.

It is here that we see a link between the present *sūtra* and the one considered prior to this. In the last *sūtra*,

Patañjali refers to Absolute Space where alone *divya-śrotram* is possible. While the present *sūtra* talks of travel in relative space, Patañjali indicates that unless one has the spiritual insight to hear the *divya-śrotram*, it may not be right for him to undertake space travel. This hearing of the *divya-śrotram* is a condition of spiritual communion where the voice of the mind is not heard so that one is in a position to hear the music of the spheres. Without conquering the Inner Space, all attempts to conquer the outer space may open up dangerous possibilities. This applies equally to methods adopted by technology as by Yoga.

While the previous *sūtra* speaks of Inner Space where alone *divya-śrotram* is possible, the next one speaks of outer space where the relevance of *ākāśa-gamanam* can be seen. One speaks of Space in Consciousness, while the other speaks of Space in Cosmos. The two must move together if the individual and the society are to be benefitted through technology, whether of science or of Yoga. The travel in Inner Space is possible only by making the mind weightless even as travel in outer space is possible only when the body is rendered weightless. Without rendering the mind weightless, to make the body weightless for purposes of travel in outer space is fraught with immense dangers. In Hindu Mythology we have instances of two individuals who mastered levitation and space-travel. In Hanumān we see the mastery of the secret of levitation, but in Nārada we come across an adeptship in the technique of *ākāśa-gamanam* or travel in outer space. Hanumān lacked a sense of discrimination when he carried the whole mountain when only a little herb was necessary. And we are all too familiar with the role of Nārada as the ambassador of outer space. His travels created tensions and strains in human relationship!

The space travel whether through Yoga or through scientific technique needs a background of spirituality. There must first be the conquest of inner space of the mind before one undertakes an exploration of the outer space. When one is able to hear the *divya-śrotram* then can one go safely into *ākāśa-gamanam*.

*bahir akalpitā vṛttir mahā-vidēha; tataḥ prakāśa-
varaṇa-kṣayah*

44. The Mindless state, inconceivable by all processes of mentation, is known as *Mahā-vidēha*. It removes all screens that prevent the Light from coming in.

The state of *Videha* is freedom from bodily enclosure. But here Patañjali speaks of *Mahāvideha* which may be called the Great Death. It is not the death of the body but of the mind. *Mahāvideha* hence refers to a condition which is mindless. When the mind is rendered mindless then the whole past is negated. This condition is obviously outside all conceptual activity of the mind. It is inconceivable by the mind. The word used is *akalpita* meaning unimagined by the mind. How can the mindless be known by the mind? The *sūtra* says that in this mindless state or the condition of *Mahā-vidēha* all obstructions to the shining of the light are removed. The screen that prevents the light from coming in is the accumulation of the past. In *Mahāvideha* happens the death of the mind so that the past, and the future emanating from it, are completely negated with the result that one is able to come to the experience of the moment of the present which is indeed the timeless moment or the eternal now. Man can indeed put himself in contact with the Universal Mind and

thus draw upon the inexhaustible source of all Knowledge. But that which prevents him from establishing this contact is the individual mind. When the individual mind dies then there is no screen that hides the Universal Light. To this Universal Mind, Buddhism gives the name of Ālaya. In *The Voice of the Silence* by H. P. Blavatsky there is a significant passage which says:

Alas, alas, that all men should possess
Ālaya, be one with the great Soul, and
possessing it, Ālaya should so little avail
them.

Behold how like the moon, reflected in the
tranquil waves, Ālaya is reflected by the
small and by the great, is mirrored in the
tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart
of all. Alas, that so few men should profit
by the gift, the priceless boon of learning
truth, the right perception of existing
things, the Knowledge of the non-existent.

In the above passage we are told that the right perception of existing things comes only when there is the knowledge of the non-existent. By no process of mental activity can there come this knowledge, the knowledge of Unmanifest. It is only in the mindless state, the condition of *Mahāvideha* that this supreme knowledge comes. One may ask: What has all this to do with the development of psychic powers with which this chapter is mainly concerned. This *sūtra* is like a mystical prelude to the question of psychic powers to which the following refers. Patañjali seems to put in such mystical preludes to all discussions of psychic powers, particularly

when major expressions of *siddhis* are involved. In the next *sūtra*, he says:

sthūla-svarūpa-sūkśmānvayārthavattva-saṃyamādbhūta-jayah

45. By concentrating on the gross and subtle expressions of the elements, their essential and all-pervading characteristics, and the functioning of their attributes, a mastery over the five elements is obtained.

From the *ākāśagamanam* of the previous *sūtra* where the vastness of the universe is referred to, Patañjali now turns to the minuteness of the self-same universe. From the universe to the atom—this is the sweep represented by the two *sūtras*. The five elements spoken of here are the Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether—*Prithivī*, *Āpa*, *Teja*, *Vāyu* and *Ākāśa*. These constitute the basic structure of the material universe. The *sūtra* says that by concentrating on the gross and the subtle expressions of these elements, by knowing their characteristics and also by understanding the functional activities of their attributes, one can come to the mastery of the elements—which really means mastery over physical matter. The nature of this mastery is elaborated in the next *sūtra*. But before one enters this field of psychic development where mastery over physical matter is acquired, one must remember the background of *Mahāvideha* about which Patañjali has spoken in the last *sūtra*. Before mastery over the mind, a mastery over matter may prove very dangerous. In *Mahāvideha*, he speaks of the mastery over mind as a prelude to acquiring mastery over matter. The present *sūtra* only describes the field of that mastery over matter. It indicates that mastery over matter involves an

understanding of the gross and subtle expressions of the elements as also a knowledge of their all-pervading characteristics and the functional attributes of those very elements or the *Pañca-bhūtas*. It is in this field of matter and its expressions that the *siddhis* pertaining to mastery over matter have to be understood. What indeed are those *siddhis*? Patañjali describes these in the next *sūtra*:

*tato'ṇimādi-prādurbhāvaḥ kāya-saṃpattad-dharmānabhi
ghātaśca*

46. Through this, one develops psychic powers such as *Aṇima*, etc., attains to an excellence of the body and its unobstructed functioning.

The meaning of the word *tataḥ* or "through this" has to be found in terms of the previous *sūtra*. In other words, this *sūtra* explains the implications of the mastery over matter mentioned in the last *sūtra*. Patañjali says that first of all it means a development of such *siddhis* as *Aṇimā*, etc. The group of *siddhis* associated with *Aṇimā* are *Mahimā*, *Laghimā*, *Garimā*, *Prāpti*, *Prākāmya*, *Iṣitā* and *Vaṣitā*. They are eight altogether. The literal meanings of these *siddhis* are: *Aṇimā* or making oneself as minute as an atom; *Mahimā*, making oneself very large; *Laghimā*, making oneself very light; *Garimā*, making oneself very heavy; *Prāpti*, capacity to reach anywhere; *Prākāmya*, having all desires fulfilled; *Iṣitā*, the power to create and *Vaṣitā*, the power to bring anything under one's control. The words denoting these *siddhis* explain the purpose and the aim of the psychic powers, and so they hardly need any comment. They signify a complete mastery over matter, for the *siddhis* seem to manipulate matter in a remarkable manner. Obviously these must involve the breaking up of matter and

re-arranging it to suit different purposes. This need not seem fantastic to modern science which speaks today of transferring memory from one brain to the other. Experiments are being made for this purpose on animals. In the above context the *siddhis* like *Iṣitā* and *Vaṣitā* do not seem incredible. The Yogic *siddhis* enumerated here thus speak of manipulating matter, breaking it up and changing it into different expressions of matter.

Patañjali says that along with these psychic powers comes an excellence of the physical body as also its free and unobstructed functioning. These are explained in the next two *sūtras*. But one must keep in mind the fact that the mastery over matter must follow mastery over mind described as *Mahāvideha*. Without this mastery, powers such as *Aṇimā* would give to man such control over material forces that he may easily go astray and move towards his own moral degradation. Only the new mind can use such powers wisely, and the new mind is born in the experience of *Mahāvideha*. When the new mind wields such powers then there is brought an excellence to the physical body. The next *sūtra* refers to this as follows:

rūpa-lāvanya-bala-vajra-saṃghananatvāni kāya-saṃpat

47. The excellence of the body consists in beauty of form, grace of movement, strength of dignity and agility of limbs.

Here is a description of the excellence of body which even modern body-experts may well consider seriously. We find in this age a strange upsurge of the body-cult. Even Yoga is being exploited for the propagation of this cult. But our experts forget that the beauty of the physical body depends

upon various factors. Cosmetics alone cannot impart beauty to the body, and yet in the cosmetic industry huge amounts are being invested so that the body-cult may flourish. Patañjali here gives four essential qualities for the excellence of the body. These are *rūpa*, *lāvanya*, *bala* and *vajra-saṃhanatva*, meaning form, grace, dignity and agility due to cohesion. This agility represents nimbleness or elasticity. There has to be beauty of form, but this alone does not give excellence to the body as is understood today in the modern craze for physical beauty. Along with form there has to be grace in movement, as also strength as expressed in dignity. Added to this there must be the agility and the elasticity of limbs. *Vajra* is a weapon of great elasticity, for if it is not elastic it would get broken. And so the excellence of body consists in beauty of form, grace of movement, strength of dignity and agility of limbs. When one is able to establish mastery over matter then is this excellence possible. But one has to be careful to see that the excellence of body does not become a cult of exhibitionism as has happened today. This will only result in perverse sex involvement. That is why Patañjali says that mastery of mind must precede the mastery of body. When this happens then one is not afraid of old age, for then one will be able to retain the excellence of body. Now this excellence of body imparts to the senses a new range of activity. A mastery over matter extends into the functional fields of the body as well. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

grahaṇa-svarūpāsmitānvayārthavattvasamyamādindriya-jayaḥ

48. There comes a mastery over the senses, covering their receptivity, their nature, their

distinctiveness, their functional attributes and purposes.

With control over the five Elements, there is not only imparted to the physical body an excellence, but there is a greater efficiency in the functional activities of the senses as well. These functional activities have been detailed in this *sūtra*. They are fivefold in nature: *Grahaṇa* or receptivity, *svarūpa* or nature; *asmita* or distinctiveness; *anvaya* or attributes and *arthavattva* or purposiveness. Here is a complete picture of the efficient functioning of the senses. Each sense must grow in receptivity so that it is able to bring in more and more data from the external world. Each sense must adhere to its own nature so that it is free from sensorial distractions. They must develop their distinctiveness which really means, they must function to their full potential, making patent all that is latent in its power and capacity. The mastery over the senses must mean that the functioning attributes of the three *Guṇas* act smoothly. And last but not the least, the energies of the senses must not be frittered away in purposeless activity as happens during nervous tensions. When there is mastery over matter imparting to the functional activity of the senses this remarkable efficiency, then does one know the secret of extrasensory perception. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

tato manojavitvam vikaraṇa-bhāvaḥ pradhāna-jāyaś ca

49. Then comes in the field of the senses a speed comparable to that of the mind resulting in non-dependence on instruments or sense organs, indicating mastery over the forces of nature.

The word used is *vikaraṇa-bhāva* for non-dependence upon instruments or sense organs. Surely this is the basis of extrasensory perception. In such perception one does not depend upon the sensorial organs. Whether it is Psi or Pki phenomena, the relevant factor is that in both these, cognition and action do not depend upon sensorial instruments. The *sūtra* says that there comes to the senses a speed such as that of the mind. Here the senses have almost merged in the mind. In extrasensory phenomenon the demarcating line between the mind and the senses is obliterated. This can happen only if there is a quality of extraordinary efficiency in the functioning sphere of the senses. If the senses are dull their merging with the mind would never result in extrasensory perception. After all what is cognized through psychism must be transmitted to the senses and they must be able to absorb what is transmitted. Ordinarily the senses grow into sensitivity to external stimuli. The *sūtra* here speaks about the sensitivity to the stimuli of the mind. What the mind perceives without the intervention of the senses must be passed on to the sensorial field so that action may take place. Psycho-kinesis is possible only when the senses are extraordinarily sensitive to the urges and the impacts of the mind. We once again come to the problem of the new and the old mind. Psycho-kinesis with the old mind will result in display of one's superphysical powers and the urge to show miracles. It will be used for one's egoistic tendencies. If the new mind undertakes activities of the nature of psycho-kinesis then there would be no danger of selfish urges being fulfilled.

We have seen that throughout the discussion on psychic powers Patañjali emphasises the need for *siddhis* to operate in the ground of *Samādhi*. In *siddhis*, one forges newer and newer instruments of expression, but of what use is expression

without the ground of experience? Here lies the difference between the Rāja Yoga and the Haṭha Yoga. In the latter, mind is sought to be controlled through matter, while in the former matter is brought under the control of the mind. When mind controls matter, the field of psychism becomes safe for the spiritual man to move about and *siddhis* become additional avenues of expression and communication. Here *siddhis* are not craved for; they come naturally in the path opened out by the control of mind over matter. There is no element of display of psychic powers nor an effort to overawe others by the impact of so-called miracles. When mind controls matter then psychic powers function quietly without any fanfare. The truly spiritual man is not even conscious that he possesses such powers. In the next seven *sūtras* that follow, bringing *Vibhūti Pāda* to a close, there is once again a re-emphasis on spiritual perspectives giving us an additional confirmation of the fact that in Rāja Yoga psychism is incidental. It is the spiritual experience of Mysticism which indeed is fundamental.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SUBJECT-OBJECT PHENOMENON

COMMUNION and communication constitute the rhythm of spiritual life. They invariably go together. Without communion communication is devoid of life. Similarly communion which does not naturally flow into communication is utterly arid and barren. When there is real communion, it must spontaneously flow into communication. There can be no time interval between the two. When there is an interval then the communication does not have a natural quality about it. It becomes laboured and calculated. We have said in the earlier discussions that in communication the mind does function but it is the new mind that operates, when the communication emanates naturally from the experience of communion. While in communion there is the experience of discontinuity, the field of communication demands the ground of continuity for its functioning. Without such continuity the experience of communion cannot become understandable. While there may be a continuity of pattern there is always in such communication a discontinuity of content. Sometimes even the pattern may be new; but it will be new only in the sense of a modified continuity. However, a mere modification in the patterns of continuity does not impart to them a quality of livingness. It may be a modified pattern with the sameness of content, brought about by the thinker and the thought. But when the experience

of communion comes, it may alter the old patterns, or it may keep them as they are, or it may even destroy them completely. All this happens under the impact of communion itself.

It is communion that gives a direction to the pattern of communication. Once the direction is received then the mind can build the required channels and instruments of communication. It is the direction that matters. The construction of a road along the direction indicated is the work of the mind. In other words, this is done by the faculties of the mind such as reasoning as well as imagination. Both reason and imagination have a place in the field of human relationship but these must function along the lines indicated by communion. If this does not happen then reason becomes a mere formal and structural activity of the mind, while imagination a mere fantasy and day-dreaming. In the direction indicated by communion lies the new quality, and it is the function of communication to provide expression to this quality particularly through reason and imagination. It is like the music of a great musician. The entire quality of his music is contained in the first note that is struck. This first note arises from his experience of communion. If it does not, then that note has no refreshing quality about it. It is just a reproduction from memory. A musician who sings or plays just from memory can bring no creativeness in his music. The new quality which his first note brings determines the direction of music. He then expands it using all the powers of reason, imagination and memory. The latter three give a pattern of continuity, but the content of the pattern is given by the experience of communion. The music of such a musician will show forth a discontinuity in the midst of continuity. This must be so in all patterns of human relationship. There has to be continuity on the plane of relationship, but it must

be a continuity that contains the quality of communion. With that quality, one can expand one's music as much as one likes using all the powers of the mind. It is only this which will impart a creativeness to one's expressions. Similarly in human relationship one may evolve pattern after pattern, but all these if they are not based on the quality of communion will be lifeless. The fresh waters of love will never flow through such channels. Thus it is, that communion and communication must constitute the rhythm of spiritual life. Then whatever one does in the sphere of human relationship will have a new quality from moment to moment. There will then be a continuity without sameness. When there is communion then one has the power and the knowledge to initiate patterns of right action. When communication emerges from the ground of communion then one knows how to act rightly in any given situation; one does the right thing, in the right manner and at the right moment. Patañjali refers to this in the following *sūtra*:

*sattva-puruṣānyatā-khyāti-mātrasya sarva-bhāvādhi-
ṣṭhātṛtvam sarvajñātṛtvam ca*

50. In the awareness of a clear distinction between *sattva* or the observer and the *puruṣa* or the subject, one is endowed with knowledge and power to deal with all situations of life.

We have earlier discussed the observer-observed relationship as distinct from the subject-object relationship. To see a distinctness between the two is to effect an elimination of the observer or the conditioned state of consciousness. When the observer is eliminated then the consciousness is freed from

conditioning factors. Then what acts is the *puruṣa* or the unconditioned state of consciousness. There is action without the actor. This indeed is the state of communion. To the unconditioned consciousness or the *puruṣa* is vouchsafed the vision and the understanding of the Whole. The *sūtra* speaks of *sarvajñātṛtvam* or a state which might be compared to omniscience. In the vision and the understanding of the Whole, there lies indeed the supreme knowledge of the object or the individual. And it is this knowledge which generates its own power so that one is able to act in the right manner with reference to that object. The *sūtra* speaks of this as *sarva-bhāva-adhiṣṭhātṛtvam* meaning a power to deal with all situations. This is something comparable to omnipotence. He who acts from the base of communion brings into the field of communication these two factors of knowledge and power. But in order to come to that state of communion, one must understand clearly the observer-observed phenomenon. This phenomenon at its highest is known as *sattva*.- In *sattva* there is a very fine layer of conditioning, somewhat like *hiraṇmayenā-pātrena* about which *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* speaks. The veil cast by *sattva* is indeed a golden veil. One tends to regard this as no veil at all, for it is fine and translucent. The transparency with reference to the veil does not alter the fact that there is a veiled perception. In the observer-observed phenomena there is always a veiled perception, for the object is seen through the veil cast by the observer. And so what one sees is not the object, but the observed. And the observed is the shadow cast by the observer over the substance. It is when the veil is removed that there comes a relationship between the subject and the object. Then the *puruṣa* sees *what is*, and to see things as they are is to have the knowledge and the power to act rightly in relation to it.

The phrase used is very significant. *Sattva-puruṣa-anvatā-khyati-mātrasya* means, in being just aware of the distinction between *sattva* and *puruṣa*, the observer and the subject, the necessary knowledge and power to deal with the situations of life comes. How can one see the distinction between *sattva* and *puruṣa*, between the conditioned and unconditioned consciousness? As one becomes aware of the movement of the conditioned consciousness, one comes to the perception of the unconditioned consciousness. The unconditioned consciousness cannot be known by any effort of the conditioned consciousness. The latter must vanish for the former to be. And the conditioned consciousness withers away in the very act of seeing how the consciousness is being conditioned. To watch this without any interruption or interference is to come to the perception of the unconditioned consciousness. What *puruṣa* sees is *what is* and it is this right perception which gives to the unconditioned consciousness both knowledge and power to act rightly with reference to *what is*. Thus a subject-object relationship is established in place of the observer-observed relationship.

The conditioning of the mind is such a subtle process that if one is not constantly aware of the movement of the mind then almost unknowingly one may move towards subtler forms of conditioning. It is to this that Patañjali refers in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

tad vairāgyād api doṣa-bīja-kṣaye kaivalyam

51. When one is detached even from the awareness of the unconditioned state, then because of the destruction of the very seed of corruption, one comes to the experience of absolute freedom.

To be detached from the awareness of one's unconditioned state is to have non-awareness in awareness. The Hindu psychology, while discussing various states of consciousness talks of *jāgrt* or waking; *svapna* or dreaming, and *susupti* or deep sleep conditions. Now in waking state there is awareness with choice; in dream state, there is awareness without choice, and in deep sleep there is non-awareness in awareness. This means that one is not even aware that one is aware. In deep sleep one is not even aware that one is sleeping. If one becomes aware that one is sleeping then there would be no sleep. In other words, it is only when the sleeper is inoperative that deep sleep comes. Sleep cannot come by effort; it comes only when the effort and the maker of the effort subside. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali seems to be referring to this state. If one is aware that one is in an unconditioned state, then that very thought brings back all the conditioning of the mind. If the mind describes even to itself that there is an unconditioned state then that very verbalization by the mind throws one into the prison-house of conditioning. This verbalization by the mind is the seed of corruption. If one is conscious that one is virtuous, then in that consciousness lies the seed of corruption which drags down virtue to the condition of vice. Indeed there is no greater vice than the self-conscious virtue. Any self-consciousness with regard to one's unconditioning serves as a seed which brings into existence the whole process of conditioning. So there has to be an awareness not only of one's conditioning but also of the entity that becomes aware of its own conditioning. To be aware of the conditioning process is not only to be aware of the observed, but also of the entity who describes to himself this conditioning by naming. The observer is the seed of corruption. There has to be detachment not merely from the

observed but more fundamentally from the observer. It is only then that the seed of corruption is destroyed and one comes to the experience of absolute freedom or *Kaivalya*. A constant vigilance is the price which freedom demands, and Patañjali speaks of this in the next *sūtra*:

*sthāny upanimantraṇe saṃga-smayā-karaṇam punar
aniṣṭa-prasaṃgāt*

52. There may be a recurrence of old tendencies if there arises a feeling of pleasure or of pride on receiving recognition from others.

One may not seek recognition but even to be conscious that one is being recognized is enough to reawaken the old tendencies. It is like being conscious, in a subtle manner, that one is virtuous. To take an unconscious delight and therefore to have a sense of subtle pride that one is receiving recognition from others is to enter a plane of inclination along which one will go down even before one realizes what has happened. The phrase used is *sthāni-upanimantraṇe*. The word *sthāna* means status, and *upanimantraṇa* means an invitation. The phrase hence would mean "being invited to a status". Obviously this refers to being given a recognition for one's attainments or being invited to occupy a position of status. Under such circumstances to have *saṃga-smaya-akaraṇam* means an avoidance of a sense of pleasure or pride. The giving of status sometimes becomes a very subtle process. Therefore to be free from pleasure or pride when status is being given demands an extraordinarily alert mind. To discharge a function and yet be not involved in the status with which it is associated requires constant awareness. It is only in a condition of such awareness that one can know what real

freedom is. Patañjali speaks of this constant awareness in the following *sūtra*:

kṣāṇa-tat-kramayoḥ samyamād vivekaḥ jñānam

53. When there is an awareness of the moment and also of the emergence of time-succession from that moment then is born Wisdom.

Here Patañjali introduces two words which are most significant, namely *kṣāṇa* and *krama*. Now *kṣāṇa* is the moment, and *krama* is the succession of moments. *Kṣāṇa* is obviously the timeless moment, while *krama* is the time-succession. Patañjali says that one must be aware of the moment as also the succession of moments. Wisdom is born in this awareness of both time as well as the timeless moment, the Manifest as well as the Unmanifest. To watch the moment expressing itself in time-succession is to watch the Unmanifest establishing an intangible touch with the manifest. Patañjali says that Wisdom is born in this state of awareness. To be aware at the same time, of both the moment and the succession of moments is indeed to have a mind extraordinarily alert and sensitive. Wisdom grows only in the soil of such sensitivity.

In time-succession there exists a diversity of manifestation. Out of this diversity mind evolves a unity in which it selects the similarities and rejects the dis-similarities. It is obvious that this knowledge is arrived at only by "a process of comparison". All knowledge gathered by the mind is the result of a process of comparison and contrast. There is no other process by which mind can establish its base of knowledge. But surely in comparison and contrast one looks only at similarities and dis-similarities, and therefore one never looks at the thing as it is. It is only wisdom that enables one to see

things as they are, for in wisdom there is awareness both of the timeless moment and the time-succession. In the timeless moment there can be no comparison, for without an extension in time, how can comparison be done? The thing as it is can be comprehended only in the timeless moment where comparison and contrast have no validity whatsoever. This vision of the timeless moment vouchsafed to Wisdom is indicated in the next *sūtra* where Patañjali says:

*jāti-lakṣaṇa-deśair anyatānavacchedāt tulyayos tataḥ
pratipattiḥ*

54. In Wisdom comes a perception of a distinctiveness of things which otherwise cannot be distinguished either by class, characteristic or position.

To discover a distinctiveness of things even when no difference exists seems strange. When things are same, even then to see a distinctiveness appears meaningless. How can there be distinctiveness where no difference exists? The *sūtra* says that Wisdom is able to do this even where things are same in terms of *jāti* or class, *lakṣaṇa* or characteristics, and *deśa* or location. *Anyata-anavacchedāt* means absence of definition with regard to separateness. In simple terms this means an utter absence of differences. This absence of differences is so total that neither in terms of class or species, nor in terms of traits or characteristics, nor in terms of location or position can one be distinguished from the other. To put it differently, the sameness is so complete that one cannot discern any difference between them. Yet Wisdom enables one to clearly perceive the distinction. *Tulyayos-tataḥ-pratipattiḥ* means in the midst of total sameness to see clearly a distinction between

them—this is the sensitiveness imparted by Wisdom. One may ask: What is this distinctiveness in the midst of an absence of all differences? The meaning of the *sūtra* is that due to Wisdom one is able to perceive the unique and the incomparable which cannot be fitted into any framework of classification or grouping. Class, characteristics and location are the factors out of which a framework of classification is generally created. But the unique and the incomparable cannot be put in any grouping. And the unique exists in the midst of seeming sameness. One can evolve unity out of diversity, and thus eliminate all differences. The diversities can be grouped under different classifications, and by this process a sameness can be imparted to that which was different. When such sameness is imparted the mind is unable to see any distinction whatsoever. The sameness created by the mind is its synthesis. The mind that synthesises is unable to see the distinctiveness of things. To create unity out of diversity is a mental process. This is done by a comparative study of things and by the acquisition of knowledge. The mind throws a screen of generalization over everything, and through that creates an artificial unity. In this process, the similarities are taken into account, and the dis-similarities are put aside. Unity based on similarities gives one a picture of sameness. But dis-similarities are as important for the understanding of things as similarities. In fact, the dis-similarities are even more important, for they contain the distinctive factors pertaining to men and things. These distinctive factors are the uniqueness of a thing. Every object, every individual, in the universe has a uniqueness which is not shared by any other object or any other individual. This uniqueness is the incomparable quality of things and individuals and it exists in the midst of apparent sameness. Even when things cannot

be distinguished by class, characteristics or position there is a uniqueness which imparts to it a distinction which the mind, accustomed to see everything in the framework of classification, cannot perceive. Uniqueness is incomparable and therefore defies all attempts at classification. It is Wisdom alone that enables one to perceive the uniqueness of all things, and uniqueness is indeed the quality of things. The mind moves only on the plane of quantity and measurement. It is Wisdom that sees the quality of things. In the next *sūtra*, Patañjali further expounds this theme of Wisdom. He says:

*tārakam sarva-viṣayam sarvathā-viṣayam akramam
ceti vivekajaṃ jñānam*

55. Wisdom which transcends all processes of knowledge cognizes the entire nature of things all at once and not in the succession of time.

Wisdom is here described as *tārakam*, meaning transcendental. The *sūtra* says that cognition comes to Wisdom not in time. *Akramam* denotes an absence of time-succession. Knowledge is the product of time, but Wisdom transcends the limitations of time and so it knows everything all at once. This shows that its perception is Whole. While totality can be understood only in time succession, Wholeness can be comprehended only in a moment. The *sūtra* says that Wisdom comes to comprehension all at once of *sarva-viṣayam* and *sarvathā-viṣayam*. These two words signify objects in space and in time. In other words, to Wisdom there are no barriers either of space or of time. Wisdom cognises at the same time the form and the content of things. Space contains the form and time

contains the content of things. This simultaneous perception or *akramam*, is the essential quality of Wisdom. It may be noted that Wisdom is essentially a state of absolute freedom. What greater freedom can one conceive of than a condition where the barriers of time and space are no more? In this freedom alone Wisdom appears. This condition has been described in the following *sūtra*, the last in this Pāda.

sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam

56. It is when experience and expression function at the same level and with the same intensity that the state of absolute freedom is born.

The *sūtra* once again speaks of *śattva* and *puruṣa*. But here they must mean expression and experience. *Puruṣa* is the state of experience even as *sattva* is the field of expression. *Puruṣa* is the mover in the field or *kṣetrajña*, and *śattva* is the field or *kṣetra*. When there is perfect harmony between the two then alone can there be complete freedom. What does the harmony between the two mean? The word used is *śuddhi-sāmye*, meaning that when experience and expression function at the same level and with the same intensity then is absolute freedom known. When there is communication arising from communion then there is seen this perfect harmony. Do not the experience of love and its expression function with the same intensity and at the same level? The intensity of expression is because of the intensity of the experience of love. They function at the same level, for there cannot be a sensitivity in the experience of love and a lack of such sensitivity in its expression. There has to be *śuddhi-sāmya* between the two, for a refined experience cannot be expressed crudely. Such *śuddhi-sāmya* can come only when, from the

field of *sattva*, the observer vanishes. When *sattva* becomes a field, unpolluted by the touch of the observer, then it can provide the necessary conditions for the *puruṣa* to express himself. When the *sattva* and the *puruṣa* vibrate together then is *śuddhi-sāmya* established. *Sattva* must become a musical instrument perfectly tuned but not used by the enjoyer. Then the *puruṣa* can play on that instrument the supremely divine melody. Such an instrument would respond to the slightest touch of the *puruṣa*. H. P. Blavatsky in *The Voice of the Silence* says:

Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing Vina, mankind, unto its sounding board—the hand that sweeps it to the tuneful breath of the Great World Soul. The string that fails to answer beneath the Master's touch, in dulcet harmony, with all the others, breaks and is cast away.

In the context of our discussion regarding this *śūtra*, *sattva* can be compared to the Vina, perfectly tuned. It is so superbly tuned that its strings are able to respond to the faintest touch of the *puruṣa*, resulting in *śuddhi-sāmya*. There is the same intensity in the functioning of the *puruṣa* and the *sattva*. When *sattva* is divested of all its contents, when its conditioning, even the subtlest, is cast away, then it becomes a perfect instrument. This is indeed the condition of absolute freedom. It is true that an experience of love, or of spiritual perception, cannot be completely expressed, for the language of expression is different from that of experience. Even then, it is of the highest importance that the medium of expression does not cause any distortion to what is being conveyed. When the distorting element of the medium, even the subtlest and finest, is eliminated, then the spiritual experience can

convey its meaning through the purified instrument. When *sattva* vibrates harmoniously with *puruṣa* then is the instrument of expression rid of all impurities. Without this, communication can never be effective.

Patañjali has been concerned in this *Vibhūti Pāda* with the subject of communication. While recognizing the value of psychic powers, he has all along drawn the attention of the student to consider the development of psychic powers in the background of intuitive insight. Without Wisdom, the development of psychic powers is fraught with immense danger. Wisdom comes in the awareness of the distinction between *sattva* and *puruṣa*, the observer and the subject. It is only when the observer-observed relationship ends and there comes into being the subject-object relationship that Wisdom is born. In this awareness, because of the elimination of the observer, the instrument of expression becomes extremely rarefied and therefore capable of responding to the faintest touch of the *puruṣa*. The touch of the *puruṣa* or the subject has a quality of intangibility in it. Even the most purified instrument can but convey the inner experience only intangibly. An expression becomes alive only when there is the intangible touch of the Unmanifest or the *Puruṣa*. It is in this that the rhythm of communion and communication is maintained, and in such rhythm lies the freedom and the joy of true spiritual living. But freedom is a vast subject, intrinsically related to one's spiritual life. In Yoga one is enabled to discover the secret of true freedom. It is only the free mind that can show forth creativity in all that it does and expresses. The state of Yoga is indeed the state of absolute freedom. But can man, living in the world of relativity, know what absolute freedom is? It is to this subject that Patañjali turns in the last section of the *Yoga-Sūtras*, called the *Kaivalya Pāda*.

FOURTH SECTION

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MUTATION OF THE MIND

THE last section of the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali is entitled *Kaivalya Pāda*. The word *Kaivalya* is ordinarily translated to mean Liberation. While this meaning is not incorrect, the real connotation of the word is Absoluteness or Aloneness. The great European mystic, Plotinus, describing the spiritual journey in one intensely significant sentence said that it is "a flight of the alone to the Alone". Reality, by whatever name one may describe it, is indeed incomparable. The Hindu mystics called it *ekamevādviṭiyam*, meaning, One without a second. Reality, Truth, God indeed has no second, and it is this that makes it incomparable. Now that which cannot be compared with anything else, that which has no second, is surely the Alone or the Absolute. The Absolute stands alone; it is the relative which can be compared and contrasted. The Absolute is not the opposite of the relative. If it were so then the Absolute could be compared with the relative. And that which can be compared is not the Absolute. The Absolute and the Alone are interchangeable terms.

But one may ask: Does the fulfilment of Yoga lie in bringing one to the experience of Aloneness? If at the end of these practices all that happens to the aspirant is this Aloneness then the prospect does not seem worth all the trouble. But this seems so because one tends to equate Aloneness with loneliness. The two are poles apart. While loneliness is an outer condition, Aloneness is an inner state. In loneliness one is left

without the company of others, and therefore very much in the company of one's own thought-colleagues. When one is without any company, then the pressure of one's own thoughts increases and one is compelled to listen to the story of the mind. If man is afraid of anything it is to be left to face the onslaught of his own mind. In the company of others one can evade this face-to-face encounter with one's own thoughts. It need not necessarily be the physical company—it may be in terms of books, entertainment, occupation or many such things which help an individual to keep away from this direct encounter with one's own thoughts. Afraid to face his own mind, man dreads being left without the company of external association. There is no wonder he detests this condition of loneliness.

The fulfilment of Yoga lies not in loneliness but in Aloneness. For Aloneness no particular physical or super-physical conditions are necessary. One can be Alone even in the company of a thousand people, for, as stated earlier, it is an inner state, where one is completely free from the company of the thinker and the thought. But one cannot be free by running away from these. When the thinker and the thought subside then comes the moment of communion. It is this which is the state of Aloneness, for in communion there is no place for the other. It is a non-dual state where the observer has no place whatsoever. And it is the observer that is the "other" in any act of spiritual perception. The state of non-otherness comes when the observer is no more.

What is it that gives to one a sense of loneliness? It is the absence of the observed that makes one feel lonely. One has always lived with the observed; in fact the observed is the only world that one has known and so when that gets disturbed the feeling of loneliness comes. Now the observed

is the image cast by inferential knowledge. Inference functions with sensorial cognition on the one hand and the authority of past experience on the other. Out of these two factors one builds up one's inferences, which is the content of the image. This image is the observed and it is maintained by the observer or the thinker. But the image is of a living entity, and so the action of this entity naturally disturbs it throwing up new sensorial data. This data has to be processed by the authority of past experience so that one may come to a new inferential conclusion or to a modification of the old image. Now between the disturbed old image and the creation of a modified image there is an interval, which is not of chronological but of psychological time. It is an interval between the broken and the repaired image. It is in this interval that a feeling of loneliness comes. One does not want to look or listen to the broken image and therefore one seeks escape after escape. There is not merely the agony of an external broken image, but more the agony of the broken image of oneself. When the observed is damaged then in that very process the observer too is damaged. He has to repair first the broken image of himself before he can create a modified image of the observed. It is this which is most annoying. In this interval where the broken images of the observer and the observed are being repaired there comes the intense feeling of loneliness. It takes time to repair both these images, and the psychological interval between the damage and the repair seems too long. One seeks some escape where one may find respite before turning to the arduous task of repairing the broken images. A respite may be in the form of a book or entertainment or anything that is available so that one may not have to face the situation caused by the feeling of loneliness.

If only one would listen to the story of the broken image, then would one know how the observer for his own safety and continuity had tried to maintain that image against all odds, ignoring the demands of the real. The story will tell all about the ulterior motives behind the efforts of the observer to defend the observed. In order that one may not have to listen to this story, one seeks escapes. In listening to the story of the broken image, one can not only free be from it, but one can transform the interval of loneliness into the creative moment of Aloneness. In the *Kaivalya Pāda*, Patañjali speaks of this secret where the despair of loneliness gives place to the joys of Aloneness. As stated earlier the very meaning of the word *kaivalya* is Absoluteness or Aloneness. He who comes to the experience of Aloneness knows what Liberation is, for he moves in the ecstasy of Absolute Freedom. But before turning to this profound subject of Aloneness and Absoluteness, Patañjali recapitulates the discussion regarding the development of psychic powers in the opening *sūtra* of the *Kaivalya Pāda* as follows:

janmauṣadhi-mantra-tapaḥ-samādhijāḥ siddhayaḥ

1. Psychic powers may be due to heredity,
or drugs, or incantations, or austerities,
or *Samādhī*.

There are individuals or even racial groups that have inherent psychic faculties of an elementary order. They become natural mediums and speak of visions in which they contact spirits, fairies, gnomes, etc. These are instances of lower psychism. After speaking of psychic powers arising out of *janma* or heredity, Patañjali refers to *auṣadhi* or drugs as instrumental in awakening these faculties. In India for a

long period of time, Sannyāsins have taken to certain types of drugs in order to induce psychic visions. Aldous Huxley tried Mescalene in order to open doors of psychic perception. These days there are any number of drugs which are being used for the same purpose. LSD, Marijuana, Hashish, Heroin are some of the modern drugs used by drug-addicts and also by those who wish to come quickly to certain types of psychic visions. The next in order of instruments used for psychic development as stated by Patañjali in this *sūtra*, is *mantra* or incantations. This is the instrument very largely used in Tāntrik disciplines. According to Tantra, the various *chakras* or psychic centres can be aroused by repeating the *bīja-mantra* associated with each *chakra*. It is different for different centres and there is a technique by which these are to be repeated. The vibratory effect of *mantras* is recognized, and each has a specific vibratory rate and range. This can be studied in the Tāntrik literature. From *mantra* Patañjali turns to *tapas* or austerities. This refers to certain types of Haṭha Yogic disciplines, of which *prāṇāyāma* and *āsana* are the predominating factors. It is after this that Patañjali mentions psychic powers or *siddhis* in the background of *Samādhi* or communion. By indicating this particular order in psychic development, namely heredity, drugs, incantations, austerities and *Samādhi*, Patañjali has once again emphasised the advisability of considering the question of *siddhis* only after the experience of *Samādhi* or communion, and not before that. Psychism without a spiritual base is dangerous. This is what is pointed out again and again in the Vibhūti Pāda. In the opening *sūtra* of the Kaivalya Pāda, he sums up the entire argument regarding Psychism and Spirituality or Occultism and Mysticism. This is because Yoga is fundamentally concerned with coming to an experience

of a new order of living, and not merely a modification of the old ways. This new order of living is an experience transcending the realm of duality where the mind functions. Psychism or Occultism is just an extension of the approach of duality—it has no concern with the non-dual nature of life's experience. It is concerned with an extension of consciousness—not an expansion. Expansion of consciousness refers to a new dimension of living and it is to the exploration of this new dimension of living that Patañjali turns in the following *sūtra*:

jāty-antara-pariṇāmaḥ prakṛti āpūrāt

2. The cause of all mutations lies in the overflow of nature.

The phrase *jāty-antara-pariṇāma* used in this *sūtra* is most significant. It means a change, not of degree, but of kind. It indicates a change of species, not a mere modification but a fundamental transformation. In biological terms, it indicates not a mere variation but a mutation. Here Patañjali gives a clear indication as to what the fulfilment of Yoga is. In biology variation is a structural change whereas mutation affecting the hereditary factors of an organism shows a change of content. In mutation there comes into being a new species of biological evolution. It is to be noted that mutation is an individual phenomenon; in nature there is no phenomenon of collective mutations. So even at the biological level, in mutation one sees the flowering of an individual organism. In fact, mutations represent an expression of biological individuality.

But here in our discussion we are not concerned with mutations at the biological level. Our concern is with psychospiritual transformations which come within the range and

purview of Yoga. Patañjali, by introducing the phrase *jāty-antara-pariṇama*, calls the attention of all students of Yoga to the psycho-spiritual mutations. The approach of traditional religion and morality is one of variation or of modified continuity. Yoga implies mutation in the evolutionary factor known as discontinuity. They are described as jumps in nature. Yoga too constitutes a jump in the realm of consciousness, and hence it is concerned with an expansion of consciousness, and not a mere extension as is the case with Occultism and different forms of psychism. In this *sūtra* Patañjali does not merely speak of mutation but indicates how mutations occur. To denote this the phrase used is *prakṛti-āpūrāt*, in other words, by the overflow of nature.

Now an overflow is a phenomenon where the barriers of the traditional flow are broken down. When a river overflows it does not remain within the confines of the limits set by the two banks. So an overflow is something which cannot be put in the framework of rules or limits of law. In biology, mutations are sometimes called the sport of nature. A sport becomes enjoyable because of the element of overflow. Where there is no overflow, life moves in the grooves of tradition. Surely love is an overflow of consciousness; it is not the product of something built up in terms of rules and regulations. Nature too, in a sportive mood, moves away from the grooves of rules, and when this happens it brings into existence what are called mutations. But an overflow is not a deliberate breaking of rules. Anything that is deliberate is a negation of the overflow. An overflow in terms of consciousness is that where neither the thinker nor the thought exists. It is an expression of joy where the enjoyer is not present. And such moments of joy are indeed most creative—in fact, they are the only creative moments. An overflow has no purpose

to fulfil other than the overflow itself. In such an overflow someone other than the actor or the enjoyer operates and so an entirely new factor of evolution comes into existence.

Julian Huxley, the great biologist, says in one of his books while expounding the theme of Evolution that :

“ spontaneous change or mutation of single factors has been and still is probably the most important source of new departures without which evolution could not take place.”

Thus it is through mutations that new departures in evolution are made possible. He describes mutations as spontaneous changes which is the exact meaning of *prakṛti-āpūrāt*. It is in the spontaneous overflow of nature that mutations arise. A Buddha or a Christ or a Kṛṣṇa is indeed the result of this. Such individuals are not the products of the normal movement of evolution. Such a phenomenon cannot be explained in terms of the laws of evolution. A spontaneous change arises, it cannot be brought about. The fulfilment of Yoga lies in this overflow of consciousness. It arises in that timeless moment, where there is neither the thinker nor the thought. The function of an overflow is to give a new direction, even as a biological mutation is a new departure in the otherwise continuing stream of evolution.

Yoga represents the singular point of spiritual individuality, which has a quality of uniqueness about it, for it cannot be compared with anything that has been or that may be. The experience of true individuality is an experience of Aloneness. In fact, it is out of Aloneness that the mutation arises. In that Aloneness the true individuality

flowers and shows a new direction to the evolutionary stream. Such is indeed the experience of Yoga. And he alone who has discovered his individuality can know what absolute freedom or *Kaivalya* is. All fundamental changes are spontaneous because a conscious effort, however sublime, has its own limitations. It moves in a circle and has no means to break that continuing circle. Patañjali in the subsequent *sūtras* makes references to the limitations of the conscious effort. In the third *sūtra* of this Pāda, he says:

*nimittam aprayojakam prakṛtīnām varanabhedas tu
tataḥ kṣetrikavat*

3. The instrumental cause cannot alter the hereditary constituents; they can only remove obstacles in the manner in which a farmer irrigates his field.

There are two categories of causation known and described in Hindu psychology. One is *nimitta* or instrumental and the other is *upādāna* or material. In making an earthen pot, the potter is the instrumental cause, or *nimitta* while the clay is the material cause or the *upādāna*. In instrumental cause lies the effort of the human mind. Patañjali says in this *sūtra* that by no effort of the human mind can fundamental changes be brought about. The phrase used by him is *prakṛtīnām-varaṇa-bhedam*, which means removing the obstacles of inherent natural tendencies. *Bhedam* indicates an act of piercing, and so the *sūtra* says that by instrumental cause the inherent tendencies cannot be pierced. It is next explained as to what can be done by the instrumental cause. All that can be done by it is similar to what is done by the farmer while irrigating his field. The farmer cannot change the

inherent tendency of water, which is, that it finds its own level. The natural tendency of water to flow from the higher to the lower level cannot be changed. But then what does the farmer do to irrigate his fields? He removes the external obstacles so that the water may be enabled to flow. He cannot remove the inherent tendencies but surely he can remove the overlaid obstacles, such as the stones, etc. that stand in the way of the natural flow. Patañjali suggests here that the instrumental cause can perform only a negative role. And this is exactly the role of the conscious effort of the mind. By conscious effort one can remove the external or the overlaid obstacles but one cannot change the inherent or the hereditary factors. In mutation it is the hereditary constituent that is changed. So long as the heredity remains unchanged there can be only variations. No fundamental change can be brought about by keeping the hereditary tendencies intact. The conscious effort of the mind obviously is within the campus of its own past or its own psychological heredity. So it can by its own conscious effort produce only psychological variations. It cannot go beyond the range of modified continuity. But mutations arise only when the continuing background of heredity is changed. It is a change representing not modified continuity, but discontinuity with reference to the content given by heredity.

Every conscious effort of the mind arises from the past, and so whatever it does automatically strengthens the past. It is the past which gives continuity to thought. How can thought which lives on the continuity imparted by the past consciously create conditions where the continuity of the past is negated? Since mutation arises in the moment of discontinuity, it represents a factor where the continuity of the past is made inoperative. That is why in all mutations

it is the hereditary factor which is affected. It is with the change of heredity that mutation comes into being. But how can the heredity be changed by a conscious effort? Patañjali says that it is only in the overflow of nature that mutations can come into being. He speaks of what conscious effort can do and what it cannot do. It can do the negative work of removing obstacles, but it cannot order the overflow. When the obstacles are removed then the overflow of nature may come at its own sweet will. The removal of obstacles in the psychological sense means making the mind utterly negative or completely unconditioned. This once again happens in the awareness of the conditioning process without interruption. When the mind is completely open then the overflow of nature, when it comes, will have a smooth passage. But once again it needs to be understood that openness of the mind is not a cultivated attitude. To maintain an attitude of open mind is to negate completely the state of openness. Patañjali speaks of this in the next *sūtra*:

nirmāṇa-cittāny asmitā-mātrāt

4. All consciously cultivated attitudes of mind arise from a sense of I-ness.

The phrase used for a consciously cultivated attitude of mind, is *nirmāṇa-citta*. To interpret this to mean the creation of several artificial minds by Yogic powers does not seem quite relevant. This becomes clear in the sixth *sūtra* of Kaivalya Pāda. *Nirmāṇa-citta* is the cultivated mind or more appropriately the cultivated attitude of mind. All such cultivated attitudes are the result of conscious efforts by the mind, behind which are any number of motivating factors. It is to this that Patañjali refers when he says that there is *asmitā* or I-ness behind all activities of the *nirmāṇa-citta*. In fact, he says

that there is *asmitā-mātra* meaning nothing else but the sense of I-ness.

One may adopt any mental attitude one likes and give it the noblest garb, but still it cannot be free from the motives of self-protection and continuity. One may sincerely hold a particular attitude, but since it is built and cultivated consciously by the mind, its sustaining force is the underlying motive. This is emphatically stated by the phrase *asmitā-mātra*. Behind all so-called noble and spiritual attitudes lies the preservation and the propagation of the sense of "I". This is still more made clear in the following *sūtra*:

pravṛtti-bhede prayojakam cittam ekam anekeṣām

5. There is in reality only one mind behind seeming manifoldness of its expressions.

cittam ekam anekeṣām, means there is only one mind in the midst of seeming manifoldness. And it is this one mind which is the *prayojakam* or the directing agency underlying *pravṛtti-bheda* or the diversity of activities or expressions. Here Patañjali enunciates a profound principle of human psychology, and that is the inadmissibility of a fragmentation of mind. Mind cannot be fragmented into different compartments. It is because of this that there cannot exist conflicting tendencies in the same mind so that in one compartment there is love and in the other hate, in one worldliness and in the other spiritual idealism. He says that even though there may be seeming differences in expressions and mental pursuits, behind them all there is only one mind, that in which there is *asmitā-mātra* or the sense of I-ness. One cannot be partly spiritual and partly given to worldliness. Even if mind is sought to be broken up into several compartments, there is only one spirit that broods over these apartments—

and that is the sense of egoism. The present *sūtra* clarifies the activity of the *nirmāṇa-citta* to which reference was made in an earlier *sūtra*. One may cultivate a hundred different attitudes and move about with a solemn face to indicate one's seriousness but behind all that is the one motivating factor of *asmitā* or the sense of I-ness. The ideals and aspirations of such a mind are utterly hollow, for they are sustained by the motivating factor of the "I". The virtues and the ideals of the mind are like artificial flowers with no fragrance at all. They may appear to be attractive but to use the phrase of H. P. Blavatsky, "under each flower a serpent coiled". This coiled serpent is the sense of I-ness. Such a mind knows not *jāti-antara-pariṇama*, or spiritual mutation. It can decorate the prison-walls but it is an utter stranger to the refreshing experience of freedom.

It is not the *nirmāṇa-citta* that can understand the secret of fundamental changes, much less initiate them. For this a new quality of mind is necessary—a mind that is truly mindless. Patañjali refers to this in the next *sūtra*:

tatra dhyānaṅgam anāśayam

6. It is only the state born of meditation which is completely free from all motives.

The word used here is *anāśayam*—the state in which there is no *āśaya*, meaning motivations or intentions. The mind free from all intentions is born of meditation. The word "meditation" is a composite term implying *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* or awareness, attention and communion. This is the condition in which the mind is rendered mindless, for in it there is no place either for the thought or for the thinker. It is only in this state that the overflow of nature is possible.

The thinker and the thought are the greatest impediments. One would experience the joys of an overflow from moment to moment if one were to be free from the presence of the thought and the thinker. It is in meditation, and there alone, that the ground for the arrival of mutations is created.

And so in these six preliminary *sūtras*, Patañjali has laid the foundation for the philosophy of Yoga. He has given a new meaning to the state of Yoga, for according to him, Yoga is a condition in which spiritual mutations take place. Thus Yoga indicates an expansion of consciousness where new dimensions of living are explored. But such mutations are not the result of consciously cultivated attitudes of the mind. They come into being when all such attitudes subside—and that indeed is the state of meditation. On this true foundation of the philosophy of Yoga, Patañjali raises a magnificent superstructure in the *sūtras* of the Kaivalya Pāda that follow. It is only the mutant organism that knows what absolute freedom is, for it is free from all the encumbrances of the past. Patañjali tells us in this Kaivalya Pāda how each man can raise a beautiful superstructure of life on the strong and lasting foundation of Absolute Freedom, and how he can, by coming to the experience of mutation, become a centre of a new departure in the evolutionary stream of humanity.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FRAGMENTED APPROACH

THERE are two questions which often arise in the minds of serious students of Yoga. They are: Whether a conditioned mind can comprehend the unconditioned state of consciousness; and whether a conditioned mind can ever become absolutely unconditioned. These are not two separate questions; but are interrelated and, therefore, one arises from the other. In the two *sūtras* which we considered in the last chapter, Patañjali has answered these two questions by stating *nirmāṇa-cittāni-asmitāmātrāt* and *dhyāna-jam-anāśayam*. The conscious effort of the mind arises from the sense of I-ness. He therefore implies that by the conscious effort of the mind, one cannot comprehend the unconditioned state of consciousness. The consciously cultivated attitude of the mind has its roots in I-ness which is the all-pervading factor of conditioning. Surely it is the I-ness which conditions the mind, and so any activity of such a mind is within the conditioning limits of that I-ness. So the mind cannot understand what the unconditioned state of consciousness is by its own efforts, however, sublime they may be. It is but obvious that a continuing process cannot bring one to the understanding of the discontinuous. And the unconditioned state of consciousness is indeed a state of Discontinuity.

If the conditioned mind cannot comprehend the unconditioned state, then can such a conditioned mind ever be absolutely unconditioned? In the minds of most people there is a

misconception regarding the character of the unconditioned state of consciousness. It is evident that before one comes to a direct realization of such a state, one's intellectual understanding about such a state must be clear. One finds that even this intellectual understanding is largely absent. There is a general idea that an unconditioned state is one which is not conditioned by evil or undesirable factors. This means that a mind conditioned by good and noble factors is to be regarded as unconditioned. Strictly speaking an unconditioned mind is an unoccupied mind. But this does not mean that the mind is freed from the so-called undesirable occupations only. Generally in all religious and moral approaches, the aspirant is asked to keep the mind occupied with what are known as good and elevating thoughts. But a mind occupied with good thoughts, however ennobling they may be, is not an unoccupied mind. Similarly an unconditioned mind which is moulded and shaped by so-called good factors is not an unconditioned mind. The unconditioning has to be absolute, just as the unoccupied condition of the mind has to be free from all occupations, whether good or bad.

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to go to Him with a completely unoccupied mind. He says: *sarva-dharman-parityajye*, meaning leaving all occupations of the mind behind. This state of being unoccupied or being unconditioned is made clear by the *Gītā* at another place. In the twelfth discourse we find Śrī Kṛṣṇa telling Arjuna that to Him only that devotee is dear in whom there is to be seen the giving up of the good as well as the evil tendencies. The phrase used is *śubhā śubha-parityāgi*; meaning renouncing good as well as evil. Patañjali, in the *sūtra* considered in the last chapter, states that in the state of *dhyāna*, the mind is freed from all motives or intentions. It becomes *anāśaya* or free

of all motives and therefore absolutely unconditioned. When we take these two *sūtras* together—one speaking about *nirmāṇa-citta* and the other about *dhyanā*—we get an answer to the two questions which we have posed in the beginning of this chapter. The conditioned mind cannot know what the unconditioned state is, and the state of absolute unconditioning can come only in the moments of meditation or communion. Absolute unconditioning is not a modified conditioning. It has to be *śubhā śubha-parityāgi*, renouncing evil as well as good. Has one to renounce the good also? If this is done, will not the very base of moral behaviour be negated? Patañjali discusses this question in the *sūtras* that follow:

karmāśuklākṛṣṇam yoginas tri-vidham itareṣām

7. The *karma* of a Yogi is neither good nor bad; in the case of others, *karma* is of a threefold nature.

One may ask: Why has Patañjali suddenly opened the subject of *karma*? In this section, he is concerned with *kaivalya* or absolute freedom. One of the factors that seems to prevent an aspirant from coming to the experience of this freedom is the operating process of one's own *karma*. It is hardly necessary to point out that *karma* is regarded by most aspirants as one of the greatest stumbling blocks along the path of Yoga. Now the word *karma* has to be understood in two senses: one, the action performed by an individual, and second, the fruits reaped by one as a result of actions done in the past. In any case the word *karma* is associated with the reaping of fruits—it does not matter whether the fruits are reaped now or in the future. The reaping now is due to actions performed

in the past, and the reaping in the future depends upon actions performed in the present. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali says that the *karma* of a Yogi is neither good nor bad. The words used are *a-kṛṣṇa* and *a-śukla* which means neither not-bad nor not-good. Now this may mean that the actions of the Yogi are neither good nor bad, or it may mean the fruits reaped by the Yogi of his past actions are neither good nor bad, or it may mean both. We suggest that in this *sūtra* the word *karma* has to be understood in both the senses, namely, action as well as the fruit of action. This is so because if an action is good or bad then its fruits are bound to be good or bad. If what the Yogi reaps is neither good nor bad then it is obvious that his actions are also free from the attributes of good and bad. Patañjali here deliberately uses the negative terms of *a-kṛṣṇa* and *a-śukla*, for the mind has no positive knowledge of anything. Its knowledge is always indirect, but to know anything positively one must have a direct perception of that thing. It knows only by a process of comparison or contrast. And so what it calls "good" is not-bad, and what it calls "bad" is not-good. Good and bad as opposed to each other is the product or the construct of the mind. But since the Yogi is one who knows the secret of transcending the limitations of the mind, he is free from these opposites. His actions, and therefore, the fruits of his actions, do not contain the element of good as opposed to bad and vice-versa. This is to indicate that all the actions of the Yogi emanate from the state of communion where no duality exists. Actions arising from the non-dual ground of communion are free from the contradictions of the opposites. The Yogi no doubt functions in the realm of duality, for an action needs for its performance a world of relationship, and relationship implies duality. But when an action performed in the

world of duality arises from the ground of non-duality, then duality becomes a polarity without opposition. It is in the co-existence of light and shade that the beauty of the landscape becomes greatly pronounced. Similarly the non-dual experience of communion imparts to the world of duality a new meaning and a new significance. As the actions of a Yogi emanate from the ground of communion they are completely free from the conflict of opposites. It is because of this that Patañjali says that the *karma* of a Yogi is neither good nor bad. This does not mean that his actions are colourless; on the contrary, they are most colourful, displaying the intrinsic beauty of the colour, and not a beauty in contrast to its opposite.

Patañjali also says in this *sūtra* that the *karma* of others is of a threefold nature. What is this threefold nature? It is good, bad and a mixture of the two. In the *trividham* or the threefold *karma*, the third is not something that transcends the good as well as the bad, but one in which the good and the bad are mixed up. The *karma* of most people is of this nature. This threefold *karma* arises from the ground of reaction, while the *karma* of a Yogi arises from inaction. The *karma* that arises from the centres of reaction is itself a reaction. It is reaction that binds; pure action never binds. And so in the midst of pure action, the Yogi experiences complete freedom or *Kaivalya*. But the question is: How to be free from the bondage of *karma*? How can one be liberated from the threefold *karma* which binds one in a chain of reactions? This is discussed in the four *sūtras* that follow.

tatas tad-vipākānugūṇānām evābhi-vyaktir vāsanānām

8. The threefold *karma* gives birth to such tendencies as become active under conditions favourable to them.

The word *vipāka* means ripening or activization. This ripening is with reference to *vāsanās* or tendencies. It has to be remembered that the whole of one's psychological past or the entire *karma* of the individual is present at every moment in the form of tendencies. It is not that only one's *prārabdha* is present at any moment but the whole of the *sañcita* or the accumulated *karma* as well. The *prārabdha* is present in the form of circumstances, while the *sañcita* is present in the form of tendencies. But the tendencies do not become active all at once. They need an appropriate climate for their manifestation. In other words they need to be stimulated by certain external happenings. This stimulus may be caused by a word, a gesture, a perception or an action. This external factor does only the evoking so that the latent tendencies have proper conditions for their expression and manifestation. If for its manifestation an action has a need for an outer stimulus then surely it functions by reactive processes. The nature of the threefold *karma* is indeed reactive. He in whom there are no centres of reaction, to him there is no bondage caused by reactive processes. The man of pure action needs no stimulus, outer or inner. He lives in the same world in which the person bound by the threefold *karma* moves. For the former there is no stimulation of latent tendencies, for he has no centres of reaction in his consciousness. He responds to outer conditions but is not stimulated by them. To respond without a stimulus is indeed pure action. It is a total action. It is only the man of total action who is completely free and he alone knows the state of *Kaivalya*. But the question is: How is one to come to this state of total freedom? For this one must further explore the nature of reactive tendencies. This is what Patañjali does in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

jāti-deśa-kāla-vyavahitānām apy ānantaryam smṛti-saṃskārayor ekarūpatvāt

9. Although separated by time, space and diversity of characteristics, there is a continuity imparted to these tendencies by habit and memory.

In the chronological sense, past and present are separated by time and space. They are also separated by outer conditions or circumstances. And yet, according to the above *sūtra*, there is a continuity between the past and the present, not so much the chronological as the psychological continuity. And Patañjali says that this continuity is imparted by habit and memory. The words used are *saṃskāra* and *smṛti*. Now *saṃskāra* is impression or that which forms part of one's psychological habit. *Smṛti* of course is memory, once again the psychological and not the chronological. The *sūtra* says that in spite of the differences caused by time, space and outer conditions there is *ānantaryam*, meaning non-interruption or continuity. Patañjali says that this continuity exists because of *smṛti-saṃskārayor-ekarūpatvat*, meaning the sameness or the identical nature of habit and memory. He indicates here that if latent tendencies are activated it is because of the continuity of habit and memory. If the centres of habit and memory could be made inoperative then these tendencies will not be evoked. They will wither away for want of stimulus. One can go through life's circumstances and yet experience no stimulus to latent tendencies. And because the latent tendencies do not come with their noise and distraction, one will be able to respond to life's impacts totally and adequately. It is the stimulus which causes psychological distraction. When this distraction is not there, then one can look at life

in a total and an undistracted manner. Response without challenge is a condition of *Kaivalya*, for one is not dependent on external conditions or internal moods with reference to one's actions. But in order to understand this, one has to explore the whole field of desire and how desires change into cravings, thus creating the whole problem of tendencies and their continuity. Patañjali discusses this question in the following *sūtra*:

tāsām anāditvaṃ cāśiṣa nityatvāt

10. These tendencies seem beginningless because the urge to live appears to have no end whatsoever.

It is hardly necessary to state that all tendencies are cravings in their latent form. It is the activated tendency which is recognized as a craving. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali sees the cause of these tendencies in the desire to live. *Āśiṣa nityatvāt* means the desire to live being endless. Here the desire to live has no biological significance. With the arrival of humanity on the evolutionary scene, the emphasis of evolution shifts from the biological to the psychological plane. So the desire to live indicates a desire for the continuity of the psychological entity or the *asmitā*, the sense of I-ness. Man seeks an endless continuity of this entity, for according to him, his security would be endangered if this entity were to disappear. And from this desire for continuity with regard to the "I", all the tendencies, latent and patent, come into existence. Since the sense of "I" is co-terminous with the mind, it is well-nigh impossible to trace the beginnings of *asmitā*. And therefore the beginnings of these tendencies as well. As *asmitā* is the ground in which these tendencies are born, they

seem to have an uninterrupted continuity. There is no particular moment or event in which one can locate the beginnings of one's tendencies. But one may ask: If that is the case can one never find freedom from these tendencies, and therefore from the operations of the threefold *karma*? Patañjali discusses this question in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

hetu-phalāśrayālabhanaiḥ saṃgrhītatvād eṣām abhāve tad abhāvaḥ

11. Being dependent on and sustained by motives and their fulfilment, they disappear when the motivating factors wither away.

We have seen that the tendencies of the mind are the operating base of the threefold *karma* which is the cause of man's bondage. Patañjali says here that these tendencies are dependent on and sustained by motives. In other words it is due to motives that these get activated. The phrase used is *hetu-phala-āśraya-ālabhanaiḥ*, meaning dependent on motives and their fulfilment. Further on he says that these tendencies are not only dependent on motives, but are sustained by the same motives. The phrase *saṃgrhītatvāt*, means "being kept together." As it is the motives that nourish these tendencies, in motives are to be found the cause of *karmic* bondage. If one is to experience freedom from *karma* then one's consciousness has to be divested of all motives. If the motives are not there, how can the tendencies receive their sustenance? Patañjali says: *eṣām abhāve tad abhāvaḥ* meaning when there is the absence of the one there is automatically the absence of the other. It is in the motiveless condition of the mind that *Kaivalya* or Absolute Freedom can be experienced.

We raised the question in the beginning of this chapter: Can the conditioned mind ever come to absolute unconditioning?

It can, if the mind is freed of all motives. It is no use struggling with the patterns of conditioning, for the cause lies not in patterns but in motives. Sometimes a spiritual aspirant attempts to close his mind to certain outer factors of conditioning, but this will be of no avail so long as the motives exist. But the question is: How to tackle the problem of motives? If motives do not exist, will man have any incentive at all to move further? Without these will he not regress into a condition of indolence and self-satisfaction? Can there be incentive without motive? If not, is it possible for a man to perform action without any incentive? Action without an incentive is response without challenge. Patañjali in his *Kaivalya Pāda* is placing before the students of Yoga a philosophy the underlying principle of which is action without an incentive. This alone is total action—an action that leaves no residue, as it is free from the opposites of good and bad. When there is action without incentive, when there is response without challenge, then is there freedom from the operations of the threefold *karma*. Patañjali explores the implication of this philosophy of Yoga in the subsequent *sūtras*.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE PROCESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ONE of the fundamental principles of evolution is that one can become only what one is. "Become what you are" is the core of the mystical teaching in all the great religions of the world. This idea of "becoming what one is" offers no difficulty in physical or biological evolution. We can easily understand that the mango tree must produce mangoes and the apple tree apples. We do not expect anything else to happen. If anything else happens then we regard it as extremely abnormal, declaring it as a freak of nature. But in the field of psychological phenomenon, the problem of becoming assumes great complexity. This is so because in this field becoming is pursued without understanding the nature of the being. To say that one can become only what one is, seems perfectly reasonable. And yet it is this reasonableness which is thrown to winds when one comes to the psychological sphere of becoming. Buddhism asks the pupil to "look within and realize that thou art Buddha". A Zen Master told his disciple: "If you are not Buddha then you cannot become Buddha."

We usually say, since we know what we are, we would like to be some one else. In this statement there are two misconceptions. First, we do not know what we are, and second, we cannot be like some one else. When we say that we know ourselves, what we mean is that we have an image of

ourselves. This image is the product of time. It has been built from likes and dislikes, from resistances and indulgences, from hopes and despairs. This image is all that we know, and our constant striving is to become like it, or if necessary to modify that image and become like it. If we find that the image built by us is not sufficiently attractive then we modify that image and make it more in the likeness of some one else. That some one is also known to us only as an image. Our entire process of psychological becoming is therefore to grow in the likeness of our own image or in the likeness of it as modified in terms of a more attractive one. But the image is not the being. It is a construct of the mind containing various factors of our psychological past. So that which keeps the image alive is the unfulfilled past. Our entire process of psychological becoming emanates from this unfulfilled past. And so the journey of psychological becoming is a journey in search of a future in which the unfulfilled past will be fulfilled. It is this which is at the root of all frustrations that arise out of the process of psychological becoming. In this process the movement is for becoming what one is not or for becoming what the image desires. There is a continual conflict between the dictates of the being and the demands of the image. This conflict is experienced in the form of obstacles that one seems to face in the way of fulfilling the demands of the image. The image is not the being, and so in the becoming which emanates from the image there is to be seen the following of the *para-dharma*, meaning the Dharma or the quality of another. The becoming that emerges from the ground of being is natural and spontaneous, and so, free from frustrations and conflicts. This is so because the being contains, like the seed of a tree, the entire course of becoming. In this sense becoming becomes a movement

of expression and not a movement towards the fulfilment of the unfulfilled past. In such becoming emanating from the point of being, the movement is towards giving an expression to the inner fullness. Surely the seed has the fullness of the tree, not merely of one tree, but of all the trees of the past, the present and the future. The whole circle of becoming is contained in the point of being. This point has no magnitude or extension in time. It is thus timeless, but the circle which emanates from this point is the movement of the Timeless expressing itself in Time. The meaning of the time process can be found only in the timeless moment. This relationship of the timeless and the time is most germane to the understanding of the whole process of becoming or evolution.

atītānāgataṃ svarūpato 'sty adhvabhedād dharmāṇām

12. The Past and the Future exist in the moment of the Now; they seem different because of the time-succession.

The word used is *adhva-bhedāt*. *Adhva* means the act of traversing the space which obviously indicates a movement of time. And so *adhva-bheda* suggests a movement denoted by time-succession. Patañjali says that the past and the future exist at all moments of the now. It has to be borne in mind that the moment of now is the timeless moment or the Eternal Now. In this Eternal Now, the past and the future exist simultaneously. The whole time-succession is contained in the Timeless Moment. It is like the sunlight broken up into the spectrum of colours. The time-succession is the spectrum where the colours are seen. The being contains all the expressions of the becoming. A question may arise: If the past and the future are there in the Eternal Now,

then does it not mean that the future is determined, and if so, where lies the freedom of the individual? Is the future determined? The answer to this question can be both "Yes" as well as "No". It is determined, but not by an external agency. No outside factor brings about this determination of the future. It is the being that determines the movement of time succession in which there is future. This future is the expressional activity of the being itself. And so it is along the line of *svadharmā*. In this sense the unpleasant connotations of a determined future no longer exist. It is left completely to the being to determine its course of movement in time. This determinism by the being is its complete freedom. Therefore, the question of freedom and determinism is utterly false. The being in complete freedom determines its course. Determinism seems unpleasant and irritating because one sees only the infinite motion of becoming and is unaware of the infinite rest of the being. Patañjali adds further:

te vyaktasūkṣmā guṇātmānaḥ

13. The factors of Becoming whether tangible or subtle are governed by the functioning of the *Guṇas* or the Three Attributes.

In the field of expression the governing principle is the nature and the functioning of the three *Guṇas*, namely, *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*. While experience is attributeless, expression, whether tangible or subtle, is always with attributes. In fact, the nature of expression is determined by the relationship that subsists between *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*. By relationship is meant which of the *Guṇas* is dominant and which recessive. Where *Tamas* is dominant the nature of expression is comparatively crude, but where *Sattva* is dominant it is *Sūkṣma* or

subtle. The time-succession is the field of expression in which the dominant and the recessive factors of the *Guṇas* alternate. It is this alternating current of the *Guṇas* which constitutes change or fluctuation in the movement of becoming. If no interference by the mind is caused in this movement of the *Guṇas* then the process of becoming flows smoothly. But if the becoming is initiated by the mind, then are seen conflicts in the alternating movement of the *Guṇas*. If the mind interposes between being and becoming, then distortion is brought in the very functioning of the *Guṇas*. Otherwise they function according to their nature, providing a field for the expressional activities of becoming emanating from the point of being itself. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

pariṇāmaikatvād vastu-tattvam

14. Because of the evenness in the fluctuating movement of the *Guṇas*, there is no distortion caused in the quality of the being.

The word *vastu-tattvam* indicates the essence or the quality of the thing. The *sūtra* says that when the *Guṇas* function in an even manner, without the interference by the mind, then in the field of expression is retained the quality of the being. But if the mind interferes, thereby disturbing the even flow of the *Guṇas*, then the movement of becoming loses the intangible touch of the being. When this happens the process of becoming is divested of all meaning and purpose. But when does the mind interfere in the functioning of the *Guṇas*? It happens when it wants the movement of becoming to follow its direction instead of the direction of the being. With this comes the conflict of two wills—the will of the mind and the will of the being. The entire teaching

of the *Bhagavad Gītā* centres round this conflict, and it is resolved only when Arjuna discovers the identity of the individual will and the Divine Will. There is no conflict between the individual will and the will of nature. The conflict comes only when the mind interposes and creates a division. Patañjali makes this abundantly clear in the following *sūtra*:

vastu-sāmye citta-bhedāt tayor vibhaktaḥ panthāḥ

15. It is the fragmented mind which does not see the thing as it is.

Patañjali uses in this *sūtra* a very significant word which is *citta-bheda*, meaning a divided or a fragmented mind. The word *vastu-sāmye* indicates the sameness of a thing. The *sūtra* says that even when the thing is the same, the fragmented mind is not able to see it as it is. This is due to the fact that the thing and the mind seem to be pursuing different paths. *Tayor vibhaktaḥ panthāḥ* which means the two, the thing and the mind, are moving along different roads. Right perception can come only when the thing and the mind have a synchronized movement. If the two move at tangent to each other, how can there be a clear perception? *Vastu-sāmye* means the thing in its essence or the qualitative nature of the thing. The quality is unchanging in the midst of all quantitative changes. The *sūtra* says that even though the quality or the essence of the thing is the same, the mind due to its fragmented or divided nature is unable to see it. It is only when the mind is aligned to the thing that the thing can be seen in its right perspective. The thing and the mind must converge on one point and this is right alignment. It is the lack of this condition which is described as *vibhaktaḥ panthāḥ*. Right alignment of the mind is possible only when its projective

activities cease. The mind follows the path of its own projections, and so instead of seeing the thing as it is, it sees its own projections. In the next *sūtra*, Patañjali discusses further the relation of the mind and the thing as it is.

*na caikacittatantram vastu tad apramāṇakam tadā
kiṃ syāt*

16. The existence of a thing is not dependent on the perceiving mind; for what would become of it when the mind does not cognize it?

Patañjali here demolishes the concept of solipsism or subjectivism. In the extreme form of Māyāvāda, the existence of the thing in itself is denied. To say that the thing does not exist is to fly into subjective fancy. What is meant by *māyā* is the mistaking of the projected as the real, the shadow for the substance, or the reflection for the reality. It is when the observed is regarded as the object itself then is one caught in *māyā* or illusion. The thing by itself exists although the projecting mind does not see it. Patañjali says the thing exists in itself whether the mind cognizes it or not. He argues that if the existence of the thing were to depend on mind's cognizing it, then what would happen to it when the mind is unable to perceive it? Will the thing become non-existent? Will the other individual cease to exist just because the mind does not cognize him? There is a thing by itself and there is a thing projected by the mind. The existence of the latter depends upon its perception by the mind, but the thing in itself exists whether the mind cognizes it or not. The thing in itself is the object; while the thing projected

by the mind is the observed. The observed is dependent on the mind, but the object is not.

tad uparāgāpekṣitvāc cittasya vastu jñātājñātam

17. According to the colouring of the mind, the object is cognized or it is not.

Patañjali says in this *sūtra* that the mind's cognition or non-cognition of a thing depends upon its conditioning. The word used for conditioning is *uparāga apekṣit* meaning thereby that the cognition will be in terms of the *uparāga* of the mind. Now *uparāga* is the colour or it may also mean an eclipse. Thus mind's cognition depends upon whether it is eclipsed or not. In other words, as is the colouring of the mind, so is its perception. A conditioned mind can never have a right perception of things. Such a mind sees only what it has projected in terms of its own colouring. If it has put on red glasses then whatever it sees is red. It is hardly necessary to point out that the redness is the factor projected by the mind and does not belong to the thing in itself. Patañjali adds further:

*sadā jñātās citta-vṛttayas tat prabhoḥ puruṣasyā-
pariñāmitvāt*

18. There is a possibility for the mind to observe its own conditioning.

The question is: Is it possible for the mind to observe its own conditioning? It is certainly possible but only when the mind ceases to be the observer. So long as it is the observer, the observation of its own conditioning is not possible. The mind as an observer is the conditioned entity. Such an

entity always brings its own colouring to whatever it sees. When the observer ceases then the subject begins to function. This subject is the *puruṣa*. We have already discussed in the earlier pages the distinction between the observer-observed phenomenon and the subject-object phenomenon. While the observer-observed phenomenon operates it is impossible for the mind to observe its own conditioning. The *puruṣa* or the subject is the unconditioned state of consciousness. It may be asked: Does the *puruṣa* or the unconditioned state observe its own conditioning? Is not this statement self-contradictory? If there is an unconditioned state then how does the observation of the conditioning process arise? It has to be borne in mind that the unconditioned state is not something continuous. If it is so then it itself is a conditioned state. When the unconditioned state becomes static then it is only another form of a conditioned state. It is only when the unconditioned state observes how various conditioning factors are impinging upon it, it can be in a true state of unconditioning. In other words the existence of the unconditioned state is possible only in the constant awareness of how the conditioning factors are playing upon it. The moment that awareness ceases the unconditioned state degenerates into a conditioned state. The above *sūtra* says that the conditioned mind cannot observe this; it is only in the moment of unconditioning that this observation is possible. The mind functioning as observer cannot observe it. The *puruṣa* alone can watch the movement of conditioning. When the observer functions in the mind, then it is a movement of the mind—a movement initiated by mind's own thought-process. But when the mind is freed from the movement and the activities of the observer, then the *puruṣa* functions through the mind. This movement is not *of* the mind but *in* the mind.

The observer is subject to the fluctuations of change, but the *puruṣa* or the Subject, being in an unconditioned state, is unaffected by the changes which cause conditioning. When the mind as observer ceases then what happens? Patañjali says in the next *sūtra* as follows:

na tat svābhāsam dṛiśyatvāt

19. The mind is not self-effulgent, for it is the field, not the Knower of the field.

The mind has the factor of *dṛiśyatvāt*, meaning it is observable. It is this which makes it the field. Therefore it cannot know itself. Yet this field is a living organism, not something inert. It has a vitality of its own and builds up its own reflex mechanism for self-protection even as the physical body does for its own survival. On a cold night the reflex mechanism of the body draws up a sheet for protecting itself against the impact of the lowered temperature. The mind too builds up its psychological reflexes, in terms of the past experiences in the field of psychological relationship. These psychological reflexes with the passage of time become an artificial entity capable of its own automatic action and response. Just as the reflex mechanism of the body functions in order to maintain the biological continuity against hazards which may be real or imaginary, in the same way the reflex mechanism of the mind is concerned with the maintenance of its psychological continuity. It has its own automation which constitutes its habit. In fact it is habit that maintains it and gives it the necessary nourishment. The reflex mechanism functions like a censor or a mentor controlling the activities of the body as well as the mind. This mechanism built up by the mind itself functions with its own vitality or its own momentum.

It arrogates to itself the role of protecting the mind against all odds and hazards, real or imaginary. It regards itself as the controller guiding the movements and the activities in the field. There slowly arises a conflict between the reflex mechanism and that which it seeks to control. It does not want the mind to respond to anything that is likely to endanger its habit structure. Assuming to itself the role of the observer or censor it sees everything in terms of maintaining its structure of reflexes and habits. This is the "I" or *asmitā* that has come into existence and demands its continuity and safety. It sees only the observed, for in the maintenance of the observed its own security is guaranteed.

The assumption of the role of the observer or censor brings into existence the conflict between the controller and that which it wants to control—the conflict between the observer and the observed. The observer is the reflex mechanism, a bundle of habits and automatic responses. This conflict ends only when the observer-observed phenomenon ceases. But how can it cease? It happens only as the observer watches the movement of the observed and having done that watches its own responses and reactions. If this watching is done without interruption or interpretation then the cessation of the observer-observed phenomenon comes. We have discussed this already in the chapters dealing with *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. In this watching there is one difficulty to which Patañjali draws our attention in the next *sūtra*:

eka-samaye cobhayānavadhāraṇam

20. The awareness of the perceiver and the perceived cannot happen at the same time.

Here Patañjali gives us a great insight into the whole problem of awareness. He says that awareness must move

from the outer to the inner realms. There must first be the awareness of the perceived or the observed, and it is from there that it can move within where the awareness is of the perceiver or the observer. Unless one sees the movement of the observed in its various expressions, one cannot become aware of one's reactions or responses to it. The awareness of the observer is the awareness of one's responses to the movement of the observed. We saw while discussing *pratyāhāra*, that this particular instrument is intended to bring the senses and the brain to their full functioning potential. It is this which enables one to see clearly the various movements and expressions of the observed. When this clarity of perception comes then through *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* one comes to a right perception of things. In clarity of perception one is concerned with an awareness of the thing or the object in its aspect as the observed. In right perception there is awareness of the observer's responses and reactions to the observed. Patañjali says that this two-fold awareness cannot be done at the same time. It is the awareness of the perceived that leads to the awareness of the perceiver. *Ubhaya-anavadhāraṇam* means that there cannot be an awareness of both at the same time. Any attempt to do so would defeat the very purpose of awareness. The state of awareness must come smoothly and naturally. This will happen only when it is allowed to flow from the outer to the inner. Patañjali in the next *sūtra* says:

cittāntara-dṛśye buddhi-buddher atiprasaṅgaḥ smṛti-saṃkaraś ca

21. If we postulate that a second mind cognizes the activity of the first mind then the proposition will land us into postulating an infinity of minds, each higher than the other

Most often in dealing with problems of spiritual life, one is prone to introduce two minds, the higher and the lower. It is commonly believed that the higher mind would cognize what is going on in the realms of the lower mind. The implication of this is that the higher mind because of this cognition would be in a position to control the lower. The lower is called the concrete mind, meaning thereby that it can cognize concrete things. In other words, it can perceive the observed. The higher mind is known as the abstract mind. The implication of this is that it can cognize the knower of things or the observer. But then how would one know the validity of the cognition of the higher mind? Surely we will have to postulate a third mind observing the activities of the second mind. This will require the bringing in of a fourth, a fifth and an indefinite number of minds. In fact, there is no higher or lower mind. The mind is just one and cannot be fragmented into lower and higher. What we call the "higher" is only the product of the "lower". Our minds are in a state of conflict and contradiction, and it is this conflict which creates a division into the higher and the lower. The higher is supposed to be good, and the lower is supposed to represent the evil. This division is the clever device of the mind itself, for this helps to maintain its continuity. The higher and the lower become the two opposites of the mind, and it feels comfortable when the two opposites are formulated. It can carry on its activities between these two opposites. The endless activity of the mind is indeed its play of the opposites. This division into the higher and the lower evades the issue of awareness as it is not interested in the state of awareness coming in. By creating the division, a duality is sought to be maintained where the higher is the observer and the lower is the observed. But as Patañjali says the

postulation of a second mind will necessitate the postulation of a third mind and so on *ad infinitum*, with the higher becoming lower in terms of the still higher. With this endless series of the higher and the lower, the duality of the observer and the observed will remain undisturbed. But this duality itself is false, for the observer and the observed are not two different entities. The falseness of this duality can be negated only when the awareness moves from the outer to the inner, from the observed to the observer.

Patañjali in the last section of his *Yoga-Sūtras* dealing with the fulfilment of Yoga, places before the student a comprehensive philosophy of Yoga. This philosophy in simplest term is the philosophy of Awareness. To be established in Yoga is to be aware of the Reality which is present here and now. Reality is not far away. To postulate it as far away is to put it in the framework of time and space. That which is timeless is present in the eternal now. One has only to be aware of It. All the instruments of Yoga depicted by Patañjali are towards bringing the student to the state of awareness. In awareness lies the fulfilment of Yoga. In the state of awareness one realizes the falseness of the duality of the observer and the observed. Beginning with the observed, it moves naturally and smoothly into the awareness of the observer. As this is the crux of the whole philosophy of Yoga, Patañjali discusses further this question of awareness in the *sūtras* that follow. If in awareness the duality of the observer and the observed vanishes then what is it that one becomes aware of; and is there any entity that becomes aware of something? Or is it just the Nothingness becoming aware of Nothingness, the *sūnya* becoming aware of the *Śūnya*? These philosophical questions are considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXX

THE INTERVALS OF NON-AWARENESS

THE *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali, containing one hundred and ninety-six *sūtras* can be broadly divided into two sections. The first two parts entitled Samādhi Pāda and Sādhana Pāda are concerned with the problems of Ascent or the problems of communion. The last two parts entitled Vibhūti Pāda and Kaivalya Pāda deal with the problems of Descent or the problems of communication. There is thus the Yoga of Ascent and the Yoga of Descent. The Yoga of Ascent merges into the Yoga of Descent through the transformation of mind, already discussed in the earlier chapters. It is the threefold transformation of the mind which opens the way to communication. In Kaivalya Pāda, Patañjali gives a hint as to how the Yoga of Descent merges into the Yoga of Ascent. Ascent and Descent constitute the rhythm of Yoga. He indicates that the Yoga of Descent merges into the Yoga of Ascent through a state of total awareness. This threefold transformation of mind and the total awareness of consciousness seem to be the instruments that maintain this rhythm of Ascent to Descent and from Descent to Ascent. In the Yoga of Descent, emanating from the threefold transformation of the mind, there are two phases seen in a clear manner. These are discussed in the Vibhūti Pāda and the Kaivalya Pāda respectively. In the Vibhūti Pāda there is an exposition of the Occult science and its powers; in the Kaivalya Pāda

there is an exposition of the mystical philosophy and the unitive experience arising from it. In the field of communication, one is enabled to function effectively through the powers of the Occult Science and through the understanding vouchsafed by the philosophy of mysticism. Awareness which constitutes the core of this philosophy, becomes the turning point from the Yoga of Descent to the Yoga of Ascent. When the Yoga of Descent reaches its acme, the journey of Ascent begins. It is to this culminating point of Descent that Patañjali takes us in the *sūtras* that follow.

citer apratisaṅkramāyās tad ākārāpattau sva-buddhi-saṁvedanaṃ

22. When the consciousness is still, there comes to it the awareness of its true and original nature.

Patañjali uses the word *aprati-saṅkramāyāḥ*, meaning a condition which is changeless. This denotes a state where the mind is no longer subject to restlessness, moving hither and thither. It is a condition of deep silence. In this state there is the cognition by consciousness of its true and original nature. The phrase *tad ākārāpattau* means knowing its true nature. In the very beginning of the *Yoga-Sūtras*, Patañjali giving a definition of Yoga says that it is a return of consciousness to its original, unmodified nature. It is the cessation of the modifications of the mind. And so a return to the unmodified or the original condition of consciousness is the aim and objective of Yoga. Here consciousness comes to the awareness of itself. The mind is like the Prodigal son, and his return is indicated in the Path of Yoga. To be aware of oneself is a great revolutionary event, for it is the ground

for effective communication. But this awareness of oneself, or *sva-buddhi-samvedanam*, demands a total stillness of the mind. Even if there is a slight agitation then surely the vision of oneself cannot be obtained with clarity. The age-old spiritual maxim is "Know Thyself"; but this knowledge of oneself can come only in moments of total stillness. It is in such a stillness that one can look within to find one is the Buddha. This stillness is obviously the condition of pure awareness, for there is neither the perceiver nor the perceived. In this total awareness there takes place pure perception, and the condition for such perception is the utter negation of the observer and the observed. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

draṣṭṛi-dṛiśyoparaktam cittam sarvārtham

23. This awareness comes only when one sees the all-pervading nature of the observer and the observed.

Cittam sarvārtham uparaktam, means, the entire consciousness is pervaded by the presence of the observer and the observed. Unless one realizes the all-pervasive nature of the observer-observed phenomenon there is no possibility of coming to the state of total awareness. The word *uparaktam* is very significant and it means that the entire consciousness is coloured by the influence of the observer-observed phenomenon. Patañjali emphasizes this idea of the all-pervading nature of the observer-observed phenomenon in the following *sūtra*:

tad asamkhyeya-vāsanābhiḥ citram api parārtham saṃhatya-kāritvāt

24. Although containing innumerable desires and urges, the mind moves only with one

motivating factor, and that is to safeguard the observer by an associative process.

Here Patañjali describes the mind as a compound. The phrase used is *saṃhatya-kāritvāt*. A compound is a combination of different elements. It is an entity built up by associations. It is the associative memory that determines the nature and the quality of the mind. The above *sūtra* says that even though there may be innumerable desires and urges in the mind, all of them function by a process of association for the maintenance of the observer. The security of the mind lies in keeping the observer unhurt, for it is that which gives continuity to the mind. The desires and the urges of the mind may be of a diverse nature, but behind this apparent diversity there is the associative activity of the mind which links them all to the needs of the observer. The observer is the master who must be kept in good humour. The innumerable *vāsanās* or desires are like little streams moving towards the sea which is the observer. The associative device of the mind is extraordinarily clever. It does not matter where a particular thought or desire starts; in no time it is brought to a point where it can find its connection with the observer. The mind for ever strives to maintain this duality of the observer and the observed. And so in the activities of the observed there is an underlying motive to serve the *parārtha*, meaning, the other, which is the observer. It is this "otherness" which hides the real motive of all urges and desires. There is really no other, for the observer and the observed are identical. Therefore the *parārtha* that is outwardly seen in the activities of the observed are only for the maintenance of the observer. The observer is indeed the "I" or the *asmitā*, and everything that the mind does is

for the strengthening of this I-ness. One's desires and urges may have outwardly the garbs of service and sacrifice, but in truth they are for extending the empire of the "I".

Patañjali says in the next *sūtra* that

viśeṣa-darśina ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā-vinivṛtitiḥ

25. In the man of right perception, the feeling of "I am I" has completely ceased.

In this *sūtra*, the term used for the man of right perception is *viśeṣa-darśina* meaning one whose perception has a distinctiveness about it, or one who has a special perceptive insight. But the *sūtra* says that in such perceptive insight there is to be seen a complete cessation of the sense of "I am I" or the sense of my-ness. Ordinarily our relationship with men and things is based on a sense of my-ness. We are not interested in a thing or a person unless we are able to establish a relationship of my-ness. This my-ness implies a sense of possession and an identification arising from that sense of possession. Sometimes one mistakes identification for communion, but the two are poles apart. In identification there is an extension of oneself, while in communion there is an extinction of oneself. Identification is based on my-ness which is bound to continue so long as there is self-identification, or "I am I". How do we recognize ourselves? Surely by the factor of continuity, and so in the feeling of "I am I," the recognition of the "I" is on the basis of the factor of continuity. What we call "I" is the entity that continues. So in the feeling of "I am I," the "I" is not the entity living in the present, but one that has its roots in the past. When we recognize ourselves, we recognize what we were and not what we are now. The present is a timeless moment, free from the memory

of the past and the anticipation of the future. So it is unrecognisable. The "I" being ever new is outside the possibility of recognition. The perception where there is the recognition of the "I" is one bound and restricted by the time-process. The unrecognised "I" is perceived only in the timeless moment. The *sūtra* speaks of this special perceptive insight. For this insight there has to be a complete cessation or the feeling of my-ness. In the phrase *atma-bhāva-bhāvanā-vinivṛtti*, *ātma-bhāva* is my-ness, and *ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā* is the sense of my-ness. Some commentators have interpreted this to mean giving up the desire to live in the Ātmic plane. This interpretation makes no sense in the context of the previous *sūtras*. Patañjali, while discussing the deeper problems of awareness, mentions the *viśeṣa-darśinaḥ* or one with a special perceptive insight. This is nothing else but an extraordinary quality of awareness. He says that in this awareness there is no place for a sense of my-ness or I-ness. In the next *sūtra*, he discusses this same question of perceptive insight.

tadā hi viveka-nimnaṃ kaivalya-prāgbhāram cittam

26. Then is the mind wisdom-oriented indicating the state of Absolute Freedom.

The word *tadā* has a reference to the previous *sūtra*, and means that when the complete cessation of my-ness has taken place then is the mind wisdom-oriented. This wisdom-orientation heralds the arrival of the state of *Kaivalya* or absolute freedom, indicating that freedom can abide only in a wisdom-oriented mind. Freedom is not to be found through knowledge, for knowledge binds one to the past. Wisdom comes only when the accumulation of knowledge

ceases, and with that the bondage of the past also comes to an end. The word *viveka-nimnam* means, inclined towards wisdom or oriented towards wisdom. There can be no possession of wisdom. There can only be an orientation towards it. That which can be possessed is knowledge, or *aparā-vidyā* to use the phrase of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. Wisdom comes in flashes, as it has no base of continuity. In this condition there is *kaivalya-prāgbhāram*, meaning an indication of absolute freedom. When the mind is inclined towards wisdom then one gets an indication of absolute freedom. But neither Wisdom nor Freedom can be put in the framework of continuity. Patañjali discusses this in the background of awareness.

Now awareness is not a continuous experience; it comes from moment to moment. There may be awareness at one moment, and the next moment it is gone. So awareness has to be wooed from moment to moment. It is not the result of practice, so that after some time one may sit back in a chair and be satisfied that one is in possession of it. It must be borne in mind that awareness is not an accomplishment arrived at after strenuous practice. It comes from moment to moment, so that there may be moments of awareness alternating with moments of non-awareness. Patañjali refers to this in the next *sūtra* wherein he says:

tat-chidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṃskārebhyaḥ

27. When there are moments of non-awareness then the old tendencies make their appearance once again.

Patañjali uses the phrase *tat-chidreṣu*, meaning when there are holes or intervals in the wisdom-oriented state. During these intervals a different content of the mind comes to the surface because of the recurrence of past tendencies. He

says there would be *pratyaya-antāraṇi* indicating that a completely different content of the mind will be visible. When the interval of non-awareness arises then the content of the mind, completely out of harmony with Wisdom, may make its appearance. And this is due to the *saṃskāras* or the old tendencies. The implication is that one cannot afford to be self-complacent in spiritual life. If there is to be a state of *Kaivalya* or Absolute Freedom then one must pay the necessary price for that freedom. And the price is constant vigilance. But one must realize that intervals of non-awareness are bound to come in which there may be the recurrence of old tendencies. But this need not dishearten the student of Yoga. Such intervals are bound to arise, for one cannot remain in the rarefied atmosphere of awareness all the time. It would be too strenuous. One must return to the world of work-a-day activities. It is the common experience of all students of Yoga that there are moments when old tendencies do appear, specially when one is depressed or physically unwell. They make their appearance, sometimes mildly, while at other times very vigorously. Generally when this recurrence of old tendencies happens the spiritual pilgrim gets disheartened and feels that all his work of *sādhana* has been wiped away, and that he will have to begin the journey all over again. The more one gives way to this feeling, the more does one strengthen the old tendencies. Their recurrence has to be taken in one's normal stride. Patañjali strikes a warm and heartening note for the benefit of the student of Yoga in the next *sūtra*.

hānam eṣāṃ kleśavad uktam

28. The elimination of these tendencies can be done in the same manner as freedom from

kleśas or afflictions is obtained as discussed earlier.

One need not be afraid of the recurrence of these old tendencies, for they can be dealt with in the same manner as the *kleśas*. This has been discussed in the earlier chapters. In the eleventh *sūtra* of the *Sādhana Pāda*, Patañjali says that it is only in the condition of meditation that the afflictions or the *kleśas* can be got rid of. As seen earlier, meditation is the composite process comprising *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi*. If one maintains the rhythm of communion and communication then there need be no fear regarding the recurrence of old tendencies. In the field of communication one is likely to move away from the state of awareness, and experience conditions of non-awareness when the old tendencies make their appearance. But if one moves constantly from communication to communion, and vice versa, then the recurrence of these tendencies will not create a problem. It is the non-maintenance of this rhythm which gives the soil of continuity to the recurrence.

It may be noted that communion is an experience of the timeless Moment. One cannot, however, remain all the time in that moment. One must come down into the realm of time-succession. It is in this realm of relationship, that sometimes the vision of the timeless moment becomes faint, or disappears completely. When this happens the life of old tendencies of *kleśas* or afflictions begins all over again. The root cause of the *kleśas* is *abhinivesa* or the desire for continuity which arises only when in the time-succession the touch of the timeless is gone. It is hardly necessary to point out that continuity is the characteristic of time-succession. It is this desire for continuity that creates problems of *rāga*

and *dveṣa* or attachment and repulsion, bringing into existence *asmitā* or false identification. And is not *asmitā* the very base of *avidyā* or ignorance? Now the problems of continuity are bound to arise where the touch of the discontinuous moment vanishes. So the solution to this problem of recurrence of old tendencies is to see that the experience of communion is brought constantly into the field of communication or the field of relationship. If the rhythm of communion and communication is maintained then one need not be afraid of the intervals of non-awareness. In these intervals, problem may seem to arise, but one will be able to deal with it instantaneously so that no soil is given to it to grow and establish its roots.

In life problems are bound to arise, indicating the need for constant re-adjustments. To ask for freedom from readjustments is to ask for conditions of non-existence. To the living this problem arises again and again. It is for the dead that no such problem arises. It may be remembered that biological re-adjustments do not occur so constantly as psychological re-adjustments. To live is to face this problem constantly. But this does not mean that one must give a soil to the problem. If no soil is given then the problem will get dissolved in the very moment of its arising. It is only the experience of communion arising in the field of communication that enables one to face the problem without giving it a soil. And so it is in the maintenance of the rhythm of communion and communication that one can be free from the recurrence of old tendencies during intervals of non-awareness. To face problems and to dissolve them in the very moment of their arising is to live a life free from strains and tensions. It is to know absolute freedom in the apparently restrictive conditions of everyday life.

A question may arise: Is it possible for one to experience such absolute freedom in the life of daily routine, bordering almost on drudgery? If not, of what use is Yoga? If Yoga does not enable us to bring a new dimension of living in the work-a-day world, then it becomes a gospel of escapism. But this is what Yoga is not. Can the touch of the timeless be maintained constantly during one's journey in the realm of time? Will such a touch of the timeless bring one to a new dimension of living? It is to this that Patañjali turns in the last group of *sūtras* in this Pāda.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TIMELESS MOMENT

OUR studies of the *Yoga-Sūtras* have clearly indicated that the central theme of Yoga is *Samādhi*. This is the culminating point of communion, as well as the starting point of communication. Patañjali introduces this subject of *Samādhi* in the very first section of his book, and ends the whole discussion of Yoga by once again referring to it. It was left at a particular point in the first section of the book and is brought to its culminating height in the Kaivalya Pāda. In the first section he spoke of *Asamprajñāta*, *Nirvitarka* and *Nirbīja Samādhis*. We saw there, while discussing these threefold nature of *Samādhi*, that they have essentially to do with the functioning of the three *Guṇas* of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*. We must clearly understand that manifestation depends upon the functional combinations of these *Guṇas*. Without these *Guṇas* and their functioning attributes, no manifestation is possible. In the subhuman kingdoms, particularly in animals, the functioning of these *Guṇas* is free from all distortions. It is true that the functioning range of the *Guṇas* among the animals is very limited, yet within that limited range their functioning is clear and undistorted. We see in them the stability of *Tamas* so that their capacity to remain motionless is most amazing. Their physical organism does not show forth any element of instability. We also see in them the activity of *Rajas*, but this activity has no element of restlessness in it. Animals indulge

in no useless activity. They become active for a purpose, and after that is achieved, there is no hang-over in their activity. Once again it is true that their range of activity is very limited, but within that range there is no aimless or purposeless activity. There is a beautiful expression of *Sattva* too in animal behaviour although its range once again is extremely limited. One has only to observe an animal in a state of relaxation. It is so graceful that one never finds such graceful restfulness in human beings. This restfulness of the animal is its *Sattvic* expression. We see here the three *Guṇas* functioning in a limited range but with perfect smoothness, expressing stability, activity and harmony. *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva* of Hindu psychology may to a certain extent be compared to thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis of the European philosophy. But the latter do not have the same significance and meaning as the former.

While in animal life we see the three *Guṇas* functioning almost effortlessly, in human beings we see distortions in their functioning. This is so because the mind, for its own purposes, interferes with the functioning of the *Guṇas*. Thus it is that stability degenerates into indolence; activity into restlessness, and harmony into self-righteousness. In life, one does need stability, but it need not express itself as indolence. In life we need also activity but once again it need not become a restless process of becoming resulting in frustrations. Similarly the needed element of harmony, must not display itself as self-righteousness. The harmony of the Self-righteous individual is the seed of the gravest vice. There is none so vicious as the self-righteous man who is conscious of his so-called virtue and makes a display of it.

With the functioning of the mind, the three *Guṇas* operate in a much wider field, their range becoming limitless. But why

should there be distortion just because the range is extended? Cannot this distortion be ended so that the *Guṇas* function effortlessly in a range and in an area that have no limits? The functioning of the *Guṇas*, as explained earlier, get distorted when certain centres are established in the mind so that they are forced to operate in the context of those centres. These centres are thought-habits, thought-modifications and thought-seed. We discussed this in great detail in the first section while dealing with the threefold *Samādhi*. Stability in the psychological field becomes inertia when centres of thought-habit are formed in consciousness. Similarly activity becomes restlessness when centres of thought-modification are formed. Harmony or synthesis becomes self-righteousness when centres of thought-seed are formed in consciousness. The threefold *Samādhi* seeks to break down these distortions in the functioning of the *Guṇas* and purify their functional operations. Purifying the functioning of *Guṇas* is one thing, but transcending them is something entirely different. This act of purification is essentially negative in nature, for it happens when the interference of the mind is halted. To allow the *Guṇas* to function without the interference of the mind is the fundamental basis of purification indicated in the threefold *Samādhi*. It is thus negative in its nature, for it removes the obstacles of the mind in the sphere of their functioning activities. The *Bhagavad Gītā* in the Second Discourse (v. 45) says:

traiguṇya viṣayā vedā nīstraiḡuṇyo bhavārjuna

“The subject matter of the Vedas is the three *Guṇas* or the Attributes, but O, Arjuna, be thou above these three attributes.” The Veda is the spoken or the manifested word. All that is manifested is governed by the activities of the three *Guṇas*. In fact, there can be no manifestation except in terms

of these. It is their combinations, with dominant and recessive factors, that cause the immense diversity in the field of manifestation. To transcend the attributes is to commune with the Unmanifest. Arjuna is asked not merely to bring about a purification in the functioning of the *Guṇas*, but to transcend them. The threefold *Samādhi* referred to in the first section is not concerned with their transcending but concerned with the establishment of a due balance in their functioning. Patañjali in the Kaivalya Pāda takes us to an experience of *Samādhi* which constitutes the transcending of the three *Guṇas*. In this *Samādhi* there is not the negative role of removing the obstacles of the mind, but something intensely positive. It is true that the positive can be born only in the soil of the negative. In the following *sūtra*, he gives an indication of this positive nature of *Samādhi*:

*prasaṃkhyāne 'py akusīdasya sarvathā viveka-khyāter
dharma-meghaḥ samādhiḥ*

29. When the state of meditation is an end in itself, and not a means for the fulfilment of some other end then there comes that pure and total awareness in which is born the *Dharma-Megha Samādhi* meaning a spiritual experience comparable to the Cloud of Benediction.

There are several words in this *sūtra* which need to be explored. The word *prasaṃkhyāne* means “in a state of deep meditation.” The dictionary meaning of *prasaṃkhyāna* is meditation. Then follows a word here which is most interesting—*akusīda*. *Kusīda* is a moneylender who gives loans charging heavy interest. *Akusīda* would mean the opposite of it, i.e. one who

does not indulge in moneylending business in which case the question of charging interest does not arise. Now, what has this to do with the *sūtra* where the state of deep meditation is being spoken of? The word has great relevance in the context of the subject discussed. There are many people to whom spiritual life is a good investment bringing considerable dividends. These bring a business outlook to the spiritual field and look to the interest or the dividend that will result from such a spiritual investment. In other words to such persons the spiritual life is not an end in itself but a means to acquire something else. In the modern world many persons approach the subject of meditation with the same mentality of investment and dividend. So the phrase *prasamkhyāne api-akusīdasya* means that he who regards deep meditation not as a means but as an end in itself, not an investment bringing attractive interest but a fulfilment in itself, such a person, free from all motives, is endowed with great sensitivity. *Sarvathā viveka-khyāteḥ* really means a state of total awareness arising from sensitivity. *Viveka* ordinarily means discrimination, implying a capacity to sort out the true from the false, the real from the unreal. But how can such sorting out be done unless there is an awareness of what is? Unless one sees what is, one cannot show this quality of discrimination.

Now awareness and sensitivity always go together. In fact, they are two sides of the same medallion. Therefore *viveka-khyāte* means an awareness born of sensitivity. But the *sūtra* interposes the word *sarvathā* meaning total or all-pervading. The *sūtra* tells us that he who regards meditation not as a means but as an end in itself is endowed with total awareness born of great sensitivity. Such a man has indeed come to the state of *Dharma-megha-samādhi*, meaning a spiritual state blessed with the 'Cloud of Benediction.'

What does 'Cloud of Benediction' mean? The term *Dharma-megha-samādhi* has been interpreted in various ways. We have translated it as the 'Cloud of Benediction' because that explains best the nature of spiritual experience indicated by this *Samādhi*. Here the aspirant experiences a downpour of benediction from on high. The threefold *Samādhi* of the first section serves a negative purpose and remains confined to the sphere of purified activities of the three *Guṇas*. When this negative task is completed then comes the positive experience of spiritual life. But this cannot be brought about by an effort. It descends when the soil of negativity is ready. Into this soil comes the rain of benediction, irrigating the fields of one's daily life. From the 'Cloud of Benediction' comes this refreshing rain transforming the dry and parched earth into a garden of green foliage. The benediction is the positive descending into the soil that is negative. The negative soil has been made by human effort, but the rain comes when the human effort ceases. This indeed is the secret of divine Grace.

To know the possibilities of human effort and also to know its limitations—this is indeed the great secret of life. He who knows it remains for ever in a state of joy, for he is ready to receive the Grace when it comes. In the *Dharma-megha-samādhi* there is indeed the receiving of this Grace that descends from above. But for this to happen the spiritual life must be divested of all motives and expectations. In the moment of deep meditation, to expect something to happen is to make it a means to achieving something else. When meditation is an end and therefore untouched by any expectation, whether crude or noble, then is one ready to receive the benediction from on high. The cloud will burst at its own sweet will, but when it bursts the soil will be ready to receive the

rain. It is from the realms transcending the *Guṇas*, that the rain of benediction comes to irrigate the negative fields. The *Dharma-megha-samādhi* is the highest point of Ascent. Now just as the point of ascent becomes the point of descent, similarly that which is the point of supreme descent is also the point of re-ascent. The ascent and descent must go on for that is the rhythm of spiritual life. But the process of ascent reaches its culmination in the *Dharma-megha-samādhi* where there is a rain of benediction from on high. What greater communication can there be than the Highest communicating with the Lowest, the Heaven communicating with the Earth? In this communication there is no obstruction of the "I". It represents perfection in action where the actor is no more. So long as the actor is present, there can be no *Dharma-megha-samādhi*. The Divine Grace descends when there is nothing to obstruct its path—not even the receiver of the Grace. Then it is that the Divine that acts, and such action is like the heavenly rain irrigating the dry fields of life. When the rhythm of communion and communication is maintained then is there perfect freedom of action. Such action never binds, for there is no touch of the actor. Patañjali indicates in the next *sūtra* what happens when one comes to this experience of the *Dharma-megha-samādhi*.

tataḥ kleśa-karma-nivṛttiḥ.

30. Then there is complete freedom from Karma and the afflictions that arise from it.

Karma and *kleśa* go together. *Kleśas* arise from *karma* and *karma* again from the functioning of the *kleśas*. We saw in the second section of the Book that *kleśas* are of a five-fold

nature, namely *avidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *abhiniveṣa* or ignorance, false identification, attachment, repulsion and desire for continuity. One becomes aware of *karma* only through the operation of the *kleśas*, and it is through the operation of the *kleśas* that the accumulation of *karma* takes place. To think of *Kaivalya* or absolute freedom while *karma* and *kleśa* continue to operate is utterly meaningless. But how can *karma* be removed by conscious effort? Such an effort will generate more *karma*, for behind all conscious efforts there are motives. The *karma* and the *kleśas* are washed away when the rain of benediction as Grace comes in the moment of *Dharma-megha-samādhi*. There is a state of *karmalessness* which comes into existence when living becomes its own end and ceases to be a means to acquiring something. It is hardly necessary to state that Divine Grace cannot be ordered. It comes. The phrase used is *kleśa-karma-nivṛttiḥ*, meaning that the *kleśa* and the *karma* just drop away. In the very pouring in of the rain the trees and the plants are washed clean and all the accumulated dust wiped away. He who can constantly come to the experience of *Dharma-megha-samādhi* does not allow any dust to gather. He moves in life utterly fresh and completely refreshed from moment to moment. Patañjali refers to this wiping away in the following *sūtra* wherein he says:

*tadā sarvāvaraṇa-malāpetasya jñānasyānantyāj
jñeyam alpam*

31. Free from all veils hiding the Reality, one realizes that, compared to enlightenment born of Wisdom, all knowledge gathered by the mind is utterly insignificant.

In all processes of knowledge there is the duality of the knower and the known, the *jñāta* and the *jñeya*. Here the knower is anxious to gather as much knowledge as possible regarding the known. The phrase *jñeyam-ālpam*, meaning the known becomes utterly insignificant. In fact in all processes of knowledge the significance of the known is something which the knower himself has projected. To realize that the known is *ālpam* or insignificant is to break down the whole edifice of the knower. The hollowness of the known is perceived when one watches the content of what the mind has accumulated. The mind accumulates only names and images. There is no livingness in anything that it accumulates. In watching this hollowness one perceives the motives of the knower. When the knower and the known cease then there comes the infiniteness of knowledge described here as *jñānasya ānanyāt*. It is the knower who builds frontiers of knowledge by creating the known. But knowledge in the true sense can have no frontiers. It is the knowledge without frontiers which truly is Wisdom. This comes only when the veils that hide the Reality are removed. It is like dust gathering on the surface of the mirror and thereby distorting the vision. The *sūtra* uses the phrase *sarvāvaraṇa-malāḥpetasya* meaning the consciousness free from all polluting touch of veils. It is a state where consciousness is free from the distortions of veiled perception. It is in such an unveiled perception that the infinity of knowledge comes; but this infinity of knowledge is not the extension of knowledge acquired by the mind. There is here neither the knower nor the known. If the known becomes insignificant, *jñeyam ālpam*, how can there be an infinity of knowledge? If infinity were merely an extension of the mind's knowledge, then the known would become limitless. It is an infinity where the known has no

significance and hence the knower, too has no significance. It is a knowledge without the knower and the known. It verily is wisdom, for wisdom is a state which comes into being when the thinker and the thought are absent, when the knower and the known are no more. Liberated from *kleśa* and *karma*, the spiritual pilgrim in the moment of *Dharma-megha-samādhi* is completely freed from the burden of knowledge, for he comes to the infinity of Wisdom. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*:

tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāma-krama-samāptir guṇānām

32. In such Infinity of Wisdom, the process of psychological becoming through the functional activities of the three *guṇas* comes to an end.

The man of wisdom is one who has a right perception of things. He sees not through the glass darkly and has an unveiled perception of men and things. To have an unveiled perception is to know the real nature of things. It is a perception without an image. Now in our normal perception we see the image of things. This applies equally to internal as well as external perception. In other words, our perception of ourselves is also in terms of an image. We have an image of ourselves and that is all that we know about ourselves. It is the unveiled perception that enables us to see ourselves without an image. All our processes of psychological becoming are based on this knowledge of ourselves as an image. It does not emanate from the Being. In the light of Wisdom there comes perception of ourselves as the being. When this happens then all the frustrating activities of psychological becoming come to an end. There is becoming, but it is a becoming of what one is. Where psychological becoming

emanates from the image, there one finds the distorted functioning of the three *Guṇas*, as here the mind seeks to impose its own motivations on the activities of the *Guṇas*. When Becoming emanates from the being, then the *Guṇas* function normally without any interference by the mind. When the process of becoming is left to the *Guṇas* without the intervention of the mind then it is smooth and effortless. In this the becoming is not for seeking psychological fulfilment, but for the expression of the fullness of the being. The phrase *pariṇāma-krama-samāpti* means the end of the process of becoming which awaits *pariṇāma* or fulfilment. The becoming emanates from being, and so there is no question of arriving anywhere. It is the arrival which imparts to all processes of becoming a factor of frustration and dejection. *Pariṇāma-krama* is indeed the point of arrival. The *sūtra* says there is an end to this process of arrival through becoming. The mind desires to use the *Guṇas* for the purposes of arriving somewhere thus leading to distortions in the functioning of the *Guṇas*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* talks of “*Guṇas* functioning among the *Guṇas*”. This means in the functioning of the *Guṇas* no motive of the mind is projected. In this, the psychological time ceases, and there remains only the chronological time. Where becoming does not emanate from being, there it is the psychological time which constitutes the field. And psychological time is indeed the cause of frustration. But when becoming is just in the chronological time then it is divested of all frustrating factors. It is to this element of time that Patañjali draws our attention in the next *sūtra*:

kṣaṇa-pratīyogī pariṇāmāparānta-nirgrāhyaḥ kramah

33. Changes occur only in moments but they become apprehensible in time-succession.

Normally our consciousness is in such a cloud of insensitivity that we are never aware of moments; we apprehend only time-succession. But changes occur only in moments. He who is aware of the moments will comprehend the trend of movement indicated by the being. When this happens the process of becoming goes on in the natural context. He who knows only the time-succession and is unaware of the moment apprehends movement without a sense of direction. It is the moment which contains the direction. So without a sense of direction, a mere movement is meaningless. This is what is perceptible in man's efforts at psychological becoming. It has movement but no direction.

Patañjali uses two very significant words in this *sūtra*, namely *kṣaṇa* and *krama*, or moment and time-succession. Life exists only in a moment, but the mind of man functioning in the sphere of past and future is unable to see life as it is. The *krama* is the movement of the mind from the past to the future, which is the psychological time. The mind is unaware of the present which is a timeless moment. It sees everything in the context of time-succession. It believes that all changes occur in this stream of time. But the fact is, life is in a state of constant flux. It is never the same at two successive moments. It has only a momentary existence. But the mind wants to hold this moment in time-succession. Now time-succession is a continuity, but the momentary existence of life indicates the factor of discontinuity. It is only in the moment of discontinuity that life can be experienced. What exists in time-succession is only the memory of the moment. But to indulge in memory without the perception of the moment is to display elements of false existence. It is this false memory which is the begetter of psychological time. When the

perception is not there, how can there be memory? Without the experience of the fact, the memory has no ground in which to function. An artificial ground of projection is given by the mind, and this becomes the field for the operation of memory. It is this which creates the frustrations of psychological time. He whose consciousness has the sensitivity of the awareness of a moment has no fear of death. In fact, life as well as death can be understood only in the moment of the present. To attempt to find the secret of life and death in the continuity of the time-process is to engage oneself in an exercise of futility. Reality abides in the Eternal Now, in the timeless moment of the present. To be aware of this is to know absolute freedom. Patañjali says in the next *sūtra*, the last in the *Yoga-Sūtras*, that when one is established in that state of freedom then does one know what spontaneous and effortless living is.

puruṣārtha-sūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citi-śakter iti.

34. *Kaivalya* or Absolute Freedom is a state of effortlessness where the three *Guṇas* return to their movement unfettered by the mind and where consciousness regains its original and unmodified condition.

In this last *sūtra* Patañjali seems to have summed up the entire philosophy and practice of Yoga. He began his *Yoga-Sūtras* by defining the state of Yoga as a condition where all modifications of mind cease. Here in this *sūtra* he indicates that this condition is indeed a state of *Kaivalya* or absolute freedom. In *kaivalya* the consciousness regains its original and unmodified condition. It regains its innocence, in which

state alone freedom is possible. The state of innocence is untouched by thought, and so the *Guṇas* return to their own movement, unfettered by the mind. The mind does not use them for its psychological becoming. In fact, in *Kaivalya* all processes of psychological becoming have come to an end. Patañjali introduces here a phrase which is most interesting. He speaks of *guṇānam-pratiprasava*, meaning the *Guṇas* return to the state prior to the intervention by the mind. The *sūtra* also speaks of *citi sakteḥ* meaning the power of pure consciousness. This purity of consciousness comes because of *svarūpa-pratiṣṭha*, meaning established in one's original nature. The consciousness obviously is purified when it has no false identification. When it is established in its real nature then it is free from all accretions or all those factors that are associated with an acquired nature.

Yoga means union, but strangely enough it is union with oneself. It is a reintegration of oneself. To be united with oneself is surely an experience of total freedom; for one is then not bothered about defending something. It is in putting up defence-mechanism that one loses one's freedom. When there is nothing to defend then one is free from traces of fear. And freedom abides where fear is not. It is the acquired nature that needs to be defended; the original nature needs no defence for it exists by itself and is not the product of time. That which is put together by time can be destroyed by time.

In *Kaivalya* one is free from the entire movement of psychological time. And so in the psychological sense one lives from moment to moment. Each moment is fresh as there is no psychological burden to be carried across the passage of time. To live from moment to moment is indeed to live effortlessly, or, as Patañjali says in this *sūtra*,

puruṣārtha-sūnyānām, meaning where all effort has ended. When the three *Guṇas* function effortlessly without the intervention of the mind then one is free from all psychological resistances. Absolute freedom is verily that condition where no resistances and therefore no indulgences exist. When there is no struggle for psychological becoming then can one act with absolute freedom, and then living becomes an end in itself—not a means to achieve something, or some destination. Living is its own destination—such is indeed the life of Yoga, the life of absolute freedom. It is only the free mind that can act freely, without any compulsion, inner or outer.

This is indeed the state of Love, for Love acts under no compulsion. It is an action without an incentive, a response without a challenge. This alone is total action. From total communion to total communication—this is the journey of Yoga. Yoga is a gospel of true action, not a gospel of escape. It is a life where becoming is the field in which is a free expression of the Being. Where communion and communication co-exist there life becomes an indescribable joy—a joy that can never be corrupted by time. And in Yoga lies the secret of the co-existence of communion and communication, of experience and expression, of the Transcendent and the Immanent, of the Timeless and the time. He who knows the secret of the co-existence of the two, alone can know the fullness of life. And what is Yoga but an experience of the fullness of life? Experience of the fullness of life demands an act of dying from moment to moment, for it is in death that life finds its fulfilment. To know how to live, and therefore to know how to die—this is the supreme message of Yoga and is the true elixir of life.

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