



LIVING
A TRULY
RELIGIOUS
LIFE

Vimala Thakar

LIVING A TRULY RELIGIOUS LIFE

with Love.

Vimala Thakar

VIMALA THAKAR

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**VIMALAJI'S COMMUNICATION WITH
MUMBAI INQUIRERS**

**IN THE FESTIVAL OF FRIENDSHIP GATHERING
IN MOUNT ABU**

IN NOVEMBER, 1995

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FOREWORD

Vimal Parivar, Mumbai, is happy and privileged to present in this book Vimalaji's friendly communications about "Living A Truly Religious Life". This theme was chosen by Mumbai friends for their November 1995 Vimal Parivar Family Gathering at Mount Abu. Vimalaji kindly agreed to explore in depth all the aspects and implications of religion and religious life for sincere inquirers.

The word 'Religion' is subjectively interpreted by each person according to tradition, family upbringing, education and the social and cultural environment. All these influence and condition his ideas about religion. Religious practices are followed and often there is a dichotomy between religious practice and the rest of one's life.

Vimalaji delves deep into the traditional and non-traditional approaches to religion and indicates what religion and religiosity truly mean.

She deals with important practical aspects which would help every serious inquirer in his urge for freedom from inner conditionings and inner contradictions. She describes the beginning and the progress of the enquiry. She explains the process of self-education. She persuades us to question ourselves regarding the supreme priority in our life. She depicts our various habit patterns. She enlightens us about the observation of the mental movement and its subsequent abeyance. The harmonisation of various energies within us is elucidated.

She talks about the role of silence and explore the implications of true meditation which leads to the personal discovery of Reality. She tells us that the act of living rightly is itself the worship of the Divine and that religiosity is to abide in and

remain immersed in the source of life while one is moving through relationships.

The publication of this book has become possible due to the whole-hearted co-operation by many Vimal Parivar friends in Mumbai to whom we owe our thanks. We are specially grateful to Kaiserben Irani who recorded the discourses, to Shri Sudarshan Dheer, the internationally acclaimed graphic designer, for preparing, as a labour of love, the excellent artwork for the cover page and to Shri Rajesh Valia for providing the beautiful photograph for the front cover.

May Vimalaji's loving words of wisdom inspire the readers to live a truly religious life.

17 February, 1998
Mumbai

Vimal Parivar

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LIVING A TRULY RELIGIOUS LIFE

Due to the kindness of some friends from Bombay, we get this opportunity to come together and share life for some days every year. The 5 or 6 days that we shall be together, we will be sharing life on the verbal level through dialogues and communications, on the non-verbal level through silence and on the non-mental level we will be sharing the presence of one another.

I do hope that all of us sitting in this room are not only acquainted with the English language but have a fairly good command of the language to understand the nuances of the words and the English idioms and feel the character of the language. So, for 5 days, may I request you to think in the English language, to feel in the English language so that the consciousness is soaked and bathed in the personality of that language. It is not sufficient that we talk with one another here in this room in the English language and then go on thinking outside this room in Indian languages which are heavily loaded with a number of associations - intellectual and emotional.

My request is to have merciless honesty with oneself as we conduct this participative joint enquiry into the theme of Living a Truly Religious Life. An enquiry requires, does it not, unconditional receptivity, alert sensitivity and a sense of self-restraint. Enquiry is not curiosity. Curiosity floats on the verbal level. Curiosity can provoke dry logical argumentation and assertion can creep in, in a clandestine manner. Then the communication gets arrested and dialogue does not occur. We have come together here for the sacred responsibility of a dialogue, of a sharing of life.

My third request would be not to feel hurt by the analysis that will be taking place here in the sessions during which we shall be together. That is why one used the term, merciless honesty or merciless truthfulness with oneself and with one's understanding.

Am I Alive?

Now, the theme is "Living A Truly Religious Life". The first question I would ask myself, " Am I alive?" It is only for a person that is alive, that the question of living becomes relevant. Are we alive? And, what do we imply by that term - being alive?

The earth is alive, the mountains, the trees are alive. What is the difference between their being alive and a human being calling himself alive? Do we go by the clinical and medical indications of being alive? That the person is breathing, the body is warm, there is elasticity in the body and capacity for mobility? Is that what we imply by being alive? Or is there any deeper implication when a person, when a human being says that 'I am alive'? So, what is the indication or, if I may be forgiven, what are the criteria for calling ourselves alive and what do we mean by living?

We are born, we are brought up, we are provided with nutrition for the growth of the physical body. Our brains and minds are conditioned, trained, equipped to acquire knowledge about the socio-economic, political, cultural patterns of behaviour. We are helped to acquire skills in handling those organised, structured, standardised patterns of behaviour. So we get a job, enter into business, have a family and manifest those patterns, express those patterns in the movement of relationship - is that living? We will have to question ourselves deeply because the theme is tremendously fascinating. It requires probing the fundamentals

of life. This questioning becomes necessary because we are desirous of finding out what is a truly religious life.

Religiosity

Religion is a word that implies to remain united with the roots of life, with the matrix of life, the ground reality, the source of life. That is the meaning of the English word 'Religion'. Religiosity is to remain immersed in the source of your life while you are moving through relationships at the physical level, the verbal level and the mental level - all the levels. If you turn to your Sanskrit language, the word is Dharma or in the Buddhist parlance it is Dhamma. Dhaaranat Dharma Iti". That vitality, that vital energy, that nectar which sustains life, which nourishes life, is Dharma. Dharma is that principle, that vital energy, the essence which causes the sustenance of life in you. Obviously, the source of life, the root of life, the essence of life is something that cannot be organised, that cannot be standardised, that cannot be structured.

I wonder if you have noticed, that the cosmic life surrounding us is an unstructured phenomenon. There is interrelationship, inter-planetary rhythmic relationship, but there is no structure. There is an orderliness without organising it. There is no rigidity of a system. There is the music of rhythm. The dance and the interaction of innumerable energies in the field of cosmos, is a beautiful phenomenon, a majestic phenomenon but standardisation, organisation, structuring is not possible there.

So, it seems to me that religiosity might require the courage and the fearlessness not to allow any structured, organised, standardised patterns of sensual, verbal or mental behaviour to victimise me. Human beings, I hope, do not feel satisfied when they are converted into computerised robots in the name of economics, politics, religion and culture. If they are

converted into passive consumers of patterns of behaviour, readymade codes of conduct, rigid norms and criteria, then an undercurrent of dissatisfaction begins to eat into the being, if there is a human being. Please do see with me that to be alive is not to be a computerised robot.

Religion - Its Traditional Implications

So, you have taken up a theme which is quite serious. We will require sustained seriousness at least for one week to probe into the various aspects of the theme. One is aware that the word religion is generally and most often used to denote an organised pattern of behaviour of a community. The Hindu religion, that is to say the Hindu way of behaviour - ethical, cultural, social, economic, political and so on. Similarly there are the patterns of behaviour of the Muslim religion, the Christian religion, the Sikh religion, Judaism and others. One is aware that the word religion is associated with these patterns of behaviour, the cultural etiquettes, the ethical conventions and so on. But it seems to me that it is misusing the word.

We should allow the word to speak for itself. Look at the root of the word in Latin from which the word religion has been brought into existence. This variety of patterns, though they might have been worked out in minutest details, could not be called religion. It cannot be a cultural or moral etiquette or behaviour. Religion cannot have a structure. It cannot have a pattern through it is necessary to train people, to educate people and certain patterns of behaviour and certain codes of conduct become necessary for living as members of society.

There is a global structure called economy - controlled, regulated, modulated by technology, electronics, nuclear science. A global structure that is called politics. So, there is

the supremacy of the economic structure, the political structure. Education has been structured and patternised. These conditionings and training and skills in handling those structured systems and patterns may be a necessity but religion is not a social activity. Religion cannot be a cultural etiquette or formality. Please do see with me that living in a society cannot extract the price of liberty and inner freedom from us. It cannot ask of us the sacrifice of getting conditioned psychically and accepting the authority of persons, personalities, systems and structures. Psychic slavery or enslavement is more disastrous than any other kind of slavery. This psychic bonded labour is much more devastating than any other kind of bonded labour.

Personal Discovery of Reality

My friends, these are words born of deep sorrow and anguish. What is happening in the world and what is happening in India? The victimisation of the human being, obliging him to accept authority, the authority of the State, the authority of economic structures. Now there is the authority of liberalisation and globalisation. Then there is the authority of the university degrees and diplomas.

So, is there any field of human life, any area of a human being's life where one could remain totally unconditioned, where one will not have to accept the authority of any concept, system or the authority of symbols representing the concepts? There are areas where the conditioning is necessary and one has to concede that. But is there no area in the life of a human being where there can be unconditional, absolute freedom? Is not the human being free to discover the nature of truth, the meaning of life, entirely by oneself? The personal discovery of the meaning of life, the personal discovery of the nature of the ultimate Reality is the only thing that can unite the human being to the source of life. Such a

personal discovery results in the personal perfection of the inner and the outer - an intimate, direct encounter with the Isness of life, denuded of all theories, systems, structures. Such perception is ecstasy, such discovery is bliss. It allows the understanding resulting from that encounter and discovery to flow into our life. It is the expression of inner freedom.

Freedom has to be lived from morning till night. Whatever you do, from brushing the teeth, bathing the body, sleeping the body, everything that one does can be an expression of the inner freedom. And it is only an inwardly free human being that can relate to others or with others. Surely, human relationships cannot be repetitions - mechanical repetitions of systems and patterns. That is why one intentionally used the word computerisation, robotisation of human beings, if systems and structures and codes and patterns are extended to the psychic realm of life. As long as they remain sanely worked out systems and patterns in social life, one can understand it. But when they are extended to the inner realm of consciousness and you have to put the chains of conditionings on the consciousness, then we are banishing religiosity from our lives.

This morning one felt the need of putting one's cards on the table as it were. How one understands the word religion and religiosity. We will work them out step by step in the next five days. But, first of all, there should be a comprehensive perception of the theme. A truly religious life requires a person that is alive, requires a person that loves to be alive, not to be pushed and pulled and dragged around. One who loves the freedom of living. If we are afraid of freedom, if we are afraid of life, then we can imagine that there is security in systems, in structures, in patterns, in codes of conduct. We must be told what they are, we must be taught how to approximate them, to adopt them, to handle them.

Do I Love Freedom?

So do we want to live? Do we love freedom? Have we got the humility to be vulnerable to the mystery of life? Because life is unpredictability. Life is a flux of changes on the matrix of something that is unchangeable. On the physical level, on the mental level, inwardly as well as in the external, the outer world there is a vortex of change that goes on - space - bound, time - bound. In our own body the change goes on everyday, though we may not notice it. Metabolically the change goes on and with the change, with the growth, the tastes change, the psychological needs and requirements change. So, there is a beauty of that flux of change in which we are. We are ourselves products of human civilisation and culture where the bodies and brains have been conditioned.

So, that is our abode - living in those limited and conditioned forms, surrounded by this tremendous momentum of change that goes on - birth, growth, decay, death, emergence, dissolution, change in seasons, change in everything. Haven't you seen how in the last two years the context of life in India has changed, the psychology has changed?

So we have to live in the midst of these changes and stand on our ground, remain united with our roots, with the source. What a marvellous opportunity to be born in a human form, where evolution has become eloquent and self-aware. The opportunity exists for cognition - to cognise, to understand the things that are around - not to remain on the perceptual, the instinctive animal level, but to be able to analyse, to synthesize, to derive conclusions, to convert concrete experiences into abstract concepts, to build up symbols to represent those concepts. It is a marvellous opportunity, a vast heritage in the conditioned realm and due to that self-aware consciousness or energy in the human form, contained

in the human form, there is also the opportunity to explore the nature of freedom, the nature of reality, the tenderness of love and compassion.

Do I Want True Religion?

So, this morning we are trying to differentiate what is generally called religion, what we accept naively as religion, implications of that acceptance, accepting the authority and we are trying to differentiate it from what is, to use your term, true religion.

True religion will be one for the whole humanity. Patterns of behaviour will be many, conditioned by race, conditioned by geographic peculiarities of the region, by the needs of the community - agricultural, industrial, post-industrial. So, we will have to differentiate between the so-called religions, the denominations that have been given the name of religion and the religion which can be common and which is common as far as your friend can see it to the whole humanity. What is the difference between the aliveness of the earth, the trees, the mountains and the human beings? Of course, the trees do not have the mobility, the mountains do not have the mobility and the human beings have the mobility. That is evident. Besides that? So let us ask that question when we go out of this room. What is the content of our being alive?

Besides the technical, the clinical, the medical symptoms, what is that special ability which is available to human beings only? Self awareness. Do we use that self awareness? Is that the source of our perception and responses? Is self awareness the discriminative characteristic of human beings and their aliveness? What is that self awareness? Anyway, what is awareness and this opportunity for living, for relating? What is this act of relationship? Is it a projection of a pattern?

Is it verbalisation of a system? Is it the effort to sustain some structures? What is relationship, human relationship? Do we ask these question of ourselves?

So, enquiry is a very sacred responsibility. With this introductory communication about the theme, let us depart and come back in the afternoon, after doing some probing.

You, who have come here for the first time may not be or may be aware that the person you are meeting has spent more than forty five years in travelling, has met the people who consider themselves enquirers, has had very intimate dialogues and discussions with them. And after those forty five years around the world, one has perceived that people are afraid of asking fundamental questions to themselves. They are afraid of the basic questions. They are afraid of freedom. They are afraid of life. They want security against life, security against the unpredictability of life. They want to be guided. They want even to be dictated. They want to be controlled. They would like to be rewarded, punished.

You know, one has seen that people are afraid of freedom. They feel lost when they are not surrounded by compulsions, when they are not ordered about. When somebody does not need them, require them, they feel lost. Love of money , love of power, love of conveniences, sexual pleasure, sensual pleasure - that is there. Love of life? The gratitude towards life that I am alive, to feel that it is a benediction to be alive, it is very rare. Love of Life is very rare!

Religion is not a cultural etiquette. It is not a social activity, please. So, do we want religion? Do we need true religion as we need food, clothing, shelter, jobs, economic security?

Because, we will not be able to live religiously unless there is within us that basic need.

And I think one should stop here.

LIFE IS A MYSTERY

I wonder if we have noticed that what we call life is a self-generated phenomenon. I hope that you might be finding some leisure to look at life, moving away from the centre of the ego and self-centred emotions and memories and thoughts, to look at life and the mystery of its existence. The self-created wholeness of life contains innumerable universes and they are interrelated - the universes, the planets, the solar systems, the earth, the oceans, the skies, the mountains, the rivers. Everything is interrelated, not interconnected but interrelated. I hope we recognise the difference between the two.

A small thorn pricks your foot, you have gone out somewhere for a walk and the brain feels it. There is toothache and the whole body feels the pain - there is interrelatedness in our body. In the same way, in the cosmos, in the wholeness of life, everything is interrelated. Not only that, but there are not the parts and the whole constructing a totality. There is an organic, homogeneous wholeness. It cannot be fragmented. The non-divisibility and the non-fragmentability of life, its self-generatedness - that is what we call mystery. Life is a mystery - its wholeness, its complexity, its homogeneity, interrelatedness of every expression of life. This mysteriousness of life generates a sense of sacredness or holiness about it. Holiness is the perfume of the wholeness.

Not only that, the five principles which seem to be the ingredients of life- the earth, the water, the fire, the sound, the emptiness of space - they contain one another. Besides the interrelatedness, there is the mystery of these principles containing one another. You must have noticed that there is fire within the earth. There is water in the earth. Various sounds are contained in the earth along with the emptiness. Have

you noticed that the emptiness of the space in the skies contains fire, water? Have you noticed how water contains earth? It is a marvellous phenomenon. They contain one another, without disturbing the unique characteristics and identity of one another.

Have you looked at the mystery, how the solar system functions and the relations between various planets? This orderliness in the relationship, this interrelatedness, has not been created separately by someone after having created the world. It is an inbuilt characteristic of life - the majesty, the grandeur and the mystery of life. I wonder if you have ever looked at life this way.

Is it necessary to imagine, as the people in the middle ages or before that might have imagined, that just as we build a house and live in it, there is some creator who has built the whole creation and lives in it, somewhere in the heavens? The Father, the Mother, or some such imaginary creator? Is it necessary to imagine? In the in history of theologies, there is the evolutionary process and there was a time when people of the world imagined the creator as a person, an entity separate from the creation, sitting somewhere, dishing out rewards, punishments, getting angry, having favourites, just as there are the father and the mother in the house with the progeny, and they give rewards, they punish the children? That is how the house, the home, the family is kept together. In the same way they imagined that creation is kept together.

We are living at the end of the 20th Century when scientists are discussing whether consciousness is a separate, independent principle or it is a resultant of the evolution of matter. They are discussing whether consciousness contains matter or matter contains consciousness and in the evolutionary process it manifests itself.

If you would read the discussions that are going on among the physicists of the world in the last few years, they are discussing psychoscience, the science of consciousness as there is a science of matter - Physics. We are living at the end of the 20th century and is it not necessary that we have a scientific approach to life? There might have been efforts to pull the unknowable in to the area of the known with the help of ideas, theories, emotions. In order to relate to that mystery of life, various textures of relationships might have been felt necessary. So, those ideas, those systems, those concepts, those symbols, representing those ideas, housed in temples, mosques, synagogues, cathedrals, Gurudwaras, Buddha Viharas, Jain Derasaras etc., they must have had relevance to the intellectual and emotional development of the human race.

The Source of Religion

But today, physics and metaphysics are nearly converging upon each other. Science and spirituality are getting synthesised and integrated into one homogeneous whole. So it seems to me that the sense of sacredness, the sense of mystery is the source of religion. We have to perceive life as 'it is'. Then recognise that the wholeness, the complexity, the interrelatedness is not something that can be analysed, categorised, measured, defined. The recognition of the infinity and immeasurableness of life, the indivisibility and non-fragmentability of life creates a different relationship with life than the one based on ideas, theories and emotions. Unless you look at life, unless you perceive and recognise the mystery, the sense of sacredness does not come about. Reverence for life does not wake up in the heart.

The recognition of the infinity and immeasurableness of life is also the recognition of the human limitations - that which gets individuated from that wholeness. Wholeness is non-

individuated, non - specified. When its emanations come in focus of time and space and clothe itself in form, size, shape, colour, etc., it gets limited. There is a beauty in limitedness as there is grandeur in the wholeness. As the non-individuated wholeness evokes a sense of awe and respect, the limitedness of forms, what you call material objects, our bodies, our senses, etc., they generate a sense of beauty, of affection because you can touch them, you can feel them, you can handle them.

So, limitedness is also the wealth of life, Individuatedness of various objects, animals, birds and other expressions of life, is as sacred as that non-individuated, all permeating wholeness of life. My friends, I am trying to share with you that Life itself is Divinity. Life is sacred and the act of living is the worship of that Divinity. So do we recognise the mysteriousness of life or have we accepted theories and ideologies that have come to us through books and traditions? Have we accepted the authority of the symbols and the concepts they represent and do we look at life through those ideas, those concepts? Then there will be second hand, third hand, hundredth hand relationship with the reality of life.

If we want a first hand, personal relatedness to the mystery of life, then with all respect and humility we might have to brush aside at least tentatively, for the purpose of exploration, of experimentation, all the symbols, the ideas, the concepts. One is not talking of rejecting them. As acceptance is irrelevant, rejection also is equally irrelevant to the act of living, to the understanding of life. So, do I look at the movement of the seasons, the relationship between the earth, the sun, the moon? Do I look at the seed sprouting and then becoming a plant, a tree? Have I time for that? Or I have no time because I am so engrossed in earning money and having, raising a family, and the clashes and the petty conflicts and my own ego hurt, honoured, accepted, rejected ? Am I so busy with

all that and with the social activities that I have no time to look at the universe in which I am born?

You are born in a family, you are born in a community, you are born in a world on this planet called earth but you are born in Cosmos also! You are as much related to the sun and the moon as you are related to your parents. You are related to the earth and the skies as you are related to your caste or community. There is an organic relationship. So the source of religion is the urge to look, to perceive, to discover, to understand.

The Awakening of Religiosity

If that urge is not there and one is satisfied with accepting the ideas, the traditions, the systems, following them, repeating them, then, I think, that the sense of sacredness, that which is not manmade, that which is not the result of human thought and ideation, or theology or philosophy, but that which is self - created, self - propelled, self - regulated cannot be discovered. Unless that urge is there for personal relationship with reality, religiosity does not come about. So, just as we devote time to our responsibilities for the family, to social and personal commitments, it is also necessary for the awakening of religiosity in our consciousness to allot some time to live the organic relationship with nature.

This relationship is to be lived, not to acquire something, not to obtain, something, not for experiencing, but to have a contact, to have an encounter, to have an interaction which is spontaneous. We do it for pleasure when you go swimming. You do not go swimming for acquiring anything but for the joy of it. We do it out of necessity. If the winter is biting cold, then you go and stand out in the sun. That is a reaction to the need. Is there any need at the psychic level to perceive the relationship and to live that organic relationship? Religion, religiosity are concerned with the living, not with ideas, theories,

thoughts, memories, systems of discipline. There is a kind of spontaneity about it.

Harmonizing Bodily Energies

Supposing, presuming that we, sitting in this room have that urge, 'Athato Satya Jignyasa', 'Athato Brahma Jignyasa', 'Athato Atma Jignyasa'. Presuming that all of us here have that urge, not to know, but to see, to understand and to live. Where do we begin? We have the microcosm, the body, of the macrocosm - a condensed cosmos in this body. So why not begin with the body and find out if there is harmonisation of energies in the body as there is harmonisation of energies in the cosmos? The principles of earth, water, fire, sound and space, their interrelationship is in harmony. The grandeur, the majesty comes from that harmony. So, is there any harmony in the energies contained in our body? We have biological bodies. We share them with the biological aspect of all the animals, the birds, the trees, and others. There are instincts incorporated in the body and they have energies.

Have you noticed the energy of appetite and what it does to your whole body, when you are really hungry, when you are really thirsty, the energy of thirst, the energy of sex, the energy of sleep? It is something fantastic. They are non-mental, non-rational instincts. You do not say, I will feel hungry. They are not in the realm of volition. They are the wealth of the biological world. The plants feel hungry, thirsty. The birds, the animals, the earth feels thirsty. And mind you, this is not poetry, this is life. Life itself is poetry.

So, in my body have I ever looked at these energies and what they do to the body, to the mind, to the brain? Do they create any tension, pressure? Do they create any conflict? And when those energies begin to operate, what do I do with them? How do I feed the appetite? How much does my body

need? What kind of food does the health of the body relish? Not what my taste wants, not the craze for traditional tastes and flavours, but what is it that my body requires? Whether you look at it from the naturopathic approach, the approach of Ayurveda or Homeopathy, that is not my concern. But how do we feed the body, get acquainted with the energy of appetite and look at the diet, the provision that we have for satisfying that? Do we do any injustice with it? Do we over-feed the body? Do we under-feed it? Do we starve it? I am angry, therefore I do not eat. I am too much worried and therefore I do not sleep. What is my relationship with the body? Let us begin there and put the house in order.

So my learning will result in a new approach to sleep, to sex, to food, to exercise. How do you sit the body? How do you stand it? How do you walk it? What kind of exercise do you give to the body? There are so many autonomous systems within the body. Do they get exercise? Do they get an opportunity for getting themselves revitalised, the muscular system, the glandular system, the nervous system, the chemical system, the respiratory system? All these autonomous systems are working inside our body. The secretions from the glands - how they convert the food into various chemicals and minerals? Have you looked at the mystery that is physical life? So, the harmonisation of the energies will begin with the acquaintance of the physical - that is noticeable. You can feel it, you can see it, you can handle it, you can correct the imbalances. If that is not religion, then what is religion?

So the unscientific approach will disappear. Your relationship to food, to exercise, to sleep, etc., will be intelligent, well-informed, and responsible. Then there will be no excesses - no excessive sleeping, no excessive eating. There will be no compulsive eating, no compulsive sex, no compulsive sleeping. There will be no excesses and

imbalances resulting from them. There will neither be indulgence nor suppression but a scientific moderation, a scientific restraint, the elegance of restraint, voluntary restraint. Not because the scriptures ask me to do it, but I see that they are necessary for the harmony which is the health of my life.

The Energy of Sound and Speech

There cannot be happiness without harmony. There cannot be peace without harmony. Harmony is the breath of peace and perfume of health. So, on the physical level there is a qualitative change in my approach and in my behaviour with the body. Then I notice that there is an energy called sound and speech, which enables me to speak. Have I noticed how I speak? What happens to the body when I speak? The birth of sound, the journey of sound. Whether it is from the centre, the pit of the stomach or it is from the crown of your head? Have you ever asked where does the sound live in my body? And how does it get converted into a word and it travels and comes out of my mouth? This is learning, Sir, this is learning. This is enquiring, exploring.

So, you will have reverence for the energy of sound and speech and you will not misuse it, abuse it. Speaking is for communication. Speech is for sharing. Speech is for narrating the facts. Speech can be an expression of inner motivation. It is a bridge between the outer and the inner. Now, am I using it in a responsible way or in a disorderly way? The whole day gossiping, talking unwarrantedly, unnecessarily? Do I misuse that? Reverence for Life has to be lived.

We may sit down and say, 'Nadatmakam Jagat Sarvam. Nadarupa Swayam Vishnuhu. Nadarupa Maheshwarah. Nadatmika Para Shaktihi. Nadatmakam Jagat Trayam'.

What about us? What do we do? Have we perceived the harshness with which the sound energy, the capacity for

verbalisation is abused and misused in our life? If there is disorder on the physical level, how can there be orderliness on the mental level which is subtle, imperceptible, invisible, intangible?

So I harmonise the energy of speech. When I talk about facts, I do not mix my preferences and prejudices in that reporting. You see, they call it truthfulness, I call it correct adjustment with the fact. If there is maladjustment with the facts, if you mix all your emotions, preferences, prejudices, theories while you are narrating something, you are reporting something, then there comes about what you call a lie or falsehood. A lie or falsehood is maladjustment with the fact or maladjustment with your inner motivation. Apart from its ethical and moral content, even scientifically speaking, if you use the words to conceal your motivations, to hide them or you contaminate the facts with your preferences and prejudices, the misuse and abuse come about. So I would put my relationship with this verbalisation, a huge dimension in my life, on a level of rationality and science.

Only scientific spirituality is going to be valid for the next century. It is not the flair of emotions and brilliance of oratory or ideation that will last. That which stands valid when tested by rationality and science will be there in the next century. The other structures, systems, wealth of concepts, etc., will become a part of history and perhaps preserved as verbal monuments of ancestors. So, a new dynamics is required and we begin with our own selves.

The Energy of Thought

Now comes the difficult area, from the biological we are moving to the psychological. As we have seen, we are products of millions of years. The brains have been trained, conditioned, educated, by the whole human race. So, there

is the energy of thought contained in the whole nervous system, right in the plasma, nay, still further, in the marrows of the bones. They are conditioned, conditioned for refining, conditioned for sophistication. Culture is nothing but the process of refinement and sophistication. So there is the energy of thought within us as there is the energy of instincts in the biological structure. What do we do with those thoughts, those memories, that knowledge, that experience contained in the conscious, the subconscious, the unconscious? And the difficulty is, it is invisible.

You cannot see the mind as you can see your liver or kidneys or pancreas, glands or lungs or heart. Mind is not an organ of that kind. It is the amalgamation of all the conditioning of millions of years, permeating the whole body. From the crown of the head to the big toe, there is mind, - that energy of thought, memory and experience. It is there. Now, how does one create an order and harmony in that vast field, if one wants to do it?

I say no, this is very hard work. I will follow whatever is available, like fast food, instant coffee, ready made garments, ready made religion, fast spirituality. No, I am not saying this in a lighter vein. This is the sad reality of today. In the commercialised world and commercialised life, people want easy and quick spirituality. If it can be obtained without exertion, if we can get it ready made, if somebody can place the hand on the head and give me the experiences, I will be happy. Living itself is looked upon as an exertion and shortcuts to living are sought in the name of progress. Please, this is not criticism. It is verbalised sorrow that is being shared with friends. You cannot combine religion, religiosity with commercialisation, standardisation, regimentation, propagation. It is something uniquely individual. As flowers are not the repetition of one another, in the

same way, the discoveries of truth and reality are not repetitions.

Observing the Movement of the Mind

So, now, I am faced with this energy permeating my whole body. I want to get acquainted with it. I want to seek it. There comes the relevance of learning - to observe, to watch.

So, there comes the relevance of allotting some time for oneself, for learning, for education and sitting down to watch. As you have already established a scientific relationship with the body through proper food, proper exercise, proper sleep, through moderation, through restraint, now there will be no difficulty in sitting down comfortably in whatever posture your body enjoys, provided the spine is erect, straight and erect, so that the rhythm of breathing is not obstructed in any way. When you sit erect or stand erect then the inhaling and the exhaling of breath comes out rhythmically, not jerkily or shakily. So one learns to sit properly. The body establishes its relationship with the earth. You do not make the body stiff and rigid. You sit in a relaxed way.

Living is a movement of relaxation, not of tension, not of pressure, not of conflict or contradiction. So as you have established a harmonious relationship with the biological instincts, may be, the body begins to cooperate. You sit down somewhere in a quiet corner. If there is no place, no garden, if there is a small terrace or a balcony, sometime of the day and night when you can have half an hour, forty five minutes to yourself, you will sit down and just see how the mind moves and what it brings up. You have to see it.

So, you will see the chaotic movement of the mind. It runs back to the past, the yesterday or the last month or the last year or it jumps into the idea of the future. The future does not exist as a dimension. But the mind jumps from the past to

the future. It jumps from one subject to the other, one memory to the other. One has to watch. Unless the disorder, unless the chaos, the anarchy are perceived directly, there will not be an urge for freedom.

Inner contents come up to the surface level and get exposed to my perception and attention. My ego gets hurt, because I see the anger, I see the jealousy, I see the lustfulness, I see the ambition, I see the good points, the bad points, everything. And I begin to think why it is there. Was it with my parents, was it due to the mother, is it due to the father, is it due to the teacher?

The introspection, the analysis, the interpretation begin. There are so many books which give the theories for interpretation. The Freudian theory, the Adlerian theory, the deep psychology of Martin and so on. So the whole game of intellectual interpretation goes on. We are not talking about that. Observation without reaction, observation without evaluation, without judgement, is an austerity. It is a cerebral austerity.

To look and let things get exposed. If that has happened in that half an hour or forty five minutes, that I devote for my education, then while I am working in the office or talking with my wife or husband, that observation remains with me as a new dimension, a new faculty. Then I know what I am saying I am aware why I am talking in a certain way. A new dimension gets added to the usual daily routine. So when you are angry, before there is the outburst, you are conscious that you are in the grip of anger.

The observation has now got converted into the recognition and direct experience of it, during relationships. I am now conscious that I am in the grip of jealousy, I am in the grip of comparison. I am a victim of ambition, of impatience.

In the movement of relationship, now there is a new strength. We are not in a hurry to change it. We are not in a hurry to eliminate them. First of all, perception in solitude, then realization and recognition in the midst of relationships. Then one notices ten times a day what has happened, either in the grip of victimization by this emotion or by that idea, or by that thought. So a genuine sadness dawns on my heart, not because of any theory but because I have seen the chaos and the misery that it creates. My angry words, my impatience, my doubting, my attributing motives, suspicions, all that I see now, and I also see what it does to my relationships. So the crookedness, the imbalance, create a sadness in my heart, and then there is the urge to set oneself free of the chaos and the anarchy. By reading about it in a book, or hearing about it in talks and discourses, that burning flame, that urge for freedom does not come about.

The Urge for Freedom

So the observation, getting converted into recognition, leads to the emergence of an urge for freedom. This urge is not born of any idea. This urge is not born of any theory. It is not born of any reaction. So this urge for freedom will have its own unique momentum. When we turn to religion, when we turn to spirituality out of reaction, then we are carried over by the momentum of that reaction. As soon as the reaction subsides, then the depth, the intensity also disappear.

If I doing it out of ambition, then either the ambition is fulfilled and therefore the enquiry discontinues or there is frustration and I withdraw from the enquiry. Please do see this. The momentum, the velocity for the urge for freedom should be genuine, born of your own perception, born of your own understanding.

So, now there is the sadness and urge for freedom. I do not like it. I have noticed all the chronic imbalances, the temporary lunatic imbalances, my neurotic behaviour, and the urge is there. What a person does then is worth noticing. If the person is born in India and has access to scriptures, to books on ethics, on religion, spirituality, spiritual discipline, he chooses and selects. That is how we live, we the ordinary people. So I say now I will do this. I will do that to discipline my mind. So the mental effort is experimented with and people take vows and pledges of keeping silence for certain days, fasting, abstinence and so on. So various kinds of disciplines are experimented with.

There is the desire to control the behaviour of the mind. But we are the mind! The more we make an effort to control it, the relationship of the controller and the controlled is not relished by the brain, the ego, the whole mind. After the newness, the sensation of the novelty withers away, there is resistance from within. Outwardly there is control, but inwardly there is resistance. A split comes about. There can be hypocrisy, showing something outwardly, which does not exist within. I may be boiling with anger inside and I try to control it. Thus there is a split between myself and what is happening to me.

Determinations, decisions, vows, pledges - all have been tried in India, in the Middle East, in the Christian world. In the Eastern countries, in the Buddhist countries, it has been tried. And there starts the game of denial, suppression, repression. The worldly people also play the game of indulgence, an obsession with pleasure. There is the game of denial, suppression, repression and the inner being shrinks and gets dry. Or there is the constant conflict, misery and suffering.

When a person realizes this, if at all he realizes, that such a course of action does not lead to spontaneity, it does

not lead to harmony, but it adds to the suffering. And religion is the ending of psychological suffering. 'Klesha Mukti Kaivalyam', according to Patanjali. Ending of psychological suffering, 'Dukhah Nivrutti Kaivalyam' according to Buddha. So the psychological suffering does not end. If this is realised then the dimension of effortlessness or surrendering the effort comes about.

But I think this is enough for the morning. We began by saying that life is a mystery - its self-generatedness, its built-in order, harmony, its interrelatedness. Having seen it outside of us, we started seeing whether it exists inside of us. Why is there not that harmony here, that harmony which exists between the solar systems, the interplanetary systems? Why is it not here as there is a rhythmic movement of seasons in the cosmos? Why is there not a rhythmic movement in the body?

So our field of learning is our own body, the biological instincts moving there, the energy of thought moving there, the energy of emotions moving there. They are our tools. They are our instruments, they are our companions. So the exploration begins at the body level. We have arrived at the point, where the mental movement, which is the result of millions of years of conditioning, does not yield to the control of disciplines or codes of conduct.

Having observed what is happening inside us, now we have come to the point that the momentum of millions of years contained in our body and the momentum of volition, they are not on a par. The volition, the decision, the pledge, the vow, all of them get defeated before the momentum of the subconscious, the unconscious, the past. Either you become pessimistic, you become frustrated and you say, nothing can be done or you are willing to explore the pathless path of

effortlessness. We will talk about that when we meet again.
Thank you for your patient hearing.

III

LIFE IS DIVINITY

I wonder what has been happening to you while you were listening to our previous verbal communications? Was listening a partial activity, listening to the words, sorting out what is to be rejected, what is to be accepted, transferring the acceptable to memory and feeling satisfied that something new has been acquired? Is that the content of listening or is listening a total action, an action of the whole being, not only audition, selective reception, an enriching of memory? What does the term total action imply?

We are dealing with religion. We are dealing with the field of consciousness, which is invisible, intangible. We are dealing with psychological facts. So when someone talks about psychological facts, points out the mechanism of mind, the anatomy of mind, the 'modus operandi' of mind, does the listening result in perceiving those facts? We listen and we also perceive our psychological realm and see whether the psychological facts are there, the way they have been pointed out. Listening and perception of the psychological truths cannot be separated. If they are separated then, listening to talks, discourses or reading books of the teachings of the emancipated ones, can become only an intellectual stimulation, an intellectual exercise, an emotional entertainment.

So reading and perceiving the facts within us, listening and looking at the facts simultaneously within us, should go together. If that happens, the audition and the perception get blended together, then the truth indicated by that perception becomes the substance of our being. It does not remain a truth pointed out by someone, but due to this simultaneous listening and perceiving, that becomes the

nutrition, the substance of our own being. So I do hope, that all of us have been listening, perceiving and understanding the truth indicated by the words during the last few sessions.

The Inquiry Begins

With your co-operation, I would like to look at the life of a learner, an inquirer, from a slightly different angle this morning and I appeal to you to work along with me. Those of us who are born in India, are born in an ancient country, where the pursuit of truth, the quest of reality, has been the primary concern of our ancestors and they had converted their lives into laboratories. Their bodies, their brains were the laboratories. Their explorations, their experimentations and their verifications have been verbalized and put into the form of books. You cannot escape hearing or reading about religion or spirituality if you are born in this country, brought up in this country. Naturally one is born in a family where there are traditions, ethical traditions, so called religious traditions, traditions of the family, traditions of the caste, traditions of the class and so on. We are born in that.

The idols of Gods and Goddesses are kept somewhere in a room or some corner of the house and we see them being worshipped, mantras being chanted, rituals being performed, and so on. This is the travail of Indian life. What do I do? At some age, at the age of 5, 25, 50, an urge has woken up in my heart to understand the meaning of it all, to find out the validity of it all. So this urge has come up within me. The how and the why of it is not important but the fact is important. If it has happened, as it happens with some fortunate ones, then one would begin questioning.

Questioning Tradition

One would say, why are these idols in my house? Why are my parents worshipping these idols, spending so much time, singing mantras, chanting or doing Japam? Why are they doing it? What is the relevance of all that to life? If I ask them, they will say, 'We have been asked to do it. We have seen our parents do it'. That does not help me. 'This is the tradition in our family, we have done it. As a son or a daughter, you should also follow it'. That is their way. You cannot compel them to understand and explain. So here I am. I have studied at school, at college, at the university. I have studied science, engineering, humanities and so on.

Now I have to find out for myself. Because asking of the elders, trying to talk with them, which could have been a channel of education, is not available. That is not possible. So by reading books I find out that these idols have been used as the reminders of the all permeating Divinity. You ask any one who conducts worship of a God or a Goddess in the family. They are not worshipping that small idol, three inches or three feet, of metal or stone. They say, 'It is God'. So that represents some power, which is independent of human power and thought.

They say, it is all permeating. 'Antaryami, Ghata - Ghata - Wasi', omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient. Obviously that small idol (Pratimaji), represents something which is all permeating, all pervading. Do I see that? Through the words of my father or mother or wife or husband, do I see the truth? When they are worshipping God and I ask them, what do you mean by God and they will say, they are not worshipping the piece of stone or metal. The Bhajans, the chants or whatever they sing, they contain these words. So I find out.

Now I learn a truth, that this is a symbol, a traditional symbol, representing something. Why was the symbol necessary in Bhakti-Yoga? This is an ancient country and whatever is there, could well be the result of the exploration and experimentation of many generations. I do not reject it offhand and I do not want to accept it on the authority of tradition, because acceptance does not make the fact your own truth. The acceptance does not reveal the truth to you. It becomes a mechanistic repetitive following of something which you do not understand. So why did the ancestors feel the necessity?

May be, they were catering to the needs of the illiterate ones. They were catering to the needs of society which is emotionally dominated and found out that people cannot correlate the daily activity with Divinity. They do not live in the awareness that Life around them is supreme Intelligence. They are surrounded by It. They are composed of It. They are born of It. They live in It. They move in It. This basic truth is understood intellectually, theoretically and they cannot relate their actions to It all the time. So once or twice a day, they sit near the symbol and worship it.

The Way of Learning

Supposing I find it possible to co-ordinate my activities with the awareness. If the revelation of the Truth, the essence of Bhakti-Yoga, has enabled me to be aware of the all pervading, all permeating nature of the Truth, of the Reality, then the symbol may not be necessary for me. Do you see the way of learning?

‘Yatah Sarvam’, that from which everything has emanated, ‘Yasmin Sarvam’, that in which all is contained, the allness, the wholeness is contained, ‘Yah Sarvam’, that which has taken the garb of allness, retaining its oneness, ‘Sarva Druk

Tatha', and simultaneously it is the perceiver. Out of It all has emanated, in It all is contained. The oneness has taken the mask of allness and simultaneously it is the seer, the knower, the understander. 'Swatmanam Namamyaham', that is the essence of my being. I bow down to that essence.

Do you see? If you question the tradition, try to learn from it, ask why it is done to yourself, not to others, probe, explore and find out, then the essence, the truth behind the tradition, has become your own and the symbol has become secondary or unnecessary. No question of accepting, rejecting. No question of saying do not worship it, it is not God, it is a symbol. It is not necessary to tell others. But for you a quantum jump from tradition to the discovery of truth has taken place.

You have to question every tradition. So when you question why do they do Japam, why do they chant mantras, you will find out, that they are using sound energy. Sound contains light. The sound element, 'Nada' and 'Agni' Sound & the fire element cannot be separated. They are intra-convertible energies, which are used for 'Yagnya', 'Havana', which are used for chanting the mantras.

Do you want to use that sound energy? Do you want to envelope yourself in that sound energy? Do you want to use it as a therapy? Do you see? So, the mantra, the Japam, the 'Yagnya', you find out what could have prompted the ancestors to spend their lives and utilize them.

Now if you find out, if you question this way, you have the fearlessness of humility, you have the receptivity of a learner. Then you find out the purpose behind the mantras or the yagnyas. You have learnt why the fact is there. If I were you, I would take one step further and I would experiment. Mind you, your friend Vimala spent 3 months in a cave near Tehri, after doing her M.A. in a cave where Swami Ramtirth had lived. I wanted to find out the effects of sound energy on the

nervous system, on the chemical system. I had to find that out.

Supposing you find out that this repetition of the sound energy, may be used as a therapy, but it does affect the brain and makes it dull. The quietness that it gives, the semblance of peace that appears, has no dynamism in it. The day Vimala discovered this fact, she walked out of the cave. So now you see that it is not necessary to use sound energy because the side effect of that is benumbing the sensitivity. Not only of the brain but of the whole being. It is a kind of hypnotism, self hypnosis. The tranquility that results from that, has many disturbing side effects. So then one tries to find out, if there is a way where one is not required to use the energy of sound and light. In this way the enquiry continues.

What Is Your Supreme Priority

This morning I am trying to share with you, how a serious inquirer proceeds further. Born in a heavily conditioned society, you can carve a path of your own sadhana, provided, finding the truth, understanding the meaning of life, is the top priority with you. It is a very dangerous game. Because once you discover the truth, the truth does not leave you, even if you want to leave it. Then it pricks. It makes its presence felt to you. You cannot continue in the old rut. Then you will feel guilty. Then you cannot have a division of your being. If you talk about the truth verbally, discuss about it intellectually and live in a contradictory way, live in a different way altogether, then there is a division of the personality. And if it is allowed to crystallize, one can become a split personality in the name of religion, in the name of spirituality. That would be a disaster.

If religiosity, if communion with the Truth, communion with the Reality, communion with the Divinity of life, the mystery of Reality, is the supreme priority, then one should start the

inquiry. Then one should launch upon this inner voyage of self-discovery. Otherwise religion would be a new avenue for hypocrisy. Religion can lead to inner split, division, obsession, neurosis. We do not want to add to the troubles that are already existing. If this finding out the truth, understanding the truth, living of it, is not the supreme priority, top priority, then the vitality, the urge, the passion is not there in one's life.

Then you live a double life. Intellectually you pay lip service to the truth. You say that is my conviction and in day to day practical life, you follow blindly, mechanistically, ritualistically, the traditions, the customs and so on.

Living the Truth

So it is very necessary to ask oneself a question. What if I find the truth, what if I understand the truth? If I discover the meaning, what am I going to do with it? Am I going to live it? And supposing the people around me do not like that, they oppose it, they do not co-operate, then is there a willingness, is there a fearlessness to live it alone? To be with the Truth alone, to be with Supreme Intelligence alone, to be with Life alone? Do I want to do that?

Let us take an instance. A hundred years ago, on the banks of the Ganges lived a person, who was later on called Ramakrishna Paramhansa. A boy who had never been to school. Born in a very small village, in a very poor family, he comes to Dakshineswar. He gradually becomes the priest in the Kali Temple. And he looks upon that Kali, not only as his mother but he sees in that Kali, the controlling, regulating force of the world. 'Maa, Ami Jontro, Tumi Jontri', I am an instrument in the hands of a cosmic power. He realizes that behind the idol, behind the symbol, was the concealed Truth. He discovers it.

Do you know what that results in? His beautiful wife Sharda comes to Dakshineswar and this Ramakrishna, who has discovered the Truth behind the Kali worship, worships the wife as the mother.

They were married. They were young. They did not take the vow of celibacy. It was not an effort of the will, the discovery of Truth. This young man was carried to the house of a prostitute by Mathurbabu. See was a lovely young damsel and she was singing. Mathurbabu was convinced that this young man, Ramakrishna would get attracted towards the woman. But Ramakrishna says, 'Maa, I saw you in the temple and you have already come here'. He sees It. It is not a belief. It is not a credulity. The perception was revolutionised. Discovery of truth is a dangerous thing, unless there is the willingness to live the truth that is understood.

Leave aside Ramakrishna. There was a couple living in Bhavnagar district, Samdhiyala village, Gangasati and her partner in life, Kahalubha. They understood the Truth and they lived It. 'Hun Ane Maru, E To Mananu Che a Kaarana Paanbai, E Man Jo Cheel Dhani Mati Jai To, Ramadu Tamane Bavan Bar'.

Gangasati & her husband, lived their whole life in a small village. Tradition did not prevent them from living the truth they had discovered. Why does it prevent us? It did not prevent a young boy, Narsimha Mehta, when he was thrown out of the house. It did not prevent Meera, that beautiful young woman. Do you see? It did not prevent them because they were prepared to pay a price for living the truth. It is very simple Sir, very simple.

We try to run away from living the truth. It seems to me that there is a fear of life. We do not see that Truth is its own

security, that freedom is its own protection. Either we do not see that or, we are afraid of life, we are afraid of freedom, we are afraid of religion.

Centuries back, when Shankara, the boy, renounced at the age of five, told his mother, the whole society in Kerala was annoyed. Without becoming a house holder, how can you become a Sanyasin? And the boy said, 'Yat Aharev Virajet, Tat Aharev Pravrajat'. The moment there is that inner renunciation, then you are entitled to have the outer.

But when his mother died and he was back with her, he paid the price. Because the Sanyasin had returned home. Nobody would touch the body of his mother. He had to cut it into pieces and carry it to the cremation ground. The history of India, is full of such individuals, like Shri Ramakrishna, Shri Ramana, or J. Krishnamurti. Everybody has paid the price.

So traditions are not to be rejected. They are not to be accepted, they have to be understood. The why of it has to be understood.

Secondly very few of us have the fearlessness to trust our understanding and to trust the judgement that we arrive at. There is diffidence within us. We hesitate, thinking what will happen in case I am wrong? So what? If my truth is incorrect, I might falter. I will learn from that faltering. But we think, in case I am wrong, let me have psychological security, do what others are doing, follow the crowd, belong to the crowd. The social security and psychological security have priority with us, not the Truth. We believe we want the Truth! It is our belief.

It is going to be a little difficult for my friend to record, because the intensity today is too much. I am sharing my

life blood with you. So the voice, the modulation, the convenience of the machine - they all get out of focus. But I am not going to apologize. We have come together for sharing. Then why should I spare you?

Inner Divisions

Many of us might be reading books on Vedanta, attending satsanga, listening to the talks on Vedanta and feel uplifted by them. There is a seemingly ennobling effect on our emotions. We admire scriptures but live according to tradition. I have a son, of marriageable age. I have to find out a girl for him, but the girl must be of my caste. Or a boy for my daughter must be of my caste. 'Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mithya, Jeevo Brahmaiva Na Para', 'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahman', in the Ashram, in satsang. In daily life we may think otherwise. 'But, why not convert the fifteen crore muslims into secondary citizens? Hinduism should be the basis of nationalism! That is the foundation!'

How do you reconcile Vedanta with this? We make it a fashionable spiritual conviction - nothing to do with life! In the middle ages, when there was a cultural renaissance in Europe, and they were exploring religious superstitions and myths, there was bloodshed and fights. So intellectually we accept. Look at the game we play in life. We want to be religious. We wish to have religiosity. But look at the game of self - deception that we play.

Intellectually we accept. And in life, in the name of practicality we say, 'No, no, my relatives will get very much displeased with me. I do not mind a boy or girl of any caste or class but you know, it is my wife, my husband, my relatives!'. So it seems to me that not only are there contradictions in our life, but there are inner divisions also which we justify and defend.

When I had used the term, merciless honesty with oneself, I had in mind this game of self deception that goes on in the name of religion, in the name of spirituality. So are we really serious about religion and religiosity? Is there a willingness to be vulnerable to life?

See the Ashram Vyavastha in Indian society, the Hindu Society. It talks about Brahmacharya, Gruhasthashram, Vanaprasthashram, and Sanyasa. Is there a willingness in me really to live the state of Sanyasa as the Chaturtha Ashram? Look at the compromises we make even with the tradition.

We take what is convenient for us, psychologically convenient for us and we leave the rest. If you follow that logically, with clear understanding, then you have to relinquish your hold on all the identifications - my house, my property, my family, my children, I and my. We say, 'Namay Swaha, Rupay Swaha, Kulay Swaha, Gunay Swaha'. In Viraja Homa, you do your own Shraddha. Do we go to that extent? We do not.

A person like J. Krishnamurti says, 'Sir, after 60, live in your family as if you are dead'. That was his way of saying the truth. That was his way of initiating people into the secret of Sanyasa. Live, as if you are dead, that is to say, no identification, anywhere, no sense of belonging. You are living with people. They do not belong to you. You not belong to them. You have no claims over them. So we cannot play around with truth. We cannot be casual about truth. That is the difficulty.

Let us take a slightly different angle. I read books on psychology. I hear talks on psychology and intellectually, theoretically I understand. That is how understanding begins. It penetrates the brain and percolates after that into every

layer of the being. But it has to begin with the word. So I understand that what we call mind is nothing but an amalgamation of conditionings. The ego is a concept. The self, the me is a concept. In the second half of the 20th century, this truth has been put into words by scientists, psychologists and also by the teachers who have been communicating about the deep truths of life. There is nothing like the individual ego, or individual me, the self. It is only a mode of operation. We have been conditioned to function that way, psychologically, cerebrally, neurologically.

So I understand that there is nothing like an individual mind and ego is a concept. I talk about it. When I have to live in a family, somebody says something which hurts me, I get angry. I understand. That it is a reaction. This anger is a reaction and yet I get angry. I want to express that anger, I want to assert, I want to dominate. And if somebody says, 'Come on, yesterday you were talking about this, in the group meeting, you were discussing so elegantly and now you have given in to all these reactions'. Then I say, 'Well, this is my habit. You know it is a long standing habit'. I do not allow even the pain and agony of having betrayed my own understanding to work upon me. I cover it up with defence and justification. Don't we do that?

We do it about religion, we do it about psychology. So the million dollar question is, do I want to get out of all this? The how of it is not important. There must be the foundation for inquiry, a unshakable foundation within me.

Communion with Divinity of Life

So we can learn from our communications here together, that religiosity requires fearlessness. I have not seen insecurity in my life. Whenever you stood up and lived the truth, the Divinity has protected you, not in some personified form, but

in the majestic ways of cosmic life, the security, the protection comes. You haven't even an idea from where it comes.

So, If there is the fearlessness and if there is the urge to live in communion with the Divinity of life, that Supreme Intelligence, which permeates the whole world, if you give It a chance to operate upon you, then it is called in the Indian traditional way, surrender, surrendering the ego. You know that is the traditional language which the modern young people do not like, "Why should I surrender? Don't surrender! Give It a chance to operate!

The ancient language of faith or surrender is a very pregnant tradition. It is pregnant with meaning. So many nuances of meaning are contained in that word. Faith is the English word. Shraddha is the Sanskrit word. 'Satye Pratishtitha Dharana, Iti Shraddha'. Getting grounded in the truth that you have understood is 'Shraddha'. Getting rooted in the truth that you have understood is 'Shraddha'. The word faith may not say the same thing to us. But I have seen the truth that this Cosmos, this whole life, is not man made, it is not shaped by man's thoughts, concepts or theories. It is a self generated phenomenon and everything is born of it and lives in it and I am also organically born of it and live in it. Once you see the truth, then how can you ever feel lonely? How can you ever feel afraid?

As a fish born in water, of water, lives in it, we are born of that Supreme Intelligence, that Chaitanya, Divinity. Have I not been saying that Life itself is Divinity, the Isness of Life? So if we get rooted in the truth that we understand, then it becomes faith or 'Shraddha'. And when that happens, the I, the self, the ego, recognises the field where it has to operate and also recognises the field where its movement is irrelevant. So it operates at the physical, the material level, the social level. But in relation to the Divinity of life, the mystery of life, it

relinquishes all effort. Relinquishing hold on mental effort, is called surrender. It is called dedication, 'Samarpanam'.

Please do not mystify the term 'egolessness, but understand its true meaning. So in those moments of egolessness, that is to say when the ego has become non-operative, the ego does not get destroyed. It becomes non-operative as the centre of consciousness. It is not the source of perception. It is not the source of your responses. So when it becomes non-operative, goes into abeyance, goes into non-action or non-motion, then the all pervading, all permeating supreme Intelligence, takes charge of your being. So when it takes charge of your being and uses your senses, operates through it, then what you call the grace of Divine is on him or her.

In modern language, the blending of the individual consciousness and the cosmic consciousness has occurred. In the latest psychological terminology, there is a dimensional transformation in that individual. From the dimension of the 'I', the self, the me, a quantum jump into the Allness or Isness has occurred there.

So this morning we began by saying that if we are born in a country where consciousness is very heavily loaded with conditionings and life is filled with traditions, customs, how do we begin? Where do we begin? What do we do with the truth that we discover? We have shared today the implications and consequences of these questions.

IV

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGIOSITY

Words are reluctant to indicate the non-codified, non-standardised nuances of meaning which are vitally necessary for communication. One has to rely more on the non-verbal communication and the sharing that takes place in silence, rather than on these rigid verbal medium of words.

It has been our primary concern here to share about the nature of religion, the essence of religiosity and ways and means of living that religiosity, alongwith the daily travail of our life for us who are the ordinary common people, with various commitments and responsibilities.

I hope we have seen last week together that religiosity is to be in communion with the ultimate Reality of life. You may call that Reality, Godhood. You may call that Reality, Divinity, supreme Intelligence, Isness, and after having used all these words, we find that we cannot name it. The scientist today says that within, behind and beneath matter is energy. Within, beneath and behind energy is emptiness. And in that emptiness is concealed the mysterious Source of life.

This being a gathering of primarily Indian friends, I would like to take the liberty of mentioning that thousands and thousands years ago, in the Vedic era of life, the science of consciousness was predominating in this region, which is called the Oriental hemisphere. And Rigveda was written.

In the tenth Mandala of Rigveda, there is the 'Nasadiya Sukta'. 'Na Tatra Sat Asit, Na Asat Asit'. Before the creation emanated from the creativity of Life, there was neither truth nor untruth, nor absence of truth. 'Na Tatra Mrutyuhu, Na Amrutam Hi'. There was neither death nor immortality, neither

day nor night and so on. Vedas are perhaps the best poetry written in ancient Sanskrit, which very few in modern India take the trouble of studying.

So it seems that at the end of 20th century, the physicists, the scientists, are paraphrasing what the ancient seers had seen.

Confining Divinity to Places of Worship

Reality defies verbalisation. For our consolation and our imaginary psychological relationships with the Divinity, we may use words. They may have utility and relevance for our psychological satisfaction. But the truth remains that the Source of life, the Matrix of existence, the ground Reality, defies verbalization, leave aside definition or description.

The only thing that the words can say is, that It is all pervading. It is all permeating. There is not even the minutest particle of matter in which the Divinity is absent. Now, if we understand this truth even verbally, intellectually, is it not clear, that we have to reconcile to this all pervading presence of Godhood or Divinity around us? Please do see that. Somehow the human race seems to have found it difficult to concede to the all pervading presence of the Godhood and has tried to create areas where Godhood should remain restricted.

The Godhood, the Divinity, should remain restricted to temples, to mosques, to cathedrals, to synagogues, to Gurudwaras. The Supreme Intelligence should not dare to peep into our houses and see what we do there or at our work places and should not question, what we are doing there. It should be satisfied with the worship that we conduct once, twice, five times in the so called places of worship. It should be satisfied with rituals and what we offer. Please do see this. This is not satire! This seems to be a tragedy. There is some

point where the human race has gone wrong, has taken a wrong turn in developing a civilization or culture.

So the human race seems to have tried in every part of the world to restrict the movement of that Divinity. It should not interfere in my personal life. It should respect my privacy and that does not happen. It is difficult to be religious because we cannot escape God. We cannot escape the Godhood or the Divinity. We cannot conceal anything from that all perceiving Sensitivity or Intelligence, the Supreme Intelligence, the Param Chaitanya, the Brahman, the Allah, the Omkar, the Satnam. Our difficulty is we cannot escape the presence. We like to concede the presence in the temples, but we would like to banish that Supreme Intelligence from other places. So when we dance to the tune of the mind, when we dance to the tune of our wishes, ambitions, jealousies, anger, we wish that the Supreme Intelligence even within us, should remain quiet and should not whisper unto us that we are doing something undesirable, wrong, because then suffering begins. It is the Godhood that causes suffering, keeps on pricking from within.

We would not like the Supreme Intelligence, the Paramatman, the Mother, the Father, or whatever name you give It, to interfere when out of fear we tell lies, when out of ambition we tell falsehoods, when out of greed and lust we utter lies. We know we are misbehaving, but it is none of the business of that Supreme Intelligence to probe, to perceive and make us feel uncomfortable!

The Omnipresence of Divinity

You are sitting with a friend and the friend is not worth the name, if the friend conceals or hides the truth which you have come to inquire about and explore with him or her. So we have to learn to reconcile to the all pervading presence, not

existence, please, but the presence of the Divinity, in every drop of our blood, in every particle of matter, in the eyes of the animal, in the steadiness of the trees, in the eyes and the behaviour and the words of fellow human beings. Religiosity requires this primary recognition of the omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence of Divinity.

We cannot define It but It is there. We feel It. We would like not to feel It but we cannot help it. Everybody has that sensitivity. It is our destiny. 'Ishvara Sarva Bhutanam Hruddesherjun Tishthati'. That which has come into the focus of time and space, that which has clothed Itself in a form, Ishwara, that principle of life, that Chaitanya, that energy, that Supreme Intelligence is omnipresent. Wherever there is motion, movement, energy, that basic fundamental principle of Intelligence is there. 'Ishate Rajate Sarvatra Iti Ishvarah'. 'Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam, Yat Kinch Jagat-tyam Jagat'.

So, let us proceed presuming that we, who are sitting in this room, seriously wanting to explore how to remain in union with Reality, recognize this basic truth of life, fact of life, reality of life.

If we recognize this fact, don't you think that words and phrases like seeking God become irrelevant? You seek that which is hidden. You do not seek which is there.

A villager, a farmer from village Mandar in Rajasthan, had given simple replies to questions put to him by a very scholarly friend of mine, who had come from America in the early sixties. When he asked the farmer, 'Do you believe in God?' The farmer pointed to the sun and said, 'Do you have to believe in the sun?' The professor was not satisfied. He took a handful of clay and said, 'Look this is matter, this is dead, do you believe in God?' And before he could throw the clay to the ground, the farmer took it in his hand and kissed it and said,

'Do you call my mother earth dead? This is not dead'. And my professor friend got the reply.

It is not necessary to believe that which you see. You do not have to seek that which is evident. We have found out ways of avoiding, dodging that presence. If we stop playing that game, then Divinity has not to be sought. It has not to be obtained. It is within you. You are born of it. Does the fish have to obtain water? Does it have to acquire it? It is born of water. In the same way we are born of Divinity, that perceptive Intelligence, Chaitanya, that Brahman. Our ancestors had their own language. So they could say, 'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahman'.

So we are born of It, we are born in It, we have to live in It and with It. We forget that. We think we are born in a family, we have to live with that family. We are born in a society, we have to live in the society. We forget nature. The Divinity has decorated itself with the form of nature. The Oneness has clothed Itself in manyness. The unity has taken the garb of diversity. So as much as we would like to separate the world from the Divinity, the form from the Formless, the matter from the Divine, we cannot do so. It is inseparable, indivisible, non-fragmentable. If we recognize this, then how do we proceed?

How do we Proceed

The Divinity is there in matter, at the material level. How do we live with that material level? Through our senses. The senses, the sense organs, the external, the internal, they are the medium through which we get associated, we get in relation with the Divinity. So on the material level, how do we recognize that the Divinity is there?

First we recognize It in the form of energy. The energy contained in the earth. We have read about it, we have heard

about it, so with great faith, we sow the seeds in the earth. Please do see. If we do not have faith, if the farmer has no faith in the creativity of the earth, diverse energies contained in the earth, we will not be sowing seeds, we will not be doing agriculture. We have tremendous faith in the earth, in the water. When you water the seeds, haven't you got faith? You have got faith in the sun. You wait for the summer to scorch the earth, prepare it for sowing the seeds. You are grateful to the rains when they come and flood your fields, where you have sown the seeds.

So we recognize the presence of Divinity in the form of energy. For example, take the energy in the rays of the sun. Now medical science tells you of the minerals, vitamins contained in the sun-rays, all the seven colours in the sun-rays. Everything has been analysed for us now. So now it is easy to recognize the Divinity in the energy of the rays of the sun. Divinity is creativity, unconditional creativity, inexhaustible creativity. Our word for that is 'Chaitanya, Chitishakti'. So we recognize Divinity in the form of energy. And these diverse energies have emanated from one source of energy, as the seven colors in the rays of the sun emanate from one sun. There is a nectarous quality in the rays of the moon, which fill the crops, the plants, the trees with lovely colours, delicious tastes. That is the role of the rays of the moon. As the sun nourishes, the moon plays a complementary and the supplementary role. Diverse energies but one source. So we recognize that these energies have the same source.

Now, if I have recognized that matter is not dead, the earth is a being, the space is a being and the suns and the moons are beings, that they are our fellow beings, we are their fellow beings, then an attitude of respect comes about. We have been the plunderers of the planet, because we never recognized that matter contains Divinity. We have been abusing our bodies, these temples and cathedrals of Divinity,

because we did not recognize that the physical, what we call the human body, is as much a mystery as the whole cosmos is.

We try to misuse, abuse the body, the energies contained in the body and then we pay the price in the form of diseases, sicknesses, restlessness, suffering and so on. So we will have a new scientific attitude towards what you call matter and the material world. Albert Schweitzer calls this new attitude 'Reverence for Life'. We will have respect for matter and the material world. So we will not take in excess, will not misuse, will not abuse.

If there is real respect, then there is the tenderness of love that goes with it. So your living in communion with Divinity at the physical level indicates a new relationship with matter. Once you see that it cannot be separated from the Divine, there is nothing mundane and nothing separately religious or Divine, nothing exclusively material and exclusively spiritual. It is all woven together. It is a vast dance of energies, innumerable energies, intermingling, interacting, changing forms, changing colours. So my behaviour with the material world, through every sense organ changes. When the eyes notice some beauty, I will feel that respect for it, not immediately pounce upon it to own it, to possess it. Wherever the use is necessary, warranted for the maintenance of life, with great reverence, I will pluck a flower or a fruit or a vegetable and with a sense of gratitude, I will use it. Do you see how restraint and moderation become the essence of religiosity? So at the physical level, there is no sense of collecting, owning, possessing for satisfying greed. That is religiosity at the physical level.

Secondly my friends, this so called physical or material world has the beauty of ever changing nature. It is a dance of changes on the breast of the changeless. It is a dance of

growth, decay and death, which is called perishing, on the breast of the Imperishable. Look, the earth is steady therefore you can walk upon it. The bed of the river is steady therefore the water of the river can flow on it. The Imperishable becomes the Isness, the ground Reality on which the perishable blossoms, flowers and merges back. It is a dance of emanation and dissolution. Emerging and merging back is one cycle. Nothing is destroyed. I wonder, if you have noticed, in the whole Vedic literature, there is no word for destruction, that evil.

It is only changing the forms, 'Rupantaram', 'Gunantaram', but nothing like evil as an independent entity and nothing like destruction and death, as a separate entity. There is no duality. So everything is changing. What does that teach me?

Non Attachment

What is the Divinity teaching me through the dance of change, growth, decay, death, perishing, changing form? It teaches, does it not, that if we are open and receptive, if we are willing to learn, then it says, 'Don't get attached to any object that is perishable. Don't get attached to any animal, human or non-human, which is perishable. Live with it, enjoy the company, interact with it, but do not cling to it. Do not develop dependency. Because your attitude of dependency will lead to suffering, the world will change. The material world is going to change. The human mind and its moods are changing, do not cling to them.

Psychological dependency is called attachment. This dependency is the fertile soil for all sorts of psychological suffering. You can live, respecting the independence, interacting, sharing, exchanging. But if you get involved in the excitement of pleasure, in the repulsion of dislike, then the right association and the right relationship with the material world becomes impossible. You get stuck up in your mood of

attachment, your mood of expectation, your mood of clinging and dependency. Your living gets suspended. But the other is bound to change. It goes on with its own movement.

So I have learnt from life since childhood that it is anti-rational, it is unintelligent to get attached emotionally or to develop a habit pattern to depend upon something which is perishable, changing. Relationship becomes scientific. It has the austerity of love, and not the excessive indulgence of lust and greed.

Communion at the Physical Level

You see we are talking about scientific spirituality. The approach to spirituality, to religion, to ethics in the era of science has to be scientific. There would be a new ethos in this scientific age. That is why the old norms, criteria, codes of conduct have collapsed. You may give them crutches of your beliefs and credulity. But they will be tested. The validity will be tested on the basis of rationality, scientific examination and investigation. At the physical level, you remain in communion with the Divinity, if you recognise the energies, interact with them without attachment or repulsion.

The ground Reality is there. Ground Reality is not in some abstraction or theory of Godhood. Godhood is here, now. You cannot escape It. So we have to wake up to Its presence and learn to live with It. We have to educate our senses. That is what the science of yoga does through Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharna and so on, which is the eight fold path of self purification, through education at the sensual level, education at the verbal level, education at the mental level. Then there will be a balance, equanimity, at the physical level. 'Samatvam Yoga Uchyate. Equanimity not in some abstract way in the mind or in the brain, in some conviction of a theory, but here, at the sensual level. The behavior will be

balanced without an effort of the will, without the imposition of a code of conduct. Please do see this.

Out of understanding, out of recognition of a fact, out of reconciliation to the presence of the Divinity there would be a new attitude, a new quality, a new texture of our behaviour at the sensual level. Then you would not be surprised that a person called, Ekanath, saw Divinity in a thirsty donkey and gave him the water that he was carrying to Rameshwara. He was not to come upon it as a miracle. He saw, he recognised the Divinity. So what was there in the temple of Rameshwara and what was there in the thirsty donkey moving in the street, was the same for Eknath. The union has to be lived my friend, it is not an idea.

Communion at the Verbal Level

What does remaining in communion with Divinity at the verbal level imply? We want to find out how to live religiously in daily living, is it not so? So let us begin at the very beginning.

First thing, I will not use the sound energy through the words as a weapon. 'Ahimsa Pratishthayam, Tat Sannidhou Vairatyagah'. You have read it, you must have known about it from yoga schools which are so many in India. I am sorry, I sound like a teacher, rather than a friend. But we have so much to share.

So at the verbal level, I would say, I do not like to be hit by words, their intonations, their pitch of voice, their accents, their pronunciations. I will not use the language, the words, to hurt any one, to hit any one, to insult, to humiliate any one. The sound energy is sacred. It is the emanation of Divinity within me. How can I use it destructively? How can I use it when it is not necessary to be used? The relationship to speech and verbalization changes. There comes about a

restraint out of respect for sound, for Nada, for the energy of Nada, the sound, respect for the body in which it is contained.

So excessive speaking, compulsive speaking disappears. See, how the education takes place. You may call it Sadhana, you may call it self - education, you may call it by any name. The names do not matter. And how I do it, how you do it, is upto our sensitivity. There cannot be a code, like a steam roller, asking every one to take a vow of silence for so many hours. You see, that is not necessary. We are educated persons, we are responsible persons. We have a longing for a religious life. So if there is a longing, if there is an urge, then on the verbal level, the use of sound energy will have the dimension of respect and restraint. It seems to me that most of us suffer from excessive use of speech. We can express ourselves in one sentence, but for the pleasure of speaking, we will use four sentences. So, relationship on the verbal level, with languages, with words, will change.

One has come across so many people, who very comfortably, ten times a day, say, I did not mean that. That is to say, when the person spoke, he or she was not attentive to what he or she was speaking. Why do you utter words, which you do not mean? Please do see that. You are cheating yourself, leave aside the other person. It is a very expensive, prohibitively expensive self-deception, which damages the quality of the psyche, which pollutes and contaminates the consciousness. But they very comfortably say, 'Oh, I did not mean that. I must have said it in anger. I must have said it in impatience.' Why? Impatience, anger are temporary derailments, imbalances. Derailment is a technical term, so we may not use it. Going off the rail, you know, that is becoming very habitual with Indian Railways. They go off the rail and we human beings also go off the rail! Do you see that?

So we use in a responsible way, this faculty of verbalization, which is a marvelous thing. There would not have been music, drama. There would not have been literature, philosophies, social sciences, natural sciences, if we did not have this faculty. So there should be respect for the energy of 'Vak', the speech, respect for sound. My dear friends, I elaborated intentionally, because sound seems to be the primal principle behind creation. Not the word but the sound, sound and the principle of fire, light contained in it.

Sound is an extension of silence. It is the first emanation from the emptiness of silence. In Akasha is the sound contained. Sound is contained in emptiness and the scientists say, the universes emanate out of compressed emptiness. That is their latest theory. See how metaphysics and physics meet. They converge upon the same point.

So when I talk about respecting the sound energy, I am talking about respecting the Divinity contained, the creativity contained in that word. A speech can be purified through 'Satyam', through truthfulness, through faithfulness, if we do not betray ourselves. Religiosity would become so easy if we do not betray our understanding, if we do not deceive ourselves. Then things become very easy.

Observing the Thought Structure

But let us proceed. Remaining in union, immersed in the ground Reality, immersed in the Source of existence - let us not convert that word, immersion, into some abstraction. That immersion has to be lived. It is not something to be grasped by the intellect, as a theory, as an idea, to be stored in memory. Life is for living and the act of living is the fulfillment of life, whether it brings pleasure or pain, honour or humiliation. When I come to the mental level, then I realize, that this conceptual,

mental level, this thought structure, is a creation of the human race.

We share the biological, the physical, the verbal with the whole cosmos. Now comes the creation of the human race, which we call the thought structure, the mind. It is also valuable though it is a construction and creation of the human race. We are its products. So I will show my respect for this 'I', the me, the thought structure, the ego, whatever you call it. I will indicate my respect, by first getting acquainted with it, through observation. I will see what it is, not just believe it. As there are religious beliefs, there are psychological beliefs, psychological credulity. Credulity about psychological theories is as dangerous as credulity about so called religious or theological beliefs.

When through observation, I have found out the weak points, the excellencies, the points of imbalances, the crookednesses, then in my movement of relationship, I will behave responsibly in the beginning, so that, the crookedness, the perversion, the weaknesses do not spoil my behaviour, do not imbalance it. They are there. I have seen them. So when they surge up, I will be on my guard. I will be on the defensive and not let them contaminate my response. This is still the realm of effort, the effort of being conscious, the effort of being alert, feeling their presence and not allowing them to contaminate, to pollute.

This is called in your Indian terminology, 'Viveka'. The English word discrimination does not have that rich content. So I was hesitating to use the word, discrimination. But either my knowledge of the English language is limited or that English word does not have the rich content as 'Viveka'. Even phonetically, semantically, the Sanskrit language seems to be a very rich language, not because it is ancient, but it is a rich language.

So there would be a new sense of responsibility in behaving towards others. I would not justify my behaviour, my impatience, my imbalance, by saying it is my nature, it is my habit. I won't do it, because then my behaviour will become anti-social. Now if that has happened, then as an enquirer, as an explorer, I would say, I have reconciled on the physical level, on the verbal level, and also on the mental level. A new sense of responsibility, discrimination has dawned. A change has occurred in the quality of my behaviour with others. Never will I be inattentive so that wrong words escape me. Never will I be inattentive, casual, absent-minded so that the weaknesses, the imbalances creep in and contaminate the responses. I have now educated myself about all that. What Next?

The Role of Silence

So, those who are really concerned feel an urge to find out that which is beyond this mental energy, this thought energy, which has been constructed, channellised, utilised, which has created grooves of traditions and conditionings. Is there anything beyond? Or is the mind, the thought structure, the mental movement, is that the end? I would like to find out. Then comes the role of silence in a person's life. Unless the mental movement discontinues, the perception through sensitivity, the feel through sensitivity of that which is beyond, cannot take place. So logically I have now to educate myself in putting myself in a state of non-action, physically, verbally, mentally. I have to educate myself so that all the voluntary movements go into abeyance.

This is the difficult part. The ego says, I will find out what happens in silence. Let me have the experience of silence. It has no interest in allowing anything to happen where it cannot acquire something, a new acquisition, a new possession, extra-sensory perception, transcendental experiences and so

on. So it says, this silence is not interesting. It feels interested in techniques, formulas, some methodology of concentration, because it wants at the end of the effort, something as its own. And here when the movement of the mind, the thought structure discontinues, then the ego, the I, the self, the me, becomes for that time non-existent, non-operative. It feels as if it is dead.

It is not that we are afraid of physical death. We are more afraid of the death of the ego. So people are afraid of silence. People are afraid when there is emptiness of silence within. If by any goodluck, their mental movement goes into abeyance, there is no movement within, they feel afraid, they feel suffocated, because we are used to the movement of thought, of an idea, of a word. We are used to tension, pressure. And when the mental movement stops, there is a wholistic relaxation, complete relaxation, nothing happens. Nothing moves, nothing happens and the person used to the movement, used to the sound or the tension of a thought, feels lost. 'I don't know what is happening to me'. Why must 'you' know, what is happening? Let it happen. We want to interpret. We want to analyse the experiences, measure their religiosity. Will they stimulate some powers in me, some siddhis in me? You know, our interest is a non-religious interest. Because even if the self, the me, acquires transcendental experiences, occult experiences, there is the experiencer, there is the experiencing and there is the experience. What you were doing on the physical level, as the experiencer, experiencing and having the experience, like the sensation of pleasure, you are extending that to the mental level.

Develop the faculties, the latent powers in the mind, if that is the interest. One may follow the techniques, the formulas, develop the powers, wander around in the transcendental, the 'Shaktipat', 'Kundalini Jagruti' etc.

There is no religiosity about them. If one is interested in them, one is free to have them. Developing the powers, using them as a therapy, helping people, all that can be done. It is good work, a social activity. Religiosity is not a social activity.

So, people feel lost, because nothing happens. Nothing happens to whom? To their sense of separate I-ness. Nothing happens to them, as a separate identity. From all divisions, they have gone back into their wholeness. Even the division, subject object division, the I, the me, the not-me, the 'Asmat', 'Yushmat Pratyaya', all that disappears. So this dissolution, this temporary dissolution of the sense of division, of the sense of separateness is felt like death and people are frightened.

It is not the death of the ego. It is not the destruction of the ego. It is only that the centre, the ego, as the centre of consciousness, has become non-operative. A different dimension of consciousness is coming up. But it takes time. So if there is an urge to find out what is beyond the brain, beyond the mind, and merging in the ground Reality, the existential Essence, then, passing through the tunnel of emptiness, this tunnel of silence, seems to be a necessary phase.

It is not the destination. Because if you allow that silence, that total relaxation, that wholeness of the being, to remain there, as an operative dimension, then really many powers do get developed in that dimension. There comes about an extraordinariness, a magnetic quality to the person. And unless there is the urge, the deep urge for union with the ultimate Reality and one has no curiosity about the powers, one is not tempted for using them for any purpose whatsoever, then only those powers that develop in silence also subside, as the thought movement subsides at the mental level.

Re-Educating Ourselves

Fortunately or unfortunately we cannot escape Godhood. Not only does It surround us, It is also within us. It is everywhere. So we have to reconcile to the omnipresence of Divinity. We cannot hope for and try for privacy from the Divine! We will do as we want to do, when we want to do, as we wish to do, unseen by the Intelligence, unnoticed by the Intelligence! You cannot banish and confine Godhood to man's preserves.

I have visited Australia, half a dozen times. In Australia there were preserves. In India also, there are preserves for the tribals, the Adivasis. So we have created in the name of religion sophisticated preserves and want Godhood to remain restricted there! Unfortunately It is an incorrigible rebel! You turn to matter, It is there! You turn to energies, It is there! You turn to your body, It is there!

So really while re-educating ourselves, we have to unlearn so many things. We have to pass from the level of perception, recognition, realization and then to relationship. So we talked about our re-education, at the sensory level, at the verbal level, at the mental level. We talked about those who would like to go beyond, to explore the beyond, to find out that which is beyond time and space, beyond brain and thought, beyond all the measurements that man has created, beyond all the concepts that man has created, on which we have been fed and nourished and by which we have lived. We talked about transcendence of all that. It is a tremendous event, you cannot remain the same after the transcendence.

So if there is the willingness for that ultimate transformation, that mutation, that wholistic revolution, then the exploration of silence, the energies contained in silence, letting them discontinue, will be necessary.

TWO APPROACHES TO RELIGION

I wonder if you would like to look at the question of the traditional approach to religion and the non-traditional approach to religion, their implications in our daily living and the equipment that one has to live the traditional or the non-traditional way.

It seems necessary to distinguish tradition from convention. In India, the cultural tradition is the Vedic tradition. This is an ancient country and Vedas are the psychic foundation of Indian civilization. The four Vedas, the five hundred Upanishads, the six systems of Indian philosophy form the intellectual tradition. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagawatam form the emotional basis in the cultural tradition. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the six systems of philosophy have been interpreted by very eminent emancipated scholars, like Shankara, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabhacharya and others. Based on those interpretations, conventions have sprung up in society.

So the traditional approach implies, accepting the authority of the communications in the Vedas, in the Upanishads, and in the six systems of Indian philosophy and choosing any one of them. When we utter the word convention, we refer to the interpretations of the commentaries, not the original Vedas or the Upanishads. Please do see the difference between the two. This is just to attract your attention towards the difference of content between the words convention and tradition.

The Traditional Approach

The traditional and conventional approach implies therefore that you accept the authority of some theory about

the nature of Reality, theory of duality, non-duality, qualified duality and so on. You accept the authority of the interpretation, you accept the authority of the interpreter, and the living and dead commentators of the Vedic literature.

So you accept the theory, that is the intellectual acceptance of the theory. Do you see what it implies? When I accept the theory of non-duality, I have already determined the destination. I have already determined the nature of Reality, that Reality is non-dual. The destination is determined, whether you accept duality or non-duality. The nature of Reality is fixed in your mind. And now you have to seek that. The traditional approach implies the acceptance of the theory about the nature of the ultimate Reality.

Then you accept the commentator of that theory, interpreter of that theory, so the acceptance of the authority of a person comes in. The third aspect of accepting the authority implies the acceptance of the mechanism, the methodology, the technique, the formula, prescribed by the interpreter or the commentator. It is a three-fold authority. Traditional approach implies acceptance of this three-fold authority. There comes the authority of a system or a technique or a method, authority of a person and authority of the concept of the nature of the ultimate Reality.

This is how the Indian psyche has been functioning, heavily loaded, cluttered with theories of the ultimate Reality. It is crowded by various interpretations of those theories and emotional influences of personalities, following the sect, following the dogma. So this has been the fashionable way of being religious.

It gives you a sense of intellectual security because you have not to exercise your intelligence, your sensitivity, to explore. What is there to explore when the theory about the

nature of Reality is already accepted? It is only to be sought but there is nothing to learn. Please do see. We are talking about serious and fundamental aspects of religiosity, the crisis existing in the Indian psyche. There is nothing to learn about, there is everything to acquire. Acquire the information about the theories, acquire the skill in handling the techniques and methodologies. Acquire the skill in propagating those ideals, and you become a fascinatingly religious person.

So intellectual security in theories, emotional security in personalities and systems and structures. So if we need that security, the emotional and intellectual security, then it is better that one goes the traditional way and follows the so called religious conventions. Unless there is a willingness to learn and explore the nature of Reality through the pathless path of meditation or psychic aloneness, it is better that one follows some traditional way. The acquisitive tendency of the ego is satisfied because it acquires first the verbal knowledge, then it acquires experiences through practising certain methods and so on.

You know, a person born and brought up in the midst of all this, is communicating. This is not said in any disrespectful way, not in any derogatory sense. But people try to compromise the traditional with the non-traditional. They imagine that they want freedom, when all they are seeking is only security, emotional, intellectual, psychic.

So it is desirable that we get disillusioned about our motivations and our requirements. We get clarity about our fears, about our ambitions and so on.

So first of all let us see that there cannot be a compromise between the traditional and the non-traditional enquiry. One begins with the acceptance of authority and the other begins with a non-authoritative approach.

Without acceptance, rejection, agreement, disagreement, without conforming to, or revolting or rebelling against anything, it is finding out, learning, discovering with the fearless humility of an inquirer. A seeker has an arrogance because he knows what he is seeking. And a learner, an inquirer, has infinite humility because he begins by saying "I do not know. I would like to find out".

It is this traditional approach, beginning with the acceptance of authority, promising freedom and liberty at the end of the journey, which has propagated that without a Guru you cannot be liberated. You cannot dive deep into religiosity unless you surrender to the Guru. This necessity of a teacher or a Guru has been emphasized adnauseam in Indian society.

Now we have exported it to Europe, America and other countries, inhibiting the psyche of the non-Indians by the same concept of authority, approximation, conformation, and repetition. In return we have accepted the authority of their economic theories, theories about their technology. We have not exported in vain! Export is accompanied by import. So we have blindly accepted their theory that progress is equated to technology. We have accepted their economic theories about trade and commerce, about profit and loss in place of community living and sharing. We have accepted their psychology of individualism and confrontation in place of friendship and cooperation, in place of face to face communication. So this exchange goes on!

The Non-Traditional Approach

So in the very beginning when I go home and I would like to be a pilgrim, launching upon the pilgrimage to Truth & Reality, let me find out, where exactly I stand. This is necessary in the initial stage so that the fear of the unknown, the fear of

infinity, the unknowableness or the immeasurableness of life does not block our path, obstruct our exploration or frustrate us in any way.

So the fearlessness, psychic fearlessness, intellectual fearlessness, emotional fearlessness is necessary, at the very first step of inquiry, not freedom at the end of the journey but freedom at the very first step of inquiry and exploration.

I wonder if you realize the penetrating nature of the non-authoritative approach to Reality or religion. It implies, does it not, that the last word about the nature of the Reality, Divinity, Godhood has not been said.

It is a very daring thing to see the implications and to find out if one recognises that truth and one stands by it. The last word in science has not been said. Theories about physics entertained in the first half of nineteenth century, were brushed aside in the second half. Theories of physics in the first half of twentieth century have also been brushed aside. A scientist does not feel that he is violating the dignity of Einstein, when he questions the validity of the theory of relativity or questions the validity of the theory of the atomic nature of time and reality, replacing those theories by new postulates. There is an approach of tentativeness in science, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology and so on. It seems to me necessary that we introduce that approach of tentativeness in the field of religion and spirituality, not accept the theory, try to conform to it, repeat it or follow it.

'Manushyanam Sahastreshu Kashchit Yatati', One among thousands, very few among thousands, dare to love life. Most of us are afraid of life. It is something to be afraid of, collect safeguards, find out methods, techniques, formulas about how to live, how to enquire.

Are We Afraid of Life?

So my second plea this morning is, are we afraid of life? If we are afraid of being alone with life, without the intervention of a personality, without the protection of a theory, then we cannot learn or discover. We want to understand the meaning of life. For understanding the meaning of life we will have to have direct, immediate encounter with life, not encounter or contact with life through theories, through personalities. But in the sanctity, sacredness of aloneness, we will have to be with life as it is, inside us, outside us.

So we have to find out if there is fear of life. People think they are afraid of death, but one has seen that most of us are afraid of life and living also. We need a theory to live by, a personality to protect us while we are living, and an umbrella of a sect, Sampradaya and so on.

So from the very beginning we find out, whether we want the traditional or the non-traditional approach. In the non-traditional approach, we will be left alone with life, intellectually, emotionally. I am not talking of running away from society. On the physical level. You will be in society, earning your livelihood, If you have married you will be with your family. If you are not married, you are alone. That part is taken for granted. I am talking about religion, the pursuit of religion, the quest of religion, enquiry and its nature, its texture. We go very casually about it!

It is this psychological requirement of being with a group, with a crowd, with a herd, that must have made the followers of Buddha, create a 'Sangh'. Tathagata Bhuddha said, 'Atma Deepo Bhava'. Be a light unto yourself, understand what I communicate. Do not cling to my person. 'Sarvam Kshanikam, Sarvam Duhkham, Sarvam Anityam'. One who said that, did not expect that his disciples or followers would create a God

out of him. 'Anatta, Anatma' is one of the basic teachings of Bhuddha, but they created a God out of him. They created a theory out of his communications. They were communications. They could be called teachings. But they got converted into theories and objects of propagation. The same might have happened to Mahavira, who talked about 'Kaivalya' and Buddha talked about 'Nirvana'. Who wants Nirvana? Who wants Kaivalya?

So there seems to be a basic fear of life and a psychological requirement for protection not for guidance. Guidance is available in the books, in the teachings. Guidelines are provided. Communications are there. We want much more than that. Please do see this.

The communications, the teachings of Christ never required the creation of a church. Beautifully elegant teachings communicated in the Sermon on the Mount, through the parables, through the whole life of Christ. But one is afraid of life, afraid of being vulnerable to the life as it is.

So traditions by themselves or conventions by themselves are not bondages. But our attitude towards them may create bondages. They are not obstructions. They are not obstacles. What we do with them, may create an obstruction, an inhibition or an obstacle.

So one should ask oneself, is there a willingness, without any reservation whatsoever? Many reach nowhere and in the evening of life, they have empty shells of words and theories. A sense of psychic exhaustion, fatigue, if not frustration, overwhelms many of my fellow human beings in most of the counties that I have travelled in the last thirtyfive years.

VI

MEDITATION.

I would like to share with you, my friends, something about meditation this morning - meditation as a way of living, meditation as an alternative way of living, an alternative dimension of consciousness.

A person who has observed and studied the physical needs and the physical structure and organised to provide for them decently and sanely, can proceed to learn about that which is beyond the physical and the psychological. Brain is a part of the body. What you call mind is the conditioned energy, contained in the nervous system and the chemical system of the body. I am not separating the body and the mind, the body and the brain. I am taking them together.

So one who has arranged, organised everything to the best of one's capacity on the physical level, now turns to the other aspect of one's being, the psychological, which you call the mental movement. Such a person observes, studies, enquires and finds out the repetitive nature of the mental movement. Appetite is everyday new, fresh. There is no staleness about hunger, thirst, sleep, and even sex, if it has not been reduced to a means of pleasure.

There is a kind of Divinity about sex through which mankind partakes of the creativity of cosmic Intelligence - the energy to create another human being. So, if it has not been converted into a sheer and mere means of pleasure, then there is no staleness about it. There is no repetition about it.

Observing the Mental Movement

But when you turn to the psychological, there is repetition in thoughts, in desires, in wishes, in memories. Please do watch the mental movement, not only when you sit down in silence for half an hour but throughout the day and you will find that it is a repetitive movement. Watch the unending demands, the whims, the craze, the idiosyncrasies. They have a momentum, the velocity of millions of years behind them.

The appetite, the thirst, the sleep is limited by the body. The physical needs are limited, that is their elegance. But the mental wants provoked by thoughts and ideas, sustained through ambition, through the desire to assert, to dominate, sustained through the seeking of pleasure, are unending. It is a bottomless pit, never satisfied with what one has, always creating an idea of the more and making you run after it emotionally, economically, politically, socially.

So Intelligence gets enslaved, trapped in this mental movement. One observes this and studies this and does not carry this back merely as an idea, to be carried home, carried back to the places you have come from. But if you observe it and you do not find it so, then throw these words out of the window. But if you find the truth behind it by your personal observation, watching, then that repetitiveness, that mechanicalness, that irresistible velocity which victimises you, which makes you helpless, is bound to awaken a deep sorrow.

Is this man's life? Is human life to be lived at the inner compulsion of the mental movement? Is there no freedom? Socially, economically, politically, mankind has been running after freedom. Is there no inner freedom? Are we bound to live as prisoners of the thought structure? Do you see, if one observes, studies and finds out the repetitive mechanistic nature, the enslaving nature of the mental movement, then the urge for freedom comes about. The urge for freedom is

not an intellectual conviction. It cannot be born out of an intellectual conviction. You cannot force the urge upon yourself. No chemical fertilizers can be used for aggravating it. It has to be genuine. It has to be born in the soil of your heart, of your being.

Abeyance of the Mental Movement

Presuming that it is born, then will it not be necessary to allow the mental movement, the movement of the thought structure to discontinue by itself, to go into abeyance, to go into non-operation? How will it go by itself? Because in the human beings, the consciousness that you and I have, happens to have the faculty of self consciousness. It is not a simple consciousness which exists at the level of trees and mountains, or the simple consciousness enriched by the force of instincts in the animal world. It is much more complex. It is a multidimensional energy.

So you and I know that we are sitting in a room called Gandhi Bhavan. We are conscious why we have come together. You are conscious that you are listening to the verbal communication and at the base of this consciousness, there is an energy of awareness that you are so and so, that you have come from such and such a place, that You have a family. There is an awareness, a nonverbal awareness, as the ground current. Now you are listening and at the same time you are aware if you understand it or do not understand it.

So once this thought energy, this mental movement, this conditioned consciousness, which is self-conscious at the same time, finds out as a fact, the bondage, the pathos of it, of being chained to the past, of being shackled to the momentum of the past, once it finds out all this as a fact then the sorrow of that slavery and the urge for freedom are born together. Then there is no fear.

So you allow that mental movement to go into abeyance. One can even treat that mental structure, thought structure as a friend and say to it, 'My friend, you are relevant in my social life. You are relevant, your movement is relevant, very useful when I deal with finite matter, the material world, the social structure, the economic structure. You and the knowledge contained in you, the experience contained in you are very useful. I am grateful but please, the further movement seems to be irrelevant, unwarranted. So cooperate with me'. You know, it is like autosuggestion. There are theories in psychology of suggestion and autosuggestion. Psychologists and psychoanalysts use it for curing a patient suffering from mental imbalance. It is like an auto-injection. Take blood from one part of the body and inject it in the other.

So if you feel that the mind won't go into abeyance by itself, have a conversation with it, with yourself. Don't you have a conversation through your eyes with your reflection in the mirror? You sit before it and you examine yourself, your dress, your hairstyle and so on. It is a kind of optical conversation. Here you hold a dialogue with the mind and just persuade. Do not say arrogantly, 'You are of no use now, hide yourself, take yourself away'. Do not take that attitude.

I have not seen any energy, more non-violent than the energy of love. You persuade the mind with love and respect, because the thought structure is a creation of our billions and billions of ancestors. We are the products. How can we be insolent to that heritage? Without it we cannot live. At the physical level, in society, its relevance is there. But there is a field where it is not relevant.

So first, you begin by sitting quietly, steadying the body, you steady the mind. If you want to take the help of music or even chanting mantras, sound energy for steadying the mind,

then try it for a few minutes. Nothing is to be excluded. Because exclusion is also a negative propagation. Nothing is to be propagated, nothing is to be condemned, nothing is to be excluded. Religiosity has an all inclusive comprehension of life and a little pragmatic approach in religion is also necessary.

So, when the mind is not insulted, humiliated, when it is not called, your enemy, you consult, you discuss in a friendly way, then it goes into non-action by itself. The movement of conditioned energy goes into abeyance. When that movement discontinues, the grip of the past over Intelligence, the grip of the past over your whole being, is snapped. When the mind becomes steady, it loosens but it is still there. When the mind is steady it does not suffocate you, but it is there. And when the mental movement goes into abeyance, then you are no more tethered to the past and its immense momentum. You see, religion, spirituality is more precise than your science of physics or mathematics. It is a science of life.

Spirituality is a science of living. It has nothing to do with beliefs, credulity, theories. So when the mental movement discontinues, there is a space in consciousness. The crowd of thoughts has withered away. The chaos has disappeared. The tensions and pressures due to the chaos also disappear. For the first time in your life, there is a total relaxation as a psychophysical fact. When total relaxation occurs it implies that I am not waiting for something to happen. I have not told myself that if you sit in silence for two hours, this power will develop and that power will manifest! This non-action, this abeyance of the conditioned past is not a means to an end. It is a step by itself. If you are climbing stairs, then when you climb a step, the previous one is left behind. You don't carry it on your shoulder.

Silence

So in total relaxation, in that silence, there is no tension of waiting for something to happen. If the waiting continues, then there is the tension of that waiting and of expectation. Then you have allowed a back-door entry to the past. You have closed the front door, and left ajar the back door. So we are back to square one. In waiting is also included, the authority of the idea of the future. You bring back that myth of psychological time through that waiting for something to happen. What is to happen is to happen, shall happen. But our waiting, our expecting, introduces the time factor and introduces the chains of the past.

Now you are in the laboratory of life. You have to be very precise, very accurate. This is yoga, my friends - Yoga of life and living. Here the whole life is included, involved. The wholeness is a dimension. So when that relaxation takes place, there is the beauty of the aloneness of Intelligence, unconditioned energy, the unconditioned potential contained in the human consciousness, in the human being. So meditation is being alone with life, not with theories, not with the emotional influence of personalities, not with any choices and selections but with the beautiful nudity of consciousness. It is stripped of all the past.

That silence, that emptiness, that vast space, uncluttered by thoughts, ideas, emotions is felt first while you are sitting alone, because it is something new. You had never exposed yourself to that dimension of silence.

Silence is not an attribute of the mind, my friends. It is not a quality. It is a dimension of life, like space and time. When Einstein introduced the fourth dimension, time as a dimension, people were baffled. But here in this country people have

talked about silence or emptiness as a dimension of consciousness, a dimension of life.

You recognize the orbit of the earth and the gravity, the law of gravitation contained in it, the in-built quality of gravitation. You recognize the cause and effect relationship introduced in your psychological orbit. That is how the brain works and creates order in the trans-psychological dimension, the dimension of wholeness. The energy of Intelligence is not a cerebral energy, not a glandular, muscular energy. It is not the energy of the past. It is the vibrating energy of the timeless present.

The Energy of Intelligence

That energy is felt by you first when you sit down for an hour or half an hour. Then you are filled with it even when you go to your office, to your factory, whilst working at home, talking to people. It becomes the substance of your being. At first, thought was the abode. The thought structure was the abode where you lived. It was the source of your perception and it was the source of your response. Now silence is the substance of your being. The wholeness of that silence, the wholeness in that emptiness, is your abode now. The life in you sees out of that silence, hears out of that silence. Naturally the quality of perception and response goes through a qualitative change.

We are talking about transformation, we are talking about mutation. What is meditation if it does not result in mutation, dimensional transformation. If you try to find out the centre of that energy, you will get lost, because it has no centre. As the whole cosmos has got condensed in the human form, the whole cosmic energy is there in that emptiness of silence. That fills the brain, that changes the perception and the responses. If you allow that to happen, then a new human being is born of you, within you.

Then when you see through the eyes, that energy of Intelligence, that 'Param Chaitanya', that 'Atma Tatva', that supreme Intelligence, that Supramental Consciousness, or that Grace of the Divinity, sees through your eyes. Because there is no centre as the me and the circumference as the not-me, it takes the wholeness of life in one sweep of perception. It sees the particular not separated and isolated from the whole but it sees the particular as organically related to the whole.

The particular is in the wholeness. So you relate to the particular with the awareness of the wholeness. You relate to your time by the watch with the awareness of the timelessness of life. You relate to the crookedness, the harshness, the cruelty, the misbehaviour of human beings with the awareness that all human minds are conditioned in this way. This particular man, this particular person is still a prisoner of that. He has not stepped out of it, like me. So there is compassion. Not a selective softness and tenderness for persons, but compassion as the perfume of your being.

So religiosity is possible. Religiosity, implying communion with life and living, that communion in the daily travail, becomes possible in that dimension of meditation.

'Apyayantu Mamangani, Vak, Pranas, Chakshus, Shrotramathobalam..... Aum Shantihi Shantihi Shantihi'

VII

COMMUNION WITH TRUTH

We have been here for 'Satsang'. 'Sat' is Truth, 'sang' is communion. We have come here for communion with Truth. There is a person who operates as the captain of the team, keeps the people together. In the same way, one has been speaking here and others have been operating equally through listening. So this has been a joint adventure and the atmosphere has been of a family gathering, because we all belong to one another, those of us who have turned our faces to Reality, towards Truth, towards discovering the meaning of life and uncovering the mystery of relationship.

So in the informality and intimacy of a family gathering, I will not mind if the word teacher is used, because the communications are not on personal matters. But they are about the ultimate Reality, which one has perceived, in which one has lived and out of which one moves into the stream of relationships. But the presence of a teacher and the communications of a teacher, are of relevance to the lives of those, who convert themselves into students or pupils.

There is a double process of learning. You get verbal information, soaked in the authenticity of realization and communion. You get the verbal information from or through a person. It has always been so. 'Iti Asmabhi Shruyate'. It is how even the seers of the Upanishads write in their dialogues. So you hear them through a person and relate yourself to the Truth that is indicated by the words. It is a double process. So I do hope that we go through this complex double process of learning from a person and learning from Life through that person.

It is the law of life that when there is a genuine inquiry and a person gets charged with that inquiry, the meeting between the inquirer and the teacher takes place. Life brings them together and the communication takes place. If along with the communication, communion also takes place, then the meeting has been fruitful. The meeting has been worthwhile. Such an opportunity for a worthwhile meeting has been given to us by the hard work of the organisers.

Two Parallel Aspirations

Now in these five or six days, have we learnt together that religion is a field for learning and discovering the Truth and not for acquiring anything for the ego? There is a difference between an ambition to acquire samadhi, acquire transformation, obtain mutation, a difference between this acquisitive ambition centered around the ego and a non-acquisitive urge to discover the Truth for the joy of it.

It seems to me, that in human consciousness, there are these two aspirations, running parallel. There is an aspiration which is acquisitive, comparative, competitive, which wants to know, to experience, to own, to possess, on the material level, the physical level, the psychological level, etc. And there is a parallel aspiration for non comparative, non-acquisitive, non-competitive learning, discovering, sharing, sharing of joy, sharing of peace, sharing the sorrow of one another, an aspiration to discover the goodness, the beauty. These two streams, these two currents run parallel in human consciousness. And one has to do justice to both of them.

The acquisitive tendency and the emotional, intellectual equipment for that acquisition can be utilised in social life. You acquire the knowledge, the skill that is necessary to live as a member of society, industrial society, post-industrial society, nuclear society, society that has gone through the

cybernetic revolution, mechanization, automation and so on. You acquire knowledge and the skill so that you can relate to the social structures, the economic structures, understand the niceties of economic and political systems and operate there. So acquiring knowledge has relevance there. Acquiring experiences and skill, comparing and doing your best, your level best, nearly perfect, best in the skills that are necessary to live in a modern society. It need not be contaminated by the ambition to compete with others in their possessions, their wealth, and their acquisitions. You can do better and even the best without being ambitious.

But religion happens to be a field where this process of becoming, acquiring, knowing, experiencing, does not seem to have much use or utility. Here you learn and discover for the joy of seeing the light of Truth, the light of Love, enjoying it. So please do see with me that religiosity is not going to offer you new experiences, intoxications of experiences. If at all one lives religiously, there is the light of understanding. There is the perfume of love and there is the dignity of peace. You do not become anything different from what you are. But the whole of your potential flowers and blossoms. So your beingness flowers and the substance of your beingness gets uncovered. It manifests.

As the cosmic life manifests itself timelessly in new forms, in new styles, in the same way, the inexhaustible creativity or potential for creativity contained in us, as it is contained in the earth, the ocean, the mountains, the trees and so on manifests itself.

Inner Conditionings

We are born in societies. So the bodies, the brains, the energies contained in them, there are sanskaras, conditionings, they are conditioned. As we walk upon the earth,

the inner conditionings at the psychological level are a reality. They should not be discarded. They should not be ignored. They need not be pampered or worshipped. But they should be understood. So as a learner, a pupil on the path of religion, I would get acquainted with the conditionings existing in me.

In whichever family, whichever community, whichever caste, religion, creed, country, I am born, let me turn inward and find out the conditionings that are existing there, how many beliefs are there, how many superstitions are there. I will have to sort them out. If there are any beliefs, superstitions, I will have to get acquainted with them and throw them away. If there are any traditions, upon which the ancestors had worked in the laboratories of their lives, then I will have to experiment and find out their validity. I have to work for getting acquainted with them, for having an interaction.

Without having an interaction, how would you find out the validity? Outright rejection, outright acceptance, will prevent the learning and the discovery. So my second point is to get acquainted with the conditionings, discarding the superstitions, the beliefs that I have gathered, find out the traditions, experiment and test their validity. When I experiment, when I explore, I find out the limitations also. It is only a real scholar, an erudite person, who can appreciate the limitations of knowledge, the sterility of knowledge.

Knowledge is sterile. You may know all about the theories of theology, theological philosophy, psychology etc., and that collection of theories, ideologies, value structures may not bring about any change in the quality of your life. So those who do not study, do not exercise their brain, may not appreciate that all knowledge is limited. Even to find out the limitations of knowledge, you have to study. You cannot just repeat a sentence that 'Knowledge is limited'.

Once there is appreciation of the limitation of knowledge, the sterility of knowledge, the cerebral enquiry following the path of knowing will terminate by itself. With some people, this activity of knowing never comes to an end. They think they will find it. If they do not find it in one * ideology, they will find it in another. They move from ideology to ideology, from religion to religion, scripture to scripture, make a comparative study, academic study, decorate their intellects and brains. But knowledge has no vitality to cause a mutation. So it seems to me that as one gets acquainted with the traditions and tests their validity, one should test the validity of knowledge also, verbal knowledge, theoretical knowledge.

So when the beliefs, the credulity, the superstitions are discarded, traditions are experimented with and tested, then that tradition which is not in harmony with enquiry, which blocks enquiry, which prevents enquiry, obstructs enquiry, is brushed aside gently. That tradition which does not interfere with enquiry is allowed to exist, because it does not contaminate the perception, it does not hamper the inquiry, it does not prevent the quest.

Then I come to knowledge. When I have discovered through exploration that knowledge is limited, the cerebral enquiry, the verbal enquiry terminates. Please do see this. Unless the verbal enquiry, this activity of knowing, the intoxication that knowing new things stimulates temporarily, unless that verbal enquiry ends, meditation does not come about.

If that is done, let me also in my life as an inquirer, spend some time in testing the validity of experiences. We have experiences on the physical level. The sense organs, get into touch, get into contact with their respective objects. That contact stimulates a sensation. That sensation gets converted into an electric impulse in the body. That impulse is interpreted

by the brain and a reaction as per the upbringing comes about. So sensations and experiences cannot be and need not be avoided on the physical level. There comes about an aesthetic taste and sense of discrimination about those experiences on the physical level.

Because of tradition, I would also like to learn about and experiment, explore, the experiences caused by chanting, by Bhajans, by Mantras, by the Japam etc. Let an inquirer go through those and if the inquiry is genuine, one might notice, that every effort causes an experience and every experience conditions you not only chemically and neurologically, but conditions you psychologically. As verbal knowledge conditions you, these experiences condition you by creating a habit pattern. You get addicted to those stimulations. In the beginning the Bhajans are sung, the devotional songs are sung for the meaning of the words and for the joy of those words, born of communion, in the lives of the saints or the liberated ones. You sing for the joy.

** You learn through that. Then you get addicted to the Raga, the Tala, the tune, the singing of it, the dancing of it, and you require that day after day, year after year. The same happens to the chanting of Mantras. The tranquilising effect of the sound energy pacifies nerves in the beginning, also relaxes the nervous system in the beginning but then self hypnosis comes about and one gets addicted to the tranquilization through the sound energy. Please do see. One has seen this happening. So every experience conditions you. Without your wanting it, a habit pattern comes about, so that you cannot meet the present, the challenges of life as they visit you, with the freshness of spontaneity and vitality.

So knowledge is used in its relevant field. This beauty of experiencing a sensation, going through an experience, is used on the physical level in its relevant field. But for religion,

a psyche is necessary that is not cluttered by the movement of thoughts, the movement of experiences, the movement of habit patterns. That kind of unconditionally free psyche, is necessary for the communion between Life and ourselves to take place. Religion is an unconditional inner freedom, without reservations, without inhibitions, without clutterings of habits, without any need for stimulation. If one spends a year or two in testing the validity of traditions, of knowledge, of experiences, one might learn and find out. As long as it gives joy, the doing of it gives you joy, without binding you in any way, without making you want to impose it on any one else, you may do it.

Music is a source of joy, dancing is a source of joy. Someone had asked a question yesterday about singing of Bhajans, chanting of Mantras. How do we know that we are doing for the joy of it? You don't wait for any result to accrue from it. If I do one hundred thousand Japams, what will happen? What will I get? Twenty four lakhs Japams, then this will happen. When the use of sound energy is converted into a means, if you are doing it as a therapy, as an alternative therapy, alternative medicine, then go ahead, if it is not related to religious enquiry.

This Hatha Yoga is becoming fashionable as a therapy in Europe and America. It has its value. But when they do it for having a symmetrical body, using it as a therapy and miss the beauty of Dhyanam and Samadhi, the whole thing remains incomplete. The consummation of the study of Yoga into a different dimension of consciousness does not take place.

So one is saying that the ground of our psyche or consciousness, the traditions, the sanskaras, the past, is there. You cannot reject it. You have to relate to it, learn from it,

study it, experiment and find out what is relevant and what is in harmony with your enquiry.

When that is done, then we have finished with the conditioned part of our being. We have observed the acquisitive tendency, we have given it a scope by utilizing it in the socio-economic field. When we have allowed the tendency to know and to experience full scope on the physical level, in a sane way, in a scientific way, in a rational way, then we have dealt with our conditioned part properly.

Now we come to the other part, the unconditioned part of our being. What happens to us in profound sleep? It is unknown. There is an unknown part of our being. Only when we get up in the morning, we find that there is rejuvenation, revitalization of every cell, when there is profound sleep. How does this revitalization take place? The ego was not functioning. The 'I', the 'me' was not operating upon the whole body. So one looks at the phenomenon of sleep. We go through it every night, seven hours, eight hours. We never question what happens and how it happens.

So if we question what happens to us in profound sleep and how it happens, then perhaps we might realize that there is a field, there is a dimension of our being, where the effort of the ego, effort of the 'I', the 'me', is not necessary. Life operates without the exercising of the ego. Then I say to myself, 'Well, there is a field where life functions, without the conscious exercising of the ego, the me, the self, the knowledge, the activity of experiencing.' One does not say, let me experience what sleep is. One says, let me sleep. But there, the Intelligence is not functioning. There is a passivity, there is total relaxation. So I say to myself, 'This total relaxation in the passivity in profound sleep, has given so much vitalization and refreshment. So now let me find out what will

happen if in waking consciousness, the ego does not function, the centre of the me, is not operative'.

Exploring Meditation

Then there is no activity, there is no passivity, there is only alertness, alert sensitivity. So I begin to explore what is called meditation, where one is awake, where there is alert sensitivity, but there is no cerebral activity, no movement of the past. One creates an opportunity for oneself to learn. So the acquaintance with the unknown fields of consciousness, the unknown dimensions of our consciousness, comes about through this meditation.

One of your questions was about the fright that comes about, if the mind does not function. There will not be any fear, because your mind does not function for seven or eight hours when you are sleeping, unless you are dreaming all the time. Dreaming is the extension of waking consciousness. Unfulfilled desires and ambitions, the hurts, the wounds, that were not expressed, conscious suppressions, repressions, the involuntary impressions that take place when you move in society, all of them get mixed up together and dreams come about. Or if physical health is not there and there is some trouble in the body, then also dreams can take place. One is not talking about that. One is talking about profound sleep. You may have it for an hour or 2 hours.

So meditation is an exploration, a non -cerebral exploration, a non-mental exploration. You have to allow it to happen. As you allow it to happen in profound sleep, you allow it to happen in total wakefulness. If that happens, then one discovers that without the conscious movement of the mind or the brain, in the total relaxation of the centre of the me, life does not get extinguished. There are no experiences, no sensations, because the experiencer, the knower, the stimulator of sensations, that centre of the me, is non-

operative. Therefore, there are no experiences, there is no knowledge it something new and yet life persists. So there is an opportunity of being with life alone. Meditation is a psychic aloneness.

Aloneness

Well, we were exploring together, what is religiosity and in this last gathering I just wanted to share with you, that aloneness is inevitability of life. In pleasure and pleasure seeking, aloneness is neither necessary, perhaps not even possible. But for peace, love, joy, aloneness is inevitable. When there is aloneness, there is deep joy. When there is aloneness, a communion with the Isness or Suchness of Life takes place. So one tastes that aloneness, one tastes that silence, that emptiness and that becomes the abode.

A religious person is inwardly alone psychically, through physically he may be with people or may not be with people. Being with people does not disturb the aloneness. Communicating verbally with people does not disturb the silence and the movement of relationship does not disturb the renunciation of solitude.

Let us hope that all of us are pilgrims of that religiosity, pilgrims of that communion. All these talks that are given here are response to the query and the quest that the friends from Bombay had indicated. This year as usual, I had requested the friends in Bombay to give me an indication of what they would like us to have a dialogue about, discuss together.

Previous years also, I have been requesting friends to give me an indication about the theme, they would like us to take up. You see, I have nothing to propagating. I have no peculiar path of mine, particular discipline of mine. If there is

anything, that I have to communicate on my own, it is the Divinity of life. Life for me is the Divinity, the Godhood, the Govinda. And even the Govinda of 'Dwaparyuga' had concealed himself behind the commonness of his life. He lived as a lover of life and lover of human beings.

So hiding and concealing behind the manifest is the nature of the unmanifest. Hiding the oneness and unity behind the diversity and manyness, is the play of that Divinity of Life. So if there is anything that I have to communicate on my own, I say that 'Life is Divinity itself'. There is no creator apart from creation. And there is no Godhood apart from the immeasurable and unnamable beauty of the cosmic life. For the convenience of relating to that, you may utilize forms that have existed, names that have existed. But when we talk about Satsang, the communion with Truth, one has to point out all this.

As Shankara and the stotras have been mentioned, I would like to refer to one thing. Shankara, the exponent of Advaita, said, 'Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mithya, Jeevo Brahmaiva, Napara. Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma'.

Vinobaji said, 'Brahma Satyam, Jagat Sphoortihi, Jeevanam Satya Shodhanam'.

Vimala says, 'Brahama Satyam, Jagat Tathyam, Jeevanam Yoga Sadhanam'.

The Act of Living

Because Life is Divinity, the act of living is the worship of the Divine. Therefore that act of living has to be purified. Perception has to be purified. Response has to be purified scientifically. When you have the scientific approach, you eliminate the maladjustment, you eliminate the imbalances.

Imbalance is impurity. So when You eliminate the imbalances, life gets purified. Perception is purified. Response is purified. The sense organs are purified. They are educated. Education is for purification and with purification comes illumination.

So the act of living is the field of Sadhana. Your homes are the centres. They can become the Ashrams for Sadhana. Every relationship becomes an opportunity to discover the factual content of our mind and then correct it. So relationships become the opportunities for self discovery. What you call 'Karma', does not become 'Bandhana Padaka' but becomes 'Muktidayaka'.

'Karma' does not bind you. Relationships do not bind you. 'Muktidayak' - they become the open doors for emancipation. So there is no need to run away, to escape from responsibilities, to turn our faces away from anything at all. The network of escapes that has been provided, is not necessary today, because we have the education that has informed us about the possibility of a scientific approach to religion, to spirituality. More than that is not necessary.

And I think I accept defeat! What defeat? Accepting defeat, is saying that family gatherings will be possible as long as family members of the Bombay Group feel them worthwhile. They are not camps. I felt so relieved when the term, family gathering was used. We used to call them Festivals of Friendship. I used to so call them even in Holland, which has been my second home for quarter of a century. For all those gatherings people from nearly ten to fifteen countries would come there and we would spend ten days together. I would call them Festivals of Friendship.

I do not deny the teacher in me but you must accept that this teacher wants friendship to be a dimension of relationship. Teaching might have taken place if you have learnt. Teaching

requires two to happen. So one does not deny the teacher. There is no allergy to words. But this is 'Sakhya Yuga'. This is an era of friendship and in friendship, the listener is as much responsible as the speaker. I have to be grateful to you if you have received. That is why from the very beginning, from 1963, I was very careful not to allow the gatherings to be huge, big gatherings.

In the Bhoodan days, in ten years of my working in the Landgift movement, Vimala had addressed even on Chowpaty, Bombay, meetings attended by three hundred thousand people and smaller meetings than twenty five thousand people were not known to me in those years. Whether it was Madras, whether it was Guwahati, whether it was Gujarat, one has seen that. And there used to be the cause, the Landgift movement. For collecting land, distributing land, that technique was necessary.

But when one started communicating on one's own, then one was very careful that the scale was small, where the sacred intimacy of informality can be lived by the listeners and the speaker. I feel hurt if someone feels a distance between them and me. There is no hierarchy.

I have resisted people creating any pedestal for me. So I call myself a friend. But the sanctity of teaching and teachership can be retained, even in this relation of friendship. Life willing, we might meet again.

LIVING A TRULY RELIGIOUS LIFE

Do we feel intensely the need for true religion as we need food, clothing and shelter? Unless this basic fundamental need has awakened within us, we will not be able to live religiously.

Is there a willingness, is there a fearlessness to live a truly religious life inspite of all odds?

Life itself is Divinity and the act of living is the worship of the Divine.

If religiosity, if communion with the Divinity of Life is your supreme priority, then you should launch upon this inner voyage of self-inquiry leading to a personal discovery of Reality.

Vimala Thakar