

BHAGAVADGĪTĀ



AND CONTEMPORARY C R I S I S

K I R E E T J O S H I

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AND
CONTEMPORARY CRISIS

KIREET JOSHI

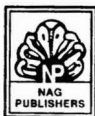


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BHAGAVADGITA and CONTEMPORARY CRISIS

**(An Introductory Study in the form of
fictional narratives)**

KIREET JOSHI



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to

**the upward effort of India to uncover
its ancient spiritual knowledge and to
build new paths of the future.**

**"We do not belong to the dawns of the
past but to the noons of the future."**

SRI AUROBINDO

PREFACE

The aim of this book is not to present a scholarly interpretation of the Bhagvadgita; the aim is to gather from that great book a few insights and to relate them to some of the needs of our own times. The fictional form in which this study has been presented is experimental in character; it was felt that this form might prove convenient in presenting helpful light from the Gita in an exploratory manner on some typical situations of our present day life.

Among various books written on the Gita, the one that has given me true illumination is Sri Aurobindo's "Essays on the Gita", and I shall feel rewarded if readers turn to that book.

New Delhi
29.11.1995

Kireet Joshi

CONTENTS

1. An Ordinary Seeker	1
2. The Princess	10
3. Law and Life	67
4. What is Education?	192
Appendix-I	301
Appendix-II	311

AN ORDINARY SEEKER

I

I am a seeker; I have been obliged to become a seeker by the pressure of all that is around me and my circumstances, external and internal. I am by any standard an ordinary person. I am not a thinker, but I think; I do not have an oceanic heart, but I feel and sympathise; at times, greatly and deeply; I am not heroic, I must confess; often I act because I must; often I lose courage and feel ashamed; even when I dream, I do not act strenuously to realise my dreams.

I have been living much on the surface; I have heard that there are depths and widenesses of our being, but I am ignorant of them. My psychological existence is simple. A small but clamorous company of desires and some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings,--these constitute the empire that I survey; I have some tastes and a few ruling or prominent ideas amid a great current of unconnected or ill-connected and mostly trivial thoughts. I have a number of vital needs, some of which are urgent and imperative. I am not strong but not unhealthy, and I have alternations of physical health and illness. My life has been a succession of uneventful joys and griefs, frequent minor disturbances and vicissitudes. Twice or thrice I had spells of strong searchings and

upheavals of mind. On the whole, my life has had some tolerable disorderly order.

I am about thirty five years old. My life-partner is almost of the same age. We are fairly happy with two children, both of whom go to school in the neighbourhood. We are both working in private firms. I am a junior executive; my life-partner is also similarly placed. We are both science graduates, but our knowledge of science is out-dated and it has not much relevance to the kind of responsibilities that we are expected to shoulder. We are fairly attached to each other, but I remember those early days of our union and of perfect happiness. Is love a mere flower destined to wither away? Occasions are multiplying when we find strangers to each other. Our life has become a routine, and while there is much hurry for everything, the routine seems to be as stable as ever. Not being insensitive, I try to observe my thoughts and actions rather mercilessly. I have discovered many parts of my being, my intellect, will, sense-mind, heart, desires, and my body. My most disconcerting discovery is that every part of my being has its own complex individuality and natural formation independent of rest; it neither agrees with itself nor with others, nor with my ego, which is itself a kind of mystery. For the ego wants to remain what it is and yet wants to be different from itself!

Frankly, I find that I am composed not of one personality but many personalities, and each has its own demands and differing nature. Besides, I find myself besieged by battery of suggestions and ideas that seem to be pouring on me from all sides.

I am open to new ideas and when I catch at them I hurl them about in a rather confused fashion. The contemporary world is spinning fast, and I am obliged to run faster and faster even to keep myself in the present position. I know that I have to think about ethical problems, social problems, problems of science and religion. I watch political developments and form my shaky judgments. I try to look with as understanding an eye as I can attain to at all the new movements of thought and inquiry and action that chase each other across the modern field or clash upon it. I read poetry and fiction, but I have no clear ideas about art and aesthetics.

What baffles me is the torrential rain of news and advertisements that fill the chambers of my mind. Newspapers, radio and television invade with such a speed that I have no time for quiet reflection. I try to take interest in theatre and cinema; and science, too, —my own discipline, —whispers to me of its new knowledge and discoveries. I feel overwhelmed and even crushed by the explosion of information and unprecedented speed of communication.

I feel depressed too. At a time when advancing knowledge has the potentiality to serve the highest aims of civilisation, we seem to be drifting in directions that might bring about fatal disasters, notwithstanding the cessation of the cold war and bipolar world. Budgets of nations show rising graphs of expenditure on arms, and they are engrossed with developing new equations between economic change and military preparedness.

I also feel distressed to think that at a time when the world is shrinking, the gulf between the rich and the poor is widening, the sharp disparities of development and asymmetrical relations among nations are impelling disadvantaged countries to seek unattainable goals. These are bound to create vicious circles of dilemmas and predicaments from which it seems impossible to escape.

Nearer home, I find myself in a crowd of human beings who are jostling with each other in search of proper focus in their lives which is constantly eluding them. All around me there is competition and appetite to devour last morsels of pleasure. There is too much of elbowing each other to find a place under the sun. Human relations have become brittle and veils of decency are being lifted away rapidly. Ambitions are mounting, and even noble men of yesterday are found yielding themselves to the temptations that had corrupted Macbeth. And what about jealousy? Jealousy in professional life; jealousy in domestic life. Increasing number of Iagos are found wandering about in their blind hunt for victims of suspicion and doubt. I shudder to enter into my own heart lest I may have to confess to myself the presence of Hamlet and his tragic dilemma to be or not to be.

I want to believe, if I can, that however imperfect and dim the present forms, the strivings of love, in the domestic and social life, will not end in self-destruction but insist on discovering their divine absolutes. I should like to see the triumph of the absolute love of man and woman, the absolute maternal or paternal, filial or fraternal love, the love of friends, the love of comrades, love of country, love of humanity. I should like

to see the economic development of life succeeding in getting rid of the animal squalor and bareness and in giving to human beings the celestial ease and leisure. How much I wish that politics ceases to be the game of strife and deceit and charlatanism so as to become a large field of absolute idealism! I love the virtues of courage, energy and strength, however weak I may be in my present state.

I turn to my children and ask if I shall have the capacity and skill to foster them and provide for them the inspiration and guidance to enable them to grow into heroic humanism. Is it the fault of the time or of my circumstances that prevent me to be what I want to be for myself, my life-partner, my children, my neighbours, my country, my human family?

There is, I feel, a deep crisis, and I cannot attribute it entirely to all the factors outside myself. The crisis is within myself, as I find arrested and bewildered and can no longer find way. My external life is but a thin fibre of the huge structure that is becoming so huge that it can no more be managed even by our highest physical, vital and mental capacities. The crisis of that life is perhaps acutest and unimaginably unmanageable. But what about my internal life? Is there in my inner heart and soul a breath that can stand against the chaos of the external life?

II

The other day I noticed those weaknesses rising in me for which I felt ashamed. I noticed without pity those appetites that are in the wretched and wicked. Alas! I was falling in the

abyss of darkness, when I was awakened by the clamour of the complaint of my children. They were fighting with each other; they had beaten up each other; they were crying, and each was complaining that the other had torn away and destroyed the books that were lying on my desk.

Filled with my own sense of shame, I could not feel angry. A deep compassion arose in my heart, and I embraced them both with an unknown feeling of love and sweetness. The children felt the magic of my embrace, and their quarrel and complaint vanished. I simply smiled, and they returned to their room comforted and recompensed.

When I reached my desk, I was horrified to see the state of my torn books. I lifted these books to put them in good order. These were my favourite books,--books of Tagore and Whitman, of Shakespeare and Kalidasa, Ramayana and Mahabharata. And beneath them all were a few torn pages of the Gita. As I took these pages in my hand, I tumbled and sat down in my chair. I felt exhausted and, in no time, went to sleep.

I do not know how long I slept, but when I woke up I saw two compassionate eyes of my life-partner that were pouring soothing tenderness on my torn spirit and body. I understood love behind love; I realised that there was here a fragrance that can never fade. There was complete silence, and I was put into my bed with the hands that balmed all my limbs.

III

The next day was like any other day, and yet all seemed to have changed. A new resolution had

emerged in my being. Even an average human being like myself, I said to myself, can overcome a crisis. There is something else, and I wanted to find it out.

When I was alone at home in quietude, I turned to those torn pages which were still on my desk in the same condition in which I had left them on the previous night. As I began to read them I saw a new light. I felt drawn to them as never before. Previously, I had looked upon them as leaves of a religious scripture, and to my mentality, religious dogma had lost much meaning and value. But these pages,-- the last portion of the second chapter of that Great Book--came to me in a new aspect. Here was the goal that I was in search of, and here were the steps described with logical and scientific rigour. I read them again and again and found a solution to my crisis. I awoke with a fresh vigour. Later, I discussed all that I had learnt with the learned and devout. And, in order that I might not forget the lessons that I had derived, I jotted down the notes, which are given in the Appendix.

IV

There is a need today not only to have self-knowledge but also to have the methodology by which that knowledge can be attained. I felt grateful that the study of this knowledge has uplifted me and I feel that the grip of the crisis has been loosened.

I have now an insight into the nature of my personal crisis as also of some aspects of the crisis all around in the world. Our civilisation is a huge attempt to organise life; but the principle of

organisation is mechanical; it does not take into account the freedom of the human spirit.

Our civilisation looks upon man as an economic being; even the mental culture that it develops is being put at the service of the demands and needs of the economic being.

Our civilisation does not deal with the problems of egoism and vital indulgence; it has developed the science of material life but neglected the science of self-control and self-discipline. As a result, it has no remedy of the uprush of forces and violence and of appetites that come upon individuals, societies and nations from time to time.

We may find solutions to many problems that we are facing today; we may find an answer to the threat of nuclear power or of global pollution and environmental disturbances. But even these solutions will not solve the basic problems of the human passions and egoistic assertions that are bound to take serious forms of violence. It is these problems that we need to solve.

Our personal lives are conditioned by the general organisation of life, and we are gradually becoming dehumanised. We do not have the leisure to grow inwardly, to express our inner concerns and share our deepest affection or to purify it. We need a lever to uplift us. We need the knowledge of what is within us, beyond our economic being, beyond our physical, vital, mental and intellectual faculties. We need to know if there is a source of peace and tranquillity, a source of true creative and effective activity free from turbulence of hurried struggle in which we are obliged to elbow out our fellow beings by a competitive machinery.

The crisis of our personal life is that while we have become capable of high dreams, we have at the same time become incapacitated to find the right means to realise those dreams.

But in the few pages that I read that day, the knowledge that they provided awakened me to a new dimension. The learned and the wise with whom I have since discussed have enriched my understanding. These pages, I am told, is the first foundation of the teaching of the Gita, and it contains in seed all the knowledge that the Gita means to give us. It is, we might say, the first indispensable practical unity of knowledge and works with a hint already of the third crowning element in the soul's completeness, divine love and devotion.

More I hope to learn a little later. For the time being, I have the delight of finding the way and the aspiration to implement what I have learnt. I want to walk on the path.

THE PRINCESS

I

It was 1967. I was introduced to her in April that year by one of the leading industrialists who had appointed me his adviser,--not for industrial enterprises, but for something else. He was Chairman of a number of charitable institutions, mostly devoted to education, health and social reforms. I was supposed to advise him on these matters. In that month of April, there was a Seminar at Geneva on "Modernising Management", and he was requested to preside over that Seminar. He had asked me to accompany him, and we came to stay in the famous hotel "Riviera". It was there that my Chairman had introduced me to her at the breakfast table, saying, "Meet my friend. She is the charming Princess, the only one in the world!".

And, indeed, during the next few years I found her that she was not only a charming princess, but she was also a brave and bold leader of her country, with great potentialities to grow into a world-leader, a leading stateswoman of our planet. She believed in the concept of Family of Man, of one world of human unity, of planetary civilisation. She was, at that time of our first meeting, only thirty four years old, but she had the wisdom of ripe age. She had read volumes of World History and she had expertise in matters of

culture. All this and much more I came to learn about her as I grew closer to her.

At the breakfast table, the conversation was led by my Chairman, and the Princess and I listened to him with rapt attention. His main question was : Can human nature be changed?

I knew this was his pet subject, since his life had been a series of disillusionments and he had come to the conclusion that the world would be better off if ruled by innocent animals than human beings who are incorrigibly unkind, egoistic and selfish. The discussion did not last long as the Princess was called away in the midst of an argument when I was making a point that human nature *can* be changed and *must* be changed.

Princess had come as the leader of her country's delegation to the UNESCO Conference, and she was to address the Conference that morning. Late in the evening when she returned, I happened to be in the lobby, and on seeing me, she said: "I want to show you something". She took me to her suite; on the way, she said: "I was impressed with your argument this morning about the possibility of the change of human nature." She smiled. By that time we had reached her suite. When we sat down on the sofa, she took out the latest issue of "La Suisse" from her dossier; she asked me, "Have you read this Bulletin? There is a very very important statement of the Secretary General of the UNO, U. Thant."

She was enthusiastic; she herself read it out. "Listen, what he says, and this concerns the theme of this morning's argument," she said and began:

"That a fraction of the amounts that are going to be spent in 1967 on arms could finance economic, social, national and world programmes to an extent so far unimaginable is a notion within the grasp of the man in the street. Men, if they unite, are now capable of foreseeing and, to a certain point, determining the future of human development. This, however, is possible if we stop fearing and harassing one another and if together we accept, welcome and prepare the changes that must inevitably take place. If this means a change in human nature, well, it is high time we worked for it; what must surely change is certain political attitudes and habits man has."

She finished. She smiled and exclaimed :
"Fantastic! Isn't it?"

I nodded. She said: "I must write to him a letter. Can you help in drafting it?"

I replied: "Yes, but you must help me by telling me what exactly you wish to emphasise."

"You know what to say," she said.

"Yes, but I believe not merely in change of human nature, but in spiritual change. And I am not sure if you would like to speak of that."

It seemed as though our rapport with each other had become so great within one day that I felt I had known her quite well and known also the wave-length of her thoughts.

"I think," I continued, "you believe that if human beings become reflective, if they cultivate taste for literature, poetry, art, beauty, if they became humane, if they became refined, if they could harmonise their sentiments and thoughts and their will-power,--then they have changed their

nature. And that is what you want. But, on my part, while all these things are very desirable, they are only preliminaries of the real change. The real change is spiritual."

The Princess felt uncomfortable. She felt sorry and said, rather politely, "You know, I am an atheist!"

"I know it," I said, "I mean I had conjectured it. You are basically Greek in your temperament, and I understand it very well and appreciate it very much. I too am Greek in my mind, although in my soul I am Indian—as you too, I believe, are Indian in your soul."

She remained quiet for some time and became pensive.

"You know I too am an atheist in a certain sense," I said.

She lifted her head. She looked sharply to understand what I had meant.

I said, "People say that God is good and omnipotent and that He has created the world. But how could He have created a world in which He inflicts suffering on His creatures, sanctions pain, permits evil? God being All-Good, who created pain and evil? It is argued that pain is a trial and an ordeal. But does it solve the moral problem? For by that reasoning we arrive at an immoral or non-moral God. He may be an excellent world-mechanist, a cunning psychologist, but not a God of Good and of love whom we can worship. Why? For one who invents torture as a means of test or ordeal, stands convicted either of deliberate cruelty or of moral insensibility and, if a moral being at all, He must be inferior to the highest

instinct of His own creatures. It is sometimes argued that pain is an inevitable result and natural punishment of moral evil. But this does not escape the root of the ethical problem. For we might retort as to who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering. Actually, we see that moral evil is in reality a form of mental disease or ignorance. So the question is as to who or what created this law or inevitable connection which punishes a mental disease or act of ignorance by a recoil so terrible, by tortures often so extreme or monstrous. Oh no! I do not believe in such a Creator!"

The Princess seemed deeply gratified.

"What, then do you mean by 'spiritual'?"

"May I tell you?" I asked. And I continued: "My father was an atheist. He was a communist leader in my country. But he was deeply humane, extremely honest and sincere. He believed in internationalism. He had greatly welcomed the contest between Capital and Labour and he used to say that the First World War had become memorable for the Russian Revolution. According to him, this Revolution was a sign that a phase of civilisation had begun to pass and the Time-Spirit was preparing a new phase and a new order. And he was greatly enthused by the great hopes that this Revolution had raised."

"Very interesting" the Princess remarked. "But I am not a communist," Princess said.

"I know. I understand because although I was brought up as a Marxist, I came to be greatly influenced by Socrates and Plato. It is the

"Dialogues" of Plato that gave the structure and substance to my brain. And, you know, both Socrates and Plato believed in Soul and in God."

"Yes, but the Western thought developed on new lines. Christianity brought in new ideas and new beliefs. And you know how Christianity collided with Science. To my mind, the triumph of Science has been the most remarkable phenomenon of our times."

"Yes," I said and added, "but the balance-sheet of Science has a large deficit in terms of the contributions it has made to war and destruction."

"Yes, of course," she agreed instantaneously. "And that is why I advocate Scientific Humanism."

"Right. And that is precisely what, in my view, is inadequate to deal with the challenges of our times."

I paused for a while. Then I said:

"We need a Spiritual Revolution."

It was evident that she was unhappy to disagree with me or to fail to understand me. She argued : "With all your brilliant exposition of atheism, how can you reconcile yourself with religion, with spirituality---all these things which are anti- science?"

I knew that in order to answer her question, I would be required to present a long chain of thought and data. And neither of us had the time for this long presentation. So I said briefly :

"I shall explain to you when you can give me some more time. But briefly, I make a distinction between religion and spirituality, between religion and Yoga, between God who lives in Heaven only as a judge and God who is Himself

the world and its suffering and its cure. I shall tell you how I came through a long-winding road to the Veda, to the Upanishad, to the Gita and the rest of the developments of spirituality. I came to realise that spirituality is knowledge, not only the knowledge of the Divine and the Soul, but also of the World, and that that knowledge is as scientific as is the scientific knowledge of Matter. And may I add, I belong to no religion?"

We had to leave our dialogue at that incomplete stage. But as I was leaving, the Princess told me: "I seem to understand what you mean. And you will draft that letter. Will you? I shall change it, if necessary, but I trust that you know my mind."

I was deeply touched by the nobility and generosity of the Princess. And I felt her tenderness intangibly as she spoke these words.

II

For the next two days, we were all so pre-occupied that we had hardly any time except for occasional greetings at the lobby or in the restaurant. But I had given to the Princess the draft of the letter to U Thant, and she had told me the next day that it was signed by her without any amendments. At one encounter, she had asked me how big were the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita, and whether I could lend them to her, if they were readily available with me. In reply, I had told her that while the Vedas and Upanishads are rather voluminous, the Gita was comparatively very brief and contained, in brief, the basic lines of the Yoga of what I had earlier spoken. Besides, as I had with me a copy of a good English

translation of the book with me I had sent to her room that copy.

On the third day, the Princess invited my Chairman and me for a dinner. As the Chairman was very busy, he asked me to join her. This gave me an excellent opportunity to discuss, not atheism and spirituality, but something quite different.

The discussion centred in the beginning on the vast changes that are sweeping all over the world. In one sentence, the Princess summed up at one stage by saying:

"This century has been an unquiet age of gigantic ferment, chaos of ideas and inventions, clash of enormous forces, creation, catastrophe and dissolution. And how much all this has engendered agony and tension, not only of the body, but if I use your terminology, of the "soul" of mankind!"

I added: "During this period, the age of reason reached its highest pinnacles and widest amplitudes."

"True, consider experimental science alone. Armed with efficient technology it has registered phenomenal developments. But as you said the other day, the balance-sheet of scientific progress is a mixture of good and evil for humanity. For while new heights of excellence have been experienced by it, humanity has also got dwarfed as never before. A series of rivalries among nations dominated the scene. Two stupendous world-devastating wars swept over the globe and they were accompanied or followed by revolutions with far-reaching consequences. A League of Nations was formed, but broke down after some time; the UNO came to be built, but its deficiencies and

weaknesses are forcing leaders to think of radical changes in its Constitution and working. Do you think will the UNO last?" she asked.

"The UNO is perhaps the most momentous development of our times. I hope it does not break down. For if it breaks down, it will have to be replaced by another world-body. And if that body is constituted as one world-state on the principles of uniformity on the model of the ancient Roman empire, it will be a curse. The best thing would be to preserve the UNO and amend its Constitution so that the power of veto is eliminated and all nations come to enjoy not only theoretical but effective and practical equality."

"But how? Take the tensions between the North and the South. Armaments are being piled up in huge quantities and, although there are talks of reductions, are they going to have practical effect?"

She continued: "My own country is small---small in size but great in culture. But big powers want to crush our economy, our greatness. My father as the Prime Minister has succeeded so far to maintain the integrity of the country and to thwart the designs of divisive forces, which are being fuelled by foreign big powers. My father is to my country what Lincoln was and is to the United States. He is a great man and a great hero. One day I shall invite you to my country and you will meet him and also my husband and our two children."

"I would love to come to your country," I said, "and I would like to assist you in your efforts."

"Yes," she said, "but what I am very much concerned with is the global crisis, threat of nuclear war, threat to environment, threat to humanism. You see all around how military expenditures are being ruthlessly planned at the cost of many important priorities,--just what U Thant has pointed out. And science continues to minister ingeniously to the art of collective massacre. Expensive life styles have been fashioned and advocated, and men, women and children are being increasingly led to isolated and divided lives. Multiplying complexities of the inner and outer life have been turning into complications and unresolved dilemmas; and chaos of views of life, each with only relative validity, has been shaking, for good or evil, foundations erected by ethical systems and humanism. Individualism, which at one time encouraged discovery of greater realms of ends, has been overtaken by egoism and selfish indulgence of impulses and passions. Don't you think that all this and much more has led humanity to a state of crisis of serious proportions?"

I nodded. After a brief pause, I said: "This crisis is not only serious but even unprecedented. At one time, it had looked as though two factors, if combined together, would mitigate the crisis."

The dinner was almost coming to an end. Dessert was already being served. And I did not want to prolong the discussion. So I paused for a while. But Princess asked :

"Which factors?"

"First was the idealism that lay behind the Russian Revolution; in fact, the parent of that idealism was the French Revolution with its ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. And the second

was the resurgence of Asia. But, as you know, socialism has turned into state socialism. It has brought in greater equality and a closer association in human life but it has imposed great fetters on human freedom and it has remained confined only to a material change. It has missed..."

The Princess interrupted to say : "That socialism is bound to collapse. It has aggravated the mechanical burden of humanity."

"Precisely," I said, "it has crushed more heavily towards the earth its spirit."

"But what about the resurgence of Asia? What about your own country?"

"The resurgence of Asia, in spite of its glorious moments of achievements, meant eventually only a redressing or shifting of international balance. India had held out a great promise; even now I have not lost hope. But India became quite dormant after a few movements of awakening. In spite of her great inner preparations, it has still not been able to provide the required conditions of the step forward which is the one thing needful, viz., a new flowering of spiritual culture which does not reject matter but transforms material life in all its splendour and beauty."

Our conversation seemed to be coming to an end. Coffee was being served, and I was about to express my thankfulness for the excellent dinner, when she asked:

"What about internationalism?"

"Yes," I replied, "Indian resurgence would have turned itself into a great force of internationalism. All our great leaders of the freedom struggle were citizens of the world. But my own

feeling is that internationalism should become a vital need of the lives of nations and of the entire humanity. But this cannot come about without spiritual change. For Spirit is universal in its very nature, and it is only the sovereignty of the Spirit that can establish invincibility of universality."

The dinner had ended, and the Princess had signed the Bill. But as we rose to leave the table, she said: "Would you care for a stroll? I want to understand more of the Spirit that you are speaking of again and again."

Before I could reply, we were already in the lobby, where several members of her delegation were wanting to meet her. But she dismissed them saying it was quite late and that she would meet them the next day at the breakfast table.

We were now on the road which was lit by the full moon besides the street lights. Suddenly, it began to drizzle. So I said: "Let us get back. Besides, can one explain the Spirit? The book that I have given you will explain everything in detail."

"Don't mind the drizzle," she said, "it will soon stop. Tell me something," she pressed.

True, drizzle stopped suddenly. And we began to stroll leisurely. I said:

"Let me first explain what I think of the contemporary crisis. The modern world is growing increasingly commercial in character. A powerful impulsion of our times is towards the industrialising of the human race and the perfection of the life of the society as an economic and productive organism. You rightly predicted that communism of USSR will fall to pieces. That will be an occasion for the free world to absorb the underlying truth

of communism; but that does not seem very likely. Market economy will spread out in full swing; and capitalistic competition will become more unbridled than ever before."

"I agree," Princess said, "What I am looking for and what I am working for is to subordinate commercial ends to humanism, to internationalism, to harmony of efflorescence of human personality."

"Yes, I too have the same idea or similar idea. But my studies have shown that mere idealism is not enough. Mere ideas are moonshine and romance. We must dive deep within ourselves; we have to make a discovery of the inner being, which is by its very nature universal, inherently peaceful and devoid of any tension or conflict."

The Princess was listening attentively. I said: "All the great ideals you are speaking of are being repeated day in and day out by politicians all over the world."

"Oh, I know it too well. I am constantly surrounded by politicians. There is hardly any one among them who can be called a true statesman. The politicians utter high words and noble ideas, but they make them rapidly the claptrap of a party. They represent average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception. They represent mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. It is a pity that good of all has to be decided by such minds, and the governance of the world is entrusted to such hands."

I was gratified to hear these critical remarks: she looked heroic. I took over the conversation:

"Now the question is whether there is any power by which the very nature of politicians and

politics can be changed. Mere ideas and propagation of ideas will not do. That which is deeper than ideas and idealism is the substance and power of the Spirit. And it is not to be a matter of beliefs or dogma. For belief and dogma will again be nothing but ideas and idealism. No, just as electricity is a power that can give shock and energise, even so spirituality is a power that can revolutionise and transform."

I paused for a while.

"And, may I tell you something more? Are you not bored?" I asked.

"No, not at all. I am keen to listen. Please tell me." Princess said enthusiastically.

I felt inspired and said :

"There is a deeper cause of the present crisis, and that cause gives an unprecedented character to that crisis. Let me explain. But shall we sit on this bench?"

"Yes, of course."

We sat down on the bench. The roads were quite empty. It was past midnight. But we both felt quite fresh. I continued :

"In previous cycles of human history there have been periods where intellect dominated, but it never reached the sweep, pitch and intensity as in our modern Age. The age of Reason is, therefore, of special significance, particularly, when we realise that human being is distinguishable from other species by virtue of its Reason. Now, over the last five hundred years, our faculty of Reason has been cultivated, subtilised and sharpened to utmost degrees of excellence. And what is the result?

"Reason had promised that it will be able to discover the ultimate Truth in all its comprehensiveness and that, too, with certainty. But now, Reason has demonstrated that the very concept of Truth is relative and that what can be known by Reason will always be circumscribed within the limits of varying degrees of probability.

"Reason had promised that when it will be allowed to apply itself to human life it will be able to bring about the right relationship between the individual and collectivity. Reason also erected three great ideals of progress, viz., ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and promised their harmonious fulfillment in a rational order of society. But now Reason has demonstrated that Reason can neither harmonise the individual and collectivity nor can it synthesise freedom, equality and brotherhood. It has proved, on the contrary, that when liberty is secured, equality is sacrificed, and when equality is attempted to be realised, liberty is sacrificed. As for fraternity, it is a far-off dream. Fraternity, in particular, is the quality of the mutuality of soul with the soul, not of the mind with mind.

It is thus clear that the Agenda of the Reason has now been exhausted. The question is as to what next can reason do.

"The inability of Reason to answer this question constitutes the heart of our contemporary crisis. It has either to go upward towards spiritual knowledge or to remain stagnant. If it remains stagnant, it will continue to engender scepticism, which is injurious and ruinous for humanity. For going upwards, it has to have deeper knowledge or readiness to gain that knowledge. If that

readiness does not come forth,---as is very largely the case,--we can imagine what can happen to humanity. There is, of course, another possibility, equally undesirable. That possibility is that humanity will remain constantly gravitated to a certain type of fixed movement, bereft of a nusus for a higher ascent or mutation. The fact that today the centre of gravity tends to move towards the economic social ultimate, the turn of humanity will be towards an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort and towards the use of reason and science and education for the channelisation of a utilitarian rationality which will mechanise life and create systems for vital and material satisfactions surrounded by luxuries of intellectual and aesthetic pastimes.

"This is the central question for us. Do we want humanity to gravitate to this lower level and become fixed in it.? Or else, do we want a higher and spiritual existence in which alone mental ideas and idealisms can be fulfilled?

"In fact, this question has never been posed before humanity decisively. This is in fact a moment of great evolutionary significance. Do we want to *evolve* or to *stagnate* or *gravitate* to lower depths? Our inability or refusal to answer this question is our real crisis."

I stopped. And there was a deep silence within us and in the atmosphere.

As we started returning, the Princess asked me : "What is the solution? What should be our agenda?" She looked very intense.

I said : " A great responsibility lies on the leaders of action. This responsibility cannot be

discharged without deep commitment to higher ends of our life on the planet. They must first of all work for the fulfillment of the ideal of human unity which respects diversity and freedom of nationalities in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would have disappeared. Secondly, this unity to be real and lasting has to be based on spiritual foundation. Thirdly, therefore, there must be created atmosphere under which increasing number of individuals grow towards the necessity of the discovery of spiritual reality and its manifestation in all aspects of life. Finally, this effort must aim not merely at individual perfection but at collective perfection."

The full moon was shining bright high above us, and all around was great quietude. We walked back to the hotel. The only question she asked me just before parting at the lobby was: "Shall I find the needed light from the book you have lent me?"

"Of course," I said enthusiastically.

"And I shall meet you tomorrow again." After a pause she added: "I am leaving Geneva late tomorrow evening."

"Yes, I know," I said.

We bade goodnight to each other and left for our respective rooms.

III

Next morning, as I was leaving my room for breakfast, my telephone rang. As I took the receiver, I found it was the Princess who was speaking. She said, "I had thought of meeting you at the breakfast table, but I have to skip the

breakfast. I have too many people this morning and they want to brief me for the session today at the Conference. May be, you are also very busy throughout the day. But I have spoken to your Chairman. Do you know what I told him?"

"No, I have not yet met him. Probably he will tell me when I meet him."

"It was simply this. I told him that I have adopted his adviser as my adviser! And he laughed but added : 'But don't abduct him!' I said, 'Never! But I will invite him to my country and steal his advice from time to time.' He agreed readily."

She continued : "He added again, 'I know you are leaving this evening and both my adviser and I will be very busy till very late at night. So, I may not be able to come to see you off, and you should pardon me for it.' But before I could say anything, he said, 'Look, I shall release my adviser and send him to the airport direct and he can see you off on my behalf.' I told him not do so. I said that I will understand, and in any case, there will be plenty of people to see me off. But he insisted that he would send you on his behalf."

I smiled and said : "Well, I will be very happy to come. Actually, I was very keen to see you off, and you can see how the unseen hand of the Spirit has arranged this for me without any effort on my part!"

"Are you sure it was the hand of the Spirit? Was it not my conversation with your Chairman?"

"But in my view, yourself, the Chairman and **your** conversation,-- all this is a part of the hand **of** the Spirit."

She laughed. She said, "I do not think I will be able to win in an argument with you. But let me tell you one thing in a great hurry. We may not have much time to talk to each other at the airport. So, could I make a request to you?"

"Of course," I said.

"Yesterday, you spoke of the difference between religion and Yoga. I would have liked to discuss this question with you at length. But could you just jot down a few lines to explain this distinction? I shall be happy to read it during my flight."

"Sure."

"And let me add one word. Thank you very much for our conversation. I think a new chapter has opened up in my life. And more I shall write to you at your address in India."

"You don't need to thank me. When you will read that book which I gave you, the Gita, you will know whom to thank. Till that time, keep your thanks in reserve."

The Princess laughed and said, "I must really stop now. Already, some visitors are knocking the door of my room. Please pardon me for this abrupt end of this conversation."

During the whole day I was so occupied that I did not have enough time to sit down quietly to write down that note which I had promised. I snatched, however, just ten minutes before my departure for the airport when I could write down the following lines:

"There are three things which seem similar to each other, but they are quite different from each other. These are : religion, philosophy and

Yoga. Religion is a turning to God or to a representative of God or one who has come to be looked upon as God. But this turning is a turning of the mind and the heart supported by pious and worshipful thoughts and emotions as also by certain specific prescribed acts.---and all this cast in a framework of a scripture, creed, dogma, authority of the Priest or the Church, a system of rituals, ceremonies.

“Philosophy may also be a turning towards God or Absolute or Ultimate Reality. But this turning is an intellectual pursuit with rigour of logical chain of arguments, which might or might not ultimately support the belief in God, Absolute, or Ultimate Reality.

“Yoga is also a turning towards God; it may also begin with faith in God. But neither the turning nor the faith are absolutely essential for Yoga. For Yoga is practical psychology, a science of faculties of our psychological being and a scientific knowledge of how these faculties can be combined, developed, subtilised, and so organised by rigorous processes of purification and concentration so as to open up vistas of knowledge whereby the whole world is seen and experienced in larger and deeper contexts of the living experiences of our inmost self and its union with That which is even much vaster than, and transcendental of the universe. Yoga is psychological revolution and it aims at the change of consciousness. And to the seeker of Yoga, dogma, creed, ceremonies, rituals and authority of a Priest or a Church are of no essential significance and can be even completely dispensed with.

"I may only add that the book which you are going to read, the Gita, is a book of Yoga, and even though many people read it as a religious book, I look upon it as a book of scientific knowledge of the world, of man, and of all that is beyond the world and man and their inter-relationship and unity. Gita is also a book of technology or methodology by which the knowledge contained in the book can be realised, internalised and securely possessed.

I would like you to read that book only in that spirit."

I folded this note and carefully put it in an envelope and sealed it.

When I reached the airport, the Princess had already arrived at her special lounge and she was surrounded by a number of dignitaries as also by the members of her own delegation.

It took a little time before I could catch her eye. But she was in the midst of a long conversation with her own ambassador to Switzerland. When she finished talking to him, she rose from her seat and came over to me. I said, "I know you are to talk to many people, and I shall not take much time. You had asked me to prepare a note for you, and I leave that note with you."

She smiled and while thanking me, she said, "I have prepared the agenda of my immediate work. This agenda has two goals: human unity and change of human nature,---those two goals of which U than has spoken and on which you have commented. My fortune is that my father is a Prime Minister and I have ready access to a number of countries and their governments. Let us see

how things work out. I shall write to you letters from time to time. But I have to make one last request before I leave. I want to know more about your country, about your culture, your philosophy, your science, your people, your leaders and all your plans. Send me any number of books. You do not need to consult me. Your choice of books will be final; let the booksellers send the bills direct to me and they will be paid. The present limit for these books will be \$ 10,000/. "

"That will be done. And thank you very much for reposing so much trust in me."

She smiled and went back to her seat in the midst of a crowd of people. I waited until she was escorted away by the officer of the airlines. Before she left, she remembered to spot me out and shook my hands.

When I returned to the hotel, my Chairman had just returned from the session. He asked me whether I had fulfilled my duty, and he said, "I am sorry I have added to your work. But I am sure you will thank me for all this retrospectively." He laughed again.

Next day, we left for India.

IV

During the next few months, I sent to the Princess more than 500 books on a variety of subjects connected with India. Knowing her special interest in culture, a large number of these books pertained to Indian art, Indian architecture, Indian dance, and Indian literature. Books on the Veda, Upanishad and the Gita as also on a number of modern commentators on Indian tradition of Yoga

constituted quite a big bulk. The rest were connected with contemporary leaders of India and with the story of India's struggle for freedom. I also sent a number of books on Indian system of education, Indian Constitution and Indian system of governance.

I received a few letters from her, all of them extremely brief. I realised that she must be very busy and was thankful that she took trouble to write at all.

After a few months, I received a telegram from her. She had asked me if I could pay a visit to her country during the next fortnight. I showed this telegram to my Chairman. He smiled generously and said, "You must go."

Things developed quickly and I found myself in the capital of her country within less than 15 days. When I met her at her palace, I was delighted to see how faithfully she had classified and arranged the books that I had sent her in her own personal library. I was further pleased when I learnt that she had read a number of books already. Then she told me suddenly, "I was waiting for your arrival. I have taken a holiday for a week, and you will fly with me and my husband to a beautiful town on the Eastern Coast where we have a beautiful castle, which is my ancestral property. My children also will be with us, and they will have a chance to talk to you."

"One week! How could you manage to find such a long holiday?" I asked.

"It was really hard. But my father understands and I want to tell you a secret."

I was eager to know it. She smiled and said, "In public affairs, nothing can be definite. Nobody can be sure. But my father has decided to reshuffle his cabinet within a fortnight."

She paused for a while. And I looked at her with deep interest and expectancy.

She said, "He wants me to be the Minister for External Affairs."

I was truly happy and burst out to congratulate her most warmly. She smiled, but she added, "You know, I have been reading the Gita. I have read over the text several times. And I have many many questions to ask you. I feel very happy with the prospect of becoming the Foreign Minister. But I wonder whether it is right for me to feel happy. What would Krishna say? Has he not said that one should be equal minded?"

"Equal-minded does not mean that you should feel miserable or you should feel indifferent. The experience of happiness has to be received without losing balance. And one should not feel disappointed, if tomorrow a different decision is taken and something unexpected and something adverse comes to pass. To receive what comes to you and to offer it to the Divine, --that is what is expected of the seeker."

"Yes, but I do not know whether I could pass that kind of a test. But at the same time, I should like to be prepared for my new responsibilities. But before I can think of anything else, my mind is full of questions, and unless they are answered my mind will not feel free to concentrate on the work that lies ahead of me."

"But what are these questions? I do not think I know much about your country and I can hardly help you in preparing for your forthcoming tasks."

"No, I do not want to discuss for the moment questions of my state affairs or of politics or of statesmanship. My immediate questions, all, pertain to Yoga, Yoga of the Gita. This book, the Gita, is extraordinary. The more you do not understand it, the more you feel you should go upto the end of it. I do not know how to express. But because it is difficult, I cannot leave it. The book seems to be pressing upon me. And I shall tell you something that I felt two months ago."

I did not know how much time she had planned to spare for me for this meeting. She had told me that she was to introduce me to her father. But before I could react to her questions, she said, "Let us go to the garden where I had this experience."

Within a few minutes, we found ourselves under a beautiful bower covered with beautiful creepers which were studded with multi-coloured flowers. She sat down on a bench and asked me to sit next to her. She said, "I was reading on that day this very precious book. I was reading the second chapter where Krishna describes the sage who is settled in the state of Samadhi. As I was reading it, I felt extremely relaxed and my mind became so quiet, so quiet, I cannot describe it. My eyes got closed, and I felt that my entire body had become immobile. Soon I experienced a great calm all over the upper part of my skull. This calm began to grow. Surprisingly, I was fully awake and calmness became truly solid. I felt as if a solid pillar of peace was descending right from

the top of the skull, and I felt within a short time that my entire body had become a solid unified substance of silence. There was no movement of thought except when it occurred to me, "Look, there is no thought." Then I tried to think : but the silence was so solid that no thought could penetrate it. And in spite of my effort to make some movement of my body, I could make no movement. This silence continued to occupy my body, and then I made no effort either to think or to move. I just remained immobile, static. I could only watch the presence of this silence. It took nearly half an hour before this pillar of peace began to melt, and I could gradually feel a slow return of the current of ideas. My arms had become numb, and I had to rub them to regain the ordinary circulation of blood in my palm and my fingers."

She stopped for a while. I commented: "But this is an excellent experience. It is most precious."

She said, "But this was not the end of this experience. After a short moment, while I was still sitting quietly, I had another wave in my consciousness. And as I closed my eyes, I began to see a number of colours. The main colour was blue and then for a long time, it was orange. And then I saw something as one sees in a dream. I witnessed a huge crowd, and next I saw a figure emerging from a carriage. The figure was not distinct and clear. But I was standing in the crowd and I watched that figure climbing up the gallows. Suddenly, I knew in the dream that that figure was figure of Danton. And I heard him speak something. I could not hear those words. And within a few seconds, I saw his neck guillotined. But as the head came down on the ground, I

looked up with a great sense of horror in my heart. I looked at the sky and I heard the following words:

"I am immortal, I am immortal, I am immortal."

And soon, this entire scene vanished and I found that there was a beautiful garden in the midst of which a beautiful girl was standing with a basket in her hands. No, it was not myself. She had angelic face and her eyes were shining like diamonds. And soon, this scene also vanished. And when I came back and opened my eyes, I said to myself: "That was Joan of Arc."

I was amazed to hear an account of these two great visions. I was filled with such a thrill and astonishment that I could say nothing. She too remained silent.

Just at that time, some one came to summon us by announcing that the Prime Minister wanted to see me.

The Princess and I went back into the palace. I had an extremely interesting meeting with the Prime Minister during which he spoke to me about his country, its culture, its people, its problems, the way in which his government was planning to deal with those problems. As the Princess had told me earlier, he was extremely humane and heroic. I felt in his presence leonine power and courage. He was a man of peace and a man of dreams. At the same time, I felt he was a practical idealist. He told me towards the end of the conversation: "The world has entered into a new era. I do not believe that there would be a third world war. Forces of peace have become so powerful that

people have begun to push back thoughts of war and violence."

After meeting the Prime Minister, the Princess took me to her husband. Her two children were present; they were beautiful children, a girl and a boy,--the elder one was a girl, the younger one was a boy.

The Princess was required to accompany her father for a state luncheon, and she took our leave. Before leaving, however, she told me, "Apart from many other qualifications, my husband is a photographer; and, as you know, photography is an art when the photographer is an artist. And he is an artist. Do not forget to ask him to show you his huge studio and his numerous albums of photographs."

The husband laughed; and after the Princess had left, all the four of us entered into a long dialogue. We were stopped only when we were summoned for the lunch.

V

We had reached the Castle, the ancestral property of the Princess, located on the coast of the sea against which stood out beautiful ranges of hills. The castle was quite huge and well furnished. Carpets and curtains, sofa sets and chairs, tables and desks of various sizes, a marvellous art gallery, and a big library ---all these and many more pieces of art, sculpture and articles reminiscent of medieval times would impart an impressive sight to any guest or visitor. The atmosphere was royal, and there was taste and beauty pervading all things, big and small.

During the short air travel in her private plane, the Princess had charted out our full programme of one week. Our main work was to discuss various intricate questions that she had encountered during her study of the Gita. She had shared her study of this book with her husband who, having understood the greatness of its theme, had thought of a plan to make a long television film of the entire dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, ---not for commercial but educational purpose. In this plan, he was greatly encouraged by the Princess. But they wanted sharp clarity in their own mind about the exact content of the dialogue, and also the precise sequence in which the dialogue should be presented. They had in their mind teachers and students of their country, who, according to them, should be the first beneficiaries of the message of the film.

The Prince---that is how I had begun to address the husband of the Princess---was an excellent cameraman and was devoted to the production of films which would have direct relevance to education. He wanted to tape-record all the sessions of questions and answers between me and the Princess, and he wanted, therefore, some time for preparation of setting up the tape-recording system in one of the rooms of the castle.

The Princess wanted to write down her questions with great precision. In fact, she had already done a good deal of home work on these questions. But she was not satisfied. She wanted to go through her papers and rewrite or reformulate a few questions and add a few more.

Soon after arrival at the Castle and after a hurried breakfast, the Prince and Princess got busy

with their respective tasks. I offered to go with the children to the sea-shore and enjoy the sun which had just emerged from clouds. Children were marvellous and they told me stories and legends connected with the Castle, with the sea and with the hills. I too told them a few short stories of Indian epics and dramas. When we returned, both the Prince and Princess were ready to sit down for the session.

Children had become so friendly with me that they did not want to leave me. They promised they would not disturb us, but wanted to listen to the discussions. Their request was granted.

The Princess began with her preparatory remarks; she said:

"I find that the Gita has three distinct blocks, each of six chapters, and the argument seems to run in somewhat winding manner so as to be appropriate to the psychological condition of Arjuna. But before we analyse the entire thread of the argument, could you just answer my two preliminary questions?"

I smiled and said, "I am already frightened. But let me try if I can answer your questions."

"The Gita is a book of the science of Yoga. But it seems to contain three sciences, science of Yoga of Works, Karma Yoga, science of Yoga of Knowledge, Jnanayoga, and science of Yoga of Divine Love, Bhaktiyoga. Why are these yogas so-called? Why, for instance, is Karmayoga so called?"

I answered as follows:

"Yoga of Works is so called because it employs a method of utilising all the elements of works for

achieving the perfection of works. The goal is perfection of works and the method is to transform or eliminate human desire and egoism, and to transform intention, dynamism, and struggle,---all the elements that constitute works and their results.

"Yoga of knowledge is so called because the goal is to arrive at the perfect knowledge of essence and manifestation, of the relationship between multiplicity and unity, of the totality of things and of anything else that may even transcend the totality. And the method is to purify, develop, enlarge and transform our ideas and concepts, our powers of reasoning, of analysis and synthesis, our modes of knowledge, our capacities of discrimination and co-ordination, ---all the elements that constitute our processes of cognition.

"Yoga of Divine Love is so called because the goal is to arrive at the climax of unmixed bliss that can never dry up, of sweetness and purity that can never be exhausted, of oceanic love that can embrace each and all, and even the One who lies beyond everything. And the method is to purify, intensify, widen, heighten and transform all our feelings, emotions, sensations and all forms of relations of love."

The Princess said:

"Why is the Gita called the Book of Synthesis?"

I answered :

"Both in method and in results, processes of work, knowledge and emotions are united. Even if one begins with works alone, the method gradually widens out in such a way, that works culminate in knowledge and the crown of the union

of works and knowledge is perfection of love. Similarly, if we begin with knowledge, the method illumines works also, and knowledge finds its fulfillment in execution of the highest will. And where there is integration of knowledge and will, love too is purified and fortified, and the seeker seeks perfection of love in every way of his being. And if one begins by love, we find that love is the power and passion of self-delight and fills the peace of infinity and mighty will of action with ecstasy. Love fulfilled includes knowledge. And this unity also includes all the perfection of will and its work in the world. Because the Gita unites these three powers of our psychological being, the Yoga of the Gita is called the integral and synthetic Yoga."

The Princess asked:

"Can you just outline very briefly the main thread of the argument of the Gita?"

I replied :

"The argument of the Gita resolves itself into three great steps."

"The first step is Karmayoga; in one word, this Yoga consists of selfless sacrifice of works. The second step is Jnanayoga; and in a few words, this consists of self-realisation and knowledge of the true nature of the Self and the World. But this second step takes up within itself the advancing movement of the sacrifice of works, and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, and this consists of adoration and seeking of the highest Reality, the supreme impersonal Person. But in this step the knowledge

is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of Works continues. The double path becomes the triple path of knowledge, works and devotion. And, at the end, the goal is accomplished, and the goal is union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature."

The Princess asked:

"The most difficult part of the Gita is, to my mind, chapters 3 to 6. And I find a great sympathy when Arjuna complains that the answers of Krishna are very perplexing. Take, for instance, at one stage Krishna says, and this is verse 49 of the second chapter, 'Action is far inferior to the Yoga of intelligence; take, therefore, refuge in intelligence, O conqueror of riches! miserable are those who accomplish action for its fruits.'"

"Krishna continues then the exposition of the Yoga of intelligence and shows the excellent results of this Yoga. Naturally, therefore, at the commencement of the third chapter, we find Arjuna making a complaint to Krishna:

'If you take intelligence to be superior to action, O Janardana, why do you assign to me this terrible action, O Keshava?'

"How, according to you, is this question answered?"

I said :

"We have to be careful while listening to the words of the Gita. Krishna says that action is far inferior to the Yoga of intelligence. He does not say that the *Yoga of action* is far inferior to the Yoga of intelligence. Actually, Krishna explains that both these Yogas are, in a sense, optional; but

even then the Yoga of action is superior to the Yoga of intelligence.

"Why?

"For Yoga of intelligence demands complete renunciation of action. And as a matter of fact this demand can never be fulfilled so long as we live in the body. For even if we avoid all other actions, we are obliged to do those actions which will preserve the body. So, the Yoga of intelligence is required to give place in its frame to these works at least. And it prescribes that even while doing these works, one must remain unattached to them. That means that it accepts the principle of non-attachment to works. But once you accept this principle, why should it not be applied to all actions? And the moment you accept it you have accepted the Yoga of Action.

"On the other hand, the Yoga of Action as expounded by Krishna takes up the elements of the Yoga of intelligence. And it even announces that the Yoga of Action culminates in knowledge even while works continue to operate."

The Princess interrupted :

"Yes, but how is the argument for the Yoga of Action developed?"

I answered :

"The method of the Yoga of Works is to accept the continuation of Works; but in this method, one important element is added, and that is to look upon Works as *sacrifice*, as *self-giving*, as an *offering*.

"As Krishna declares :

'Because it does not accomplish works in the spirit of sacrifice, therefore, the world becomes

imprisoned in the chains of works; accomplish the works as Sacrifice, O son of Kunti, free from attachment.' (3.9)

"This is the first step of the argument. Let us analyse the situation further. Works have behind them two important propelling forces :

i) Desire for the enjoyment of the fruit of the Works; and

ii) Desire to affirm one's ego in performing actions.

"Therefore, when Gita asks us to offer works as sacrifice, its first demand is to sacrifice the fruits of works. It is in this context that we have the famous declaration: 'To action alone hast thou the right, not to its fruits.'

"Next, Gita points out that action is never done by the ego; it is done by the three modes of Nature, Prakriti. In regard to this, the Gita says:

'The three modes of Nature perform all works. With understanding clouded by the sense of ego, man thinks : "It is myself that is the doer of action." (3.27)

"Hence , the Gita asks the seeker to offer as sacrifice not only the fruits of action but the sense of doership of action and action itself.

"Next is the question as to whom actions are to be offered as sacrifice.

"And here the answer is complex. But in simple terms the answer is : 'Offer actions to the one to whom they properly belong.'

"The question is : To whom do they properly belong?

"The first answer is : 'They belong to Universal Nature, Prakriti.'

"But the higher answer is obtained when the Gita points out that Prakriti ever acts for the Soul, Purusha. And Prakriti itself offers the sacrifice of all its works to Purusha.

"Hence, it follows that we should offer our actions not to Prakriti but to the Soul.

"But what is the Soul? Is it the individual soul? Or is it Universal Soul? Or is there still some other super-soul or Being?

"The final answer of the Gita is that there is the Supreme Being from whom all action ultimately proceeds, and therefore, all actions should be offered as sacrifice to the Supreme Being, who is also called in Sanskrit "Purushottama".

"This completes the central step of Karmayoga."

The Princess said :

"But why do you not tell the entire argument? For my difficulties arise when I try to hang all the steps of the argument in one chain."

I said :

"Yes. But it will take a little longer than you expect. And I am afraid we do not have that much of time right now.

"I am sure children must be feeling very hungry."

The Prince said :

"All right, let us have a quick lunch and come back quickly."

Children were truly happy and were thankful that I had thought of them.

VI

After the lunch, we came back. But the children were rather tired and they preferred to go for a nap.

The Prince said : "We'll go straight to business. Let us start with your exposition."

I began :

"Let me recapitulate a little. And let me clarify the basic premise of Karmayoga. This will require me to bring in elements from the entire text of the Gita.

"Karmayoga is the Yoga of Works. So its basic question is : 'What is the nature of works?'

"The peculiarity of the Work is that it always produces a result.

"And behind every work there is the propulsion of energy; and at the human level, there is always a will that propels the energy, which performs a work which produces a result.

"Again, at the human level, there is behind a will a certain state of consciousness, a certain state of discriminating intelligence, which makes a choice, takes a decision and propels itself in the direction of the execution of the decision.

"The discriminating consciousness and resulting will are called in the Gita's language, "buddhi".

"Is there anything apart from Buddhi in our work?

"The Gita's answer is that Buddhi is an evolute of a vast cosmic energy which needs to be studied, if we are to deal properly and scientifically with our works.

"This Cosmic energy is called "Prakriti", universal Nature. If we analyse this energy, and if we observe it properly, we shall find that it has three modes: it has the mode of inertia (called *tamas*); it has the mode of passion, drive and struggle (called *rajas*), and it has the mode of light and satisfaction (*sattwa*).

"What is further observed is that there is also the element of *manas*, the mind which co-ordinates all the five senses of touch, smell, etc. Then there are five senses of action.---And, finally, there are five great elements, ---ether, air, fire, water and earth. In brief, the Gita says that the Prakriti is eightfold: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect (*buddhi*) and egoism.

"Now, Prakriti or cosmic energy cannot be propelled to action by itself. It begins to act and produce results only when its modes come into a condition of disequilibrium. And this disequilibrium is created only when its original state of equilibrium is disturbed. The disturbance arises from a source that is higher than Prakriti, that higher source is called Para Prakriti, higher Nature. Para Prakriti is not limited like the lower Nature to three modes. Its nature is vast, it is fully conscious, its will is creative of truths and harmonies of truths, it is full of delight.

"This higher Nature manifests cosmic powers, and each cosmic power is called a godhead. Godheads are figures of manifestation of one Supreme Divine that is above even higher Nature. This Supreme Divine also manifests itself into multiple individualities by means of the higher Nature. Each of these individualities is called "Jiva." Each Jiva is the individual being of the

Supreme Divine, capable of witnessing, controlling, sanctioning and lordship over the movement of Higher Nature. And we may repeat that behind and supervening and overtopping the godheads, jivas, and Higher Nature is the supreme Himself without whose propulsion Higher Nature cannot act, cannot manifest. And even when the Higher Nature acts, the Supreme Being remains superior to the activity of the Higher Nature, and in that superior status it remains immobile, which is called "*Akshara*" in the language of the Gita. (The mobile is called "*kshara*").

"According to the Gita, Paraprakriti (or Higher Nature) moves only by the Will of the Supreme Being, who is also called "*Purushottama*".

"Thus all action ultimately issues from Purushottama.

"This being the case, we can start from any work in which we may be engaged, and trace it ultimately to the Purushottama.

"Now, this tracing our path from our present state of activity to the Purushottama is the process of Karmayoga.

"Let us now go into some details.

"Our main problem of life is connected with the Work in which we are engaged at any given time. It is, normally, a mixed packet of effectivity and ineffectivity, pleasure and grief; it is, normally, carried out in circumstances which we wish to modify or from which we wish to come out. Or else, we wish to transform them in better or best ideal forms.

"What is the way?"

"The first key lies in "buddhi" the intelligent will, which is always behind our action and its result. If this intelligent will is quieted and purified, it begins to do better discrimination and co-ordination.

"It detects that in the operation of our works, there are two limiting factors, viz., desire and ego.

"It further detects that ego's claim that it is the doer of works is false.

"This detection weakens ego's clamour and riot.

"The intelligent will also detects that desire is quite ignorant; it does not know how to go about to get what it wants to, and what it really wants is quite small as compared to what can be obtained if desire is eliminated.

"Normally, both ego and desire revolt against these findings of the intelligent will. And there is normally a struggle and even a long battle.

"But three things can give a great help.

1. One is the help that can be obtained from the cosmic powers of the higher Nature. If our intelligent will can persuade ego and desire to become less and less assertive and make an offering of results of works, works themselves, and the sense of ego's authorship of works, then these cosmic powers (or godheads) can lift up our entire psychological being and our circumstances to newer and higher levels.

This process is called the act of sacrifice to the Gods, to the cosmic Powers, and the response of these powers.

2. The second help can come if the intelligent will can, by becoming more and more quiet,

discover the Immobile Brahman. Once that is discovered, and we begin to dwell in it,—because it is a cosmic, because it is quiet, silent and devoid of any movement, all our actions, when they enter into it, become quiet, and we become free from the burden and pressure of works and our circumstances.

3. And the third help can come to us if the intelligent will can detect the presence of jiva or its delegates or its rays of light, will and joy which are secretly present behind all our works and our circumstances. In fact, its delegates are to be found in body, in our life and in our mind and intellect. But there is also its very powerful and radical delegate, which is called in the Gita, the Soul which, even after the death of the body, remains immortal and enters into a new body. This soul can be made more and more active; and it can guide us in the process of sacrifice.

“The important point here is that it can get directly in contact with the Jiva, with the Gods, with the Higher Nature and even with the Supreme Purushottama.

“Now, if we take help of all these three aids, our entire complex of works can become modified, enlarged, purified and even miraculously transformed.

“Basic process is only one : Sacrifice of our Works.

“This process consists of an ascent; our sacrifice ascends from desire and ego and makes a threefold approach; approach to the cosmic powers, approach to the Immobile Brahman,

approach to Jiva or its delegates spread out in our ordinary psychological complex.

The results are:

- i) increase of quietude;
- ii) increase of equality;
- iii) weakening of desire and ego;
- iv) experience of the help received from cosmic powers;
- v) experience of the immobile Absolute;
- iv) experience of the Jiva or Soul;
- vii) ascent of our lower nature into the Higher Nature;
- viii). help and interventions of the Higher Nature;
- ix) help and interventions of the Supreme Being.

“When this process and these experiences continue to be repeated, we find three great results.

i) We find ourselves liberated from the hold of ego and desire; ego and desire are eliminated and destroyed; and we also find ourselves in the hands of the Supreme Being, who thereafter pours His will in us without any obstruction from our side; our work ceases to be “ours”; the Divine Work manifests automatically through us. We become vast and our work becomes universal capable of “lokasangraha”, solidarity of the progressive march of humanity. This is the result that is appropriate to Karmayoga;

ii) We become aware, and we come to possess integral knowledge of the Surpreme Being, His Higher Nature, godheads, Immobile Absolute, multiple individual souls and manifestation of the

Supreme, —and the intricate relationships of all these with our troubled world. We come to perceive all in our self and our self in all. We also come to come to know how the troubled world can be helped to come out of its troubles and distresses. This is the result appropriate to the Jnanayoga, the Yoga of knowledge.

iii) Thirdly, we become completely self-surrendered to the Supreme Being in a state of full love, full adoration, full union. This is the result appropriate to the Bhakti Yoga, Yoga of Divine Love.

“When these three results are synthesised, we can realise the significance of the great pronouncement of the Gita which Krishna declares to Arjuna towards the close of his teaching, namely, to abandon all our standards of right and wrong and to give ourselves entirely to the Supreme Divine who will manifest His perfection of Will through the instrument that is fully devoted and surrendered to Him.

“Arjuna was bewildered because he was overpowered by conflicting notions of right and wrong in which considerations of “mine” and “thine” and of duties derived from egoistic understanding of himself in his circle of life had circumscribed his thought and sentiment. When Arjuna was lifted to a higher level of vision in which the secret of the Divine Will and of the complete consecration of the entire being to that will were brought forth as in clear daylight, his problem was resolved; his crisis was overcome.”

As I finished this long statement, the Princess said:

"There still remain several questions; but my central questions have been answered. But before we stop for the day, may I put one more question?"

The Prince, however, switched off his tape-recorder and said, "I think we deserve some refreshments before we tax ourselves any further."

We all agreed. And refreshments were ordered by the Princess. Just at that time, there was a call on telephone for her from her father. She rushed to the telephone and when she came back, she announced that there were some urgent political developments and that she was required to rush back to the capital without delay.

"My Lord," cried out the Prince, "Our entire programme of the holiday has been shattered to pieces."

"Let us not be disappointed," said the Princess, "There must be some deeper significance."

She looked at me and added:

"We must discover the Divine Will and submit ourselves to it!"

The Princess left the room in order to get the arrangements made for the flight to return to the Capital. In the meantime, children had got up and come to our room. They too felt disappointed with this sudden cancellation of the holiday.

Within half an hour we were at the airport, where our plane was waiting for us. Before we boarded the plane, the Princess received another message that the reshuffle could not wait till the next morning, and that it was to be effected by that evening itself.

During our travel, there was hardly any talk. The important remark that the Princess made was that she was aware of a revolt that was brewing in the ruling Party against some of the members of the Cabinet. She felt that this must have taken a serious turn and her father must have been placed in a situation of a crisis.

By the time we reached the Capital, news had flashed that all the ministers had tendered their resignations. When we arrived at the Palace, we found that we were just in time for the swearing-in ceremony. Before the sun-set, the Princess had become the Minister for External Affairs. But this quick development was soon to be followed by another big event, a tragic event, for which none was prepared.

VII

Twenty five years have elapsed since I came back from that country. That was soon after the Princess was sworn in as the Prime Minister. Yes, it was under tragic circumstances that she came to assume that highest political office. Earlier, on that very night when she was sworn in as the Minister for External Affairs, her father was assassinated, and there was a terrible turmoil all over the country. There was evidently a conspiracy behind the assassination, and it had deep roots in the fierce opposition that was building up against the progressive policies that the Prime Minister was pursuing. These policies were affecting adversely his political rivals, plutocrats and barons of various categories who, therefore, wanted to capture power at any cost. That story is long and need not be narrated here. The major fault of the Prime Minister

was that he had underestimated the power of forces of violence, greed, corruption and selfishness. He had begun to live under the illusion that the new world of goodwill and harmony had already been established and that the only road that was to be followed was that of development, prosperity and happiness for all people of his country.

The Princess had to pass through a worst period in her life. At the initial stage, she had thought of withdrawing from the battle of life that had already erupted like a volcano. But she had told me later that she had seemed to hear the words of Krishna : "Fight. Do not calculate. The results are in My hands." She had added : "This was the occasion when I realised the meaning of Kurukshetra and why the message of the Gita is even today as fresh as it was to Arjuna." She had then narrated at length her experience of one night. She had said : "That night I was very tired and even my will had begun to show signs of weakness. I was lying in my bed, but was restless. Then I seemed to feel as though Arjuna himself was whispering into my ears : 'Protect the Right; do without fear or weakness, or faltering thy work of battle in the world; thou art the Eternal and Imperishable Spirit, thy Soul is here on its upward path to immortality. When I heard the word 'Immortality', I got up from my bed. It was past midnight and I began to walk in my bed-room with firm steps as though I was marching on the battlefield. I felt as though the spirit of Joan of Arc had entered into me. And I remembered that vision of Danton and his words: 'I am immortal, I am immortal, I am immortal.'

"I began to ask myself more seriously than ever as to why I had that vision. Yes, since the time I had studied the story of the French Revolution, I was looking for the real spirit behind that Revolution. I had studied Rousseau and Voltaire; I had studied also Mirabeau, Robespierre and several other leaders of that great epoch. And then, suddenly, when I began to study Danton and his speeches, I felt that I had discovered the real centre of that Revolution. Although history has not appreciated the importance of that great hero, I began to see clearly that Danton was the character of Revolution personified. He was the very spirit of that great time; of the great ideal of three words: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

"I did not sleep that night at all. I felt as if my mind and my body were being put on a furnace. I witnessed my will being forged by Arjuna, by Joan of Arc, by Danton. And by early morning I had decided. No, a firm resolution was vibrating in my entire being with the burning power of fire: 'I shall fight.' And thereafter not for a moment I hesitated. Of course, the battle was not to be fought with arms and weapons. But there was a constant danger of my assassination. All old politicians stood against me; many of them were close to my father; some were deeply respected by me; some were even my helpers and teachers of my early youth. Friends of yesterday had become enemies of today. But people were with me, and I could witness how the Spirit, if it wills, can blow its winds through the masses, awaken them, and lift them up on its mighty wings."

Yes, I was a daily companion of her election campaign and I had witnessed great masses

gathering behind her and pushing her to victory. She ultimately triumphed and triumphed gloriously. Within a month, she was the Prime Minister of her country.

Just before she went to the swearing-in ceremony she had come to my room and told me: "I was very happy when I was made Minister for External Affairs. But today I am quite different. I think I am beginning to understand Krishna's description of equality. I realise that it is not indifference, it is not resignation to the inevitable, it is not stoicism, it is not philosophical neutrality. It is something quite positive, high, uplifting. It makes me look at the world with fresh eyes as though I am in the 'sky.'"

I was deeply gratified and felt an ineffable calm.

Soon thereafter, however, I left her country to join my Chairman, who was at that time at Calcutta. After narrating to him the entire story of what I had experienced during those days of the battle of the Princess, I expressed to him my wish to retire. He was shocked. He said, "But I thought that you not only believe in Karmayoga but are also practising Karmayoga. How can you think of retirement?"

"You are right," I said, "I should have used a better word." I then explained to him what was uppermost in my mind. I said: "I am convinced that India has a great role to play in the emergence of a new world order. India has or rather had knowledge of the Spirit. But it has neglected Matter. The West has the knowledge of Matter but has neglected Spirit. Both have become bankrupt in their own ways. Both can be replenished by

each other. But who will take the lead? I think it is for India to come forward to bring about the real synthesis of the East and the West. And this can be done only if India can, first, recover its knowledge of the spirit, and second, if it can develop that knowledge in the context of the advancing western knowledge of science and technology. In these tasks, I can make my own humble contribution. Because of my background, I feel that I should devote all my time to work on these two tasks. I need to undertake a long programme of research. I want to study and practise and realise our spiritual knowledge, our integral knowledge, what the Gita calls *Jnana Vijnana*, the knowledge both of essence and of manifestation. And then I want to write. I should like to demonstrate through my books that spirituality is not a matter merely of attitude, merely a matter of piety, or of goodwill; I would like to show that spirituality is matter of knowledge, that it is a systematic knowledge, it is verifiable knowledge, it is progressive knowledge, and that on account of the long history and tradition of this knowledge, it has stood the test of time and can even open the doors of profounder knowledge both of the spirit and of matter. It is also quite possible that this research might lead to the discovery of new methods and technologies of both spiritual and technological and material advancement. It might even teach how spirituality can embrace the totality of life and how materialism can open its gates into the realms of the supra-physical and invisible reality. Only then shall we be able to speak meaningfully of the synthesis of science and spirituality. I have witnessed the

contemporary crisis from close quarters, and I think it can be resolved effectively only by integral spirituality and an unprecedented spiritual revolution that benefits not only the strongest in spirit but even those, as Krishna says, who are weakest and even those who are wallowing in deep ignorance. Humanity as a whole has to be lifted up. Flood gates of knowledge are to be opened for all. Such is the task that I am visualising. I feel I have a call to give myself to these tasks."

My Chairman was still unhappy. "But how can you leave me?" he asked.

I could not give a reply. Then he said, "All right. I think I will have to yield. But tell me where you would like to stay. I know that you have no home, and that you have all along lived like a pilgrim. I shall make all arrangements for you. And you will have not to worry about your material needs and comforts. You are my adviser for life, wherever you may be."

I felt deeply happy. I thanked him for his kindness. Then I said, "I wish to be near Brahmaputra, somewhere on its banks so that I can watch its mighty currents and listen to those inspirations of the heaven that they constantly carry. I want to hear directly from the waters the sacred words of Agni, of the Veda and of the Upanishads."

A beautiful spot was selected, and my Chairman got a beautiful cottage constructed for me on that spot. He personally accompanied me to that cottage and left me there. The entire area around the cottage has developed over the last twenty five years. A big colony has sprung up with numerous cottages, conference rooms and

various other facilities for people to come and stay in these beautiful surroundings as visitors or as permanent residents. Much of my time is being spent in meeting a number of visitors daily, and apart from my inner work and writing, I have a huge correspondence and my Chairman has provided to me an efficient secretariat.

The Princess, too, has visited me several times. Twice she had brought her family and a few members of her Cabinet. And my correspondence with her has never stopped, nor has it been ever interrupted. Just this morning, I have received a letter from her. Normally, she writes very brief letters. But this one is rather very long. She has written:

"I am writing this letter with a specific purpose. But let me explain it with a long preface.

"Since my early youth I have been trying to understand the nature of the contemporary world. That is the reason why I read World History, political theory, economics, law and international affairs. My study shows that humanity is passing through unusual times. My question was as to what was the precise nature of this unusualness. I have been discussing this question with a number of people. If you recall, we had spent several hours during our very first meeting in Geneva on this very question. Then during the last twenty five years, I have not only been a witness to the turmoil of political life but also have been its participant. The books that you have been sending have been of great utility to me. Some of the wisest leaders of India have, I believe, been able to diagnose where exactly lies the maladies of our times. They have also shown how these maladies can be cured.

When you had first spoken to me about spiritual revolution, I had hardly understood it. But now I feel that is the only way, although it is the most difficult way.

"In my own country, people are afraid of the word "spiritual", as I was myself once afraid of it. We have tried everything in our own country all that is being offered today by the best minds.

(i) We have tried to bring about a perfect economic society and adopted the democratic cultus of the average man. Our economists offered a rational and scientific formula to achieve this goal. (ii) Secondly, several of my advisers presented a scenario in which society can be united through unanimity of mind and life. And they did not hesitate to suggest sacrifice of liberty of thought and expression. Even today, in spite of recent collapse of communism in the USSR, a few of my advisers feel that without compulsion of some kind by which people begin to think in terms of unanimity, society cannot be held together. (iii) A third set of advisers have insisted that we should develop an enlightened reason and will of the normal man in the expectation that he would voluntarily consent to a new socialist life by subordinating his ego for the sake of the right arrangement of the life of the community. They have further advised that reason and will can be enlightened by the aid of two agencies : the agency of a greater and better mental knowledge and the agency of a new social machinery which will solve everything by the magic of the social machine cutting humanity into a better pattern.(iv) There is also a fourth set of advisers who believe that society can achieve cohesion only by means of one common

religion whose appeal can influence not only reason and will but also vital and physical habits of man.

"I have given a great deal of thought over all these four alternative propositions. Being uncertain myself as to what exactly is the right solution, and being incapable of implementing what you have called "spiritual revolution", I have been a tool of circumstances and pressure of immediate advisers who have triumphed temporarily in imposing their views. I have watched, to use the language of the Gita, the machine of prakriti, I have experienced how prakriti is inexorable, how the three gunas (sattva, rajas and tamas) determine all the activities. I have virtually experienced how my ego is nothing but a puppet in the cosmic dance of prakriti. I have often remembered Krishna's words which describe how an individual is mounted on a revolving machine and how helpless is the individual on that machine.

"No, I do not think there are any simple or ready-made basis of unity, mutuality and harmony for the common life of the people. If man consisted only of one part, if he were only a material being, if he were only an economic man, if he could live merely by bread, there could, of course, be a simple and straightforward solution. But the essential point is that man is a complex being. He lives simultaneously on the physical plane, vital plane, mental plane and spiritual plane, even though he might not experience all the planes with equal force of vividity. The main point is that man's satisfaction cannot arrive unless he constantly progresses, and this progress has to be both horizontal and vertical. Mankind has gone on progressing, although in a circle most often, but today, his complexity has

become so great that he has no instrument by which this complexity can be comprehended and dealt with adequately. The central problem is to provide a constant impetus to man to progress and yet to keep the society cohesive and integrated. If, for the sake of argument, we may concede that by means of compression and compulsion, by means of clipping the flights of freedom of thought and life, we could bring about uniformity in society and some kind of integrity and cohesion, we shall find that after a brief period of apparent sunshine, clouds will gather and darkness will spread; springs of life will dry up and there will be a swift or slow decadence. Even if, for the sake of argument, we may concede that reason can become enlightened by means of education, even then after a temporary period of sophistication and multiple fashions of ideas, there will arise in the society the emergence of unreason and poisonous forces to ruin the very institutions of education and ultimately of the society.

"There is too much of unreason in humanity, and education in right ideas can have only a negligible impact on the unreason. I am constrained to come to the conclusion that something else is needed. Is that to be religion? But the immediate question is which religion? The dream of exclusive religions to occupy the whole globe and to bring about a millennium seems to be a vain chimera. You will recall that during our first meeting I had declared myself to be an atheist; it is only when I understood the distinction between religion and spirituality that I could enter into the portal of divine life. But divine life is something quite

different from what is being dreamt by exclusive religions.

"Through your help I came to read the Gita and thereafter I have read a lot. I have also studied your recent works. Why was I greatly attracted by Gita? I was greatly struck when Krishna says that every way is His way, that every offering, every sacrifice made on any altar is an offering or a sacrifice made to the divine who is not limited to the four corners of a book or imprisoned in the fetters of a certain number of revelations or sacred words. Again, the Gita does not prescribe any rituals or ceremonies; it does not appoint any Priest; it does not erect any Church. It does not limit itself to any particular community; the whole humanity, with all its diversity, with all the freedom of approach is the field of action of the divinity that we find in the Gita. Gita itself prescribes transcendence of what is contained in the book that we call Gita. As Krishna says, 'As they approach me, so do I respond to them.'

"My conclusion is not that the Gita should be the sole basis for the solution of the problems of the world. My conclusion is that only by the full emergence of the Soul, only by the full manifestation of the native light and power of Spirit, can we hope to move in the right direction to solve the maladies of our present time.

"I feel convinced that the present crisis of humanity is evolutionary in character. Man today is required to evolve beyond what he is today. His complexity is sharpened in some directions, arrested in others, and blunted in still others. There has to be a true integration of his complexity, a

balanced development of all parts of his being, physical, vital, mental and spiritual.

"You will recall the Agenda of which I had spoken to you as far back as 1967 at Geneva. I had spoken of the Agenda for human unity and change of human nature. After so many years, I should like to reiterate that Agenda but with renewed and enriched emphasis. I have learned that even one step forward takes several years. After twenty five years of constant efforts, aided by what I can now call explicitly the divine light, I have found that there is an increasing number of individuals who are feeling the need to be free from ordinary notions of politics and religion and all other narrow concepts of life. I have visited at least ninety countries with a deliberate intention to meet such individuals and to establish some kind of contact in the battle that is being waged today for the birth of a new world of harmony and unity and fraternity, which is being opposed ferociously by the old world.

"Let me now come to the main point of my letter. I feel that the greatest hope for the future can be built only on children and youth. If we really want unity of mankind, and if we want not only ordinary change of human nature, but spiritual change of human nature, then we must address ourselves to the children and youths of the world. I intend, therefore, to build up an international union of children and youths during the next year. I have many plans to bring children and youths together from all parts of the world from time to time and provide them the best possible facilities through which they can dream freely and joyously of a new world and develop

in their own fellowship the true vibrations of the sovereignty of the Spirit which allows opulent development of the mind and the body.

“Let me not say more than what I have said already. But I shall now like to invite you to join us here and be with us to guide the formation of the International Union of Children and the Youths.

“I know that you are by your inner nature, Swabhava and Swadharma, a teacher, a teacher who does not teach but who is a friend, extending constantly his helping hand to whoever cares to hold that hand.

“I am soon coming to India to meet you and to extend this invitation personally to you. I am sure you will not disappoint me.”

I have read this letter several times and I feel truly happy with the conclusions to which the Princess has reached. On my part, I have handed over her invitation to the indwelling Divinity, our Master and Friend. And as He wills, so will it be.

LAW AND LIFE

I

My very first encounter with Law was at once embarrassing, instructive and fruitful. I was seeking admission to the Bombay Law College and I had to pass through an interview. It was 12th June 1951, and the interview began at 10.30 a.m.

"Why have you chosen to study Law ?" This was the first question that Professor Chitle, the Principal of the College, threw at me.

Frankly speaking, I did not have a clear and convincing reply. Basically, I had only two alternatives: to become a teacher or to become a lawyer. It seemed to me that I had a pre-dominant inclination to become a teacher; but the profession of teaching gave no prospects of financial prosperity. On the other hand, it was difficult for me to confess even to myself that I was looking for monetary success. This confession, which was pressing upon my conscience, was hurting me. I was trained and nourished by my intensive studies in Sanskrit literature,- the subject of my preference and specialisation. How often I had condemned in debates in my College the idea of the modern commercial barbarism, which values nothing as much as success in competition for money! Man does not live by bread alone, I had argued. Man is a rational animal; nay, man is a moral and spiritual being, -I had affirmed again and again.

This was my constant theme, and I used to cite freely from the Veda, from the Upanishad, from the Gita. How then could I say that I wanted to study Law for securing better equipment for monetary success ?

"I have studied a good deal of Dharmashastras," I said and paused a little. "I want to understand how the present society, in contrast to our ancient society, is organised and controlled by institutions created by modern legal system."

I knew that I was rationalising to some extent, but I could not help it.

Professor Desai, a member of the Board of interview, smiled derisively. But the Chairman, Mr. Chitle, came to my help. He said : "This is an excellent motive."

Before he could proceed further, he was interrupted by a third member of the Board, Professor Bapat. He was pensive and seemed as though he was speaking from the height of some ethereal heaven. He said: "You would have been better equipped if you had graduated in Economics Hons. or Political Hons. Students of English Hons. or Philosophy Hons., too, do quite well in Law. I grant that you have done well in your Sanskrit Hons. Let me see. Yes, you have stood first class first in the University. But are you sure that you will do well in Law? Why don't you pursue your Sanskrit studies? Do your M.A., go in for Ph.D.; and you will become an excellent Professor!"

I seemed to have reached a breaking-point. I felt shaky. There was a special reason. But I gave

a somewhat diversionary reply: "I have done philosophy, too, as a subsidiary subject."

"Not bad at all," said Professor Bapat. He continued. "Philosophy is a great discipline of logical thinking; and Law demands rigorous application of logic. But the question is as to where you will be more useful to yourself and to society. Given your background, I would suggest that you should go in for M.A. and continue your studies in Sanskrit."

I felt really cornered. I felt embarrassed, and I was obliged to make an explicit statement which was a sort of a confession.

"I *am* going to do my M.A. But I want to do at the same time LL.B also", I said.

"But that is precisely what we will not allow," said Professor Desai with a tone of rigidity.

The Chairman, however, was sympathetic. He asked me: "Mr. Bhatt, why don't you make a straight choice? We have a rule that those who are admitted to this College will not be allowed to study or take up any other course. Law is a vast and a difficult discipline. A good lawyer needs to have a very wide background and thorough grasp of a number of subjects. We do not want students to be divided in their attention. If you opt for Law, you must live in the realm of Law and in the realm of those subjects which are directly related to Law, namely, sociology, economics, politics, business administration, company affairs, etc. You will have to occupy yourself with the questions of Capital and Labour, of national and international economy, business organisation, institutions of property, Government and such

other subjects. And I would also expect you to be acquainted with international organisations and the basic themes of peace, unity, human rights. And have you taken interest in progressive movements, - movements of equality and war against exploitation? I do not know if you are aware of women's movements and youth movements. No, we want you to make a choice. If we admit you here, you will have to give me a written undertaking that you will do no other course. Are you ready to do so ?"

I was face to face with the conflict between Freedom and Law. "Must law always clip the wings of freedom?" I asked rather impulsively. "I am interested in both Sanskrit and Law; and I can see that both can help each other."

"You may be right," said the Chairman. Then he added with emphasis: "But we have to go strictly by our rules; law is law; and you will have to comply with it. Make a choice between M.A. and LL.B. You cannot do both at the same time. Of course, you can finish M.A. first and then come here for law. There will be no difficulty."

I did not reply.

The Chairman grew soft and looked at me with kind eyes. He said: "Look, Mr. Bhatt, you are a good student; you have good potentiality; I will admit you to this College. From your side you will agree to give up the idea of doing M.A. at the same time. Meet me tomorrow at 10 a.m. at my office."

The next candidate was called in and I had no alternative but to leave.

I was deeply disappointed, and my mind and heart were in a state of turmoil, even of revolt. But as I was climbing down the stairs of the College, I could see clearly that I was upset because I was upset. How often I had tried to teach my mind to remain quiet even in trying situations! I had to confess that I was feeling angry, and I could not appreciate the rush of anger. Just on the previous day, Vishuddha and I had discussed the psychology of anger, and Vishuddha had argued that all anger proceeds from desire, which is the enemy of our true inner Self. He had said that anger is the result of frustration of desire. I remembered the famous quotation that he had cited from the Bhagvad Gita: "When man dwells on objects in his mind, attachment to them arises. From attachment arises desire and from desire arises anger. From anger arises delusion; from delusion loss of memory, from loss of memory destruction of discrimination, and from destruction of discrimination the individual himself perishes."¹

I had agreed with Vishuddha, whom I had always admired for his equanimity. I had never seen him ruffled or angry. His purity of heart and mind was exemplary. He was only ten years older than I, and yet I had begun to look upon him as my friend, philosopher and guide. I had come to know him for the last two years, and during these years I always turned to him when I was in difficulty. I thought of him at that moment and decided to go straight to meet him. I knew that he would be at "Kaivalya Dham", where he taught Yoga to various categories of people. Kaivalya

Dham was not far from the Law College, and I took the auto-bus and reached Kaivalya Dham within fifteen minutes.

Vishuddha was somewhat surprised at my sudden visit, but he understood that I must be having a special problem. I explained to him in detail all the thoughts and feelings that were harassing me. After listening to me, he said: "Mahesh, there are several threads in your being which have become intertwined with each other. Your desire for material prosperity is only one of these threads. But at a deeper level, there are questions which relate to your inner nature, your own perception of what you want to be and the process by which you can become what you want to be. To use the words of the Gita, these are the questions that can be answered by inquiring into Swabhava, Swadharma, Kartavyam Karma, and Niyatam Karma.¹ These questions have their root not only in your heart and mind, not only in your ego, but in your free Spirit. And they have relationship with the source both of your free Spirit and the Universe. Each individual has a specific role and place in the world, each has a movement appropriate to the rhythm of his inner development, and each has to discover his true soul. In other words, the questions that harass you can be resolved only by Karma Yoga. And the most

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1. Swabhava, process of nature emerging from the Self.
Swadharma, law of development of inner nature.
Kartavyam Karma, prescribed action, duty, action emerging from inmost will.
Niyatam Karma, action guided by law, action governed by demands of Karma Yoga.

effective method of Karma Yoga is the state of equality."

My mental agitation was getting quieter, and although what Vishuddha said was not entirely new, I felt as though a fresh breeze had begun to blow in my mind. Vishuddha asked me softly: "Would you like to remain quiet for some time? I shall withdraw from here leaving you alone. You know the Raja Yogic practice. Look, here is what Gita describes that practice."

Vishuddha drew out from his book-shelf a copy of the Gita and gave it to me. He said, "Read the sixth chapter, and particularly verses 11-15."

Vishuddha left the room, and closed it from outside so that nobody could disturb me. I was now quieter and read those verses which were recommended by Vishuddha.

Then I began to turn the pages of the Gita and undertook the exercise of collecting in my note-book all the verses which pertain to the theme of equality of consciousness. "Samatvam Yoga Uchyate", equality is the name of Yoga, I noted. Why is Yoga identified with equality? I began to reflect on this question, and as I was jotting down verse after verse from the Gita, I began to perceive that equality is not only an attitude of the mind, but is also a state of knowledge. It seemed to me that it is in the state of equality that different aspects of truth can be perceived and appreciated in their fullness and in their complementarity. It is, I felt, when all aspects of the truth are seen squarely that the problem can find a true basis for solution. I went on copying all the important

verses which seemed to enlighten me and induce into me a state of equanimity.¹

I did not know when exactly I fell in a deep state of intensity and how long I remained in that state. It was similar to a state of sleep, for I had become oblivious of surroundings; and yet I was intensely awake inwardly. As I came out of that state of trance, I could see clearly in my mind a short statement which had summarised with sharpness and remarkable brevity those questions that were harassing me. There was intense quietude, and I wrote down on a piece of paper that statement which seemed to have been imprinted on my mind. I wrote as follows :

"My basic question is: Is legal profession appropriate to my inner nature and law of my self-development? Is it appropriate to my *swabhāva* and *swadharma*?"

"Is my study of advanced Sanskrit appropriate to my inner nature and law of my self-development? Is it appropriate to my *swabhava* and *swadharma* ?"

"Is there a conflict between the two ?"

"If there is no conflict, why should not both be pursued simultaneously ?"

"If there is a conflict between the two, which one is preferable for me ?"

"There is an economic aspect also: If I do M.A., I will get fellowship and free stay in the hostel of my College where I will be doing M.A. If I do LL.B alone, I shall lose both these

1. I am appending in the appendix all the verses that I have jotted down at that hour of my intense search.

advantages. Moreover, Law College has no facility of hostel accommodation, nor does it award any fellowship for LL.B. students."

When I wrote down this statement, my mind became absolutely quiet. I experienced tranquillity. I did not know how long I remained in that state, but it was two o'clock in the afternoon when Vishuddha opened my room. He had brought a plate of fruits and a glass of milk.

He smiled and said, "You must be very hungry now." While he was placing the plate and the glass on my table, his eyes fell on what I had just written down on that piece of paper.

He said: "Can I see it?"

"Certainly. It is the result of my meditation, which has clarified my mind."

After reading it, Vishuddha said, "When the problem is clear, solution can never be far."

He smiled again and left the room, saying, "Remain here as long as you like; but I have to attend to a number of young people who have come to see me. We shall meet again tomorrow."

I remained in that room till very late and left for my hostel when the sun was just setting and sinking into the vast ocean, which I could see through the window of Vishuddha's room.

My agitation had really ceased, and when I went to sleep late at night, I had a feeling that my meeting with Principal Chitle the next day would turn out to be crucial for my life.

It was exactly 10 a.m. when I entered into the room of Principal Chitle. Before I could greet and take my seat, the Principal said: "Mr. Bhatt, I won't be able to give you more than two minutes.

I just want to know if you have brought the written undertaking that you will give all your time exclusively to the pursuit of your studies in this college. You can just hand over to me that undertaking and meet the Registrar who has been told to grant you admission and register your name. As you know, the College opens on 20th June, exactly after one week."

For a moment, I became immobile. It seemed to me that I was given no opportunity to explain. I had with me the note that I had written down the previous day after my meditation. I took it out and presented it to him. Then I added: "Sir, my basic question is psychological. I want to be convinced that I must pursue legal studies and nothing else. I care very much for a right decision based upon valid premises, which, in this case, relate to the ideals of Swabhava and Swadharma, - the ideals which I cherish deeply on account of my Sanskritic studies. I shall be very grateful for your help."

Principal Chitle heard me attentively and then read my note. He lifted his eyes and gave me a look of deep understanding. He said, "Your note explains to me a great deal. But I shall need to explain. And I do not have the needed time. What to do?"

"Please do find the time, Sir," I pleaded.

"I am somewhat unorthodox," he said with a soft smile. He thought for a while and asked me, "Can you come to my residence this evening at 9? I spend three hours in my library daily after the dinner, and if that is convenient to you, I could discuss with you at that time."

I was greatly comforted. I said, "I can come at any time. And 9 o'clock this evening suits me very well. In fact, I want to learn a great deal from you, and this will give me a great opportunity to do so. Thank you very much, Sir."

When I came out of the office of Mr. Chitle, I was in a state of inexpressible relief. I climbed down the stairs quickly to catch the auto-bus for Kaivalya Dham. I wanted to share my sense of relief with Vishuddha.

When I reached Kaivalya Dham, I was told that Vishuddha had gone out for some urgent work and would not return before 2 p.m. As I had nothing else to do, I decided to wait for Vishuddha in his room. I wanted to be quiet, and I thought that his room had all the atmosphere for quietude and deep reflection. But as I entered into Vishuddha's room, I found there a young man absorbed in reading a book, which he had evidently taken out of the shelf of Vishuddha's library. That young man looked at me sharply and said, "I am sure you have come to meet Vishuddha. He is not here now, but if you have patience as I have, you are welcome to wait for him."

I felt that he was, to some extent, provocative. But in reply, I smiled and said, "Sure, I can wait for him. Vishuddha has taught me the art of waiting. He has said that when you are required to wait, think that God has given you the time to think of Him. This is what I do, and if you do not mind, I shall sit here quietly. I promise you that I will not disturb you."

"You seem to be one of the disciples of Vishuddha. You know, I am not his disciple. I am in a lower category! I am his boyhood friend.

My name is Balwant, and if I mistake not, you must be Mahesh Bhatt!" He laughed mischievously.

I was really surprised and asked him: "How do you know my name?"

"Yes, I do. Vishuddha has spoken to me about you from time to time, and although I have never met you before, I could easily make an inference from the descriptions that have been given to me about you."

By this time I had taken my seat, and not intending to talk any further, I began to look at the ocean through the window.

But Balwant was irrepressible. He drew his chair near mine and said: "You are seeking admission to the Law College. Why do you want to join the company of those who sell their intellectual power for earning bread?" I was truly startled. "How do you mean?" I asked.

"I do not mean offence to you. Please forgive me for my bluntness. I am rather sarcastic, but, believe me, I have no malice. I am much improved during the last few days, and I would have been more blunt than I am today if I had to meet you, say, a month ago. During this one month, a real change has occurred in my outlook and even in my temperament. I had my first turning-point at the age of 15, and now I have the second turning-point at the age of 30. I think that I should introduce myself to you more properly."

I thought I had made a mistake in deciding to wait for Vishuddha. I had expected to remain quiet, but I had run into this talkative man. But somehow, I felt charmed by this young man, his

frankness, and his disarming smile. I showed my eagerness to listen to him. He started.

"I am a teacher, an ordinary teacher, in a secondary school. Actually, I wanted to be a teacher in the primary school because children in the primary school are as frank as I am, and I feel the warmth of their innocence, their curiosity, and their sense of wonder. But the authorities found that I was too qualified to be a teacher in a primary school. You know, my father wanted me to be a very educated man. He wanted me to be a lawyer."

"Why ?"

"Because he himself is a lawyer. Something like what we have in our outdated caste system. If your father is a Brahmin, you are a Brahmin; if your father is a goldsmith, you are a goldsmith. If your father is a potter, you are a potter. People do not take into account your inclination, your aspiration, your temperament, your innate faculties, your real means of fulfillment."

I was truly delighted to hear these words. Was he not echoing some of the ideas with which I was entangled at that critical moment of my life? Was he not talking about swabhava, swadharma? I became relaxed, and began to like this man. I got curious to know more about him. Balwant continued :

"So, I had to study Law, as you are now intending to do. I do not know your motive. But I studied Law only because after a lot of resistance, both active and passive, to my father's pressure, I had to yield. And I studied Law. Then my father wanted me to join him in his chamber. But

I asked him: "What if I join your chamber? I shall be just like you. People will call me very clever, I shall win many debates and shall earn as much as you do. May be, even much more. But so what?"

"That is very interesting," I said. "What did you do then? "

Balwant continued: "I said, 'Father, you know I respect you. But if you do not mind, let me tell you that you do not understand me. I am by nature a thinker. It is true that thinking is not considered a profession in the present society. Our society is job-oriented. It expects you to be captured in a slot. Society has created many slots in the form of jobs; and you have to be ready to be caught in one of the slots. And without your being imprisoned, this society gives you no wages, and, therefore, no sustenance. Father, please allow me, therefore, sometime for me to think. I need a long period to think over many problems that the society of today is facing.' I said that I wanted to study history, sociology, political science, economics, philosophy and literature. I also wanted to be acquainted with modern developments in science. I told him that my study of law, which I had undertaken under duress, had ultimately benefited me greatly because it gave me a concrete sense of our social institutions and even the philosophy of civilisation. I confessed that I was grateful to him for having pressed me to study law. But I begged him that I should be allowed to study M.A. and that if I did very well, I should even be allowed to go in for doctorate. I must tell you that my father is somewhat conventional, but very kind at heart. At times, he can even be

progressive and revolutionary. He relented and allowed me to join M.A. and I chose History as my special subject. I enjoyed this study. By the time I finished my M.A., I found that I was growing into, what may be called, a social reformer!"

He laughed. He asked me if I was not feeling bored with his monologue. I protested and said that I was enjoying every word that he was speaking and learning something very useful. He continued:

"Just as there is no profession of thinking in our society, even so there is no profession of social reform either. If you become a social reformer, as some must, you have to consent to the life of poverty and starvation. That's a pity, but that is how our society is structured. In any case, I had begun to feel that not only our own society, but the entire humanity was passing through a great period of transition. I am sure you have heard people talking of transitions, and in a sense, humanity has always been in a period of transition. But the sense that I had and have is that the present state of transition is something unfathomable, multi-dimensional and incalculable in its import. To tell you the truth, I had come to feel that humanity was getting increasingly dehumanized and that we had reached a climax of a conflict between fetters of bondage and freedom. I was, therefore, turning away sharply from institutions, from authorities, from establishments, in search of effective means of the flights of freedom of inner spirit of man. I know that you are a Dhârma Shastri and you know a great deal about soul and spirit and I will not be

able to define as clearly as you can what freedom of spirit means. But I know my own experience. I have enjoyed freedom in my own way, and I feel as though there is in me something like a true individuality which pours out in creativity when I am truly free. Well, this is the kind of freedom which I would like everyone in society to experience and enjoy. I want to imagine a state of social existence where no institution crushes the freedom of the individual. Impelled by this aspiration, I began to study the story of Revolutions, and I wrote a thesis for my doctorate on the theme of "Modern Revolutions". I enjoyed thoroughly my research work, and the Ph.D. degree that was awarded to me was nothing as compared to the great joy I had in conducting my research. My faculties of thought and imagination were exercised to the extreme point of their limitations, and I gained some kind of clarity in regard to the maladies of the present state of humanity and even, to some extent, of how these maladies can be cured."

I was feeling very interested and I thought that my own aspirations, although not as articulated as his, were not dissimilar. I felt happy to be drowned in his narration. I asked him: "What, in your view, are the maladies of the present day and how can they be cured?"

"No, I won't tell you all that. It is a very long story, and once I enter into it, I would not like to stop in the midway. I am opposed to half-way houses both in my talks and in my works. If you want to hear me on this subject, you must find at least five hours at a stretch, and I will talk to you. But, one very simple thing that I can

readily tell you is that we need to work on our children. They will build a new society, if they are rightly inspired and educated. And that is why when I finished my Ph.D., I wanted to join a primary school or even a Kindergarten as a teacher. My father opposed the idea, since he felt that I was going to waste my faculties, my time, my energy, everything, if I shut myself in a small corner of the world occupying myself with a few children in a small school. I told him that all depends upon how you look upon Space and Time. Everyone works in a small corner in the world, and everyone has to concentrate on an extremely small area for producing any effective result. Even the President of America has to sit in a small corner in his White House Office, and he ,too, has to concentrate on a small desk and on a small piece of paper. Only people call it big. But the eyes fixed higher above in the sky may hardly cast even a cursory glance on it. I told my father, 'Every work is important, whether you call it big or small; the question is whether one has a fixed goal, measured the means, and determined to work single-pointedly on those means.'

"Excellent," I cried out, "You have succinctly summarized the entire meaning of Karma Yoga. You are a Yogi."

"Nothing of the sort, Mahesh! But since you speak of Yoga, let me tell you that since I am a friend of Vishuddha right from the time when he was a boy, I have deeply enquired into the real meaning of Yoga and some of my questions which still remain unanswered are related to Yoga. I have just come back from Tiger Hills. I am sure you have heard of the Tiger Hills. Haven't you?"

"Yes, I have; that is where Vishuddha lived for many years with his teacher," I said.

"That's right. I had gone to meet Gurudev, and it was an experience which has thrown me straight into the heart of Yoga. How much are you interested in Yoga?"

"Well, to my mind, all life is Yoga, and I would like to devote every minute of my life to Yoga. Three years ago, I started my journey, - my journey of intellectual enquiry," I said. But I stopped narrating my story and said, "I shall tell you at length later what happened to me, how I conducted my enquiry and what conclusions I reached. I shall tell you how I came to be convinced intellectually of the existence of God and how I decided to devote my life to the task of realisation of God. I have since been studying various systems of Yoga, and I have been reading the Gita repeatedly, as I find such a wideness of spirit in the teaching of the Gita. And, surprisingly, for every question in my practical development of Yoga, I find an illuminating answer in it. Right now, I have come to this question: "What is my specific work in the world? What is the truth of individuality? Is individual real or illusory? Is individual a mere cog in the machine of the world or is there something in the individual which can lift him up from the machinery of the world and embrace freely the whole world and yet work effectively precisely at the point at which he freely determines to work in accordance with his own inmost nature and inmost law of action?"

"Very interesting. Tell me a little more about your questions," said Balwant.

"But I want to hear you first. You were telling me about your Ph.D., your love for social reform, your diagnosis of world problems, your solutions, and your determination to work on children. All this is extremely interesting. Tell me all about your work and then about your meeting with Gurudev. Tell me all that."

"Yes, I shall tell you all that and much more. But the way in which you have formulated your questions is so refreshing. I really want to listen to you. Tell me more about your questions", Balwant insisted.

I felt greatly encouraged. I said, "You are perhaps aware of that famous sentence in the Gita:

"All is determined by Nature; of what avail is the effort to control ?"

"At the same time, the Gita says that the self is the enemy of the self and the self is the friend of the self. And it further says that by the self one should control the self. This means that there is a lower self and there is a higher self and that there is in the higher self a Will which can rise above Prakriti, Nature, and can control the lower self. I am in search of that Free Will, and I am in search of that kind of work which will be in harmony with that Free Will. I think that when the Gita speaks of Swabhava and Swadharma, it really means to refer to the movement of Free Will emerging from the inner self, from the higher self, Swabhava, and to the law of development of the nature of the inner self, Swadharma. Right now, I am knocking the doors of my own inner being to ask : "What is my true nature? What is my true work? And what is the right law of my work?"

"Excellent," cried out Balwant. I am delighted to hear this. I can now realise how both of us seem to be sailing in the same boat, and although you are much too younger to me, I can see how mature you are in your quest."

"Truly, I feel delighted to talk to you. But now, please continue with your story. I want to hear more and more about you," I said.

Balwant took up the thread of his story. He said, "Our system of education is stupid in many ways. If you are a Ph.D., you can teach in the College or in the University, but you are debarred from teaching children in the Kindergarten or primary school. You cannot teach even in the secondary school! It was after my intensive effort that I could persuade the authorities of my present school to employ me to teach secondary students. While making a concession to me, they took pains to make it clear to me that they would pay me only what is payable to a graduate. They were comforted when I told them that my aim was teaching and not earning money beyond a very ordinary level. This is how I got settled in my present employment, and while my work with children is extremely rewarding, I am finding out how our entire system of education has rendered our schools into veritable prison houses. The very first thing that is denied in our schools is freedom. Everything is compulsory. Courses are compulsory, classes are compulsory, time-table is compulsory, lectures are compulsory,- everything is compulsory."

"Could you tell me, if you are able to succeed in realising your ultimate aim?" I asked.

He replied, "Fruits of teaching are intangible. You cannot measure your success or failure over a short period of time. It is only when these children will grow up into adults, when they will be required to fight the battle of life, that, if I have the chance to observe them, I might be able to judge whether the atmosphere that I am giving them had helped them to grow into that kind of manhood which is really required by our times. It is only then that I would be able to say whether I have succeeded in my ultimate aim or not. Perhaps, I will never be in a position to observe these children when they have grown up into adults. But how does that matter? One can only do one's best. Fruits are never in your hands. Isn't that the famous declaration of the Gita?"

I nodded and said softly, "To action alone hast thou the right, but not to its fruits."

Balwant continued:

"But teaching is not the only activity in which I am engaged. Now that I have come closer to you during this brief conversation, there is no harm in whispering into your ears the nature of my secret activities. We have formed a society of like-minded people. Most of them are young men and women. We are all convinced that the present world order is unjust and untenable and that there is a need of radical changes in every domain of life and at every level of our existence. We are convinced that none of the current ideologies has the radical vision of the goal that we need to put before the world. We believe that neither democracy nor socialism nor communism can meet the needs of justice, can liberate human spirit, can bring man to his fulfillment. What we call

democracy today is not democratic democracy; it is only parliamentary democracy which easily degenerates into plutocracy. What we call socialism is a state machinery to control and even tyrannize; what we call communism is nothing but bureaucratic comradeship. Rulers of society, whether in democratic society or in totalitarian set-up, are all alike, they are perpetuators of status quo, and many of them are corrupt and wicked manipulators. Legislators are, to use the words of Kathopanishad, like the blind men led by the blind; our lawyers who should guide legislators and judges, —are they fulfilling their role? And the real captains of our society are those selfish rich men whose main purpose is to make more money; there are, of course, exceptions; and the rest of the members of the society are just carrying out their duties, - more or less indifferently, realising more and more as years pass by that they can hardly influence the organisation of social life. We feel that all government of man by man by power of compulsion is evil, a violation, a suppression or deformation of all natural principle of good which otherwise will grow and prevail for the perfection of the human race. We question the social principle itself and feel that it is liable to a sort of a fall of man from a natural to an unnatural, an artificial principle of living."

Balwant was speaking with passion, and I did not think it proper to interrupt him. He continued:

"Don't you see that everywhere the pressure of society on the individual is increasing? Don't you agree that pressure unduly curbs necessary elements of human perfection? All that I am saying

may be dismissed as advocacy of anarchism, evils of which are very well known. No, I do not speak of that kind of anarchism, which claims the right of man to "live his own life" in the egoistic or crudely vitalistic sense. We recognise that in the earlier stages of evolution, the principle of social compulsion was clearly inevitable, and until man has grown out of all the causes of this necessity, that principle of social compulsion will be found relevant. But the more the outer law is replaced by an inner law, the clearer will man draw to his true and natural perfection. And the perfect social State must be one in which governmental compulsion is abolished and man is able to live with his fellowmen by free agreement and cooperation."

He paused a little. Then he made a short statement:

"These are some of our basic ideas, and our work at present consists mainly of the study of the present situation and discussing among ourselves possible means of redressal of the evils of all social compulsion on the individual."

"What is the difference between your idea and communism?" I asked.

He replied: "There is no meeting ground between the two, except that communism also envisages a condition of society where State will wither away. But so long as socialistic state continues to exist, I do not see how that state could ever become the instrument of the withering away of the State. Besides, while communism advocates violent revolution, I, for one, am a pacifist."

"But by what means do you propose to arrive at a condition where governmental compulsion can be abolished?" I asked.

"We rely on two powers. Both these powers are psychological in character. The first is enlightenment of the human reason. If human reason can be rightly cultivated, then it will claim freedom for itself and will at the same time equally recognise this right in others also. There is also another power. This is what we see manifested in the natural human sympathy. If this power is given free play under the right conditions, it can be relied upon to ensure natural cooperation. Not to rely on the governmental fear and social compulsion is our highest ideal. You may call it anarchistic ideal, but it is quite different from the gross and violent anarchism. Ours is what may be called intellectual anarchism."

For a short while we both remained very quiet. I became aware that Balwant was a very serious man, a very purposive man, and a very determined man. I also felt a great attraction towards his ideas, although his formulations were rather rough and had an appearance of exaggeration. Some of his statements were sweeping and I felt uncomfortable about them. I felt the need to digest properly before I could pronounce any judgment. I needed some time and therefore suggested that we should have some refreshments.

Balwant readily agreed. He stood up immediately and said, "You shouldn't bother. There must be some fruits and milk in the kitchen. I know everything where Vishuddha keeps all these things, and I shall be able to bring some fruits for

our refreshments." Balwant left and came back in no time with a basket of fruits and a jug of milk.

"I cannot find sugar," he said. "But I don't think we shall bother about it."

"Actually, I was thinking of going to a restaurant where we could continue our conversation," I said.

"Look, it is already past 12, and Vishuddha may arrive before long. Let us, therefore, remain here and wait a little longer."

While we were eating, I felt curious to know why Balwant had gone to Tiger Hills and why he had said that that visit had marked a second turning-point in his life. I wanted to ask him about this, but felt very hesitant to do so. I could see, however, that he had already read my thoughts. Balwant himself started on that subject. He said, "Mahesh, have you ever been to Tiger Hills? Have you met Gurudev? How much do you know about him? Do you know why I had gone to meet him? "

"No. I have never been to Tiger Hills, nor do I know where exactly these hills are located except that they are very near Darjeeling. About Gurudev I know very little; some times Vishuddha has spoken to me about him with deepest reverence. He calls him by his personal name, Brahmadev, and he says that Brahmadev ji does not like to be called a Guru. Vishuddha has told me that Brahmadev ji treats him as a friend or as a brother and does not even appreciate if anybody touches his feet as a mark of respect."

"Yes, I find him an unusual man, quite different from usual godmen who are running

asked me about my studies, about my thoughts, about my feelings. In his presence I used to feel a great pressure of compulsion, and I used to remain speechless whenever he was around. I think I was obedient to him in the sense that whenever he asked for anything, to bring a glass of water or to do any kind of service to him or to guests, I always obeyed him instantaneously. I would have thought that all fathers behave with their children in the same manner but for the fact that Vishuddha was living in my neighborhood, and he had a totally different kind of father. Vishuddha was a very charming boy, and his temperament was extremely sweet. His father loved him immensely and talked to him almost incessantly, whenever he found the time. He used to offer him chocolates and all kinds of gifts; he used to explain things; he used to sit with Vishuddha to tell him stories, to read books, to recount his experiences. And if I were around with Vishuddha, I too used to get the same treatment from him. I used to call him uncle and I was very fond of him. I always felt that he had an oceanic heart in which one could swim freely and joyously; therefore, whenever I had any questions in my mind, I used to run up to him and ask him. And he always answered me with great affection. I always used to wonder why my father was not like him.

"Years passed. And this particular event took place when I was 15 years old. My father had an elder brother. He is no more now. A daughter of his was getting married, and all of us, - my father and mother and myself, - were invited to attend the marriage. I was particularly keen to

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attend this marriage because this sister who was to be married was very dear to me and even now she is very dear to me. She was older to me by 4 or 5 years; she lived in Allahabad and whenever she used to visit us during vacations, she used to bring all the gifts of her charming presence and wealth of beautiful presents consisting of books, pencils, drawing papers, colour boxes, etc. I loved her immensely, and I knew that I would do anything for her. About a fortnight before the marriage, I received a letter from her in which she had invited me to be present at the marriage, and towards the end, she had added a line saying that she would be very grateful if I could persuade my father to reach Allahabad as early as possible. She had mentioned that she had something very important to tell my father and she wanted his help.

"Unfortunately, because of the psychological remoteness of my father from me I could not show that letter to him. When only 5 or 6 days were left, I asked my father, "When shall we start for Allahabad?"

"Tomorrow", he replied.

"When shall we reach Allahabad?" I asked again.

"Don't worry about that," he said. He added, "We shall be in time for the marriage; I know how much you love your sister. Do not worry. We shall be on time." I could say nothing more.

"We reached Allahabad just when the bridegroom had already arrived with the entire party, and there was a great hustle and bustle in

the huge bungalow in which everything was arranged for the marriage ceremony. As soon as we arrived, I climbed up the staircase and tried to enter into the room of my sister. But her room was full of guests and a number of friends were decorating her. I stood at the door just to attract her attention. But her eyes were closed and her face was rather gloomy. Somehow, I felt guilty and I knew that I should have been courageous to show the contents of that letter to my father and to induce him to come to Allahabad much earlier. While I was blaming myself, my sister suddenly looked up and on seeing me she rushed up to me. All her friends were astonished but they had no time to stop her. When she came out, I held her hands and said, "Alka, I am so sorry I could not come earlier. But what is the matter? Can I do some thing for you?"

"Alka did not reply; she took me into another room where there was nobody. She said, 'It is too late. I am finished. I am in love with somebody else, and I can never be faithful to this man with whom I am to be married. I cannot even explain to you. I have no time. I had thought that uncle would be the only person who could help me. He is a great man; he is a great lawyer; and he loves me very much. I could have explained to him, and he would have helped me. I am sure about it. But now, what can I do? And what can uncle do at this late hour? Even if he wants to do something, circumstances would not permit him to do anything. It would be a great scandal. It would be a fiasco. It is impossible. My life is ruined.'

"She sat down on a sofa and began to cry; and tears began to well up in my own eyes also. I knew that I was guilty, and within a flash I could see that I was guilty because I was timid; I knew that I was guilty because my father was grave and stern; I knew that I was guilty because there was a wall between me and my father. And, suddenly, something happened to my being. There was a real explosion in my psychology. Fearlessness seized me and an unimaginable courage overpowered me. I left my sister in that room and rushed straight to my father and holding his hands tightly, I said in a whisper but with an imperative command: "Father, you must stop this marriage. My sister shall not marry this man."

"My father stood aghast; but he felt pressure of my presence, and he came out of the crowd in order to talk to me without being heard by anybody. He asked me, 'What is the matter? What is this madness?'

"I said with a rapid rush: 'Father, Alka is in love with somebody else. I do not know with whom. She has not asked me to request you to stop this marriage. But I am asking you. You must stop this marriage. You are a lawyer, upholder and defender of justice, and you shall not allow enactment of injustice in your presence.'

"My father acted swiftly. He rose very high in my esteem. He acted heroically. He first met Alka, consoled her and assured her that he would stop the marriage. He found out from Alka as to with whom she was in love.

"During her visits to Bombay, Alka used to meet the younger brother of a friend of my father, an eminent industrialist, who had risen from the

state of abject poverty to a high level of affluence. He used to visit our house from time to time; and his younger brother, Vijay Jadhav, used to take guidance from my father in regard to his studies.

He was a bright young man, and I used to like him very much because of his pleasing manners and his intellectual gifts. He used to tell me a great deal about English literature, - about Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelly and Tennyson. He himself was a poet and used to explain to me how to write poems. None in our family or in his family came to know of the developing relationship between him and Alka; but it was evident that their love had reached a stage of high maturity, and they had promised each other that they would unite themselves in a wedlock. She had expected to explain all this to my uncle at a suitable moment; but that moment never arrived. In the meantime, soon after her last visit to Bombay, when she returned to Allahabad, her father fixed up her engagement and marriage in a quick succession without allowing much time to Alka to explain her position and her relationship with Vijay. Besides, her father was extremely conventional, and Alka knew that under no circumstances would he permit her marriage with Vijay. Apart from anything else, there was the question of caste-difference, and her father was chained obstinately to the caste system. Alka's only hope was her uncle, and that is why she had written to me that letter.

"My father planned out the escape of Alka. He asked my mother to take Alka away from the bungalow and asked me to arrange for a taxi. This I did readily, and within a short time, both my

mother and Alka were at the railway station. It was then that my father went up to the bridegroom, took him aside and explained to him the entire position. I do not know what he talked to him, but the bridegroom's reaction was entirely favourable. He even thanked him for his frankness and said that he was grateful that the marriage was stopped at the right moment, before it was too late. But a stiff opposition came from Alka's father and bridegroom's father. There was a tremendous tumult and uproar. Alka's father (my uncle) entered into a long argument with my father saying that he had no right to interfere with his personal affairs and that the father of the daughter alone had full authority to do whatever he liked in regard to his daughter. This was the first time when I heard a naked statement of man's property rights in human beings. This was the first time that I came to realise the pitiable condition of women where their inclinations and wishes mean nothing to their parents or to the society. Woman is a chattel,- this was the main burden of the argument of Alka's father. Similar arguments were also levelled by many other people who had, by now, surrounded my father; some uttered very harsh words, some even abused him. The elders of the caste felt threatened, and in return, they threatened my father that they would ex-communicate him. I admired when my father remained calm and merely smiled. He said that Alka had the right to determine her own marriage and that he would take full responsibility to ensure Alka's happiness throughout her life.

"Very quietly, both my father and I slipped away from the noise and clamour of the marriage

party to the railway station. When we reached the platform, we found that Vijay also had arrived and was waiting for us. Within half an hour, the train arrived, and we had no difficulty when we boarded the train and left for Bombay.

"This was my first turning-point. You might say this was my new birth. A new personality was born in me, and I discovered that my father was truly great and honourable. From that day onwards, we had entered into a new relationship. He was, of course, ex-communicated and was boycotted even by our kith and kin. But he suffered all this with rare stoicism. My father was thenceforth my friend and I could talk to him freely without barriers. I came to look upon him as a true lawyer, upholder and defender of justice, ready to intervene and suffer the consequences of doing what he thought was right and just."

I was moved to hear this story and wanted to know more about his father. So I asked him, "What is the name of your father?"

Balwant smiled. He said, "He is a very famous lawyer of Bombay; in fact, he is one of the leading lawyers of the Bombay High Court. I am sure you must have heard his name. And you are bound to meet him often at the Law College, since he devotes everyday one hour to teach Law at the Law College. He is Professor Bapat."

"Professor Bapat!" I cried out in astonishment. "Of course, I have already seen him. He was on the Interview Board, and I was greatly embarrassed by the questions that he threw at me."

"Do not mind his questions. In normal circumstances, he is conventional; in special cir-

cumstances, he is progressive; in extraordinary circumstances, he is heroic. I can assure you that he would never come in the way of anybody's progress, and he is extremely sympathetic to students. Do you have any problems?"

I then explained to him my entire position and the problem that I was facing in regard to the admission to the Law College. I also told him that Principal Chitle had invited me to meet him that very evening at 9.

Balwant said at once: "Mahesh, do not worry. Your appointment with Principal Chitle signifies something very special. It is only under very special circumstances that he gives appointment at 9 p.m. Consider yourself to be very fortunate. I am sure he will find a way for you."

I felt comforted, and as I was about to ask some further questions, particularly about his second turning-point, Vishuddha entered the room.

"At last, you have arrived!" said Balwant.

"I am sorry that I had to be away and got late. But I had left a word for both of you, and you will grant that I have come a little earlier than 2 p.m.," said Vishuddha apologetically.

"But believe me," said Balwant, "both Mahesh and I had excellent time, and as usual, I had a profitable opportunity to inflict a long lecture! You know how much I enjoy lecturing, and I am very glad that Mahesh is a very good listener."

Vishuddha smiled. He said, "What is your programme now?" And then he turned to me and asked me as to what had happened during my meeting with Principal Chitle in the morning.

Balwant interrupted before I could answer him. He said, "Vishuddha, there is no cause of worry. Principal Chitle has invited Mahesh to meet him in the evening at 9. This means an exceptional privilege, and we can only expect a favourable decision."

On my part, I gave a full account of my interview with Principal Chitle and told him that the crucial part was played by that note which I had written after my meditation in that very room on the previous day. Vishuddha smiled and said, "What is important for you is not admission, but some satisfying answer to your deeper questions. I do hope that Principal Chitle will remove your doubts and he will find a satisfying solution."

Balwant said, "Let us now no more be worried about this problem. I have a lot to talk to you about my visit to Tiger Hills."

I felt that Vishuddha and Balwant should be left alone; so I proposed that I should leave and go to my hostel. Balwant, however, protested and said that there was nothing so secret in what he was to report and that I could listen to the entire report. Vishuddha, too, pressed me not to leave. However, I asked Vishuddha about his lunch. Vishuddha said that he had already taken lunch at his friend's house and asked us whether he could offer us some fruit and milk.

Balwant said that we had already taken the liberty to plunder his kitchen and had finished our lunch.

Balwant then started his long narration.

III

The most interesting part of Balwant's narration was his dialogue with Brahmadev ji at the Tiger Hills. His main question was whether the secret society which he was forming should undertake a programme of causing unrest in the country by violent and other means with a view to create a climate for a radical change. Many of his colleagues were feeling that no radical change could be brought about in the society if things were allowed to take shape in a leisurely fashion. According to them, the situation of India and that of the world was so deplorable that it could be remedied only by radical operations. Balwant himself was of the view that some radical steps were needed, but he was a pacifist. At the same time, he had no answer to an argument which was put forward by some of his colleagues who were suggesting that just as Sri Krishna had found no alternative to a violent war for the establishment of the rule of justice and Dharma, even so the present situation was so critical that there was no alternative to administering shock therapy to those institutions of society, including the Government, which were degenerating rapidly towards corruption and tyranny of the wicked. He had argued that the basic message of the Gita was that of peace and it would be a mis-interpretation of the Gita if it was used to justify employment of violent means. He, however, wanted a greater clarity on that question. His question was: Is violence justified, as it was in the context of the situation that led to the Mahabharata war? And if so, to what extent?

Balwant said that when he met Brahmadev ji, he experienced such an inexpressible peace that the idea of war had no standing-ground in it. He said, "Brahmadev ji looked like a solid mass of Himalayan peace. This peace was so compelling, it was so overwhelming that my own mind became a pillar of peace. For half an hour or even more I remained immobile in his compelling presence and when I came out of this experience, I had already an answer to the question that I wanted to put to him. In that state of peace there was no place for any manoeuvre or any plotting, let alone any design for a violent overthrow of any establishment or Government. In my first meeting with Brahmadev ji there was no talk and when I withdrew from him I could feel that he was decidedly opposed to violence of any kind.

"In spite of this experience, I wanted another opportunity to meet Brahmadev ji and to seek from him an answer to the following question. "Why did Sri Krishna ask Arjuna to fight with his arms and even to slay his grandsires, teachers and brethren, and that, too, when Arjuna had already thrown down his own weapon Gandiva, and had declared that he would not fight?" With this question I met him the next day. But once again I had the same experience of massive peace. On that day, however, before leaving him, I told him, 'You will please pardon me for my impudence. But I am a student of modern history and I have specialised in the theme of revolutions. I find that the present situation of humanity is ripe for a new revolution, a revolution that would break the fetters of law and liberate human spirit into freedom-not for individual salvation but for collective salvation.

And this kind of revolution will require, it seems, employment of numerous methods; and some of my colleagues believe that these methods should include a shock therapy to all establishments that oppose the freedom of human spirit and seek to tyrannise over people by corrupt and illegitimate means. I want to put this question to you, and I shall be very grateful if you could kindly favour me with your illuminating reply.'

"I had expected Brahmadev ji to tell me that he would not be interested in the question and that experience of peace would be enough to dispel any illusion that I might have with regard to the efficacy of violence. But, surprisingly, he agreed to answer my question, and he began the answer there and then itself.

"He said: 'Since you raised the question of the Gita, let us understand that the central interest of the philosophy and the Yoga of the Gita is its attempt to reconcile and even effect a kind of unity between the integral realisation of the Spirit and the outer actualities of man's life and action. Gita shows the way as to how to unite ineffable peace with utmost dynamic action. In arriving at this reconciliation, it is aware of several alternative possibilities. What are these possibilities?

'First is the solution proposed by spiritualised ethics which insists on Ahimsa, on non-injuring and non-killing, as the highest spiritual law and spiritual conduct. On the basis of this ethics it could be argued that violence is a sin and the battle, if it is to be fought out at all, must be fought on the spiritual plane only by soul-resistance. And if it does not succeed on the external plane, if injustice conquers, the spiritualised ethics

will argue that that would not matter since the individual would still have preserved his virtue and vindicated by his example the highest ideal.

'The second possibility would be to advocate an extreme inner spiritual direction which would be apt to take the ascetic turn and to point away from the life and its aims and standards of action towards some celestial or supra-cosmic state. Under this possibility one would pass beyond the struggle between social duty and an absolutist ethical ideal or spiritualised ethics. Renunciation of the world and its responsibilities would be the consequence of this alternative.

'A third possibility would be to demand from man of action,- a warrior and leader of men, - to fulfil his duty to resist the powers of wrong and injustice and to give battle and establish, even through a terrible physical struggle and giant slaughter, if necessary.

'A fourth possibility would be to regard abstention not only from violence but even from battle as the only way and the one right moral attitude. Resist not the evil - this would be the consequence of this alternative,- and the argument would be that evil would be transformed into good by the power of non-resistance and of drinking, like Shiva, the cup of poison contained in the attack of the evil.

'It is important to observe that the Gita rejects none of these possibilities in its place.

'And yet, it goes boldly beyond all these conflicting positions. It declares that none of these positions is justified if it is to be result of the

individual and egoistic decision. It justifies only that action which is inspired by the Divine Will.

'The Gita justifies all life to the spirit as a significant manifestation of Divinity and asserts the compatibility of a complete human action and complete spiritual life lived in union with the Infinite, consonant with the highest Self, expressive of the perfect Godhead.

'The central question is: "What is the Divine Will? We have to remember that Divine Will is not static; it is dynamic; it is ever-progressive. You have no right to take a leaf from the book and declare that such and such is the Divine Will because such and such was the answer that the Divine Will had given at such and such a time in human history. What Sri Krishna had declared to Arjuna was indeed an injunction to take up arms to fight for the sake of justice and Dharma; but what was the injunction he had given unto himself, - when he declared that he would use no arms in the battle? And what about his injunction that one should rise to the state of utter equality, of utter quietude, even nirvana, in order to perform Divine action?

'Are you and your colleagues inspired by the Divine Will when you are trying to fashion the design to employ violent means for achieving your ends? And what is your end? Is it a part of the Divine vision?

'The Gita is a guide to action, and you must, indeed, refer to its guidance; but you must understand the conditions that the Gita lays down.

'Of course, you may say that it is very difficult to know the Divine Will. But then you should

admit that it is quite unjustified to say that you will take up arms because it so directed in the Gita.

'My definitive answer is: "Discover the Divine Will in the present condition and work out that will to the best of your ability. That will be your best solution to the contemporary crisis.'

"I realised that a new dimension had been opened up in my vision. I had to admit that I was ignorant of the Divine Will. But then I had to put a further question to Brahmadev ji : ' It is believed that you live constantly in the Divine Consciousness and that you are able to communicate with the Divine. If so, can you tell me what is the Divine Will at present?' Brahmadev ji smiled. He looked sharply and said: 'No violence in any measure.'

"And as he uttered these words, I felt a tremendous release in my being; and once again, a massive peace descended on me which uplifted me from all turbulations of my mind. I felt I was reborn. This was my second turning-point in my life.

"On the next day, however, when I met Brahmadev ji I had still one question in my mind and wanted to put it up to him for his answer. I said, ' I have a theoretical question in my mind, and I am seeking answer to that question.' He said, 'What is that question?'

"I said, 'When Sri Krishna asked Arjuna to take up arms and to fight the battle, he had at least at that time, and in the case of Arjuna, no objection to the use of violence for the establishment of the rule of Dharma. This means

that Sri Krishna had in his consciousness some justification for the use of violent means. What was the basis of that justification?"

"Brahmadev ji replied: 'In the process of evolution, there are various stages of progression.

At the lower stages, creatures and people live and act in ignorance. The law of action in ignorance includes the play of strife, conflict and battle. At that level, one would find the justification of the famous maxim of Heraclitus who declared that war is the father of all things. History of mankind is largely a record of wars because it is largely a record of the history of creatures and people living in ignorance. At that stage, the ideal life of knowledge cannot be harmonised with the life of ignorance. The ideal of peace, the ideal of harmony, the ideal of spontaneous mutuality belongs to the life of knowledge and not to the life of ignorance. At that level, therefore, it would be impossible to avoid those means of action which are appropriate to the life of ignorance, and those means include violence also. You could, therefore, preach violence as a means of action at that stage, even though you can and should put forward non-violence and peace and harmony as ideals. At the time when the teaching of the Gita was uttered by Sri Krishna to Arjuna, mankind had not yet reached that high level of development where use of arms could be avoided. All over the world, violence was regarded as a legitimate means of action, even though legal systems in different countries laid down varying conditions and restrictions on the use of violence.

'It is remarkable that Indian civilisation had even in early stages tried to organise human society

in such a way that incidence of war could be minimised, and it had also laid down that war should be fought only for the protection of justice. It was further laid down that only one section of people was entitled to fight in the war so that use of violence could be limited only to one section of people. That is why we find in the Gita Sri Krishna speaking of the Dharma of the Kshatriya and of the creed of the Aryan fighter.

'And even when Sri Krishna asked Arjuna to take up arms, he insisted that he should fight without anger, without wrath and without any sense of revenge. If you read Mahabharata carefully, you will find that Sri Krishna made an extraordinary effort to avoid a war; it was only when no other alternative was available that he came to advocate war, and that, too, as a means available *at that time* for a progressive development of humanity towards the ideal of justice and truth.'

"I felt deeply satisfied and I wanted to fall at the feet of Brahmadev ji. But as you know, he does not appreciate anybody falling at his feet, and he prevented me from doing so."

Balwant seemed to have finished his report. And all of us remained quiet for a short time. Then Vishuddha looked up at Balwant, who smiled and said : "Let me now come to the second part of my report."

Vishuddha, however, interrupted him and said, "It is already 3 o'clock, and at 5.30 we should be at the St. Xavier's College, both you and myself."

"Of course. And I should like to ask Mahesh also to join us." Balwant then turned to me and

asked me, "Do you know, Mahesh, there is a very important lecture at the St. Xavier's College this evening? The lecture will be delivered by the father of Vishuddha and will be presided over by my father."

I turned my eyes to each of them with astonishment! Did Vishuddha's father live in Bombay? And is he such a prominent man? These questions flashed through my mind in an instant.

Guessing my questions, Vishuddha smiled and said, "Mahesh, do not be surprised. My father, too, is a lawyer and, every year he delivers at least one public lecture on some important subject of wide public interest."

"But you never told me." I mildly protested.

"But you never asked me," replied Vishuddha.

"But tell me now about your father. What is his name? And why have you never introduced me to him?" I asked.

Balwant interrupted and said, "Mahesh, you should ask me this question. His father is none other than Professor Desai whom you met at the interview board. Like my father, he, too, devotes one hour daily to the Law College in an honorary capacity, just to be able to impart some of his knowledge and experience to students. Unlike my father, he is progressive in normal circumstances, he is radical in special circumstances, and he is revolutionary in extraordinary circumstances. My father needs always to be pushed ahead of his times, Vishuddha's father is always ahead of his times on his own. I am sure you will enjoy his lecture. Please do come."

I was greatly inspired to attend the lecture, but I was not sure whether the time would permit it. I said, "If the lecture starts at 5.30, it may go on upto 7.30; and I have to reach Principal Chitle's residence at nine o'clock."

"There is no problem," said Balwant. "It will be my responsibility to ensure that you reach Professor Chitle's residence by the appointed hour. The lecture is at the St. Xavier's College at Dhobi Talao, and Principal Chitle's residence is in the premises of the Law College at Churchgate. There will be ample time to commute from Dhobi Talao to Churchgate. It would not take more than half an hour."

I was overwhelmed by the events of the last two days. And my heart was thrilled to come to know so many things within such a short time. There was no doubt that this was an exceptional moment in my life. While I was thus reflecting, Balwant awoke me by saying:

"If the programme is now settled, listen to me quickly what I have to say about Vijay who had accompanied me to the Tiger hills."

Vishuddha said, "It is settled and we may now proceed."

Balwant began. He said, "Why had Vijay decided to come with me to the Tiger Hills? It was an abrupt decision on his part. On the eve of my departure from Bombay, both Alka and Vijay paid a visit to our house and during their conversation with my father and myself, Vijay declared that he would join me in my travel as he was very keen to meet Brahmadev ji. I was startled by his declaration and looked at Alka. Then Vijay

explained to my father, 'It has happened suddenly; I have been feeling uncomfortable during the last one year and I am looking for a new basis for my life. And just yesterday Alka made a remark, 'How long shall we be wasting our life?' I do not know what had prompted her to say these words, but that made a great meaning to me. I, however, asked Alka as to what we should be doing to live our life meaningfully. And she immediately said, 'Why don't you meet Brahmadev ji?' And no sooner did she speak these words than I decided to go at once to Bramhadevji. Just then, Alka reminded me that her brother, Balwant, was to proceed to Tiger Hills the very next day.'

"My father felt concerned on hearing all this, but he at once made arrangements for Vijay's travel with me.

"During the long travel from Bombay to Darjeeling, I noticed that Vijay had become deeply reflective and whenever he spoke to me, he seemed to indicate that a profound change had overtaken him. It was about this change that Vijay spoke to Bramhadevji. I was also present at that time. He explained to Brahmadev ji as follows:

'My wife, Alka, and I have reached a stage of inner crisis. Externally, we are both very happy. We have a lot of wealth and great prestige in society. And our work keeps us both occupied fully. And yet, Alka has been feeling that we are not doing our best. Alka feels that she should plunge herself into a new way of life that would bring her nearer to a higher and spiritual way of life. On my part, I understand her very well and would like to do everything for her that would lead her to the path of fulfillment. At the same

time, I have suddenly been feeling that I am sitting on a volcano which might erupt any time. I also feel suffocated whenever I look within. I feel as though I am chained, and feel a great yearning for freedom. I am harassed by dualities, and I do not know in which direction I should move. We speak of crime and punishment. But what is crime if not intention to commit a crime? And if intentions are to be counted, I feel that I am a criminal. I am a student of Shakespeare and his four tragedies have influenced me greatly: Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello and King Lear. Macbeth was a noble man but degenerated through selfish ambition into an unfaithful murderer; Hamlet was also a noble man, but besieged by dualities, indecisions and doubts, he ruined his soul, happiness of Ophelia and drew the curtain of death over several others. Othello was a great lover but stung by jealousy, he smothered his most beloved wife and then ended his own life. And King Lear became a victim of betrayal and descended into the abyss of frenzy and self-destruction. I find that I am each one of them, and if I am still respected, it is only because of the false veils that I am wearing. Something has happened to me during the last fortnight, particularly, when Alka told me that we were wasting our lives. I feel as though a seal of my heart has been broken, and I have now no desire to lead that life once again. Is it possible to wash oneself clean and become utterly pure? Utterly faithful? Utterly truthful? I want to be that and beseech you to guide me.'

"The atmosphere in that cottage of Brahmadev ji was extremely quiet and serene, and when I heard Vijay, his words seemed to penetrate into

my own heart, and they tore me up thoroughly. I had some kind of vanity and pride that I was very frank and blunt and that I was opposed to all kinds of pretences. But now, as compared to Vijay, I suddenly found myself covered with dirty linens without even realizing how dirty they were! And as I began to look at myself, I too found within myself the same Macbeth, the same Hamlet, the same Othello and the same King Lear. I realised that there were standards nobler and profounder than those described in the books of Law in the light of which I stood guilty and unworthy of any kind of honour."

Balwant stopped for a moment, and the atmosphere was so serious that neither Vishuddha nor myself could make any comment.

Balwant continued." Brahmadev ji said in reply to Vijay that the inner soul is always pure and the discovery of inner purity is the first step. And he added that inner purity is not to be created, it already exists. The soul, he said, is not impure; it is inherently pure just as fire is inalienably pure. He said that that was the reason why the Veda spoke of the pure soul in terms of the symbolism of fire, Agni. It is true, he said, fire is in the beginning a spark and only by gradual growth it becomes multi-tongued fire. He elaborated : 'The meaning of life is gained through the process of spark growing into a fire. Impurities are in our mind, in our life, in our body; and these impurities can be burnt away by the spark action of the soul. Mind, life and body are evolutes of *Prakriti*, Nature. But the soul is superior to the mental, vital and physical nature, which is also characterised by three gunas, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. But the

action of the soul is free from these three gunas and from the limitations of the mind, life and body. Therefore, if you discover your inner soul, if you form it and make it stronger in formation, you will become what the Gita calls, *kritātmā*. You become the soul that is formed, and chiselled, and just as diamond, when chiselled, becomes bright, even so, the soul when chiselled become bright. And you begin to see and experience this formation within your inner psychological complex. At the early stages, this formation corresponds with what the Kathopanishad describes as *angushtha mātram*, not bigger than the thumb. But as it grows further, it rises in strength and force and becomes capable of extinguishing all the impurities of the mind, life and body.'

"Brahmadev ji looked very kindly into the eyes of Vijay and continued to look at him for a long time. He then asked Vijay: 'What would you like to do?'

"And Vijay answered without even a moment of reflection, 'I wish to remain with you and learn the science and art of the discovery of my soul.'

"Brahmadev ji smiled. He said, 'You can stay here for some time; but as you know, life here is quite hard; and you will have to arrange everything yourself. I do not have any organisation or institution here; nor do I wish to build one. For I do not advocate escapism and withdrawal into inactivity. Problems of life must be solved in life by transforming life. I am only a friend and give friendly help from time to time to those who care for it.'

"Vijay said that he knew about it, but that he would be grateful if he were allowed to remain

for a short period somewhere in the vicinity of Brahmadev ji so that he could meet him from time to time.

"Brahmadev ji immediately accepted this. And then we both took leave of him."

Balwant had finished his account. I was filled with wonder and happiness to hear that beautiful account of Vijay, and for a moment I wondered as to why I too should not run away to Tiger Hills. But I realised immediately that I was still too unripe and I did not have that intensity which was so manifest in Vijay. I turned to Balwant and said, "Balwant, you are extremely fortunate to have witnessed this great dialogue between Vijay and Brahmadev ji, and this dialogue has clarified my own mind very greatly."

Balwant smiled. But he suddenly looked at his watch and said, "It is already 4.15, and we should immediately start for the St. Xavier's College."

Within a few minutes, we were ready, and when we reached the St. Xavier's College, we saw Professor Desai and Professor Bapat alighting from their car. Vishuddha and Balwant stepped forward to receive them. When they came out of the car, I was introduced to them. Both Professor Desai and Professor Bapat then proceeded towards the Main Hall. A huge crowd was waiting in the Main Hall. In fact, the Hall was packed to its full capacity and a number of people were still waiting outside the Hall. Three of us were, however, fortunate to get our seats in the frontline.

Exactly at 5.30 p.m. Professor Bapat stood up to introduce Professor Desai and requested him to deliver his speech.

IV

"The Task of the Contemporary Lawyer" was the theme of the speech, and I had never heard such a brilliant speech before. It is impossible to narrate what he spoke, and what I am giving below is a dim reflection of some of the prominent ideas that were expounded by him.

"Discovery of Law, whether in the field of Nature or in the field of human affairs, is always a mark of progress. It matters little whether we consider Law as a process of inevitable connections of cause and effect or as a process of uncontradicted regularities or probabilities. But the curious fact is that there are in this world similarities, uniformities, unities, and identities, and when we discover them we call them laws. In the field of Nature, laws do not need to be enforced; they are automatic and are found to be imperatively enforced by the very operation of forces of Nature. In human affairs, the situation is much more complex. There are laws of instincts and impulses. These are automatically enforced; but they can also be restrained or controlled by laws of a higher degree of existence; for there are laws of desires, which are less automatically operative, but which are quite often irresistible. Both instincts and desires are so powerful that the Gita declares: "All creatures follow the forces of Nature. Of what avail is the effort to control?" What is true of instincts and desires is also true of ideas and thoughts. Not many of us can control

the rush of ideas and thoughts, and most of us find ourselves as if we are mounted uncontrollably on wheels of a machine from where we cannot escape. And yet, in the realm of ideas and thoughts, there is a power of discrimination, a power to stand behind the rush of forces of Nature, by means of which we can observe, we can control, we can master. And at a later stage, we can even discover or formulate those laws by which forces of Nature can be controlled and mastered. In the human realm, these laws assume a normative character. We then make a distinction between positive laws and normative laws. Positive laws are those laws which are automatically operative and which are spontaneously enforced by Nature. Normative laws are those laws which are perceived as standards which *ought* to be made operative and which need to be enforced.

These normative laws have their origin in the ideas that operate in religion, ethics, and several other fields of culture. Only a few of them which can be enforced through a machinery of compulsion and through legal machinery of reward and punishment, come within the province of what is called State Law.

"But State Law must always be viewed in the larger context of progressive culture of man where newer concepts of normative laws are discovered or fashioned. And to the extent to which the State Law subjects itself to the newer and higher concepts of normative laws, it rises into higher realms of culture.

"The society, in which makers and interpreters of law consider the present formulation of law to be rigid and inflexible, becomes stagnant and

moves rapidly towards decline and fall. But the society becomes progressive and dynamic where legislators, judges and lawyers are constantly engaged in improving the existing formulation of law, in making it more and more subtle and to infuse in them greater and greater elasticity to allow increasing individual freedom. Whether society remains stagnant or progressive will, therefore, depend upon the way in which the makers and interpreters of law dedicate themselves to their real task.

"Let us try to understand the situation in a greater detail. In India, we have a very important word "*Shāstra*." *Shāstra* does not mean a mass of customs unintelligibly followed by the customary routine mind. *Shāstra* is the knowledge and teaching laid down by intuition, experience and wisdom, the science and art and ethic of life, the best standards available to the race. To elaborate the same idea, it may be said that *Shāstra* is the recognised science and art of life which is the outcome of mankind's collective living, its culture, religion, science, its progressive discovery of the best rule of life. Evidently, the concept of *Shāstra* is much vaster than the concept of the State Law, which is called *Vidhi* in Sanskrit. The fortunate part of Indian Culture is that it paid enormous attention, time and energy not only to the development of State Law but also to the development of the *Shāstra*. And this *Shāstra* grew into higher and higher levels of excellence, and there developed also a subtler science and art not only of collective life but also of individual life, culminating into what is called *adhyātma shāstra*, of

which the Bhagvad Gita is regarded as one of its highest formulations.

"In the Gita, there are four important verses to which I should like to draw your attention. These are in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters, an explicit reference to Shastra. In the first place, the Gita has made a distinction between action according to the licence of personal desire and action done according to Shastra. It says, "He who discards shastra and acts under the impulse of his desire attains neither the perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme goal."

"It further says, "Therefore, let the shastra be your authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done. Having known what is declared by the provision of shastra, you should perform the prescribed action."

"But the Gita goes farther and envisages a possibility of disregarding the Shastra and enunciates a possible motive force of deviating from shastra and describes in some detail varying qualities of this motive. This is how the Gita introduces the element of flexibility in the shastra. And it puts before humanity a ladder of ascendance by which individuals and collectivities can rise higher and higher beyond the borders conceived and determined by Shastra. In other words, the Gita recognises law beyond law and recognises even freedom beyond law.

"The name that the Gita gives to the element which enables individuals and collectivities to obey shastras is *Shraddhā*, a term which is highly misunderstood but which has a very complex connotation in the Gita. The Gita regards Shraddha as a necessary foundation for the acceptance of

Shastra. The question is, why do we accept law? We are aware of the answer given by Western thinkers like Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau through their varying formulations of the Social Contract Theory. It is the contract, they say, which is the basis of allegiance of man to law. But we can ask a deeper question. Even if we concede that an actual or fictional contract was at the root of man's allegiance to law, what was at the basis of the acceptance of the idea of the contract itself? The answer cannot be anything but the assent of the being, its conscious acceptance and will to believe, will to be, to survive and realise. It is to this assent, this acceptance, this will to believe, to be, to survive and realise that the Gita gives the name of faith, *shraddha*. *Shraddha* is not, as many assert, opposed to reason; at its deepest level, reason itself is rooted in the will to be and to realise, in *Shraddha*.

"Therefore, the most important thing that a society should look up to is its *Shraddha*, its irresistible aspiration, its fundamental and inevitable drive to be, to become and to realise. The first and foremost task of the law-maker and law-interpreter is to feel the pulse of the *shraddha* of the society, to examine the quality of *shraddha* and to work on that *shraddha* so that the *shraddha* that is spread in the society is of the highest kind.

"If this is not done, a time comes in the society when it ceases to be a living thing, and it degenerates or stiffens into a mass of customs and conventions. A time comes when it is found that the shastra is imperfect or is no longer useful for the progress that is demanded. A new truth, a more perfect law of living becomes imperative.

The Vedic Law becomes a convention and Buddha appears and propounds a new rule of the eightfold path of the goal of Nirvana, and it may be remarked 'that he propounds it not as a personal invention but as a true rule of Aryan living, constantly re-discovered by the Buddha, the enlightened mind, the awakened spirit. The Mosaic law of religious, ethical and social righteousness is convicted of narrowness and imperfection. The law of Christ comes to replace it and claims at once to abrogate and to fulfil. The human search does not stop there and there is a constant search for the higher law of perfection, the higher rule of right living.

"The Gita makes a distinction between three kinds of Shraddha that lies behind a possible deviation from Shastra. There is, says the Gita," *sattviki shraddha*, *rajasi shraddha* and *tamasi shraddha*."¹ The *tāmasi shraddhā* deviates from Shastra mechanically, unintelligently and meaninglessly. *Rājasi shraddhā* often takes the form of a revolt of the egoistic nature seeking freedom from the yoke of something which it feels to be cramping its liberty of self-fulfilment and self-finding. Even this kind of revolt is often justified by some narrowness or imperfection of the shastra or by the degradation of the current rule of living into a merely restricting or lifeless function. But deviation from Shastra may be *sāttviki* at its heart. This is the best condition under human limitations; for when *sattviki shraddha* deviates from Shastra it may turn to larger and greater ideal. This movement is usually

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an attempt to lay hold on some forgotten truth or to move on to a yet undiscovered or unlived truth of our being.

"But the Gita goes even farther and speaks not only of shraddha of three Gunas of Nature, but declares that our own true self, our inmost soul, is itself constituted of shraddha. In other words, it gives us a new definition of shraddha, of faith. It is the very force of our true substance which inevitably manifests in our outer action, in our becoming. It says:

"This Purusha, this individual self, is of the stuff of "Shraddha"; as is one's shraddha so verily he is."¹

"The lesson we learn from this profound statement is that the best way of keeping society progressive is to educate the young in such a way that every individual is able to uncover his deepest self, not his egoistic individual, but spiritual individual, the very stuff of which is the inevitable drive towards the highest ideal that the individual and collectivity can aspire for.

"Let me summarise three important points which you can derive in regard to the task of leaders of law : The first is to draw out from the existing shastra the very best and put it forward as the ideal to which the present formulation of law must strive for. The second is to try to discern with the wise eyes of a scientist all the elements in the society that are brewing to induce deviation among people and to encourage all that can be inspired by sattviki shraddha. And the third task is to pay attention to the youth, - to their

education, to their upbringing, so that their deepest nature, their deepest individuality is formed and fashioned and made capable to express itself as potently as possible.

"Having said this, - and what I have said may be regarded as the perennial task of the leaders of law, - I may now turn briefly to what may be regarded as the task of the *contemporary* leaders of law. Let me say, first, that the task of the lawyer is truly sacred, provided that the lawyer himself approaches his task with the required sacredness. Secondly, I should like to affirm that the contemporary crisis, of which we speak today, cannot be resolved satisfactorily without the highest cooperation of the law-makers and law-interpreters. In a sense, it may be said that the present crisis is the crisis of law. It is a crisis of law because, on the one hand, the law of desire is being given unprecedented freedom to operate in all domains of life, and yet, on the other hand, there is an imperative and urgent need to provide to mankind those ideals and those laws which, if accepted, can bring about an ideal harmony between the individual and collectivity. The crisis has arisen because the conflict between the lower law of desire and the higher law of self-control, self-knowledge and perfection is not being sought to be resolved by lawyers, judges and legislators. As a result, there is a cry in the soul of humanity, which is knocking at our gates more and more imperatively.

"What is the way?"

"Three great ideals have come up in the forefront of humanity, and leaders of law must take full advantage of them and utilise them for creating the alchemy that humanity needs today

at this critical hour. These ideals are: the ideal of human unity, the ideal of harmony of liberty, equality and fraternity, and the ideal of self-determination. We do not have much time to dilate upon this great theme. But let me say that if these ideals can be brought nearer to realisation by means of creating the needed flexibility in our system of Law, we can, lawyers, judges and legislators can, render signal service to humanity. And if we can create increasing awareness of the need to provide to every individual and every collectivity the highest possible freedom, and if this freedom can be properly expressed in our institutions, we shall have fulfilled what is expected of us.

"We can take advantage of three important events of our recent times.

"The coming into being of the United Nations Organisation is momentous even though it has certain basic deficiencies which need to be rectified as early as possible.

"The universal declaration of human rights adopted by the UNO on 10th December, 1948 is of highest significance at this important hour.

"Equally momentous is our own constitution of India which is a great document, even though I can foresee that some of its deficiencies will necessitate a series of amendments, and even a major re-drafting.

"But these are some of the bright lights on our way, and if we can use them as torches, and move forward, we shall be able to overcome and triumph."

The lecture was greatly applauded, and it was followed by a volley of questions. Of great interest was the question that was raised by Professor Bapat. His question sparked off a lively discussion on the importance of Constitutional Law, merits of the Indian Constitution and whether Indian Constitution could be regarded as a model piece of legislation. Professor Bapat upheld the greatness of the Indian Constitution and Professor Desai, while praising some of its salient features, pointed out that its main defect was that it was pre-dominantly unitarian rather than federal. He also pointed out that the Constitution should have made provision for multiple citizenship, considering that Indian ethos is fundamentally universal and provides an abiding basis for universal citizenship. He also maintained that deeper aspects of Indian culture such as those of *dharma*, as distinguished from "religion", should have been reflected more pre-dominantly and explicitly. Finally, he contended that while parliamentary democracy was inevitable in the present circumstances, there is a need to institute a serious inquiry into the ways and means of evolving a more democratic democracy. Towards the end of the argument, Professor Desai also pleaded for the formation of Human Rights Commission, and argued that it should be a statutory body under the Constitution.

The atmosphere of the debate was very lively and there was a good deal of sparkling wit and humour both from the audience and from the dais. The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m., and Vishuddha advised me to take a cab and go straight to the

residence of Professor Chitle so as to be punctual for the meeting with him.

V

My meeting with Principal Chitle began at 9.00 p.m.

At the very outset, Principal Chitle put me at ease by saying that I should explain to him my point of view without the strain and stress of time. He said that there are moments in the life of every student when he needs to be heard with patience, and it was for that purpose that he had made a custom to meet students from time to time individually or in groups at his personal library at nine in the evening. I felt deeply touched by Principal Chitle's concern for the psychological welfare of his students and by the kindness that he showed throughout our conversation.

I explained to Principal Chitle that my difficulty was psychological and ethical in character, and that its roots lay in the confusions in my mind in regard to what is right and what is wrong, particularly in the light of the notions of karma, akarma and vikarma which have been mentioned in the Gita.

Principal Chitle said that one of the chief deficiencies in the contemporary Indian juristic thought was that it has not seriously attempted to correlate the ancient Indian jurisprudence with the modern jurisprudence. He frankly admitted that he himself was more at home in Roman Law and modern jurisprudence than in the ancient Indian wisdom.

purifying and developing these processes to their highest levels of perfection? What is Karma Yoga, if not the full analysis of conative processes and of confirmed methods of purifying and developing these processes to their highest levels of perfection? Gita explains in detail how impulses and desires arise and impel action. It describes the role of intelligent will in purifying desire and in disentangling the knot of desire and ego from our motivation of action. It delineates the processes and methods by which one can become, first, free from the attachment to fruits of action, and, ultimately, from action itself. And at its summit, the Gita gives the secret of self-giving by which all action is seen to be proceeding from a supreme source that is at once static and dynamic. And the pinnacle of Karmayoga is reached when one raises one's cognitive, conative and affective capacities and potentialities in a great synthesis where the divine love, divine knowledge and divine action flow through the liberated individual in a plenary and ecstatic and triumphant symphony. You will think that I am getting poetic; but the joy of my discovery compels me to dance with words, and the sheer language of the Gita gives the aesthetic experience to my affective parts of the being. The smile of Krishna and his words of counsel and encouragement and inspiration seem to provide to my emotions uplifting experience and as I read the Gita I feel deep educational transformation! Bhakti of which Krishna speaks seems to have penetrated my heart and I feel I understand when it is said that the true knowledge comes from the highest state of devotion and that all action culminates in knowledge.

"But this is not all. Yesterday I was reading all that the Gita teaches about Swabhava and Swadharma, about the jiva and the Karma, action, that is rooted in the jiva, which is itself rooted in Paraprakriti, higher nature of the Supreme Lord. This reminded me of the talks that we used to have about education that enables each individual to discover himself and I asked myself if the Gita gives us the secret of self-discovery. What is swabhava? I asked myself. Is it temperament? Is it natural inclination of the given moment? Or is it something else? Indeed, there are many questions in my mind and hope to discover their answers with you when you are here. For instance, I want to understand what the Gita means by the word "Shraddha", for it says that each one becomes what his shraddha impels him to become. Is it that one speaks of in connection with religious belief? It can't be so; because the Gita speaks of each individual's unique shraddha. I think this concept of shraddha seems to be very important for education, and this concept needs to be harmonised with the counsel of Krishna when he asks Arjuna to attain to knowledge by repeated questioning and service to the teacher. How is questioning to be reconciled with shraddha? I want to understand all this and much more. It appears that a new appetite for learning has become awakened in my heart, and this has just come at the right moment since, because of the forthcoming examinations, I am obliged to turn to books, - and this turning would have been mechanical or meaningless if this new appetite were not to seize me. Here, too, I see the Hand of the Beloved Krishna.

It also speaks of *sahajam karma*, the natural inborn or innate action.¹

"Against this background, Sir, the fact that I am a Brahmin and that, therefore, I should be engaged in activities appropriate to the brahmin is pressing upon me with irresistible force. Rightly or wrongly, I cannot make up my mind whether a profession of a lawyer is a rightful profession for a brahmin. And this uncertainty has a disabling effect upon my thought and action. If you could kindly enlighten me, and if I could be convinced that a Brahmin should not become a lawyer, I shall withdraw my application for admission to the Law College. On the other hand, the proposition that I should be studying Sanskrit and Dharmashastra raises no problem because I am convinced that that is appropriate to my Brahminhood. But if it can be shown that the study of law and profession of law is consistent with Brahminhood, then I do not see why I should not enter into the Law College, and why I should not be doing both my Sanskrit studies and Legal studies simultaneously, considering that in all humility I believe that I can do justice to both the courses fully. Besides, I shall be having financial benefit if I continue my Sanskrit studies and accept the fellowship which has been offered to me by my College."

Professor Chitle made no reply. He seemed reflecting on what I had said. So I said with some hesitation, : "I do not know if I have explained my inner mind with some clarity."

Principal Chitle comforted me by saying that he was very pleased with my statement. Then he went on to say:

"Mahesh, I should like you to clarify to yourself that the teaching of the Gita has no bearing on the *existing* caste system. Caste system is a very different thing from the ancient social ideal of *Chāturvarnya* and in no way corresponds with its description in the Gita. Take, for instance, the description of the Vaishya. The Gita speaks of agriculture, cattle-keeping and trade of every kind to be the work of the Vaishya;¹ but in the present caste system, the majority of those who are concerned in trade and in cattle-keeping, artisans, small craftsmen and others are classed as Shudras, when they are not put altogether outside the pale. The merchant class is alone, and that too not everywhere, ranked as Vaishya. Again, today, agriculture and Government service are professions of all classes from the brahmin down to the Shudras. Moreover, where is the place of Gunas in the present day caste system? What we find today is a rigid system of *āchāra*, with no reference to the conventional Gunas or individual nature.

"It is also significant that the Gita does not lay down any specific outer professions for the Brahmin and the Kshatriya. It describes the Brahmin and the Kshatriya merely in terms of their respective Gunas. It states that serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, wisdom, knowledge, science and pursuit of reality are the activities of Brahmin which arise from his inner nature. Similarly, it states that bravery,

vigour, fortitude, resourcefulness, non-escapism, generosity, and lordship are activities of the Kshatriya born from his inner nature.¹

"The present caste system is a conventional system, where prominent or even exclusive importance is given to external criteria such as birth, outer manifestations of customs and conventions, dress, language and symbols. Chaturvarnya of the Gita refers to an intermediate stage of society where divisions of functions and activities of society were necessitated but they were effected by reference to inner states of consciousness and inner qualities as also by subtle manifestations of action. It was also recognised that by birth everyone is Shudra and that it is by cultivation of higher qualities that one can rise into superior classes of society. There is also a deeper view of Chaturvarnya, which recognises equality of all the *varṇas* and where there is no rigidity with regard to divisions of activities. We can see in the case of Sri Krishna himself; we see how he manifested the qualities of all the four types. He is known like a Brahmin as the expounder of knowledge and as a Teacher; he manifested the great qualities of the Kshatriya as a ruler, an administrator and a diplomat; he also manifested the qualities of the Vaishya by excelling in virtues appropriate to prosperity, opulence, and mastery over relationship of exchange manifest so clearly in relationships of love of various kinds. As a charioteer, Sri Krishna manifested the highest qualities required in performing activities of physical labour.

"In modern society a new pressure has been built up under which increasing number of individuals are required to develop four-fold personality. Dignity of labour, the quality of the Shudra, is extolled both in theory and practice; everybody is today expected to participate like a Kshatriya in the governance of society and state; and with explosion of knowledge, development of the capacity to learn throughout one's life has become a necessity; this means that everyone is required to become a perpetual Brahmin; finally, earning livelihood and amassing of wealth is expected of everyone. Whatever may be drawbacks of present system of society, there is no doubt that the gospel of equality and development of four-fold personality is becoming inescapable.

"It is in this wide context that you have to reconsider your premises and liberate yourself from the confusions that are likely to arise by trying to read mistakenly in the Gita the justification of the present rigid caste system which is still unfortunately operative in practical affairs of life in India."

Professor Chitle stopped for a while. When I said nothing, he continued:

"Let us look at the situation in a different way. The ancient system of Chaturvarnya, of the four varnas, had a triple aspect; it had a social and economic aspect, it had a cultural aspect and it had a spiritual aspect.

"On the economic side, it recognised four functions of the social man in the community, - the religious and intellectual, the political, the economic and the servile functions. There were, thus, four kinds of works, (i) the work of religious

ministership, letters, learning and knowledge, (ii) the work of Government, politics, administration and war, (iii) the work of production, wealth-making and exchange, (iv) the work of hired labour and service. And an endeavour was made to found and stabilise the whole arrangement of society on the operation of the four functions among four clearly marked classes. I must add that this system was not peculiar to India; with certain differences, it was a dominating feature of a stage of social evolution in other ancient or medieval societies also.

"It must also be remarked that the four functions are still inherent in the life of all normal communities, although the class divisions no longer exist. The present society may be called a purely productive and commercial society. We have, in Soviet Union, even a Shudra society of labour. But even in these societies, these four types of functions persist. There are thinkers moved to find the law and truth and guiding rules of existence; there are captains and leaders of industry, who would make all this productive activity an excuse for the satisfaction of their need of adventure and battle and leadership and dominance, and there are many typical purely productive and wealth-getting men; and finally, there are everywhere the average workers satisfied with a modicum of labour and the reward of their labour. But although these four functions exist, there is no rigidity limiting individuals only to one category of function or determining them by birth or by any other external symbolism. The fact is that wherever individualism begins to grow, wherever reason rises in revolt against convention,

the old system begins to be broken down, giving place to a more fluid order.

"I should, however, emphasise that in the older system of India, the economic division had attached to it a cultural idea which gave to each class its religious custom, its law of honour, ethical role, suitable education and training, type of character, family ideal and discipline. It is true that the facts of life did not always correspond to the ideal but there was a constant and strenuous endeavour to keep up, as much as possible, a real correspondence. The importance of this attempt and of the cultural ideal and atmosphere it created in the training of the social man was immeasurably high; but at the present day, it has little more than a historical, and evolutionary significance.

"The third element of Chaturvarnya was its spiritual aspect. In India a profound spiritual use and significance was attached to each of the four varnas of society. And if you study Gita properly you will find that it is by underlining this spiritual significance that we shall get at the real kernel of the teaching of the Gita. And it is in this aspect that you should think of your specific questions.

"I think your confusion will be cleared up if you try to understand what Gita really means when it lays down that apart from Dharma of the social order to which you belong, there is also *Swadharma*, the law of the development of your inner self. It should also be underlined that Gita lays down that *all* actions culminate in knowledge. Giving his own example, Sri Krishna says that he has no limitation of any action, and he wants the seeker to have the same wideness and freedom as belong to his own nature. He wants us to approach Him

through all manner of being, *sarvabhāvena*, so that one becomes tuned to His infinite nature, *madbhāva*."

I was under the spell of both the eloquence and the illuminating substance of Principal Chitle's words. I felt as though a veil of confusion had been lifted away from my mind, and yet, I was in need of a more concise and sharper statement. So I asked him, "Could you just kindly tell me the upshot of all that you have said? I am feeling so enlightened, but I need to be more precise."

Dr. Chitle smiled. He said, "All that I have said can be stated in the form of a few propositions. (1) All actions must be determined from within; (2) whatever action man does, if done according to the law of his being, the truth of his nature, can be turned Godwards and made an effective means of spiritual liberation and perfection; (3) although each of us has four tendencies in varying degrees each one of us has a predominant tendency in one direction, and so each one of us may allow growth of qualities and functions on the lines of one's pre-dominant tendency; but one need not necessarily feel bound exclusively to the law of that pre-dominant tendency. While following the lead of the pre-dominant tendency we should at the same time allow growth and development of all the four tendencies. This kind of flexible and comprehensive attitude is particularly required in our own times where social divisions are or ought to be broken down and where the situation is fluid. A new type of society is in the making, and that society will grow more rapidly on sound lines in proportion to which individuals of today develop as many characteristics and qualities and

capacities and skills as may be available within the present stock of natural abilities."

I felt greatly satisfied, but I was so overwhelmed that I could speak nothing by way of response.

Dr. Chitle summed up what he wanted to say: "Development of integral personality is the need of our time. You have to grow at once into an ideal Brahmin, ideal Kshatriya, ideal Vaishya and ideal Shudra. Do not think that because you are born a brahmin, you do not have the qualities of the Kshatriya in you, or that you should not develop the qualities of the Shudra in you. I may be a prince by birth and yet I may have the innate character and capacity also of a teacher and of a craftsman. In fact, all the four natures of brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra are divine in character. They are all born from the Divine. This is what the Veda speaks of in its famous *Purusha sūkta*. It is from the Divine himself that all the four - brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and sudra—have become manifest. All the four have become manifest, because all of them are inherent in the Divine."

This was a categorical and clear statement. But then I asked, "Sir, what is your advice?"

Principal Chitle smiled, but immediately became grave. He said, "Do not ask *me* to do what *you* should be doing. Examine your own nature. You must do according to your nature. Do not label yourself as a brahmin or a kshatriya or a vaishya or a shudra. What is important is what is your inner nature. Ask yourself: What are my present capacities? What are my potentialities?

How best should I develop all of them in such a way that I can grow into an integral personality?"

I remained quiet for a little while. I said, "Sir, I have in my nature both the qualities of a teacher and the qualities of a lawyer or a judge."

"Then you should follow both." said Principal Chitle.

"But then, Sir, am I justified in asking your permission to do both M.A. and Law simultaneously?"

Principal Chitle burst out in a laughter. "You have brought me to my senses", he said.

Principal Chitle remained pensive for a few moments. Then he said, "No law should be inflexible. Laws should be so formulated that they regulate but also facilitate. If the law of our College restricts you unduly, there is a good case for us to modify it. Do not press me for an answer now. I shall have to think of all the implications. I shall also need the support of my colleagues, particularly, of Professor Desai and Professor Bapat. We have a few days more; meet me again on the 18th June, - two days before the commencement of the session."

At long last, I felt a sense of deep relief in my heart. I had no words to express my admiration of Principal Chitle and no words to express my gratitude for the illumination that he gave me and for his labour of nearly two hours during which he examined my confusions threadbare and delivered me into clear light.

It was exactly 11.00 p.m., and as Principal Chitle cast his glance on the clock. I said, "Sir, I have no words to express my gratefulness. I should

now be leaving; it is already 11 o'clock. But I should like to assure you of one thing. If you allow me to do both M.A. and Law simultaneously, I shall work very hard, and although results are in the hands of the Divine, I shall strive my best to prove that the concession that you made in my favour was quite justified."

Principal Chitle smiled. While I was leaving his room, he said, "I am sure I will invite you again at this late hour. You deserve this privilege."

VI

I was full of enthusiasm when I met Vishuddha the very next morning. It was a very brief meeting, since a number of people were waiting to meet him. But during the five minutes that I had with him, I told him how great was my meeting with Principal Chitle. In conclusion, I told him, "The talk was so satisfying that I do not mind now what fruit will it bear ultimately. The talk was a reward in itself."

Vishuddha smiled and said, "An effort rightly pursued culminates at the point where action by itself becomes intrinsically self-sufficient and utterly satisfying, irrespective of its consequences. This is one of the tests in the process of Karma Yoga. To an accomplished Karma Yogin, every action automatically bears this character. One can be sure that whenever an action attains this character, it produces the very best possible consequence."

I smiled and said, "Well, this meeting with Principal Chitle has given me this rare experience. And I would have liked to discuss a few things, but I do not wish to come between yourself and the people who are waiting for you."

Vishuddha said, "I am sorry I do not have any time now. But yesterday you complained to me that I had never spoken to you about my father. But the occasion never arose when I could speak to you about him. Now the occasion has presented itself. Last evening, after you left the St. Xavier's College, I had a short chat with my father. He said that since today happens to be a holiday, he wanted me to have lunch with him. He has also invited Prof. Bapat, Balwant, Alka as also a few lawyers who are working with Mr. Bapat and himself. And he has invited you, too."

"Me!" I cried out in surprise.

"Yes", said Vishuddha with emphasis. "And this was not at my prompting. He remembered you on his own. Did I not introduce you to him when he arrived at the St. Xavier's College? I am sure your handsome and intelligent face must have made an impression on him. In any case, he told me on his own to bring you with me for the lunch."

"What a beautiful circumstance!" I was truly elated. Just on the previous day, I had an extraordinary meeting with Principal Chitle; and on the very next day I was to have the privilege to lunch with one of the most distinguished jurists of our country! While I was thus reflecting, Vishuddha said, "Will it be possible for you to come straight to my father's residence? I have to be away from Kaivalyadham after 11 o'clock, and I will reach my father's residence direct. Let me give you my father's address. You know where Strand Cinema is located. Just opposite to it, there is a tall building and that building is called "White House". My father's flat is on the sixth floor. I

am sure there will be no difficulty for you in locating this building."

I left Vishuddha and returned to my hostel. As I had a few hours on hand, I decided to go up to the Hanging Gardens where I could collect myself and organise various ideas which had poured into my mind on the previous day. I also thought that the lunch might provide an excellent opportunity for me to put a few questions to Prof. Desai apropos of his talk the previous day.

VII

I arrived at the residence of Prof. Desai at 1.15 p.m. Vishuddha, Balwant and Prof. Bapat had already arrived. Four or five other persons whom I had not met earlier were also present. One of them was Mrs. Bapat and the other was Alka. The others were junior lawyers working with Professor Bapat and Professor Desai.

Contrary to my earlier impression of Prof. Bapat, I found that he was extremely cordial and affable. As they were talking about their personal affairs, I remained politely quiet. But by the time we were called to the dining table, Balwant had already raised a few interesting questions. He had expounded his theory of intellectual anarchism and asked Prof. Desai as to how long, in his opinion, the world civilisation would take to realise the goal of a harmonious state of anarchy, where the individual and the society could synchronise their steps of development without any need of an external agency like the State.

Prof. Desai said that even in the state of anarchy, some kind of a coordinating agency would be necessary. "Take, for instance," he said, "the

question of traffic. Don't you think there would be need for an agency to regulate traffic in order to avoid accidents?"

"Yes," said Balwant. "But that agency would not compel individuals, and it would not impose any law upon the members of society."

"In theory, you may be right," replied Professor Desai, "because you are assuming that every member would be so enlightened that he would not only submit automatically but would love to submit himself to the regulations which would be required for the smooth functioning of the collective life. But in practice, there are bound to be differences among individuals, and, therefore, in their level of enlightenment. What about children? Would they not be required to be compelled to follow traffic regulations?"

Balwant laughed. He said, "Uncle, what you are saying is so simple that it all goes without saying. There have to be some rules; but rules will be very simple. In any case, I do not think there will be any need of a complex machinery of law or of judiciary. What I am very keen about is to eliminate from the society professional lawyers; and even if they exist, they should perpetually remain briefless."

Prof. Desai laughed. He said, "Look, Balwant, as long as human beings exist on the earth, there will be normative thinking, and normative thinking is the real genesis of the species called lawyers. There have always been lawyers in society in the past; there are lawyers now; and there will be lawyers in the future, too. You cannot avoid them. Even in the state of anarchy, people will debate on the questions of the right

arrangement of the society, and even if the debates may not be acrimonious, there are bound to be differences of opinion. And while in certain situations differences of opinion do not matter, they do matter in regard to some other situations. So people will have to devise methods of arriving at some kind of agreement. And who will devise these methods? Who will formulate agreements? And who will interpret agreements? The clear answer is: "Lawyers, lawyers, lawyers."

We all laughed, and as we all rose up to move towards the dining table, I happened to be just next to Prof. Desai, who took my hands in his, and said, "What do you think of Balwant's anarchism? Would you like to live in anarchism or in a civilised society governed by law and order?"

I took the question very seriously and, as a consequence, I could make no reply. But as the lunch began, I turned to Prof. Desai and said, "I do not have words to express how very grateful I felt when I heard your lecture yesterday. I have read the Gita several times, but I had never suspected that its references to Shastra and Shraddha contained such a profound wisdom regarding law and jurisprudence. Since hearing you yesterday, there has been a real bombardment of my mind. I had never suspected that the Gita had a philosophy of revolution."

Prof. Bapat felt a shock at my use of word "revolution". He said, "Mahesh, Prof. Desai never spoke of "revolution" yesterday. Did he? I am sure Balwant has filled your mind with notions of revolutions, and when you were listening to

Prof. Desai, you were translating Prof. Desai's arguments in terms of Balwant's ideology."

Balwant said, "Let me say something."

Prof. Desai, however, intervened and said, "Balwant, you do not need to enter into an argument. I will answer both your father and Mahesh. If you read the Gita very carefully, you will find that there are two propositions. The first proposition advocates that one should abide by Shastra. But there is also the second proposition which can be derived from the question that Arjuna raises at the commencement of the seventeenth chapter. He asks, "What is the disposition of those, O Krishna, who disregarding the directions of Shastra, perform their works in the spirit of sacrifice with faith?"¹ What is inherent in this question is that there are people who disregard Shastra. It is true that the word "revolution" has not been used, but one would not object if one reads the hint of it in it.

"I spoke yesterday of deviation from Shastra, and I also gave examples such as those of Buddha deviating from the Vedic shastra and of Christ abrogating and fulfilling the Mosaic law. Surely, the idea of revolt is involved in it. Yes, Mahesh, I have read the Gita very often, and sometimes, under conditions of stress. My personal life has been a life of battle, and in this life I have often felt a sense of revolt. I had also raised in my own mind several times this question, namely, whether the Gita is a closed book or whether it is an open gate through which new truths can be constantly discovered. It was after repeated studies of the Gita that its last injunction began

to dawn on me with a powerful rush of floodlight. That last injunction is: Give up all dharmas and surrender to Me alone. I asked myself: 'What could be the meaning of giving up all Dharmas?' With this question, I read again and again the last six chapters. Then I found that in these chapters, Gita describes various kinds of Dharmas. It speaks of Dharma appropriate to the field of knowledge, knower, and knowledge itself; it describes the dharma of Sattvic guna, Rajasic guna and Tamasic guna; it describes the nature and dharma of the "ashvattha tree" as symbolic of the world, samsara; it describes the nature and dharma of the Deva and the Asura; it describes the nature of Dharma, of Shraddha; it distinguishes three components of Kartavyam Karma and speaks of the characteristics of sacrifices, austerities and gifts; it presents a concrete idea of different kinds of foods and tells us what is sattvic food, what is rajasic food and what is tamasic food; it distinguishes between three kinds of renunciations; it also analyses five component parts or causes of action, - it speaks of the seat of action (*adhisthāna*); doer of action (*kartā*); instruments of action (*kāraṇa*); various categories of effort (*cheshtā*), and providence (*daivam*),- and it presents in detail three-fold nature of dharma of each of these five elements. I asked the question as to why the Gita had taken so much trouble to delineate the concept of dharma in such minute details. And I found that all this had a profound bearing on questions of ethics and on questions of law. And I had truly felt illuminated when I read its explicit reference to Shastra. And then I pondered over the question as to why Arjuna spoke of the

consequences of deviating from Shastra. Surely, Gita must be profoundly aware of how Shastra normally tends to bind individuals and imprison them into fixed grooves of life and nature. Surely, I said to myself, Gita must have considered the problem of those who feel the yoke of law to be intolerable at one stage or the other. And as I reflected more and more, I found that the entire drift of the argument of the last six chapters is to disclose to the seeker the means by which one can transcend the limitations of the three Gunas and of various dharmas and enter into the liberation of infinity. It is then that I realised the importance of the concept of Gunatita, the concept of one who has risen above the Gunas. In fact, the emphasis on the concept of Gunatita is underlined, when towards the end of fourteenth chapter, Arjuna specifically asks the question as to by what marks the one who has risen above the Gunas can be recognised.¹ And Sri Krishna answers this question in some detail.² It became clear that while the Gita accepts the bondage of Gunas and also the bondage of the law of the Gunas for the ordinary course of life, it encourages the breaking of the chains of the bondage of Gunas by gradual sublimation and perfection of Sattwa. It even describes divinity and divine nature and mentions that divinity and divine nature are above the Gunas. The goal of the Gita is, therefore, to ask individuals to rise above the bondage and to attain to the freedom of the Divine Nature. Sri Krishna even speaks of the concept of Sādharmya³ and tells

1. 14.21

2. 14.22 - 27

3. 14.2

us that the highest status of the individual is attained when the individual is united with the Divine not only in *essence* but even in *nature* and in *attributes*."

At this point, Alka intervened and said, "Uncle, I am afraid you have become oblivious of the fact that you are sitting on the dining table. Please do some justice to the dish that is in front of you."

Prof. Desai laughed and said, "I am sorry, but the subject is so important. I feel very happy that Mahesh has raised a very important issue."

Alka said, "But you should first finish your lunch. We have all finished it, and you are far behind."

Prof. Desai said, "Never mind. I never intended to eat so much. And I have already eaten enough. They can even remove my plate. In fact, if you have finished your food, let us have dessert."

Dessert was quickly served; and it seemed that Prof. Desai was keen to finish his argument. And as soon as we rose from the dining table, Prof. Desai turned to me and said, "This concept of *sadharma* must be read with what Krishna speaks of *svakarma*, *swadharma*, *paradharma*, *svabhava-niyatam-karma* and *sahajam karma*.¹ My feeling is that Gita distinguishes between a general law and a specific law. Ordinarily, it seems to prescribe that everybody should follow the general law or *shastra*; but on a more subtle level, Gita wants everyone to understand his own nature, to discover his own specific law of action and to act

1. 18.45-48

according to that law, even if it is in conflict with the general law or shastra, provided it is motivated by sattvic shraddha. And then Gita goes even farther and lays down that in order to attain unity with the Supreme Being and Supreme Nature (madbhava), one has to transcend *all* the laws."

Balwant intervened to say, "This transcendence of all the laws is precisely the core of anarchism that I am speaking of. This is the reason why I seem to be inclined more and more to accept the path of Yoga expounded in the Gita."

"You should, however, make a distinction between your brand of anarchism, and the doctrine of transcendence of all laws that is contained in the Gita," said Prof. Desai forcefully. He continued, "Your anarchism, even intellectual anarchism, does not transcend the limitations of egoism. What Gita teaches is not only transcendence of all the laws, Dharmas, but it asks you to transcend the very root of desire and egoism. The difference between your anarchism and Gita's teaching is as much as a difference between a dog and an elephant."

Balwant felt very uncomfortable. He said, "Uncle, I am not able to answer you at this moment. But I shall make an in-depth study of the Gita. I hope to come up with an argument which will convince you that my position is not very far from that of the Gita. If not intellectual anarchism, there is certainly the basis in the Gita for what I can call spiritual anarchism."

Prof. Bapat, who was quiet for so long, warmed up a little and said, "In that case, you would have only vindicated Prof. Desai's suggestion. For the difference between your

present anarchism and spiritual anarchism is as great as between a dog and an elephant."

Balwant replied, "Let us see how far my research proceeds and we shall then make a judgment. You will agree that no lawyer or no judge should pre-judge the issue."

I was watching Alka. In fact, she appeared inwardly sad, but she was perhaps trying to put up a cheerful face. She noticed perhaps that I was watching her. So she turned to me and said, "Mahesh, do you know that my uncle is a good actor? And he has a remarkable mastery over the Shakespearean dramas?"

"Is that so ?", I asked.

"Uncle, why don't you give a recitation of one of the memorable passages from Shakespeare?" Alka pleaded.

Balwant also liked the idea very much and said, "Yes, uncle. We have not heard your recitation since a long time. Let us hear from you that famous speech of Antony."

Alka intervened, "No, uncle", she said, "I do not like that speech very much. It is too rhetorical and too ironical. There is not that sincerity which is to be found, for example, in that exhortation of Portia to Shylock. Besides, its message is noble, and I think that that passage is worthy to be learnt by every student of law, every lawyer and every judge. Uncle, why don't you recite to us Portia on Mercy? Do you remember how, once when I was in my teens, you had moved me to tears by reciting that passage? And since that time, I have read that passage again and again. I can never forget it."

"Well, Alka", said Prof. Desai, "In that case, let us hear your recitation of it. That will give us a great delight."

This suggestion was liked by everybody, and everybody pressed her not only to recite but even to act out that passage.

Alka, however, turned to one of the junior lawyers and said, "Malati, please help me. You have tremendous histrionic ability." Malati responded readily. She began:

Portia: Is your name Shylock ?

Shylock: Shylock is my name.

Portia: Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;

Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

You stand within his danger, do you not?

Antonio : Ay, so he says.

Portia : Do you confess the bond?

Antonio : I do.

Portia : Then the Jew must be merciful.

Shylock: On what compulsion must I ? Tell me that.

Portia : The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.

Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him
that takes.

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it become
The throned monarch better than his
crown;

His sceptre shows the force of temporal
power,

The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest
God's

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore,
Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this --
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation; we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all
to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant
there."

Her performance was excellent; everyone applauded her. Even Prof. Bapat said that he was thrilled. Prof. Bapat actually went one step farther and said, "Malati, why don't you enact the entire court scene of this play? I always recommend to students of law to study that court scene. There is so much to learn from it. This particular passage that you have just now recited has a great message for the entire realm of law. Law should always yield to mercy; mercy is an expression of divine grace, and divine grace is but another name of

freedom. I do not advocate anarchism, but I do believe that when human civilisation develops higher forms of culture, the conflict between law and freedom begins to be resolved. Law ceases to imprison freedom, and it becomes the child of freedom."

Vishuddha said, "Uncle, you should write a book on this subject. You should make suggestions as to how the present law can be upgraded by infusion into it of higher realms of thought and culture. I remember how the other day you spoke of the law of wages and the principle that that law should embody."

Balwant was surprised to hear this. He said, "Father, you never spoke to me about this. What is this new theory that you have developed?"

Prof. Bapat replied, "Oh! it is nothing! It was just a reference to a parable in the New Testament."

Vishuddha got up from his seat and said, "Balwant, don't ask uncle. I will just read out to you that parable. Since uncle spoke to me about this, I have read this parable again and again, and I feel that if that parable could be made a basis of our Labour Laws, we could really build up a salutary system of the relationship between management and labour."

Vishuddha brought out the New Testament from his father's library and coming back to his chair, he said, "I cannot give the performance of the kind that we had from Malati."

"Then why don't you ask Malati to read it out?" suggested Balwant.

"Yes, Malati," said Prof. Desai.

Vishuddha gave the book to Malati and pointed out where the passage occurs in the book. Malati read it aloud:

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do

what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous? So the last will be first, and first will be last."

As soon as Malati finished the reading, Balwant turned to his father and said, "Father, do you really mean that the system of wages in our country can be re-designed on the basis of the principle laid down in this parable?"

"Why not?" replied Prof. Bapat.

"You recall what Prof. Desai said yesterday in his speech. He said that one of the tasks of the law-makers and interpreters of law is to visualise higher truths of perfection and to strive to modify the present law in the image of those higher truths. If this exercise is done vigorously by all concerned, we could certainly arrive at a workable formulation."

"Father", said Balwant, "I am sure I am making impact upon you. Or else, how could one explain such a revolutionary thought in your mind?"

All laughed. But Prof. Desai remarked, "Balwant, why don't you think that your own so-called revolutionary ideas are a result of the impact that your father has been making upon you since you were a child!"

"Yes, uncle, you are quite right," said Alka, "Spirit of revolution is actually a hereditary transmission to Balwant from my uncle. It is because of his false egoism that Balwant thinks that he alone has the prerogative to think of revolutions and to initiate revolutions!"

"Thank you, my daughter," said Prof. Bapat. "What Balwant needs is humility; what he needs

is the perception that revolutions existed much before him and greater revolutions are being conceived even at this moment than what he can imagine. But now, before we disperse, who will comply with that request which I made?"

"Which request, uncle?" asked Alka.

"I just spoke to Malati about the court scene in the Merchant of Venice, where Portia deals with Shylock and inflicts a fatal blow on his greed," answered Prof. Bapat.

"But uncle, do you think she can enact the entire scene? If I get a copy of the drama... Is it possible, Malati?"

Vishuddha immediately stood up and brought the collected works of Shakespeare from Prof. Desai's library and gave it to Malati.

Malati turned to Prof. Bapat and said: "The entire court scene is rather too long. Can you select just one passage?"

"All right," said Prof. Bapat. "I shall suggest one passage which illustrates the subtlety of the intelligence of Portia. You know, I always impress upon students of law that they should develop subtlety of intelligence and that their mind should become so sharp that they can easily grasp subtle points of law. And here is the passage. Give me the book."

Prof. Bapat turned the pages of the book and pointing to the concerned passage, he told Malati: "Here it is!"

Malati took the book and recited the following passage:

"Portia : A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine.

The court awards it and the law doth give it.

Shylock : Most rightful judge!

Portia : And you must cut this flesh from off his breast.

The law allows it and the court awards it.

Shylock : Most learned judge! A sentence!
Come, prepare.

Portia : Tarry a little; there is something else.

This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood:

The words expressly are "a pound of flesh".

Take then thy bond, take though thy pound of flesh;

But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed

One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods

Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate unto the state of Venice.

Gratiano : O upright judge! Mark, Jew.
O learned judge!

Shylock : Is that the law ?

Portia : Thyself shalt see the act;
For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

Gratiano : O learned judge ! Mark, Jew. A
learned judge !

Shylock : I take this offer then: pay the
bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

Bassanio: Here is the money.

Portia : Soft !

The Jew shall have all justice. Soft! No haste.

He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gratiano :O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Portia : Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more

But just a pound of flesh; if thou tak'st more

Or less than a just pound - be it but so much

As makes it light or heavy in the substance,

Or the division of the twentieth part

Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn

But in the estimation of a hair --

Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gratiano :A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

Portia : Why doth the Jew pause? Take thy forfeiture.

Shylock : Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bassanio :I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Portia : He hath refus'd it in the open court;

He shall have merely justice, and his bond.

Gratiano :A Daniel still say I, a second Daniel!

I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shylock : Shall I not have barely my principal?

Portia : Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture

To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shylock : Why, then the devil give him good
of it!

I'll stay no longer question.

Portia : Tarry, Jew.

The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be prov'd against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears by manifest proceeding
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehears'd.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

Gratiano : Beg that thou mayst have leave
to hang thyself;

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's
charge.

Duke : That thou shalt see the difference of our
spirit,

I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it.
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Portia : Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

Shylock : Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that.

You take my house when you do take the prop

That doth sustain my house; you take my life

When you do take the means whereby I live.

Portia : What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gratiano: A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake!

Antonio : So please my lord the Duke and all the court

To quit the fine for one half of his goods;

I am content, so he will let me have

The other half in use, to render it

Upon his death unto the gentleman

That lately stole his daughter --

Two things provided' more : that, for this favour,

He presently become a Christian;

The other, that he do record a gift,

Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd

Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

Duke : He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Portia : Art thou contented, Jew ? What dost thou say?

Shylock : I am content.

Portia : Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shylock : I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;

I am not well; send the deed after me
And I will sign it.

Duke : Get thee gone, but do it.

This was an extraordinary rendering. Malati had acted the role not only of Portia exquisitely but also the roles of Shylock, Gratiano, Bassanio, Antonio and the Duke. It was simply wonderful! Prof. Bapat indicated that he had another engagement at 4 o'clock and that he should like to leave. As for me, although I had no engagements, I said out of politeness that I too should be leaving. But then everybody got up to leave. Vishuddha, however, told me that he wanted to remain with his father but that I could meet him the next morning at 9 o'clock. He said that he had no engagement the next day till late in the evening. I thanked him very much and took leave of Prof. Desai and everybody else.

VIII

The next morning I got ready early as I was keen to meet Vishuddha. I had many questions in my mind; some of these questions were personal in character, others were theoretical and practical. During the previous two days, I had come to know of Vishuddha's personal background and wanted to know the story of his development. I also wanted to find out what really was the thrust of his life. Although I was acquainted with him over the last two years, I came to realise that my knowledge about him was quite superficial. I had taken him to be a mere teacher of certain yogic practices. I had never suspected that he had deep

connection with the world of law. I had also known him as a pupil of Brahmadev, but I had never enquired into the depth, breadth and height of his knowledge. I wanted to ask Vishuddha about all these matters. I was also keen to know more about Balwant and his activities. There were some deeper questions also in my mind which had become crystallised during the last two days as a result of the speech of Prof. Desai and my personal acquaintance with Principal Chitle and Prof. Bapat.

As I was about to leave my hostel for Kaivalya Dham, there was a knock at my door. When I opened the door I was pleasantly surprised to find Vishuddha with his charming smile. As I asked him to come into the room, he said, "I can see that you are ready to go out."

"Yes, I was just about to go to Kaivalya Dham to meet you and to spend as much as time as you could spare. You had told me yesterday that you had no special engagement until late in the afternoon. So I thought that if unexpected visitors do not come in the way of your time, I could benefit from my talks with you."

"Well, if you want that I should not be assailed by unexpected visitors, we should escape to the seashore or to some garden. But let me first give you the good news."

I looked intently at Vishuddha and asked him, "What is it?"

Vishuddha said, "A final decision has been taken regarding your admission to the law college. You will be allowed to do both Law and M.A. simultaneously."

I felt a thrill and a great relief. Vishuddha explained to me how the decision had been arrived at. He said that Principal Chitle had invited Prof. Desai and Prof. Bapat at his residence on the previous evening to discuss my case. Prof. Chitle had argued that mine was a fit case for special consideration. After a short discussion, a decision was taken to amend the rules for admission and to permit M.A. students to prosecute law studies provided that the concerned candidates had secured first class in the qualifying examination and had shown ability to shoulder the burden of pursuing two courses at the same time.

In a flash of a second, I saw how within a few days circumstances had so shaped themselves that what had seemed impossible had become feasible so smoothly and easily.

"This is all due to you," I said. "This can be described as a magic of contact with you."

"It is truly a magic of the aspiration," said Vishuddha. He looked at me sharply with his bewitching smile. Then he added, "There is a law of demand and supply in the world. Fundamentally, there is a profound science of events. Normally, events appear to be occurring almost by chance. In any case, we do not know how and why events occur. Human beings seem to enjoy or suffer helplessly under inexplicable torrents of events. There are, of course, two extreme theories. According to one, man is a puppet of events and destiny; according to another, man is the maker of events and destiny. But according to the science of events, both these theories are partially true and partially erroneous. The central shaper of events is the power of

aspiration. The greater the awakening of man, and the greater the intensity of his aspiration, the greater is his power of shaping circumstances and events."

"I do not follow what you really imply," I said.

Vishuddha smiled and said, "I will explain to you. But let us first get out from your hostel. Let us go to the Hanging Garden. It will be almost empty by now, and we shall have uninterrupted time to talk and discuss."

I readily agreed. Within half an hour, we were in the Hanging Garden and we found ourselves strolling leisurely in its beautiful tracks.

Vishuddha explained to me from his personal life the law of aspiration and how he had made experiments with that law. This gave me an opportunity to know about his boyhood and how he came to develop his personality. Vishuddha gave me a long answer.

He said: "From my early boyhood, I had a natural inclination to observe myself and to experience varying states of my nature. There was inherent delight in my inner being and there was inexpressible sweetness in my temperament. My natural tendency was to fall in love with nature, with birds, with animals and human beings. In my solitude in my garden I used to talk to plants and flowers, and I used to imagine that they too were talking to me. I had special love for jasmine and rose and used to spend hours in their company. Every night before going to sleep, I used to go to a special domain of my nature where the fibres of my thoughts and feelings

vibrated like strings of the violin and wrapped me in contemplation of harmonies of soft sounds. It was heavenly.

"At the age of twelve, I lost my mother. This was a great shock to me, but it was a catastrophe for my father. He had loved her so deeply that he could not imagine himself living without her. He began to ask questions about the survival of soul after death. In fact, he launched upon a quest for immortality. I was his intimate friend, and he shared with me his quest with great transparency and depth. I was, of course, unripe to understand his philosophical questions. But I gave him all my warmth of understanding and affection. During that period, my father went through a psychological upheaval, and while he continued his career of law, he took up a serious study of our ancient wisdom. He also began to practise meditation and I also practised it in my own way.

"Unfortunately, with the growth of philosophical ideation in my mind, I began to lose my earlier intensity of sweetness and delight which were inherent in my nature. I began to feel uneasy. I did not really understand what was happening to me. But I could notice that there was growing in me a certain kind of disequilibrium. Within a short time, I began to feel disoriented. My spontaneity vanished, and I began to feel strain and burden of artificiality in my thinking, feeling and behaviour. I felt as though I had forgotten the art of life which was a natural gift implanted in my nature right from the beginning.

"By the time I entered my fifteenth year, I felt the need to undertake a voyage of the history

of human thought. I wanted to know of the greatest thinkers of human life, its problems and their solutions.

"One evening, I explained to my father this aspiration that was burning in my heart and asked him how I could go about it. I was, however, unable to express myself adequately, but I believe that what I told him made no impression on him. He just looked at me and made no comments. I had expected my father to take me up on his wings and to travel with me in my voyage of the history of human thought. Days passed, weeks passed, months passed, - nothing happened. In the story of my psychological development, the silence of my father created a shock that seemed to me so terrible that it caused a barrier in my relationship with him. I do not think that he noted anything unusual in my behaviour, but I closed myself in my shell and stopped talking to him about my deepest urges and needs.

"At seventeen, I finished my intermediate studies in my college and, thinking that it would please my father very much, if I took up the study of law, I joined the Law College. I could not, however, relate my legal studies with the inmost enquiry that was constantly knocking the doors of my mind. A further disequilibrium in my consciousness was created and I began to look for ways and means by which my lost equilibrium could be regained.

"One important question that occupied me at this stage was: What is the nature of human nature? What is mind? What are states of consciousness and how do they alternate?

"Since my boyhood I had noticed what I used to call "rhythms" of stages of development. These "rhythms" disappeared, and I began to feel as though I was living in a desert, psychologically.

"I wanted to regain my intensity of delight and sweetness, but it was evident that I had drifted away and it seemed to me that I was all alone in my journey and there was darkness all around me.

"My outer behaviour was, however, so normal that nobody, - not even my father - could suspect that I was desperately looking for an escape from my intolerable psychological condition.

"During my winter vacation, however, I went to Mount Girnar for an excursion. It was as I was walking on the high altitudes of this mountain that I happened to enter into an extremely beautiful forest. This forest is known as Bharatvan, and it was here that I happened to meet Brahmadevji. This meeting changed my life altogether.

"The story is long, but I shall be brief. I found in Brahmadevji a store of knowledge and wisdom that was amazingly rich and varied. I decided to stay in Bharatvan in a small cottage next to the cottage of Brahmadevji. I wanted to study all that he could teach and I could learn.

"When my father came to learn of my decision through my letter, he was greatly disturbed and rushed to Bharatvan to persuade me to return to Bombay. But his very first meeting with Brahmadevji convinced him that I had made a correct decision. As a matter of fact, my father expressed his gratitude towards me for having discovered some one who represented a great synthesis of ancient and modern knowledge.

"My father became a disciple of Brahmadevji and during the subsequent years, he began to spend his summer vacations at Bharatvan so that he could study and practise his spiritual life under the direct supervision of Brahmadevji.

"During the next five years, I studied on my own the entire history of thought, eastern and western. I had, of course, the guidance of Brahmadevji, but his methods of teaching were quite unique. Externally, he was not very communicative; he guided me only through suggestions and encouraging smile. A major part of my studies was devoted to the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita. I also studied Indian Law and jurisprudence, mainly under the guidance of my father who used to visit Bharatvan during summer vacations. I underwent a systematic practice of various systems of Yoga,- Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Tantra. Living in Bharatvan was an exceptional process of education."

I was greatly interested in Vishuddha's story but was curious to know what had happened to his state of disequilibrium which was the main cause of his psychological difficulties.

Vishuddha seemed to understand my question by inner telepathy. So he said :

"At an early stage, I put to Brahmadevji three questions: (1) What is the most comprehensive and synthetic thought? (2) What is the most comprehensive law in the world? (3) What is the nature of highest realisation?

"Brahmadevji's answers were cryptic.

"He had said, ' The most synthetic thought is what the Veda calls the seven - headed thought. The most comprehensive law is the law of sacrifice. The highest state of realisation is what the Gita calls the state of *sadharmya*, the state of oneness not only with the essence of the Divine but also with the nature of the Divine.' "

I found that none of these three answers were comprehensible to me. So I asked Vishuddha to explain me these answers.

Vishuddha said, "Let me first say that Brahmadevji made me understand the distinction between various states of consciousness. He told me the story of the quest of Bhrigu as described in the Taittiriya Upanishad. In this story, there is a description as to how Bhrigu discovered, first, that Matter was the ultimate reality; this was followed by his discovery that Life-Force was the ultimate reality. Next, he discovered that Mind was the ultimate reality; then he discovered that Vijnana was the ultimate reality. Later, he realised that Bliss was the ultimate reality. And Brahmadevji explained to me that even beyond bliss one could discover that Consciousness is the ultimate reality; and beyond Consciousness one could discover that the Pure Existence is the ultimate reality. These are seven steps of discoveries; each step constitutes one step of thought and all the steps of thought can be comprehended and embraced in a vast synthetic movement of thought which the Veda calls the seven-headed thought.

"Brahmadevji had explained that the seven-headed thought is innate in our consciousness, but we are not conscious of it. But whenever this

innate thought begins to vibrate, one begins to experience a true harmony in the inner being. It is this harmony which is the inexhaustible store of inherent delight and sweetness. He pointed out that many young children are unconsciously in contact with the seven-headed thought, as a result of which they experience automatic equilibrium and compactness of consciousness. But since the contact is unconscious, most of the children lose it at an early stage of development. In a few cases, however, this contact remains alive even for a longer period. This had actually happened in my case. But so long as this contact remains unconscious, there remains always a risk of a sudden collapse of the equilibrium. And once the disequilibrium takes place, man is obliged to trace the cycle of analytical thought through which Bhṛigu went from one step of thought to the next higher step of thought. Even then the lost harmony is not regained in its full intensity and in full experience. It took me five years to complete the cycle of seven-headed thought; and even though I arrived at some kind of equilibrium, my satisfaction was far from perfect."

"What did you do then? " I asked.

"Here, again, there is a long story," said Viśuddha. "But briefly speaking, I was initiated in the study and practice of the law of sacrifice. And this is the domain of Yoga. It took me a considerable time to understand the concept of Yoga. Often Yoga is confused with religion or else with ethics. The Indian terms in this context helped me a great deal; for we have, in India, three different words for three different things. Yogic life is termed *adhyātmik jīvan*; religious life is

termed *dharmic jivan* and the ethical life is termed "*naitic jivan*".

I did not want to interrupt Vishuddha but fearing that he might mistakenly assume that I had understood this distinction, I asked him to explain it to me.

He said, "One can write a volume on this question. But let me make a brief remark. Ethical life is governed by ideas of good and right in terms of utility, duty or deliverances of conscience or categorical imperative. The criteria of judgment here fluctuate between various extremes of the social good and the individual good and of the harmony or compromise between the individual and the society. It opens up sometimes to injunctions of religions, but ethical thought subjects them to a rational scrutiny and, in doing so, it loses itself to varying uncertainties or infirmities of judgment. Ethical life remains bound by the conflict of standards of conduct. And it is led up to a higher search where it reaches out to a higher light. This is when ethical life becomes a spring-board for Yogic life.

"Religious life derives its rule of life from sets of doctrines or beliefs held to be indisputably true under the authority of revelation or scripture or actions of a religious founder or prophet or avtar. Religious life may allow theological discussions but it remains basically narrowed down to unquestioning acceptance of dogma and practice of rituals, ceremonies and prescribed acts. It also gets itself tied up with the church or priesthood and social structures supposed to have been sanctioned and sanctified by the religious beliefs and customs.

"The Yogic life may begin with ethical life or religious life or with both but such a starting—point is not indispensable. For it is fundamentally a quest of knowledge, possession and realisation of the spirit by methods of radical transformation of our psychological being and its cognitive, conative and affective capacities and potentialities. One discovers a source of knowledge which is ever - progressive in its application to life and its problems. Yogic life is an explosion of consciousness which liberates itself from dogmas, rituals, ceremonies and authority of any establishment. Its concern is with the direct realisation of the higher objects of knowledge and its application to the problems of life and the world.

"But let me now come to the science of Yoga itself. Here, too, there are schools of specialisation and schools of synthesis. As you know, Yoga has come to mean to many people a system of physical exercises which belong to Hatha Yoga. It is not generally known that Hatha Yoga is only one of the several systems of Yoga and that in some of the most synthetic or integral systems of Yoga, most or all exercises of Hatha Yoga are optional or else they are dispensed with altogether.

"Yoga is sometimes identified exclusively with the system of Yoga expounded by Patanjali, - the system of Raja Yoga, which apart from discipline of purification of consciousness, (consisting of *yama* and *niyama*) and that of elementary pranayama and asanas taken from Hatha Yoga, proposes a method of arriving at concentration of consciousness (*samadhi*) by means of a gradual cessation of modifications of the stuff of consciousness (*chitta vritti nirodhah*).

"When I speak of Yoga, I mean the principle and system of synthesis in which the methods and goals of different systems of Yoga are synthesised on the basis of some common principle. One of the systems of synthesis of which you are aware is the synthesis of Yoga to be found in Gita. Brahmadevji taught me also the synthesis of Yoga of the Veda and the Upanishad. He is also practising a new Yoga of the synthesis which he considers to be indispensable for solving difficult problems of the contemporary crisis of humanity.

"The principle of synthesis in the Gita consists of integral application of the law of sacrifice."

Things were getting difficult, and many questions were rising in my mind at the same time; but I did not want to interrupt Vishuddha's flow of thought. So I simply asked one question: "What is the meaning of sacrifice? Is it the kindling of fire in the altar and offerings of fuels, clarified butter and other materials?"

"No", replied Vishuddha.

"The sacrifice that you described is the ritualistic sacrifice; and even the ritualists believe that that sacrifice is symbolic in character. In the Veda, the original sacrifice is described as the sacrifice of the *Purusha* into the activities of Nature. In this original sacrifice, the Divine stands back from the manifestation of His power in the poise of witnessing and controlling *Purusha* and plunges Himself into manifestation or Nature by a sort of projecting consciousness. This projection is the original act of sacrifice of *Purusha*, and it introduces the process of constant vibration of the will of the Divine into the activities of Nature,

which impels also the return of the energies and activities of Nature towards the will and being of *Purusha*. The Divine Himself plunges into Nature and Nature offers herself to the Divine : this is the law of sacrifice which synthesises and coordinates all the processes of law in the world. It is fundamentally the law of self-giving or the law of mutual self-giving. It is to this law that Sri Krishna refers when he declares that the Lord created the Universe along with the law of the sacrifice.

"This matter is extremely important for those who want to practise law in individual life or collective life or in the life of the State. It is when I came to understand the law of sacrifice that the entire domain of legal studies came to assume a different aspect. I came to realise that all lawyers, all legislators, all judges are fundamentally seekers of the knowledge of the law of sacrifice consciously or unconsciously. All of them are engaged in determining what is right action and what is wrong action in the light of the universal law of sacrifice. All of them are engaged in promoting right action, and therefore, of the law of sacrifice.

"Karma Yoga is the real field of lawyers; for Karma Yoga is a path of action in which higher forms and higher motivations of action are discovered and practised. It is at the higher levels of Karma Yoga that the universal law of sacrifice is consciously discovered and practised.

"Sacrifice symbolically means kindling of fire; but this fire is not physical fire; it is the fire of aspiration; it is the fire that unites material life with the light of the spirit. In practical terms, the law of sacrifice prescribes that all activities should

be offered as the fuel of the sacrifice, as an offering to the Supreme Divine who is seated by means of His sacrifice in the heart of energies of Nature. It is not the tinders, it is not the clarified butter, which are the fuels of this sacrifice. It is works of knowledge, works of devotion, works of life-force, which are fuels of this sacrifice. That is why the Gita speaks of offering of all activities to the Divine as the fundamental principle of Karma Yoga. This Karma Yoga leads us to a synthesis of action, knowledge and devotion.

"Our human law, that which is dealt with by the lawyers in the courts of law, is only an outer reflectionⁿ of integrating law of sacrifice. The task of the lawyers is to keep in the forefront of vision this integrating law of sacrifice and measure the present law of the State by finding out the degree to which it approximates to the universal integrating law of sacrifice. The lesser the distance between the two, the higher is the level of society and its culture; the greater the distance between the two, the lower is the state of society and its culture. And the ideal is reached when individuals in the society transcend the State law and practise the law of Karma Yoga and arrive at a point where there remains no outer law, but only one inner law, the law of sacrifice of the Supreme Divine into the activities of Nature and the law of sacrifice of activities of Nature offering themselves to the Supreme Divine.

"This and much more I learned from Brahmadevji about the law of sacrifice, which also contributed to the development of equilibrium in my consciousness. But let me now come quickly to the most important discovery that I made when

I was still living in Mount Girnar. As you know, after my first five years of stay with Brahmadevji, we both left Mount Girnar and migrated to Tiger Hills near Darjeeling. And it was before I went to Darjeeling that I made a detailed study of the Yoga of the Gita. It was through this study that I came to understand what Brahmadevji had told me earlier about the highest state of realisation as the state of *sādharmya*. Let me explain.

"It is well known that the Gita speaks of three *gunas* of nature, *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*. Even human nature is a mixture of these three *gunas*. It is a mixture of the state of knowledge and happiness (*sattwa*), a state of restless activity, struggle and impulsion (*rajas*), and a state of inertia and ignorance or mechanical repetitive activity (*tamas*). These three *gunas* are centered in each individual in his specific complex of desires and egoism.

"But the Gita also speaks of a state which lies beyond this three-fold nature. It speaks of the state of *nirvāna*, a state of utter silence and stillness. This state is also called the state of *trigunātīta*, the state which is above the *gunas* or which is devoid of three *gunas*. "

"But the Gita goes still farther. It declares that there is a higher nature, not only of quietude and stillness but also of dynamism which is *divine* in nature. This declaration is of fundamental importance, particularly in the context of Karma Yoga, in the context of synthesis of the Gita's Yoga and in the context of the determination of the higher goal of human life."

Vishuddha paused a little. He was perhaps wondering whether I was bored or tired. He asked

me, "Are you tired?" He added. "We can stop here and discuss this matter again later on."

"Not at all", I protested. "On the contrary, I am absorbing every word that you are uttering. I am feeling extremely enlightened. Please continue. I want to hear more and more."

He continued : "Well, then, let me refer to the middle six chapters of the Gita, chapters seven to twelve. In these chapters, Gita describes the fullness of the Divine Being and His Divine Nature. The Gita also gives us some broad hints as to whether we can discover the divine nature even in our ordinary lower nature. The Divine Nature operates immanently in the universe at large but it is discernible only partially in each of us at various levels of consciousness. It operates as the veiled source of sattvic, rajasic and tamasic movements of Nature. It operates there secretly and therefore not experienced by us in our ordinary process of life. At rare moments the veil between the higher nature and the lower nature becomes thin and the higher nature sometimes discloses itself and we feel elevated for a short moment into extraordinary sublimity of knowledge, power and delight. The higher nature is also the stuff of our true individuality (Jiva) of which our ego (ahamkara) is a distorted image in the lower nature. Our true individuality, - that which is figured in the Veda as the *hamsa*, or which is known in the Upanishad and the Gita as the *jīva* is one of the multiple centres of the consciousness of the Supreme Lord expressed through the higher nature. The Gita speaks of jiva as a portion of

the Supreme, as the *amsha* of the *Purushottama*. It is also described as the manifold centre of the higher nature, *parā prakritir jīvabhūtā*. Like the higher nature, jiva also remains veiled and can be experienced only rarely, and that, too, obscurely in our obscure consciousness.

"But this jiva can be experienced luminously by Yoga as our deepest being; its presence is felt by us, first, as our aspiration to become and to realise; as we begin to live deeply, we come to feel this aspiration more and more intensely with a force of inevitability. At this stage, we do not yet know the real thrust of this aspiration, but we feel its drive to be something inescapable. Because it is still not luminous, this aspiration cannot be called the state of knowledge; nor is it a state of sattvic, rajasic or tamasic nature. It is the state which the Gita designates by the word, *shraddhā*. Gita goes far enough to say that shraddha is the very stuff of the individual, that as is one's shraddha, so one is verily. This shraddha, which is in its origin higher than sattvic, rajasic and tamasic nature, acts normally in our ordinary life in the domain of sattva, rajas and tamas. Hence, it assumes a three-fold character of sattva, rajas and tamas.

It is by tracing shraddha to its origin that we are transported into the experience of jiva.

"Each jiva is a specific mode of expression of the Supreme Being. And this specific mode is its *svabhava*, the becoming of the inmost self, the automatic expression of the role that the individual has to play in the movement of the world. It is this *svabhava* which is the root of the will of the individual; that becomes action or karma, which,

in turn, keeps the cycle of the world in motion, which the Gita calls *kshra bhāva*.¹

"The presence and action of the jiva in the process of becoming, in karma and kshara bhava, is a matter of great significance. Nothing in the svabhava or karma can be understood properly without the understanding of the jiva. And since the source of the jiva is the higher nature and Supreme Lord, mysteries of existence are those of higher nature and of the Supreme Lord.

"We saw above that our shraddha, properly traced to its source, will take us to the jiva. But this process is aided by the fact that the jiva stands, not only above but also secretly, through its delegates, behind lower levels of existence; and this standing of jiva is known as the status of purusha. The status of purusha is the state of being, which can stand behind and above the

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1. At the commencement of the eighth chapter, Gita enumerates six universal principles : *akshara, svabhāva, karma, kshra bhāva, purusha, adhiyajna*. These six principles can be explained as follows: *akshara* is immutable brahman, spirit or self, atman; when we enter into *akshara* we get the experience of quietude and silence. *Svabhava* is the principle of self, *adhyatma*, operative as the original nature of the being, "own of way of becoming", as this proceeds out of the self, the *akshara*. *Karma* proceeds from that and is the creative movement, *visarga*, which brings all natural beings and all changing subjective and objective shapes of being into existence. The result of *karma* is all this mutable becoming, the changes of nature developed out of the original self-nature, *kshara bhava* out of *svabhava*. *Purusha* is the soul, the divine element in the becoming, *adhidaivata*, by whose presence the working of *karma* becomes a sacrifice, *yajna*, to the divine within. *Adhiyajna* is the secret divine who receives the sacrifice.

movement and which can control and master the movement. Even if it becomes subject to movement, it can so become by its will. Every jiva that is in the condition of bondage has come to that condition by its consent, and can come out of that condition by its consent and volition. At each level of our existence, we find its presence. This is more fully explained in the Taittiriya Upanishad. At the physical level we find it to be *annamaya purusha*, a physical being, possessing and sustaining our physical body and its movement. At a higher level of our vital and dynamic movements, we find it to be *prāṇamaya purusha*, a being of life-force, sustainer and supporter of our vital energies and activities. At the level of the mind, it is *manomaya purusha*, the being that sustains and supports the activities and energies of conception and ideation.

"All these three levels are immersed in sattva, rajas and tamas. Therefore, jiva as the purusha of these levels is predominantly or almost exclusively over-powered by these three gunas. To co-ordinate these three purushas, the jiva puts forward a more powerful formulation consisting of the stuff of higher nature. This formulation is quite small in the beginning; it is, therefore, described in the Kathopanishad as "not bigger than thumb." It is of the nature of a spark of purity and intuitive knowledge, which manifests in our outer nature of mind, life and body, as their inner self. The Kathopanishad also calls it *antarātman*. This is *antarātman* because it represents our inmost individual self, jiva, and it is seated in the mystic seat of our heart. This inner soul, which can be called the psychic being, or *chaitya purusha*, grows

gradually in its domination over mind, life, and body in proportion as it is able to project itself more and more in the mental, vital and physical energies and in proportion as these energies demand its greater presence and domination over them.

"It is the antaratman which ultimately becomes the guide and leader of the human journey. At higher levels, *jivā* is able to put forward the *vijnānamaya purusha* and even *ānandamaya purusha*.

"But the development of the antaratman plays a crucial role in the discovery and development of the state of "sadharmya".

"*Antarātman* is to be distinguished from the ego. In the language of the Gita, antaratman is the self that is the friend of the self, and the ego is a self which is the enemy of the self. This the real basis why the Gita insists on the elimination of the ego and on the transference of our consciousness from the lower to the higher where antaratman can take the lead. In the Rig Veda, antaratman is symbolised as the inextinguishable mystic fire, *Agni*, which is the priest of the sacrifice, *purohita*, the one who leads by remaining in the forefront of the movement of the sacrifice. It is this fire which has a will inherently illumined by supreme inspirations of the Truth, *agnir hotā kavi kratuh satyash chitrashravastamah*.

"The significance of the *antarātman* becomes acutely meaningful to us when we consider the question of free-will. In fact, the question of free-will is supremely important for the student of law, since the entire institution of law assumes that every human being should voluntarily adhere

to law and that if he or she deviates from law, he or she does it voluntarily as a result of which he or she renders himself or herself responsible for it and liable to punishment. Some philosophers have raised the question as to whether the notion of responsibility can ontologically be justified. Now, there is a vision of the universe in which every particular movement is dependent upon every other particular movement, and all the particular movements are determined by a vast universal movement. The Gita itself speaks of that vast universal movement which is called by the generic term *prakriti*. And it is not difficult to collect statements from the Gita to show that everything in the world is in its scheme deterministic, leaving no room for freedom. In the purely *tāmasic* operations of *prakriti*, which are dominant in the material universe, every movement is initiated by another, and directed to a fixed end-point. The law of inertia, the law of fixed movements, the law of determinism of energy and force prevails everywhere. There is, however, the element of *rajas* also in *prakriti* where there appears to be the presence of alternative possibilities. The realm of *rajas* is manifest in our own life in vital drives, impulses and dynamic actions and we have a feeling of freedom when alternative possibilities are presented; the one that is actualised is, however, precipitated under the pressure of uncontrollable passions. These passions are so powerful that even when our mind begins to manifest its *sāttwic* qualities, - qualities of knowledge and harmony, - and even when there is an effort to control the drives of the *rajas*, we find that in the ultimate analysis we seem to be over-ruled by the passion

of the rajas or by the secret determinations of the energies and inclinations of *sattwa*. The fetters of the tamas may be rough and hard, the fetters of rajas may be smooth and shining, and the fetters of *sattwa* may even be glittering, but all of them are really fetters that bind; they are the chains that deny our freedom.

This is the reason why the Gita says: *prakritim yānti bhootani nigrahaḥ kim karishyati*, all creatures are driven by prakriti, of what avail is control? The picture that emerges in one aspect of the Gita is that of complete determinism of Nature.

"And yet, Gita is not deterministic. It constantly appeals to the necessity of self-restraint and self-mastery. It underlines the concept of free-will to such a degree that Sri Krishna after giving his illuminating message, leaves Arjuna completely free to act according to his will, *yathechhasi tathā kuru*. What is the ontological basis for this? That basis is the *antarātman*. Mechanism of nature is not all; determinism of prakriti is not all; behind the operations of prakriti, there is a secret operation of the higher prakriti, *parā prakriti* and that of the *antarātman*. Even the subjugation that prakriti imposes upon the *antarātman* can be traced in the ultimate analysis to the will of the *jīva* of which the *antarātman* is a delegate. It is for this reason that the *antarātman* can, by free-will, lift itself up from the chains of prakriti and introduce in the web of world-action, forces and energies that vibrate with the *antarātman's* own nature constituted by *parā prakriti*, which transcends the mechanism of the three *gunas* of the lower prakriti. Beyond the law of Nature is the freedom of the soul, and this freedom can assert itself.

And because it *can*, there is in our inner being the sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility is at the root of normative ethics, of regulative law and of spiritual discipline."

Vishuddha had spoken all this in a downpour of speech with a force of enthusiasm and inspiration. I was amazed at his eloquence and the weight of the substance of what he had spoken. This was the first time when he spoke to me at such a length and with such force. I began to look at him with a sense of awe and reverence. I looked into his eyes and I found in them shining diamonds of fire. His very soul was manifest in them.

This was the first time when I felt that I had entered into the secret portals of the Gita. And I felt drawn to go still deeper and enter into the chambers of the mysterious teachings of the Gita. So I asked Vishuddha, "How does one experience the antaratman?"

Vishuddha did not reply, but he smiled. After sometime he asked : "How does one experience mind?"

I could not answer.

Vishuddha continued, "You experience your mind through its activities of ideation and reflection-its activities of thinking. Similarly, the *antarātman* can also be experienced, to begin with, by dwelling in the activities which are appropriate to the antaratman."

"And what are these activities?" I asked.

Vishuddha replied : "Just recall the question that you had raised a few days ago. You wanted to know what was your *swadharma* and what was

your *swakarma*. You had a long discussion with Prof. Chitle on this question. Inevitably, the discussion led you to a deeper reflection on the Indian social organisation originating from the four-fold order of the society, *chāturvarnyam*. This four-fold order of the society rests upon the four-fold quality of the *antarātman*, the quality of Knowledge, the quality of Strength, the quality of Mutuality and Harmony and the quality of Skill in Works. The more you dwell and live in these four qualities, the more you experience your antaratman. Normally, these four qualities get mixed up with *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, - qualities of the lower *prakriti*; but if you can purify these four qualities from those three qualities, you begin to enter into the centre of your being, and you begin to experience your selfhood by self-possession and self-mastery. In the realm of the three *gunas* of the lower *prakriti*, our ego-sense tries to co-ordinate and arrive at some kind of self-control; but that self-control is strenuous and brittle, because ego-sense does not have the substance and reality of the inexhaustible fire which unites spontaneously those golden qualities of Knowledge, Strength, Harmony and Skill.

"You must have seen at once that these four qualities correspond to those which are associated, respectively, with the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudhra. Fundamentally, the antaratman is at once the brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and shudhra, but embedded as it is in the lower *prakriti*, it manifests only one of these four qualities pre-dominantly, and that, too, gradually. The predominant quality that is gradually growing within us is what we call *swabhāva*, the

quality that manifests the becoming of our true self. And the rhythm of the manifestation of that quality is what is called the law of that becoming; and this law is called *swadharma*.

"Normally, each one has only one line of development marking the growth of one of these four qualities, and therefore, it is wise to discover that line of development and to remain fixed in the law of that line of development. But more you begin to live in your swabhava and swadharma, the more you begin to experience pressure and presence of other qualities as well. And we find that the swabhava running on the line of Knowledge needs increasingly the development of Strength, Harmony and Skill. A perfect brahminhood demands a rich blossoming and support of the qualities of kshatriya, vaishya and shudhra. And if you lead this argument to its extreme, you arrive at the concept of four-fold personality which antaratman is capable of putting forward at the heights of its growth and manifestation. Your own predominant swabhava and swadharma ceases to be one-sided, and, like a fully blossomed lotus, you arrive at perfections of the brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and shudhra. The limits of initial swadharma are broken and you begin to race on a chariot not of one wheel but increasingly and ultimately of all the four wheels. Indeed, one begins to come nearer to the nature and law of the Divine Himself, and the ideal that the Gita puts forward is that of transcendence of all dharmas so that you become one with the boundless and infinite dharma of the Divine. And that is verily the state of *sādharmya*, the state of oneness with the nature and the law

of the Divine. It is the *antarātman* and its four-fold quality resulting in four-fold personality that takes us to the inexpressible freedom of the Jiva, of the divine Nature and the Divine Being, *parā prakriti* and *Purshottama*."

Vishuddha stopped here and remained silent for quite some time. My mind was greatly satisfied and although I had still a few questions, I did not disturb by putting questions the immense tranquillity that seemed to have descended upon us. In that transparent atmosphere, the garden looked bright and heavenly, and I felt the joy of intimate oneness with plants and flowers that were swinging their heads in the mild breeze that was blowing all around.

It was nearly 1 o'clock when we awoke from that quietude. We looked at each other, and without speaking a word we left the garden and began to descend towards the ocean. While we were climbing down, I asked Vishuddha, "How does one feel when one experiences the *antarātman*?"

Vishuddha answered, "Indescribable sweetness. Do you know how the Kathopanishad describes the jiva?"

I said, "No."

Vishuddha said, "Kathopanishad describes it as *madhavadah*, eater of honey. The tongue of the mystic fire tastes that sweetness, but by what language can words describe it?"

I remained quiet.

As he was leaving me at my hostel, Vishuddha said, "Yoga is so called because by its process the soul *unites* itself with the Supreme Lord and in

that union fountains of joy spring out and the entire being and the world become alive and vibrant with freshness. Life becomes immortal."

The remainder of that whole day was suffused with inner delight and my mind sat quietly and my heart throbbed with joy that was mingled with sweetness and compassion.

IX

Next morning as I was glancing through the columns of the newspapers, my eyes fell upon a heading in a column : "Fifty seven arrested." I felt curious and began to read the details of this column. A story was narrated here of a group of young people whose houses were raided, and how on the basis of the evidence collected, fifty seven young men and women were arrested. Towards the end was a line that plunged a dagger in my heart. It read "The leader of the group is one Mr. Balwant Bapat and he, too, has been arrested." Within a minute I was on my way to Kaivalya Dham and was able to catch a running bus which halted at Kaivalya Dham in less than ten minutes. A number of students were doing their exercises of Hatha Yoga, and everything was as usual orderly and quiet. Vishuddha was in his room, and when I approached him, he looked at me with utter quietude.

"You must be knowing about Balwant's arrest," I blurted out without restraint.

"Yes," said Vishuddha.

"What is the matter? When did you come to know about it? What is to be done?" I asked.

Vishuddha smiled. He said, "First, sit down and be quiet."

As I took my seat, Vishuddha continued : "Nothing is to be done at this stage. We have all tried to get Balwant released on bail. But Balwant himself does not want to get released. He wants all his companions to get released. But the charges are so serious that none can be released."

"What is the charge?" I asked impatiently.

"Sedition. Conspiracy to topple the Government by violent means," said Vishuddha.

I understood.

Vishuddha said, "Balwant is a pacifist leader of an activist group, some members of which have been harbouring ideas and plots of creating disturbances in the country and to spread the fire of bloody revolution."

I understood, again.

"Do you recall Balwant's talk with Brahmadevji? He himself is a pacifist but also an anarchist. Pacifism and anarchism can go together very well, - but in the kingdom of God, when it is established here on the earth. In the unregenerate world of today, however, anarchism can easily turn into chaos and violence and disorder. My father, Balwant's father and I met him in the jail. In fact, we were all with him when he was arrested and taken into custody. We tried our best, but Balwant was adamant. It seemed as though he wanted to be left alone in the solitude of the police custody."

"Why don't you tell me the whole story?" I asked.

"There is nothing much of a story. We do not yet know what evidence the police have collected. There is nothing specific against Balwant, but there is a proof that he is the undisputed leader of the entire group. There is undisputed proof that a few members of this group had conspired to blow up bridges and railway tracks, and much else, besides. I do not think Balwant knew the magnitude of this conspiracy. But he certainly knew the philosophy of violence which some of the members of his group have been secretly advocating. I think he understands very well the spirit of these young people, their impatience and anger; I think he understands also that the country needs a great change. He had dialogues with his colleagues. His talks with Brahmdevji had given him sufficient force of argument by which he had hoped to convert the unruly members of his secret society. But he has been swept away by the tide of time. As a leader of the group, he bears responsibility. Both his father and my father will be able to secure his acquittal. But he told me, 'Vishuddha, I want to stay with my friends. I know that I am not guilty and it is unjust for the police to arrest me. But what is justice and what is injustice? A profound muslim vizier while giving a parting advice to his son had said, "Even when injustice seems to prevail, be sure that Allah has acted and will act towards you justly and mercifully." And when he looked at my eyes, he seemed to convey to me that he had understood the uncompromising justice that lies behind all appearances of the world. He said, 'I am passing through a great turning-point in my life; since I met Brahmdevji, I have been

craving for solitude and and unlimited time to reflect and contemplate. God has given me what I was asking for.' I pressed his hands with my hands and poured all my heart when I told him, 'You do your best; we shall do our best. Behind injustice is the Divine justice of the present moment; but behind that divine justice there awaits a greater justice which is mingled with grace that shapes the future. Do not resist, but give all yourself in His hands." And he looked at me with eyes that emitted the same justice and grace of which I had spoken without knowing what it was. His eyes gave me the touch of the grace in which all justice is swallowed."

I remained quiet for sometime. But I felt I must meet Balwant and talk to him. I asked Vishuddha, "Can't we go and meet him?"

Vishuddha said : "Why not? But first be quiet. Agitation is not action, and it can never help. Go to your hostel back and remain plunged in the Divine. When it is arranged, I shall let you know and we shall go to meet him."

I said nothing and returned to my hostel. The very next day, Vishuddha and I met Balwant. I found that Balwant was transfigured. He was no more the Balwant that I had known earlier. He was peaceful and cheerful. When I told him that we wanted him to be released, he said, "Since yesterday, I have been thinking deeply of two great personalities - Socrates and Jesus. Both were victims of the laws and judicial systems of their times; both would have been able to avoid condemnation; but both voluntarily allowed the chariot of time to pass over them. And both knew God and His will, which is always right and which

is more revolutionary than any revolutionary can conceive of. I am learning my lessons at their feet. And I seem to feel the whisper of the Gita into my inner ears :

"Abandon all laws and take refuge in Me alone.

I shall deliver thee from all sin; do not grieve."

I could say nothing. But I, too, resolved to sit at the feet of Socrates and Jesus and to hear the message of the Gita.

On the 20th June, my Law College opened and, as arranged earlier, I was granted admission under new rules. Law had yielded to the requirements of freedom. I plunged myself into the study of law with the determination to serve always those ends that freedom constantly reveals in its upward flights to summits.

P.S.

Readers will, of course, like to know what ultimately happened to Balwant and I should like to assure them that, although it took several years, the lame leg of justice ultimately reached its destination and delivered Balwant out of the four walls of the prison. But the story of the trial, and the impact it had on me and on my understanding of the contemporary crisis is extremely interesting. Let us, however, reserve it for our next meeting.

WHAT IS EDUCATION?

I

"Father," I addressed him softly as he came out of the bath room, clad in his white *dhoti* and looking nowhere with his upward gaze. His lips were repeating the *gayatri* mantra and his feet were speeding towards the puja room, where he would soon perform his daily worship of ritual sandhya and havan, recitation of Vedic hymns and sacrifice by lighting fire in the tinders and offering to it the oblations of clarified butter and fragrant materials, herbs and grains.

None was expected to stop him on his way to the worship, and it was unusual for me to dare to commit this impropriety. It had seemed to me that there was no alternative; I had to announce to him the truth before it was too late.

My father brought downward his awesome gaze. His eyes declared his annoyance at being disturbed in his holy routine. I felt totally discouraged and incapacitated. But I was my father's son who was taught that the first and foremost duty of man is to speak the truth, disregarding any calculations of consequences. "*satyam vada, dharmam chara, speak the truth, abide by righteousness.*" My heart was repeating this great mantra right from the moment I had looked early that day at the colourful dawn through my window

even as I had opened my eyes after a disturbed sleep full of inner struggle.

Dawn is worshipped in the Veda as a forerunner of the light of the Sun, and my father had taught me in my early years how to welcome and pray to Usha, the Goddess of the Dawn, so that she may deliver unto us a new departure from the past and bestow on us the gifts of the coming day. I knew by heart a number of the Vedic hymns addressed to Usha, but they did not come readily to me at that moment. Or they did, for it was perhaps by their aid that I was gripped by one single mantra, speak the truth, abide by righteousness, *satyam vada, dharmam chara*.

I had got up earlier than anyone else in the family. My elder sister and younger brother were still asleep. They had gone to sleep very late, since the bus that brought me to Dwarka was greatly delayed and they had remained awake in order to welcome me. They were very fond of me and since I had returned home after an interval of two years, they were even excited to some extent. I know that they were shocked to see my new appearance with long hair and beard which I had begun to grow since the last few months without any particular reason except that this was perhaps in imitation of a few close friends in the college. They concealed their surprise but their shock was even greater to find that my usual strong and sturdy body had been reduced to unrecognisable thinness. My sister spoke out with some anger :

"Girish, why have you ruined your body ?"

I had made no reply but indicated that since father and mother were asleep and my act of giving

an account of myself would make noise and disturb their sleep, it would be best to postpone all explanation to the next morning. They both had complied with my wish and allowed me to retire into my room without any further fuss.

Our house is not far away from the famous temple of Dwarakadhish, Sri Krishna, and I could see its summit and the flag fluttering over it in the dim light as I opened the door in order to begin my ablutions of the morning. I had a great inner fascination for Sri Krishna and my devotion to him was nurtured from my early boyhood by my mother. I remembered in a flash that memorable day when my sister Mira and I had spent twelve hours at a stretch from morning till evening in the temple repeating continuously one refrain "*Radhe Govinda, Radhe Govinda*". Mira was twelve and I was nine at that time; on the previous day a saint had given a discourse on the divine love of Radha and exhorted us to repeat that mantra in order to open the doors of our heart to Radha's consciousness. Fortunately, our father and mother were away to Jamnagar, a neighbouring town, to attend a marriage ceremony, and the household was under the charge of my little mother, Mira. The one thing I learnt from that day-long repetition of the mantra was how to prostrate inwardly at the feet of Radha and Krishna. A mental image of these adorable divinities was formed and placed in the centre of my heart. Then I had perceived that starting from my head downwards my whole body stretched itself, limb after limb, and it fell wholly and unreservedly at Their feet.

I have treasured the memory of this image of my prostration, and whenever I recall it, I feel the presence of Radha and Krishna, and, sometimes, I feel as though they beckon to me to come to Their bosom where I could lay in an eternal repose like a child in its mother's lap. But presently when I saw the summit of the temple with the flag, I perceived in my mental image, not Radha and Krishna, but Krishna and Arjuna in the battlefield, and the one mantra that seemed to be emerging from the lips of Krishna was : *satyam vada, dharmam chara*.

After the bath, when I got ready, I found that my will had become feeble and my courage had left me. I perceived that my feet were turning towards the puja room, where by the usual custom of the family, every member was expected to join the daily sandhya and havan. In ordinary orthodox brahmin families, women are not allowed to have access to these rituals, but my father was a progressive brahmin, and, recalling that some of the great Rishis of the Veda were women, he had given the necessary training to my mother and sister so that they too could join and sit with the male members of the family at the worship and sacrifice. I saw that my mother had already entered the room of worship and she was arranging various articles and materials required for the rituals. But as I was about to enter that room, I turned back and before I could think further, I saw my father emerging from the bath room and coming towards the room of worship. I mustered all the courage that I had built up to speak out and, disregarding the awe of my father's eyes, I said :

"Father, I'll go back to Ahmedabad today itself; and father, I have given up eating any cooked food and have been living on fruits for the last two months. And...father, I'll not join you in *sandhya* and *havan*, because I am convinced that these are external routines without any force of truth."

I had thrown a bombshell, and immediately I began to wonder if there was any other alternative. I loved my father too deeply to wish to hurt him, but I had to tell him frankly what was uppermost in my mind. That was how I felt was the demand of the truth.

My father heard me but made no reply. He simply ignored me and my words and proceeded to perform the rituals. I left the scene and went away to my room and bolted its door from inside.

II

A few hours later my mother called me out and rebuked me for my behaviour. She said that my father had blamed her for my impudence and arrogance. He had told her that I had become a barbarian with perilous tendencies that would end in utter ruin of my future. She was given strict instructions to tell me that I had no permission to leave Dwarka and that I must at once resume normal diet. As for participation in rituals, they were prescribed by shastra, and I must not deviate from the injunction of the shastra.

I heard her very quietly, but when I made no reply, she looked at me sharply and said :

"Your father has gone on fast unto death and will not break it until you promise to abide by his instructions."

This ultimatum unnerved me, but I still made no reply. Then, with tears in her eyes, she made an appeal:

"Girish, I was overjoyed when you wrote to me that you had, in deference to my wishes, decided to visit home, and I was expecting that this home would cheer up with mirth and joy with your songs and stories. Instead, you have turned everything so bitter that I do not wish to live any more. Is it in your books of studies that you should so misbehave with your parents and disobey their wishes? I wonder if I did not commit a serious blunder in sending you so far away from home for your higher studies. Your father was totally against your seeking admission to colleges in Ahmedabad. He wanted you to go to Jamnagar or Rajkot so that you could visit us every week and thus be under our constant watch and guidance. But I wanted my brilliant son to grow wider wings and to fly farther and farther to ever-widening horizons. I had pleaded that you must go to Bombay or to Ahmedabad, even though it was so difficult for us to afford the needed expenses. But you won't understand. The ghost of obscurity has seized you and you are no less obstinate than your father. You know that your father does not like discussions, and once he has taken a decision he is as firm as a rock. So I can make no appeal to him."

She stopped for a little while. My heart was torn and I could not bear her tears. I took her hand in mine and said :

"Mother, why don't you appreciate that I have no alternative? I am pursuing the path of truth and knowledge, and it is you and father who have taught me to pursue this path."

"I don't understand you and your path. I don't think we taught you to remain away from family, not to eat correct diet and not to practise our religion."

"How to explain to you, my dear mother? Look, our educational system does not provide the real food that our soul needs. It is you who taught me what our soul is and what aim our soul ought to pursue. This was many many years ago. You taught me the stories of Nachiketas and Shvetaketu when I was only five years old. And since then I have been asking the questions about life and death and immortality, and I have been contemplating on the famous declaration of Aruni to Shvetaketu, "That art thou". Nothing else interests me as much as these questions, and nothing attracts me as much as the opportunity to be alone and to introspect. Since I joined the school I was expecting to find some books or some teachers or some classes where what I really need is discussed.

But now after so many years, it has become clear that I must take some drastic decision and devote myself exclusively to the search of self- knowledge. And I must implement the decision, even though it might mean complete renunciation of family and friends, of the whole world."

My mother was shocked and grieved. She embraced me with all her affection and said : Look, Girish, I won't scold you nor will I go on fast unto death to prevent you from doing what you want to do. You know that I have always encouraged

you and given you whatever advice I am capable of giving. But now you have grown up; you have become a learned man. What advice can I give you? But remember one thing. The Self that you want to know is the child of the Supreme Lord. Your Jiva is the amsha, portion of the Purushottama; and you cannot discover the Jiva by indulging in egoistic actions. Do not, therefore, act from ego.' Whatever I have received from the Veda or the Upanishad or the Gita has taken me to go to Krishna, to pray him, and to discover from him as to what is His will and to do as He decides. If I have taught you anything else but not this then I have indeed misguided you, and I should like to make amends now. But tell me, have you offered yourself to Krishna and asked him what He wants you to do?"

My dear mother's words of affection, filled with deep faith and wisdom, melted me totally, and my tearful eyes looked straight into the eyes of my mother. It was my turn to embrace her and I said :

"No, mother, you have never misguided me. But I have not yet reached the point where I can converse with Krishna and get His guidance. But I have been reading the Gita again and again in order to learn what is His will in regard to me and my future. You know that father wants me to become a qualified doctor. You know how hard I studied to get admission to the Medical College. I secured 80 % marks at the Board Examination, and yet failed to secure admission to the Medical College! You were so keen that I should go to Bombay or Ahmedabad for my College studies, and I was deeply happy that you thought of this.

Ultimately, I got admission to the Gujarat College and I proceeded from here to Ahmedabad.

"Now during the last two years, I have mounted myself on two wheels and am trying to keep a good balance between the two. While I am reading for B.Sc., on the one hand, I am also pursuing my philosophical studies, on the other. I had no other alternative. I have been so much pressed inwardly to understand the ultimate truth of existence that I had to take up the extra load of philosophical studies. I am so deeply interested in these studies that whenever I find some leisure from my science subjects, I turn to philosophical books and read them with all my appetite.

"Unfortunately, our system of education is so narrow that if you offer science, you can't do philosophy, and *vice versa*. And yet, every good professor tells me that science is incomplete without philosophy, and philosophy is incomplete without science. But officially, nobody recognises this important fact, and a student like me who wants to do both has to study one or the other privately at his own initiative under a great hardship of time and energy. I had, therefore, been obliged to use all my vacations during the last two years to study philosophy. It was for this reason that I could not come home during these two years and I had to deny myself the pleasure of being with you and father and Mira and Upendra. Even now I have come during the current vacation only to comply with your order that you sent through Mira's letter. But to tell you the truth, I am missing my studies, and at the present juncture of my mental quest, I can't afford it. My mind is full of questions and I cannot postpone my quest. My dear mother,

you will please understand me. It was for this reason that I feel that I must return to Ahmedabad and make the best use of the present vacation to study to solve the questions that are harassing me. It is not to avoid the family and the pleasures of our sweet home, but I am not able to enjoy anything when my mind is pre-occupied with my philosophical questions for which I need urgent answers."

My mother was listening to me with great patience and understanding. But the last statement seemed to amuse her. She asked : "What are these philosophical questions? May I know?"

I smiled. I said : "Mother, I want to have intellectual conviction that God exists."

My mother stopped me: "But you know that God exists. Don't you ?"

I was hesitant in replying. I said : "Yes, mother; but....."

"Oh no! I am now quite sure that you should be up and doing with this question; you should resolve this question without any delay. "*Samshayātmā vinashyati*; one who goes on doubting all the time perishes."

"Yes, mother," I said. "I am working day and night on this question. You know the importance of God is so great that whether He exists or not makes all the difference in life. If you know that there is an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Reality, then life has to be lived under His presence and guidance. You are no more alone in the world."

"Of course, you are not alone," said my mother with deep affection and understanding.

And then, she added : "Well, I'll not stand in your way of inquiry and I shall facilitate your departure for Ahmedabad as quickly as possible."

I felt greatly comforted. But immediately, I took up the question of my diet. I said: About my food. During the last year, I began reading books on Nature Cure, and I became convinced that the only food that is sound for us is that which is cooked directly by Nature. That means fruits that ripen on trees. So during the last two months, I gave up all cooked food and lived exclusively on fruits. And you can see how successful has been my experiment. I am now adequately reduced and feel quite fit. Besides, this experiment has given me some control over my palate. It is the *sadhana* of *asvāda* (conquest over palate)."

"Yes, Girish, but you have also imperilled your health and constitution of the body!" Mother said this with deep concern. She continued, "You have a growing youthful body, and I am afraid fruits do not have all the elements that the growing body needs. And you seem to be hiding the fact that you are not taking any milk at all. Here also, you should have consulted Sri Krishna. What does Sri Krishna say in the Gita ? You should neither eat too much nor eat too little; you should neither sleep too much nor sleep too little. The law of life is to avoid excess.¹ Again,

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥^२

"Yoga destroys suffering only if it is practised by one who takes due care of food and comfort, who puts in the right effort, and who is balanced in his waking and sleep."

"But, mother," I said, "is it not true that the right food for me is the one cooked directly by Nature herself?"

"Sure," replied mother. "But you must realise that your mother, too, is part of Nature, and if she cooks something for you, that too should be counted as cooked directly by Nature!"

I laughed.

Mother continued : "Look, my son, I am not as learned as you are; nor have I read those books. But between Nature and Super-Nature, man is an intermediary and he, too, is an agent of Nature, Prakriti. And man has the natural tendency to contrive and invent. Cooking is what that tendency has invented, and so you cannot banish all human cooking from your menu! Man improves upon Nature, and you have to learn to see how and how far man's improvements are right. And that brings me to your long hair and beard. What's the point in growing long hair and wearing a long beard? You want to be natural, no? Ancient Rishis also used to wear long hair and beard. But they used to look so elegant and purified. My advice to you is : Do what you like, but give due attention to beauty and dignity. Beauty is for me an aspect of the Divine as much as Truth and Goodness. But I won't say more than that. If you have a good sense, go to the barber at once and get yourself a good hair-dressing. I agree with your father that you are looking like a barbarian!"

I felt ashamed and could not dare look straight into mother's eyes. But mother continued : "And now that you have listened to me so far, let me tell you about your aversion to rituals also."

"But before you say anything," I said, "please permit me to explain. Mother, I have taken a decision that I'll do a thing only if it is meaningful and if it serves the purpose of Truth. After my careful study I have come to the conclusion that rituals are a sham and they are an excuse for not doing the real inner sadhana. People do the outer rituals and take solace that they have done all that is required to be done for uniting oneself with divinity. They forget that the real thing to be done is to attain to the state of psychological concentration. Doesn't Krishna say in the Gita that the real sacrifice is the sacrifice of knowledge? We should be pursuing inner knowledge,- that is the real sacrifice, not the daily ritual of reciting hymns and lighting the fire at the altar. No, mother, I have given up rituals since the last two years, and I'll not resume them simply to deceive my father and do some mechanical acts even when I don't believe in them."

Mother smiled and said : "Look, Girish, I advocate no rituals. My Lord Krishna asks for only three simple things, *patram, pushpam, toyam*, a leaf, a flower and water,- and that too offered with a sincere heart of devotion. Where inner sincerity is present, outer offering is only an expression but not a necessary requirement. Girish, I want you to pursue your path of knowledge and truth; that is infinitely more important than joining rituals and singing hymns and offering ghee and

grains to the fire. I have no quarrel with you at all.

"But let us look at the matter from a different angle. What is the origin of rituals? Rituals are and will always be, because they, in their origin, express deepest emotions. Deepest emotions demand rituals as their means of expression. The only problem is that rituals in due course tend to become mechanical and lose their original spirit. So rituals need to be dropped when they begin to imprison the inner spirit and deaden the processes of expression. But once again, when the true spirit begins to vibrate, new rituals will come into being, and they should be welcomed. But I agree with you that the inner spirit is more important than rituals, and if you feel that our rituals have become mechanical, I would not force you to join them, provided that you are true to the deeper pursuit of inner quest and inner sacrifice."

I felt quite satisfied and began to confess to myself that my mother had a vast store of wisdom of which I was not truly aware.

"What do you advise me, mother? What should I do?" I asked.

"I will not ask you to do something that you think is opposed to the truth as you understand it. Stand firm on your convictions. But ask yourself : "What is truth?" To me nothing is true if it is not an expression of your unconditional relationship with Krishna. And by Krishna I mean not only the Avatar whom I worship as my Lord, but also the Purushottama that transcends all religious creeds and dogmas. It is He to whom the whole humanity, willingly or unwillingly, offers itself and from Whom it derives

its strength and wisdom to sustain itself and to progress towards the glorious future.

"These are my simple ideas of truth, and I would advise you to put yourself in relation to Him as a child."

After a little pause, she added :

"Don't be rigid. The Divine is always plastic and insists on no particular formulation or mode of action. *Ye yathā mām prapdyante tānsthāiva bhajāmyaham*. This is what Krishna declares in the Gita : As they approach Me, so do I reciprocate them to suit their approach.

"You want your father to understand you. I don't blame you. That is your right and legitimate demand. But I ask you to try to understand your father from your side."

In an instant I realised how self-centered I had been and how I had been misjudging everybody else. I remembered a wise man whom I had met recently at Ahmedabad. He had told me : "Ego is a false accountant. Ego keeps an account in which the universe turns around the needs of the ego and enters into the column of profits only those items where the universe has served the ego; all the rest is entered into the column of losses."

I melted and said apologetically :

"Mother, you must pardon me. But I am so much pre-occupied with myself that I must reverse myself so that I can perceive the universe as it is without my coloured glasses of my ego."

My mother smiled. She said :

"Your father is no more what he was two years ago. There has been an upheaval in his

inner life, and even his outer nature has changed a great deal, -- although his exterior seems very much as before. But that is a long story and this is not the moment to tell you that story. My advice to you is that you should spend your vacation here and find out what we are all passing through -- your father, myself, Mira and Upendra. We all need you and you can do a great deal for all of us. Be flexible and do not hurt anyone. Your father loves you very deeply, and let me tell you he expects nothing from you except your highest well-being as you conceive of it."

I was totally moved and I readily agreed to abide by her advice. She was quite pleased and as she rose to leave the room she turned to me and said :

"Girish, let me add one thing. Rituals are dispensable; you can discard them if you so wish. But you can also put a living soul in them, if for one reason or another you are obliged to perform them. Don't allow the issue of ritualism to become the cause of quarrel between you and your father. I am with you in your fight for the truth, and there are ways of fighting the battle. You want to stand for the truth. No? You want to speak the truth, no? Yes, I want you not only to speak the truth but also perform the deeds of the truth. Only you must know that both speaking truth and acting on truth depends upon the right knowledge of the truth -- and that is an extremely difficult task. There is also the delicate art of speaking the truth.

"Why, indeed, Indian wisdom has declared :

Truth must be spoken,

but truth that is agreeable must be spoken;
Truth that is unpleasant must not be spoken;
Untruth that is agreeable must not be spoken.

"Think over these wise words. Not that you should bind yourself to these words. But learn them well and give a better account of yourself. Your next examination will come when your father returns home exactly at 5.15 p.m.

"And, since your father is on fast, none at home will take any food until you are able to persuade your father and give him his meal with your own hands."

She left the room without looking at me. But I knew that there were tears in her eyes. And if she had looked at me, she would have found tears flowing out from my eyes -- tears of gratitude for the love and wisdom that she had poured on me in order to uplift me.

My mother is unusual in many ways. She is sixty but the glow of her youthfulness has still remained bright. She has a very healthy and solid physique, thanks to the rigorous training she had undergone in gymnastics and athletics in a special school that was organised by the Maharaja of the small state of Dolom in Saurashtra. The school was meant for the princesses and daughters of the members of the royal family and other relatives. But my mother's father was the Dewan of the State, and as a special privilege, my mother was admitted to that special school. She was good at horse-riding and had won numerous trophies for swimming. Because of her wide-ranging physical education, her body was endowed with health, strength, agility, grace and beauty. She had also

a great love for adventure, and even today she organises programmes for hiking and mountaineering for girls and women of our district.

That special school did not have formal courses of studies, since it prepared its students to go to U.K. at the right stage where they could have their formal training. For obvious reasons, my mother could never go to U.K. but she had learnt several languages quite well, and her knowledge of history and geography was of a high order. Science was not taught as a discipline, but there used to be visits of eminent scientists to her school and she had taken an active part in organising a Science Museum under the guidance of the teachers of the school and other visiting scientists. In music and art and embroidery she had special gifts, and she had learnt, to some extent, not only Indian Kathak but also Western ballet.

Her father was a very learned man. His speciality was Sanskrit, Latin and Greek, and his mastery over Indian system of law and administration was exceptional. Unfortunately, he died when my mother was only fifteen, and as he was an honest man, he had built up no assets. Consequently, my mother, who was the only child, had to migrate with her mother to Dwarka where her uncle lived in modest conditions. Her uncle was a staunch Vaishnava, spending a great deal of his time in worship of Sri Krishna and in the study of Bhagwad Gita and Bhagawat. It was here that my mother learnt the Gita by heart and came to understand the subtleties of Bhakti.

Her uncle and aunt did not approve of my mother joining any school, but they encouraged

her to master the art and science of household work and practical affairs of family life. Soon after coming to Dwarka, her mother passed away; thus she was practically left to herself. At her uncle's house, she learnt hard lessons of life, and as she had no cousins or companions, she turned to deep reflections on the meaning and aim of life, which, in turn, fortified her devotion to Sri Krishna.

At the age of nineteen, she was given in marriage to my father. Thus started a new chapter in her life.

My father was born and brought up in Dwarka in an orthodox family of Yajurvedis. He was a bright student at a Vedic School and by the time he was fifteen he had acquired mastery over the recitation of Shukla Yajurveda, madhyandina recension. He had also gained acquaintance with Sanskrit Grammar and Jyotisha (both astronomy and astrology). He had inborn interest in the study of herbs, and an old Ayurvedic physician gave him practical knowledge of Ayurveda. But even with this considerable background, he realised that he would get no employment if he did not join a government school to learn English and other subjects required for Matriculation Examination. As he had not followed the regular prescribed course at the Vedic School, he had great difficulty in getting admission to the Government school. But once admitted, he proved his excellence in every subject and topped the list of successful candidates of the district at the Matric examination. As his economic condition was extremely poor, he was obliged to join a primary school as a teacher. During the next few

years, he studied as a private candidate and passed B.A. and B.Ed. and later even M.A. in Sanskrit with high distinction. All these academic qualifications enabled him to reach the higher rungs of teachership of the Secondary School and later of the higher Secondary School.

In the meantime, his marriage with Sharada, my mother, had brought about a great change in his philosophy of life. He was a Shaivite, a devotee of Shiva, and she was a Vaishnavite, a devotee of Vishnu and Krishna. He was an erudite scholar of Veda and Upanishads, she was confined only to the Gita. He pursued the path of knowledge, she pursued the path of devotion. There was an evident conflict between the two, but my mother played a great role in establishing a harmony. She became my father's pupil of the Veda and studied a few Upanishads like Isha and Kena quite thoroughly.

But she imposed upon my father a healthy regime of physical education. My mother believed in the gospel of service and, in due course, she began to take a leading part in activities of social welfare. In her public activities, she found it necessary to come in close contact with women of different religions; she, therefore, learnt a good deal of the religious tenets of Jainism and Islam. In fact, she became so popular with the muslim women that authorities of a mosque provided her an adjoining hall where she could teach muslim women how to spin and weave and earn some money. Twice a week, she used to teach these women the life of the Prophet Mohammed.

To begin with, my father did not appreciate the Gita as much as the Veda and the Upanishads.

But in due course, he mastered the Gita so thoroughly that he undertook a formidable task of formulating a comprehensive science of Yoga, *Yoga shastra*, in which the yoga of the Veda, Yoga of the Upanishads and the yoga of the Gita could be viewed as a vast and comprehensive system of verifiable and repeatable experiences. To begin with, my father had reservation about Vaishnavism and did not share my mother's adoration of Krishna. In due course, however, he entered into the profundities of Shaivism and Vaishnavism and came to accept the principle of self-surrender to the Divine as an integrating truth, and he developed in his own mind a synthesis of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. To begin with, my father did not like mother's labour to study Jainism and Islam. But, in due course, he began to be influenced by my mother's train of catholic arguments. My mother's argument was that although different religions did not teach the same thing, each religion taught something that was very valuable, which should be learnt for the enrichment and perfection of the human spirit. She believed that even atheism has some valuable lessons to teach the growing soul of man. In the ultimate analysis, she used to fall back upon the declaration of Krishna in the Gita when he says :

मम कर्त्तव्यमनुवर्तते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥¹

(People follow in every possible manner My own path.)

All quarrel, so her argument ran, rests upon the disease of exclusivism, -- the claim that my

preferred doctrine is exclusively true or superior to all other doctrines.

This disease can be cured, she used to say in her simple style, by calling people of all religions and no religions to share their discoveries in an ever - growing flame of synthesis of knowledge. Let us deny all denials, she used to say.

Both my father and mother had planned a good system of education for their children. All of us were born when they were in early forties, and they were by then quite ripe in their educational thought. My father wanted us to have a good grounding in the Vedic tradition, but he also wanted us to have a good grounding in Western tradition of Science and Philosophy. He had dreamt a sort of a synthesis of the East and the West.

My mother wanted us to have a good physical education and refinement of nature and manners. Her attitude tended to be spiritual, my father's attitude remained largely religious and pragmatic. These attitudes did collide with each other in a subtle manner, and from time to time, there were sharp differences between father and mother on the question as to how we should be brought up.

I recall what father had told me, when I had just finished my eighth standard. He had said that I should specialise in Science because he had thought that I should prepare for a career of a doctor. I remember his exact words.

"We can't change the system of education and the system of society. Our system of education that is given to us by Macaulay allows you only

five alternatives : you can become a doctor, or an engineer or a lawyer, or a clerk, or else a teacher. I don't want you to be a lawyer because Macaulay, again, has decided that it is a duty of a lawyer to speak lies in defence of his clients. As for engineering, there are no good facilities in our State. Thus, I have have concluded that you should become a doctor, unless you choose to be a clerk. As for becoming a teacher, well, a teacher has no status in our society, and I have to say this even though I have been a teacher all my life. If you become a doctor, and if you continue your Vedic studies in your private life, you will have the best possible combination."

I had no inclination to become a doctor; so I had protested mildly. But my father had answered in severe tone :

"Girish, there are certain things in life that you have to do even though you may not like them. There is a law of necessity that rules the world."

And I was silenced, although I had expected a better explanation of the world from the one who knew the Veda so well.

That very evening, my mother had taken me for a long walk after our early dinner. And, talking of my studies, she had told me:

"I have dreamt all my life to create a new system of education. But I am not yet worthy of Krishna's boon of an opportunity to create such a new system. But I know one thing. In every circumstance of life, however, adverse it may be, there is always a route of escape by which the soul of man can come out of the law of necessity.

Your father spoke to you today of the law of necessity, and he is right as far as our present conditions continue to be what they are. But remember that your soul is greater than the law of necessity, and if you keep alive your aspiration to be free and to do what your highest will wants you to do, you have nothing to fear. Freedom will come. So keep this in mind. As the Gita says : "As is your faith, so verily you will become." Such is the power of inner faith, inner will to be and to realise.

"And remember again one other important matter. True education does not consist of studying these books or those books, whether they be the books of the Veda, Upanishads or the Gita, or else, other books of science or medicine or economics or what you will. True education is to grow inwardly to discover the Divine Will and to manifest it in physical life. And the secret of the science of the discovery of the Divine will can be practised under any system of education."

I had asked her : What is that secret?

And she had replied :

"Do you remember an extremely important question that Arjuna puts to Sri Krishna? It occurs in the third chapter :

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजतः ॥¹

O Krishna, by what impelled does a man get engaged in sinful activity, against his own will, as if goaded by force?"

As I was listening to her intently, she continued to explain.

"Girish, this is the most important problem of human life. Education must lead you to discriminate between the right action and wrong action. And, even if you have this discrimination, even if you know what is right and even if you want to do the right action, you feel impelled to do the wrong action. It is at that point that education must come to your help. And true education is that which comes to your help at that important moment."

My mother had paused a little. But I was keen to know Krishna's answer. So I asked :

"What is the solution, mother?

My mother said :

"Sri Krishna gives his answer in seven verses. I'll show them to you when we return home. To my mind, Gita is a great book of the science of education, and these seven verses may be regarded as the central theme of education. What is education? True education is to know oneself and to control oneself."

These words of my mother impressed me so much that they got written down indelibly on the inmost state of my soul. And when we returned home, I asked my mother to show me those seven verses. My mother was very pleased with my eagerness. She took me to the room¹ of worship, and made me seated on a mat. Then taking her seat opposite to me, she recited these seven verses:

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
 यथोत्त्वेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥
 आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
 कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानतेन च ॥
 इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
 एतैर्विषोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥
 तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
 पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥
 इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
 मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बद्धे परतस्तु सः ॥
 एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तथ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
 जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥¹

1. 3.37-43

That Desire and that Wrath that arises from passion, from the guna of rajas, that you should know to be the enemy, -- the sinful devourer. 37

Just as the fire is covered by smoke, mirror by dirt, embryo by poison, even so the knowledge of the knower is covered by the unquenchable fire of desire, the constant enemy. 38-39

Senses, mind and intelligent will are its places of residence; through them it veils the knowledge and deludes the soul. 40

Therefore, by means of the control of senses and the rest, slay that sinner, the destroyer of knowledge in all its entirety. 41

Above the senses is the mind, above the mind is the intelligent will, and above the intelligent will is that Self. 42

O Arjuna, knowing him to be above the intelligent will, controlling the self by the self, slay that enemy in the form of Desire, which is very difficult to conquer. 43

After reciting these verses, mother explained to me each verse. At the end, she said : "Girish, this is the programme of education that I assign to you. I know it is a long and difficult programme, but the earlier you begin, the better will you become equipped to fight the battle of life."

I heard her counsel with deep reverence. But before leaving her I said : "Mother, our mind is so unstable that I find it very difficult to bring it under control."

In reply, mother said : "That is, of course, true. Arjuna himself had stated this problem. This occurs in the sixth chapter. Listen to what Arjuna says :

चंचलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥¹

"But then Sri Krishna gives the solution :

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥²

"O Arjuna, there is no doubt that it is very difficult to control the mind. But it can be controlled by constant practice and disillusionment."

On this important verse, mother made no comment except that it contains the entire science and methodology of education. And, indeed, this comment has served me well throughout all these years of my education.

1. O Krishna, mind is restless and strong and obstinate.

I believe that it is as difficult to control it as the wind.

Another incident that I recall in which father and mother had a conflict in regard to their children's education was connected with my sister, Mira, who had just then finished with distinction her higher secondary course. Father had decided that she should join the local women's college and study for the B.A. degree. She had to decide what subjects she should offer. I was in the twelfth class, still one year below her level, but I had the firm view that the college provided no courses which were truly relevant to Mira's psychological needs. Mira and I were intimate friends, and we often used to talk to each other of our deepest aspirations and wildest dreams. An important subject of our frequent discussions used to be our present system of education, and we were both merciless critics of the current aims, contents and methods of education. Mira had a very clear aim of her life and education, and she wanted to pursue that aim at any cost. In all seriousness, she used to tell me that while learned educationists, including our father, proclaimed that the real knowledge is that which leads to liberation, *sā vidyā yā vimuktaye*, it is precisely that knowledge which finds no place in our programmes of education. Her main interest was to find out some teacher or some book that explained the "higher nature" of which Sri Krishna speaks in the seventh chapter of the Gita. She felt that the mystery of the universe could be unveiled if the higher nature and lower nature (*para prakriti* and *apara prakriti*) could be linked and if the path could be traced for making a transition from the latter to the former. I had read that seventh chapter with her several times, but neither of us could find the answer to the

question that she had posed. When we discussed this question with our father, we received such a long discourse that at the end of it we were more confused than enlightened. When we discussed it with our mother, she said that the true knowledge can be gained only through para bhakti, the higher form of devotion in which there is no motive other than that of entire self-giving to the Divine. Both Mira and I wanted to know how to cultivate para bhakti, and mother's answer was that that bhakti could not be gained by personal effort but by the Grace of the Divine or the Grace of a Teacher in whose contact the soul of the seeker would open up as a sunflower opens up to the Sun.

We looked in vain in our educational system for any opportunity or facility to find out such a Teacher. In the meantime, we were feeling quite suffocated by the routine of prescribed subjects and mechanical round of daily classes where teachers taught by snippets through hurried lectures in a rush to cover the long syllabus within a limited time available to them. And the only thing that seemed to matter was to develop capacities and skills to pass examinations and to get the maximum possible marks. Subject-oriented, lecture-oriented and examination-oriented system of education seemed to both of us a kind of compulsory imprisonment to escape from which we yearned intensely.

In that year, however, in the month of December, when Mira was preparing hard for her Board Examination of the final year of the Higher Secondary Course, a small group of five women from Delhi paid a visit to Dwarka. The

group was led by an impressive scholar and singer, Kamalini Sharma, who had taken a vow to sing only devotional songs and recite Samaveda. My father came to know of this visit because the Secretary of the Mutt of the Shankaracharya of the Dwarkapeetha approached him with a request to organise in his High School a programme of devotional songs by Kamalini Sharma and her group. The programme was arranged, and our entire family had the privilege to be introduced to the group and to listen to enrapturing songs that were presented by it. Music and singing were so enchanting that everyone felt spellbound. I felt greatly uplifted, but what surprised me deeply was that Mira, who was seated next to my mother in an opposite row, was weeping almost continuously and uncontrollably.

The next day, Mira told me that she had found in Kamalini-ji the teacher that she was looking for and that I must help her to meet her. I gave her the necessary help and when she and I met Kamalini-ji, she begged of her to be accepted as her pupil. Kamalini ji smiled and said that she herself was a pupil but invited her to meet her everyday during her stay in Dwarka.

Kamalini-ji and her group taught Mira a number of devotional songs, and within a week a great transformation came upon Mira's inner life. During one of these days, she told me :

"Girish, would you believe if I told you that I had the vision of Sri Krishna?"

I looked at her sharply but did not reply.

Then she smiled and added : "I also heard the flute of Sri Krishna. Will you believe it?"

I made no reply.

Mira continued : "I spoke of these experiences to Kamalini ji; would you like to know what she told me?"

"What did she say?" I asked.

"She said : 'Be prepared now for a long period of *viraha*, separation.' She then laughed and, pressing me to her bosom, she whispered into my ears: 'The path of divine love begins with a brief union and a long session of suffering of separation, since Krishna hides Himself and does not uncover Himself until you uncover yourself totally before Him!'

Mira blushed. She looked marvellously beautiful. Then she said : "I now understand why Mirabai had declared that she was wedded to Sri Krishna. Will you believe if I tell you that I have discovered that I am born to become a bride of Sri Krishna? But this is a secret between you and me. Don't tell anybody else."

I was overwhelmed by Mira's state of intensity, and taking her hands into mine, I said : "My dear sister, I believe every word that you have spoken."

Mira blushed again.

Towards the end of the week, Mira came to me and with a continuous stream of tears in her eyes, she said:

"Kamalini ji is leaving tomorrow and I do not know how I shall be able to live without her. I implored her again and again to extend her stay, but to no avail. She has no compassion for those who love her. She loves the pupils of her school

much better. I wish I, too, were to join her school. Do you know what is that school like?"

"No. Have you found it out?" I asked.

"Yes", she said, "it is exactly the kind of the school that fits with my needs. I like to learn hundreds of devotional songs, and her school teaches both classical music and devotional music. And, besides, it allows every student to take up a course in Indian culture; and one can specialise in a number of other courses for specialisation in any particular aspect of Indian culture, - religion, spirituality, ethics, dharmashastra, yoga, art, architecture, polity. But the question is how to join that school."

"But where is this school? Is it very far from here?" I asked.

"Kamaliniji told me that it is near Delhi. There is a village, and the school is somewhere near that village. It is the father of Kamaliniji who has built up that school, and it has also a hostel so that students from outside Delhi can also stay and study there."

"Splendid!" I said. "Then you should join that school. We shall talk to father and mother."

"They won't allow it, I am afraid," said Mira.

"Mother will agree," I said, "but we shall have to make a big effort with father. We shall have to plan well."

After the departure of Kamaliniji and her group, Mira and I spoke to mother about our plan. As anticipated, mother was agreeable but she said it would be prudent to wait for a few months before talking to father. She said: "Look, your

father is expecting Mira to pass her higher secondary examination with very good marks. She should fulfil his expectations. Thereafter, we may be in a better position to persuade him."

We agreed to follow mother's counsel. Mira appeared at her final examination and the results came out in due course. All this took nearly six months. Mira had done exceptionally well and she had stood first among all girls in our district. My father and mother were exceedingly happy, and both myself and my younger brother, Upendra, felt that her success was our own success.

Immediately after the results, Mira and I approached father but it was Mira who spoke to him as advised by mother.

"Father," said Mira, "I want a boon from you."

"Mira," said father with a genuine smile, "I will not refuse you anything if I am capable of it.

But remember that I am not a King or a Rishi who can pluck even stars from the heaven."

"But the boon that I am asking for is very simple. I need your permission to join the school of Kamalini ji."

Father seemed stunned. He gave no reaction for quite some time. Then he smiled. But immediately thereafter he became extremely grave and said :

"Mira, I admire Kamalini, and from what I learnt about her school, I feel that she is doing a very laudable work. But her school does not award degrees, it is not even affiliated to any University. Her courses are good for rich people's children. For people like us, the most difficult problem is

to find suitable boys for our daughters. And all suitable boys in our section of society demand from girls one or two degrees. This is unfortunate, but what can a poor man like me do about it?"

I was thoroughly unhappy with the answer. I became impatient and said :

"Father, we should revolutionise the society. We should revolutionise education. And the first step in the revolution is to take some revolutionary decisions in regard to one's own children's education."

Father looked at me with severity, but made no reply. He, however, turned to Mira and said:

"You have done so well in your examination that I cannot refuse you anything. But what you have asked, I am not able to give. Please be kind and give me what I ask from you."

Mira was taken aback, but before she could respond, father continued.

"You must join the Women's College here in this very town, and get your B.A. I do not mind what subjects you choose."

Mira seemed greatly disappointed. She protested mildly : "Father, they don't teach the subjects in which I am interested."

Father made no reply. Atmosphere became tense and none spoke a word. At last, father got up from his seat, and turning to Mira, he said :

"I understand you. But I am helpless. We are bound in a net, and the law of the net is inexorable. We can't escape it."

Mother was listening to this conversation as an impartial witness. But now she intervened.

"You cannot thwart children's wishes by taking refuge in the iron law of the society. Perhaps the society of which we are speaking is a ghost having no substantial reality. And the future of which we are so much afraid is also a ghost, which will never be like what we are imagining. We are worried about what "suitable boys" will demand; it is quite possible that the one who will be really suitable for my Mira will be a cultured person who will ask for nothing else than true culture from her. All your life you have criticised the present system of education, and yet precisely when the occasion has arisen for you to prove the sincerity of your criticism, you plead helplessness. If parents like us cannot send their children to schools and colleges, not for degrees, but for true education, then how will the present circle of inexorable law be broken?"

Father did not argue. He simply reiterated his helplessness and kept merciless silence. And then he turned to his books. None in the family could break his silent and cruel decision. Father had cast a disabling blow on a tender creeper that was striving to climb up in search of a stable support.

Mira joined the local College for Women in obedience to father's wishes, but nothing in the college could attract her mind or heart. In fact, she entered into a temporary slumber as far as her soul was concerned. The only time I saw her coming into life was when she wrote to Kamalini ji or when she received answers from her. But her wings were clipped and she lived like a caged bird.

In the course of one year I passed my higher secondary examination and went away to Ahmedabad. For the next two years I did not see her, and letters between us were rather infrequent and brief. But the last letter that I received from her just before my departure from Ahmedabad to Dwarka was rather long and it gave me a glimpse of how that beautiful flower that was withering away was secretly blossoming by the pressure of its own inherent force. She had written :

"Dear Girish,

I am happy that you have decided at last to visit us during the winter vacation. I am overjoyed and am eager to talk to you of many things that I am discovering these days. My final B.A. examination is drawing near and I have just begun to open my text books, which have remained neglected so far since they are extremely uninteresting and uninviting. To my surprise, however, the one book that has gripped me is the "The Manual of Psychology", and as I was rushing through that book it occurred to me that the Bhagavad Gita can be looked upon as a book of psychology. Since then psychology has become a favourite subject, and when I was recently reading the Gita, I began to discover in it great insights pertaining to education and I feel that I should proclaim the Gita as a book of the science of education *par excellence*.

"All education must deal with the processes of cognition, conation and affection. And it is precisely these three processes that the Gita right from its beginning to the end is occupied with. For what is Jnana Yoga, if not the full analysis of cognitive processes and of confirmed methods of

purifying and developing these processes to their highest levels of perfection? What is Karma Yoga, if not the full analysis of conative processes and of confirmed methods of purifying and developing these processes to their highest levels of perfection? Gita explains in detail how impulses and desires arise and impel action. It describes the role of intelligent will in purifying desire and in disentangling the knot of desire and ego from our motivation of action. It delineates the processes and methods by which one can become, first, free from the attachment to fruits of action, and, ultimately, from action itself. And at its summit, the Gita gives the secret of self-giving by which all action is seen to be proceeding from a supreme source that is at once static and dynamic. And the pinnacle of Karmayoga is reached when one raises one's cognitive, conative and affective capacities and potentialities in a great synthesis where the divine love, divine knowledge and divine action flow through the liberated individual in a plenary and ecstatic and triumphant symphony. You will think that I am getting poetic; but the joy of my discovery compels me to dance with words, and the sheer language of the Gita gives the aesthetic experience to my affective parts of the being. The smile of Krishna and his words of counsel and encouragement and inspiration seem to provide to my emotions uplifting experience and as I read the Gita I feel deep educational transformation! Bhakti of which Krishna speaks seems to have penetrated my heart and I feel I understand when it is said that the true knowledge comes from the highest state of devotion and that all action culminates in knowledge.

"But this is not all. Yesterday I was reading all that the Gita teaches about Swabhava and Swadharma, about the jiva and the Karma, action, that is rooted in the jiva, which is itself rooted in Paraprakriti, higher nature of the Supreme Lord. This reminded me of the talks that we used to have about education that enables each individual to discover himself and I asked myself if the Gita gives us the secret of self-discovery. What is swabhava? I asked myself. Is it temperament? Is it natural inclination of the given moment? Or is it something else? Indeed, there are many questions in my mind and hope to discover their answers with you when you are here. For instance, I want to understand what the Gita means by the word "Shraddha", for it says that each one becomes what his shraddha impels him to become. Is it that one speaks of in connection with religious belief? It can't be so; because the Gita speaks of each individual's unique shraddha. I think this concept of shraddha seems to be very important for education, and this concept needs to be harmonised with the counsel of Krishna when he asks Arjuna to attain to knowledge by repeated questioning and service to the teacher. How is questioning to be reconciled with shraddha? I want to understand all this and much more. It appears that a new appetite for learning has become awakened in my heart, and this has just come at the right moment since, because of the forthcoming examinations, I am obliged to turn to books, - and this turning would have been mechanical or meaningless if this new appetite were not to seize me. Here, too, I see the Hand of the Beloved Krishna.

"I think Krishna is the inevitable Teacher, and He arranges all kinds of circumstances to capture our soul and give to it the experience that it needs for its growth. And this is one new insight that I have derived from my recent study of the Gita. Someone was telling me that Arjuna was fortunate that at the very critical moment of life, Krishna happened to be near him to help him and to illumine him and to place him on the right path. His argument was that everyone cannot be so fortunate as Arjuna and therefore the teaching of the Gita is relevant only for the few who could have the same fortune as that of Arjuna. When I was contemplating on this argument, I had suddenly a flash which seemed to tell me that in the arrangement of the world, Krishna is always close to the soul in need of Him, and thus the Gita wants to convey a universal message : "Do not fear; if you turn to Krishna with a sincere seeking, be sure Krishna will be there ready to help you and guide you."

"Since then I have been telling myself : "Be a good pupil like Arjuna; turn to Krishna with the heart of trust and pray to Him to teach you and guide you." And, indeed, the more I tell this to myself, the more is my enthusiasm to learn and the greater is my inner feeling of the uplifting Presence of the Beloved Krishna.

"You will perhaps think that I am getting crazy, but I am your, for ever, crazy sister, and I know that you will not laugh at me.

"But let me now close, this letter.

"We shall talk a great deal when you are here.

Your sister,
Mira"

This was a unique letter packed with high educational philosophy! I was truly thrilled and felt deeply drawn to her. Intellectually, however, I was passing through a state of tension; my cognitive capacities of thought and reflection had almost completely overshadowed my affective being; I was greatly dissatisfied with the poverty of my fund of intellectual knowledge and wanted to enrich my mind as quickly as possible. This was the reason why I had no mind to spend any considerable time at Dwarka during my visit. It was particularly the pressure of my mother that had compelled me to visit Dwarka and was planning to stay there just for a day and return to Ahmedabad without any delay so as to get back to the library and the books that I was reading voraciously. But Mira's letter had evidently shaken my plan and I had begun to think of rescheduling the duration of my stay at Dwarka in consultation with her. Yet, before I reached Dwarka eventually late that night, my mental tension had grown so heavy that I resolved once again to return to Ahmedabad the very next day.

How tension makes you decisive and indecisive alternately! When I threw the bombshell and caused disturbance to the harmony in the family, I was quite decisive. But soon after that event, and particularly after my conversation with mother, I became quite indecisive. Besides, mother's appeal to try to understand father had touched a deep chord in my heart tearing apart my walls of pride and prejudice.

I was soon overtaken by a sort of concentration, and I found myself traversing inner depths of my being. I felt my solar plexus. An inner door swung open and I felt something very warm and very sweet. I plunged myself into deeper depths. There was a strange experience of myself being not myself, and yet, there was deeper intimacy and a deeper self of self- possession. It was as though I was recovering my own true dominion, my strange and fresh self. There was peace, even silence, and overwhelming presence! And as I entered deeper into that presence, a quiet joy burst out into a stream coursing through my arteries and veins. Inexpressible harmony and bliss! I felt then a tangible stuff and substance, far removed from senses and mind. An ocean of sweet waters. I did not know how long I remained plunged into those depths, but when I began to return, some words were stirring in the vibrations of my being and I seemed to be hearing without hearing:

"Truth is infinity.

Truth is plasticity.

Truth of speech, truth of consciousness.

Be vast, be free."

When I came back to my senses and as I looked around myself, I felt that all had changed. I was no more myself with a narrow and rigid and tense self. I had no frustration and I found myself wrapped in a strange sort of love. I thought of my mother and came to love her in a new mode. There was new music in that mode, a note of sweetness and wordless harmony. I thought of father and found that I had no dispute with him.

His two eyes that always seemed to be like two piercing needles, seemed to me to have been turned into pools of waters of compassion. I felt in them ever-yielding consent. I felt as though a great load of my head had suddenly disappeared. I felt so light, so light, that even the pressure of a feather would make a difference. And then I thought of Mira, and as I lifted my eyes, I felt her fragrant smile. In an instant, there was gentle knock at my door. I got up from my bed, and opened the door. I found standing before me that fragrant smile. It was Mira holding in her hand a beautiful jar full of red and pink roses.

"What's it?" I asked.

Without answering, she entered the room and placed the jar on my table. She then turned to me and said, "Let's go to father. We cannot allow him to fast. I have packed his lunch in the tiffin box. You, Upendra and I will go to him. We shall not discuss anything. We shall just entreat him to take the meal. You will not speak, but you will smile, won't you? And I am sure we shall succeed."

My eyes had become fresh and as I looked at her, she appeared to me to be a white luminous angel of uncomparable beauty. I felt her transported into the Greek image of Athene, the calm goddess of Wisdom that destroys darkness in a flash. I smiled and I knew that she knew that I had become different. Her smile and my smile mingled, and I at once understood that all music is cling-clang of mingling hearts.

As I was going to say something, Upendra entered the room and asked me, "Do you agree?"

I did not answer.

"I agree to go with you and Mira, because I see no point in quarrelling. But I disagree with father. Fasting unto death is a crime. It is violence. It is moral compulsion. I do not understand why people threaten us with this weapon of fasting unto death. Lord Krishna did nothing of this sort when Arjuna threw away his Gandiva and refused to fight in the battle of Kurukshetra. Instead, Lord Krishna smiled and induced Arjuna to ask questions and enter into a dialogue. And Lord Krishna answered every question patiently and elaborately."

"Look, Upendra," said Mira, "this is not an hour of argument. This is an hour of reconciliation. Dialogues can follow thereafter. Do not say this is right and that is right or this is wrong or that is wrong. Everything is right in its own place."

Upendra laughed. He said, "Yes, you are right, but fasting unto death is never right."

"Girish, will you stop Upendra?" Mira turned to me and said, "Get yourself ready. We must go to father at once."

"I am almost ready," I said, "But do you know father does not like members of his family visiting him in his office in the school?"

"I know," said Mira. "But today he will like it."

Within a few minutes all the three of us came out of the room and Mira turned towards the kitchen to bring the tiffin box. Just at that moment we witnessed a surprise most surprising. A horse carriage arrived and stopped at the gate of the

house. And lo ! father alighted from it, and there was a stranger with him.

IV

It was nothing short of a miracle. In any case, it was most unexpected. None had contrived it. It had happened by itself. How to explain it? The arrival of that stranger was an incalculable turning-point for all of us.

His name was Naveen Chandra, a man in his early forties, with muscular physical frame, collected calm and strength; he looked youthful and leonine. At the very first sight, I fell in love with him. He looked at me and I looked at him. He told me, "You have a spark, but kindle it day after day until it becomes a fire that continues to burn uninterruptedly."

I heard these words and felt that I understood myself as never before. I awoke in a new day light and felt that I was born afresh. What a relief it was to know someone who knew and understood! I was charmed and came to realise the meaning of the nearness of a soul to another soul. In one instant, Naveen Chandra had become my teacher, -- not by any external authority but inner communion, by the power of influence that unites one soul with the other. I had become his.

His meeting with father was extra-ordinary. As I learnt later, Naveen Chandra had come to Dwarka with the sole intention to meet father. He had a project and wanted to collect a few learned Sanskrit pundits in his school at Rajpipla. In the course of his search, he came to hear of Tryambakeshwar Vyas as the most learned Sanskrit pundit of our region. He had an overnight journey

from Rajkot to Dwarka by an autobus and losing no time on arrival, he had straight gone to father's school to meet him. And what he found in my father, in Tryambakeshwar Vyas, was more than what he had expected. He found that father was not only a great Sanskrit Pundit but also a great educationist; he found that he was not only an educationist but also a radical educationist. He also found that father was living in agony of imprisonment where circumstances had debarred him from fresh air and breath. He found that father was a burning fire covered temporarily with ashes. During his very first conversation with father, Naveen Chandra had discovered in him one of those whom he was looking for: someone capable of teaching competently and yet capable of learning and experimenting. Naveen Chandra had told me later that even at sixty five, father was capable of rejuvenation and that it was indispensable for his mental and spiritual health to leave Dwarka in order to join his school at Rajpipla. I believe that Naveen Chandra's appreciation of his abilities had given to father a deep inner gratification.

My mother was also pleased with Naveen Chandra because she found in him a great exponent and commentator of the Gita. In a few pregnant sentences, Naveen Chandra had explained to my mother the mystery of the Divine Grace. Is prayer necessary for the Divine Grace to descend? If necessary, how can grace be regarded as unconditional? Naveen Chandra had smiled and said, "The very fact that you pray is a consequence of the operation of the unconditional movement of Grace." My mother's second

question was regarding the nature of faith. Is faith blind by nature? And what is the difference between faith and devotion? And Naveen Chandra had answered: "Faith is always blind; but faith is always dynamic and insistent; it is in its irresistible insistence that it surmounts mountains of difficulties and secures inevitable success." But he had distinguished between blind faith and mechanical faith. Blind faith, even though blind, is living faith; mechanical faith is a faith that revolves around a belief or a dogma and does not push itself to transform itself in knowledge and action. He had further explained that all faith has the germs of devotion, and it is only by acts of faith that the stream of devotion begins to flow in our entire being. The third question that my mother had asked was : "What is the difference between the actions of the Karmayogi and the actions of the Bhakta, devotee? And Naveen Chandra had answered : "The actions of Karmayogi are, for a long time in the course of Karmayoga, of the nature or spirit of duties; but the actions of the Bhakta are spontaneous flowers of love, where nothing is a duty and nothing is felt as a sacrifice. All actions are garlands to adorn the charming presence and body of the Lord." These were summary questions and summary answers, but mother was deeply moved to declare the wisdom of Naveen Chandra and exhort us to seek his company.

"There is magic in our guest," Mira had confided to me. She had not asked any questions, but from the moment of his arrival, she had felt that she had found a teacher from whom she could learn without asking or without hearing.

As she had told me that very evening, "Naveen Chandra's skin glows with knowledge and his breath is a sweet fragrance of love. I am learning from him even by seeing him, by merely feeling him."

Upendra, too, had found in Naveen Chandra an intimate companion capable of boyish fun and frolic, even of mischief. He had felt a few moments of thrills in his talks with the new companion.

All this and much more had happened in one single day. And a big change swept over our entire family and its atmosphere. Father had broken his fast on his own and taken food in the company of the guest; and there was no trace of tension in his mind. I had felt unimaginable relief when I had seen him eating that marvellous meal and chatting away with Naveen Chandra. He was a new man, whom I had never known. He had found someone to whom he could talk tirelessly and endlessly. After that meal, he had just taken me aside in his room for a moment to tell me, "Girish, you are free. You will act in your freedom and I shall not insist on any particular course of action. I know you are sincere, I am aware that I have been rigidly severe with you from time to time. Henceforth, I am merely your counsellor." This was for me a unique experience of the transparency of the soul, bereft of any fear or shame in its act of unveiling. He had left the room immediately, but I had continued to be in the room and, as never before, I had wept and sobbed with tears that had cleansed my soul. The tug-of-war that had taken place in the morning had simply vanished; there was no rope to be pulled in opposite directions. Later, I had gone

to the kitchen, taken my full meal of cooked food and thus broken my vow to live forever on fruits alone. Later, I had whispered into the ears of Mira, "I am not leaving tomorrow, but will stay on to profit from the talks with Naveen Chandra." As for rituals, I felt no inclination for them, but father never even remotely seemed to invite me to participate in the rituals. At the same time, I had resolved to kindle my inner fire and to arrive at a glorious point where it could continue to burn with increasing intensity and force.

I got the opportunity of a long and exclusive talk with Naveen Chandra when, late in the afternoon the next day, father asked me to take our guest on a round of Dwarka and to show him that beautiful township of Mithapur barely twenty kilometers away from Dwarka. I borrowed the car from Chaturbhuj Sheth, Chairman of the S.P.I. School Trust. Father was advisor to Chaturbhuj Sheth and he had the freedom to borrow his car from time to time. After a rapid round of Dwarka, where the chief place of attraction was, of course, the temple of Dwarkadhish, we proceeded towards Mithapur. During the journey, I was at first rather reticent. I was so overawed by Naveen Chandra's presence that I had no courage to enter into a conversation with him. But, at last, after much hesitation I asked him rather mildly that question which was uppermost in my mind. I asked him, "Is it possible to have intellectual proof and conviction of the existence of God?"

He said, "Yes."

That was the end of the dialogue. Or so it seemed. I was greatly disappointed. I had expected

a long-winding answer, and I wanted him to take the lead in the conversation. For a little while, I remained quiet, but went on thinking as to how to continue the conversation. Then I mustered the courage and asked him another question. "Do we have the proof of God's existence in the Veda? Or is it in the Upanishads? Does the Gita give any account of this proof?" This question seemed to stimulate Naveen Chandra.

He said, "Veda is a poetic expression of varieties of spiritual intuitions and revelations which were obtained by the seers in their supernormal state of consciousness. The Vedic seers were capable of truth-sight and truth-hearing. By means of profound methods of Yoga, they had discovered truth-consciousness, *Rita - chit* and in that state of consciousness, apprehension and comprehension of truth in its infinite aspects becomes automatic. Are you acquainted with the Veda?"

I shook my head, and said inaudibly, "No."

Naveen Chandra took my hands in his and said, "Look, Girish, you should not feel nervous. It is not your fault that you are not acquainted with the Veda. It is unfortunate that in the land where the entire culture has grown out of the luminous seeds of the Veda, our system of education keeps all the children completely ignorant of those luminous seeds."

I was encouraged to speak. I said, "My father is a great Vedic scholar, and I have been fortunate to study a few hymns from him since my boyhood. I know a number of hymns addressed to Agni; I know a few hymns addressed to Usha; and a few

hymns addressed to Varuna, Mitra, Savitri and Ashwins."

"That is quite a lot," said Naveen Chandra, "and if you make a deeper study, you will find that the Veda is a record of spiritual experiences which transcend intellect. Of course, you can derive from the Veda a great and multi-sided doctrine and you can even give a philosophical form to it, but Veda itself is not a work of philosophy. Philosophical knowledge is a lower kind of knowledge as compared to spiritual knowledge. The Vedic Rishis belonged to the Age of Intuition and not to the Age of Reason, which came much later in Indian history. Even the Upanishads are intuitive in character, and not philosophical. It is true that people speak of the philosophy of Upanishads and believe that there are philosophical discussions in the Upanishads. But that is not true. The questions which are raised in the Upanishads are those of spiritual seekers; the dialogues of Upanishads, wherever they occur, are not intellectual and argumentative; they aim at comparison and interchange of spiritual experiences. But the wealth of spiritual experiences that are contained in the Veda and the Upanishads is so great that when the Age of Reason followed the Age of Intuition, numerous philosophical systems came to be developed, and most of them took the character of intellectual presentations of spiritual experiences. Mahabharata, of which Gita is a very important part, is the product of an age where intellectuality had begun to preponderate, and we find in the Mahabharata intellectual discussions of what, how and why of varieties of subjects. Mahabharata is

decidedly philosophical, when it deals with a number of intellectual subjects; and yet, Mahabharata is not a book of philosophy. Even the Gita is not a book of philosophy; but it raises many philosophical questions and employs often philosophical methods to present its answers. The questions that had gripped Arjuna at the moment of his depression were intellectual and philosophical; in presenting these questions, there is a systematic arrangement of ideas, and there is a kind of dialectic throughout the whole of the Gita. Lord Krishna, too, in answering questions follows largely intellectual and philosophical methods, although the aim of the Gita is not to arrive at a mere intellectual conviction but to unveil the secrets of spiritual existence and even to impart a Divine vision which not only silences mental questions but even quenches the thirst of the heart and physical senses. If you now ask the question whether the Gita contains an intellectual proof of God's existence, I shall make four statements.

“(1) According to the Gita, the Supreme Reality can rightly be approached only through divine nature, divine consciousness and divine power, *parā prakriti*. Para prakriti may be viewed as the Divine Logos, the creative truth of the order of the Universe, which is the source of our own human Reason. Para prakriti, the Divine Nature, is both a power of knowledge, and a power of action; it is Knowledge-Will. The human vision and human will are so limited that they cannot enter directly into the vision of the Supreme Reality. Divya- drishti, Divine Vision has to intervene. This is the reason why when Arjuna wanted to have the vision of the Divine, Lord

Krishna tells him that he cannot have it with his limited human vision. Lord Krishna then bestows upon Arjuna, by his divine act, a divine vision. The entire eleventh chapter is the description of this great episode where Arjuna is able to see the Divine face to face.

"(2) But all this comes as a culmination of a long intellectual preparation, during which Lord Krishna engages Arjuna in a kind of intellectual dialogue, which was, of course, suffused with spiritual perception, intuition and revelation. During this long intellectual dialogue, Lord Krishna declares that Supreme Reality is supra-sensuous, and although knowable by intuition, it is still seizable by intellect, *atīndriyam buddhigrāhyam*.

"(3) At another place Lord Krishna enunciates a very important philosophical principle which states : "Of non-existence there can be no being, and of existence there can be no non-being, *nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate satah*".

"(4) Finally, let me refer to three statements in regard to the nature of the Divine Reality that we find in the Gita which are extremely important if you wish to deal with the question of the proof of God's existence. For when you ask of God's existence, you must have a clear conception of what you mean by God. God has been conceived variously, and many intellectual problems have arisen because one is not clear about the meaning of the term "God". The conception of God that we find in the Gita is complex. As Lord Krishna declares, and I shall only para-phrase it for the sake of brevity, that while all things are in God, God is not in them; and immediately, it is added that God is in all things and is seated in all the

creatures and rules over them; and finally, it is added that God is all things.

"These three statements seem to be contradictory of each other; but if you think over them quietly, deliberately and intelligently, you will find their reconciliation, and you will understand how through intellectual thought God is seizable."

When he stopped at this point, I had many questions in my mind. But we had arrived at Mithapur and I wanted to show him the beauty of the design of Mithapur.

There are very few towns in India which have the beauty and simplicity of Mithapur. Tatas who have created this township have bestowed scrupulous care on planning the town and imparted to its roads and buildings and gardens extraordinary charm and attractiveness. At every nook and corner, we meet with luminous messages of happy and noble life through quotations of great leaders of thought and culture. Everything here is optimum : size of buildings, size of population, and the size of township itself. The entire town is Tatas' empire of chemicals, and yet, there is no imperialism; people are happy and contented by and large, and facilities of modern life are available to all the inhabitants. All this and much more I wanted to show to Naveen Chandra. But he seemed to be much more interested in me than in the township. He said, "Girish, this township stands apart by its neatness and clarity. I can see this at once, and the beauty of the design does not surprise me; you can at once see the imprint of Mr. J.R.D. Tata on everything that is visible and invisible in this town. But can't we find one good

spot where we could talk to each other?" My deepest chords of the heart were stirred; I felt deeply grateful that he was so warmly responsive to my heart's yearnings to talk to him. I took him to the sea-shore and we settled down in one of the benches in a special structure constructed by the municipality. The sun was descending on the Western sky and the vast Arabian sea was preparing itself for the evening tide. Everything was quiet and we too were alone. I was eager to talk and to learn.

Naveen Chandra broke the silence in which we were entranced for more than ten minutes. He told me, "It is curious but true that when I was in the college in Bombay, I had the same question as you have now regarding the existence of God. It was the question of life and death for me, and I met a number of professors in my search of a satisfactory answer. I read a number of books also. I spent days and months of deep contemplation. I studied the history of religions, I studied philosophy of religion, and I also studied a good deal of psychology of religion. I made a special study of the ontological argument, cosmological argument, teleological argument, historical argument; I studied Deism, Pantheism, Theism, Pluralism, Dualism, and Monism of various kinds. I studied the Veda, the Upanishads, the Gita; I studied Nyaya, Vaisheshika; I studied Samkhya and Yoga; I studied Poorva-Mimansa and Uttara-Mimansa. I studied Jainism and Buddhism; I studied Materialism and modern Empiricism; but I found no satisfaction."

Naveen Chandra paused a little. So I asked him, "What happened next?" He said, "I felt quite desperate. At one stage I even concluded that I was pursuing an impossible task. I thought that in all probability God's existence cannot be proved intellectually. I went even farther and thought that to believe in the existence of God is to be illogical and irrational. For some time, I set aside my study of metaphysical philosophy and turned to the study of economics and politics. I sharpened also my study of ethics. I dabbled in history also. All this led me to study programmes of social reconstruction and, in that context, made a study of utopias, ancient and modern. But I was thrown back once again to the question of God's existence. It appeared to me that no programme of political reform or social reconstruction can have any unshakable foundation, and several alternatives seemed to be equally good or bad. Only if God existed, so it seemed to me, one could have solid foundation for social, moral, economic and political programme of reconstruction. In other words, I felt it a matter of necessity to pursue my enquiry into God's existence. I also appeared to realise that in looking for the proof of the existence of God, one should free oneself from the notions of proofs which are available in deductive or inductive sciences.

"Just at that critical moment of my intellectual life, I got the opportunity to go to the Cambridge University for my doctorate. And I decided to work on the theme of the proofs of existence of God for my doctoral thesis. While I had just begun my work on this thesis, circumstances conspired to take me to Paris where I registered myself at

the Sorbonne University. I did not change the subject of my research. But the deeper I went into the subject, the deeper grew my diffidence, and although I remained for two years at Sorbonne, I could not make much headway in writing out my thesis. I came back to India, and it was much later that I could write a book on the subject...."

I interrupted him and said, "But that means that you have arrived at a definitive conclusion."

"Yes," he replied.

"Can't you tell me that conclusion?" I asked.

He smiled and said, "It is somewhat difficult; in a conversation like this, you cannot expound the subject in the way in which it ought to be. If you really want to study this subject, you should be prepared to spend a month or two with me and study the book that I have written."

"But I am prepared already," I responded immediately. Then I added, "But my intensity for the answer is so great that I would urge you to tell me something at least. Let me tell you that I am actually stuck up in a small round of a few ideas connected with the ontological argument, and I go round and round without any issue."

Naveen Chandra made no comment. So I told him, "There are times when I spend sleepless nights on this question, and my cerebral activity goes on continuously practically the whole night."

"All right," said Naveen Chandra, "Let me say that you need to have some widening of your consciousness. Whenever mechanical thought goes on repeating itself in the mind, one of the best courses is to expand your horizons. In fact, three

processes of learning are : widening, heightening and deepening of consciousness."

I asked, "But how to widen my horizon?"

Naveen Chandra looked at me with deep eyes of understanding and said, "If you like, I will give you a few exercises and that would help you to come out of a narrow circle of mechanical ideas."

I felt deeply gratified and said, "You must take me to be your pupil and I shall be happy to learn from you not only now but for ever."

Naveen Chandra smiled and caressed my arm. But soon he became serious and said, "Girish, metaphysical philosophy deals with two inter-related ideas, the idea of infinity and the idea of eternity. From where these ideas originate is itself an important question of metaphysical philosophy. But the more you contemplate on these two ideas, the more you grow in maturity. And one of the keys in arriving at intellectual proof of God's existence is to take help of these two ideas and to brood over them quietly and leisurely. Do not be in a hurry to arrive at any conclusion. Be very patient and cultivate the attitude of endless patience. One of the greatest enemies of impartial metaphysical thought is the ambition to arrive at quick conclusions and to expound them before people victoriously."

As I heard these words, my mind felt a great relief, and a good deal of tension of the mind ceased. I felt greatly relaxed and began to open myself to a long journey of quiet contemplation. I looked at Naveen Chandra with inviting eyes.

Naveen Chandra continued, "The next thing that I would like to suggest is to obtain a clear idea of what you mean by Reason. At present, the notions of Reason differ widely."

I said, "Oh, how much you comfort me! I have been constantly asking myself during the last several months as to what exactly is the meaning of 'rational' and 'logical'. Every philosopher claims to be rational and logical. And yet, he disagrees with the conclusions of every other philosopher. If reason were universal, and if reason arrives at conclusions rationally, why should philosophers disagree among themselves?"

"You are right," said Naveen Chandra, "You have formulated one of the basic issues of philosophy itself."

"But what is your answer?"

"The answer is not simple. But let me say, to begin with, that there is an idealistic view of reason and there is a materialistic view of reason. There is also a pragmatic view of reason and there is a utilitarian view of reason. There are those who believe that reason is the faculty of understanding through the grasp of meaning and there are those who controvert various meanings of meaning and ultimately arrive at the conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning, except in a trivial sense.

"If, indeed, the world is a mere matter of chance, can there be any meaning at all in the world? There are, therefore, some who believe that the very attempt to understand or to find meaning in the world is misdirected."

"But is the world a matter of mere chance?"

"If you look at the world superficially, you do find that events seem to be occurring, if not by chance alone, very often so. The world seems, in a sense, a chaos, a series of events which happen pell-mell without reason or rhyme."

"But don't you think," I asked, "there is so much of order in the world? The day is followed by night and night is followed by day; laws of matter seem to be inexorable; no two material objects can occupy the same space at the same time; and we are aware of the law of gravitation, the laws of electromagnetism and so on and so forth. The laws of chemistry are again inexorable; even in the field of biology, laws appear to be quite rigid; only in the field of psychology, individual variations are so great that we seem to be devoid of the control of law. But even then, there are definite laws of mental growth and there are even laws of logic."

"You are quite right," replied Naveen Chandra. "Considering this pervasive operation of law, which seems to be coupled with the sweep of chance events, some philosophers might argue that the world is a self-organising chance."

I smiled and said, "But what is the effect of such a view of the world?"

Naveen Chandra also smiled, "If the world is basically a matter of chance, whether self-organising or not, the theory that the world is a chance may happen to be right only as a matter of chance! In any case, theory of chance will find it impossible to explain as to how chance working at random has been able to produce the rational faculty which seeks to find meaning and order in the world."

"Yes, but a thorough-going chancist would say that that also has happened by chance."

"True, and I would no longer dispute with him but would argue that his position has no obligatory force and that therefore I am free to institute a fresh inquiry to find a better explanation of things than what his theory provides to me."

We both looked at each other and smiled.

"How do we proceed in our exploration?" I asked.

"Well, the first obstruction to our exploration is rationalistic materialism," said Naveen Chandra. I looked at him with inquiring eyes. He continued:

"The most powerful element here is that of Agnosticism, which goes on pushing the limits of the unknowable until it covers all that is merely unknown. Its premise is that the physical senses are the sole means of knowledge and that Reason, therefore, even in its most extended and vigorous flights, cannot escape beyond their domain. It contends that Reason must deal always and solely with the facts which they provide or suggest; and the suggestions themselves must always be kept tied to their origins."

"Yes, I know this argument very well," I said, "but I do not know how to deal with it."

Naveen Chandra replied :

"The business of philosophy is to question all premises, all pre-suppositions. What is the ground for declaring that physical senses are the only means of knowledge? And why should Reason be compelled to limit itself only to the evidence of senses? What physical senses declare is that they

can perceive Matter, but it is not within their power to declare that they are the *only* means of knowledge or that Matter *alone* exists. If you examine the subject closely you will find that the vice of the materialistic argument is that it is circular, and it commits the fallacy of what logicians call *petitio principii*. It first assumes that Matter alone exists and then attempts to prove it, not by questioning it but by reiterating it. For if you ask why it holds that physical senses are the only means of knowledge, the answer will be, 'Well, it is only this assertion that can be made if Matter alone exists.' Thus, you will see that the statement 'Matter alone exists' and the other statement that 'physical senses are the only means of knowledge' are sought to be derived from each other, but they are neither derivable from each other, nor are they proved independently of each other. The so-called premise and the so-called conclusion of materialism are both arbitrary and dogmatic."

I felt that I had grasped the argument, but was not sure. So I asked him, "Could you explain this to me in somewhat simpler terms?"

Naveen Chandra replied slowly and patiently:

"The aim of materialism is to prove that 'Matter *alone* exists. Here the word 'alone' is very important. How does materialism proceed to get to its business? It argues : 'Look, physical senses are the *sole* means of knowledge. For the sake of the argument let us concede it for the moment. What is next? We are now told: 'Look, physical senses declare that Matter alone exists.' Now this statement can be questioned. For if we examine it closely we find that physical senses can truthfully

declare only one statement, viz., Matter exists. Do they or can they declare that matter alone exists?"

"Of course, not." I said.

"So, you see, Materialism tries to derive the statement 'Matter alone exists' from the perception of physical senses that 'Matter exists.' And this derivation is unwarranted." Naveen Chandra clarified.

"Yes, I see it." I said.

Naveen Chandra continued:

"Now let us question the premise that physical senses are the sole means of knowledge. You will see here, too, that while it is true that physical senses are means of knowledge, these senses do not and cannot declare that they are the *sole* means of knowledge."

"It is clear now," I said joyfully.

We remained quiet for a while. A question then stirred in my mind and I asked him:

"Don't you think that modern science is materialistic?"

Naveen Chandra said, "It would be too sweeping to identify all modern science with materialism. But it is true that there is in present-day science a bias in favour of materialism, and modern science has contributed enormously to the development of materialistic Reason. Actually, modern scientists tend to distance themselves from any explicit formulation of materialism, but the methodologies which they approve have a sort of implicit materialism. They might even reject materialism, and for that matter any philosophical doctrine. They might prefer to look upon themselves as strictly non-philosophical and adopt a

neutral attitude towards any speculative endeavour. But the moment you suggest to them any subject that is related to the supraphysical realm they tend to put it out of their court by declaring that it is unintelligible non-sense or that it does not satisfy their paradigms of methodology of knowledge."

As I went on listening to these words, my mind began to wander among the ideas that were expressed in a recent Seminar that was held at my college on the theme of scientific explanation. During that Conference, two questions had come to dominate my mind. I posed these questions in order to get Naveen Chandra's answers. I asked : "Are there limits to scientific explanation? Do you think science will one day be able to explain all phenomena that puzzle our contemporary mind?"

Naveen Chandra heard these questions very attentively with his eyes closed in what seemed to me a mood of contemplation. But as he opened his eyes and lifted them up at the horizon, he exclaimed : "Look, Girish, how beautiful are these compositions of colours! The disappearing sun is leaving behind a trail of glory; what a feast for our eyes!"

I too looked up at the meeting-point of the sky and the sea and noticed splendid display of colours. But this beautiful scene made no aesthetic effect on my mind which was deeply preoccupied with abstract ideas of dry and stringent philosophical thought. Naveen Chandra seemed to understand me. He immediately switched himself off the beauty of the evening and turned to me to give a reply to my questions. He said :

"Science attempts to look at the vast universe which appears to it as a paradox of "boundless finite". The universe seems to reveal itself as an Energy, known not by itself but by its works, which throws up in its motion waves of energies and in them a multitude of infinitesimals; these, grouping themselves to form larger infinitesimals, become a basis for all the creations of the Energy, even those farthest away from the material basis, -- for the emergence of a world of organised Matter, for the emergence of Life, for the emergence of consciousness, for all the still unexplained activities of evolutionary Nature.

"Science tells us that it knows now that different groupings and a varying number of electric infinitesimals can produce or serve as the constituent occasion for the appearance of larger atomic infinitesimals of different natures, qualities, powers; but it fails to discover how these different dispositions can come to constitute these different atoms. Science tells us also that certain combinations of certain invisible atomic infinitesimals produce or occasion new and visible determinations quite different in nature, quality and power from the constituent infinitesimals. But it fails to discover, for instance, how a fixed formula for the combination of oxygen and hydrogen comes to determine the appearance of water which is evidently something more than a combination of gases, a new creation, a new form of substance, a material manifestation of a quite new character. Similar disabilities to explain are to be found also in regard to the phenomena of biology and psychology. It is, for instance, stated that genes and chromosomes are the cause of hereditary

transmissions, not only of physical but of psychological variations; but science has so far failed to explain how psychological characteristics can be contained and transmitted in the inconscient material vehicle.

"One notices also a peculiar kind of strain when science finds itself unable to explain certain phenomena; under pressure of that strain, it goes on stretching its acknowledged or unacknowledged bias of materialism beyond its legitimate limits and betrays some kind of nervousness that we find in all dogmatic defences of indefensible positions. For instance, even when we do not see or know, it is being expounded to us as a cogent account of Nature-process, that a play of electrons, of atoms, and their resultant molecules, of cells, glands, chemical secretions and physiological processes manages by their activity on the nerves and brain of a Shakespeare or a Plato to produce or could be perhaps the dynamic occasion for the production of a *Hamlet* or a *Symposium* or a *Republic*. But if we examine this kind of explanation, we fail to discover or appreciate how such material movements could have composed or necessitated the composition of these highest points of thought and literature. These formulae of Science have the air of the formulae of a cosmic magician. They are presented as precise and irresistible formulations of how and why of processes, but their rationale remains fundamentally unintelligible; they do not disclose the intrinsic how or why.

"We can now be led to enquire what consequences follow if, instead of pursuing materialistic reason, we could resort to the pursuit of idealistic reason. Idealistic reason is also called

Pure Reason. When the Gita refers to buddhi, it is to this Pure Reason that it refers, although the connotation of buddhi extends also to the aspect of Will. Pure Reason may accept our sensible experiences as a starting-point but refuses to be limited by them. It goes behind them and judges, works in its own right and strives to arrive at general and unalterable concepts which attach themselves not to the appearances of things but to that which stands behind their appearances. To correct the errors of sense-mind by the use of pure reason, is one of the most valuable powers developed by man and the chief cause of his superiority among terrestrial beings.

"The complete use of pure reason brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge."

The subject of pure reason had always baffled me, and although I could see that the evening was preparing to spread the dark carpet on the sky, I could not resist the temptation to demand a detailed elucidation of the nature and functioning of Pure Reason. I said, "Can you tell me something by which I can come to experience Pure Reason and recognise its operation?"

Naveen Chandra looked at me with very kind eyes. He seemed to be willing to answer my question, but he said, "It is a vast and difficult subject, and if I have to reply to you, even briefly, I shall need considerable time."

I was, however, so keen to hear him on this subject, that I told him that I was in no way in a hurry to return home. I added, "Before leaving home, I had already told Mira that we would be very late in returning. So, there is no cause for worry on that account."

"Even then, we should not be unduly late," said Naveen Chandra. "They are bound to wait for us for dinner. Would it not be better if we return now? I would speak to you on this subject after the dinner."

I did not resist his suggestion, but said, "But I am so keen to hear you on this subject that I beseech you to continue to talk to me during the return journey."

Naveen Chandra seemed very happy, and as we sat in the car for our return journey, he said: "There are not many students who are so keen to learn as you are. I respect this keenness and feel delighted. Do you know that I have derived one very important lesson from my experience of teaching and learning?"

"What is it?" I asked.

Naveen Chandra took my arms in his and said, "Never allow the curiosity of students to be postponed. Never tell a student that the time is not ripe for him to understand the answers to the questions that he is raising. Never tell him, 'I will answer you later.' Never tell him, 'You won't understand.' Any question that arises spontaneously in the mind of the student is ripe for an answer, and the question must be replied, and it must be replied briefly or at length according to the need of the student, and it must be answered in words which can be understood by the student."

I cannot describe the happiness that I felt on hearing these words. For they echoed precisely those very sentiments which I had come to cultivate during the last three years. How often I was told by teachers and elderly people, 'You won't

understand; you are still immature; you have to read a lot before coming to me to get the right answers!

I was simply frustrated whenever I had heard these 'wise counsels'. I used to feel why teachers cannot hold the hands of their pupils, bring them closer to their hearts and whisper into their ears the secrets which they have learned. And now, at last, I was seated next to the one who was precisely that kind of a teacher whom I had longed to meet and converse with. My heart melted in inexpressible love and gratitude. I looked at Naveen Chandra with a deep expressive smile and invited him to teach me.

Naveen Chandra began to pour nectar on me with his long and uninterrupted speech:

"Sense organs are visible, but Reason is not physically visible. How then do we come to experience Reason? It is by the experience of the activities of the Reason. At the lowest level, Reason translates sensations which are experiences of the sense-organs into images. These images are not physically visible, but somehow these images correspond to the forms of physical objects which are sensed by the sense-organs. At a little higher level, there is the process of abstraction. This process of abstraction involves, first, comparison of images. For example, you might sense through sense-experience a number of cats, and a number of images of cats float somehow in your awareness. Then you compare these images of cats among themselves and you come to *recognise* similarities or even some kind of identities among them. How and why we come to recognise these similarities or identities is an important question

and one should reflect on it. Actually, we go farther and we begin to develop a conception of 'cattiness' under which you come to *understand* similarities and identities. Now if you are attentive, you will find that the concept of 'cattiness' is general or universal in character. By the help of this concept, you come to *understand* the concept of 'all' and realise that all cats have some general and universal character, and, no matter how one can differ from another, all cats have some such identity among them that you become capable of describing in general terms even those cats which you have not experienced through your sense-organs. In other words, you have now arrived at a concept which enables you to understand not only the cats that you have experienced but even the cats that you have not experienced. This is the beginning of the operation of the Pure Reason. At the level where reason is forming an image of an object, reason is tied up with the sense-experience, but when reason has arrived at the formation of a general concept, you have gone beyond any particular sense-experience, and you are now in a realm of something independent of sense-experience.

"Let us now revise a little. First, you have the capacity of forming an image. This capacity of imaging does not belong to senses themselves. So, there must be something other than senses which causes the activity of image-formation. Next, there is perception of similarities and identities. What is it that perceives these similarities and identities? These similarities and identities are not sensations. They are more than sensations. You go farther. You come to *under-*

stand, you come to *recognise*, you begin to *perceive* a universal, which has never been experienced by the senses. These operations of understanding, recognition and formation of universal ideas constitute the middle level of the functioning of Pure Reason.

"Let us go still farther. Once one universal idea is formed, it becomes easier for us to form other universal ideas; and then you begin to compare one universal idea with another universal idea, and the more you become capable of this activity of reason, the more mature becomes your understanding. This mature understanding is a very important functioning of Pure Reason. At higher levels, you become capable of forming some such universal concepts that the entire realm of concepts can be subsumed under them. In the history of thought, those philosophers who have analysed idealistic reason or Pure Reason have come to subsume all our experiences of the world under four general concepts. There is, first, the concept of quantity; secondly, there is the concept of quality; thirdly, there is the concept of relationship; and fourthly, there is the concept of modality. You name any experience of the world and you will be able to subsume that experience under these four general concepts. In addition, there are two other universal frames of experience which are present everywhere in the world, and you cannot escape them. These are : space and time. Thus, you will find that there is in our awareness an operation that is capable of forming conceptions and these conceptions can all be subsumed under the concepts of quantity, quality, relationship, modality, space and time. The

capacity that is in us which deals with these six concepts is a capacity not physically visible to us, but it is something that we can experience supraphysically, and that capacity is the capacity of Pure Reason.

"Now let us go back to the act of conceiving. An act of conceiving may be a pure imagination or fantasy; or it may be an accurate symbolising of something very truly existing reality. Actually, even a fantasy presupposes some existent by which it is supported; even a sky-flower which does not really exist can be conceived only on the basis of some existent sky and an existent flower which are placed together by a play of the mind : all imagination or symbolism points to a pre-existent reality. Again, every act of imagination or symbolism is an act beyond which there is a beginning and so on *ad infinitum*, as also an end which has beyond it another end and so on *ad infinitum*. Infinity on the pole of beginning and infinity on the pole of the end constitute a stair that can subsist only on a foundation of infinity which exists in itself. Existence-in-itself in which infinity of extension of Space and Time is founded or contained is the farthest point to which our Pure Reason can reach in its flight of understanding. Existence-in-itself without Space and Time and without the categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality is not only conceivable, but it is the one thing we can conceive behind the phenomenal universe. Necessarily, when we say it is without them, we mean that it exceeds them, that it is something into which they pass in such a way as to cease to be what we call Space, Time, quality, quantity, form and out of which

they emerge as form, quality and quantity in the movement of Space and Time or Space-Time. They do not pass away into one form, one quality, one quantity which is the basis of all the rest, -- for there is none such, -- but into something which cannot be defined by any of these terms. Therefore, we say that existence-in-itself is an Absolute, a transcendental base of all that is relative and finite."

I listened to this exposition with all my attention, straining my concentration to grasp each step of thought-movement. When Naveen Chandra stopped and remained silent for a short moment, I triggered off a question almost involuntarily.

"How do you relate all this with the ontological argument?"

Naveen Chandra seemed pleased and he at once began to speak :

"The mistake of the ontological argument is to treat existence as a quality or as a predicate; it attempts to show that God being perfect by definition would be imperfect if He did not possess the quality of existence. That is the reason why that great German metaphysician, Immanuel Kant, could demolish that argument by pointing out that existence is not a quality through his famous statement that hundred dollars in actual existence are no more than hundred dollars in imagination.

And Kant was quite right. A quality can be separated from substance, but existence cannot be separated from substance; for existence is itself substance. What we need to demonstrate is not that God has existence but that existence-in-itself is the substance that we call God, and that

existence-in-itself is not only conceivable but it is the one thing we can conceive behind the phenomenal universe."

I felt a strange sort of peace that comes to the mind when a new insight suddenly illumines its nooks and corners. I had, of course, not understood the argument with any precision, but a great relief had descended on me as though a heavy load was taken off my head. Suddenly, the great statement of the Gita began to shine out in the inner chambers of my heart : *matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na chāham teshvavasthitah*¹ (all are situated in Me, not I in them), *na cha matsthāni bhūtāni, bhūtabhrinna cha bhūtastho mamātmā bhūtabhāvanah*² "yet all existences are not situated in Me; My Self is the bearer of all existences and it is not situated in existences, even when all these existences issue from Me." "*mām mānushim tanumāshritam*³, ("I have lodged myself, have taken up My abode in the human body.") I felt in an instant as though I had understood the inter-relationship of all these statements which I found hanging together in the unity of transcendent self-existent from which all Space and Time and forms issue and in which they are contained. I seemed to understand the illustration given in the Vedānta of the relation of the phenomena of Nature to the fundamental ether which is contained in them and yet is so different from them that entering into it they cease to be what they now are, as most nearly representing the identity in difference between the Absolute

1. IX.4;

2. IX.5;

3. IX.11

Existence-in-itself and the relative phenomena of the universe. I saw at once the synthesis of Deism, Pantheism, and Theism. All this was, however, still vague, but I felt the joy of a new discovery and I kept it in my heart as one treasures a newly acquired jewel in the chest with the intention of taking it out at leisure to watch it again and again and to enjoy it in multiple ways.

Our car was now nearing Dwarka, and I began to value and enjoy each moment of the journey that was soon to end. I looked at Naveen Chandra with grateful eyes that were emitting inexpressible joy. Naveen Chandra smiled and said, "The journey of the Pure Reason has ended, but not of the integral being. There is still one more step, which is the most important step."

"What is it?" I asked.

"Pure reason at its highest brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge. But the concepts of metaphysical knowledge do not in themselves fully satisfy the demand of our integral being. For our nature views things doubly : it views them as idea and it views them as fact. Therefore, every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes an experience. The metaphysical knowledge of the reality of the transcendent existence- in-itself has, therefore, to be verified in our experience. It is only because there is a supreme experience of that Reality testified by the science of Yoga that our integral nature can find in it its resting-place."

Naveen Chandra became silent. After some time, I looked at Naveen Chandra and found that he was absorbed in deep contemplation. But in

response to my inquiring eyes, he said : "We cannot speak of that experience in an ordinary conversation. One has to be ready to hear the voice of silence. And I know that you will one day hear that voice."

I felt delighted but asked him : "Shall I then have the explanation of the mystery of things that remains still unexplained?"

"Yes, of course!" he said and became quiet again.

Within a few minutes we arrived at home where the entire family was waiting for us.

After the dinner, Upendra came to my room and told me that he was very keen to talk to Naveen Chandra about his school. He asked me whether I could not plead with him for his admission to Rajpipla School. He said that he had heard about a new system of education that Naveen Chandra had established in that school. I told him that it would not be proper to disturb him at that hour when he might be resting, but promised that I would do the necessary the next morning. But Upendra said that he would not get sleep unless the matter of his admission was finalised. I had, therefore, to yield, and we both knocked the door of the room of Naveen Chandra.

Naveen Chandra welcomed us, and turning to Upendra, he said, "Do you want to play with me?"

Upendra looked up to me and explained, "I wanted to play intellectual games with him. We had discussed this matter this afternoon." Then, turning to Naveen Chandra, he said, "No, I want to discuss a very serious matter with you."

Naveen Chandra burst out in laughter and said, "First, come inside the room, and then answer a question that had occurred to me after our last conversation of the afternoon. We shall then discuss *serious* matters."

We were overwhelmed with this kind of welcome and all our hesitations disappeared.

After we had taken our seats, Naveen Chandra drew his chair near ours and turning to Upendra, he asked, "Do you write poetry?"

"I like to, and have composed a number of short poems, mainly sonnets. But writing poems is exactly my difficulty."

"How could writing poetry become a difficulty?"

Upendra grew serious and explained, "I am somewhat like Wordsworth. I am sure I will never become like Wordsworth in poetry, but I am like him in running away from school to enjoy natural beauty and harmony and music of the heart. You must have read his poems. Do you remember those beautiful lines?"

"Which ones?" asked Naveen Chandra.

Upendra replied instantly : "These are from 'Prelude':

'Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony and music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling
together
In one society....'

Naveen Chandra burst out in amazement, "Upendra, you are splendid. Where and when did you study Wordsworth?"

"Oh! that is my problem! I wander away from school and disappear in the gardens with my books of poetry and drama. As a result, I am a bad student and got a zero in mathematics. I failed in my tenth examination even when I bagged prizes for English and Sanskrit. I love Wordsworth, Shelly and Keats; and I love Kalidasa and Bhartrihari. I wonder whether these poets ever learned mathematics. I think their curricula were quite different and they had the freedom to study what they liked and to muse over the music of their heart. I do not understand why I do not understand mathematics. And the difficulty is that mathematics is a compulsory subject and unless I get through mathematics, I cannot pass my secondary examination. I am afraid, I shall fail again and again, and that will be the end of my educational career. Does life depend so much on mathematics that one must pass examination in mathematics? And tell me how many people remember mathematics in their later life, and what use do they make of trigonometry and ratio-proportion and variations? Most of the grown up people tell me that they remember nothing of their mathematics even when they had scored high marks in their examinations. Why should then one learn what we are to forget? Look at poetry; you read poems, recite them, and enjoy their rhythms. How lovely they are! And they are unforgettable. They become your life-partners. You enjoy reading poetry only when you run away

from the school and sit under the groves of trees in the company of inviting flowers."

"Wonderful! Upendra, you must keep up. Take it from me, class rooms in the schools are like cells of prison. Free spirits should escape from these prison cells and fly away in the sky singing the songs of the soul."

"But this is not allowed. You are supposed to sweat in the dingy rooms of the schools listening to the boring lessons of history and geography, where you have no tales except those of battles and deserts. In my history class I have never heard the story of Kalidasa or of Jayadeva. But one day, when I was reading *Meghadootam* stealthily in my class, my teacher somehow noticed it. As I looked up at him with fear and rebellion in my eyes, I was reprimanded, and my dear book was confiscated forthwith!"

"How cruel!" exclaimed Naveen Chandra, "Upendra, you are a poet in the making, and you need a special kind of education."

I found that that was a good moment to intervene.

"That is the reason why we have both come to you. We have heard that your school is quite different, that you have no classes, no syllabi, no lectures, no examinations. Could Upendra join your school?"

Naveen Chandra immediately replied, "Yes, of course. But your description of my school is not quite accurate; and there is one important condition which most people find it difficult to fulfil."

He looked at Naveen Chandra and waited for him to explain. Naveen Chandra continued, "You said that there are no lectures in my school. But the fact is that whereas lecture system is the backbone of the normal system of education, lectures play in my school only a marginal role. A school should be like a garden, or it should be like a play ground. In a garden, what is important is not the gardener but plants and trees, bushes and flowers and fruits. Similarly, in a school what is important is not the teacher, but the children and their dreams, their daily conversations and their problems of friendship and battles of imagination, and their strivings of intellectual exercise and their sports and games and marvels of the development of their muscles. In the garden, you need sunshine and water, and daily care. In the school, you need sunshine of knowledge and water of inspiration and affectionate warmth of the teacher. In the garden the most important task of the gardener is to watch the plants and trees and to tend to each one of them if anyone of them needs special care and treatment. In the school, too, the most important task of the teacher is not to teach but to observe the children and to tend to each one of them, if any one of them needs special care and treatment.

"In our normal system of education, teachers find no time to play the role of the gardener. They have no opportunities to observe the children; they do not come to know how each one of the children employs his or her faculties to the task of studies and games and various other activities of growth and development. The teacher does not come to know which children have special

faculties and gifts and which one of them have handicaps or deficiencies. Every child has its own seasons of growth and development, of quiet hibernation, and sudden or slow flowering and fruition. Each child has its own romantic periods of studies when it falls in love with one subject or the other and if the teacher does not know how to take advantage of that period, the child often feels the want of his uplifting hand and the student manages all alone his enthusiasm with poor or no results.

"Take Upendra for example. What amazing intellectual gifts he possesses! And the poor boy has to satisfy his romance for poetry by absconding from the school. When he romances with Kalidasa, his object of love is snatched away from him. Under the care of a good teacher who observes and watches his children, Upendra's romance in poetry could have been easily detected and a wise teacher could have also helped him to blend in his mind both poetry and mathematics.

"All knowledge is one. All subjects are complementary of each other. There is no subject that is not interesting. Everything is interesting. Poetry, music and mathematics; mathematics, logic and metaphysics; metaphysics and physics; physics, chemistry and biology; biology, evolution and man; man, history and geography; geography and the earth and the planets and stars and galaxies and the universe; -- all these are interrelated, and all subjects are needed in some measure or the other for the perfection of man. You should not blend subjects together by methods of compulsion. Each child has natural curiosity which should first be developed and by a natural process of association,

comparison and contrast, by building bridges of natural growth, the child should be led from subject to subject weaving spontaneous interconnections."

The conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door. It was Mira who had brought a glass of milk for the guest.

"Don't you think our guest deserves some rest?" Mira looked at me with rebuking eyes as soon as she entered the room. She said, "It is already 10 o'clock and this is the time for everyone to go to sleep." Mira spoke with a tone of authority and asked us to withdraw from the room so as to give respite to the guest.

Naveen Chandra, however, protested. He said, "The fault is entirely mine. They came to me only with a simple question, but instead of answering briefly, I am inflicting a long lecture on them. They are such passive listeners that I am enjoying talking to them!"

"You must be very tired," said Mira with feeling and concern.

"Oh! no; I go to sleep only at midnight, and I have still two solid hours," said Naveen Chandra while taking the glass of milk from Mira.

"We must be leaving," I said and added, "We must not obstruct your work. We shall continue our conversation next morning."

"Not at all," said Naveen Chandra. He then turned to Mira and said : "Let me finish my talk with these bright young men. I was just explaining to them the new system of education which we have developed at our school at Rajpipla. And if you feel interested, you too are welcome to listen."

"Who won't like to listen to you?" answered Mira with evident eagerness. She took a seat on a chair placed next to mine and said, "In that case, you must answer my question first."

"What is your question?" Naveen Chandra asked with freshness in his eyes.

"Don't allow her." Upendra protested mildly. He explained, "She has no questions; she has only a statement to make. She has recently discovered that all educational philosophy that we need today is contained in the Gita. I am sure she wants to be praised for her discovery!"

"Don't be naughty," said Mira, "I have a genuine question to ask."

"All right; go ahead," said Upendra with a mischievous look in his eyes. "But be sure that she will begin with Gita."

"So what?" said Mira. Then, turning to Naveen Chandra, she said, "It is true I have been thinking a lot about philosophy of education since the last few months. I have made a discovery of great insights regarding education in the Gita. Why do I find Gita to be a book of education?"

"That is because all education is yoga, and the Gita is a book of yoga," said Naveen Chandra briefly but pointedly.

Mira seemed struck by the answer but she asked for elucidation.

Naveen Chandra felt enthused by Mira's query. He said, "Education is practical psychology which aims at employing effective methods by which individuals can be enabled to develop their actual and latent faculties at an optimum pace of acceleration. And this description can easily apply

to yoga as well. Yoga, too, is practical psychology; as in education, so in yoga, the object is attainment of perfection; as in education, so in yoga, there is a system of applications of effective methods to develop faculties of knowledge, action and emotion; as in education, so in yoga, body, life and mind are taken up as instruments and various methods are employed on these instruments so as to purify them, subtilize them, expand their powers, deepen their powers, heighten their powers; as in education, so in yoga, the secret is to arrive at concentration. For concentration applied to its object results in siddhi, realisation. And, finally, as in education, so in yoga, concentration causes acceleration of progress."

"Please tell me more," Mira pleaded.

Naveen Chandra continued, "Take, for example, Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga can be viewed as a process of intensive and methodological physical education. It takes body as its instrument; it prescribes methods of purification of the body; the two important methods are those of *asana* and *pranayama*. These two methods facilitate not only purification and expansion of powers of the body but also concentration of these powers on the object of the perfection of the body, which includes also spiritual liberation. Spiritual mastery over the body is an important object of Hatha Yoga. It is true that in our schools, physical education is often taken as a pastime, and games and sports are encouraged with a mixed motive in which physical fitness is only now increasingly acknowledged as an important element. But physical education should rightly be designed as a process of Yoga,

and even games and sports can be taken up in a comprehensive programme of Yoga.

"Let us now turn to Raja Yoga of which Sri Krishna makes a reference in the sixth chapter of the Gita. Raja Yoga, too, includes in its methodology application of asana and pranayama, exercises of the posture of the body and those of breath control. But its main interest is in silencing vibrations of the stuff of consciousness. It prescribes methods of self-control by which thought, action, behaviour can be regulated and purified and this is the aim of the processes of *yama* and *niyama*.

But the chief emphasis is on the attainment of concentration of consciousness which liberates supernormal powers of the mind and leads them to the state of complete Silence. Here the specific methods are those of *pratyāhāra*, *dhāranā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

"You will notice that in the process of education, a great emphasis is laid on various elements which are covered by Raja Yoga. It is now increasingly recognised that concentration accelerates the process of learning and that concentration generates the needed knowledge. It is our own experience that when we want to solve a problem, we try to concentrate on it, and the solution flashes out as soon as concentration is achieved. It is very well known in sports that the power of concentration plays a decisive role. In a sense, all education can be summed up as a process of concentration.

"It will now be easy to realise that other processes of Yoga, too, are identical with the processes of education, although our education system hardly employs them. Karma Yoga, the

Yoga of works, takes up the entire realm of dynamic drives of the human being. They include instincts, desires, longings, attractions, repulsions, intentions, motives and activities of will. How to deal with all these dynamic drives, how to purify them, how to expand their capacities, and how to lead them to states of unified and concentrated will-force, - these are the main questions of Karma Yoga. How to master desire and eliminate egoistic consciousness from action, -- these are the central questions of Karma Yoga. To arrive at desirelessness and egolessness, -- this is proposed to be the aim of Karma Yoga.

"The ideal system of education must provide opportunities and facilities to students so that in all their activities and struggles, in their problems relating to relationship, influence, acquisition, possession, enjoyment, and victory, the spirit of Karma Yoga is infused. It is said that education should be man-making education. What is meant is that education should develop power of courage and heroism, powers of human relationships and powers of nobility and benevolence, and this can be done only if Karma Yoga is applied in the day-to-day life of education.

"Unfortunately, education today pays little attention to this large area of human consciousness, and it concentrates on the cognitive process almost exclusively, and, here too, it limits itself only to powers of intellectual understanding and memory. An ideal system of education should correct this deplorable situation.

"We may now come to Jnana Yoga, which covers within its province, powers of sense-perception, imagination, intellectual thought,

ratiocination, intuition, inspiration and revelation. To divide Karma Yoga from Jnana Yoga is a kind of artificiality. In a natural process of perfection, cognitive and conative elements are not only inter-related but they are interwoven to such an extent that all action culminates in knowledge and all knowledge culminates in effective action. If one reads Gita carefully, one will find that Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga are synthesised by unifying knowledge and action.

"In India, people often talk of such beautiful ideals as '*yogah karmasu kaushalam*' or '*sā vidyā yā vimuktaye*'. But in practice, these ideals receive no practical application in our educational system. Knowledge which is aimed at in our schools and colleges consists of information and hardly anything more. Even the art of questioning and impartial investigation is rarely encouraged. The higher processes of understanding, of comprehension, of complex analysis and synthesis are even rarer. And those elements which are central to Jnana Yoga, namely, the development of powers of intuition, inspiration, and revelation are totally absent. And yet the ideal of the pursuit of the knowledge that leads to liberation can never be implemented without the development of intuition, inspiration, and revelation. The vast vision of the domain of knowledge that we find in the Gita indicates to us that world-knowledge, self-knowledge, and God-knowledge constitute one whole, and education should be so designed that the student receives right guidance and inspiration to arrive slowly or rapidly at this integral knowledge of the world, self and God.

"All dynamic activities of human personality are largely ignored or neglected in our educational system. In the same way, the large domain of feelings and emotions, of sympathies and commitments, of faithfulness and self-sacrifice are also ignored or neglected. This neglect is injurious to the right aims of education, and just as we need to employ the methods of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga in our educational system, even so the methods of Bhakti Yoga, too, need to be employed. What is distinctive in the Bhagavadgita is the way in which Yoga of Divine Love is shown to be the crown of the synthesis of action and knowledge. But how to introduce methods of Bhakti Yoga in education is extremely vast and difficult, but I am sure that this too can be done provided we are able to change the present structure of education and the present methods of education."

All the three of us were listening to Naveen Chandra very attentively. Mira seemed to be absorbing every word with great passivity; Upendra seemed to be enjoying the width and depth of Naveen Chandra's exposition; and I was wondering as to how great ideas of Yoga and education that were being spread out with a rare sweep of comprehensiveness can really be implemented.

"But how can we change the present education system?" I asked.

Naveen Chandra had a ready response, "First, you need students and parents who are convinced that the present system of education must be changed. Their discontent with the present system should be such that they are ready to make every sacrifice that is needed to bring about the needed change. They must have revolutionary spirit,

and they should be prepared to lead the life of revolutionaries.

"That is not enough. These revolutionaries should have a clear vision of the goals towards which the revolution must be directed. This is perhaps the most difficult task. I have myself been engaged in a struggle during the last twenty years. I have been facing problems, I have been making experiments and I am collecting various kinds of materials, and it is only now that I can speak with some precision of the vision that we might put forward before ourselves."

"What is that vision?"

"It is a threefold vision: vision about the new aims of education; vision about the new contents of education; and vision about the new methods of education."

"Why don't you tell us more elaborately?" I asked.

Naveen Chandra smiled, "This can be elaborated in several different ways, but since Mira is present here, I must speak in the language of the Bhagavadgita. So let me articulate what I have to say in a terminology appropriate to the Gita.

"The aim of education should be to discover the Sun of Knowledge in which God, Man and Nature stand integrated in a blaze of light through which each individual would discover the Divine Will to manifest itself in physical life. To discover *Purushottama*, to discover His Will and to manifest it in physical life through the individual, Jiva, -- this would be the aim.

"The new content of education would relate to the theme of Man and the Universe and cover

all sciences, arts and crafts by means of which harmony between man and the universe could be established at all levels.

"Methods of education would channelise the progressive relationship between the zeal of the pupil and the uplifting hand of the teacher. These methods would underline the sovereignty of the child and interweave the pursuit of Truth with austerities of Harmony and vibrating joy of Liberty."

While listening to these words, I felt as though I was transported into some ethereal garden of a paradise. For a while, there was complete silence; none spoke a word, none stirred.

The atmosphere seemed packed with concentrated force. I felt for a moment that I had entered into my own original home of peace and bliss.

After a while, Upendra felt restless; obviously he was very keen to discuss the question of his admission to Rajpipla School.

He asked Naveen Chandra, "What is to happen to me? You were going to explain to me the condition on which I could get admission to your school. I think that I can assure you that I am thoroughly opposed to the present system of education; the very fact that I am absconding from my classes must have shown you that I am a rebel. I *am* a revolutionary. What more do you want from me?"

Naveen Chandra smiled. He said, "I am just coming to that. But first of all, let me finish what I was telling you about our lecture system in our school. We have made a number of experiments

in order to determine the advantages and disadvantages of lecture system, and we have come to the conclusion that lectures are useful under five circumstances, namely, when you want to introduce a subject, when you want to give a bird's eye view of a subject, when you want to create collective consciousness in regard to a particular subject, when the teacher feels greatly inspired to speak and address a small or even a large group of students, and when a teacher has made a recent discovery which he wants to share with his students. But when these circumstances are not present, lectures tend to become mechanical and boring. It is true that the lecture system, where almost everything is expected to be transmitted through lectures, is quite economical, but it is hardly appropriate to the profound requirements of education.

"I have often thought of the dialogue between Arjuna and Lord Krishna. What is the nature of this dialogue from educational point of view? It takes place at a critical moment in the life of Arjuna, and nothing could have helped him to come out of his crisis if he did not have with him Lord Krishna standing near him ready to talk to him, to uplift him, to answer questions as they arose spontaneously in the course of the dialogue. As I reflected again and again on this important episode, I came to realise that in the totality of educational process we must create a facility for students to get the required help from the teachers, so that students can approach their teachers individually and obtain required guidance by means of personal dialogue. As I reflected more and more I discovered that a totally new setting would

be required. After repeated experiments, we were able to invent a new structure and a new methodology regarding teaching- learning."

Mira looked at Upendra meaningfully, and it was obvious that she was suggesting that Gita was not only a model of educational philosophy but even of educational methodology. Upendra, too, smiled responsively. I went on looking at Naveen Chandra with eagerness to learn more of the invention that he was speaking of.

Naveen Chandra continued, "Our present system of education has created among all of us a *set* of expectations. When you go to school, you expect to go to the class, and you are ready to listen to lectures. You are further habituated to expect the teacher to cover the prescribed syllabus.

Sometimes, while listening to a lecture, certain questions arise in your mind. More often than not, you do not find atmosphere favourable for posing questions during the course of lectures. If you, however, happen to be bold, and pose a question or a series of questions, you might probably get some brief answers. But there is hardly any time for any further questions that might arise in your mind. Sometimes, your questions might fall outside the scope of the prescribed syllabus and the teacher often tends to suggest that they cannot be answered because they fall outside the syllabus. But then, what happens to your questions? If you are very curious, you might go to the library and find out the answer yourself. But in the lecture-system not much time is left for going to the library. More often than not, your questions remain unanswered, and they gradually get buried forever.

"I thought that the most important thing is to effect a change in the set of expectations that are built up among students and teachers. Why should one go to school or college? One should go to school and college to find out answers to questions, and the function of school and college should be to provide you the right atmosphere where your curiosity, your sense of wonder, your questions are sharpened. You must expect to get the facilities for personal study in the school or college; you must expect to get the benefit of consultation with your teachers; you should expect to get access to relevant books and documents; you must expect to get the time and leisure to study, to contemplate, to meditate, to concentrate, to work, to discuss, to grow and to develop your faculties. You must not expect to have sessions of lectures from teachers; you must expect to learn.

"Following this line of argument we decided that most of the class rooms in our schools should be transformed into *consultation rooms*; only a few classes should be retained as *lecture rooms*, where teachers can give lectures occasionally, and that, too, should not be compulsory. Teachers should not be required to finish the syllabus; each student would be required to make his/her own programme of studies in consultation with teachers, and it would be the rôle of the students to ensure that he/she covers the syllabus that he/she will have designed for himself or herself.

"This gave rise to many interesting developments. Each student was free to formulate his/her own programme of education; each one was free to determine what courses of study should be combined and in what way they should be

combined; each student was free to prepare his/her own timetable; each student was free to work at his/her own desk or to spend time in the library, or visit a quiet place in the garden or in a special room just to contemplate and to remain quiet, or to go to a hobby room or to a music room. Each one was free to approach the teacher of his/her own choice.

"In this new setting, teacher found time to observe the students and to prepare special programmes which they could recommend to pupils as and when they are required. Teachers became consultants, they became guides; and they could answer the questions of students individually or in a group, briefly or at length, in accordance with the needs of situation.

"A very important consequence followed for the examination system. We dispensed with the so-called terminal or annual examinations. But each student could take an examination whenever he/she felt ready for it; teachers devised various kinds of tests, -- tests for improvement, tests for confidence-building, tests for revision, tests for overcoming special deficiencies, tests even for fun and amusement.

"Each student had now the opportunity of progressing at his/her own pace and teachers' help was available in the form of guidance, in a form of a dialogue, or even in the form of lectures under special circumstances.

"In due course, it became clear that this free movement of education could be seriously disturbed if students had wrong motivation such as studying for the sake of passing examination and obtaining certificates. We, therefore, made it

clear to every student that if he/she wanted a certificate, he/she should seek admission elsewhere."

"But then how would a student get a job in the market?" asked Upendra.

Naveen Chandra looked sharply at Upendra. Then he laughed a little. For a short while, he did not answer the question. Then he asked Upendra, "Do you want to join our school for getting a certificate and a degree?"

Upendra said, "No, I do not care for a degree; but how am I to find employment in the society?"

"If you are rightly educated, if you have developed your skills to a high level of perfection, if you have developed yourself into a fine human being -- don't you think you will have the capacity to get employment?"

"Yes. But the task would be very difficult, and most probably, I may fail to get any employment, since the present society demands certificates and degrees as a pre-requisite for employment."

"But you are a revolutionary, would you not like to change the society and create new conditions where the present kind of certification would not be required as a precondition for employment?"

"Yes, of course! But that will take a long time, and perhaps in my life time, I cannot expect to succeed."

Naveen Chandra kept quiet.

After sometime, Upendra seemed to have understood the drift of Naveen Chandra's argument. He said, "Oh! yes. I am now beginning to see. You are addressing a revolutionary or

a-would-be-revolutionary. I understand your arguments. If some teachers and if some pupils do not stand out of the present vicious circle and work out an alternative system of education, -- uncompromisingly, --one can never build up even a model system of education. And if you do not build up even one school of a new kind, how can we expect to change the whole system of education? How can we expect to change the normal syllabus and expectations of people from education?"

Upendra remained quiet for a while. Then he began again, "I see now your point. You want to prescribe a condition before you grant admission to me in your school. I accept that condition. I will not demand any certification from the school. I shall work to develop myself and face the world; come what may!"

"Bravo!" said Naveen Chandra enthusiastically. "That's the spirit. Remember that everyone of us has a soul; everyone has a special role to play in the world; everyone has to prepare himself/herself to discover that role and to execute that role; but that role can be discovered and can be executed only when you insist on developing your inmost nature, your *swabhava*, your inmost law of being, your *swadharma*. And you can develop your *swabhava* and *swadharma* best when your educational process is so purified from all mixtures of motives that nothing counts for you except the discovery of your soul and the development of faculties for expressing your soul. If you remain firm, and if you develop self-control and self-discipline, you will have the power to change the circumstances and the world would be obliged to give a place and work for which you

have trained yourself. Not certification, but your inner worth will open the gates of your work. This requires a firm determination and inmost *shraddhā*, the faith in what you are and what you are to become. That is why I make it a condition for anyone who wants to join our school that he will want to study not for getting a certificate but for developing himself/herself upto highest possible levels of excellence.

"That is also the reason why I insist on the freedom of choice. You must freely choose to join our school, -- freely, when you are above the age of fourteen. If you are below that age, I would demand a free choice from the parents, which would of course not be binding on the child, and I would advise the child to take a decision when he/she attains the age where he/she can make a free choice. I am looking for a few revolutionaries by the help of whom a new system of education can be built up. Once a model is created, other things can follow in due course."

Upendra smiled. He said, "I would like to be counted as a revolutionary, and I give you my word. I shall not regret the decision that I am taking now."

I was, however, not fully satisfied. What is the use of a model which will have no power of contagion? A model should have answers to some basic needs of society. I felt that Naveen Chandra had not yet fully answered the questions raised by Upendra. So I raised this question in a different form.

"I can see that you are quite right in refusing to award any certificates or degrees to students of your school. You do not want that students should

study in order to pass examination or to earn diplomas or degrees. I can also see that students should become heroic and be able to secure a place or work in society by the sheer strength of their character and capability. But what is wrong if society demands from your school a certificate of your assessment of your students? Will it not help the society, if your assessment is available to it?"

Both Mira and Upendra seemed annoyed with my question. But Naveen Chandra welcomed the question with enthusiasm. He said, "Excellent. It is an excellent question. I make a distinction between two kinds of tests. The first kind of tests are those which are purely educational in character. Their aim must be to enhance the growth and development of student's personality. But there can be and there should be another kind of tests which will help employers in selecting candidates for employment in specific tasks. To my mind, these two kinds of tests should be kept separate and should not be mixed together. The present system of examination is a mixture, in which the elements of the second kind of tests outweigh the elements of the first kind of tests. What I have been suggesting is that there should be an independent testing service, where any student could offer himself/herself for testing. This testing service will not insist upon any pre-qualification for admission to the test. And most importantly, the testing service will evolve an altogether new system of testing. It will take care to test physical fitness, cultural excellence and qualities of sincerity and honesty. It will also devise tests which will judge practical skills, temperament, and intellectual, ethical and scientific abilities. Finally, it will test

suitability for specific tasks, occupations and vocations. It will set very high standards of testing and will ensure that stupid and mechanical mind will get exposed. I am not opposed to tests; the question is what kind of tests; the question is the context of tests; the question is the purposes of tests. The present system of examination is to be condemned because of its mechanical character and because it pays no attention to the subtleties of individual variations and complexities of requirements of employment. My own idea is to develop a National Testing Service which will award certificates, which, in turn, would be a great help to the potential employers. But I will like to keep these tests completely independent of the tests which are purely educational in character."

I was now quite satisfied; but I wanted to go into some further details. Before, however, I could open my mouth, I heard a loud knock and ring on the main door of the house. I rushed out, opened the main door and found a postman with a telegram in his hand.

"It is an express telegram," said the postman. "It is addressed to Naveen Chandra. Who is Naveen Chandra?"

"He is our guest," I answered and took the delivery of the telegram. The postman left and I closed the door and bolted it from inside. Father and mother were awakened by the ring and had come out of the room. I told them not to feel disturbed and that the telegram was meant for Naveen Chandra. I asked them not to disturb their sleep and hurried away to deliver the telegram to Naveen Chandra.

After reading the telegram, Naveen Chandra asked me, "What is the first available train from Dwarka to Rajpipla?"

"Why? Are you called back urgently?" I asked.

"Yes, I must leave at the earliest," said Naveen Chandra very quietly. Upendra knew all the timings of the rail journeys very well. He said instantaneously, "The earliest available train leaves Dwarka at 12.30 p.m."

"Is there no earlier train?" asked Naveen Chandra.

"None, none at all," said Upendra confidently.

"Anything serious?" asked Mira with some concern.

Naveen Chandra smiled and said, "Nothing serious. It is a part of my battle."

"What battle? Do you also have battles?" asked Mira with evident anxiety.

"Oh! Karma Yoga is the battle of Kurukshetra, and I have been fighting this battle for the last twenty years. But it is a long story and I do not want that you should get involved in it."

"But we want to be involved in the battle," cried out Mira, "Please tell us what is the matter."

"It is all connected with our revolution, our silent revolution to create a new system of education. At every stage of building up experiments, there have been psychological explosions. Only three years ago we introduced our new system at higher levels of college education in our school. But there has been so much resistance, not from students but from teachers and parents. You must know that the new system of

education implies more exacting work from teachers. It is not easy. Teachers are required to be more dynamic, more innovative and much more competent than ever before. So there is a natural resistance, -- resistance of *tamas*. I fully understand it.

"Not all teachers are resisting but there are those who have a great influence over a large section of teachers; they want to go back to the old normal type of education. How mechanical and how easy is the conduct of the ordinary system! You go to a class, mount up the platform, keep standing in front of a large audience of students, deliver a lecture, and quit the class. Year after year, you give the same lecture to new audiences, and your tasks are fulfilled. Everything seems so smooth, so convenient, so successful! Only all that is not education!"

"But I thought that everybody in your school is wonderful and your school is running wonderfully well," remarked Upendra.

"Yes," replied Naveen Chandra, "everyone is very nice, if not wonderful; but even nice people quarrel; one has to go beyond niceness in order to bear the burden of a revolution. And we must realise that building and running a new system of education implies a permanent revolution. One has to be constantly vigilant, constantly creative, constantly heroic. The Veda speaks of the Aryan Fighter; Gita also speaks of the Aryan Fighter. And the message that the Aryan Fighter is called upon to put into practice is: 'Protect the Right, do without fear or weakness or faltering thy work of battle in the world. Do thy work with calm, strong

and equal spirit; fight and fall nobly or conquer mightily."

We had already passed beyond midnight, and I thought it was time to disperse. But before dispersing I told Naveen Chandra, "I will join you in your journey and I have decided to study at your school."

And before Naveen Chandra could reply, Upendra pushed me a little and said, "Before you join, I will join."

And Mira, although she said nothing, looked at Naveen Chandra with sharp eyes emitting the force of the Aryan Fighter. The bhakta in her had become a Karmayogi!

VI

How difficult it is to change! How difficult it is to change even when you want to change, -- even when you have begun to change! I had expected rather naively that father would be very happy to learn that all his three children were ready to join Naveen Chandra's school and that they were keen to join at once. Father himself had decided to join that school and to participate in the new programmes that Naveen Chandra had discussed with him during the last three days. Father had already promised him that he would bid a permanent good-bye to Dwarka and settle down in Rajpipla as early as possible. He had told us that the new system of education which was being built up in Naveen Chandra's school was a sort of fulfilment of his own dreams which he had nourished in his youth. Mother, too, was very happy that father had at last taken a bold decision in his life and thrown away the fetters of

fear and anxiety. Father had told me that I was to look upon him as a friend and as my counsellor. All my fear of him had vanished.

Next morning, therefore, when I got up early I was fresh both physically and spiritually. And my enthusiasm knew no bounds. I knew that I was free and felt in me a new born bird; I was about to make my maiden flight in the open sky of life. I wanted to tell father everything, everything without reserve. And as soon as father came out of the bathroom and as he was speeding towards the puja room, I approached him and enthusiastically touched his feet. Father was surprised but expressed deep gratification and happiness. And then, I blurted out, "Father, Naveen Chandra is leaving today, and all of us Upendra, Mira and myself are also leaving for good. We shall study in the New School and we shall eagerly await your and mother's arrival."

I had not imagined that my words would cause as big an explosion as that of a few days ago. Unfortunately, father took my words as a terrible blow to his dignity! Father resumed at once his old face, and his sharp and piercing eyes emitted fire on me. He said nothing and went away quietly to do his puja, where mother, Mira and Upendra joined him. I returned to my room, closed the door and bolted it from inside.

I realised that I was tactless and had failed to prepare a good ground before making the announcement that I had made. As I began to reflect quietly, I saw that I had committed at least three mistakes. I had not explained why Naveen Chandra was leaving that afternoon; I had not explained what Upendra, Mira and I had discussed

with Naveen Chandra till late hours on the previous night; and I had not consulted father to seek his advice before arriving at a decision. I was carried away by enthusiasm. Since the arrival of Naveen Chandra three days ago, I had begun to live in new world of freedom and joy. And I must confess that I had lost some balance.

What to do now? This was the question that occupied me. I became more determined than ever that I must leave home and leave home for good. I knew that I had to join Naveen Chandra. I knew that I had to plunge in the revolution. I knew that I must pursue Truth, that I must abide by the righteousness. *satyam vada dharmam chara* -- this was the mantra, this was the Sound that reverberated all over my being, my thought, my life-force, my body. It seemed to me that the battle-cry of the Aryan Fighter had entered into me. Large protective wings seemed to have spread out of my being, and I cried out in my heart, 'I shall protect Mira and Upendra. I shall take them with me; I shall carry them to their destination.'

Just at that moment, there was a knock at the door. As I opened the door, I saw Upendra smiling victoriously. As he entered the room, he said, "Don't be afraid. We have mounted on the chariot of Yoga and we have become revolutionaries. Mother is with us and father cannot stop us."

"But what about Mira?" I asked.

"Father has spoken very harsh words to her. He told her that she is foolish and that it would be most foolish for her to give up college studies when her final examination is only four months away."

"What did Mira say?" I asked.

"As usual, -- nothing. Then father became explicit. Without B.A. degree, he said, she would not find a good match." said Upendra.

"Then Mira said, 'Father, why are you worried about my marriage?'"

"Father said nothing, but he was obviously disturbed. When he turned to me, I simply told him, 'Father, do not worry about me. If I remain here, I shall continue to fail in the tenth examination year after year and I will be good for nothing. I must leave Dwarka; I must bid good-bye to the present system of education; I must learn what I must, and that is possible only at Rajpipla.' At this stage, mother intervened and said, 'If my children are leaving today, I must also leave with them. And my advice to you is that you should also leave today itself.' No sooner had mother spoken these words than father broke down. He retired to his room. But mother and Mira are packing up their baggage, and they have asked me to tell you to stand firm."

I sat down in my chair and asked Upendra also to sit down on my bed. I held Upendra's hands and felt close to him as never before. Our spirits seemed to have embraced each other, and my soul burst out in joy. At once, I felt the urge to go to father.

When I entered father's room, I found that he was lying in his bed and he was weeping like a young boy. A tide of love swept over me and I embraced him. And he wept even more bitterly. When he became quiet he drew me towards him and embraced me. He fixed his eyes on mine and

said, "How very old I am! Can I not change? Why do I still want to live in the old world, even when the new world is opening its gates on me and my children? All of you are right, I alone am wrong."

"You are not wrong father! You are like Shiva, drinking the poison of the old world, and I am sure that like Shiva you will be able to sustain it in your throat and remain immortal."

Father clasped my hand. He said, "I belong to *sandhyā* where the old and the new meet, where the old is striving to persist and the new has to struggle to survive and arrive. Girish! I am very happy that everyone in home is at war with me so that my old self dies and ever-young self takes a new birth."

Father and I remained with each other for a few but great moments of intimacy and inexpressible harmony. Then father said, "Get ready to leave with Naveen Chandra. I too will leave with all of you, -- today itself."

As I was leaving the room, father got up and told me, "I shall meet Naveen Chandra."

As I saw him going towards the room of Naveen Chandra, I realised in an instant that he had made a leap from the old to the new, from the circle of laws and standards of our ordinary life to the freedom that issues from surrender to the Divine. The great message of the Gita flashed through my mind :

"Give up all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone;

I shall liberate thee from all sin; do not grieve."

Exactly at 11.45 a.m., Mira locked the main door of the house and we all set out for the railway station. The old world vanished from our life, and we were ready to enter into a new world!

APPENDIX

APPENDIX-I

1. The world and ourselves-- these two basic phenomena are undeniable; that the world is observable and understandable by us is a fact, however mysterious may be the precise mechanism and however debatable may be the ultimate meaning we may attach to the world and our observing intelligence.
2. Our intelligence consists of the senses,--in the first place; but supreme over the senses is the mind; and supreme over the mind is the intelligent will, buddhi; that which is supreme over the intelligent will is he, the conscious self, the Purusha.

(Mind is superior to senses because even if the senses are operative, but if the mind is not attentive to the operation of the senses, we fail to take intelligent or conscious cognisance of the objects of senses. Buddhi is superior to the mind because it is buddhi that turns sensations into ideas, judgment and discrimination and co-ordination between ideas; and it is this discrimination that enables the power of will to choose and decide. Purusha is superior to the intellect because intellect itself detects the Purusha as the real observer, the real source of consciousness which stands behind operations of senses, mind and intelligent will and observes as a witness the world as its object.)

3. Purusha is the supreme cause of our subjective life; in that we have to fix our will. Then we can destroy the restless ever-active enemy of our peace and self-mastery, the mind's desire.
4. But what is the method of fixing the intelligent will in the Purusha?
5. We must first understand the difficulties that stand in the way. Normally, our intelligent will takes its downward and outward orientation; and it gets entangled with the play of the three gunas of Prakriti (Nature), inertia and ignorance (tamas), passion, action and struggle (rajas), and light, poise and satisfaction (sattwa). As a result, we fall at the mercy of the objects of senses, and we live in the outward contact of things. The following psychological series follows:---
 - (a) Senses excited by their objects create a restless or often violent disturbance, a strong or even headlong outward movement towards the seizure of these objects and their enjoyment. These objects carry away the sense-mind, "as the winds carry away a ship upon the sea."
 - (b) Next, the mind carries away similarly the intelligent will (buddhi) also.
 - (c) Buddhi, therefore, loses its power of calm discrimination and mastery.
 - (d) As a result, the soul becomes subjected to the play of the three gunas of Prakriti. This is the cause of the troubled life of the ordinary, unenlightened, undisciplined human being.

6. Therefore, the intelligent will should be turned upward and inward. And what is the method or technique of achieving this goal?
- (a) The first movement must be obviously to get rid of desire which is the whole root of suffering. And to accomplish this:
 - (i) We must put an end to the cause of desire, namely, the rushing out of the senses to seize and enjoy their objects.
 - (ii) We must draw the senses back when they are inclined to rush out, draw them away from their objects,--as the tortoise draws in his limbs into the shell.
 - (iii) Senses thus drawn back enter into the quiet mind;
 - (iv) The quiet mind draws back into the quiet intelligent will, buddhi;
 - (v) The quiet intelligent will draws back into the soul and its self-knowledge, which observes quietly the action of the three gunas of Nature, but is not subject to them, not desiring anything that the objective life can give.
 - (b) This withdrawal of senses from the object is not external asceticism, it is not physical renunciation. This withdrawal does not mean the austerities of the rigid ascetic with his fasts, his maceration of the body, his attempt to abstain even from food.
 - (c) This withdrawal has to be inner withdrawal, inner renunciation. For the embodied soul, having a body, has to support it normally by food for its normal physical action. If one abstains

from food, one removes the physical contact with the food, but that does not get rid of the inner relation which makes that contact hurtful. One still retains the pleasure of the sense in the object, the *rasa*, the liking and the disliking. The solution is that one must learn to endure the physical contact without suffering inwardly the sensuous reaction.

- (d) A stage will come when desireless contact with objects, the unsensuous use of the senses, becomes possible. It is possible by the vision of the Supreme, and by living in Yoga, in union or oneness of our entire inner being with the Soul. For the one Soul is calm, satisfied in its own delight, and that delight free from duality can occur, once we see the Supreme thing in us and fix the mind and will on that. This is the true method of liberation.

7. This is the method of self-discipline and self-control. And this method is not easy. Even the sage, the man of clear, wise and discerning soul who really labours to acquire complete self-mastery finds himself hurried and carried away by the senses. We may dwell once again on the reason for this.

- (a) Mind naturally binds itself to the senses.
- (b) It observes the objects of sense with an inner interest.
- (c) It settles upon them and makes them the object of absorbing thought for the intelligence and of strong interest of the will.

- (d) By that attachment comes.
- (e) By attachment desire is excited.
- (f) By desire distress, passion and anger when the desire is not satisfied or is thwarted or opposed.
- (g) By passion the soul is obscured, for the intelligent will (buddhi) forgets to see and be seated in the calm observing soul.
- (h) As a result, there is a fall from the memory of one's true self.
- (i) By that lapse the intelligent will is also obscured, destroyed even.
- (j) For the time being, the soul no longer exists to our memory of ourselves, it disappears in a cloud of passion; we become passion, wrath, grief and cease to be Self.

This must be prevented and all the senses must be brought utterly under control. Then only the wise and calm intelligent will becomes firmly established in its proper seat.

8. But even self-discipline is not sufficient for the purpose we have in view. It can be done by Yoga with something which is higher than itself and in which calm and self-mastery are inherent.
9. And the Yoga can only arrive at its success by devoting, consecrating, by giving up the whole self to the Divine. For the liberator is within us, but it is not our mind, or our intelligence, nor our personal will,--they are only instruments. It is the Lord in whom we have utterly to take refuge.

10. And for that we must make him the object of our whole being and keep in soul-contact with him. As the Gita says : "He (the seeker) must sit firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me."

B

We can now arrive at the description of the final result of the methods and techniques indicated above.

1. It becomes possible to move among objects of sense, in contact with them, acting on them, but with the senses entirely under the control of our inner self.
2. Then, free from reactions, the senses will be delivered from the affections of liking, disliking, escape the duality of positive and negative desire.
3. Calm, peace, clearness, happy tranquillity, "*ātmaprasāda*", will settle in the seeker.
4. Intelligent will is rapidly established in the peace of the self; suffering is destroyed.
5. This calm, desireless, griefless fixity of the Buddhi, and self-poise is called Samadhi. (The sign of the seeker in Samadhi is not that he loses consciousness of objects and surroundings and of his mental and physical self and cannot be recalled to it even by burning or torture of the body. These things happen in a trance, and people ordinarily call this state of trance as Samadhi. But while trance is a particular intensity, it is not the essential sign of Samadhi.)
6. The state of Samadhi is tested by the following:

- (a) expulsion of all desires;
- (b) inability of desires to get at the mind;
- (c) inner state in which freedom from desires arises;
- (d) the delight of the soul gathered within itself with the mind equal and still high-poised above the attractions and repulsions, the alternations of sunshine and storm and stress of external life;
- (e) inward orientation even while action is performed externally;
- (f) concentration on the Self even when gaze is on external things;
- (g) entire stretching of the being towards the Divine even when to the outward vision of others, one is busy and pre-occupied with the affairs of the world;
- (h) there is no outward, physical, practically discernible signs of this great state of Samadhi, which can be described in the modes of speaking, sitting and walking of the one who is seated in Samadhi, *Samadhistha*. But there are still other inner signs;
- (i) equality is the great stamp of the liberated soul;
- (j) *samadhistha* (one seated in Samadhi) is with mind untroubled by sorrows; he has done with desire for pleasure. From him liking and wrath and fear have passed away;
- (k) he is without the triple action of the qualities of Prakriti, without dualities, ever based in his true being, without getting or having, possessed of his self;

- (l) *and yet he does not cease from action;*
- (m) but his actions are not inspired by desires or by claims for the satisfaction of the restless and energetic mind by a constant activity. Therefore, the seeker is told :
 "Fixed in Yoga do thy actions, having abandoned attachment, having become equal in failure and success; for it is equality that is meant by Yoga."

Three questions may arise at this stage:

- First : Is there not always some kind of distress in action, because while doing action there is always a choice between a relative good and evil, the fear of sin and the difficult endeavour towards virtue?
- Second: If action is entirely desireless, would it not be devoid of decisiveness, effectiveness and large or vigorous creative power?
- Third : Does action not take one away from liberation towards bondage?

The answers of the Gita to these questions can be formulated as follows:

- First : The liberated who has united his reason and will with the Divine, casts away from him even here in this world of dualities both good doing and evil doing, for he rises to a higher law beyond good and evil, founded in the liberty of self-knowledge.
- Second : Action done in Yoga is not only the highest but the wisest, the most potent and efficient even for the affairs of the

world, for it is informed by the knowledge and will of the Divine, who is the Master of Works.

Third : The sages who do works without desire for fruits and in Yoga with the Divine are liberated from the bondage of birth and reach that other perfect status in which there are none of the maladies which afflict the mind and life of a suffering humanity.

(n) The status to which the liberated worker of Divine Works reaches is called Brahmic condition, "*brāhmi sthitiḥ*". This status has special characteristics:

(i) It is reversal of the whole view, experience, knowledge, values, seeings of earth-bound creatures. What is night for the ordinary people is day for this new status. In other words, the life of dualities which is the day for the ordinary people is from the point of view of the new status a night, a troubled sleep and darkness of the soul. On the other hand, that higher status which is a night to the ordinary people is the luminous day of true being, knowledge and power.

(ii) That new status is of a wide ocean of being and consciousness which is even filled, yet ever motionless in its large poise of the soul.

(iii) All the desires of the world enter into him, who has this new status, as waters enter into the sea. But he has no desire not is he troubled.

- (iv) He, living in this new status, is one with the one Self in all and has no "I" or "mine".
- (v) He acts as others, but he has abandoned all desires and their longings.
- (vi) He lives in great peace and is not bewildered by the shows of things; he has extinguished his individual ego in the One, lives in that unity. If so willed, he can even attain to extinction in the Brahman by the great immergence of the separate personal self into the vast reality.

APPENDIX-II

सपत्त्वविषये

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्य नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ २.३८

Being equal minded towards happiness and suffering, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage yourself in the battle.

2.38

... भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् । २.४५

Become, O Arjuna,

free from dualities, ever-balanced, unconcerned with acquisition and preservation and seated in the inmost self.

2.45

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ २.४८

Perform action, O Arjuna, being fixed in Yoga, renouncing attachments and seated in equality in regard to success and failure. Equality is verily Yoga.

2.48

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वोतरागद्वेषक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ २.५६

He whose mind is not perturbed by adversity, who does not crave for happiness, who is free from attachment, fear and honour, -- he is the man of wisdom with intelligence fixed in equality.

2.56

यदृच्छताभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ ४.२२

He who is content with what he obtains without fever of strain, he who has transcended dualities, and he who is without envy and is equal in success and failure, he remains free even though engaged in action.

4.22

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव शृपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ ५.१८

Men of wisdom are those who have an equal eye for the brahmin imbued with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and the despised.

5.18

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साध्ये स्थितं मनः ।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ ५.१९

Those whose mind is seated in equality have conquered phenomenal existence here itself. As the Brahman is flawless and equal in all, even so they stand established in the Brahman.

5.19

न प्रहृष्येत् प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत् प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंपूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ ५.२०

He who is seated in the Brahman, and who is the knower of the Brahman, fully awakened with stable intelligence, -- he does not get excited by obtaining what is pleasant and does not get aggrieved by obtaining what is unpleasant.

5.20

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥ ६.७

The highest self of the one who is tranquil and who has conquered the lower self is seated in equality in regard to cold and heat, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour.

6.7

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।

युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी सम लोष्टाश्मकाज्वनः ॥ ६.८

He who is satisfied with the knowledge of the essence and the knowledge of manifestation, who remains unshaken, who has conquered the senses and to whom clod, stone and gold are the same, -- he is called a Yogin.

6.8

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीन यध्यस्थद्वेषवन्धुषु ।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ६.९

He stands out distinguished among all whose intelligence is impartial in regard to friends, companions, enemies, neutrals, arbiters, haters, relatives, saints and sinners.

6.9

सर्वभूतस्थयात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ ६.२९

He who is settled in Yoga has an equal eye everywhere, and he sees himself in all beings and all beings in himself.

6.29

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ६.३०

He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, he never becomes lost to Me, nor do I become lost to him.

6.30

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ६.३१

He who, seated in all beings, worships Me with steadfast oneness, he is a Yogi living in Me even though spread out in every way.

6.31

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ६.३२

He who sees everywhere an image of himself, and he who has an equal eye for happiness and suffering, O Arjuna, he is regarded as the supreme yogin.

6.32

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १२.१३

He who hates none and he who has friendliness and compassion for all, who is selfless, devoid of egoism, equal in suffering and happiness, forgiving—

Ever content, self-controlled and possessed of firm conviction, and one whose mind and intelligence are consecrated to Me, that Yogi, My devotee, is dear to Me.

12.13 - 14

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १२.१४

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षापर्षभयोद्वेगैर्युक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १२.१५

He by whom the world is not afflicted and whom the world cannot afflict, he who is free from joy, honour, fear and anxiety, he is dear to Me.

12.15

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १२.१६

He who is devoid of wants, who is pure and efficient, seated high above and free from all trouble, and he who has renounced all egoistic initiative, and who is My devotee, -- he is dear to Me.

12.16

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न कांक्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १२.१७

He who does not get excited nor does he get depressed, he who envies none and desires nothing, who has given up all good and evil, and he who is full of devotion, he is dear to Me.

12.17

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः संगविवर्जितः ॥ १२.१८

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिषौनो संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १२.१९

He who is equal to the enemy and the friend and he who remains equal in honour and dishonour, in cold or heat and in pleasure and pain and who is free from attachment, --

To whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, and who is content with anything, homeless, steady-minded, full of devotion, -- that man is dear to Me.

12.18 - 19

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ १३.२८

He who sees the Supreme Lord seated equally in all beings, imperishable in all that perishes, he verily sees.

13.28

समं पश्यन्ति सर्वत्र समवस्थितमोक्षरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ १३.२९

Because he sees the Lord, seated euqally everywhere, and since he does not destroy self by the self, therefore, he attains to the Supreme goal.

13.29

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समतोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्पसंस्तुतिः ॥ १४.२४

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुत्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ १४.२५

He who is equal in misery and happiness, settled in well-being, viewing a clod, stone and gold alike, free from preference for the pleasant and unpleasant, firm and the same in censure and praise, --

He who prefers neither honour nor dishonour, neither friend nor foe and he who has renounced all egoistic initiative, he is said to have transcended the Gunas (modes of Nature).

14.24 - 25

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १८.१०

He who does not desire to give up a disagreeable work or who is not attached to an agreeable work, and he who is imbued with sattwa and a steady mind where all doubts have been dispelled, -- he is the renouncer.

18.10

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न कांक्षति ।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद् भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ १८.५४

He who has become one with the Brahman, whose self is ever glad, who desires for nothing and grieves for nothing, and he who is equal to all beings, -- he attains to supreme devotion for Me.

18.54

Kireet Joshi, (b.1931), studied Philosophy and Law at the Bombay University. He was awarded Gold Medal and Vedanta Prize when he stood first class first in the M.A. Examination. He was selected for I.A.S. in 1955 but resigned in 1956 in order to devote his life to the study and practice of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga at Pondicherry. He was responsible for the establishment of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Research at Auroville.

Invited by the Union Government of India he joined the Ministry of Education as Educational Adviser in 1976 and later as Special Secretary in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. He was Member of the University Grants Commission from 1982 to 1988. He was also Member-Secretary of National Commissions on Teachers which submitted two voluminous reports in 1985.

His works include, "A Philosophy of Education for the Contemporary Youth", "A Philosophy of Evolution for the Contemporary Man", "A Philosophy of the Role of the Contemporary Teacher", "Education for Personality Development", and "Sri Aurobindo and The Mother". He has also edited "The Aim of Life" and "The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil".

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