

Freedom

The Art and Science of Life

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Freedom

The Art and Science of Life

If there is one word that has had the greatest influence on the thinking of the modern man, it is the word 'Freedom'. Who does not want freedom? Everybody wants to be free. Nobody wants to be controlled by others, nobody wants to be a slave. People are ready to go to any extent for the sake of freedom, they even wage wars to regain lost freedom, because they value freedom so much. This book is all about freedom.

Why do we want freedom? Because when we are free, we can do what is good for us, we can get what we want, we can get rid of what we do not want, we can live the way we wish, without any external restrictions and controls, and we can be happy. To live well and enjoy life to its fullest extent, we have to be free, free from all external controls and pressures. Slaves are powerless and helpless, they are ruled and controlled by others, they cannot live and work the way they want. Slaves cannot enjoy life, they only undergo pain and suffering. Who wants pain? Who wants suffering? Who wants to be a slave? We all want to be masters, not slaves. We all want freedom so that we can live happily and enjoy life. The primary goal of this book to help you learn to live like a true master and enjoy your life in the fullest and the deepest sense.

To live well and enjoy life, we need freedom not only from external threats but also from our own internal enemies like ignorance, foolishness, greed and anger. We need to free ourselves not only from poverty, illness, etc. but also from all confusions and delusions. To be free in the true sense, to live like a master, we need power. Only the powerful become masters. We need the power to think, the power to observe, analyze, and understand, the power

to control. Knowledge is power. Real power comes from knowledge, not from arms and ammunition or money or technology. Real power comes from real knowledge. It is important to know and understand the world around us, it is important to understand others, and it is even more important to observe, understand, master and control ourselves. Life is like a book. A book is useless unless you can read and understand it. To enjoy life, to live life the way we want, we must first study and understand life. We must understand the art of living as also the science of living. We must understand the whole of life, every aspect of it, the whole philosophy of life. Superficial knowledge is not enough. Unless we have a complete, proper, deep, thorough understanding of the world around us, as also our own internal mental world, we cannot hope to make the most of this great opportunity thrown at us in the form of a human life. To live well and enjoy life we need knowledge. This book is all about knowledge.

This is a book on life, a book on the art and science of life. It combines the wisdom of the ancient and the modern. This is not a translation of some book nor is it a commentary. It is a fresh, complete and self-contained reconstruction of the whole of human knowledge and wisdom, ancient and modern. It presents an integrated, holistic and scientific analysis of all aspects of human life in simple English. It touches upon, and has implications for a number of fields, including modern science, engineering, technology, industry, business, economics, education, environment, health, medicine, food, agriculture, dairy, *yooga*, society, administration, justice, law, governance, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, arts, human values, even religion and spirituality. All these various topics are not treated as assorted, unrelated topics. Human life is one and all aspects of life are in fact closely and inseparably inter-connected. This book therefore presents all these diverse-looking ideas in a single,

integrated, holistic and completely scientific manner. This book is written especially for people like you who have the spirit of scientific inquiry in you. The book is rigorous and logical throughout - there is no need to go by blind faith in any religion or cult or school of thought. This book is of universal appeal, it is non-sectarian. It is meant for all human beings, without racial, religious, national, ethnic or any other kind of discrimination. You do not have to have blind faith in anything, not even in modern science. This is not really a book on religion or spirituality although topics from religion and spirituality are also included. It is not polemic, we do not directly address or criticize any religion or school of thought. The goal of this book is to seek the ultimate truth and reality but it is not merely dry and abstract meta-physics. It is not mere extreme idealism nor is it vague and nebulous. This is a very practical and down-to-earth book, it is intended to help you understand life, to help you understand yourself, to help you lead a better, more meaningful, more fulfilling, more satisfying, healthier, happier, great, glorious life. This book is for you.

The book is highly structured. There are three chapters, each divided into a number of sections. Each section deals with one main idea and the sections are arranged to provide a smooth flow and gradual development of ideas. All technical terms used have been precisely defined. See appendix for a guide to pronunciation of these terms. The book is self-contained. There are no pre-requisites. The style is simple, direct and conversational. Anybody with a high school level of English can read and understand this book.

This book is very different from most other books you might have seen. Here we ask big questions concerned with human life and we seek the final answers to all these fundamental questions. In this book we ask what is life, what is

the goal of our life, how to live and how we can get the most out of this great opportunity called human life. Questions about our life are inseparably connected with other animate and inanimate beings in the world we live in, and our relationship with them. We therefore need to understand the true nature of this whole world. The very first chapter of the book is devoted to the exploration of this universe. We ask fundamental questions concerning the universe and its true nature. We go deep, we even ask questions such as whether this universe exists, what exactly do we mean by existence, and so on. Because what appears obvious may not actually be true and in science, we cannot take anything for granted without proper inquiry. We seek complete knowledge, for, half knowledge is worse than useless, it is in fact quite dangerous. Our knowledge of the universe will remain incomplete until we fully understand ourselves also because we are also part of this all-inclusive universe. So in the second chapter we ask who exactly we are. What is the true nature of ourselves? What is the relationship between ourselves and others? What is the relationship between ourselves and the world? The first two chapters provide the complete scientific and philosophical foundations of life. The third chapter is purely practical. It includes simple, down to earth and straight forward analysis of practical, day-to-day questions connected with life. This chapter shows how we can free ourselves from all bondage, pain and suffering and elevate ourselves from the level of mere physical existence as a two legged mortal brute to a fully developed human being so that we can all live a happy, healthy, satisfying, glorious human life.

The goal of this book is to seek the truth. We boldly ask fundamental questions and we unswervingly seek the final, ultimate, provably correct answers. We will not be satisfied with tentative, incomplete, imperfect, escapist, nebulous, vague answers. We shall not simply make as-

sumptions and move ahead. We shall seek and get complete, precise, final, provably correct answers to all the big questions. We will give independent, complete, satisfactory arguments and proofs. We shall question everything, we even question modern science. You must therefore read this book with a completely open, totally unbiased mind, without taking anything for granted, without accepting or rejecting any idea without a thorough inquiry. The human mind is like a parachute, it works best only when it is open. Give up all your biases and read this book with a totally open mind. Do not read this book in the light of your current knowledge, understanding and beliefs, everything will be called into question. Read with a completely open mind.

How to read this book? This book has been organized so that you get the complete and correct theoretical knowledge first and then look at the practical aspects of life in the light of this knowledge and understanding. Any aspect of life, any branch of worldly knowledge, gets proper meaning and perspective only when it is based on the solid foundation of the knowledge of the absolute, not otherwise. That is why we start with these scientific and philosophical foundations and only after gaining complete and deep understanding of these in the first two chapters do we take up other topics connected with human life. Therefore, it is best to read this book from beginning to end in the order in which it is presented. However, if you think the theoretical foundations are too abstract, you are not yet mentally prepared for that, and you are more interested in the practical aspects from which you can benefit immediately, you may want to read the third chapter first and come back to the first two chapters sometime later. In this latter case, we suggest you read the summary sections given at the end of the first two chapters before starting the third chapter. You may not understand everything fully but you will at least get an idea about the kinds of questions we have taken

up and the kinds of solutions we have come out with. In any case, this is a book that should be read slowly, carefully. You must think deeply about all the points raised, you must try and understand everything fully, in the deepest sense, and then only proceed. In case you are unable to understand something at any point of time, make sure you write it down. Write down all your confusions, doubts and questions then and there. Hopefully, all your questions will be answered somewhere down the line. You may want to keep reading the book again and again, each time you read, there will be something more to be learned, somethings understood better, somethings understood more deeply. You may not get the most out of this book by casual browsing here and there.

Other books are about something, they contain knowledge of something. This book is about knowledge itself. What exactly is knowledge? What does it mean to say we know something? This book is also about the process of knowing, the instrument of knowing. It is also about the agent or the knower. I know and I know that I know. This book is about the knower and about this meta knower. Can the knower be known? Who will know this knower? How? Other books are about truth or falsity of some ideas, propositions, conjectures etc. This book is about truth itself. Other books describe things as they exist. This book is about existence itself. This book is therefore very different. Statements here are pregnant with meaning, deep and profound. There is much more to it than meets the eye at first glance. You will be given plenty of opportunities to come back and try and understand everything in a deeper and still deeper sense. Do not think of this as wasteful, boring and repetitive. Take each such occasion as yet another opportunity thrown at you for a still deeper understanding. Keep reading and keep thinking deeply. This book gives you plenty of opportunities to actually practice the

ideas it presents, it even provokes you, prods you, nudges you once in a while. This book takes you through various emotions - at times you may feel like laughing, at times you may feel like crying. It may be boring and repetitive at times. Everything is intentional and the intentions are always good. As you read through the book, observe your own mind and how it reacts to each situation.

We gradually develop the ideas and your understanding will become deeper and deeper as you read through the whole book. We may, for example, prove that X is not true, giving a suggestion that Y may be true instead. At a later point of time, we may show that Y is also not true, hinting at something else. Therefore, all ideas, arguments, examples and proofs given in this book need to be understood only in the context in which they are placed in the book. Do not quote out of context. Casual browsing here and there is not recommended, at least in the first reading. You must read the whole book, if you stop in between, your understanding may remain incomplete and imperfect. Reading this book is like a scientific experiment, no valid conclusions can be drawn before the experiment is completed fully, right? Never give up, even if you cannot fully understand, appreciate or accept certain ideas or concepts. Always think that the best is yet to come and keep reading. Hopefully, all your confusions and doubts will be answered down the line. Seeking complete and perfect knowledge of the absolute is an extremely subtle and abstract task and the risk of losing track is very high. Therefore, it is essential to be extremely careful, exceptionally rigorous and ruthlessly strict at every step. Naturally, therefore, you will find the first two chapters quite rigorous. This is essential, this is inevitable, because the slightest chance for relaxation and looseness can distract us far away from the truth. You will find the third chapter a lot more easy going and smooth.

There is everything in this book for someone and there is also something for everyone. You may not like all ideas and suggestions but there will surely be something interesting and useful for every reader. Pick out those ideas and thoughts that you find interesting and useful and just ignore the others. This is book to be read, chewed, swallowed, digested, assimilated, internalized, and actually practiced in life. You stand to gain immensely, because it is not a book that just gives some information or knowledge, you are not just reading some ideas about some topic that someone has aired, it is a book that is directly connected with your own life, it can actually solve all your problems and actually give you everything that you want in life. This book promises complete, satisfactory, lasting solutions to all problems faced by the individual and the human society as a whole, if only it is read in earnest, understood properly, accepted, internalized and actually practiced. It is possible to overcome all problems without exception, it is possible to get everything we want in life. It is possible to overcome all pain, all suffering, all diseases, all difficulties. It is possible to get endless happiness and pure bliss. This may look like too tall a claim at this point but you will hopefully agree with this after reading through the whole book. Do read the whole book. You will surely stand to gain immensely.

It has taken more than four decades of intense study and deep thinking to develop this book. The first draft of the book took more than five years to write and it took a couple of years more to polish and perfect. A large number of thinkers and experts from various backgrounds, from across the world, including scientists, engineers, economists, linguists, chemists, software professionals, administrators, teachers, professors, students, house wives, traditional scholars, even saints, have previewed this

book and given critical and extremely valuable comments and suggestions. All of them stand acknowledged with the deepest sense of gratitude. Most of these great thinkers wish to remain anonymous. Hence I refrain from taking any names in acknowledgment here, instead of naming some and not the others. Many of the ideas, examples, illustrations, arguments and proofs included in this book have all been around for tens of thousands of years in India in some form or the other. In a sense, everything that has been said here has been heard somewhere sometime from somebody living or dead, no one can claim originality over all of these ideas. These ideas and thoughts have all been learned from many sources all through my life. I have learned many important lessons in life from a large number of people, as also from animals, plants and even inanimate objects, all of whom are like gurus to me. Some gurus have appeared in human form and taught me directly while others have taught me indirectly, by making me think. I have also had the privilege of direct, one-to-one teaching from some of the world's greatest thinkers. I stand here merely as a mouth-piece to all these great visionaries and thinkers. All errors of omission and commission are mine, I may kindly be pardoned for all that. Feel free to contact me at knmuh@yahoo.com for any further information. Your comments, criticisms, suggestions will always be welcome.

Kavi Narayana Murthy

23 March 2012

(nandana naama saMvatsara caandramaana yugaadi)

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Chapter 1

The Universe

1.1 The Moth and the Fire

Scientists believe that the Universe as we know today came into being approximately 15 Billion years ago. This Earth has been in existence for about 4.8 Billion years now. Human-like beings have inherited mother Earth for about 4.8 Million years. The present human species, namely, 'homo sapiens sapiens' has been around for 100,000 years. Human beings have made great advances during this long history. Progress has been gradual but the rate of progress has not been linear. Our progress has been exponential. More developments have been seen in the last few thousand years than in all of our past history before that. More progress has been made in the last few hundred years than in the rest of the past thousand years. More advancements have been witnessed in the last few years than in all of the remaining part of the present and previous centuries.

There are two major consequences of this exponential nature of development. Firstly we begin to think of some 100 years ago as remote past. A 1000 years before, is considered hoary past, mostly forgotten. How we lived 10,000 years ago is difficult even to imagine. We thus have a very

limited, short-sighted, skewed, lop-sided, myopic view and understanding of our own development and progress over time. It is not that all the men and women who lived thousands of years ago were idiots, or monkeys, and we have all become supremely intelligent and wise only in the last few hundred years. People who lived long long ago were also very intelligent, perhaps more intelligent and wiser than all of us. We must give up our bias for the recent past over the remote past and take a more balanced view of human progress and development. We often hear people talk about how things were in the past and how things have improved in recent times. Which past are we talking about? Things have not remained the same over our long history of hundreds of thousands of years, there have been good times and bad times, there have been horrible times and glorious times. Everything in the past was not bad and everything we have today is not great. Nor is it the other way round.

We must also be very careful because the factors we consider as defining the very notion of progress and advancement can, and do vary with time. People who lived long ago may appear to be crude and unsophisticated by today's standards but our present view is neither the only possible view nor is it necessarily correct. Today we take science and technology to be almost synonymous with progress and development. Is this really correct? In fact the present notions of progress as material wealth, economic development, comforts and conveniences for our bodies, large scale exploitation of natural resources for achieving these, causing serious damage to nature and the very basis of life in the process, are all of very recent origin. The very definition of human advancement and progress has changed drastically in the last few hundred years or so. What exactly do we mean by human development? Can we not become better, more humane human beings by any other means, with-

out science, technology and economic development? Every coin has two sides. We seem to be highlighting one side and suppressing the other. It is time we sit back and think.

Secondly, and more importantly, if we continue to make scientific and technological progress at this rate, developments will be even more drastic and faster in the next few months, then major changes will take place in just days, and perhaps even in hours and then in minutes. What would happen then? Are we nearing the end? Where will modern science and technology finally take us? What do we get there? When? What will happen after that? Will all science and technology and development and progress stop after all that can be done has already been done? Our date of birth is fixed and known, our end is also fixed, although unknown. By trying to do everything faster and faster, are we not trying to pull our end closer and closer to ourselves? Who wants to die today itself? Who wants to become old right now? Who wants to retire the very day he or she joins a job? Why then this madness about technology for automation and speed? Why this restlessness?

We are rushing at a great speed. We have no idea which way we are heading. We have no clear goal. We have no idea about our destination. We have no idea if we can reach there. We have no idea what we will find there. We have no clue whether all will finally end well or something bad, ugly or ghastly is in store for us. Like moths driven by some unseen magical force, rushing like mad towards the devastating fire, we are moving at great speed without any sense of direction or goal. Is progress infinite? Can we keep on making developments and advancements endlessly? Are we going to come back to square one in a cycle? Or will we spiral out to nowhere, never to return again? Have we crossed the limits of speed? Have we crossed escape

velocity? Will our breaks still work? Can we slow down and stop, if at all we wish to? We are madly bringing in changes at an exponential rate, eulogizing it as scientific progress, technological advancement, and human development, without the slightest idea of the destination or the direction or what exactly we mean by progress or development. We have no clue because we have no time even to think. This could be very dangerous, right?

If progress and developments have a limit, we are very close to the limit or perhaps we have even crossed the limits. The end is near. We should be getting ready for the final showdown. How long can you keep climbing a mountain? Once you reach the top, you can only roll down, right? It appears that the human society is heading for a ghastly and total destruction in the near future. If we continue like this, life on Earth will soon be impossible. Or perhaps there is still a last chance, we must wake up, we must realize, we must act today, to save ourselves from total destruction. If, on the other hand, progress can actually be made endlessly, infinitely, that means we will always be in a state of incompleteness, a state of imperfection, as otherwise we cannot make any further progress. This feeling that everything is incomplete and imperfect leaves us dissatisfied and troubled deep within. There will always be a vacuum, a void that will never be filled. Fulfillment is as much a human need as development. Endless advancements means that mankind will never get fulfillment. Nothing can be worse than this.

Wither science? Does anybody have a clear idea as to why we are making any of these so called developments? Do we have to make progress at all? Why? Who wants us to? Where is the compulsion? Why can't we simply live, do nothing, and be happy? Is that impossible? Or difficult? Nothing at all in nature, no animal, no plant,

has undergone any major change or development or has become faster and faster over thousands of years. Why is it that we human beings cannot keep quiet and simply be happy with whatever we already have?

Why are all always in a great hurry? We are not being chased by mad dogs, right? We do not have to run for our life, let us slow down, at least so that we have time to stop and think. It is not at all wise to rush madly without knowing where we are heading or why. Should we not be wiser than the moths, at least? Today everybody is busy all the time. Nobody has time for anything. If we do not have time even to think about our own life, is there not something fundamentally wrong somewhere? It is in fact some kind of an odd disease to say we are busy and we do not have time for anything, even for ourselves. Let us understand and accept this and then learn to make some time.

1.2 Slow Down, Stop, Think

What makes human beings different, and better, than all other living creatures? We can think. And we can talk. It is the combination of these two that sets man apart from all other animals. After all, animals also eat, drink, walk, run, sleep, reproduce, and do all the other such things. All of human civilization has been possible only because we can think and we can communicate our thoughts in a structured way through speech (and in its more modern equivalent in the form of written text). Thought and language are closely related. If we can think properly, it would not be difficult to communicate our thoughts effectively. If our thoughts are themselves confused, no matter how good our oratory skills may be, we cannot communicate well, for, we do not even know what to say. Thought and speech

are closely, inseparably inter-connected. In fact thought is nothing but silent speech. So, the biggest questions before us are 1) what to think? and 2) how to think?

Did they teach you what to think and how to think at school? Or in your college or during your university education? Does the TV or the print media teach you what to think or how to think? Did your parents teach you these at home? It appears that mankind has not been giving sufficient attention to these fundamental issues. Why is it that we have forgotten all important things, things which can elevate us into full, glorious human beings? Why do we keep ourselves busy in all kinds of trivial things? We are all the time busy, we are always thinking and worrying about something or the other, but we do not have time even to think what is it that we should be thinking of in life. Strange, is it not?

Asking the right questions is the very first and the most important step in science. The very first question we must ask is what we should we think about. Clearly, we should think of things that help us derive the most out of this extraordinarily great gift in the form of a human life. Human life is great, we should not simply squander it away, just because we do not know what is life and how to live. We should think of life. We should ask ourselves what is life? What is human life? What should we do in this life? How should we live? Why? How not? Why not? What would happen otherwise? Who are we? Why have we come here? Who are the others? What is the relationship between ourselves and others? What is the relationship between ourselves and the world around us? What is the true nature of this universe? What is the true nature of our own self? If we are not at all asking such questions, if we are not genuinely seeking answers to such basic questions, how can we ever make any real progress?

How should we think? We should have an uncompromising quest for truth. What appears to be true at first sight may turn out to be false on deeper inquiry. Human history is full of such mistakes. We should therefore be very careful. We should give up our attraction for falsehood. We should be strong enough to resist the temptations of falsehood. We should not accept tentative, conditional, half-baked, incomplete, imperfect answers. Half knowledge is worse than useless, in fact it can be quite dangerous. We should not accept or reject anything, not even science, without a careful and critical inquiry. We must aim for full, complete, perfect, absolute knowledge, complete understanding of all aspects of the whole universe, including of course ourselves. This would be real science. Knowledge, real knowledge, is power. It is this power of knowledge that gives us freedom and happiness in life. This is our first and foremost priority in life. All else can wait. Forget about deadlines and focus on your lifeline.

1.3 Progress and Truth

Once a pack of cards has been sorted in proper order, no more improvement is possible. Any attempt to change it will only destroy the order. Likewise, if you keep shuffling a pack of cards endlessly, you cannot go on increasing the randomness endlessly. Science tells us that randomness is related to a concept called Entropy which is itself related to the mathematical concept of Probability. There is a limit. There is a limit to progress too. Do not confuse mere change for progress. Once the optimum value of a parameter has been found out, any attempt to change or improve this will only make it sub-optimal. Endless innovation is impossible. Innovation, discovery, advancement, progress and development are not the things that human

society needs to be engrossed with. Happiness, peace, satisfaction, fulfillment, and true human development have no relation to scientific progress, technological advancement or economic development. Think.

Competition forces business systems to keep bringing out something new every other day. There is competition even in the academic and scientific professions today. If you say the same thing as what some one said long ago, you cannot publish it as your research paper, you cannot get a PhD degree, you cannot get a promotion, or name or fame or money or recognition. Even if the truth has already been discovered, you are tempted, even compelled to keep making newer, false permutations and combinations, even if you know that it is all false deep inside your heart.

Two plus two is four. This is the correct answer. This is the only correct answer. There can be any number of wrong answers but there is only one correct answer. If we try to change this correct answer in any which way whatever, it can only become false, right? Saying two and two is seven cannot be called knowledge. We cannot say two plus two was only one and a half long ago, we have gradually improved this value to four now and as we progress further, we can make this number seventeen. Two plus two is four, it was always four, it will always be four, it is four in India, it is four in Australia, it is four in Austria. We can keep telling all kinds of false things but truth cannot be improved upon. The very idea of progress, development or advancement is not applicable to truth. Truth cannot be changed. If at all we try to change it, it will immediately become false. The whole purpose of education and research should be to seek the truth, is it not? What purpose does it serve to seek false things and more false things and even more false things endlessly? Is it not wasteful seeking falsity? Why put in all of our time, effort and money only to

seek false, useless, wasteful, perhaps even harmful things in life?

What exactly do we mean by progress or development? We are thinking animals, has our thinking really changed for the better? Are we wiser today than we were before? There has been no fundamental change in the nature of this universe in the last 15 Billion years. There has been no significant change in the nature of the human mind over the last several hundred thousand years. Nothing has changed. It is not that people who lived in ancient times were all unhappy and all the living generations are totally happy and contented. It is not true that all of our ancestors suffered great pain and agony and only the modern man with all this scientific progress and technological advancement has all the comforts and pleasures of life. Do we really need to keep progressing? Why not simply live, do nothing and be happy? Think.

Here we are going to seek final answers to all the big questions concerning human life. The very concept of progress or advancement is not applicable to truth. Any attempt to change truth will make it false. In fact, truth is that which never changes. Let us forget about progress and development, and seek the truth instead.

1.4 Science, Spirituality and Religion

We all seem to have somehow taken for granted our present love affair with modern science, technology, industry, business and economic development, which is all hardly a few hundred years old which is nothing at all compared to our long history of several hundred thousand years. Despite all these advancements in science and technology and what

not, war, terrorism, theft, robbery, looting, murder, rape, child abuse, cruelty, cheating, exploitation, inequality, injustice, poverty, malnutrition, hunger, disease are all continuing unabated, if not on the rise. Do we really have peace today? Do we have security? Do we have happiness? Do we have complete satisfaction? Have we all become more humane than before? What is the goal of human society? What is the meaning of life? How should we live? Does anybody have time even to stop and think? Is it not time we do some soul searching?

While scientists continue to trumpet the greatness of the scientific developments and eulogize the scientific spirit of modern man, many are already disillusioned and confused. They have understood that everything is not quite right. Something is going wrong somewhere. But they do not know for sure what exactly is going wrong. Exploiting this confusion, a large number of religious and spiritual leaders have sprung up, each advocating their own theories, each promoting their own brands. Some of them are genuine. They are speaking from the bottom of their heart and they are talking purely for the welfare of humanity. They know what they are talking and they are totally selfless. Others are fake, money-minded, with an eye for name and fame, or they are themselves confused. How do we pick out the real guru-s and keep the fake ones at a distance? Simple. Stop, think, question and accept only after you are fully convinced.

This book is not a book on religion or spirituality although you may see some overlap with certain scientific works which have been labelled as books on spirituality or religion. Religion is a set of beliefs and practices. Here we neither fall back upon mere beliefs and faith nor do we advocate any particular religious practice without giving a scientific basis. This book is not about spirituality either.

The term spirituality is itself misleading. It comes from the word ‘spirit’ which signifies many things, including intoxicating liquor and non-existent, imaginary ghostly beings called spirits. Even when we deal with certain aspects of life normally considered to be within the domain of religion or spirituality, here we shall remain utterly scientific and unbiased.

We are not here to promote any one cult or school of thought nor are we here to criticize others. That is not our aim. This book is not polemic, we do not directly address or criticize any religion or philosophy. The aim of this book is complete, correct, proper and scientific understanding of all aspects of human life. We shall only seek the truth and be utterly logical and scientific in our quest. In the process, however, incidentally and indirectly, all other schools of thought, fashions and fads, religious beliefs or even modern scientific ideas may stand questioned or demolished to the extent they deviate from the truth. Truth is one. To discover the truth, barriers of falsity will necessarily have to be broken. Once the truth is brought to light, other contradictory theories and doctrines automatically become false. This is just an inevitable side-effect. The only way to see the true colour and natural brightness of a copper or silver vessel is to remove the rust and dust and dirt that are covering it up. The only way to see to truth is to remove the layers of ignorance that tend to mask it. We will have to be critical, there is no other way.

A religion is nothing but a set of beliefs and a set of prescribed practices. If these beliefs and practices are based on scientific facts and sound logical reasoning, there is no reason to assume that being religious always tantamounts to being unscientific. It is possible for a religion to be scientific and it is possible to carry out scientific explorations with religious fervor, seriousness and depth. Science and

religion do not have to be necessarily incompatible opposites. In reality, however, it appears that religions have become increasingly unscientific and science has become too superficial and materialistic and hence this rift has widened enormously over the last few thousand years. Whether you call it science or you call it religion is not important for us here, we are here to seek the truth. If we find some truth in some religion, we must have the openness to accept it and if there is something wrong with science, we must be equally prepared to give it up. This is the true spirit of scientific inquiry.

Today we generally tend to simply assume that science is correct and religion is not. Is this not a blind belief in itself? We simply accept anything which is claimed to be scientific as correct and we have great reluctance in accepting anything which has a flavour of religion or spirituality. This kind of blind belief is itself a kind of religion. Faith in modern science is also some kind of religion, right? Therefore, in this book we shall not go by mere labels and claims. We shall examine the underlying assumptions, we shall critically analyze the methods followed, we shall scrutinize the conclusions to cross check whether the results match the true nature of things, we shall ask how exactly and to what extent the whole exercise is necessary/unnecessary, useful/wasteful/harmful to mankind and to all the other living creatures in the world. You need to have a completely open, totally unbiased mind all through, right from the beginning till the very end. You must be willing and ready to accept whatever comes out of the whole exercise. Reading this book is itself an experiment. You cannot afford to jump to any conclusions even before an experiment is completed. You cannot afford to give up in between, you must read the whole book. It is not enough if you are curious, you must also be serious. Go ahead and read the whole book carefully, you will surely find it worth the time

and effort.

1.5 The Big Questions

Let us now start by asking some big questions. We have all had dreams. In our dreams we live and experience a whole fantastic world, full of people, animals, non-living objects of all kinds, both realistic and imaginary. We feel that we are part of our dream world, we feel that we are living inside our dream world, the dream world appears around us, outside of us, we are inside this world. We experience space, time, objects, people, perception, change, feelings, emotions, everything.

As soon as we wake up from our dreams, we realize that it was all just a dream, a projection of our own mind, not reality. Our mind is inside us and the entire world of our dream actually existed inside us, inside our own mind. Nothing of our dream world actually existed outside of us or independent of us. The world was inside us, not we inside the world. After we wake up from our dream, the other characters there do not continue and go on, the moment we wake up, the entire world of dreams suddenly vanishes into nowhere. In fact we realize that it did not exist at all.

We see a whole big world outside of us when we are awake. We live inside the world, the world is not inside us. It appears that this world exists independent of us. We may come and go but the world goes on. Other people and the rest of the world will go on even after we die. How can we be sure? Is there any proof? Is there any proof that the world exists and it exists outside of us and independent of us?

We see a world of objects in a mirror. We all know that

objects are not really inside the mirror, they are outside the mirror but they appear to be inside it.

Dreaming and looking through a mirror are common experiences of all ordinary human beings. In one case, the world initially appears to be outside of us but on waking up we realize that the whole world was actually inside us. In another case, the world appears to be inside but it is actually outside. Either the world must be inside us or we inside the world. Both cannot be true. Which is true? Are we inside the world or is the world inside us?

The world of dreams did not exist in reality. It is all only fantasy, some kind of imagination, not real. So we think. This external world we see in our waking state is real. So we take for granted. Dreams appear to be real as long as we are dreaming and the universe appears to be real as long as we are in this state of being awake. What is the big difference? Does the universe really exist?

We all simply take it for granted that our experiences in the waking state are real and our experiences in the dream state are all unreal, purely imaginary. In fact we often define reality and imagination giving these examples. How can we jump to such conclusions even before we conduct a thorough inquiry? That something appears to be real is not sufficient proof in itself. After all, the dream world also appears to be real as long as we are still dreaming. In science we cannot take anything for granted, however obvious it may be. We cannot accept or reject anything just because all the people in the world think so. We need to investigate with an open, unbiased mind, willing to accept whatever finally comes out as the truth, whether that is intuitive or counter-intuitive. It is not in the spirit of science to start experiments and observations with a strong prior bias for the outcome. It is also not in the spirit of

science to jump to conclusions even before we complete our experiments and observations.

There is a story of a cucumber and a cabbage going to the pond for a bath. The cucumber quickly took out its skin and jumped into the pond to finish off the bath while the cabbage went on removing its leafy garments one by one, never to find itself ready for the bath! We can wear this shirt or that, we can put on a sweater and on top of that a coat too. Whatever we superimpose this way, we can also take them all away. We can take away the coat, the sweater, the shirt and the undergarment because we have superimposed all these on our body. What is superimposed can be gotten rid off, whatever is superimposed, all that can be gotten rid off. What remains, what can never be taken off, what cannot be given away or stolen or lost, what can never leave us, that is our true nature or *svaruupa*. The superimposed things can only change the external appearance, they cannot affect the underlying reality. The aim of this book is to seek such an underlying changeless reality. What is the *svaruupa* of this world? What is my own *svaruupa*? These are the big questions.

Fire is naturally hot. It is always hot, we do not have to heat it. Nor can we take away its hot and burning nature. Being hot and burning is its very nature. Water is not hot by nature. We can heat water by bringing it in contact with fire. The hotness of water is not natural, it is an acquired quality. Therefore, water loses its heat if we simply leave it to itself. All acquired qualities, all qualities produced by contact with another object, all effects produced with effort can go away, they can never be part of the *svaruupa*. *svaruupa* is the natural quality that is already there, always there, not dependent on other things, never lost. It is the very nature of mirror to reflect. It is the very nature of ordinary water to quench. It is the very

nature of light to illumine. What is the *svaruupa* of this world? What is my own *svaruupa* then?

Does the universe really exist? Is there a single world common to all of us? Is it external to us? Does it exist independent of us? How can we be sure? If it exists, what is the true nature of this universe? Do I exist? What is the true nature of myself? What is the relation between myself and the universe? What exactly do we mean by existence? Does space exist? Does time exist? What is the true nature of space and time? These are some of the big questions we shall address and deliberate upon in this chapter and the next. We shall stop only after giving final, ultimate answers to all these questions. We shall not accept tentative, partial, imperfect, incomplete, relative, conditional answers. Elsewhere, if a theory has no apparent contradictions or confusions or gaps, then it is accepted. Here, this much is not enough. We are aiming at the final, definitive, infallible, conclusive, ultimate truth. We need the final answers, complete and fully correct. It is going to be a long and fascinating journey. Get ready.

All human beings naturally tend to assume many things about themselves, about space, time and the rest of the world. We may have never seen any proof but still we all tend to strongly believe in these assumptions our mind makes. Our attachment to these deep rooted assumptions is so great, we will tend to strongly resist any attempt even to call them into question. This book is unique - it helps you to question your own mind, understand its strengths and limitations, overcome its weaknesses, master your own mind and live happily like a true master, free from the bondage of ignorance.

1.6 Critical Inquiry

We have asked very big questions. Good. But to seek and get proper answers to all these fundamental questions we must first develop the art of critical inquiry. We shall therefore take some time to think of how to think. We all have a strong tendency to jump to conclusions too fast and we cannot afford to fall into that trap here. We also have a tendency to accept what others say without critical inquiry. In a truly scientific inquiry, we should not blindly accept or reject anything based on what any political power or religious leadership or a saint, a sage, a messenger, a messiah, a prophet or a seer or even a scientist says, however great and worship-able they may be.

If someone says ‘The Sun rises in the East’, perhaps you would simply accept this as true. This book is meant for people who will stop and ask what exactly is East? If East is defined as the direction in which the Sun rises, the given statement serves no purpose at all as it gives no new information. If, on the other hand, East is a fixed direction, then this statement cannot be true, at least most of the times. We all know that the Sun oscillates north-south too over the year and on most days the Sun must be rising either to the north of East or to its South. Since this movement is continuous, the probability of the Sun rise time coinciding with the time when it crosses the East point should be extremely small. Even when this happens, what exactly do we mean by the rising of the Sun? The Sun is not a point, it is a whole big circular shape. Should we consider the point of time when the Sun just appears over the horizon or the point of time when it is fully above the horizon? Even during this short period, the Sun continues to move northwards or southwards relative to the Earth. Further, light rays bend while passing through the atmosphere and so the shape and size of the Sun we see are

not entirely correct. The given statement must therefore be by and large false. Whether the Sun rises in the East or not is itself irrelevant for us but in this book we shall go slow, stop, question, critically examine every minute aspect as illustrated in this brief example.

You have been brainwashed throughout your life into believing the false. It will take a lot of serious effort to unlearn all the wrong things you have imbibed and to get a fresh look at truth. We will go slowly, in stages. You must be patient. We shall ascend step by step. We may realize that what we had understood at some earlier step was not entirely correct. We will have to revise our understanding at times. Hence it is important to read this book from the beginning till the end in the order in which it is written. Every statement we make has been made with a particular intention at a particular stage of our exploration of truth. If you ignore this aspect and put statements out of context, you will see many confusions and contradictions. Do not quote from this book out of context. There are no confusions or contradictions in the final answer. If you see any contradictions, carefully analyze at what stage and under what assumptions we were working at that time and with what purpose. Then you can resolve these apparent contradictions yourself.

We are seeking truth. Truth is binary. It has to be zero or one. There is nothing in between. Even it is slightly different, it will become false. There is nothing like nearly zero or approximately one in binary. Either it is true or it is false. Hence we need to be very strict and extremely careful. We cannot accept approximations, we cannot depend upon assumptions. The ideas we present here are simple. Yet they are very subtle and we will keep getting confused because it is all so very different. Truth is very subtle and highly confusing. We need to come back to the same points

again and again and keep clarifying the doubts so that we can slowly begin to understand these simple yet insidious ideas clearly without any confusions. We have to repeat, for the sake of clarification and reinforcement. Be patient.

Expect the unexpected. Be ready for drastically new ideas and totally new ways of looking at well established facts. Be ready to seriously consider what may appear as strange, odd, unusual, unacceptable at first sight. Be willing to question everything. Have no bias, give up all your preconceived notions. You have to have an open mind. This is the biggest challenge for you. We need extraordinary courage since a Million people may keep telling us that it is all absurd and absolutely foolish. Because they are ignorant, and they know not their ignorance. And they stop not to think. Do not get fooled. Truth, knowledge and wisdom are not games of number. How many agree and how many disagree is not the point. Truth cannot be voted in or out. Whether one says or one Million say, truth is truth. That a Billion people believe in something is no proof that it is actually true. That great scientists say this with conviction is no guarantee that it is real. When it comes to the deepest and the most profound questions in life, nobody can be blindly trusted. We need to take a careful look at every minute step and convince ourselves of its correctness beyond all doubt. We cannot make assumptions. We cannot take anything for granted. The risk of missing the truth is very high. One small mistake somewhere and you will end up getting a completely wrong picture.

You need not blindly accept anything. You should not. Stop, think, ask questions, clarify your doubts and proceed only when you are fully convinced. Do not take anything tentatively and read on. Each step depends upon the previous steps. Go step by step, from the beginning till the end, slowly and carefully. Do not casually browse here and

there at random. Do not accept anything just like that, not even science. It will take time to read, understand and digest all this but you will surely succeed. Have patience. You stand to gain immensely and that is a promise.

1.7 Holistic Thinking

You cannot read a book if you hold it too close to your eyes. You cannot observe something if you grip it tightly, closing all your fingers on it. We cannot properly observe, know, or understand anything if we hold on to it tightly, that is, if we have a strong attachment to it, or we have strong preconceived notions and biases one way or the other. We cannot get a proper and complete understanding of anything if we look at it from any one particular view point alone. Here we are asking questions concerning human life as a whole. It is therefore very important, in fact essential, to conduct a critical inquiry as if we are some alien creatures who have come down to earth to watch and understand these mortal human fellows. We must distance ourselves from the whole of human society and observe like a completely neutral observer. This is the big challenge.

We should not think we are doctors or engineers or scientists or lawyers or drivers or carpenters. The moment we identify ourselves with one branch of knowledge or a profession, the moment we identify ourselves as a teacher or a parent or a businessman or whatever, we will invariably start asking ‘what does this mean to us’? We should think of what it means, per se, in itself, by itself, not what it means to us. We have started dividing knowledge for the sake of convenience but we have come too far and compartmentalized knowledge a bit too much. There is no such thing as physics or chemistry or biology or geology or astronomy or medicine. All are one. Knowledge is one. We

should aim for complete knowledge of everything, of the whole universe. This is possible only if we detach ourselves from our specializations, affiliations, professions and roles.

Compartmentalization leads to local optimization. Local optimization does not necessarily lead to global optimization. Even if everybody does their very best, with utmost sincerity and honesty, finally nothing good may result. If there is no overall control and if every driver tries to somehow reach home at the earliest, there would only be utter chaos on the roads and the whole traffic will get stuck up in a mad traffic jam. We can maintain a smooth streamlined flow of traffic only if we look at, understand and control the entire traffic situation as a whole. This is the essence of holistic thinking.

The agriculture ministry got worried about food shortage and took on a single point agenda of increasing agricultural production. Great advancements were made in terms of production but what about other aspects? Soil became critically poisoned, in fact soil is now dead. Forests have been destroyed. Rivers have been destroyed. We have either severe drought or heavy floods. Ground water is almost completely gone. Indigenous cows and bullocks are all gone. Now agriculture cannot go on without electricity. Food itself has become poison. Farmers have lost their knowledge of agriculture, they cannot make their own seeds or fertilizers or pest-repellents. Thousands of years of accumulated practical knowledge and wisdom has been lost. Farmers are committing suicide. Food scarcity has not been solved, we are in fact heading towards a great food crisis. Why do things happen this way? Because we do not think of all aspects, we put our blinkers on and work with a narrow focus. Agriculture, soil fertility, quality of food - not just the quantity, live stock and animal power, environmental conservation, industrial growth, economics,

loans and subsidies are all very closely, inseparably inter-related. We cannot have a separate agriculture department and a separate environment department and a separate industrial department. This compartmentalized thinking is the source of all human problems today. Improving one aspect while spoiling others is not real development. It is unwise to work in isolation. Human life is one and we must look at it as a whole. It is this wisdom that is critically lacking in human society today.

The industry ministry will be trying hard to promote industries and the environmental ministry will be trying hard to contain industrial pollution. Are these not all closely, in fact inseparably inter-linked? Many bits and pieces do not make the whole. Life is not a jig-saw puzzle, it is a single indivisible, whole. Holistic thinking is absolutely essential. Think of every aspect, think of every possible stake holder. Do not think of what is good for you, or for your family or near and dear ones, do not think of what is good for your department or company or even to your country. Do not even think of what is good for all human beings. Think what is good, for the whole universe, think what is right. Think of the truth. No qualifications. This is the right way of thinking, this is the only right way of thinking.

Today there are a lot of well meaning people in the world and they are all doing very well in their own areas but overall mankind is at its lowest. The path to hell is paved with good intentions. Good intention is not enough. Sincerity and hard work are also not sufficient. We must learn to think of all aspects, of the entire universe, before we do anything. Here we are going to ask and answer very big and fundamental questions concerning all aspects of human life. We need to think holistically. There is no other way.

We need to consider all stake holders, not some, not most, not even almost all. We need to consider all aspects - direct and indirect, immediate or long run, important or trivial. We need to ask all possible questions at every stage and evaluate all possible answers. It is not enough to go one or two steps, we must keep digging deeper and deeper, until we can go no more. Look at this example: Why worry? Because there is a test tomorrow. Why worry for that? Because I have not studied. Why worry for that? Because I may score low. Why worry about that? Because I may get a poor grade overall. Why worry? Because I may not get job. Why worry? Otherwise I will not get money. Why money? ... Go on and on like this, do not stop, until you come to the very bottom line. Understand the most fundamental issues first. What is it that you want in life? Why do you want it? Can you really get it? Will it really solve your problem? Is there a guarantee? Do not stop, for example, by saying I need money, ask why do you need money. Why can't you live without money? You will get complete, proper, deep understanding of life only if you master this art of holistic thinking. Do not worry, this is not an impossible task. Do not worry about the amount of data that you need to consider and the number of steps you need to go through. The secret of overcoming these practical problems is to think more abstractly, to think at a meta level, to think in more general terms. You will see examples of this throughout this book. Observe carefully, learn, practice. Unless and until you get a complete and clear picture of everything, you should not jump into action. You might be taking a big risk, you may be taking the wrong path, you may be harming yourself. Do not do anything in life until you understand life fully.

1.8 Frogs in the Well

Let us take a specific situation and analyze it in detail. Think of health care. Scientific experts in biology, chemistry, physiology, bio-chemistry, bio-informatics, etc. carry out fundamental research into the nature of human body, its functioning, the nature and cause of diseases, ways of curing these diseases, drug discovery, etc. Chemical engineers and process engineers develop techniques for large scale production of these drugs. Pharmaceutical industries manufacture the drugs. Marketing agencies give publicity, store, transport and distribute and sell the drugs. Doctors prescribe and administer the drugs. Hospitals provide the necessary infrastructure. Patients get cured. Lives are saved. Everybody is happy. Everybody has good intentions, everybody is working sincerely and doing their best. Everything looks perfect and fine. Is everything really fine? Think.

A chemistry professor is very happy if he can discover a new chemical molecule. Nothing else concerns him. A chemical engineer is very happy if he can find out means of economically producing it in large quantities in the factory environment. A pharmaceutical industry is happy to actually manufacture the drugs, sell and make money. Marketing people are also after business and money. Doctors want to cure illness and save lives. In the process they make money too. Patients of course want to get rid of their illness. All the people are working for the well being of patients, to reduce illness and suffering and pain. Everybody is doing their job and doing it well. But diseases, pain, suffering and premature death are all on the rise. Who is perfectly healthy today? Most people including the youth and even small children have some ailment or the other today. Why?

What happens during research? In all possibility researchers use computers. There is nothing wrong in using computers but we should not stop here, we need to dig deeper. What happens when these computers are manufactured? What all raw materials are used, how exactly are they processed, what all industrial wastes are produced, how are they disposed, how do these wastes affect the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat? We must understand all these in full detail. As a simple example, computers and other scientific equipment come in cardboard boxes packaged with thermocol and covered with plastic sheets. We take the computers and throw away these packaging materials as unwanted wastes. As civilized and responsible citizens, we take care to avoid littering and we put the wastes into designated bins. We think our role ends there. Is that all? What happens to these wastes? Plastics have a very high volume to weight ratio and are not bio-degradable. They occupy a lot of space and now there is not an inch of free space anywhere. All kinds of plastics, thermocol, sponge, PVC, batteries, electrical and electronic wastes, hazardous chemicals are all simply dumped somewhere and burnt, leading to release of toxic gases and residues. There is no safe way of disposing off a vast majority of the wastes we produce in the world today. We are adding large quantities of extremely toxic and dangerous chemicals into the air, water and soil system everyday, all over the globe. We consume the vital oxygen in the atmosphere and inject poisonous chemicals everyday while we travel by rail, road or air. How can anybody remain healthy? Health care does not mean hospitals and doctors and medicines. Prevention is better than cure. The health care system may be curing the illnesses of a few but at the same time it is itself the root cause of all the deadly diseases. A recent survey in the US showed that after heart attack and cancer, the third largest cause of death was ‘doctors and hospitals’! Every step that we

are taking towards health is actually leading to more diseases. Because we have become very narrow and sectarian. Think of all aspects and only then will you know the truth.

We are not at all suggesting here anything specific about how research or technology or any aspect of health-care system should or should not be. That is not our goal here. All we are saying here is, we need to consider all the stakeholders concerned, including scientists, engineers, doctors, nurses, patients, manufacturers, the packaging people, distributors, the truck driver, the tyre manufacturer for the truck, and every other individual connected with or affected in some way or the other, directly or indirectly, immediately or in the long run. All human beings, in fact all living beings are affected by manufacture, transportation, administration and disposal of drugs and other medical equipment in many ways. For example, the air, water and soil pollution caused by these processes affect their health. We all know that vehicle tyres wear out. Where does that worn out part go? It can only get into the air, water and soil. That is what we are all breathing, drinking and eating, right? We must therefore necessarily consider all these stakeholders and we must necessarily analyze every possible way each of these stakeholders is affected positively or negatively, we must then weigh all the good things and all the bad things that ensue from these human activities and come out with a plan that maximizes benefits and minimizes risks and losses to all stakeholders in the entire universe. That is possible. If you try sincerely, you will in fact end up with a simple, natural, safe, equitable, impartial, unbiased, fair, least-damaging, least polluting, sustainable, economical, affordable, lasting solution to human health problems. We can obtain what is maximally the best for the human society as a whole. There are three major obstacles to realizing such a dream. The first is narrow and compartmentalized thinking and planning. The

second is selfishness and greed. Perhaps the doctors, the drug manufacturers and medical shop keepers etc. are more interested in profit than in the health and well being of all human beings. Some people want to be richer than others, they want to make profit out of others' weaknesses and ill-health. Is this not inhuman? Thirdly, we are impatient, we are all too busy, we do not have time and patience to sit, think and plan. These are the weakness of individuals as also of the human society as a whole, these are the real diseases, these are the diseases we must cure first. Then the health-care system will automatically take care of itself.

Every coin has two sides. Every thing in life has many faces. It is not wise to highlight one or just a few aspects and ignore the rest. Think what is maximally good in the long run for the entire universe, including all the human beings, all the animals and plants, including those that will come in future. Today everybody lives in his or her own tiny world, like frogs in the well. Frogs in the well cannot decide what is good or bad for the whole universe. For example, nobody seems to be thinking or asking why deadly poisonous chemicals are being added to medicines as colouring agents. Why colour? Think big. Think holistically. This is not difficult, in fact, it is simpler.

1.9 The Art of Thinking

Is it practically possible to think of all aspects? Each field is so vast, no one can claim expertise in all areas. Taking all aspects into consideration is not practically possible. Are you thinking along these lines? This is not right. Holistic thinking is not only essential, it is very much practicable. Let us see how.

Let us take another current topic - urban development.

The moment we talk of urban development people will jump to issues like slum clearance, road widening, building new arterial roads, bridges and fly-overs, rapid mass transport system, water supply and sanitation, waste management and so on. This is where we go wrong. Before we get into all these details we must ask the basic questions. What exactly is urban development? Why develop cities? Why cities in the first place? A city is a Million people crowding in one place, right? Is overcrowding a better strategy or is spreading more evenly across the available land mass a wiser idea? A modern city accommodates a Million people or more, everybody wants milk and milk products, but it has no place for cows. Even if cows can be accommodated, surely there is no place for the grazing grounds for these cows. How is this possible? We try to solve this problem using science and technology. Today we have the dairy industry which produces enough milk and milk products for all these Millions who live in cities. But dig into the dairy industry and you will understand how cruel, inhuman, ghastly and dangerous the whole thing is. The white coloured liquid you get today in plastic pouches and tetrapacks is not really milk, it is a white concoction made up of pesticides, antibiotics, sex hormones, many other deadly chemical poisons including neurotransmitters, sometimes even blood and pus. Milk no longer has any of the nutritional and medicinal properties it always used to have. It is now widely recognized that the dairy milk is the root cause of a vast majority of serious health problems all over the globe. Technology does not always solve problems, it can create new and more serious problems too. Everybody in a city wants food but no food can be grown there, necessitating processing, packaging and transportation of foods. Everybody produces large quantities of waste materials but there is no place even to dump these wastes. Many cities have no source of water close by but everybody wants so much of water everyday. The very idea of a city is therefore

unsustainable. There is enough of natural resources for all the living people in the world, there will be enough even if our populations swell further, but overcrowding is something that nature cannot bear. Nature has enough capacity to take all the urine and stools and other natural wastes the seven Billion people in the world produce everyday but not if Millions crowd into densely packed cities.

What exactly is development? Is cutting trees and building concrete buildings the definition of development? Everybody is talking of sustainable development today but if this is the kind of development we are talking about, then development itself is not sustainable. Why at all develop urban areas? Why produce wastes at all? If people live close to the place where food is grown, there will be no need for packaging of food and all the garbage we produce on this count is simply avoided. Why add poison to food in the name of preservatives, artificial colours, flavours, taste makers and so on? If every place is within walking distance, there will be no need for any transport system or automobiles. Why make cars and motor cycles, why lay railway tracks, why maintain and operate buses, why dig for petroleum, why the refineries, why any of these? Why do people travel in the first place? Where is the need for Billions of people to travel so many miles everyday? Do not think of solving the traffic congestion and traffic jams. Ask why there is so much traffic. Everybody would only be happy to enjoy fresh air, clean water, natural surroundings, large houses with plenty of open spaces, garden fresh fruits and vegetables, no hurry, no worry, good health, plenty of time to strive and achieve great heights in any walk of human life. All this is possible if we discourage cities and encourage people to spread out. Then why give higher salaries to those who work in bigger cities? Why have less power cuts in bigger cities and more in rural areas? Who benefits from city life? Only the automobile manufactur-

ers, oil companies, supermarket and shop owners, cinema houses and other commercial centres of amusement or business. But these money-minded people also need clean air, safe water and good food, they also suffer from all the pollution and other ill-effects of city-life. One fine day these rich and money minded fellows will also understand that if everybody comes to cities, there will be no food to eat. You will die out of hunger even if you have a Million dollars in your pocket. Money cannot buy health. Money cannot buy longevity. Money cannot buy peace of mind. Money cannot buy real education. Money can buy very little that we need to live well and enjoy life. We all need to think big, think of the long term, think of ideas which are sustainable for centuries to come. Imagine a whole city catching up fire and burning out, due to war or terrorism or natural calamity or whatever. Every modern city is loaded with Millions of tonnes of hazardous materials, practically every man made artifact is poisonous. The toxic gases which will come out will destroy not only that city but also the whole world in no time. The very idea of a modern city is not sustainable.

Initially you may think giving up city life is too drastic, not practicable, people will not agree and so on. People have forgotten alternative, better ways of living and so they may think life will be difficult without all the comforts and conveniences of a big city. Village life can actually be better than city life. We have to either voluntarily give up city life and take up the old-fashioned village life or nature or the effects of our own actions will force us one fine day to go back to simple, natural, sustainable modes of living. There is no other choice. Cities are not a long term solution. Therefore, there is no need to worry about urban development at all. All problems of urban development can be solved by simply realizing that urban development itself is not a good idea. Like we build small local heaps

of garbage while sweeping a large open ground, cities are temporary dumps of all bad things that nature seems to have created in the process of disposing them off!

Our goal here is not to give solutions to the actual problems of urban or rural development, this was only another example of how we need to think, whatever be the question. The suggestions we have given here are less important, what is important is the nature of thinking illustrated here. Holistic thinking is simple, natural, direct, deep, abstract thinking, without getting bogged down by the details. Holistic thinking is not difficult, it does not require you to become an expert in all branches of human knowledge. On the other hand, holistic thinking will help you realize that most of these details are not at all necessary. Holistic thinking can take you to better solutions straight away without getting caught up in all kinds of unnecessary trivial details. Most of the problems facing mankind today are not problems, they are only superficial symptoms. The root cause of many different-looking problems can be one and the same. Wise men of ancient times asked if there is something by knowing which everything is known. They asked if there is a root cause for all human problems and if there is any solution to that one root problem. And they got to understand so much about human life and so well. Think deeply, go to the roots, set the root right and all these various superficial symptoms will automatically vanish in one go. Life is a single connected whole, all problems of life are closely inter-connected, you cannot solve one problem at a time, you need to look at the entirety. This is the secret of holistic thinking. Holistic thinking alone can give us sustainable, lasting, permanent solutions to all problems faced by the individual or by the human society as a whole. Holistic thinking is the only recipe for a better life and a better world order. This is the art of thinking.

1.10 The Methodology

Everybody thought Earth was flat. The church opposed vehemently but scientists finally proved that the Earth is round like a ball. Now no one has any doubt. The fact that the entire world believed something which we now think is false, shows that human thinking is never fail-safe. The entire world can go wrong. We must accept this. That a Billion people think it is so does not make it the truth. All human beings have essentially the same ‘software’ program running in their brains. If a software has a ‘bug’ in it and it says two and two add up to seven, all the countless Billions of copies of this software will say two plus two is seven. Consistency is not a proof of correctness. All human beings can go wrong. Many times they have. This is no surprise.

Even great minds get confused. Scientists, researchers, academicians, professors, experts, can all get fooled by the magic of nature. At one time doctors firmly believed that bad blood was the cause of all diseases and they used to take away a good deal of blood to cure patients! In hind sight we may laugh at this but at that time, everyone believed in it. Alchemists were trying to convert all metals into gold. These were scientists, researchers, professors, mind you, not the uneducated masses who easily fall prey to superstition. We think we know many things but actually we do not. That is the reality. Admitting our ignorance is the first step in gaining real knowledge. We will have to get humble.

What appears real is not necessarily real. Even if it is exceedingly realistic, as real as real or more real than real. While you are still dreaming, a dream is as real as real can be. Not an iota less. Not a grain different. We cannot take something as real just because it appears so or because ev-

everybody thinks so.

We cannot simply dismiss all the knowledge in the world as unreal like a dream. Nor can we afford to simply accept everything on the face value. We need to take up an independent, thorough, scientific inquiry into this wonderful but most confusing world of truth and myth, fact and fiction, real and unreal. Does this universe exist? Is it outside us? Where do these notions of outside and inside reside in the first place? What exactly is space? Is it an object? Is it an attribute of some object? What exactly is time? Is time linear? Is it common for all people or do we have our own times? Does time actually move at constant pace? Does time reside within space or outside of it? We need ask such questions and seek the ultimate truth. We need to be extremely careful. We need to go slowly, step by step.

We shall follow the proven method of science - experimentation, observation, inference. Experiments must be carefully designed, properly planned and systematically conducted. Observations must be carefully noted. Inferences should be drawn with care. Everything must be double checked, frequently re-visited, giving no scope for any omissions and commissions. Experiments must be repeatable, anywhere, anytime. It should all be based on common experience of ordinary people in their daily life. We shall not rely on extraordinary mystical experiences of great men because we cannot repeat such experiments and experiences.

All of our scientific explorations will be based on 1) common experiences of all ordinary human beings, and 2) logic and reasoning. We may depend upon the works of scientists and other great thinkers but only after subjecting them to the tests based on general human experience and logical reasoning. We do not go blindly by what any particular super human being, a mystic, a saint or a seer or

a messenger of God or a messiah or a realized soul has said without critical examination. Nor shall we blindly accept or reject anything just because a great scientist has said so.

We shall give a number of arguments, examples, metaphors and simile to drive home a point. Many of these arguments and examples are not essential to prove the final results but are useful in getting closer to a complete and clear understanding and to overcome our confusions and doubts. Sometimes these examples and arguments may look strange or even far fetched. This happens because you are not used to thinking along these lines. You need to stop, think deeply, meditate, and proceed once you are convinced. The examples and figures of speech have a single purpose and should never be stretched beyond the intended purpose. Tweaking, twisting, extrapolating from these examples and quoting out of context will be futile and detrimental.

We need to define and use a number of technical terms. All these technical terms are always printed in italics. All occurrences of these terms have a very precise meaning as defined in this book. Terms which are not in italics are used in their ordinary, layman's sense, not in any particular technical sense. For example, words like 'mind' and 'real' are used in their ordinary, layman's sense, they are not technical terms. Many of the technical terms we use in this book are not English words. We have spelled them to help you pronounce these words reasonably accurately irrespective of the language(s) you speak. A pronunciation key is given in the appendix.

1.11 Existence and Non-Existence

We have started this chapter by asking some big questions and we have spent some time on the need for very careful and holistic thinking. It is time to get back to the fundamental questions and actually start our explorations.

“There is a strange variety of ghosts. These ghosts have three hands, the middle hand has 7 fingers, all equal, except for the middle one which is half as short as the others. The fingers have no nails but there is a small opening with lips on the end...” If I start like this and go on, you will definitely stop me and ask: “do ghosts really exist?” For, you understand that there is absolutely no point in describing something which may not even exist. It is not in the spirit of science to go on describing things even before we convince ourselves that the thing we are talking about actually exists.

Nevertheless, in our normal day to day lives as also in modern scientific disciplines, we often accept tentative answers and move ahead. An astronomer spends all his life in astronomy without ever asking whether the Sun or the planets or the stars and galaxies actually exist. Have you seen any book on physics which first proves that the Universe exists and only then goes about exploring it? How can we call this kind of science as science? The goal of all subjects is to discover the truth. Something that does not even exist cannot be the truth. Therefore, existence is the most fundamental concept we need to understand first. We just cannot afford to take existence for granted. We shall not.

Existence is merely a declaration in Aristotelian logic and this notion has never been seriously explored in the western world till date. Existence continues to be a taken-

for-granted thing for which a mere declaration will suffice. Modern science has never stopped to ask what exactly it means to say that something exists. Existence is not an obvious notion that requires no further thought. We need to understand it. Existence does not always mean physical, material existence. Does knowledge exist? Does anger or love exist? Think.

The notion of existence is central to our whole thesis. For, if the universe does not exist at all, there will be no point in exploring it and all of modern science would crumble into a completely meaningless and futile activity. Life has meaning only when we assume that we exist, other people in this world exist and the world itself exists. But we need to prove all these before we go about exploring life and how to live. Assumptions are not enough. Our goal is to live well and enjoy life and to do that we must understand life in full, all aspects of it. Let us therefore start our explorations by delving deeper into the very notion of existence.

Is there a lion in your living room? No. Is there a banyan tree? No. Is there a goods train? No. Is there a mountain? No. Is there a sea? No. Is there Mars? No. Is there a calendar printed white on blue with the figure of two intersecting triangles in the bottom left? Perhaps no. Is there a pen stand containing exactly seven pens, one of them having a yellow cap and pink ink? Possible but probably not. Make a list of 'all possible' things in the universe and ask if they are present in your living room. There are possibly many things in your living room and there will be so many 'yes' answers but in the vast majority of cases, your answer would be 'no'. The number of things that do not exist is infinitely larger than the number of things that exist in your living room. Non-existence is the default, existence is an exceptionally rare, extraordinary event calling

for special attention. Existence needs to be explained out.

Most things do not exist at a given point in space at a given point in time. Most things do not exist at all places, in fact hardly anything exists at all places. Most things do not exist at all times, in fact hardly anything exists at all times, right? Even the long standing Himalayas were not there some time back in the history of this Earth. The Earth itself did not exist and will not exist for ever. There is nothing which exists everywhere, all the time, right? Non-existence is the default, existence is an exceptionally rare, extraordinary event calling for an explanation. We just cannot take existence for granted. Until and unless proved, we must take everything as non-existent. There is no need to prove the non-existence of the ghost or whatever. It is absurd to imagine some non-existent thing and ask others to disprove its non-existence. The onus of proving its existences lies on the person who claims the existence or goes on describing some thing, tacitly assuming its existence. The onus of proving that the Universe exists lies on the modern scientists. All well meaning people with a true spirit of scientific inquiry in them must reject the existence of this world until and unless proved. We cannot go on describing the ghost without proving its existence, we cannot go on describing the universe without proving its existence, even if it appears so very real to all of us. And to prove its existence, we must understand existence. Modern science is not as scientific as it should be, let us be more careful here and let us start our exploration of the universe by digging into the notion of existence and how we can prove it.

We all think we are very logical in our thinking but we must admit that we can all go wrong. While questioning the existence of the universe, sometimes people try to argue that so many people think the world exists and all of

them cannot be wrong and so the world exists. Whether common belief of many people constitutes a valid proof or not is another question but the fallacy here is that we are assuming that other people exist. When the existence of the entire universe is being questioned, how can we assume that other people exist? The universe is all inclusive, all people are part of this same universe, right? We must therefore be very careful to avoid such absurd arguments based on fallacious logic. Non-existence is the default and we must start with the assumption that nothing exists. We can say something exists only after we prove its presence.

1.12 The Tentative and the Ultimate

Scientists believe that the universe came into being in a Big Bang some 15 Billion years ago. What existed before that? Did this whole universe come out of nothing or did something else exist from which came this universe? Where exactly did this Big Bang take place? Science has no clear answers. Scientists take a clever way of avoiding such difficult questions. They say space and time themselves came into being at the Big Bang. This prevents you from asking where exactly the Big Bang happened. What exactly is space? How was it created? What was it created from? Why did the Big Bang happen at all? Science has no clear answers. Einstein said space is limited but unbounded. He said it is limited so that you cannot question infinity which is beyond all human experience. He said it is unbounded so that you cannot ask what lies beyond that boundary. In our ordinary experience, if some region is bounded by a boundary wall, something else lies on the other side of the wall, right? Scientists are very clever. They define things in such a way that you cannot even ask questions. Real science should be all about asking questions and genuinely

seeking answers, right?

At one point of time we thought Earth was flat. Later it was shown to be spherical in shape. Science and scientific explorations continue, taking available, tentative truths for granted. Study of physics continued before, during and after Newton or Einstein. We make assumptions and proceed. For, otherwise, we are afraid we may get stuck up and there will be no progress. Of course we have an open mind to revise our assumptions and take a fresh look at old truths. We must accept the revised truths and we must proceed further. This kind of thinking is all fine but this will not lead us to the final, ultimate answers about the true nature of nature. Here our quest will be more rigorous, more demanding. We shall not proceed at any stage until and unless we have complete clarity. We are not interested in tentative answers. Half knowledge is worse than useless. We need complete, proper, correct, final answers. We all want light in our world, although we know very well that light does not by itself give us money, or health or job or position, or fame or happiness or anything else that we may want in life. We want light because darkness is scary, dangerous, limiting. We must seek knowledge in the same spirit, we must seek knowledge because ignorance is the root cause of all of our problems. Ignorance is dangerous, scary. Let us therefore seek knowledge to get rid of ignorance, not for the sake of mere curiosity or for the sake of name, fame, money or material wealth.

It appears that many scientists know deep inside that the science they are practicing and propagating may not lead to any final answers. Or they may intentionally be avoiding the final answers. Who knows how good, bad or ugly the final truth will be? What if it turns out to be dangerous to know? Also, the ultimate truth is not easy to seek. Let us be pragmatic and avoid asking difficult ques-

tions. Suppose we actually stumble upon the final truth, what shall we do thereafter? Who will pay our salaries if we have nothing more to explore? These are genuine fears. Understandably, modern science has been avoiding seeking the ultimate reality, the final truth. This book is different. Here we shall fearlessly seek the final truth. Let us seek the truth for the sake of truth alone.

Stop somebody and ask him to prove that the chair in front of him actually exists. In all probability he will look at you strangely, laugh at your being so naive and stupid, so ignorant of even such obvious things. If you still insist, he will perhaps say the chair exists because he can see it. There are many assumptions here - that light exists, that we can see, and seeing is actually a valid means of proving the existence of something. How exactly do we see? Who sees? What about things we cannot see? What about non-existent things that we can see due to optical illusions? We cannot jump to conclusions so fast in science. Here we have jumped dozens of steps. We need to be much more serious, we need to go much more cautiously over each of the minute steps until we come to some final conclusion one way or the other. Proof of existence is especially difficult and very different from all other kinds of proof. If we assume the existence of something else as part of our proof, we will have to prove its existence as well. We will have to prove even the existence of the prover. You will perhaps find this book very different from all other books you have seen so far. We have just begun a long and fascinating journey into a new world. Hope you will find this exercise both interesting and practically useful in your own life. Read on!

1.13 Understanding Existence

Consider a shadow cast by some object in your living room. Does this shadow exist? You can clearly see the shadow and so you may conclude that the shadow actually exists, it is an observable fact, it can be observed by any ordinary human being. What if you switch off the lights or remove the object? The shadow will vanish. If you switch on or off different lights in the room, the shadow will change in size, shape and number, although the object itself whose shadow we are talking about has remained unchanged. Clearly, the existence of the shadow is relative, it is conditional. It is relative to the object, it is relative to the surface on which it is cast, it is relative to the lights, their colours and their positions in the room. The shadow does not exist independently. If the shadow had independent existence, it must continue to exist unchanged, irrespective of what we do to the lights or to the very object whose shadow we are interested here. Even if we take away the object, the shadow must continue unaffected. This is not true. The existence of the shadow is therefore a relative, conditional existence.

There is more to it than this. What if you were dreaming? The moment you wake up, the whole living room, all the objects in it, as also the shadows completely vanish. They did not exist at all, you were only dreaming about them. Even in a dream, none of these objects could have existed without you, the dreamer. Therefore, the existence of all these objects is relative to you and your state of existence. The objects in the living room of this dream world have no independent existence, their existence can be talked about only in a relative sense, relative to you, the dreamer. Their existence can only be talked about in relation to your being in a state of dreaming. Without you, without your getting into the state of dream, they have no existence at all.

Even when you are wide awake, existence of all other things that you can observe owe their existence to you, the observer. I can prove that the moon exists but the moon cannot prove that I exist. I can prove my own existence and existence of other things. The moon cannot prove its own existence or the existence of any other object. There is something extraordinarily great about the knower compared to all that can be known. Knowing the knower is therefore the most important kind of knowledge. This whole book is a quest in this direction and how such a knowledge can actually help you lead a full, glorious happy life.

A shadow is a not a physical, material object. It is not matter. Yet we can clearly see it, we can feel its presence, we can know it. Similarly, anger, hunger, love, jealousy etc. are not physical objects, yet we can feel, perceive, experience, know them. These experiences directly affect our life one way or the other, they have great significance to our lives, life loses all meaning without any of these emotions and feelings, and so they are all real. They exist, not as physical objects in the external world. They exist in our mind, they arise, grow, subdue, vanish and we can observe and know all this. Everybody thinks he or she is knowledgeable and intelligent and neither knowledge nor intelligence has any physical, material existence. Yet everybody agrees that these are real. We must not limit ourselves to exploration of the physical world, in fact what lies beyond physics, chemistry and biology is of much more direct and much more serious relevance to our lives. Here we shall therefore take a broader view and talk of existence not only in a physical sense but beyond.

We have already seen that objects may exist at one place but not at another place. Objects may exist at one

time but not at other times. In fact the vast majority of things we come across in life are fleeting, transient, temporary, short-lived. They come and go. There is a natural tendency to get attracted to moving, changing things. That is why they use lights which keep switching on and off, or change in intensity or change in colour frequently in commercial advertisements. A changing object draws our attention more easily. Many animals are alerted by movement. A lizard may not even notice a cockroach right in front of it until the cockroach moves. The moment the cockroach starts moving, this movement alerts the lizard and the lizard quickly reacts to catch and eat its prey. Many animals know this and a commonly used strategy in the animal world is to stay still when a predator is sensed. Children as well as adults get attracted by the TV and the cinema because things there change much more drastically and faster than in our normal experiences in the natural world. Change attracts. But for someone who is seriously interested in understanding the underlying reality, it is important to resist such distracting temptations and dig deeper. It is OK for ordinary people to see people, animals and natural scenes on a TV screen but a television engineer must know that there is only a single dot of light at any given point of time on the CRT TV screen and the images of people etc. are only constructed by the viewers, inside their own minds, by putting together the scintillating points of light created by this single fast moving point source of light. A scientist always needs to look more carefully at the underlying reality by digging deeper. Here we need to be careful not to get influenced by the superficial glow and glitter and the dramatic but superficial changes that continue to attract and distract us at every moment. Things which come and go are less important in life. Electrical engineers design devices to suppress transient spikes so that we get a stable source of electrical energy. Transients not only disturb, they can be harmful, they have

destructive tendencies. Likewise, the wise learn the techniques of ignoring the fleeting changes and exploring the underlying universal principles without getting attracted, distracted, moved, or affected in any way. This is the art that we need to master in order to understand the true nature of the universe, in order to understand ourselves, in order to understand life and learn to live well and enjoy life.

1.14 Independent Existence

We are now ready to define the various dimensions of existence precisely. We must be careful not to exclude any possibility, however improbable and unlikely it may be. Taking into consideration the entire spectrum of possibilities, we can clearly see three cases: 1) things which always exist, absolutely, independently, no conditions, no qualifications 2) things which exist sometimes, in some places, under some conditions etc., relatively, conditionally and 3) things which never ever exist. These are the three possibilities. These are the only three possibilities. Nothing else is possible. Read on only after you make sure you have understood this much.

Of these three cases, the third category is only of theoretical interest included to ensure that we do not miss out any possibility from our consideration right at the outset. There is nothing that can be said about things which can never ever exist. Things which never exist at all cannot touch our lives in any way whatever. We cannot know them, we cannot talk about them, we cannot describe or discuss them, we cannot even name them. We cannot even imagine them, for, if we can, then they can be said to exist at least in the form of an imagination inside our minds. Therefore, it is not logical even to ask for or give examples.

These are complete non-entities, they can never affect our life in any way whatever, there is no need to think or talk of them anymore. We shall call this concept of complete non-existence as *asat*.

Let us now think of the first category. Let us think of things that always exist. These are things that simply exist, everywhere, all the time, irrespective of anything else in the universe, irrespective of the observer, irrespective of conditions prevailing. Absolutely no limitations, absolutely no qualifications, no conditions. Clearly, these things must be birth-less, death-less, eternal. Otherwise they cannot be said to be existing always. Also, these things cannot be dependent on anything which is in the second or third category. If it depends on anything which is *asat*, it cannot exist at all, for, it is dependent on the existence of something which itself never ever exists. If it depends on anything which belongs the second category, it cannot be guaranteed to exist always, for, it is dependent for its existence on other things which may not always exist. Therefore, items in the first category are not relative, they are not conditioned by anything in the second or third categories. What if we try to argue that things belonging to the first category can be mutually inter-dependent? Since all of them always exist, this kind of inter-dependence among different items in the first category does not come in the way of their belonging to this category. But think for a moment. What do you mean by dependence? If something always exists in every possible situation, what does it mean to say it depends on something else for its existence? The very notion of dependence loses meaning where existence is simply guaranteed unconditionally. Even if we try to think that its existence is dependent on something which itself is always guaranteed to exist, the condition is always satisfied and hence superfluous. This is like asserting that something is true provided 2 plus 2 is 4. The condition is always

satisfied and hence unnecessary. Therefore, things which belong to the first category are absolutely independent, absolutely absolute, not relative to anything, not conditioned on or by anything else. In fact these things must be independent of even space, time and the observer. Further, items in this category cannot undergo any kind of change whatever. This is because the pre-change form does not exist after change and the post-change form does not exist before the change but here we need existence guaranteed always. Therefore, the very notion of change is inapplicable here. This concept of absolute, invariant, eternal, and independent existence shall be termed *sat*. *sat* simply has no non-existence.

Practically the whole of our life is lived in a world full of physical objects, plants, animals, people and so on, none of which can be said to be absolutely non-existent, nor can we say they are eternal, invariant and absolute. Practically everything that touches our lives has a birth and a death, everything keeps changing, everything comes and goes, everything is relative. Almost everything we can think of belongs to this second category. The second category includes all things which have a conditional or relative existence. Included here are all the things which are situation dependent, observer dependent, or dependent on some other thing in some way or the other. Included here are all the temporary, transient, fleeting things that keep coming and going. We shall term this kind of temporary, relative, conditional existence as *mithyaa*. We believe that something exists because we can see it or otherwise perceive it or know it. If there is no way of knowing it at all, directly or indirectly, we would surely assert that such a thing does not exist at all. Therefore, everything that we can know of is dependent on us for its existence. Practically everything we come across in our lives fits into this category. Hence these are all of immediate and direct relevance to us in our

daily lives. We shall devote the whole of chapter three for the exploration of our daily life in this practical world of *mithyaa*. Note that *mithyaa* does not simply mean non-existent or unreal.

Let us say there is an entity which keeps changing in some attribute, say colour. Initially it was green, let us say, and then it becomes red, say. Should we say the green thing exists or should we say the red thing exists? The red thing did not exist before the colour changed to red and the green thing will no longer exist after it becomes red. Items in the *sat* category should be eternal, they should always exist, and so they can never change. Any change implies non-existence in some form before, after or during the change. *sat* must therefore be beyond all change. It cannot change in size, or shape, or colour, or location or any other attribute for that matter. It cannot even move, for, movement implies change of location and since it must be present at all places at all times, there can be no such thing as movement. Anything which changes is not *sat*. Clay becomes a pot. Clay does not exist once the pot is made and the pot did not exist when it was yet to be made. Therefore, neither the clay nor the pot is *sat*, both are *mithyaa*, because both are subject to change. Two plus two is four, now, yesterday, tomorrow, a thousand years ago, after a Million years, in India, in Japan and in America. It cannot be 3.5 last year, 4 now and 16 after 10 years. It never changes. Anything which changes is not *sat*. Anything which is not present in all places, at all times, in all situations and states, is not *sat*. There can be no such thing as progress, development or advancement in *sat*, for, *sat* just cannot change. Note that we are not actually asserting here that the number four is *sat* nor are we asserting that the statement ‘two plus two is four’ is *sat*. This is just a simple example from everyday experience to help you understand the concept of *sat*. It is foolish to

brush aside any theory of existence just because it is old or ancient, and it is foolish to take for granted that a modern or latest theory or idea has to be better, without critical examination. Truth never changes and so old or new does not matter.

sat signifies existence that is eternal, absolute, invariant and independent. All these aspects must be satisfied for something to be termed *sat*. *sat* will never get affected in any way by the presence, absence or change in the observer, situation, context, place, time, whatever. Anything that has a birth or a death, anything which depends upon the observer or on any other object or on prevailing circumstances for its existence, anything which undergoes any kind of change, is *mithyaa*. Practically everything we know of is *mithyaa*. *mithyaa* neither implies complete-nonexistence nor falsity. It is neither illusory nor unreal. This is not the way we have defined it. Anything and everything which is not *sat* or *asat* is *mithyaa*. The western mind (and all the people trained in the western system of education) would surely have serious difficulties in understanding this because they are so much used to the two valued logic of True and False. If something is not True it must be False and if something is not False, it must be True in two valued logic. Here we have a three-way classification, not a dichotomy. Things which exist but not always, not everywhere, not always in the same form are called *mithyaa*. Confusing *mithyaa* for false or unreal has been the source of tremendous confusion in the history of mankind. Even great thinkers have many a time got confused. That something is *mithyaa* can also be a simple scientific, observable, provable fact. Make sure that you are not confused by connotations and overtones not implied in our definitions. Make sure that you have understood the three levels of existence properly, fully, in depth. Do not go by what others have said in some book somewhere. Think

independently with a clear and open mind and understand these concepts yourself. This is the central, pivotal, crucial point around which the whole of human life spins. The first two chapters of this book are devoted for a proper and deep understanding of this idea of existence.

It must be made clear that we have so far simply defined three technical terms. We have not yet made any hypotheses, we have not yet proved or disproved anything. It is necessary to start with precise definitions of all technical terms we use. Both ancient traditions and modern scientific practices permit and encourage this. It would be absurd if you start objecting to definitions. We have labelled these three concepts as *sat*, *asat* and *mithyaa* based on our tradition but if you do not like these names or if you prefer other labels, you are free to read them accordingly but make doubly sure that you do not mess up with the precise meanings of these definitions. All the technical terms we use in this book will be in italics. These are not English words. To help you read them fairly accurately irrespective of the languages you know, a transliteration chart with examples and notes is included at the end of the book.

Can you think of anything that simply exists everywhere, all the time, under all circumstances? We hardly know any such thing, we cannot even imagine such a thing easily. Nothing that we see, hear or know in our lives actually exists all the time, everywhere, right? The Sun does not exist inside my house and my heart does not exist outside my body. My mobile phone did not exist some years ago and I myself may not exist after some years. Yet the wise should not take this world of fleeting things too seriously. Hidden behind all these ever changing transient things must lie some grand truth, some fundamental and universal reality. It is this big secret that the wise should

explore and understand. Then and only then will life get full and correct meaning, only then will we know how to make the most of this life in a human form. This is what we shall attempt in this book.

We can talk about the true nature or *svaruupa* only for *sat*. *mithyaa* is subject to change, even its very existence is not guaranteed, hence there is nothing that it innate, inalienable in it. Existence is the most basic property of any object and if even that can be taken away, what can the object have which can never be taken away from it? We should therefore seek only the *sat* and then try to dig into its *svaruupa*. All else is futile.

1.15 Truth and Myth

The three concepts named *sat*, *asat* and *mithyaa* are abstract and confusing. There are three possible levels of existence but it is very easy to miss the first and the last completely, since practically the whole of our lives is lived in a world of *mithyaa*. We must convince ourselves here that these are the only possibilities, there is no other possibility. One factor that seems to be root cause of a whole lot of confusion and mess is the language we use. Ordinary language is vague, ambiguous and confusing. Unless we take great care to precisely define the terms we use, we can all get easily misled. *sat* is not simply truth nor *mithyaa* the same as myth. The world we live in is not a myth, nor is it unreal or non-existent. But it is *mithyaa* because it did not always exist like this nor will it continue to exist like this for eternity. Using terms loosely and relying on translations into foreign languages can lead us to serious misconceptions. Therefore, it is extremely important that you think deeply about these definitions and make sure you understand them fully before you proceed.

In our normal day to day life, we never get to see something that always exists the same way everywhere. Everything we see is subject to change. Some things may change very fast while others change slowly but everything changes. Also, we never can get any experience of things that do not exist at all. *mithyaa* is the only thing that we experience daily, all through our life. No wonder ordinary people as also many great scientists, philosophers, thinkers, saints and seers have fallen to the trap of taking *mithyaa* itself as the ultimate reality. The whole of modern science takes this physical world as real, without inquiry. Although *sat* and *asat* are not widely experienced, we can think of these possibilities and we must be careful enough to include all these three possibilities in our logic, or we will have a totally wrong theory. Some people argue that everybody lives and experiences this world and so this world must be real. How absurd! When the whole idea is to verify if the world exists, how can we assume that other people exist? All these people are also part of the world whose existence is being examined, right? We need to be extremely careful or we will fall into traps of such absurd and foolish conclusions through logical fallacies.

mithyaa is very attractive, this is its very nature. We enjoy mimicry more than the original sound. It seems there was a contest to imitate Charlie Chaplin and Charlie Chaplin could not win this contest! We get attracted more towards a picture or a photograph or a wax model than towards the original. Everything is becoming artificial these days. Very soon some one may remark - 'look at this natural tree, it is almost as natural as our artificial one!'. People spend hours together watching TV serials which show nothing more than what actually happens daily in our homes. Tourists go on clicking their cameras instead of directly enjoying the scene before them. People go on recording music,

instead of simply listening and enjoying. People want to read, write, talk, see, and do all other things with cricket or soccer instead of simply playing. This is the nature of nature.

Our literature is full of stories of how people got fooled by *mithyaa* and how this led to pain and suffering. The crow fell for the praise of the fox and opened its beaks to sing, thereby losing its food to the fox. The crow was carried away by the lure of name and fame. The lion jumped into the well and died, confusing its own reflection in the water for another lion that had come to compete and take away its position as the king of the forest. The lion went after position and power and died. The greedy goose keeper cut open and lost the goose that used to lay golden eggs, he was carried away by the lure of quick buck. The Kauravas lost everything and died miserably because they went after the kingdom. Even an exceptionally great man like Sree Rama gave way to the adamant Sita's insistence and ran after the golden deer which led to kidnap, separation, war and endless pain, suffering to so many people. The whole city of Lanka was set ablaze, countless men and monkeys died, the widows wept. Any ordinary or even under-ordinary person, even a fool can realize in a moment's reflection with a clear mind that a golden deer is simply impossible. But the lure of this superficial and ever changing glow and glitter of this world, which is all clearly *mithyaa*, is so great, it attracts, distracts and confuses even the greatest of us all. Going after money, material wealth, name, fame, position, power and all the other worldly desires has ruined men again and again throughout the history of mankind. These are all only stories, the stories themselves are not important for us here, but the moral of all the stories is the same: all the pain and suffering in the world is because we go after *mithyaa*. We should get wiser and face the Sun directly and seek the light and knowl-

edge, instead of going after our own dark shadow which keeps moving as we run after it, distracting and eluding us throughout. The wise should focus on *sat*, not on *mithyaa*. *sat* is the most important concept in this book, the very king-pin of our whole exploration of the world and our own life. We shall dig into *sat*. In the present and next chapters, we shall dig step by step until we reach the very foundation of this whole universe, until we fully understand who exactly we ourselves are. This knowledge and understanding will elevate us from mere mortal bodies to full human beings. We will be freed from all the bondage and suffering, we will be freed from all the weakness and disease, we will be relieved of all pain and worry. We will be free in the true sense of the term. We will be able to regain our lost freedom. This is the whole purpose of this book.

In modern science we assume that the world exists, that it exists outside of us and that it exists independent of us. We tacitly assume all this without any proof, without even stopping to think and ask. Modern science is satisfied with seeking *mithyaa*. We shall not be. That is not the ultimate reality, that is not the ultimate truth. The aim of this book is to seek *sat*. For, in the ultimate analysis, we can say something exists if and only if its existence is not conditioned by the existence of anything else. Something exists if and only if its existence is not relative to something else. Something exists if it never changes, for if it were to undergo changes, which version can we say exists? Here we are not seeking tentative, relative, conditional answers, we are seeking the ultimate, final, absolute answer. This is called *paramaartha*. *parama* means ultimate and *artha* is meaning or what we are seeking, namely truth. *paramaartha* means seeking *sat*, not being satisfied with *mithyaa*. This is the sole objective of this book. There is no point exploring *asat*, that is impossible, useless. There is little use exploring *mithyaa*, in fact that is damaging,

destructive and devastating. Here we shall therefore seek the *sat* alone.

In keeping with the true spirit of science, here we shall take the existence of anything for granted only after we get a valid proof. We can prove the existence or presence of something by direct observation and/or by logical inference. We need substantial evidence. Proof of existence is very different from other kinds of proofs. Here we will have to prove that the proof itself exists, the instruments we use in our proof exist, that the prover himself exists. Else the proof has no meaning. We need to know ourselves before we can know the world because the world is what we see. Terms like ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ are used very loosely in modern scientific discussions as also in many religious schools of thought, leading to unnecessary confusions and complications. Existence is not something that can be taken for granted, it is central to life. In the first two chapters we shall seek the *sat*. In the last and final chapter, we will come back to practical, day-to-day life and look at the mundane world and how we should live there, but keeping in mind the grand truths that we would have discovered by the time we reach there. This shall be a fascinating adventure trip into the whole big universe, including the outside world and the world inside. But this is all no fiction or fantasy, we shall remain grounded firmly in completely scientific and logical principles throughout. Welcome on-board!

1.16 The Real World

Now let us get back to the big question. Is this universe, this world of living and non-living things, these trees, animals, people, oceans, mountains and what not, all these planets, stars and galaxies, is this universe real? Does this world exist? In what sense? If the world exists, what then

is its true nature or *svaruupa*?

We usually take it for granted that the dream world is unreal, we take our imaginations, fantasies and hallucinations as unreal and we take for granted that the world we experience in our waking state is real. In fact we often call it the ‘real world’. Is this so called real world really real? Where is the proof? Think.

The universe of course appears to be real, very real indeed. But that is not a proof, after all, even the dream world appears real until we wake up. We need a proof or we shall not accept it. Nor shall we reject it! Science is not about blindly accepting or rejecting anything, even the most obvious. We shall not accept anything as true and real just because it appears so to us, not even science!

In our *paramaarthā* sense, the entire physical universe is clearly *mithyā*, not *sat*. This logically follows from the very definition of these terms, no more needs to be done to prove this. Because the universe did not exist long ago (before the Big Bang or whatever theory of creation of the universe you wish to subscribe to) and it cannot exist exactly like this for ever. In fact it is continuously changing and this is an observable, verifiable fact. These people, animals, plants, mountains, oceans, the entire Earth, the whole solar system, all the stars and galaxies, this physical universe does not exist exactly like this at all times. It is ever changing. The great Himalayan mountains are called young fold mountains - they are very young, on a geological time scale, they are merely folds on the Earth’s surface. Not too long ago, there was an ocean where we see the Himalayas today. And the great Himalayas have now started melting, thanks to global warming. Very soon, there may be no Himalayas. The continents drift. The Earth is changing. The whole universe is expanding. Are

all changes reversible? Change, irreversible change, means that there is non-cyclic movement, it means that the whole universe is moving towards some end. It must end the moment it meets its end. Modern science has no clarity on universal destruction but whatever it may be, the universe is changing and so it cannot be *sat*. Nor can we say that it is *asat* since its existence in the present state is an observable, verifiable scientific fact. The entire physical, material universe can only be *mithyaa*, there is no other possibility. Remember that *mithyaa* does not mean false, unreal or non-existent in any ordinary sense.

Our own bodies are also *mithyaa*. We all have a birth date and a death date (which, fortunately or unfortunately we do not know). We are born, we grow, we change, we age, we die. Generally speaking, all physical, material things go through six phases: 1) *asti* - they exist in pre-birth form. We existed in our mother's womb as a foetus before we were born. 2) *jaayatee* - get birth 3) *vardhatee* - may grow 4) *vipariNamatee* - they transform and undergo changes, sometimes quite dramatically as in the life cycle of a butterfly 5) *apakShiiyatee* - they deteriorate and decay and, finally, 6) *nashyatee* - they die or go back to where they came from. The atoms and molecules in our bodies integrate with the elements of nature after we die. You may think the cell phone in your hand did not exist a hundred years ago but every electron, proton and neutron in it existed for Millions of years and will continue to exist for a long time to come even if we were to burn it to ashes. Yet, no physical, material object is eternal. The physical universe is *mithyaa*, not *sat*. Let there be no confusion on this point. To repeat, saying that the universe is *mithyaa* does not imply that the world does not exist as it does today. It does. It did not exist like this for ever and it will not exist in the exactly the same form for ever. It is something which comes and goes. This world, including our own body

is therefore *mithyaa*.

The physical world is only an apparent reality, not the ultimate reality. Practically the whole of modern science is about the exploration of this physical, material universe and as such not *paramaartha* in its nature. We shall not be satisfied with the findings of modern science here, we need to go further, delve deeper, and seek the true nature of the universe in its ultimate, *paramaartha* sense. Of what use is seeking *mithyaa*? There is no point wasting our time, effort and money on exploring the ever changing physical universe. No lasting, sustainable, permanent solutions can be found for any of the problems that individuals and the human society as a whole are facing today by focussing all our attention on *mithyaa*. It is time to give up our fancy for this ever changing chameleon-like world and seek ultimate truth that underlies the entire universe in the biggest sense of this term.

mithyaa includes all things that come and go. Where do they come from? Where do they go? Something cannot come out of nothing. Something cannot vanish into nowhere. There must be something, eternal, unchanging, there must be a *sat* from which emanates this whole world of *mithyaa*, there must be a *sat* into which they finally disappear. We shall seek this *sat* in this book.

1.17 Science or Superstition?

We all have had dreams in our lives. We see animals, we meet people, living, dead or imaginary, we talk, listen, walk, run, fight, do all kinds of fantastic things in our dreams. We go backwards in time, we jump from place to place in no time, we see magical transformations. We finally wake up to realize that all we saw, heard and expe-

rienced, good, bad or ugly as they may be, were all merely projections of our own mind in the state of dream, they are not real. Nobody, scientist or whoever he or she may be, accepts the dream world as real. The people, the animals and all the inanimate objects we saw in our dreams simply do not exist at all. They never existed.

But while we are still dreaming, the dreams appear to be 100% real, as real as real can be. There is not an iota of doubt in our minds. All of our experiences and feelings within our dreams are completely real as long as the dream continues. Nobody can say that it is all only a dream and not real while they are still dreaming, not even a scientist. If questioned, hypothetically, a dreamer would undoubtedly fight tooth and nail and assert that the world he is living and experiencing is 100% real and not at all imaginary. There is nothing unreal about any dream as long as we are in the dream world. Dream world is real within the dream world and it appears unreal if and only when we wake up.

This book is not about dreams but there is a big lesson to be learned here. What appears real, very real, may not be real. That something appears real is not sufficient, this is no proof. We need a proof. Until we get a valid proof, we must not jump to any conclusion one way or the other. Otherwise, we are not actually quite logical and scientific in our outlook.

Dreams appear real while we are still dreaming. This external world appears real when we are awake. What is the big difference? We usually reject the dreams as unreal and accept our experiences in the waking state as real. On what basis? We realize that our dreams are not real only after waking up to the next higher state of consciousness but we accept the world of our waking state, while we are

still inside the same state and take this to be the ultimate, true, real nature of the world. We call this science. Is this not completely unscientific? Assuming that the universe exists without any proof can only be called superstition, it cannot be called science. Whole of modern science is questionable. Let us question. We shall keep building up our case against modern science in small steps and we shall offer our strongest criticisms towards the end of this chapter. We shall not question any particular hypothesis or theory or aspect of modern science, instead, we shall examine and question the very epistemological principles on which the whole of modern science is based.

We have already seen that this external, material, physical universe is not *sat*, because it is continuously changing. In the *paramaārtha* sense, we cannot say it exists. The universe does not have eternal, invariant existence. Can we at least say the universe exists now as *mithyaa*, as an ever changing, temporary phenomenon? We know from our dreams that our own mind is capable of projecting an entire big world. How can we be sure that it is not the same mind which is projecting the whole world we experience in our waking state too? What proof do we have that the world exists independent of us? Assuming and proceeding is not in the spirit of true science. To prove that the world exists, we need to prove that we exist, to know the Universe, we must know ourselves first. Let us wake up and start inquiring.

1.18 Seeing is Believing?

Let us say, we see a chair in the room in which are standing and talking. And I ask you to prove that the chair exists. Your first reaction could be that you can see the chair, and so, clearly, the chair exists. If the chair did not exist how

could you see it? We need to recollect our discussion about dreams. The human mind is capable of seeing things that may or may not exist, as evidenced by our dreams. With no chair there, lights off, eyes closed, you can vividly see the chair in your dreams. Even when we are wide awake, we can see things that do not exist and we cannot always see things as they exist. For example, we see that the Sun goes round the Earth but science says it is the Earth which goes round the Sun. The Earth appears to be stationary but it is in fact spinning at a great speed. We see the trees running backwards but then we realize it is not the trees but our train which is moving forward. We see stars at a point in space where they existed long long ago - it has taken so much time for the light to reach us! Our eyes are not worth believing, they are in fact the ultimate liars. Therefore, this logic is flawed. 'I can see the chair. Therefore the chair exists.' is not a valid proof. This is simply not acceptable. We need to dig deeper. What exactly do we mean by seeing? Who is seeing? How do we know he exists? We need a proper proof based on much more detailed and thorough inquiry.

We can only see physical things, not the abstract. We can see only matter, not energy or fields. We can see only opaque things, not the transparent. We can only see things that are not too small, not too big, not too close, not too far, not behind us, not inside us, not above or below us. We can only see the exterior surface and that too only the visible side. Our visual perception is so very limited. Yet we think we are actually seeing objects and we believe strongly that what we see is actually the truth. Think.

Light travels very fast, almost three hundred thousand kilometers a second. But its speed is still finite, not infinite. It takes a finite amount of time for the light rays to reach us from the objects we see. It takes more time for

light from objects even a fraction of a kilometer away to reach us, than it took for the whole Universe to be created in the Big Bang. Therefore, we can never see objects as they are now, we can only see what perhaps existed some time ago. Things can change drastically in the meantime. We can see only the past, not the present.

Similar reasoning applies for hearing, touching and other sensory perceptions. That we can perceive something is not a proof that that something exists. That you can see, touch, feel, kick or lick the chair is not a proof that the chair exists. After all, you can do all of this in your dream as well.

If you are seeing a chair or a car or a TV, your eyes are getting only rays of light. The chair or the car or the TV itself does not enter the eye. The instrument of sight gets only light as input, it sees only light, nothing else. How can we say we see a car or a chair? How can an instrument see or observe or measure anything that is not even given as input to it? All the objects we see must be cooked up somewhere deep inside us. In modern science we go on exploring and describing objects even before we prove that the object actually exists. After all, if the object itself does not exist, how can its properties and descriptions make any sense? Is it scientific to say that the horns of a hare are long, straight and pointed? Seeing is not believing. What exactly is seeing? Who is seeing?

Most people today think that if the whole place is free from dust and dirt, if there is no garbage visible anywhere, if there is no smoke or dirty smell, then everything is neat, clean, hygienic and healthy. That is why food, clothes, toys, practically all items sold in any shop or supermarket store is covered with a plastic sheet to keep them dust-free. People go by what they see, people go by what they can

observe through their sense organs. Even great minds are falling into this trap. And commercial houses are minting money by exploiting this weakness and are fooling around with wild abandon. For most people in the world today, including the educated, pollution means dust, smoke, soot, smell and other visible, observable signs only. They are unable to realize that the invisible, unobservable chemicals in the air, water and food are far more dangerous to our health and well being. A dirty-looking piece of food, passed on to you with bare hands, eaten with your fingers, perhaps unwashed, can actually be quite safe and healthy in the long run - at most you may get a sore throat or a stomach upset by eating such dirty food but you will definitely not get cancer or heart attack or kidney failure or stroke because of that. On the other hand, neat looking, plastic sheet covered food items served in glove-covered hands and eaten with sterilized spoons and forks in an air-conditioned and dust free hotel room can lead to deadly diseases, great pain, suffering and premature death because of the invisible chemical poisons that pollute the environment in the process of production, distribution, usage and final disposal of plastics and all these other man-made materials. Today we take care not to litter, we collect garbage from all over the city with great effort, we dump them in one place and then set fire to it! The invisible chemicals that emanate by burning hazardous chemical wastes including all kinds of plastics, rubber, sponge, PVC, electrical and electronic wastes etc. poison the entire Earth. No city on Earth is cleaner or dirtier than any other in the world today - the whole Earth is bathed in a deadly chemical soup, threatening the very survival of human race on this planet. Do not fall for the apparently clean, modern, latest, sophisticated etc. Seek the underlying reality. Do not go by what you see with your eyes, open your inner eye of wisdom and look for the invisible enemy. Otherwise, you will never get to the truth.

1.19 Mathematics, Statistics and Science

Imagine a classroom. There are a large number of smart students. I am teaching. There are two blackboards. One is empty, on the other I have drawn a square, a triangle and a circle with chalk-piece. I point to the empty board and say 'here is a square, a triangle and a circle'. The smart students immediately 'correct' me, saying these figures are on the other board. Now I correct them. As follows.

A square is made up of four equal straight line segments, meeting pair-wise at right angles at the four corners. A triangle has three straight line segments meeting pair-wise at the three corners. A circle has no straight line, it is a curved line. I repeat all these elementary stuff from school geometry. A point has no dimension. It has no size, shape, or area. A line, whether straight or curved, has only length but no width or thickness. It has zero thickness. If it has thickness, it is not a line at all. If it has any size or shape or area, it is not a point at all. These are the fundamental definitions of Euclidean Geometry, well known and universally accepted. All my students know these very well. Therefore, you cannot see a point, you cannot see a line. Your eye is not capable of seeing anything which has zero thickness. And, if at all you can see, then that is not a point or a line at all. The so called empty board actually has an infinite variety of all kinds of geometric figures, points, straight lines, circles and all kinds of irregular shapes, of all sizes, orientations, all over the board. There are actually all these figures but you cannot see them. This is not imagination or mere hypothesis, all these geometric figures are actually there. Every point in space is a geometric point and there is actually a line between every two points. Space is filled with points, lines and all kinds of geometric shapes, regular and irregular, of all sizes and

shapes, in all possible orientations. On the other hand, the square, triangle and circle that you are seeing with your eyes on the other board are not square, triangle or circle at all. The so called square actually has four rectangles, whatever you are calling a line is actually a rectangle with some length and a non-zero width. Even these are idealizations since what appears to be straight may actually be quite crooked or broken when inspected carefully under a lens or a microscope. What you see is false. What you cannot see is the truth. You all know very well that a point has no dimensions and a line has no thickness, yet you get fooled. You take true for false and false for true. You take knowledge for ignorance and ignorance for knowledge. Why? Because you have so much of trust on your eyes. Your eyes are the ultimate liars, never go by what you see, if at all you are interested in seeking the truth.

Mathematics is full of abstractions, idealizations. That itself is not wrong. Everything we say in mathematics is true, but only within the idealizations of mathematics. The mistake is in applying it to objects in the external material world where these idealizations do not hold. A point or a line or a square or a circle exists only within mathematics, nowhere in the physical world. Where does mathematics exist? It exists only within our own mind, not anywhere outside of it. You can show me three apples or four pens or six dogs but you can never show me three or four or six. Numbers exist inside our mind, they have no existence whatever outside of our mind. Numbers cannot be seen, touched, felt or tasted, we need to imagine them. And the so called ‘imaginary numbers’ cannot even be imagined easily. Mathematics is perfectly fine, as an abstract science. Applying mathematics to physical, material world needs care. The world is not mathematics. We need to make mathematical models, that is, approximations, of the world. We can then do all the mathematical manip-

ulations. Finally we need to interpret the results back to the world, which admittedly does not follow all this mathematics. Great care is required in the first and the last step. In fact the first and the last step are the most critical, the most crucial. Yet, oftentimes, pseudo-scientists spend all their life in the middle step of mathematical jugglery and they keep on making far reaching claims based on questionable models and more importantly, questionable interpretations.

All of modern science is based on mathematics and statistics. If you survey a large number of smokers and non-smokers and you find that the chances of cancer are more in smokers, you cannot conclude that smoking causes cancer. 'Cause' is a term that scientists rarely understand correctly. All that can be said is that there is a significant statistical correlation between smoking and cancer. In principle it is possible that cancer induces one to smoke or there could be some third thing which causes both cancer and smoking. Just because there is a positive correlation, concluding that smoking causes cancer is incorrect. Every person who died out of heart attack was breathing before death. There is 100% positive correlation between breathing and death! Can we conclude that breathing causes heart attack and death? This may look silly but the arguments given by scientists, engineers, doctors and commercial establishments are oftentimes of the same nature. We fail to understand this because these so called experts use sophisticated and impressive language. For example, vested interests spread a common belief that microbes cause diseases and to remain healthy we must poison and kill all microbes. Microbes do not cause diseases. Weakness of the body causes diseases. Microbes may exploit a weak body and multiply there but they cannot succeed if the body is strong. Weakness can be caused by chemicals and this weakness may lead to diseases. There can be nothing more foolish than

taking chemicals as medicines to kill the microbes. You may overcome the present illness but you will only be inviting bigger and more serious diseases because the chemical based medicines make your body weaker and more vulnerable. Modern doctors, medicines and hospitals are not the cure, they are often the cause of human ailments. Do not go by what you see. Do not go by what scientists say. Do not go by what commercial advertisements say. Everybody is out there to cheat you, exploit your ignorance and make money. Do not jump to conclusions. Go slow, think, apply your mind, analyze, understand and question all questionable ideas. Seek the truth.

23478 may be considered approximately equal to 23479, after all the difference is only one. But 1 cannot be considered to be an approximation to 0, when we are working in a binary system where there are only two values, namely 0 and 1. The difference between 1 and 0 is also just 1 but this difference cannot be winked at. Approximating 0 to 1 and 1 to 0 would destroy everything in a binary system. Is 23478 equal to 23479? Clearly, the answer is a strong 'No'. Truth is binary, either it is true or it is false. There are no approximations. False is not an approximation of truth. Seekers of truth need to work in an absolute, rigid, strict system without any approximations and idealizations. The slightest deviation from truth must be outright rejected, summarily, without any consideration. Modern science is lax, loose, full of approximations and idealizations and hence dubious and suspect. Most people in the world including so called experts are not clear about anything today, everything is confused, vague, nebulous. We are not here to seek approximate or rough answers. We are in search of the absolute truth. Remember this and explore boldly and independently.

1.20 The Leach and the Doctor

Despite all the counter-claims, most people including scientists fall for the apparent truth and reject the real without sufficient, careful, critical examination. They jump to conclusions even before they do any experiments. Let us illustrate this with an example. The best way to treat a wound is to let a leach suck blood from that wound. Say this and almost any modern man, with the so called scientific spirit in him, would immediately laugh at this ‘unscientific’ and horrible idea. They think this was simply an old superstition and now science has greatly advanced and we have truly scientific and much better treatments for a wound. Today’s doctors would clean the wound with disinfectants, dress it up, prescribe anti-biotics etc. Who is right?

A leach lives by sucking blood. It knows that if the victim experiences any pain, he would immediately notice and take it out. The leach has to suck blood without the victim coming to know. The leach has therefore evolved to inject a pain killer, so that the victim never notices. Unlike the factory made, artificial chemical based pain killers which modern doctors prescribe, this leach anaesthetic is completely natural, safe, harmless, local and has no side effects. It comes in the right dose, neither too less nor more than required. Further, the leach itself would not like to get infected and so it injects certain substances which will deactivate harmful bacteria and other infection causing microbes. Unlike the medicines prescribed by the modern scientific doctor, these substances are completely natural, safe, and free from side effects. Anti-biotics and other chemical based drugs produced by the pharmaceutical industry are known to cause serious damage to our bodies, leading to bigger and more serious diseases in the long run, including cancer. Natural agents are totally safe. In order to ensure a free flow of blood, the leach injects substances

that dilate the blood vessels. A free flow of blood to the region of the wound means that the wound would heal faster.

Let a leach suck your blood in case of a wound. The leach cleans the region and makes sure there is no infection. It sucks away infected and dirty blood if any near the wound. It relieves you of the pain. It ensures that your wound heals faster. All without any side effects. At zero cost, that is why perhaps your doctor does not like this idea, he is losing business, that too to a leach! Your doctor wants you to take anti-biotics and all kinds of dangerous medicines, which may damage your nervous system, and every other system in your body, perhaps even cause cancer, but he is happy because he can get his fees. This is what we call modern science and technology. Utterly unscientific, based on ignorance, driven by greed.

Doctors today prescribe dangerous anti-biotics, which means anti-life, for a simple ailment like a stomach upset. If there is some infection in the digestive system, the simplest and the most natural way to reduce the infection is to just vomit. The infection causing agents are removed from the system to a large extent and the body will then be able to fight out the remaining. A time tested, simple, natural remedy for stomach upset is to take butter milk. What is there in a butter milk? If the butter milk is made from curds and if curds are made by the natural process of fermenting milk and if the milk is given by a cow and if the cow has been given only natural green grass to eat and no hormones etc, the butter milk would contain a large number of bacteria. It is this dose of bacteria that cures your stomach ailment. There are Billions of bacteria in our body, in our mouth and digestive system and they are very useful, even necessary for our survival. The message that microbes cause diseases is a massive mis-information campaign launched by businessmen to sell unnecessary and

harmful chemicals to you in the form of medicines, cleaning agents, and what not. Not all bacteria are disease causing, most are in fact very useful to us. Broad spectrum antibiotics kill practically all bacteria in the body, making the body utterly weak and vulnerable and this is what causes most diseases today. Drink bacteria, in the form of natural butter milk and the stomach infection will be gone in no time. Let the bacteria, your friends, fight for you the natural way. Modern science is increasingly becoming anything but scientific because there is competition and money involved at every stage. Be warned. Do not fall for what the modern scientist says, do not accept things blindly without careful re-examination. Think. Seek the truth, the real truth.

1.21 The Unprovable

Let us get back to our serious business of seeking the truth. How do you know there is a chair in your room? Seeing is not believing. Suppose you were to close your eyes. Will that chair vanish? You would laugh and say the chair will continue to exist whether you are seeing it or not. You know that as per Newton's first law, the chair has to simply continue to remain where it is until and unless we apply some force and move it away. But something does not become truth because Newton said it. Something does not become true because your science text book says so. Do not confuse law for truth. A scientific law is simply a generalization based on observations, nothing more. And all of our observations are suspect. Truth is different from a law. After all, any law in science can be disputed and disproved over time. A well known scientific law can also be false. Newton's laws can also be questioned. Let us examine, independently. We can. We should.

What if nobody is seeing the chair? You would think the chair would continue to be there, unless removed by somebody. Even if there is no light or we are blind, we can still perceive the chair by touching or through other sensory perceptions. It all appears silly. This whole talk may in fact look too simple and obvious to merit any serious consideration but think carefully. You can say the chair exists as long as you have some evidence of it, directly or indirectly. But if you are actually asserting that the chair exists independent of you, that is not so obvious at all. It is a very big assumption. It requires a proof. How can we prove that the world exists independent of you, independent of me and all of us?

Suppose there were no human beings at all on Earth. Is it ever possible to give a proof that the chair (or elephant or Sun, or whatever) exists? Who will give the proof and to whom? It is just not possible to prove that the world exists independent of us. This is the biggest fallacy in modern science. Science rarely if ever picks up fundamental questions such as existence. It simply makes a tacit assumption throughout that the world exists and that it exists independent of us. Without any proof. Modern science claims that its description of world is real and true. Without any proof. Should we accept this?

Are you thinking that we can prove the existence of the world independent of one person or independent of some persons or even many or most persons by resorting to other people? Remember that all these people are part of the world whose existence we are trying to explore. Until and unless proved, we cannot assume that the world or any part of it exists, we cannot assume that other people exist. If you can give a proof to yourself but without involving yourself in any manner whatever, then and only then have you given a valid proof that the world exists independent

of you. But how can you give any proof without involving yourself and without involving anybody else? Who will conduct experiments, who will observe, who will think, who will develop the proof? Just think. Independent existence of the universe is an unprovable assumption. The external physical world is only an apparent reality, it is not the ultimate reality. We all tend to assume that after we die this world and all these people will continue and go on as usual. That is why we struggle throughout our life to acquire money and property for the benefit of our children. This is exactly like assuming that after we wake up from our dreams, the other characters in the dream will go on. Nothing can be more illogical and unscientific than this. Think.

Unless and until an independent proof is given, we should not accept anything. We have already shown that non-existence is the default and existence is an exceptionally special event that calls for an explanation. Now, it is not possible to prove that the universe exists independent of us. An independent proof is not possible at all, after all only we human beings can give, accept or reject a proof. No matter how much of scientific research we carry out, no matter how much of time, effort and money we spend, no matter how many sophisticated instruments, equipment and super-computers we use, we just cannot prove that the universe exists independent of all of us. Even if our computers conduct all the experiments, note down all the observations, analyze, think, decide, and come to some final conclusion, we will not accept it as proof until and unless we have checked all these and we are satisfied and convinced fully, right? If you eliminate the human being completely, there can be no such thing as proof. Science and superstition will become indistinguishable. There is no way to prove that the world is *sat*, it is not eternal, invariant and absolutely independent. There can be no proof

that the world exists even as a temporary, ever changing *mithyaa* but independent of us and outside of us. The world is dependent for its existence on us because until and unless we prove its existence we cannot take its existence for granted. Yet we go on trumpeting the glory of scientific spirit which assumes that the world exists independent of us and external to us and goes on describing this hypothetical, imaginary universe. The whole of modern science is based on provably unprovable assumptions. We will never get a complete and correct picture of the true nature of the universe if we restrict ourselves to the ways and means of modern science. We need to look beyond, think differently, examine critically, to get final answers to all these basic questions about ourselves and this world.

Can we at least prove that the world exists conditionally, relatively, as perceived by us, temporarily, ever changing as it is by its nature? In other words, can we at least prove that the world exists in its *mithyaa* sense relative to us? Even this is not so easy. Even to say that the world exists, conditionally, conditioned on us, because we can see and know it, we must first prove that we exist. What if a ghost says that a goblin exists because it can see it? Do we not first ask if the ghost exists? Likewise, unless and until we prove that we exist, we cannot say anything about the external world. We must understand who exactly we are. What does it mean to say I see? Who sees? Who am I? My body? My brain? My mind? Something even more subtle and deeper? All of these? None of these?

We do not question the world we experience in our dreams, we simply accept it, live in it, experience it, enjoy it. Why not do the same with the world we see in our waking state? Why not simply accept it without questioning? Of course we can. Most people do. Animals also do. This is perfectly fine, as long as we accept that this is not a

logical and scientifically proven fact but we are accepting it purely for pragmatic reasons. We call this view *vyava-haara*. This is different from *paramaatha*. This is not the truth, this is only something we take for granted without questioning. We should not call this science. Either we should stop calling it science, use the term superstition or ignorance instead, stop eulogizing the spirit of science, stop influencing government decisions that affect the lives of people, or we should reject all these tentative, conditional, provably unprovable assumptions and conclusions and proofs derived therefrom, and start a proper inquiry into the true nature of the world afresh. Doing superstition in the name of science is the bane of the modern world. It is harmful to mankind. It is a sin. It is putting the lives of countless varieties of living species at risk. Many life forms have vanished completely from this Earth, never to return again, thanks to modern scientific thinking and all the technology and industry and commercial activities that ensue therefrom. Human life on mother Earth is now threatened. Man has become an endangered species, thanks to his own flawed thinking and stupid actions in the name of science, technology and economic development. It is time to slow down, stop, think, understand, change. It is time to change ourselves for the better. It is time to learn to live. Let us all live, live well, enjoy life to its fullest, but without harming others in any way whatever. That would be real progress. Let us learn to simply live, do nothing more than what nature has designed us for, let us stop exploiting and damaging our own environment. The world is *mithyaa*, it has no *svaruupa* and therefore exploring the external world is at best futile.

1.22 Fallacy

This notion of independent existence looks simple but it can be quite confusing. Let us think again. If asked to prove that the chair exists without seeing, touching or otherwise perceiving the chair through your sense organs, perhaps you will start looking for outside help. Let us say we use a camera and capture the image of the chair. Is that not a proof that the chair exists? This way we can prove that the chair exists without depending upon our sensory perceptions, right? Wrong!

There are two serious problems with this logic. Firstly, you must realize that you still need to look at the picture the camera has taken, using your own eyes. No instrument, tool or equipment can replace human perception. Without looking at the instrument panel or a hard copy print out or otherwise perceiving through your sense organs, you will never be able to get any evidence from any instrument whatever. Finally, everything boils down to our own mental perceptions. Without that, there can be no proof.

More importantly, you are assuming that the camera exists! To prove that X exists, you are assuming that Y exists. This is at best a conditional, partial proof, it is not a complete proof in itself. What if the camera did not exist at all? Your proof that the chair exists will fall apart in no time. You will first need to prove that the camera exists.

To prove X we assume Y exists. And to prove Y we assume Z. To prove Z? Either we go on endlessly like this and our proof will never ever be complete, or, we will have to come back to something seen earlier, making it a cyclic logic and hence, again, an invalid proof. X exists if Y exists and Y exists if X exists is no proof at all.

If and only if we can prove X without assuming any other thing have we given a complete, independent, valid proof of X's existence. This is clearly not possible. If ghosts were to come and give a proof that goblins exist, will we accept this? We will first question whether ghosts exist. If the prover himself does not exist, how can his proof exist? We just cannot give independent, complete, valid proof of the existence of any external, material, physical object in the world. Modern science is all about the external, material, physical world, which it assumes without proof. Hence modern science cannot lead us to the truth.

What if a person gives a proof and then dies? Does the proof become void? Can we not have a proof without a prover? Do not get confused. Think clearly. A proof is not just some words or symbols written on paper. If the proof is based on observations made by the original prover, yes the proof becomes null and void until you can again independently make the same observations. If the experiments and observations can be repeated by you satisfactorily, you become the real prover, you exist and so the proof continues to be valid. If you cannot, the proof dies with the prover. Since we have started by questioning the existence of the entire world, we cannot assume that other people exist. Either you prove it yourself or you give up.

Is there something in this whole universe, which can not only prove or disprove the existence of other things, but can also establish its own existence, all by itself? Is yes, that is the *sat* we are looking for in this book.

1.23 Dreamy Proof

Suppose some one were to actually give a scientific proof, a proof that is completely logical and sound, that the uni-

verse exists, the world we live in is real. Can we then accept this? After all, once a proof is given, we must accept without any hesitation, right?

Now think. Suppose somebody were to give a proof that the dream world is real while he is still dreaming, would you accept that proof, even if it is quite logical and convincing as per the logic of the world of dreams? Nobody would accept a proof given in the state of dream, right?

By exactly the same logic, any proof given that this world we see in our waking state is real, while we are still in this same state of being awake, should be rejected outright as null and void. If a proof given about the dream world inside the dream world is not acceptable, how can a proof about the waking state given within the same waking state be accepted? After all we realized that our dreams were only dreams and not real only after waking up to a higher state of consciousness. Any scientific proof, evidence, logical argument, etc. given about the world we experience in our waking state while we are still within the same waking state cannot be accepted at all. Hence all of modern science must be outright rejected as there is no guarantee that it will all hold if and when we wake up to the next higher level of consciousness. Modern science and technology are not capable of raising us to a higher level of consciousness, they are therefore incapable of leading us to the final truth. Science can never take us to the ultimate truth. You can never realize the ultimate reality within the scope of modern science. Modern science is all about understanding the world we experience in the waking state while we are all still inside the same state, exactly like exploring dreams while still dreaming! This is no proof at all. We need independent evidence. Modern science is not scientific at all, because it is all based on un-proven and un-provable assumptions. We shall keep building up our

case against modern science in small steps and we shall offer our strongest criticisms towards the end of this chapter. We need to get truly scientific, we need to dig deeper. Be bold, be brave, give up your fancy for modern science, question, explore, stop not until you get the final answer.

That many learned men think so and therefore it must be true is exactly like saying that all the people in my dream world agree that 2 plus 2 is 7 and therefore this is the correct answer. Forget about what others say. Do not go by what scientists, engineers, doctors, businessmen, saints, seers, spiritual gurus or any other kind of God-men say. You are not even sure that they exist, how can you believe them? The moment you wake up and realize yourself, all the others vanish like the people in your dreams. Only you can answer all your questions, others cannot. You need to uplift yourself, God or God-men will not. You need to raise yourself from a mere body made up of bone and flesh to a full, glorious, human being. This is your life. You came alone to this world, nobody came with you. You go alone, nobody will come with you, not even the dearest of them all. You need to live this life alone, in the company of others. You are alone in a crowd. You need to understand your life. Then and only then can you start living. Right now, you merely exist in bone and flesh, like this physical universe made up of sand and stones. Wake up. This is high time.

Modern science and technology can never give us what we need in our lives, we can never get peace, health, satisfaction, happiness or fulfillment. Science, technology, industry, business, economic development are all useless, wasteful, unnecessary, harmful, exploitative, damaging, devastating. What we need to live well and enjoy life is something very different. We need to free ourselves from the clutches of ignorance. We need to gain real knowledge.

From knowledge comes power. Power is the enabler. We can raise ourselves to glorious heights and enjoy life to its fullest only when we free ourselves from the bondage of ignorance. Seek knowledge, real knowledge. Seek freedom, freedom from ignorance, freedom from all doubts, confusions and delusions. Seek the power that comes from this real freedom. Seek life. Live well, be free, enjoy life. If you wish to go from Mumbai to Delhi, the first step is to leave Mumbai. This is inevitable. If you wish to raise yourself from where you are to a higher and better state, you must give up your attachment and hold on your present state. If you want a great life, you must give up your fancy for modern science and technology. You must reduce your dependence on technology. There is no other way. Either you give up ignorance in the name of modern science and technology and make this world a heaven, or you go on like this and destroy yourself and all the others. The choice is yours.

1.24 Doubts

We get many doubts. Naturally. In the waking state if I see a wall in front of me that is real because if the wall were to be purely imaginary, I will not get a bump on my forehead if try to walk through the wall as if nothing was there. Hence our experiences in the waking state are all real. Right?

Wrong! It is very much possible that you do exactly the same thing within a dream - you try to walk through a wall and you get a bump on your forehead. The swelling is real, the pain is real, of course within the dream. What is the real difference?

We are so much used to assuming that all our expe-

riences in the waking state are real that we find it hard even to question this, even after realizing that it is all completely illogical. Saying that the swelling and pain is real and hence the wall is real is illogical because the wall as also the swelling and pain were all experienced within the same state. You can never give any proof of existence in any state by taking examples from within the same state. An independent proof, a proof from outside of the state is necessary. Even if you get hit hard, you are hospitalized, you experience the pain for days, you pay the doctor, all of this put together is no proof at all. Because all of them happened right within the waking state. This is all like proving that a dream is real while still dreaming. Simply invalid.

It may appear strange that we are arguing against what we think is the 'real world', what all people normally think, what all people normally experience everyday in their lives, by taking recourse to dreams. Note that we are not depending upon what somebody saw or heard in their dreams, we are only using an extremely important and fundamental lesson that we can all learn from our dreams - that what appears real may not actually be real, that is all. If you have a completely logical mind, if you are not biased, if you are not under a grip of preconceived notions, if you are able to think clearly, there should be no problem at all in understanding all this. If you have serious difficulties, the ideas presented here have perhaps come too early for you. May be you should jump to chapter three for practical ideas for a better life. The ideas presented in this book are very simple yet very confusing. This is a book that must be read again and again, pondered, meditated upon until fully understood, digested and assimilated. You have understood this book fully only when all your doubts and confusions vanish. This is a book about your life. Nothing in your life is more important than your own life. Take it

seriously. This book is for you. Do not give up. Keep coming back until you get the most of this book. You would definitely be rewarded handsomely.

1.25 Continuity and Commonality

Why do we all make all kinds of invalid assumptions? Why do we all find it so hard to accept completely logical things? Why do we feel our views are correct even after being shown to be illogical?

One possible factor is continuity. Every time we dream a dream it is in all probability a different dream. The same characters, the same scenes, the same events rarely repeat with a high degree of consistency and continuity. There is rarely a smooth and seam-less continuation from the previous dream. In contrast, every time we wake from our dreams, we wake up to the same external world, we see the same people, the same continuing events and happenings. Hence it appears real. But continuity by itself cannot constitute a proof. At least in principle, it is very much possible that the people, scenes, events continue in dreams as well. Suppose there is continuity, would you then accept the dream world as real? Even if there is continuity, you would reject the dream world as unreal. By the same logic, you must question the world you see in the waking state. It is very easy to make a computer program remember what it was doing at the time of turning it off so that it can restart from where it left whenever we switch it on and bring it back into action. Many computer programs actually do this. Continuity can be easily programmed. It is possible that our brains are also programmed this way and that is why we see continuity of things in our waking state. Just because there is continuity we cannot assume that the world we experience is real.

There is more to it than this. Continuity assumes that there is something called time, objects are placed in time, events happen in time and so on. Until and unless we prove these, even talking about continuity is not very logical. Does this world exist in time? Does this mean that time is independent and outside of the universe? How can anything be outside the all-inclusive universe? If time is also part of this same universe, how can we say objects exist or events happen in time? Think. Further, if we assume that an object exists, then and only then it makes sense to say that it continues to exist every time we wake up from our sleep and look at that object. Suppose the object were non-existent, suppose it was only an illusion or imagination. Then, it does not even make sense to talk of continuity. What do we mean continuing existence of something which does not exist? Therefore, saying that objects exist in the world because every time we wake up from our deep sleep or dream, we see the same objects is absurd and illogical, for, continuity itself presupposes existence. How can we presuppose what we are trying to establish? If there is an insect sitting on the camera lens, all images captured by the camera will have this insect. The insect is not really part of any of these scenes, right? Likewise, suppose the objects we see are part of our own faculty of sight or observation or knowing, then it is absurd to say that these objects exist independently and they continue to exist in the outside world. A movie projector can create all sorts of very realistic scenes on the screen but nothing in those scenes actually exist outside of or independent of the projector. It is very much possible that we project the whole world and we imagine that we have entered this world and we are inside the world. We are conscious beings, we can create, destroy, modify anything and everything in this whole world, the world cannot do anything to us. There is something exceptionally great about

consciousness. We all get confused because we ignore ourselves and think of all else. Think of yourself.

As ordinary people we make all kinds of baseless assumptions and we think and talk and work and argue on their basis. Unfortunately, even modern science and philosophy is treading the same path. It is not in the true spirit of science to assume that the world or the objects in it or time or space exist until and unless all these are shown to be true, right?

Another factor that influences our beliefs very strongly is commonality between the experiences of many people. Different people usually have very different dreams but the experiences of the so called 'real world' are largely common to all people. Hence the 'real world' must be real. Right? Wrong again. Suppose many people were to get the same dream, would you then accept the dream world as real? That many people have common experiences is also not a proof. All human brains have inherited essentially the same 'software' program - our logic and reasoning system, which is all genetically hard coded. Just as in the case of computer software, it is very much possible that there is a flaw in this brain software and all human beings will consistently make the same mistakes every time. Therefore, that all people think the same way is no proof at all. Software bugs are always 100% consistent and repeatable. Consistency and repeatability cannot by themselves constitute a proof.

There is bigger logical fallacy here. You are assuming that there are other people! When we are questioning the existence of the entire world, how can we assume that other people exist? Like the characters inside your dreams, all the other people in your world could also be mere projections of your own mind. Nobody else exists. Or if they do,

we have not yet proved that. All the characters in your dream live and experience the same dream world, this entire dream world is a common experience of all these people and other living creatures in there. Or so we think. We cannot conclude from this that the dream world is real. Even if a Billion people think or say that they live in a world that is external and common to all of them, that is no proof at all. Neither the world nor the people therein may be real. Do not jump to conclusions too fast. Stop and think.

It is also not logical to accept without further inquiry that the world that different people experience is actually the same. The world each of experience can be quite different. How can we know that the world different people experience is actually the same? How do we know what exactly they experience inside themselves? We never have any direct experience of other people's experiences, we can only imagine that they may also be experiencing the world like us, we can only go by what they say. These do not constitute valid evidences and we cannot conclude that other people exist or they experience the world the same way as we do or that they all experience the same world. Think.

Either we must accept that we are completely illogical and simply go on like most uneducated people do in life without calling it science, or we must stop, think, question and accept if and only after we have found a valid proof. It is wrong to think we are all very logical and highly scientific in our outlook while we continue to be completely illogical. Let us stop glorifying modern science. Let us stop eulogizing this kind of spirit of modern science. Let us understand and accept its limitations. This would be real progress in science.

Modern science is clearly not all that scientific and log-

ical. Even if we limit ourselves to a purely practical level, we can easily see that science and its fall-outs in the form of technology, industry and economy have been exploiting, damaging, destroying the world and making our lives more and more miserable. A time may come very soon when we will not even be able to survive on this planet. Let us use science and technology only in exceptional, critical, emergency, life-saving kind of situations. Let us not encourage science and technology to be commercially exploited on a mass scale. Let us reduce our dependence on technology and all man-made materials and gadgets in our routine, daily life. Think twice before you buy anything. Is it absolutely essential? If not, perhaps life would be better off without it. Natural things are always much better than man-made artifacts mass produced in factories. We are products of nature. We have evolved and adapted to the environment that nature has created for us. Life is becoming miserable because we have filled our homes and offices with artificial materials and gadgets. Life itself is becoming more and more complicated, artificial and unnatural. Simplify your life. Simple life is better life. Think.

1.26 Imagination and Reality

We can imagine that we have put our hand on fire and it is burning. Or we can actually put our hand into fire and experience the burning. The first we call imagination. The second we think is reality. Can we say whatever is not imagination is real?

Usually our ability to imagine things is not very good. That is why ‘actually’ putting our hand into fire and letting it get burnt is so much different from simply imagining the same. Because our imagination is so very imperfect and ‘unrealistic’, we tend to believe that the other experience

is ‘real’. What is the real difference between imagination and reality?

In our dreams, our imaginations are realistic. Hence we do not feel that the dream is only a dream, merely a projection and imagination of our own mind, and not real. While dreaming, we think that the dream is 100% real. Exactly like our experiences in the waking state. This shows that imagination need not be any different or worse than our experiences in the waking world. If there is no difference between imagination and other experiences and feelings, how can we consider one as real? Our ‘real world’ experiences in the waking state are in fact no different from imaginations.

Why is it that our imaginations in the dream world are realistic while our imaginations in the waking world are not so realistic? In the dream world, our senses and the intellect are inactive and the mind is unperturbed. In the waking state, our minds are constantly disturbed and distracted by the sensory inputs as also by our intellect. Consequently, our ability to imagine is impaired. A well trained mind, like that of a true *yoogi*, can imagine things very realistically even in the waking state. And these imaginations, like those in our dreams, will be no different from our experiences in the ‘real world’ in the waking state.

Therefore, there is no fundamental difference between imagination and what we tend to think as ‘real’ experiences in our waking state. All of our experiences in the waking state are also projections of our own mind, not fundamentally different from dreams. After all, we cannot see, hear, touch, experience anything other than what our own mind projects for us to experience deep within us. There is nothing realistic about what we normally think as ‘real’. The experience of getting our fingers burnt in a fire

can be identical irrespective of whether this happened in a dream, or you ‘actually’ put your hand in fire and got burnt, or you sit and imagine the same. The fear of actually getting chased by a ferocious and hungry dog and the fear of imagining or dreaming the same are identical. That is why hypnotism works. Life is what we experience deep within us. What happens in the external world outside us does not matter at all. Forget about the external world, look inside and understand the drama of life as it unfolds deep inside yourself.

1.27 Realistic Imagination and Hard Reality

We are still not convinced. We get many doubts. If I imagine that I am not hungry and not eat at all, will I not ‘actually’ get weak even if my imagination is very realistic? Eating and imagining that we are eating are quite different, are they not?

In a dream I can dream or imagine that I am hungry or that I am not hungry, I am full. I can dream that I eat and my hunger is satiated. I can dream that I do not eat and my hunger is still somehow magically satiated. Or I can dream that I eat and still my hunger is not at all reduced. We can imagine or dream anything and everything, logical or otherwise as they may appear to be when we wake up. In the waking state, all these possible permutations and combinations are not equally probable. If we eat it is likely that our hunger is satiated and if we do not eat we will continue to feel hungry. Of course we can try hard and imagine otherwise but imagination is different from ‘reality’ - or so we think. How do we explain this difference?

In dreams there is no logic. We can experience all kinds

of 'illogical' and 'impossible' events. Not so in the waking state. Hence our experiences in the waking state must be real. So we think. Is this right? What is logical and what is not? Logic is simply whatever all human beings generally find reasonable when we are in the waking state - nothing more. There is nothing 'logical' about our logic. Logic is the way the human mind is designed or programmed to work in its waking state. If that design were different, we would all be thinking very differently - what appears logical now may appear completely illogical and vice versa. Dreams are illogical with respect to the logic of the waking state, that is all. In fact the dream world has its own logic and everything there is completely logical with respect to the logic of the dream world. That dreams are not logical with respect to the logic of the waking world is no big issue. In fact the logic of the waking world is invalid in the dream world as well and the claims and counter-claims balance out. That things appear to be logical is not a proof that these things are 'actually' true. There is no fundamental difference between dream world and waking world.

Dream world is 'real' as long as you are dreaming and the waking world is 'real' as long as you are in the waking state. The dream world, including all the living and non-living beings there-in, vanish without trace the moment you wake up. Exactly the same way, your body, the stomach, hunger, the food, and all this logic will vanish into thin air the moment you wake up to the still higher state of consciousness. All these doubts will vanish and there will no longer be any need even to clarify them. But as long as we continue to be in the waking state, these confusions and doubts will linger on. Just as all the strange things of the dream world continue as long as we continue to be in the dreaming state. The hollowness of the dream world cannot be proved or disproved from within the dream world. The same way, the hollowness of the waking world cannot be

proved or disproved while we continue to be in the waking state.

We experience life inside our mind. Whether we are awake or asleep and dreaming or merely trying to imagine, in all cases everything we feel and experience happens deep within us. At this level, there is no difference between actually eating and getting our hunger satiated or imagining or dreaming that we ate and we are now feeling full. In the waking state, the experiences are influenced and disturbed by the external sensory inputs while in the dreaming state, these external interferences are absent and hence our experiences are purer and hence more realistic. Whether we term these experiences as real or imaginary, they always happen deep inside our minds and are indicative only of the properties of our own mind, they tell us nothing at all about the external world. Contrary to common belief, modern science is not objective. There can be no experimentation, observation or inference outside of our mind and therefore everything in science has to be completely subjective. Imagination and real world experiences are not fundamentally different in any significant way.

If we forget our primary purpose of unearthing the ultimate truth of the universe and we are satisfied with mere day to day transactions at the level of *vyavahaara*, all of our doubts and confusions are valid. As long as we live in the waking world, it would make practical sense to accept everything in it as practical reality, just as we accept the dream world while we are dreaming. In that case, yes, you have to eat to get your hunger satiated and if you simply imagine that you have eaten and you do not ‘actually’ eat, your body may become weak and fall ill. This is all true, but true only with respect to the waking state. The moment you fall asleep, your body and hunger and food and weakness and all these will simply evaporate into thin air.

Our goal in this book is to rise above the level of *vyavahaara* and seek the ultimate truth in the sense of *paramaarthaa*. At that level the entire world has already been shown to be *mithyaa*. Our body, the stomach, the food and hunger, the act of eating and the feeling of satiating the hunger are all part of this temporary and unstable world of *mithyaa*. Our goal here is to raise ourselves above this mundane worldly level and seek the ultimate truth or *sat*. Let us not forget our goal and keep getting confused again and again. Nothing is realistic about the ‘real world’ or what all modern science tell us about this world. Forget this so called ‘real world’, forget modern science, start thinking.

1.28 The Fish and the TV

We all tend to think that the world exists, whether we care or not. Even after I die, this world goes on. Whether I am seeing the Moon or not, Moon continues to exist. Whether any human is observing it or not, the Moon continues to shine there. The world exists independent of us. This is how we are all given to think. But this is plain wrong. Let us see why.

If I say ‘ghosts exist’, you will all immediately object and reject my claim. You will ask where is the proof, have I seen, where, when, and so on. Because nobody has ever seen, heard, touched or otherwise observed ghosts, we all think that ghosts do not exist. This we think is scientific. Believing in ghosts is not scientific. This is our logic. Now let us apply this same logic and see what happens.

Imagine the fish in the Pacific ocean. Countless Millions of them are alive and kicking there. Countless Millions have come, lived and gone over the last many Millions of years. Has any single fish ever seen a TV? No fish has ever seen,

heard or otherwise experienced a TV in all its life. This is not not just one fish's experience but the common, long-standing experience of Millions of them. In the fish world, there is absolutely no evidence, direct or indirect, to say that a TV exists. Does the TV exist? As far as the fish are concerned, the answer must be clearly a big 'No!'. This is our logic, right? Does the TV exist? Should we say it exists for human beings but does not exist for the fish in the Pacific ocean? By the same logic, is it not possible that many things actually exist in the world but are completely beyond human comprehension even with all our scientific instruments and what not?

Clearly, existence of anything independent of human experience is a questionable idea. The world exists for us, the world exists for us the way it appears for us, that is all that we can say. We cannot say that the world actually exists like this, independent of us. The world is what it appears to us, nothing more, nothing less. It is relative, conditional. The implicit, tacit assumption in modern science that science describes the objective world as it is, is not valid. Science can never tell us the true nature of the universe. Everything in modern science is done within the same state of consciousness, like exploring dreams while still dreaming, without ever attempting to reach the next higher level of consciousness and looking at this world from that stand point. The whole of modern science is therefore completely invalid.

This universe can not be said to be existing independent of us. The existence of this universe is conditional to our existence. This universe is not *sat*. It is not even *mithyaa* in its own right. It appears to exist as *mithyaa* to us, that is all. Most of what we are doing today in the name of science, technology, industry, business, economics and what not, all the fights and wars, all the damage we are caus-

ing to the environment, all of human misery and suffering, all these are due to ignorance. Modern science, technology and economic development are neither so essential nor good for us. We can all live very well, happily, and enjoy life to its fullest, if only we stop, think, inquire, seek and know the truth. Real knowledge can save this world, modern science and its fall outs will destroy the whole world in no time. The extensive damage caused to the environment through these human exploits of the scientific age in the last few hundred years is threatening the very survival of human race on this Earth. Alarm bells are ringing. It is time to wake up.

Ancient *RShi-s* in India had understood all this very well many thousands of years ago and they have given utterly logical, completely convincing arguments, scientific in the true sense to the core, leading us to the truth. How is it that we have forgotten all that and started eulogizing ignorance in the name of science? How can we simply ignore what has been proved earlier and go on and on? We must either accept the previously held proof or we must prove it wrong and only then continue. Modern science simply ignores the whole of the ancient science of India and this is simply not acceptable. Ignorance of the language is not a valid excuse. What if I say I do not know English and side line all that has been published in English? Will that be acceptable? Modern scientists are brushing aside all of our ancient sciences calling it religious or outdated. The science of ancient India is the real science - it leads us to the ultimate truth. You must get back to the roots and study the original works under a learned guru and then you will understand and accept this. Or read this book and think carefully. Truth cannot change, it cannot be changed, however hard you may try. In the end, it is always the truth that wins. Let us be clear, we are not trying to promote or propagate any one religion or cult or philosophy, we are

only trying to seek the final truth. We are ready to accept the truth wherever it comes from, whether it comes from modern thinking or the ancient, whether it comes from India or somewhere else, whether it emerges from the study of this philosophy or that, whether it is usually linked up with this religion or that. Truth is truth and we must give up all biases and preconceived notions and seek the truth *per se*.

1.29 My World

Let us be very clear. We have never said the world is unreal. We have never said the wall or the chair or the elephant or whatever does not exist. We have never said you will not get hurt if you try to run through a wall. No, not at all. Just as something should not be rejected without proof we are simply insisting that nothing should be accepted and taken for granted without proof. We are not saying the world does not exist. We only demand a proof. If you think the world is real, please give us a proof. We are not rejecting the existence of the world. But we are also not accepting your claim that the world exists and it exists independent of us. We have already understood beyond doubt that the external, physical, material universe does not exist in the ultimate sense of existence, it has not always existed and it cannot exist for ever in exactly the same form without any change whatever, it is not *sat*. Now we have also understood that the external world cannot even be said to exist in its *mithyaa* sense - as a temporary, ever changing, fleeting form, but independent of us and external to us.

Perhaps a world exists, but it is my world, I experience it, I know it the way I know it, I do not and I cannot know its true nature by the usual methods of modern science,

it is just my own personal, internal world. It is the world I experience deep inside me. My mind is capable of creating an entire world within me in my dreams. Perhaps the same way, the entire world I experience in the waking state is also a projection of my own mind. Why not? I have absolutely no basis to say that the world outside is real and it exists independent of me. My world exists for me, that is all I can say.

Suppose you are dreaming. You see and interact with many people in your dream. Finally you come out of the dream and wake up to the so called 'real world'. You realize that what all you experienced so far was only a dream. There is no longer any dream, you have come out of that world and entered a different world. Now, does it make any sense at all to say that the dream continues, the other people in your dream will continue, only you are out of it? This is laughable, is it not? Once we come out of the dream, there is no dream at all and the entire world of dreams, including all the mountains, oceans, trees, animals, people, vanishes completely in one go. By exactly the same logic, it is nonsense to say that after I die, this world will go on. The entire world, the world I know of, my world, must immediately come to a complete annihilation the moment I go. Saying that other people will continue is exactly like saying the other characters in a dream will continue even after I come out of my dreams. Not at all logical. My world comes and goes with me. If your world continues how does it matter? Who are you and where do you exist anyway?

We see other people sleeping, waking up, expiring and we see that the world goes on. We conclude that people come and go but the world goes on. Understand that seeing other people go to sleep or wake up are part of your experiences within your state of being awake, they have

nothing to do with other people's sleep state. You can never get the experience of somebody else's sleep. You can never see through my eyes, you can never hear through my ears, you can never think through my mind. All of your experiences in your life are your own experiences in your waking, dreaming or deep sleep states. That is all.

People struggle so much all through their life to earn money and buy property. The sole dream of every middle-class family is to acquire a house of their own. Those with several houses or shops will feel rich and successful. Those few who own a whole factory or a township are considered the richest and the most successful. How many people in the world can own a whole big city? But in reality you own the whole world. Everything in this world is yours. Everybody is rich, very rich, everybody owns a whole world, they own every small thing in the whole universe. They created it all, they run the show, they are the bosses. Yet people feel they are poor, they seek more and more money and power and control and in the process destroy themselves from within. Realize that you are the master of a whole big world, give up your endless wants and desires, stop wasting your time and effort seeking what is already yours. Be satisfied, you already have everything that you can have within your world, there is nothing more to gain. Nor is there any fear of losing anything. There is no need to worry. Life is not a struggle. Life is to sit back, relax and enjoy. Realize your own true nature and then you will be freed from all the pain and suffering in life. To understand all this properly, let us now take a turn and look at the world from another angle. Read on.

1.30 Objects and Attributes

We see objects all around us - houses, furniture, toys, cars, trees, butterflies, people. Do they exist? In what sense? What is their true nature? To understand all this, it is useful to think in terms of objects and attributes. Attributes are nothing but properties of objects. When we say 'the car is red', we think of the car as an object. This object has colour as an attribute. The value of this attribute is said to be red. We may say 'the car is red', or, 'the value of the colour attribute of the car is red'. In this universe there are objects. Objects have attributes. Attributes have values. This whole universe is nothing but a collection of objects having attributes. To know the universe we need to know the objects and their properties. Everything in the Universe can be understood in terms of objects and attributes. If something is neither an object nor an attribute of some object, then it does not exist at all. Because, if something exists, it can always be considered as an object or an attribute, right?

What exactly is colour? Colour is just a label, a name we have given, for our own convenience, to refer to a class of properties including red-ness, blue-ness, green-ness, black-ness, white-ness and so on. When we see an object, what enters the eye is only light, nothing else. Light is considered to be a wave and said to have a frequency. Colour is nothing but a name for a particular range of frequencies. These labels are given by us, for convenience, purely based on our perception. Light of different frequencies appears to be of different colours to our eyes. A little beyond the frequency corresponding to red is infra-red, which we perceive not as light but as heat. Heat and light are not different in any other way, only the frequencies differ. Yet we never consider heat as a colour because we do not perceive it as a colour. Therefore, there is really nothing like colour in

the external world, colour is just a name that exists inside our own minds.

What is the frilinity of your car? You will be surprised to hear such a question and you will ask back what this word means. Frilinity is not a concept that exists in your mind and so it makes no sense to you. The concept of colour exists in your mind, you have been taught this in early childhood, and you have understand colour. Size or shape, colour or frilinity, all attribute labels for that matter, are just names that exist only inside our mind, they have no existence outside the human mind. Colour is a generic term, while red-ness, green-ness etc. are more specific, otherwise, there is no difference. Your car can have red-ness or green-ness or yellow-ness itself as a property, and we can directly talk about properties of objects, there is no need to distinguish between labels and values of attributes. There is really no difference between attributes and values of attributes. We find it difficult to express our thoughts in words without using labels and so we say the height is 3 inches and the width is 5 inches and so on. There is no other convenient way to talk of these measurements without using names like height and width. Height itself is not a property of the object, nor width but we need these terms purely for our own convenience. Therefore, we actually have only two things to consider - objects and their properties or attributes. There is no need for a 3-way classification in terms of objects, attributes and values. The attributes themselves are the values. Keep this in mind in all the discussions that follow.

Everything in the Universe must be either an object or one of its attributes. Note that we are not talking of only physical objects, we should definitely include abstract things and their qualities too. Only objects or attributes can exist in this universe. What else can exist? We can

perceive attributes through our sense organs and our mind. Using our intellect, we can realize the existence of objects on which these attributes must have been superimposed. If something is neither an object nor an attribute, there will be absolutely no way of knowing it. If there is absolutely no way of knowing something, how can we say it exists? Just as we reject the idea of a ghost, we must necessarily reject the idea of things whose existence cannot be proved in any way whatever.

We know objects in terms of their attributes. We distinguish one object from another in terms of their attributes. We say ‘this chair is bigger than that chair’ and so on. We can tell a tiger from a lion in terms of their attributes such as size, shape and colour. All differences and all similarities are with regard to attributes and their values. Can you imagine how two objects can be similar or dissimilar without bringing in any attributes whatever?

There is a very simple but interesting game that we can all play. Think of any two objects in the universe and list five similarities and five differences. The game is interesting because if you start with similar objects, giving differences would be harder and if you start with dissimilar objects, giving similarities would be harder. Play this game with young children and you will realize how smart they are. More importantly, carefully observe the nature of similarities and differences that come out in this game. Which of the two - similarities and differences, is more superficial and which is deeper and more profound? Should we focus on differences or should we focus on underlying universal principles?

1.31 The Young and Beautiful Lady

Imagine a young, beautiful, attractive, charming lady. If you are a young man, still unmarried, an eligible bachelor, looking for a match, you see in her youth, beauty, charm. You may observe her height, the shape, the smile, the way she talks or walks. Your mind wanders freely in a fantastic and romantic world. This is your view of this hypothetical lady. Now suppose you were actually the child of this lady. You will still consider her to be very beautiful. Mother is the most beautiful object in the world for any child. But surely the notion of beauty here is very different from the beauty as seen by a young man. The child sees a different kind of beauty, love, affection, care. The mother is the one, the only, the ultimate resort in all situations. The baby trusts the mother 100%. If the mother asks the baby to jump off, the child does so without the slightest hesitation, it never even comes to the mind of the child that it could be dangerous if the mother fails to catch her and let her fall down on to the ground, intentionally or by accident. Is there any other situation in life where you can see 100% trust and confidence? Now suppose you were the father of the lady. The father also knows and sees the beauty and youth of the lady but his view is entirely different. Imagine putting yourself in different roles, as the grand father or husband, or student, or neighbour, or a doctor. The object is the same but everyone has a completely different view. What is the reality? Which of these qualities, these properties or attributes of this lady are real? None are real. All are imposed by the observers based on who they are and what they want to see. A she-buffaloe looks very charming and attractive to a he-buffaloe, not to men! The same way a woman looks attractive to men, not to buffaloes or donkeys! Fortunately! Is it not? Beauty does not lie in the objects, beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. All attributes reside in the observers, not in the objects

themselves. The entire world is your imagination, the projection of your mind, your property, not of the world. It is not correct to think or claim that modern science describes the world as it really is. Modern science is all wrong, plain wrong. You see what you want to see, seeing is not believing.

A cat without a grin is OK but how about a grin without a cat? If we do not have some material object in our mind, we just cannot even think of colour or size or shape of that object. Green cannot exist if no object whose colour is green is possible even in principle. Objects have attributes, not the other way round. Attributes are super-imposed on objects. If there are no objects, there are no attributes. Attributes lose all meaning without the objects. Attributes are properties, they can only be properties of some thing, right? Attributes have no independent existence, understand this properly, this is a crucial point in our thesis.

Confusing attributes for objects is the worst mistake we can make. An object is not the same as its attributes. An object is what remains after all its attributes are stripped off, just as only your body remains after all your clothes and ornaments are stripped off. In everyday life we may refer to a person as ‘the man in red shirt’ but we should be clear that red shirt is what the man is wearing, it is not part of him, the man is what remains after the red shirt is stripped off. No single attribute, no combination of attributes, or all the attributes taken together, can be equated with the object per se. For, they are all super-imposed on the object, attributes are dependent on an object for their existence. The object is and must be independent of all its attributes. This is very very important, think deeply and make sure you understand this fully.

Our goal in this book is to know the *svaruupa* or true

nature of the world and the *svaruupa* or the true nature of ourselves. When a surgeon wants to operate on our body, we take out the coat and the sweater and the shirt and also the inner-ware. We take out all that we have put on, until only what cannot be taken out remains. What can never be negated, lost, given away, taken away, what can never leave an object, is its true nature. When ice melts it loses its definite shape. When the water evaporates it loses the very property of shape. Solid, liquid and gas are the three states of matter. Since the same substance is taken to exist in all these different states, shape cannot be a part of the *svaruupa* of any material object. Likewise, all attributes are external super-impositions, all can be negated, no attribute is innate to any object. Attributes are irrelevant as far as the *svaruupa* is concerned. We should therefore look for objects that remain after all attributes are negated.

1.32 Objects without Attributes

Size, shape, colour etc. are common properties of objects that we all know. In modern science we come across a number of other attributes such as refractive index, magnetic permeability and moment of inertia. How many attributes can a given object have? Is there a fixed number? Before the idea of moment was discovered, did objects have moment of inertia? Of course they had, only we did not know about it. The number and nature of attributes an object can have is not fixed. Attributes do not inhere in the objects, they are not innate to objects, we impose attributes on objects and we are free to impose as many and whatever kind of attributes we want on the objects. The man with the red shirt does not have a red shirt as in inherent property, he can take it off at will. Attributes are not innate, they are alienable, they can change, even while the object on which they are super-imposed remains un-

changed. Think.

In engineering and technology, we often add an extra artificial attribute such as ‘unique ID’ to objects so that they can be clearly distinguished from each other in spite of all the changes they undergo in terms of the other attributes. Two boys in a classroom can have the same name and to distinguish one from the other, we use a roll number as a unique ID. Remember that even the unique ID is an attribute, it is imposed on the object by us, it is not innate to the object, and in principle it can change too although we may have practical reasons for not changing it intentionally. There is no attribute that is innate and inalienable to any object.

The distinction between objects and attributes is very fundamental and extremely important. But we are so much used to thinking and talking all the time in terms of attributes that we find it hard to separate out the two. The same actor may take on different costumes and play different roles in different movies but a discerning onlooker will be able to identify who it is despite all the cosmetic changes. A chemist knows that the black powder used to make shoe polish and the glittering diamond are in fact chemically identical - both are pure carbon. The same way we must learn to see through the cosmetic external appearances of things and recognize the truth hidden deep inside. This is hard but necessary. Objects are not attributes. An object is what remains after all its attributes without exception are stripped off. Objects per se are indescribable. They have no name or form, even the name is an attribute. Objects cannot be described in words. Attributes can be. Our goal here is to seek these indescribable, nameless, formless objects.

Objects without attributes is very much possible al-

though difficult to imagine or describe. Attributes without objects is impossible. Our goal in this book is to seek the ultimate, the most independent reality. We should therefore learn to focus on the objects per se, not getting mesmerized and carried away by the superficial fancy dress these objects wear as if to camouflage, confuse and distract us. Let us seek the object per se, let us learn to see through the attributes that cover it up.

Software engineers talk so much about object oriented programming and what not but they simply fail to understand the difference between objects and attributes. Suppose there is nothing. Can you think of its shape? What is the shape of nothing? Or its size? Or colour? If there is no object at all, we cannot even think of any of its attributes. An object may or may not have some attribute but no attribute can exist in its own right, without any object to adhere to. In everyday parlance we are careless and loose about these simple ideas and so we get confused. When we say water is colourless, we do not mean water does not have the colour attribute at all. Water is an object and colour is one of its attributes. But we cannot say the colour is red, we cannot say it is green, we cannot say it is yellow, we only cannot give any specific value to this colour attribute. We may say the value of the colour attribute of the object water is null. Saying that a particular attribute of some object has a null value is not the same as saying that the object does not have that attribute at all. Saying that an attribute of some object has an unknown value is not the same as saying that the attribute itself does not exist. Solid objects may have a definite shape but liquids also have a shape, not a definite, fixed shape but a variable shape, a shape whose value depends upon the shape of the container. However, if the object is not a physical, material object at all, then we cannot even think of its shape. The shape attribute itself is absent. Make sure you under-

stand this subtle difference. Amoeba is not shapeless, only it has a constantly varying shape. Shapelessness is not the same as not having a fixed, constant or regular shape. To understand objects, we must imagine them as completely devoid of all attributes. This is hard but necessary here.

When ice melts, it becomes water and loses its original shape. When this water evaporates, it becomes steam and loses its size as well. Two gases may be both colourless and hence indistinguishable in terms of colour. As objects lose properties one by one, they become more and more similar. Dissimilarities melt away. What happens when all attributes of objects are taken away completely? Can we distinguish one object from the other? Think.

1.33 Real Attributes?

You may still have many doubts. OK, taste or smell may be highly individualistic and what somebody likes the others may not. Thus such properties are relative and cannot be innate to an object. An attribute is innate and inherent to an object when it does not change with the observer or with other external changes. What about length? Is it not the same for all observers? Is length not absolute and inherent to an object? No! Length is measured with respect to some accepted standard. 'Foot' refers to the length of a particular British king's feet! All measurements are with respect to some arbitrary assumed standards. What if the standard metre itself changes in length? If the standard of length lengthens, all objects in the world will shrink, and if the standard shortens, all objects will elongate proportionately. If the standard lengthens and all other objects in the world also lengthen proportionately at the same time, there will just be no way of even knowing this. Whether such a thing actually happens or what causes that are be-

side the point. The point is, length of an object is not completely innate to the object and not completely independent of everything else in the universe. The length of an object depends on outside things. Hence it is not an innate property of the object. The weight of an object depends upon where it is. An object which weighs six KG on Earth weighs only one KG on the Moon as the gravitational pull of the Moon is only one sixth of that of the Earth.

Weight is relative but you may argue that mass is absolute. Mass is the amount of matter contained in a body. That does not change whether the body is on Earth or on Moon. It is the same for all people. Hence mass should be absolute. So you think. But mass, like any other quantity, can only be measured by comparing it with some accepted standard, exactly like length. If mass cannot be measured without reference to any other object, on what basis can we assume that a body actually has a fixed mass and it is invariant? Modern science is full of such baseless assumptions. We think whatever we like to think. This cannot be called science. Mass is not absolute. No quantity is absolute. No quality is absolute. No attribute of an object is completely independent of the external conditions and the observer. It is in fact the observer who imposes his views on the objects. Objects per se have no attributes at all. Think.

We do not think deeply about the words we use and so we get confused. We may say amoeba is shapeless to mean it does not have a fixed or regular shape. We may call something as shapeless because its shape is constantly changing. We may say water has no shape to mean it has no shape of its own, it takes the shape of the vessel in which it resides. In the present context, you must understand shapelessness as complete absence of the very notion of shape, it must be impossible to think or talk of any as-

pect of shape. Make sure you understand this properly.

The colour of an object depends upon the lighting conditions. If we switch on the green light, objects appear green and if we switch on the red light instead, these same objects appear red. If we put on yellow goggles, the whole world appears yellow. If another object intervenes and casts a shadow, the colour changes. When a wall painted cream colour has the shadow of some object cast on one part of it, the human mind thinks that the wall has the same cream colour everywhere although it appears darker where there is a shadow. Since only light and nothing but light enters the eye and since intensity and frequency of light are the only properties of light that combine to give us the sensation of colour, we will have to consider that the colour is different in the two regions with and without the shadow. If you want you may capture these images on a digital camera and analyze the digital image to check the numerical values of colours in the two regions. A painter needs to use a different colour, he cannot simply use the less of the same colour to depict a shadow. The shadow region actually has a different colour. We are told white light is made up of seven colours but we do not see any of these colours, we see only white colour. What we see and what we think we see are not the same. The colour of objects depends upon external factors, hence not innate to objects. What is the colour of a mirror? The mirror appears to have the same colour as whatever objects it reflects. What is its own colour?

You may still be confused and you may wish to argue that while external factors can influence the perceived colour, there is still some inherent property of the object which gives it a particular colour under given lighting and viewing conditions. The surface properties of the object determine its colour, right? Wrong. The instrument of

sight, your eye, gets to see only light. The object, its size and shape, texture and other surface properties, colour are all purely your own imaginations. No instrument can give proof of existence or valid descriptions of something that is not even given as input to it, no instrument can say anything about something it never even gets to see. Your eye sees only light, it never sees the wall or the car or the sky. This is all your own imagination. Think.

You say the car is red. Is it really red? A colour blind person cannot see colours clearly. Many animals cannot see colour at all. If you were to ask any of them they all say there is no such thing as red in this world, and the car cannot be red. Red, or any colour for that matter is a property of the human sight, not the property of any object. If no human could ever see any colour, we would all have asserted in the strongest possible terms that colour does not exist at all, exactly by the same logic by which we say ghosts do not exist. Think.

If the human mind cannot think of some attribute, we would all say no such thing exists. If we can think of some property, we say objects in the world have that property. Whether objects have a particular property or not is dependent on whether our mind is capable of perceiving such a property. Therefore, all attributes are really properties of the observer, not properties of the objects being perceived. People see themselves in others. People see what they want to see. People see what they can. What we see is not the ultimate reality. Taking whatever we see (or otherwise perceive) to be real is the biggest mistake we can make in our lives. observer.

1.34 Change

In a desert there appears to be water somewhere there and when you go near, you find no water at all. You call this a mirage. You say it is only an illusion, not reality. Anything that appears to exist now but vanishes a bit later, anything that keeps changing and eluding, anything which cannot always be trusted as the same unchanging truth, is *mithyaa*.

If you repaint your house, it may look like a new house but does it really become a new or a different house? It remains the same old house. Old wine in new bottle. The object is the same, one of its attributes has changed, that is all. Attributes may change. The object remains.

No one stays young and beautiful for ever. ‘I am young and beautiful’ is a sentence that is grammatically in present tense but it will surely become past tense soon! Everything changes with time. The boy has grown taller, the dog has become old, the paint has faded, the food has become stale and so we speak. The world is in a constant flux. Nothing remains the same for long. Nothing is permanent except constant change. What do we mean when we say something has changed? All change is in fact change in the attributes. When we say the boy has grown taller, we mean the height attribute of the boy has increased in its value. All change is actually change in the values of attributes, nothing else. The objects themselves do not change. The very concept of change cannot be applied to objects, it can only be applied to attributes. You might have grown, you might have changed your job, or the city you live or even your name, but you remain the same you that you have always been. You cannot become somebody else. Objects cannot change, objects never change. If we are interested in seeking the ultimate truth, if we are determined not to

get misled by the cosmetic changes in external appearance, if we seek the knowledge of objects per se, we must understand and accept this one simple rule. Anything which changes is unreal, it cannot be the ultimate, true nature of things. All changes are cosmetic and superficial. The purpose of education should be seek the ultimate truth and the purpose of education should therefore be to see the eternal. Seek the unchanging. Seek *sat*, not *mithyaa*.

Objects without attributes is a conceivable idea, although difficult to imagine, but attributes without objects is impossible. Just as the shirt you are wearing is not you, your body is truly what remains after your shirt and other super-impositions are all removed, objects are what remain after we get rid of all of their attributes. Also, objects are themselves not merely bundles of attributes. Because attributes cannot exist on their own, individually or in any combination, without an object. There must be some object, independent of all attributes, on which we superimpose all these attributes. When there are no attributes, there can be no values for these attributes. Therefore, objects themselves cannot and do not change at all. Do not confuse change in attributes for change in the object per se. If at all an object changes, it must become another, completely different object. That is impossible. I can become like you but I cannot become you. A layman may think that ice and water are two different things and ice melts and becomes water. We must realize that the same substance has changed its appearance from ice-form to water-form, the object has not changed to become a different object. No object in this universe can ever undergo any change whatever. If at all anything changes, it is only the attributes of objects, not the objects themselves. Make sure you understand this.

By definition, *sat* never changes. We are here to seek

sat, we are here to seek the ultimate reality. Truth never changes. Whatever changes is not truth. Never get carried away by the fascinating drama of life, full of magical transformations and eye-catching dance of ever changing colours. We must see through all these cosmetic changes. Only then can we reach the ultimate truth. Seek the changeless. Seek the object, not the attributes. Strip off all attributes and you will find absolutely no similarities, no differences, no change. That is the ultimate reality.

1.35 The Six Act Play

The physical world is a play in six acts. In general, every material object undergoes six stages of change - *asti*, *jaayatee*, *vardhatee*, *vipariNamatee*, *apakShiiyatee*, *nashyatee*. Objects exist, they are born, they grow, they transform, they decay and they die. A baby is born. This is not the beginning, the baby already existed inside the mother's womb. Birth is not the beginning, birth is only arrival into a particular world in a particular form. The baby existed before it was born as a foetus. At one point of time, it was a mass of undifferentiated cells, it had no hands or eyes, or hair or brain, but it did exist. Before that it was just a single cell. Before that it existed as the sperm and egg from its parents. Before that also it existed. It always existed, in some form or the other. Birth is only arrival into a particular world in a particular form. Birth is not the beginning. Objects are eternal.

Then the baby grows, transforms into a man or a women, it ages and one fine day it dies. Death is not the end. Every molecule, every atom, every electron, proton and neutron in the body continues to exist. In some form or the other. Death only signifies a big change, from the normal living form to a very different form. Death is not the end.

More than 70% of my body is water. Every molecule of this water existed from time immemorial. Can we trace the history of a single molecule of water in our body? Perhaps it was the Holy Ganges once. Perhaps it was the blood of a tiger, perhaps it was the urine of a cow, perhaps it was the milk in a breast, perhaps it was a cloud, perhaps it was the ice on the Himalayas. Perhaps it was all of these at different points in time. And long after I die, it will continue to be. This is the nature of nature. It is purely for our day to day practical convenience that we talk of a beginning and an end. My cell phone did not exist in this form some years ago but every atom in it has been in existence for Billions of years.

This fantastic drama of life, full of change, ever moving from one stage to another, is all not real. Because only attributes change. Objects do not. Truth does not change. Truth cannot change. For, if it changes, it has to become falsity. Truth has no attributes. It cannot change. Seekers of truth should seek the eternal, unchanging, universal reality. Seekers of truth should not be carried away by the superficial change in the values of attributes, none of which are innate to the objects themselves. Seekers of truth should understand that progress and advancement are hollow terms used by greedy businessmen to fool common people. Do not seek progress or advancement or any change for that matter. Seek the truth. There lies the solution to all your problems. There lie lasting, permanent solutions to all problems we face in life, individually or as a whole human society. There lies the ultimate happiness and bliss. Anything which has a birth or a death, anything which undergoes any kind of transformation, anything which changes in any way whatever, is not the ultimate truth. Do not go after money or material wealth or comforts and conveniences for the body. Do not go after

name, fame, position or power. They are all subject to change, they are all elusive. You will only get cheated, you will be ruined. Seek the eternal reality and become free.

1.36 Subtle Change

Let us do some destructive testing. What if I shave off my mustache? What if I shave my head? Nothing happens, I will remain the same old myself. What if I lose my little finger? Or all the fingers? Or the whole hand? Nothing happens, I remain. I may lose my hands, legs, eyes, I will continue to be the same person. Even if I lose my heart, literally, I may be able to live with a transplant. When do I cease to be myself? Perhaps when I lose my brain? No, even if my whole body changes I remain the same person that I have always been. In fact, the whole body, including the brain, is made up of cells and cells keep dying and new cells take their place all the time. The whole body changes, several times during our life, yet we remain the same person, we never become somebody else. Even if I get a brain-transplant, even if my thinking and my desires and my feelings and my knowledge and all the properties of my mind change, I remain the same I. If we take a ball-point pen and replace the cap and then the barrel and after that the refill and the spring, you will notice clearly that we have changed all the parts. If we instead replace all the atoms and molecules in the pen one by one, you will never notice the change. Sudden and drastic change is noticed and subtle, slow, microscopic, gradual change goes unnoticed. A change is a change, however, small or big, sudden or gradual. Anything which changes even in the least is not the ultimate reality.

Normally we think of change only in terms of the values of the attributes and we do not even understand the idea

of an object itself changing. If an object itself changes, it must necessarily actually ‘become’ a different object, not just look like or behave like some other object. An object has no attributes of its own and there is no other way we can think of a change of an object. If ‘I’ change, I must actually become you or he or somebody else. Let us do some simple experiments to understand all this better.

Take two pens, say, a red pen and a blue pen and start exchanging their parts one by one. The red pen now got a blue barrel and then a blue cap and now the ink cartridge also got changed. Can we still call it a red pen? Whatever we may choose to call it, is it still the same pen whose parts have changed or has it actually ‘become’ a different pen? When will pen A actually ‘become’ pen B? Will it ever become? The answer depends upon what exactly we mean by ‘pen’. If a pen is nothing but the physical parts of which it is made, a pen must necessarily be considered changed completely and become a different pen when all its parts have been exchanged. Pen ‘A’ must be considered pen ‘B’ and vice versa, as soon as all their parts have been exchanged. My body is made up of cells and only cells. All the cells in my body would have got completely renewed once in every seven years or so but I remain the same person throughout my life. This shows that the whole is not simply a sum of its parts. There must be something different from all the parts that makes the whole what it actually is. There is something beyond the physical parts, call it ‘pen-ness’ for now, that pervades every part of the pen. This is the object, the parts and all their properties are mere attributes of this object. The object never changes and becomes a different object, even if every part is changed, even if every attribute has drastically changed. Understand change, and you will have understood the truth.

Parts of an object can be changed, the object itself does

not change. Therefore parts are not innate, they have no independent existence, they are only attributes. That an object has so and so parts is itself a property of that object. Where exactly does your nose end and eye begin? Is it not all a continuum? We define and impose parts and structure on objects for our convenience, these parts and structures reside in our minds, the object has nothing to do with any of these. That is why, we can discern an object even when we see only some part of it. That is why an object loses its identity if we completely dismantle it and isolate all the parts. An object is different from all its attributes, it is different from all its parts and their interconnections. The object is an underlying invisible, indescribable reality, that pervades all these parts and attributes and remains invariant despite all kinds of changes to the attributes, parts and their structures. A will never become B, whatever you may do to its parts and attributes. Understand change, and you will have understood the truth.

1.37 Illusion and Reality

If all human beings were completely colour blind, we would all agree that there is no such thing as colour in this world. Even if objects in the world had many different colours, none of us would be able to see or know this. Therefore, whether the objects actually have colour or not is a meaningless question. That we can or cannot see colour is all that we can say. Ability to see colour is our ability, our property, our attribute, not the property of objects we see. Colour is not an attribute of any object we can see, colour does not inhere in these objects, colour is not an attribute of these objects.

The same argument holds for all attributes. All attributes are imposed on the objects by the observer. At-

tributes are never innate to any objects. Attributes do not inhere in objects. No attribute is indispensable to an object. Just as torch light falls on objects to reveal their external form to us in a dark room, attributes we impose on objects help us to visualize and discern objects in the world. As seekers of truth, we should not be carried away by the attributes and their ever changing drama. We are here to understand the true nature of the universe per se, we wish to know the true nature of the underlying objects themselves, not the attributes which are all imposed on them by us. Attributes change. Objects do not. Objects cannot change because no change is possible without attributes.

Before the Big Bang, neither the Sun nor the stars existed. There were no Himalayas, no Atlantic or the Pacific. There were no plants, no animals, no human beings, even the Earth did not exist. There was no matter at all. Even the atoms and molecules did not exist. There were no electrons, protons or neutrons. The entire physical, material world we see today did not exist. But something must have existed, for, something cannot come out of nothing. After countless Millions of years, the Universe may not continue to be what it is. The Universe is expanding, it is ever changing, it is in a state of turmoil, it is unsteady. Hence it cannot go on like this for ever. The Sun is burning and one fine day it has to burn out completely. There would be no Sun, no Moon, no Earth, none of us. This entire world is just an illusion, *mithyaa*, not reality. It did not exist before the Big Bang, it may not exist after Billions of years, it is temporary, transient, fleeting, like the mirage. The real never changes, by definition. The ultimate truth is what existed even before the Big Bang, what exists today and what will continue to exist even after the universe has ended, so to say. Everything that we see, hear and experience is a manifestation of that one single nameless all

inclusive eternal whole. That is the truth. That is what we have to seek and understand. Modern science is still obsessed with the description of the external apparent illusory world. Let us not give up our spirit of scientific inquiry but let us boldly dig deeper and explore the underlying grand reality.

1.38 One or Two?

Let us do an experiment. I take two identical pens, one in each hand, and show them to all. Everybody accepts that there are two pens and the two pens are identical. If two things are identical, how can we distinguish one from the other? And if we cannot distinguish one from the other at all, how can we say there are two different pens? We are confused. To make things easier, now I take a single pen, in my right hand, left hand being free, and I assert ‘I have two identical pens in my right hand’. Everybody objects and ‘corrects’ me saying there is only one pen. Why can’t we accept that there are two different but identical pens? They are identical in every respect and so you just cannot distinguish one from the other. What is the crucial difference between the first case and this latter experiment? The difference is in one and only one aspect - location of the pen(s). In the first case, there were two pens, whose attributes were all identical except that the location attribute had different values. In the latter case, the location attribute also had identical values and the onlookers failed to understand this. If location was a completely irrelevant factor, if location had nothing to do with any of these pens, there should have been no difference between the two cases. No other attributes have changed. Therefore, location must necessarily be considered an attribute of an object. If the two pens have different locations you see two pens, otherwise you see only one pen. Location is

an attribute of the object.

Likewise, displacement or motion, speed or velocity, acceleration and all other spatial properties that we can think of are attributes of objects. If all aspects of space are attributes of objects what about space itself?

1.39 Space and Spacelessness

Although we may not have seen a text book on physics that starts by defining physics, after going through many books and articles, we get to understand that physics, the central core of all of modern science, is nothing but the exploration of matter and energy within a framework of space and time. Whenever physics has attempted to go beyond this, it has been termed meta-physics, which is generally not considered to be part of science. In a way physics forms the starting point for all other sciences and all of modern science is only about the material world within the framework of space and time.

Once we talk of space, we are reminded of ideas such as location and motion. A physical object is located somewhere in space. Points can be located at various locations in this space and points can move from one location to another. The location of composite objects can be given in terms of the location of selected critical points on the object. For example, the location of a circle can be given in terms of the location of its centre. To indicate the location precisely, we use a coordinate system and specify the location in terms of numerical coordinate values. For example, we say a point is located at (3,2) in two dimensional space, meaning it is 3 units away from the reference along the first dimension and 2 units away from the reference along the second dimension. The location (3,2) loses all meaning if a

reference coordinate system is not specified. All locations, irrespective of the type of coordinate system employed and the dimensionality of the space under consideration, are with respect to an assumed coordinate system.

The big question is, where is the reference coordinate system located? This is a question that modern science cannot answer. We can only talk of the location of an object within an assumed reference frame. The object can move within this space. Even if the object does not move, its coordinates change if the reference system itself changes. Where is the reference system is a question for which there is no answer. Is it also moving? Nobody can tell.

We say a car is moving by observing its changing location with reference to the Earth, which is, for this purpose, taken as stationary. We say the Earth spins with respect to the Sun or some other reference system which is assumed to be stationary. All motion is relative. Because location itself is relative. Scientists say the Big Bang happened some 15 Billion years ago and the universe as we know today came into being. Ask where did the Big Bang take place and there is no answer.

All change must be with respect to something that is not changing. If you have become thin, that is with respect to what you were sometime ago. If the colour has faded, that is with respect to what it was earlier. If you have no idea of how it was earlier, you cannot notice the change at all. No change can be observed if you are also changing along with it. The observer needs to be changeless to notice any change in the observed. Since the whole purpose of this book is to seek the unchanging eternal truth, we must focus on the observer, the seer, the knower. The whole of modern science is obsessed with the exploration of the external, physical, objective world. We should instead

focus on the subject. Only then can we hope to get to the ultimate reality.

All movement must be with respect to something which is not moving. This entire universe, space itself, must be located with respect to something which is beyond space. This space-less thing is neither big nor small, it is neither here nor there, we just cannot talk about any of its spatial qualities. We have to necessarily posit something which is beyond space. Otherwise, we cannot say where this space is located or what exactly it is. Such a space-less thing must exist, with respect to which we can think of space. Otherwise, space cannot be anywhere and if it is nowhere how can we even say it is there?

1.40 Inside - Outside

We normally take space for granted and assume that objects are located in space without thinking much. But what exactly is space? Is it an object? Is it an attribute? Whose attribute is it? Or is it some other independent entity? Is time located in space or is space located in time? Are they both independent? If they are, where are they located? Let us start thinking along these lines.

We can know attributes of objects through perception using our sense organs and the mind. We can infer that there must be some object on which all these attributes have been superimposed. Perception and inference are the only means we have of knowing anything. If something is neither an object nor an attribute, there will just be no way of knowing it at all. Whatever is unknowable even in principle must surely be rejected as non-existent. Either space is an object or it is an attribute. If it is neither, we just cannot know it at all.

Suppose there are three objects A, B, and C located somewhere in space. If space itself is another different object D, independent of A, B and C, then it becomes meaningless to say that these three objects are located in D. Where is D located? Therefore, space cannot be an object. Suppose there was no other object at all, suppose nothing else existed, how then can space exist? Where does it exist and how can we prove that it exists? Space has no attributes and so we cannot perceive it. There is no way to infer its presence either. We will have just no way of knowing that space exists and hence we must reject the idea that space is an independent object. Space can only be an attribute of some object. There is no other possibility. Which is this object whose attribute space is?

We get confused because we think there are infinitely many locations in space but there are only some objects here and there at specified locations. How can space be an attribute of any one of these objects? If it is, what about other objects? What about their locations? We tend to conclude that objects are located in space without thinking much. Think. If objects are located in space what is space? If it is neither an object nor an attribute it is unknowable. If something is unknowable, anybody with the spirit of science in him or her must reject it, exactly as we reject ghosts. Space is not an independent object in its own right. Space has to be attribute of some object.

In mathematics we are used to thinking of many points or lines coinciding with one another. Think of a triangle ABC. We can say that there is another triangle ACB, superimposed on it. The two triangles have identical location and the three lines of the triangles exactly overlap. These are similar triangles, hence the corresponding angles are equal. (This argument can be used to prove that the two

angles are equal in an isosceles triangle, a proof that does not require a perpendicular bisector to be dropped.) In general any number of otherwise identical objects can occupy the same location and we cannot even tell how many objects are there. There are no differences and so it is not even correct to say there are many objects. When there are no differences whatever, we must say there is only one object, right?

Why do we have to assume that there are many objects in this universe? After all, objects are not the same as attributes, there are no attributes innate to any object. That being the case, how can two objects be different from one another? Two or more different objects cannot exist in this universe simply because there can be no differences between objects themselves, all differences are only at the level of attributes, which are not the same as the objects. When there are absolutely no differences, on what basis can we say that there are many objects in this universe? Suppose there is a single, homogeneous, part-less, continuous, all-pervading, all-inclusive object that occupies the entire Universe. Can't space be an attribute of this single big object? Think.

We point our fingers at the leg or the stomach and say it pains here. Where is this 'here'? Nerves carry signals from the place of injury to the brain and all pain is experienced in the brain. Whether the toe is injured or the little finger of the left hand or the stomach, pain is experienced in the same place. Pain is not experienced in the leg or the hand or the stomach. If the brain is drugged with pain killers, no pain will be felt in any other region even if there is any injury there. A person whose hand has just been amputated often complains that there is pain or itching where his hand used to be! Therefore, 'here', 'there' and all our notions of space are properties of our own mind. There is

no 'here' or 'there' outside of ourselves. Therefore, space can very well be just an attribute of our own mind. Nothing is really big or small. Nothing is far or near. Think.

Objects are not located in space, space itself is an attribute. Space has no independent existence, space cannot exist all on its own. Even if it exists such a thing cannot be proved and hence we must reject such a hypothesis. Space is not real. Truth lies beyond space, beyond physics, beyond all modern science.

1.41 Time and Timelessness

Time is no different. We reckon time by observing change. If there is no change, we just cannot observe time. There must be some change, at least internal to us, which gives us a sense of time. We lose all sense of space and time when we are in a state of deep sleep and we get back our coordinates only after we wake up. Time is change. All change must be with respect to something that is unchanging. All time must be with respect to a timeless thing. Timelessness does not mean something which is ancient or something which lasts long. Timelessness does not mean indefiniteness of time. Timelessness means something about which it is impossible to talk of time. We cannot talk of its beginning or end. It has no frequency or period. Such a timeless thing must necessarily exist. Only with respect to that can we ever talk of any aspect of time. If there is something we call time, timelessness has to be real. Time itself is not real, it has no independent existence. Time depends upon change, time depends upon other objects, time depends upon the change in the values of attributes of objects. Time is not an object, it can only be an attribute, it is imposed on some object by the observer.

Location of an object, in space or in time, is an attribute of the object. The attribute can change while the object remains the same. That is how an object can change location and move in space or time. Like all attributes, location in space and time are imposed on the objects by the observer. Location is not innate in an object. Location does not inhere in an object. The object itself does not know where it is with respect to space or time. An observer can locate the object at a place by imposing a reference coordinate system. The reference coordinate system is imposed by the observer, it is not there in the objects per se. An object is actually neither here nor there. Nothing is actually far or near. Nothing is actually big or small. It is all relative. Relative to what is the big question. It must all be relative to something that is beyond space and time. Such a spaceless, timeless, attribute-less, nameless, formless thing must necessarily exist. It has no beginning or end. It always exists. It was always there, it is there, it will always be there. It is here, there, everywhere, nowhere. This is the true nature of this universe. Knowing this, we can transcend the boundaries and limitations of space and time. It is possible to know what happened in the past, it is possible to know what happens in the future because past, present and future are all right here. Similarly it is possible to know everything that happens anywhere, far or near. Far and near are merely attributes, they are not real. Nothing is far or near. Everything is now and here. We find it hard to understand and accept these facts because we have completely wrong notions of knowledge and knowing. Certainly we cannot predict the future in the sense in which you are perhaps thinking. We will get a clear picture only after we have ascended many more steps and reached the goal. Have patience.

Recognition of change is called time. Who recognizes? Certainly not the clock. We recognize time. The way I

perceive change and hence time can be different from the way you perceive it. Time need not be same for all. It is possible that I can do a hundred times more work in the same presumed clock time than you and this is because my time is different from your time. Perhaps my brain works faster than yours or it could be the other way round. When you are learning meditation, even ten minutes appears like a long time. Time is subjective, time is variable. Time is an attribute of our own mind. Time exists in us, we do not exist in time. Our usual assumption that time is external to us, common to all of us, it is linear, monotonic, and irreversible, it moves at constant pace etc. are all baseless.

Recognition of change is called time. If there is no change, there can be no time. Day or night, morning or evening, last year or next year, we can think of these only in terms of changes that we can observe. We have our own internal clock which observes internal changes such as digestion. Our internal sense of time may not correspond to what the clock or the calendar says. If we are working under pressure of time and our mind is busy, we feel that time is flying like an arrow. When we have nothing to do or when we are just waiting and our mind has no other preoccupation, we find that time moves at snail's pace. Normally we think that the clock runs at constant speed irrespective of what our own feelings about time may be. Where is the proof? There cannot be any proof. The clock, however precise we may think it is, may be running at arbitrary and changing rates, we may never be able to observe, measure or even know that. If we assume that the clock runs at constant speed, we can measure the time it takes for the Sun to go round the Earth (relatively speaking) once. If we assume that the Sun takes a fixed amount of time to go round the Earth, we can use that to calibrate our clocks. If we do not assume anything, nothing can be said about the clock or about the Sun's movement or about any other

measurement of time. All of physics, all of modern science, is based on unproven and unprovable assumptions. Entire modern science is questionable. Do not fall into the trap called modern science. Question. Think. Seek the truth.

If space and time are objects, existing independently in their own right, then we have to ask whether space is inside time or time is inside space or both of them are inside something else. What is that something else? If space is inside time we must be able to talk of the beginning and end of space, its age, etc. We should be able to say there were times when there was no space at all and there will be times when space will again cease to exist. If time is inside space then we must have specific spatial coordinates to locate it in space. Time will then not exist at any other point in space. Clearly, this is all illogical. Time and space can only be attributes of some spaceless, timeless object. It is this object that we must seek. To do that, we must go beyond space and time. We can get to the true nature or *svaruupa* of any object only after we pierce through all the surrounding layers of superimposed attributes.

1.42 Accident

Science is obsessed with the exploration of external, material objective world, presumed to be located in space and time. Life actually happens inside us. Therefore, modern science has very little to do with our life. Let us take an example to understand this. Children are playing cricket inside the compound. The child hits the ball and the ball runs off onto the road. The child runs after the ball, absorbed in the excitement of the game, unmindful of the traffic. A young man in full spirits, driving his new sports bike at great speed as if in a race, hits the child head on. The parents of the kids and other curious onlookers are

stunned.

The young motorist is worried. The crowd may attack and hit him. Or he may have to go to jail. Or undergo hardships with police case and what not. He prays that the child be safe - so that nothing much will happen to himself! The parents are stunned, terrified, worried, anxious. What has happened to the child? Their mind is thinking of hospital, doctors, treatments, injury, pain, possible long term effects. For some one in the crowd, this is just yet another road accident, a hundred thousand happen every year on Indian roads, sad but taken for granted and accepted as part of 'normal' life. Some are disgusted at the recklessness of the youth. Some are thinking about how dangerous these two wheelers are. Why not ban them? The doctors in the hospital will think about first aid, medical examinations, possible actions to be planned, and so on. For the medical students in the medical college attached to the hospital, this is another 'opportunity' to have a first hand feel for an interesting medical case.

What actually happened in the external, physical, material world is the same. It is same for all. But every one thinks differently. Everybody has his or her own view. Very different from others' views. The impressions created in the minds of the people prompts them to take action. Everything that we do in life is dictated by our own internal experiences, feelings, views, judgements, impressions. What actually happened in the external, physical, material world is secondary. Life is all about what we perceive, think and how we react in our own life. Without due consideration of our own internal world, there is no meaning for life at all. We all live in our own worlds, often very different from the worlds of others. Modern science implicitly assumes that there is a common external world and that is the ultimate reality. This is baseless and useless. Our

own individual internal worlds are much more important for us. There is no need to assume a common external world. That is not essential. Nor can we have any valid proof that a common external world actually exists.

The external, physical, material world may exist. Or it may not. It does not matter. We should not be spending all of our lives, all of our time, effort and money to explore the intricacies of the external world. Science cannot tell us the ultimate truth, science cannot lead us to the ultimate reality, science does not help us to understand ourselves, science does not tell us what is life and how to live. Modern science and technology are all at best useless. In fact they are worse than useless. Quite harmful. In just a few hundred years, this scientific spirit of the modern man has exploited and damaged nature beyond repair. The very survival of the human race of planet Earth has been called into question. Countless varieties of insects, birds, animals and plants are gone for ever. We may not be able to survive even for a few years now, unless we give up all of science, technology, industry, business and what not. Forget the external world and delve deep into your own self. There lies the answer to all your questions.

1.43 Common World?

We all live in our own worlds, we all experience life within ourselves, and this is all ‘real’ for us. The claim that there exists a world outside us, independent of us, and common to all of us is at best an assumption which can never be proved or disproved. It is therefore not at all scientific to assume that an independent, external, common world exists.

Every one of us have had dreams in our lives. In ev-

ery dream that I have had in my life, I was always there. There was not a single dream in which I was absent. I may play an active role or I may not. But I am always there as an observer. The same way, you would never had had a dream in which you were completely absent. This is everybody's common experience in life. This is not what some great super-human *RShi* or *yoogi* or saint or messenger or messiah or some enlightened soul alone can experience in his/her life. Nobody ever has a dream in which he/she is absent. Others may or may be there, your mother may or may not be part of your dreams but you are an essential part of every one of your dreams.

The same is true of our waking state. We are always conscious of ourselves, we are always self-aware in our state of being awake. There is not a single moment of your life in the waking state in which you are completely absent. You are always there, as an observer. You are the witness to your life. I am the witness to my life. Every individual is witness to his/her own life. Just as dreams are individualistic, the world that we perceive in the waking state is also individualistic. There is really no difference at all.

If you give me a world in which I am not there, that is purely imaginary and unreal as far as I am concerned. Whatever proof, whatever evidence, whatever convincing arguments and logical inferences you may give, I will not find it meaningful and useful by any means. This is true of all of us. Getting obsessed with the external, physical, material world and calling it science is absurd.

Since every one of us is invariably there in our own individual worlds and others may or may not be, it is not logically possible to have a single world that is common to all of us. We all come and go and our worlds come and go with us too. Just as it is absurd to assume that the other

people and other things in my dream will continue their play after I come out of my dream, it is absurd to think that the world goes on even after I go. My world is created by me, it comes with me and it goes with me. There is no world after I go, as far as I am concerned. This is true of every individual.

A man can be aware of the world of a woman, he may have substantial knowledge, but he cannot have the experience of womanhood. A man may know or imagine pregnancy or lactation but he will never be able to experience it himself. Likewise, manhood cannot be experienced by any woman. The world of men is different from the world of women. Nobody else can experience the world of a foetus, of a child, of an old man, of an army soldier, of a blind man, of a bird, of a fish, of a tree. We simply assume that there is a single world that is the union of all these individual worlds but this assumption is baseless. No one can have the complete experience of everything in this imaginary sum-total of individual worlds and hence no one can prove its validity. This is only an assumption and it is an unprovable assumption. No point making such assumptions.

When we see blue colour, the eye senses the light signals it receives, converts them into neural signals, which are electrical and chemical in nature, these signals are received and processed in the brain. The brain has an estimated 10^{11} neurons or nerve cells, each connected to some 10,000 other cells. It is extremely unlikely that the number and inter-connectivity in the brains of different individuals are identical. Therefore, what exactly happens inside my brain when I see blue colour and what exactly happens inside your brain when you see the same blue colour are, in all probability, very different. Both of us have been taught in childhood to recognize whatever impressions are created

in our brains as blue colour. So we both see blue colour and we both say it is blue colour. There is consistency in external behavior but this does not mean that what I see and what you see are the same. In all probability, no two individuals see any object exactly the same way. I know only what my mind depicts for me to see and you know only what your mind depicts for you to see. The world I see is not the world you see. How can there be a common world?

The world that I know of, whether in my dreams or when I am wide awake, is what is projected for my internal perception by my mind. In the waking state, the mind receives inputs from the sense organs while in the dream state, it goes all on its own. In either case, there is nothing other than what my mind projects for me, that I can know of, even in principle. Therefore, I can only say ‘this is what I see or I know or I believe or I am given to understand’ and I can never say ‘this is what the outside world actually is’. All of modern science seems to be tacitly claiming that it describes the external world objectively and its description of the world is real and the world ‘actually’ exists as it claims. This is all based on assumptions, provably unprovable assumptions, simply invalid. Life happens in the subject, not in the objects.

1.44 World? What World?

Is there one world for each person then? If you are thinking of this, you are still confused. You are assuming that there are other people! Where are they? In whose world?

It is not possible to prove that a single, common, external world exists and we all live in it. We all live in our own worlds. All the other people in my world are simply part

of my own personal world. There is no basis to assume that they exist independent of me or that they live in and experience the same world as mine. All the other people, and the worlds they may be experiencing, are all part of my own world. There is no basis for me to assume that there is a single, common, external world. There is no basis for me to assume that other people exist independently of me and they all have their own worlds like mine.

Is my own internal world real? The world I experience in my waking state I do not experience in my dream and the dreams I experience are not part of my waking world. I see neither of these worlds in a state of deep sleep. None of these worlds are *sat*, they come and go, they are all *mithyaa*. They are mere tentative, temporary realities, meaningful and useful purely for my day to day transactions. I should not think of these worlds as real.

The external, physical, material universe does not exist in the *paramaārtha* sense because it is not *sat*. This world does not exist in our dreams (a different, dream world exists) and it does not exist even while we are deep asleep. We cannot even give a proof that it exists even temporarily as *mithyaa* but independent of me. At this stage, I can only say ‘I see the world. Therefore the world as I see exists for me right now’ and this is only my proof, given by me for my own sake, assuming that I exist. Just as we accept our dreams without questioning while still dreaming, we can tentatively accept this world as real and proceed as far as our *vyavahaara*, that is, day to day transactional life is concerned, that too only during our waking state. It would be completely unscientific to assume that the world is actually there, even if dependent of us, even as *mithyaa* until we understand our own true nature and prove that we exist.

Here we are seeking *paramaārtha*, not tentative, condi-

tional, practical truths. We will have to know ourselves. 'Who am I' cannot be separated and removed from the rest of science. Physics claims to deal with the laws governing the entire universe but we only see chapters on light, sound, magnetism, gravity and so on. Why not a chapter on knowledge, love, anger, greed or jealousy? Are they not real? Are they not part of this universe? Why not a chapter on the self? As long as science keeps aside the questions concerning the self, science will remain at best useless. Let us explore ourselves first.

1.45 The Internal and the External

Modern science is obsessed with describing all the trivial facts and figures of the external world. We live inside our own internal world. Life is directly connected with our internal world and is indirectly connected, if at all, with the external world. If we ignore the internal world, we are no different from dead rocks, since all our feelings, thoughts, ideas and beliefs are deep inside us. Without any of these, life has no meaning at all. We must learn to turn our attention away from the external world and onto our own internal worlds.

At times we do in fact consider our internal worlds more important than the external world, without realizing this! That is why we consider rape as so very different from a normal sexual relationship between a married couple. What actually happens in the external, physical, material world is almost the same, it could even be identical, but rape can change the lives of both the victim and the culprit drastically. Or life may end up in suicide. The difference is internal, what our mind perceives and feels inside us, not so much in the physics or chemistry in the external world.

Why does a young man feel such a great difference between touching a woman and touching another man? The difference in the physical process of touching is insignificant. The nerves send similar signals to the brain. It is what happens inside our mind that makes all the difference.

Why do men and women get attracted to each other and not to others of the same sex, or to other animals? Why does an animal get attracted to the opposite sex of its own kind? If there is something in a she donkey that makes it attractive, if this property of attracting resides in the she donkey, every animal including men must be getting attracted to it. Attraction cannot lie in objects of the external world, attraction, and all other feelings and emotions that add up to what we call life, must be internal to our own minds. Life is inside us, not outside. Understand this and wake up.

Eating is not as important or more important than the feeling that we are eating, or that our hunger is getting satiated or that the food is tasty or whatever. If the feelings are lost, even the most pleasurable acts may not give us any happiness or satisfaction. A place may be brimming with scenic beauty and many a couple may actually be enjoying the picnic but for one who suffering from a failed love affair, the same scenes will cause more pain than pleasure. Pains or pleasures, happiness or sadness, good or bad, everything, in fact the whole of life is inside us. We must learn to stop worrying about the external world too much. Understand life. Look inwards.

1.46 Look Inside

My internal world is my life, everything that happens there is of immediate and serious consequence to me and all that may be happening elsewhere in the outside world has little impact on me. My anger, my greed, my lust, my love, my desires, my feelings and emotions, my sense of achievement or progress, my feelings of failures and frustration, my agony, my ecstasy, this is my life. Without all this, the mere physical properties of external material world have no direct effect on me. How does it matter what the diameter of the Sun is or the depth of the Pacific ocean is? How does it matter to me if somebody won or lost a soccer or a cricket match in some year in some country? How does it matter if there is life on Mars or not? What affects me, directly, immediately and seriously, is what happens inside my mind. The focus of mankind should therefore be on understanding our own minds. What exactly is anger? Why do I get angry? Is it good for me? If not how can I control my anger? This is the line we should be treading in our systems of education, rather than imbibing tonnes of information about the trivial facts and figures of the external, physical, material world.

The human mind is very capable. It is extremely powerful. If we can properly understand and train our minds, there is nothing in this world that we cannot conquer. If, on the other hand, we fail to understand our own minds, if we fail to train it properly, if our minds take control and drag us aimlessly like drunken horses, we will be ruined. The sole purpose of education should therefore be to know and train our minds. Nothing else is important in life. In fact most of what we are doing in the world today is simply unnecessary, wasteful, even harmful. Think.

Scientists and academicians consider themselves intel-

lectuals. Society also respects them. But today, most of these scientists, professors and other so called intellectuals have a weak and crumbling mind. They do research because they are unable to control the curiosity of their immature and childish minds. Curiosity is not such a great positive quality, after all. Society is spending huge amounts of time, effort and money on trivial, useless, wasteful, harmful, self-defeating, destructive activities. It is time to shake up and wake up.

If we can understand our own minds, if we can know its strengths and weaknesses, if we can overcome its weaknesses and learn to control our own minds, most of all human problems will vanish by themselves. Who am I? Why have I come here? What is the goal of my life? If we know the goal, then, and only then, can we work out a plan, a strategy of achieving it. We will then be able to say if a particular action we take takes us closer to our goal or not. We will understand what we should do in life and what we need not or should not. Today we do not know who we are. We do not understand life or its purpose. We have no clarity on our goal. We know not how to reach there. No wonder we keep doing all kinds of useless, dangerous, harmful, destructive activities, damaging our own interests, harming others, destabilizing the very basis of life on planet Earth. Many species of life forms have become completely extinct and many more are on the verge of extinction. The essence of life is same in all living beings. Whether it is a microscopic, single celled organism or a huge tree or an elephant or an ant or a human being, the core ingredient of life is same in all. If one species can go extinct, there is no reason why others should not. Human life may soon become impossible. We must wake up today. We must understand ourselves, we must understand life, we must give up all things that do not help us to reach our goal in life, including almost all of modern science, tech-

nology, industry, business, and so on. Let us drastically cut down on the time effort and money we spend on technology, let us make our lives simpler, let us make time to think about ourselves, to think about life itself.

1.47 I See the Moon

Consider the statement ‘I see the Moon’. Here ‘I’ is the seer, the Moon is the seen. Of course ‘see’ is the verb, it indicates the very action of seeing. How much do we know about each of these?

In grammar, ‘I’ is called the Subject of the sentence and ‘the Moon’, the Object. Note that here ‘Object’ is a technical term in the parlance of linguistics, its meaning is different from the ordinary meaning of the term object as we have been using all along. If we say ‘the cat chased the rat’, cat and rat are both objects for us but in linguistics, cat is called the Subject and the rat is called the Object. We shall use the capitalized form ‘Object’ to refer to this linguistic object, as distinct from our ordinary objects. The Subject is the seer and the Object is the seen.

Modern science tells us a lot about the Moon. Scientists in fact took pains to actually land man on the Moon to know all about the Moon. Recently they even discovered water on the Moon. We can fill libraries with the scientific information we have about the Moon. Modern science is in fact obsessed with the world of Objects.

What about the verb ‘see’? Of course modern science has quite a bit to tell us about this as well. Light travels in straight lines, falls on objects and gets partly absorbed, partly reflected, and, if the object is transparent or translucent, partly transmitted through the object. The reflected

light enters our eye through the eye lens and falls on the retina, creating an image. A lot can be said about light, about the surface properties of objects, about image formation and about the eye. Modern science seems to tell us a lot about seeing. But do we really understand the process of seeing in full? Let us see.

Who sees? Who is the seer? Is my eye the seer? What happens after the image is formed on the retina? The image formed on the retina is like a painting on a wall. Unless somebody sees this image, the process of seeing will not be complete, right? Who sees the image formed on the retina? When I say 'I see', who exactly is this I?

A bundle of optic nerves carry signals from the eye to the brain. What goes in these optic nerves? Subtle electrical and chemical signals, certainly not light. Light stops right at the retina. The brain receives and interprets these electrical and chemical signals and that is when we 'see'. Should we then say the brain is the seer?

If the optic nerves are damaged or made insensitive and inactive, we see nothing, even if the objects of sight exist, even if there is light, even if the eyes are open and working fine. Similarly, if the brain is damaged or made insensitive, we see nothing even if all other conditions for sight are satisfied. This proves that the eye is not the seer. If the eye ball is taken out and kept on a table in front of us, it will see nothing. The eye sees nothing by itself. An image may be formed on the retina, that is all. Exactly the same things happen inside a camera and we do not think a camera 'sees' anything. Like a camera, the eye is just a front-end data capturing device. The eye is not the seer. The seer in us must be somewhere deeper inside.

Let us say the brain sees. But then the brain never gets

to see light! If the brain is the seer, if by 'I' I mean 'my brain' when I say 'I see the Moon', then 'I' have never seen light in all my life. How do I even know light exists? How can I trust things that I have never seen, in fact things I can never see even in principle, in fact something that no human being can ever see?

When there is light, when my eyes are open, when there are some objects to see, I seem to get some sensation inside my brain and these sensations go away if I close my eyes or the lamp is switched off. I get different sensations depending upon what objects are there or not there, or as and when these objects move. Something cannot happen without any reason, there must be a cause for every effect. Reasoning like this, by a complex and highly involved and indirect logic, we start hypothesizing that there must be something that illumines objects and shows them to us. We call this light. Light must be having so and so properties, objects must be having so and so properties, in order to explain the kinds of sensations we perceive inside our brain. This is how modern science proceeds. We must understand that there are many steps in this logic, there are many assumptions too. Contrary to common belief, modern science is not at all based on direct perception. Seeing with our eyes is not at all direct perception. The seer in us has neither seen light nor any objects in the external world. Modern science does not seem to understand the 'seeing' process at all. We perceive somethings deep inside us and in order to explain this we hypothesize light, objects, and the whole external world. But then we get confused and start thinking that the external world exists and that is why we are able to see it. This is like inverting 'if A then B' into 'if B then A'. This is completely illogical. There is no proof that the external world or objects or light or even my eyes actually exist. Have you ever seen your own eyes? Think.

If my brain is the seer, I can see all kinds of fantastic things in my dreams without light, with my eyes closed, without any of the objects that are being seen. There is really no difference between seeing in a dream and seeing in the wakeful state as far as my perceptual experiences are concerned. On what basis can I conclude that light exists or the objects that we see actually exist? After all, my brain is capable of seeing things that do not exist. Modern science has no explanations to offer.

If my brain is the seer in me, I have never seen light in all my life, I have never seen any objects or people or pictures or photos or images. I have never seen lines or curves or shapes or colours. Colour is an indication of frequency of light, the brain never gets to see light and so the brain can never see any colour. Nor have you. In fact nobody has ever seen light. All of us are blind. Does light exist at all? If light does not exist, what do we mean by seeing? If seeing makes no sense, how can we say the Moon exists? What exactly do we mean when we say 'I see'? We do not seem to understand 'seeing' quite well. Our knowledge of verbs is very superficial indeed.

If you hear some noises in the next room, you can guess what could be happening there but you can never be sure. If, on the other hand, you could peep through a hole in the wall and see the scenes there, you will think you now have complete and correct understanding of everything happening there. In fact whenever we see anything anywhere, we get a feeling that our eyes are like peep-holes and we are actually sitting behind these holes and 'directly' seeing all that we see. Who is sitting behind the eye hole and seeing? In reality, only light rays enter the eye ball and form an image on the retina. Is this seeing? No. The optical sensors sense the light signals, these signals are transduced

into electrical and chemical signals and sent to the brain via the optic nerves. Is this seeing? No. The brain receives these signals and somethings happen inside the brain. Is that seeing? No, not at all. When exactly do we see? How exactly do we see? Who exactly sees? Think. Seeing 'directly' with your own eyes is not at all direct, it is very indirect, we just do not understand how exactly we see anything at all.

Just as my pen's cap is not my cap, my body's eye is not my eye. Just as seeing through somebody else's eye is not direct perception, seeing through my eyes, that is, through my body's eyes, is not direct perception.

Sounds stop at the ear, the ear is not the hearer and whoever is the hearer has never ever heard any sound. Who is the hearer? Who tastes? Who feels? Who am I? Until and unless I understand myself and I am convinced that I exist, I cannot prove that my world, the world I experience deep inside me, exists even in a *mithyaa* sense. Knowing ourselves is a pre-condition to knowing the world. The knowledge of the Subject, the knowledge of the self, is the most important as also the most difficult. Modern science has almost completely sidelined this critical question of the self and is obsessed with the dry facts and figures of the external world, which cannot even be shown to exist independently. Even if we can completely and properly understand the external world, of what use is that knowledge if we do not understand ourselves and our relationship with the external world? There is no point exploring things that may or may not have any relation with ourselves. Modern science seems to be choosing what is easy, rather than what is required, what is useful, or what is right. You cannot get to truth by avoiding it. Do not be cowards, face the truth, directly, head on.

Our line of thinking here applies to all senses but the human mind has an extra strong bias for the sense of vision. When we hear a sound and we see nothing, we can imagine the source of the sound - it was the whistling of a pressure cooker or water gushing out from the overhead tank through a leak or whatever. Similarly you can imagine possible scenarios through the sense of touch, taste, smell etc. And it is not so hard to convince ourselves that our guesses could be wrong. The perception of sight, in sharp contrast to all other senses, is so vivid, so 'realistic', that we fail to understand that all that we see is only a guess and the guess can be wrong. We see nothing, yet we are so much convinced that we are actually seeing a car or a train or the cow or the sky and all this is real beyond doubt. Blindly trusting our eyes is the biggest mistake we all do in our lives. Scientists, philosophers, thinkers are no exception.

1.48 Why Modern Science is Not Scientific

We have been making a lot of allegations against modern science. We are not worried about any particular topic or claim or result. We are concerned here about the very foundations on which the whole of modern science is based. Actually, our arguments apply to almost all other branches of knowledge too. Whether it is social sciences or humanities or arts or engineering or medicine or agriculture or music or magic, almost all subjects taught in any school, college or university in the whole world today is subject to the same flaws and the same limitations. Practically everything we are doing in the world today, except completely natural things such as sitting, standing, walking, jumping, running, crying, sleeping, talking etc. are neither necessary nor good for us. We consider ourselves thinking animals,

we consider ourselves intelligent. Let us wake up and start thinking at least now. Look at this figure carefully.

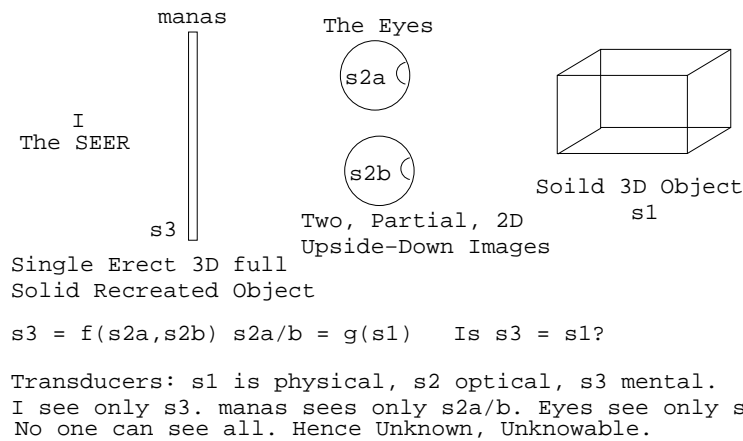


Figure 1.1: Visual Perception

Let us say there is some object in front of us. Let us call this physical object s1. This solid three dimensional object reflects part of the light that falls on it. Some part of this reflected light enters the two eye balls through the eye lenses. The special cells in the retina of the eyes react to these incident light rays and produce an image. Let us call this as s2. Then these optical signals are transduced into neural signals and sent to the brain. These neural signals are basically electrical and chemical in nature. The brain reacts to these incoming signals in some way. What happens after that?

Who is seeing what? At the first level we may think that the object in the scene is the 'seen' and the eye is the 'seer'. But mere image formation on the retina does not constitute seeing. If you just hang a picture on a wall in a room where nobody is there, no one is there to see the picture and so we cannot say anything like seeing is happening. There must be somebody to see that picture.

Therefore, the eye is not the ultimate seer, there must be somebody who is observing the eyes and the images formed there in. The brain is the observer, it observes the eyes by reacting to the signals it receives from the eyes. The brain reacts, it undergoes certain changes as a result of receiving the signals from the eyes through the optic nerves. Otherwise nothing would be seen. These reactions by themselves cannot constitute seeing, who observes these changes taking place in the brain? If nobody is observing, then there can be no perception at all. The fact that we can all actually see, proves that there must be somebody else who is observing the brain and all the reactions taking place there. Thus the brain is the 'seer' as far as the eyes are concerned but this is not the ultimate seer, it is only the 'seen' with respect to some other deeper seer in us.

This leads us to some interesting questions. The object in the scene is the 'seen'. It is only the 'seen', it is not the 'seer'. I can see a chair but a chair cannot see me, the chair cannot see anything for that matter. The chair or any other object of visual perception is a pure 'seen'. The eyes and the brain are 'seer's from one point of view and the 'seen' from another. They are not the ultimate 'seer's. In general, X is seen by Y, Y is seen by Z, Z is seen by A and so on. If this chain is infinite, we will never be able to see anything in all our lives. This being not the case, there cannot be an infinite chain. If the chain has cycles in it - X sees Y and Y sees X, let us say, then there is a logical fallacy. I can see the moon, I can observe it, I can know it, I can prove its existence but the moon cannot see me, know me, observe me or prove my existence. I can establish my own existence but the moon cannot prove its own existence or the existence of anything else. Objects in the world are not self evident, they need to be shown to exist by some conscious entity. There is thus a very important and fundamental difference in the very nature of the 'seer' and the

'seen'. The two are poles apart. The 'seen' can never be a 'seer'. The only alternative we have, therefore, is to say that there exists a pure 'seer'. This 'seer' can see but can never be seen by anybody even in principle. There must be a knower who can know everything but who can never be known. When I say 'I see', I must be this pure seer, I am the knower, I am the perceiver, I am the sentient being, all else in this whole universe is insentient. This pure 'seer' must be capable of seeing without reacting in any way or undergoing any change whatever, as otherwise, we will be left the same kind of question - who is observing these changes? We shall devote the whole of the next chapter for understanding this 'I' properly. Keep thinking.

The object in the scene is the pure 'seen', it sees nothing. We have taken the eyes and the brain as intermediate 'seer-seen' combinations. Actually, these are not really 'seer's, they are only 'seen' but for the sake of analysis in stages, we thought so. There is only one 'seer', which is a pure 'seer', it can never be seen by anybody. Yet we can prove its existence indirectly through reasoning as we have done here. If that pure 'seer' were not there, nobody would ever be able to see anything. The fact that we can all see is a proof that such a pure 'seer' must exist.

The seen-seer-seen chain can neither be infinitely long nor can it have any cycles. In fact it must be quite short as evidenced by the speed at which we can see things. The chain starts with the object of perception which is a pure 'seen' and it ends with 'I' who is the pure 'seer'. There cannot be too many intermediate stages. Nor do we gain any new insight by hypothesising many intermediate levels. The diagram shows only the sense organs and the *manas* as the intermediaries sitting between me and the objects I see. The brain can see, hear, touch, taste, smell, think, reason, explain, decide, calculate, learn and do many other

things. That aspect of the brain which deals with perceptions is called the *manas* in this book. We shall talk more about the brain and its functional components in the next chapter.

The signal s_1 is physical, the signal s_2 is optical and the signal s_3 is mental. s_1 relates to a single solid three dimensional object, s_2 is in the form of two different two dimensional upside-down images corresponding only to the visible part of the exterior surface of the object. The signal s_3 is again a single mentally reconstructed three dimensional solid object. There is a transducer converting signal s_1 to s_2 and there is a transducer mapping signal s_2 to s_3 . The signal s_3 is a function of the two part s_2 signal and the signal s_2 is a function of the s_1 signal. What do we know about these transfer functions?

'I' can observe s_3 , what my *manas* paints for me to see, nothing else. 'I' can never directly see s_2 or s_1 , I can never directly see what my eyes see or the objects in the outside world. The *manas* can only see the signals it gets from the sense organs, it cannot directly sense anything in the outside world. The *manas* just cannot know what 'I' see. The eyes just cannot know what the *manas* sees or what 'I' see. Of course the object in the external world just cannot know anything. Given this, how can assume that s_3 is the same as s_1 ? Unless we prove that s_3 equals s_1 , we can never conclude that what 'I' see is what actually exists in the world. Now, it is impossible to prove that s_3 is the same as s_1 . There are two transducers here and we do not know their transfer functions, in fact we cannot know. Because there is no single entity in the entire Universe which can directly observe both the input and output signals of these transducers. If anybody tries to check these signals, he will be using his own unknown and uncalibrated transducers inside him in the process. Unless we can directly

observe the input and output signals, we can never model any system and no conclusions can be drawn by using unknown, uncalibrated systems.

We cannot assume that the brain sees what the eyes see and the eyes see what actually exists. How do we know that there is one-to-one correspondence between these signals? Any device which takes some input and produces some output is called a system. If we can observe both the inputs and the outputs, only then we can say something about the system. If the input and output are always proportional, for example, this may be called a linear system. If we can model a system then we can relate the inputs to the outputs and calculate the output for any given input. If, however, we can only observe the output and there is no way of observing the input, nothing at all can be said about the system. Any attempt to see, observe or measure these inputs and outputs will invariably involve other transducers which are also unknown. All human beings are unknown systems, they all include the same unknown, uncalibrated transducer sitting between their sense organs and the brain, none of them can directly observe the inputs. No one can come to our rescue here. Since all human beings are unknown systems, all the instruments they claim to have calibrated are also actually unknown systems. Hence nothing at all can be said about this human perceptual system. Such an unknown system can produce any output for any input, related or unrelated. It can produce output without input and it can produce no output even when input is present. Anything and everything is possible. This is not just a possibility, our actual experiences clearly indicate this. In our dreams, we see things without need for light or eyes or even the objects being seen. Even in our waking state, we know that the images on the retina are upside down but we do not see that way. Knowing all this, we cannot simply assume that the eye-to-brain transducer

is linear. We can never observe the inputs our sense organs get, we can only observe the outputs they produce. Therefore, we can never model our sense organs.

Modern science and technology have given us a number of instruments and measuring devices to perceive and know the world. Here it must be made clear that all these instruments and scientific equipment only supplement human perception, they are not replacements. If some device can observe and conclude all by itself, and we never get to see or know the steps or how exactly the conclusion is reached, we cannot accept the conclusions. This would be exactly like saying that there is a ghost and that ghost has given a proof that there is life on so and so planet, but nobody has ever seen this ghost or how it has reached such a conclusion. Modern science is all about experiments, observations and inferences, experiments designed and conducted by us, observations made by us using our own sense organs, and inferences drawn by us, with or without the help of instruments and equipment. Human perception is an unavoidable component of all modern scientific research. And human perception is undependable.

The eye is not the seer because even if there is the object, there is light, eyes are open and image is formed on the retina, nothing may be seen. This happens immediately after a person dies. The eyes are not dead, they can live and work for another 100 years but the brain is dead. This can also happen due to medication, damaged nerves and other such conditions. The eye is not the seer. Who then sees? The seer must be somewhere deeper inside. This seer never sees light. How can we assume that light exists? How can we write a chapter on optics in our physics text books and call that science? Think.

What the eye sees and what I see are not necessarily

one and the same. Nothing can be concluded about the world going by what we see. If I am seeing the Moon and the Moon appears bright and round, this is absolutely no proof at all that the Moon exists and it is actually bright and round. It could be dark and square, or whatever, or it may not even exist. We can never prove or disprove this. Think.

The same arguments hold for hearing and all other sense organs. The seer has never seen light, the hearer has never heard any sound. Seeing, hearing, touching, tasting etc. are not direct perceptions. Direct perception is what the perceiver deep inside perceives. Contrary to common belief, modern science is not based on direct perception at all. It is very indirect, based on unprovable assumptions.

Every instrument, every measuring device, every meter is a transducer. If a thermometer shows a particular temperature, we can never be sure that the actual temperature is what the instrument is showing, because we can never directly observe the input and without direct observation, we can never model that system. All instruments require human perception and human perceptual systems cannot be modeled. Do not rush to the conclusion that a computer controlled instrument can reach the final answer without human intervention. There will necessarily be many transducers in the computer controlled system, none of them can be modeled, because the transducers within us, the modellers, are themselves unknown and uncalibrated. So the conclusions can never be trusted.

Modern science cannot be trusted. Modern science is based on inferences about inputs, drawn on unproved and unprovable assumptions about the systems that map the inputs to the outputs, without direct perception of the inputs. This is imagination, no different from dreams, this is

not science at all. Repeatability of measurements and observations is necessary but not a sufficient in itself. That different sense organs or different instruments or many people agree is not a proof. After all, we can easily build a software program that always says two plus two is seven, with one hundred percent consistency and all the Millions of copies of this software would always agree fully. Truth cannot be reached by such invalid methods. The very epistemology of modern science, the very logic on which it is based, the fundamental assumptions on top of which we have built this towering super-power called science are all flawed. All conclusions of modern science are therefore null and void.

This is not a new discovery or a new theory. This was all very well known, thoroughly understood, taught and practiced for thousands of years in ancient India. Unfortunately, today we have forgotten all that and got stuck up at these very same ideas which were proved completely wrong and given up long ago. Reject modern science, the whole of it, summarily, without any hesitation. Science and technology are not the solutions to our problems, they are the cause. They are neither necessary, nor useful. Modern science does not and cannot tell you who exactly you are, why you have come here, what is it that you should or should not do in life, how to live, how to live well and enjoy life. All of modern science and technology is completely irrelevant for life. We can all lead a healthy, happy, satisfying, fulfilling, peaceful life, we can overcome all problems that we are facing today as individuals and as a society, we can liberate ourselves from all the bondage, pain and suffering, if only we realize this and give up all of science and technology. You cannot reach Delhi if you hold on to Mumbai tightly. Likewise, you cannot gain knowledge unless and until you are ready to give up ignorance. Modern science is another name of ignorance, just give it up without a

second thought. Do not use anything which is man-made. You are part of nature and you must learn to live with nature, be one with nature. You have no right to exploit or damage nature. Any activity which involves polluting the environment is a sin and you will be punished for committing that sin. Japan is one of the most advanced countries when it comes to technology and recently half of Japan was washed away into the sea. Nature is telling us in such clear terms not to go against it but no one seems to be learning any lessons from these signs. If you still think giving up all of science and technology is too drastic a solution, do it in steps but let us take a good leap with each step and let us do it quickly. Let us not keep trying the patience of nature. Let us at least restrict the use of technology for critical, life-saving, absolutely essential activities alone.

1.49 The Turning Point

Our eyes can see not only what is present but also what is not! We see water in the mirage. The distant stars you see are not there now in those positions at all - they were there a very long time ago and it has taken so much time for the light from the stars to reach you. For all you know, the stars may not even exist today. You are able to see with your own eyes, things that existed only in the remote past! And this is no dream. You can see the Sun only minutes after it has risen above the horizon and you can see it minutes after it has already set. There are any number of optical illusions. It is only fools who say 'Seeing is Believing'.

You press a coin on to your forehead for a few seconds and it stays there until you shake it off. Now show this once and then press a coin onto your friend's forehead. Ask him to shake it off. He tries very hard but just cannot make the

coin fall off! All the boys around are laughing and enjoying. You have carefully taken away the coin after pressing it for a few seconds! There is no coin to shake off but the feeling continues. The skin is still sensing the coin which has already been removed!

All our senses are unreliable. The senses fail us. Never trust them. Modern science and technology have given us a gamut of devices and instruments to amplify and enhance our sensory capabilities - be it the microscope, the telescope, the stethoscope or the X-ray. But we can never depend on any of these. Because in the end it all boils down to our own sensory perceptions which are anything but dependable. Modern science is all like using a defective multi-meter to measure the continuity in a wire. When the instruments we use are unreliable, no meaningful conclusions can be drawn. The whole of modern science is dubious and suspect. We should not simply fall for things which are claimed to be 'scientifically proved'. In fact we must suspect, question and double check anything which is claimed to be 'scientific' before accepting it. Truth cannot be experimentally verified - all experiments depend on our unreliable sense organs as instruments of observation. Truth cannot be scientifically proved. If something can be scientifically proved, it is unlikely to be true. Scientists do not even understand the concept of proof properly. Nor do they know what truth means. We need to tread a very different path.

There are gross things and there are things subtle. Modern science has restricted itself to the gross, external, material, physical world. Physics has often tried to define itself as the science of laws governing the entire universe but no book on physics has a chapter on love or greed or fear. Are these not real? Do we not experience these in our daily lives? The whole of life is based on our feelings and

emotions, likings and dis-likings, wants and fears. What universe are we talking about?

There is an external, physical world and there is an internal world. In the state of dream, we have a whole big fantastic internal world. Even while we are fully awake, we continue to experience feelings, emotions, agony and ecstasy within our internal world. Without all this, there is really no life at all. Are we all dead like rocks? For our life to make sense to us, for us to understand the true nature of this whole universe, we must go beyond the boundaries of modern science. We need not and we should not become unscientific in our temper or our methods of inquiry. We must continue to maintain a scientific temper. We need to continue to be utterly logical and uncompromisingly critical. But we need to think beyond. Boldly.

The Universe is not just rock and mud. There is more to it than you will find in text books on science. There is more to it than what any scientist knows. Let us explore with an unbiased, open, yet critical mind. Who is the seer? How exactly do we see? How can we 'see' non-existent objects, with our eyes closed and no light around in our dreams. We say 'I had a fantastic dream, I saw my grand father, I saw a snake, I saw a flying horse' and so on and then we say 'I then woke up from my dream and saw that it was already 10 O'clock and my roommates had already left to school.' Who saw the dream? Who sees after waking up? Are these two the same? If yes, why is it that we cannot remember our dreams in full? If I was watching a movie on the TV and then I come out and watch the outside world in my garden, I can still remember almost the whole of the movie, right? Why can't we remember our dreams? If I can see without objects, or light in my dreams, why can't the same internal eye do so even when I am awake? Modern science does not have answers. Let us explore ourselves.

1.50 The Only Question

The Indian term for science is *vijnYaana*. *vijnYaana* means discrimination. Discrimination between what and what? Modern science restricts itself to discrimination between truth and falsity. What about right and wrong? What about good and bad? This is also *vijnYaana*, this should also be part of science. Science is incomplete without a clear discrimination between the good and the bad, between the right and the wrong. Science tells us how to build dams, stop the flow of rivers, use turbines and generate electricity but it does not tell us that it is wrong to do such things. Science tells us how to dig out petroleum and make cars that run on fossil fuels but it does not realize, accept and preach us not to do so. This is the cause for all the problems facing mankind today. We have focused too much on dry facts and figures about the material world and we have forgotten ourselves. What is the use of computers and mobile phones and cars and aeroplanes and roads and bridges if we cannot live and live well and lead a meaningful, purposeful, fulfilling life?

Science is always in a state of development and there are always many open questions. But even if we were to get complete knowledge of all objects in the universe, that would only be half knowledge. And half knowledge is worse than no knowledge at all! This is the biggest problem with modern science. Modern science is half knowledge and is in fact the cause of all of human suffering and misery. What if your surgeon only knows how to cut open your heart but does not know what to do thereafter? What if the pilot of the aircraft you are flying in knows only to take off, not to land? Complete ignorance is perhaps far better than half knowledge. Let us aim for complete knowledge, full knowledge of the true nature of the whole universe including the objective and the subjective. Without the prover,

there is no proof. Without myself, there is no world. To understand the true nature of the external material world, it is absolutely essential to understand the true nature of our internal world.

How many objects are there in the Universe? Innumerable. Each has a large number of attributes. Studying this vast set of objects and all their properties and all the physical and chemical changes they undergo in all kinds of situations is a great challenge indeed. Can we at all get a proper grip over this whole big universe, spread out over the vast space and continuously changing over the endless stretch of time? Consider chemical substances. There are only about a hundred chemical elements but the number of possible chemical compounds has been estimated to be much more than the number of particles in the entire universe! Can we ever get a complete picture of how all these chemicals react with one another in various conditions? Our bodies have thousands of chemicals and this knowledge of how drugs react with the chemicals in the body is vital, right? Scientists may have some idea of how two chemicals react in a laboratory environment but predicting the outcome when thousands of chemicals simultaneously interact in the real world is almost impossible. Clearly, it is humanly impossible to get a complete and correct understanding of the whole big universe and all the objects in it. Our knowledge of science will always remain incomplete, even if we go on for a Million more years. Is there something, by knowing which we can actually know everything? If you are thinking of the details perhaps the answer is 'no' but perhaps there is something by knowing which we can know the entire Universe in an abstract sense. If such a thing exists, that is the only thing we should be exploring. If such a thing does not exist, then we must simply give up all explorations, realizing that the curiosity of the mind which drives us into all these explorations is actually

a weakness of the mind and we must simply learn to curb it.

Modern science is largely objective in nature, it deals mostly with objects, far less with the subject. But without the subject, there is no world of objects. Knowledge of the subject is much more important, because we are subjects. We are the seers, hearers, feelers, thinkers, knowers. There is something exceptionally special about the consciousness in us. We need to know this in order to know everything about the Universes and about ourselves and about own lives. We live, it is our life, we want to know things, we need to know ourselves first. Objective knowledge is of little use without the knowledge of ourselves. All the mountains of trivial, dry, life-less knowledge we have about the physical, material objects in the external world does not help us to understand life, does not tell us how to live. What is the use of all these trivial scientific facts and figures? There is only one question that we need to ask. What is it that we have to know, after knowing which, there will remain nothing more to know?

1.51 The Prover and the Proof

The correct, proper knowledge of something is called *pramaa*. If you do not see what exists, if you see what does not exist, or if you see X as Y, that is not correct knowledge. That is not *pramaa*, that is called *bhramaa* or illusion. The thing which is to be seen, known or understood is called *prameeya*. The one who sees or knows is called *pramaatR*. The means of obtaining correct knowledge are called *pramaaNas*. A *pramaatR* should use appropriate *pramaaNas* and obtain the correct, proper and complete understanding or *pramaa* of the *prameeya*. This is the concept of proof. Modern science fails miserably in every part.

Modern science thinks and claims that it is based on direct perception, which it is not. Seeing with our eyes or hearing with our ears is not direct perception. Perceiving with our sense organs is called *pratyakSha* but an ancient adage warns us by saying what is seen in *pratyakSha* should not be simply trusted but proved through other appropriate *pramaana*-s. What the seer in us sees is the direct perception, what the hearer in us hears is direct perception. Modern science does not even have a clue as to who is the real seer or hearer in us. Modern science has not gone beyond the brain, which is made up of nerve cells, which are in turn made up of organic chemical substances, which are in turn made up of electrons, protons and neutrons, and no electron, proton or neutron, individually or in any combination can see or hear or feel or know.

Logical inferences we can draw inside our mind are called *anumaana*. Modern science is based on western logic systems which are quite superficial and flawed. They take some thing as fundamental as existence for granted, existence is merely a declaration in western logic systems. That is why modern science never even asks the right questions, how can it even lead us to the right answers? To make any logical inference, the one who makes such an inference is an essential ingredient. There must be a purpose. There must be some use. Western logic systems used in modern science are all symbolic logic systems where the underlying premise is that human beings are not intelligent enough, they get confused, natural languages are ambiguous and confusing, so we must eliminate all this and do our logical reasoning with merely a system of symbols. Proof without the prover, proof without a goal, proof without a stated use, what kind of a proof is this? A proof in which the prover is not an essential component is not a valid proof.

There was a war in Iraq. How do you know? Did you

go there and see yourself? Perhaps not. You go by what the newspapers said, what the TV showed, or what the radio said. This is called *aapta-vaakya*, accepting statements coming from a trusted source as valid. Modern science accepts quoting from previously published articles in reputed journals and conferences. How trusted are these so called trusted sources? Now that the whole world is spinning around money, academics not excluded, there is a motive behind every statement, there is greed underlying every word and no scientific journal can really be trusted. Even otherwise, modern scientific articles include a large number of references and hence whatever an article claims is at best a conditional proof, subject to what all is said in the referred papers being true. Since those papers in turn refer to a number of other papers, the proof will not be complete until and unless we unwind this long chain of cross-references. Is this possible at all? For all you know, there could be cyclic dependencies and the proof can never be completed. No modern scientific proof is complete and self contained. What do we mean by proof then?

It is not acceptable to simply ignore a proof that has been given earlier. The true nature of the universe, the true nature of the self and all the vital questions we are addressing in this book have been the subject of intense scientific research in India from many thousands of years. Modern science has simply ignored all that is said in this vast body of literature. In fact it is promoting all kinds of false theories which have already been demolished long long ago. How can we consider modern science as a truly scientific endeavor then?

In some schools of the Indian scholarly tradition, *shruti* or the scriptural injunctions contained in the *veeda-s* are also considered *pramaaNas* or valid means of acquiring real knowledge. This point is often not well understood. It

is not necessary to accept something on the face value just because the scriptures say so. We need not and we should not accept or reject anything simply because some sacred book or a wise man says so. We shall not accept or reject anything in this book just because there is a scriptural injunction to that effect. The *veeda-s* can be considered valid means to true knowledge only in a different, indirect sense. These ancient scriptures provoke us to think, to ask the right questions, to question our deep rooted assumptions and beliefs, which we normally do not even question. In fact this is what a real guru does too. This is what we are trying to do in this book. Once prompted and put on the right track, you can yourself understand the truth from the falsity, you can yourself pierce all the thick layers of ignorance that shroud the underlying truth. Discovery of the truth can itself be done without blindly accepting or rejecting any statement including the scriptural injunctions. The scriptures and the guru are only the starting motors, they only help us to overcome our inertia and help us get started on our journey in search of the truth. It is not necessary to blindly take *shruti* as a *pramaaNa*. In this book, we do not take scriptural injunctions or the statements and opinions of great souls as true without subjecting them to critical analysis. Here we go only by direct perception or experience and sound logical reasoning. This book is therefore a purely scientific work, not religious at all. The readers are urged to keep the same spirit and avoid jumping to conclusions based on what others say without critical inquiry.

Now we must ask ourselves some critical questions. Is the world we observe the reality because our perceptions are actually a *pramaaNa*, or, assuming that our sensory perceptions are actually *pramaaNa*, are we claiming that the world really exists as it appears for us? How do we establish the *pramaaNa* status of a so-called *pramaaNa*? Am I the knower? If yes, how can I know myself? Am I

the one who knows that I know? Am I beyond knowing? Can I still 'know' myself in some other deeper sense? I do not know anything at all either about the external world or about myself in a state of deep sleep. But I do exist. Nobody can say he does not even exist when he is in a state of deep sleep. I am, whether I think, or I do not think. I am beyond feeling, thinking, knowing. Who am I then?

1.52 The Crux of the Matter

Show a piece of cloth to any ordinary human being and ask him what it is. Surely he would say it is a piece of cloth. Ask him to observe more carefully, say using a lens. The cloth is a mesh of threads and the threads can be vividly seen under the lens. Suppose you were to pull out the threads one by one. You can go on until nothing at all remains. Where is the cloth? The cloth has vanished and there is only a bundle of threads. Does the cloth have independent existence, independent of the threads? If all the threads are removed, nothing at all remains and so the cloth has no existence of its own, independent of the threads. 'Cloth' is just a convenient name we have given to this particular arrangement of threads. This particular configuration has some applications, some relevance, some meaning to us, and we human beings have invented a name called 'cloth' to refer to it purely for our convenience. Outside of the human mind, there is simply no such as 'cloth'. There is no cloth in this universe, except inside the human mind.

Does the thread have independence existence then? Examine more closely and you will find that the thread is made up of cellulose fibres. Remove all the fibres and the thread vanishes. The thread has no existence of its own independent of cellulose.

All matter in this universe, is considered to be made up of atoms and molecules. Atoms are the smallest parts of a pure chemical substance, called an ‘element’ in chemistry. Oxygen, Iron and Gold are chemical elements. Elements combine to form chemical compounds. Water is a compound made up of Oxygen and Hydrogen atoms. Common salt is made up of Chlorine and Sodium atoms. Molecules are the smallest parts of a chemical compound. They can be broken further into constituent atoms although the substance will no longer retain the properties of the compound substance. All matter in this universe is nothing but atoms, molecules and mixtures there of. If you remove all the atoms and molecules from your car, or TV, or phone, or even from your own body, nothing at all remains. Hence car, TV, phone and all the other material objects in this world have no existence of their own. Not even our body. These are all the names we have given purely for our convenience. Outside of the human mind, there are no computers, no cars, no mountains, no oceans, no animals, no trees, no human beings. None of these exist in the outside world.

Are atoms and molecules the ultimate reality then? No, not at all. Molecules are made up of atoms and atoms are in turn made up of sub-atomic particles called electrons, protons and neutrons. There are no atoms or molecules, no elements or compounds, no iron or gold, no water or petrol, there is nothing in the material world other than electrons, protons and neutrons.

Are electrons, protons and neutrons the ultimate then? No, not really, we can go on analyzing the fine structure of matter. Scientists were actually trying to go on and on like this in what is called high energy physics until they realized that this method leads to nowhere. They gave up. They

missed one crucial observation which holds answers to all of our questions. We shall gradually unfold this secret over the next chapter. For now, make sure you understand and accept that you are not your body. Nor are you your brain, after all, the brain is also just an organ of the body like any other.

1.53 Name and Form

The world of objects, objects with a name and form, is all that modern science is concerned with. Names are given by us, purely for our convenience. These names have no independent existence or meaning outside of the human mind. Words do not have meanings, meanings are inside us. A dictionary in an unknown language may have many words scribed in it but it would not make any sense to us if we do not know the language. A dictionary does not have words and words do not have meanings. Everything is inside us. There could be black marks on white paper but these are not words, there are no meanings. Meaning if any is to be ascribed by us.

A car may be big or small. A car is bigger than a TV. The TV screen is rectangular in shape. The sky is blue. The fruit is sweet. The stove is hot. We keep talking about objects and their properties like this in our daily life. A car is made up of atoms and molecules. Are atoms and molecules big? How big is big? These are all relative terms. Relative to what? Relative to our, human perception. A wall appears flat because we are seeing it at a particular resolution. A small insect crawling on the wall may find it quite uneven and rugged. Is the wall really smooth or rugged? It is neither. Smoothness is an attribute imposed by us on the wall and ruggedness is imposed by the insect on the same wall. The same wall cannot be both smooth

and uneven at the same time. It is neither. The TV screen appears rectangular but no atom or molecule or sub-atomic particle in it is rectangular. Since the TV has no existence independent of these, it is not true that the TV screen is rectangular. No property of any object is innate and inherent to the object. All attributes are imposed on the object by the observer. Nothing in this world is straight or circular. No atom or molecule is. Nothing is red or blue. If human beings could never see colour, we all would have unanimously rejected any claim that an object is red or blue or whatever. We know that many lower animals do not see colour. How can colour be an innate and inherent attribute of any object?

All matter can be converted to energy. Matter is subject to change. Therefore nothing that is matter is *sat*. All energy can be converted from one form to another. Therefore energy is also subject to change, hence not *sat*. Entire physical world is therefore *mithyaa*, not *sat*.

There are more parts, combinations of parts or objects in the world than we have names. Therefore, names are not part of the world, names are imposed by the observer. This entire world of name and form is a projection of the human mind. The human mind is capable of creating a whole world of its own. It does in dreams. It does even when we are awake. The multitude and variety of objects we see in the external world are not real in the sense in which we normally think. All the attributes are internal to us. We impose attributes on objects. Objects themselves do not have any attributes. There can be no differences where there are no attributes. Therefore there can be one and only one object, a nameless, formless, indescribable object, beyond words and mental perception. This is the true nature of this whole Universe. Is this only existing thing a knower or can it be known? Can we establish the

existence of a known without a knower? Think.

1.54 The Blind Leading the Blind

Six blind men who knew nothing about elephants came across an elephant for the first time. They touched the different parts of the elephant, got some idea, synthesized their understanding and wrote a consolidated account. Suppose you also did not know anything about elephants. You were absolutely uninformed. You read the description given by these six blind men. You started believing that your knowledge and understanding of an elephant was realistic and factual. Because you did not know that the description was given by a set of six blind people. The moral of the story is, if you do not know who exactly is the knower, your understanding of the known will be equally suspect and dubious. If you do not know the prover, the proof itself has no value. The proof is in fact conditioned by the prover. Who is the prover? Is he knowledgeable or ignorant? Does he even exist at all?

Now, we are all ignorant. Highly ignorant, for we do not even know who we are! And we give our perceptions, our experiences, our feelings, our proofs, and expect other equally ignorant people to accept it! No scientist knows who exactly he or she is, not even the best, not even the Nobel Laureates. No scientist has even tried to inquire into the true nature of himself or herself. And we are all expected to blindly accept whatever a so called scientist says. Whatever a person with the label of a scientist hanging over his forehead cannot understand, that is superstition. If a saint or a monk or a *yoogi* or anybody else tells the truth, it will be laughed at and rejected without examination. This is how the world is today - the blind leading the blind!

Modern science is based on tacit, invalid, unproven, unprovable assumptions. The world exists, it is external to us, there is a single world that is common to all of us. There is space, the world and everything in it is situated in space. There is time, time is linear, infinite, monotonic, common to all. My dreams are unreal but my experiences in the waking state are real. And so on. Attempts to prove such things are also erroneous - trying to prove the reality of the waking world while we are still within the waking state.

We must necessarily analyze already published works and place our new contributions in the light of the strengths and limitations of the work already done by others. A whole lot of very fundamental and utterly logical, completely scientific work has already been done by the ancient *RShi-s* in India many tens of thousands of years ago. The *veeda-s*, the oldest known expressions of structured, scientific, human thought, abound with such fundamental questions about the true nature of the universe and the self. The *veeda-s* are compendia of knowledge, they are not religious scriptures, they are in fact scientific treatises. How can we simply ignore, bypass, sideline all this enormous body of scientific knowledge and continue to trumpet our own new findings, all of which have already been shown to be completely false? The science of the *veeda-s* and *veedaanta* (the final, culminating portion of the *veeda-s*) has been accepted by countless Billions of people for many thousands of years. Modern science, which is in reality just a few hundred years old, takes us backwards to the pre-*veedic* times. The *veeda-s* have already shown that the entire body of knowledge which we deal with in modern science is completely illogical and plain wrong. How can we simply ignore this? This is completely unacceptable. That we do not know the language of the *veeda-s* is no excuse. Can any scientist today ignore all that is published in

English under the pretext that he / she does not know English? If you do not know the language, you better learn. If you find it hard to understand the *veeda-s*, keep trying. There is no other go. One must either accept what has been published earlier or must give a convincing proof that there is something wrong with it before going on to take up new research. All new findings must be placed in the light of already published results, however old they may be. Truth never gets outdated. We must compare, contrast, we cannot simply ignore, bypass, sideline. This is not in the true spirit of science.

Modern science proudly proclaims that only those things which are falsifiable will be considered in science. What a self defeating claim! Modern science will never ever be able to take us to the truth, for, truth, by definition, is not falsifiable. Of what use is all this much-a-do-about-nothing in the name of science then? Why go on discovering false things and more false things? Either we must seek the truth or just keep quiet and do nothing. We are exploiting nature, we are damaging the environment, we have permanently destroyed many species from planet Earth and now even the very survival of human form on Earth has been called into question. We must at least stop doing all these wasteful and harmful things we are doing in the name of science, technology, industry, economics and business. Don't you agree?

Do not listen to scientists, blindly. Only those who know themselves can educate and enlighten others. Seek such real gurus and liberate yourself from the bondage of ignorance. This is freedom, this is the only path to happiness and bliss.

1.55 From Ignorance to Knowledge

Why is the sky blue? Because of dispersion of light. White light from the Sun has seven different colours in it - violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. When dispersed by the particles in the atmosphere, the colours get separated. Very fine. But why blue? Different colours correspond to different frequencies and dispersion follows an inverse fourth power law, a very strong function of the frequency. Then it must be violet, the extreme end of the colour spectrum, how can the sky be blue? Blue is the third colour from the violet end. Why not violet? Why not indigo? No one really knows the answer. Scientists will dilly dally and after a lot of jugglery, simply say that the sky is blue because it appears like that to our eyes! This is exactly what any uneducated person would say! Why give it the false face of science? Why is the sky blue? Why is the ocean blue? Nobody knows.

Newton is credited with discovering the laws governing gravity. After studying a few pages in a Physics text book, we all get a feeling that we have also understood gravity. While other forces in nature, including magnetic and electrical forces show both attraction and repulsion, gravity has only attraction, no repulsion. Why? While all other forces work across short distances, gravity works across the vast universe. Why do two bodies, inert, dead and lifeless, so far away from each other without any direct contact, attract each other in the first place? What exactly is gravity? Why is there gravity? Does anybody know?

These are just two examples but the whole of modern science is very much like this. Millions of patients are treated every day for cancer and diabetes. Does any doctor in the world know what exactly causes diabetes or cancer? Scientists do not even understand the meaning of the term

‘cause’. Doctors claim, for example, that microbes cause diseases. If microbes cause diseases, how is it that some catch a disease while others exposed to the same conditions remain healthy? Saying that microbes causes diseases is exactly like saying that rains cause frogs or trees cause birds. Is medicine a science at all? Is Management a science? Even physics is not. Just think.

By teaching a few equations for computing distances, times, speeds etc. we give a false impression to students of science that they know a lot about mechanics. This is the biggest mistake of our times. What we know is nothing, compared to what all we do not know. Your list of things you know may be big but you will never be able to even make a list of things you do not know. Why then this arrogance? Why this hotheadedness? That is real education which makes one humble. Let us teach our students what all we do not know, let us spend more time and effort on the limitations, drawbacks, ill-effects, the other side, the dark side of science rather than glorifying the little that we think we know. Science and technology are not the solutions to human problems, they are in fact the cause. It is time we change our view point.

What exactly is hunger? How exactly do we feel it? How exactly do we know that we are no longer hungry and it is time to stop eating? What exactly is thirst? What exactly happens in our body or mind when are thirsty? Why do we yawn? Why do we doze off? What exactly is hiccups, how and why does it arise? Why do we scratch our head when we are sleepy or when we are asked a difficult or confusing question? Why can’t we tickle ourselves? Why do we have two nostrils? There can be any number of simple questions directly connected with our lives for which we may not have satisfactory answers. Let us think of life, let us think of ourselves, let us shift the focus from the

external world to the internal world, let us get seated firmly in the internal auditorium where the drama of life is being played. Let us understand life.

1.56 Words and Meanings

We create a term and we get a false impression that we know it all. Terms have no meaning, meaning must be inside us. Terms like ‘science’ ‘scientific’, ‘unscientific’ have had far reaching effects in our times. These terms influence government policies, the media and the public. If something is dubbed scientific, people simply fall for it without stopping and questioning. And it works the other way too. Astrology is considered unscientific. The field of Artificial Neural Networks is held in high esteem as an important part of modern science and technology. What is the big difference? Both of them deal with associations from input observations to output observations without bothering about the causal connections. The two are identical in this sense. We brand one as science and other as unscientific. What logic is this? The field of artificial neural networks is very recent, just a few years old, whereas astrology has been in existence for tens of thousands of years. Astrology has stood the test of time, countless Millions of experiments have been conducted and observations carefully noted, it is based on a huge amount of practical, real life data. Therefore, if at all, we must consider astrology as more scientific than artificial neural networks. Astrology is not about predicting the future at all. If you are ignorant, foolish and gullible, people may take you for a ride but that is not a problem of astrology, that is your problem. We are blindly accepting or blindly rejecting things in the name of science. This is not in the true spirit of science.

People twist and distort the meanings of common words

to give exotic meanings and connotations. The term ‘bhu-uta’ for example, literally means what exists, what exists physically, materially. In fact the term for physics is ‘bhauta shaastra’ or the science of the physically existing things. Movie directors confuse people by creating an impression that ‘bhuut’ stands for some meta-physical, dangerous, scary thing floating in thin air and intent upon harming us. Similarly, the term ‘aatma’ has been misused so much that people laugh the moment you use such a term. ‘aatma’ means self. Don’t we talk of myself, yourself, herself, himself and so on? What is strange or extraordinary in saying I am myself. After all I cannot be yourself or herself, right? Do not get misled by terms which you do not fully and properly understand. If you do not understand something, that does not mean that it is unscientific. Rather you are still quite ignorant about it and as a well meaning seeker of truth you should only try to understand the term or the concept properly. Rejecting things even before we carry out an unbiased critical examination is the most unscientific thing to do. Do not reject anything which you do not understand.

Existence should not be equated with material existence. Love, affection, kindness, grace, beauty, knowledge, wisdom all exist but they are not matter, they do not exist physically. Most people either reject everything that does not physically, materially exist or jump to completely unscientific, illogical, nonsensical, rubbish propositions like ghosts and goblins. Use your words with care. All kinds of nonsensical ideas are being floated by spiritual leaders today and people are simply falling for all such foolish and useless ideas and theories. We need to exercise care.

Meanings are not in the words. Meanings are not in a dictionary. Meanings are inside us. We give meanings to words, words themselves have no meaning. Gender bias is

not in the words we use. If there is gender bias, it is in us, not in the words we use. No term is a stigma term, stigma is in us. No term can be scientific or unscientific. We can be scientific or otherwise in our understanding of the terms. Do not accept anything just because it is associated with terms like science, scientific, experimentally proved etc. Do you really understand what is science and what is scientific? A freedom-fighter and a terrorist may both be doing exactly the same thing - fighting for the freedom of his land. Whether we call them freedom-fighters or terrorists is a matter of our view point, our orientation, our bias, our pre-conceived notions, our ignorance. Do not jump to conclusions based on terms. Dig deeper. Truth has to be mined. Truth is hidden deep inside a mountain of rubbish ideas and random noise. Only those with a strong and clear mind will be able to reach up to the truth. In the final analysis it is always the truth that wins. If you want to be successful in life, if you want to make the most of your own life, you have to seek the truth, without getting confused and distracted by words others use.

Merely questioning everything does not make you a scientist. Asking questions is important in science. Questioning is different from asking questions. Ask questions, do not question. Asking questions implies seeking answers. This requires time, effort, zeal, dedication. A true scientist spends all his life seeking answers to questions he is interested in. A whole life is not sufficient to understand one small thing. Merely questioning everything, not seriously seeking answers by self study, introspection and research, is not the true spirit of science. We cannot find answers to all questions, life is too short for that. Hence it is best to simply accept what knowledgeable people say, without questioning. This is the science of life. 'Blindly' accepting what the elders, the more experienced, the more knowledgeable people say, is perhaps far better for the human

society than merely questioning everything. Children fall for taste and reject healthy food, elders understand better and therefore it is better for children to simply respect the words of the elders. Children do not lose freedom or anything else if they are obedient. Do not simply question everything. Let the scientist in you ask only those few questions for which you are willing to dedicate your life in search for an answer. Accept other things without questioning. This is the only way human society can remain in a balanced, harmonious, stable, equitable, peaceful, happy state. Stop teaching kids to simply question everything. Everybody need not become a scientist, everybody need not and should be questioning everything. Most people in the world are not capable of finding correct answers to all these questions. If there are questions everywhere and no answers, that will lead to disillusionment, instability and confusion. That is what is happening today in the world. This is the most harmful thing that modern science has done to humanity.

Asking questions and seeking proper answers requires a lot of time. This is not something that can be done as a part-time job. Today we spend all of our time with newspapers, TV, email and the Internet, in meetings and in travelling. We spend most of our life earning our bread. Where is the time to think? Only those few who take knowledge more seriously than money and everything else, only those few who are not after name, fame, position or power, only those few who seek knowledge not for the sake of getting a job but for the sake of knowledge alone, only such people can really find the correct answers to all the big questions in life. Those who are after money and materials can never get the true picture. Scientists cannot find the truth, they are too busy with other things. Listen the words of the ancient wise men, who had the sole aim of discovering the ultimate reality in all their life. Listen to

their words, think, try to understand. Even if you cannot fully understand it is perhaps far better for you to simply accept them at least tentatively, rather than simply questioning and abandoning all those wise words. Listen to the wise. This is good for you.

1.57 Science, Technology, Industry, Business

Scientists today rarely take up basic, fundamental, critical questions. Fundamental research is more risky - one may or may not get any great result even after struggling all through life. Nobody has patience. Funding bodies, whether private or government, want quick results. Everybody thinks that science is only for the sake of technology. Research is measured in terms of patents. For all practical purposes, fundamental science is almost dead.

Science leads to technology. Technology drives industries. Industries are run by businessmen. Business means making money. Science is funded by industry as an investment with expected results. The entire thing is a story of money spinning. Money does not fall from the sky, the game of money is always a zero-sum game. If somebody gains somebody else has to lose. 'Win-win' is a clever term coined by greedy businessmen to dupe people. There is no such thing as win-win. If one wins the other has to lose. If two parties win there is a third unknown, forgotten, gullible, helpless, voiceless fellow who is losing. That is the law of nature.

An example should make it clear as to how we are all getting cheated in the whole process. Here is the deal. You gain a thousand dollars. You are gaining and this is patently clear and publicly known by all. A hundred

thousand people lose a tenth of a dollar. The total loss is ten thousand dollars. The difference goes to the clever businessman. The hundred thousand ordinary citizens do not even realize that they are losing. Or even if they do, they are given an impression that it is a negligible amount and it is all essential for the world to go on, there is no way to stop it or it is in fact their contribution to keep the economy going. A hundred thousand people lose, the businessman becomes rich. This story is repeated again and again, Millions of times, every day, everywhere. The whole world keeps losing, penny by penny, without realizing it, the businessman becomes richer and richer. To make things more complicated, often the loss is not easily seen in monetary terms. The loss could be in terms of your time, comfort, convenience, health, whatever. The health of seven Billion people is affected and the businessmen become richer every day. Everyday we are poisoning the air, water and soil system with dangerous chemicals, all in the name of science, technology, economics, progress, development. One person's life is saved and the very basis of the life of countless Millions of living creatures on planet Earth, including all the living and future generations of human beings, is destroyed permanently. What wisdom is this?

It is unfortunate that science and scientists are now part of this wicked game. Scientific research is done to get and enjoy funds, to get more funds, to get name and fame, to make money, to get promotions, to seek awards and honours, not to find solutions to problems faced by humanity. Why glorify this ugly face of mankind? Millions are dying out of hunger even today. What science? What technology? Give up your fancy for modern science. Seek real knowledge. Half knowledge, that too superficial and fake, will only take you to hell.

The petroleum industry forces the automobile industry

to make fuel-inefficient cars so that they can make more money. Together they bribe and force governments to promote city life and make village life extremely difficult. If everybody lives in villages, there will be no need for cars or petrol, right? Seven Billion people suffer from atmospheric and water pollution, reduced oxygen, heat, noise, traffic jams and mental stress. Their health is affected, they suffer from all kinds of avoidable diseases, their life span is reduced. And they spend their hard earned money and time to buy all this suffering for themselves! There is global warning, our future is at stake. All because a few greedy businessmen controlling the automobile and petroleum industries want to become richer. Unfortunately, it is science and technology which drives the wheels of these industry. Being a scientist in such a world is a sin in itself.

If people live close to where food is grown, how can the packaging industry prosper? What will happen to supermarket stores? If people keep cows at home how can the dairy industry thrive? If everybody spreads out to smaller towns and villages how can the transport industry make profit? This whole world is a wicked game of a few greedy businessmen who want to make money at your cost. Instead of promoting the common interests and well being of all citizens, government policies today support only the rich and powerful industries and business houses. Do not join the government which is hand-in-glove with the money-making-machine today. Do not fall prey to this evil game, do not become a scientist or a technologist or a doctor or a businessman. Become a human being. Live and work for the welfare of all human beings, dedicate your life for the all-round well-being of all living creatures, present and future.

Our goal here is not science bashing but we have to understand what is false before we can seek the truth. There

is so much of brain washing going on all over the globe that unless we give it a serious enough thought, we are also likely to get duped into this fake world of modern science and technology. But the wise readers should have no difficulty in understanding this. There are more than 500 Million cell phones in India today. Just a few years ago there were none. Experts say practically the whole set of gadgets of technology around the world will be replaced with newer, more advanced technologies once in about 3.5 years. They look at this with a great sense of achievement and satisfaction. No one seems to thinking about what would happen to so many outdated gadgetry. There is no safe way of disposing off all these man-made devices and invariably this will lead to enormous amount of pollution and chemical poisoning of the entire Earth system. Why make something at all if it does not last at least a 100 years, if not 1000? Is this not foolishness? Are we not accelerating our own total destruction? Why can't we simply learn to live without any of these technologies? Let us not think of sustainable development. Let us understand that development is not sustainable. Nor is it required.

1.58 The Failure of Science and Technology

We think we have made great progress in science. We claim we have made great advances in technology. But in reality human life is only becoming more and more miserable, wretched, ugly, painful, stupid on every count. Let us take a few examples to illustrate this.

Think of the green revolution. Agricultural production was actually much more, before we started our agricultural universities and research. You may go and verify the records yourself if you please. Quality has also been

compromised. Variety and genetic diversity is lost. Soil is dead. We cut forests and built dams in the name of irrigation. Now we have either drought or floods, no normalcy. A grave food scarcity is lurking round the corner. Farmers are committing suicide. Is this what we mean by progress and development?

Think of the white revolution. With dairy technology we have dramatically increased milk production. But milk, which was once *amRta* or nectar or ambrosia, is now poison. The white coloured potion you buy in the supermarket store is a concoction of pesticides, sex hormones, antibiotics, possibly even blood and pus. People demand double toned low fat milk and then they go on eating chocolates and ice cream and cheese and butter and paneer and what not! What logic is this? Blood pressure, cholesterol problems, diabetes, kidney failure, heart attack, cancer, nervous breakdown are the direct results of dairy technology. Everybody wants milk but no one wants the cow. What logic is this?

Think of medicine. The western system of medicine has more than 2000 diseases documented but has cure for less than 200. Even here, drugs are failing and very soon no drug will work. Because the entire theory of western medicine is based on false assumptions - that microbes cause diseases and we have to kill microbes with chemical poisons to remain healthy. These chemical drugs kill us too. Diabetes, heart attack and cancer are not caused by bacteria or other microbes. Genetic disorders, sexual and mental diseases are rising sharply. Very soon nobody would be normal and fully healthy, not even the children and youth. It is time to wake up.

Two thirds of Earth is covered with water. 70% of our body is water. Life originated in water. We cannot live

without water. We know all this. Yet we go on damaging the water system, poisoning it everyday with man-made chemicals. All water has already been poisoned. Bottled mineral water is not the solution. The plastic bottles used for packaging drinking water are themselves sufficient to destroy all sources of safe drinking water permanently. You may have a Million dollars in your pocket but you will suffer from hunger and thirst and die unless you wake up today and put an end to all this science and technology and the consequent economic activities.

Think of taking out the chewing gum from your mouth, keeping it in the toilet overnight for cockroaches to feast on, and putting it back into your mouth the next day. Ugly, is it not? Now think of chewing the same gum day after day, each time keeping it in the toilet overnight, exposed to dirt and dust and what not. This is exactly what you do with your tooth brush, right? There can be nothing more unscientific than the tooth brush. This is the worst way to clean your teeth. All dental problems will go away if you give up brushing your teeth with this plastic brush with nylon bristles. Tooth paste is one of the biggest causes of oral cancer. The tooth brush and the tooth paste are a creation of the greedy dental industry. Do not forget history, mankind has lived and lived well for 4.8 Million years without using the modern tooth paste or tooth brush. Practically everything that we have discovered in the last few hundred years in the name of modern science and technology is stupid and harmful. Learn to live like the people who lived a thousand years ago. Give up modern science and technology, or get ready to suffer and die.

Why think of big things, even a simple thing like going to the toilet is now utterly unscientific. Seven Billion people urinate several times a day and each time we use some 10 or 20 litres of water just to flush. What a waste!

The traditional Indian toilet requires you to sit down with the knees fully folded. This opens up the anus and puts up natural pressure on the diaphragm so that the process becomes easy and smooth. Sitting like this is itself a good exercise which keeps your body fit, healthy and slim. Only circus animals sit on a stool or a chair, that too only when threatened by the whip of the ring master. But we think the western style commode is better and we sit like a circus animal. The matter is dropped on water and it splashes back! And you wipe with a paper and you think that is hygiene! Please use the toilet paper and then wash again with water. Collect this water and examine under a microscope. You will realize how dirty you were after using the toilet paper. Wash your hands with soap and examine under a microscope. If you have washed properly, your hands will surely be as clean as clean can be. The traditional, old-fashioned, Indian way of going to the toilet is truly scientific. The modern, western, technologically advanced toilets are the worst. Going out to the wild to attend the calls of nature is the best, having a toilet inside the house is unhygienic. The modern toilet system is a creation of the porcelain and plumbing industry. It is unfortunate that governments are making huge efforts to get rid of natural, safe, time tested methods and promoting modern industry-friendly eco-unfriendly toilet systems even in rural areas. Science, technology, industry, business, government are all joining hands to destroy the world. Fight them all.

Commercial advertisements claim that your hair gets spoiled by atmospheric pollution and their soap or shampoo is the solution to keep your hair strong and healthy. Who causes pollution? Is it not the plastic bottle or sachet in which the soap or shampoo is packed the very cause of that pollution? Are you not polluting the water bodies with the soap or shampoo? Think. Question. Have an open mind. Experiment. Find the truth for yourself.

Do not go by what others say. We live in a fake, bogus, false world today. Everybody is out there to exploit you, cheat you. Knowledge is the only weapon you can have. Seek knowledge, true knowledge. Free yourself from the bondage of ignorance.

1.59 Fish out of Water

Look at the world today. There is war. Science and technology are the prime movers of the war machinery. Do you need science and technology for peace? There is murder, rape, abduction, torture, exploitation, theft, robbery, cheating, inequality, injustice, pain, suffering, all over the world. Perhaps more so than in the past. Do you find health, peace, harmony, happiness, satisfaction, joy everywhere? What is wrong with the whole world?

The human society is after progress and advancement. We may make great progress, fantastic developments, but we will never be satisfied. Development is one thing, fulfillment is another. What gives us complete satisfaction, total happiness, endless joy, nothing but bliss is fulfillment, not development. We must seek fulfillment. We will then be able to live a full, glorious life. We can then get the most of this great opportunity thrown at us in the form of a human life. We must understand life, we must understand ourselves, we must seek the real, complete knowledge of the self.

Why do we never get one hundred percent satisfaction in anything? Why do we always see some vacuum, some void in our lives? Why can't we simply stay in one place, do nothing, and still feel happy and comfortable? Why are we ever restless? Why do we keep on doing something or the other? Why can't we get blissful sleep like a baby?

Why are we always complaining about something or the other? If we stay back at home we get bored and we would like to go out. If we go out we get bored and tired soon and we wish to go back home. We are not one hundred percent satisfied here and we are not fully satisfied there either. We keep going round and round in endless meaningless circles in life, never getting full satisfaction, never feeling completely happy, never getting the peace and tranquility that we aspire for. We are always restless. Why do we always feel like fish out of water?

Because we are fish out of water! Bring a fish from the ocean, put it on a golden throne in the most beautiful palace and give it the rarest of the gems and the grandest of the jewelery. Will it be happy? The fish would only want to go back to water. Nothing else makes it feel at home. Because water is its home, its natural abode. That is where it belongs. Put it back in water and it is back to its normal glory. We feel restless, dissatisfied, lonely, depressed all the time because we have come away from where we belong. We have wandered into a false world of attractions, getting tempted all the time but never getting anything real out of it. To feel at home, we must go back home. We must go back to where we belong. There is no other way.

And to do all that, we need to understand our own true nature. Only then will we know where we belong and how to get there. Knowledge, true knowledge, knowledge of the truth, is the most powerful weapon in our hand. Half knowledge, half-baked knowledge, improper knowledge, imperfect knowledge will not do. That may only confuse us further. We need to understand not only the true nature of the world but also the true nature of ourselves. This is the only way.

1.60 No Substitute for Knowledge

After a long day's work you eagerly walk towards home as the Sun is setting in the West. You enter the house, happily imagining the refreshing shower and a hot cup of coffee. It is quite dark inside. Suddenly you shudder, scared to death, as you see a huge snake on the floor right in front of you. All the adrenaline in the body is released at once. You are shocked. Two more seconds of deadly fear. Then your intellect re-starts working. You muster courage, slowly and carefully take two steps backwards and open the window and let some light in. You see that the snake is lying there motionless, flat on the floor. It is not moving. It has the same thickness throughout, normally the tail tapers, right? Is it a snake at all? You wipe your eyes and look carefully. Oh God, what a relief! It is only a rope and not a snake at all! Our eyes can see not only what is present but also what is not!

When you saw the snake in the rope, it was finally the light from the window that showed you the truth. All of our problems are because of the darkness of ignorance. Only the light of knowledge can remove it. There is no other way.

Would praying help? It would have perhaps helped you to maintain courage and confidence. It is surely very helpful. But by itself it could not have revealed the truth. Faith, devotion, prayer, meditation - these are all extremely useful devices but they are only supportive in nature. They may even be considered necessary but they are not sufficient. Only knowledge can remove ignorance.

What about action? Action and work are necessary but not sufficient. You had to move back and open the window to let some light in. This is action. But truth was revealed not because you moved two steps or because you

opened the window. It was only because of the light of knowledge that you could finally see the truth. If there was no light outside too, the action of opening the window by itself could not have produced any result. Work is worship. You need to develop good work culture and work with devotion and dedication. Discipline, hard work, practice surely help. Practice *yooga*. Develop concentration. But remember that all this is not enough. Without knowledge, you will not be able to get to the truth. Only light can eliminate darkness, only knowledge can eliminate ignorance.

We need stove, vessels etc. for cooking. If we do not have the required kind of vessel, we can still manage with what is available. If we do not have an electric stove, we can manage with a gas stove or a kerosene stove or a wood burning stove. If we do not have any stove, we can still cook by making our own temporary stove by arranging some bricks or stones. We can cook with rice or wheat or whatever ingredients are available. We can manage somehow or the other but if there is no fire, (that is, the capacity to produce heat), we just cannot cook. Of all the ingredients, fire is the most important, the most essential. Likewise, of all the things that we may have at our disposal, knowledge is the one most essential and most important weapon. There is no substitute for knowledge, real knowledge.

Knowledge does not come by merely reading a book, certainly not by browsing the Internet. Listening to lectures is not enough. Knowledge comes only when you think, ponder, meditate deeply for long hours. Knowledge is something that you need to get from your inside, not something that a book or guru can give you from outside. A guru can only prod you, provoke you, guide you, in thinking on the right lines. And that is very important!

The root cause of all human problems is this ignorance, in particular, ignorance of the self. The only thing that is found in abundance today is ignorance. That is why there is so much of suffering. Life has become wretched and meaningless. Learn to respect knowledge, real knowledge, not superficial, pseudo knowledge. Learn to respect knowledgeable people. You stand to gain by bowing down humbly at the feet of the truly knowledgeable gurus. A real guru is one whose knowledge begins where yours ends. Putting your head at his feet is symbolic of acknowledging and accepting this. This is not humiliation, gaining knowledge cannot be humiliating. Falling at somebody's feet is not inequality. The fact is that most people are ignorant and the truly knowledgeable are exceptionally few. Accept the fact. Respect knowledge, forget modern science and all modern subjects, seek real knowledge, get rid of your ignorance and be happy. We shall start our explorations of the self right away, after closing this chapter with a summary of all that we learned so far.

1.61 Summary

Let us now summarize all that we have learned in this chapter. This book is titled 'Freedom'. The goal of life is to live happily, to enjoy life to its fullest. Happiness come from freedom, slaves are not happy. Freedom comes from power. Masters are free, they have power, they are happy, not the slaves. Power does not come from money or material wealth or support of people or technology or bombs. Knowledge is power. Knowledge is everything. We need complete, proper, correct knowledge. Therefore, our main goal here is to seek complete and correct knowledge of everything in the universe. We need to understand life, we need to understand ourselves, we need to understand others and our relationship with them, we need to understand

the whole universe. We need to get complete and proper understanding, we need to understand the true nature or the *svaruupa* of both the external and internal worlds. The true nature, or *svaruupa* is that which is innate, inalienable, un-negatable. This is real knowledge, this knowledge gives us real power, real freedom. This is the only recipe to happiness and bliss. This way we can overcome all problems and live a full, great, glorious life. There is no other way.

Throughout we have been emphasizing the spirit of scientific inquiry. We must never accept or reject anything, not even science, without a proper inquiry. At the same time, we have given a number of reasons as to why modern science itself is unscientific. We have taken pains to explain why exactly modern science and technology cannot lead us to real knowledge or freedom, we have explained why exactly modern science and technology are actually counter productive, even harmful to us. We have not talked about any particular theory or idea or research finding, we have instead looked at the very foundation, the whole philosophy, the very epistemology of modern science. Some of these points relate to how science and technology are being practiced, taught, or applied in society etc., while others attack the very foundations of modern science. We shall quickly summarize the main points towards the end of this section.

It is pointless to go on exploring a thing even before we convince ourselves that it actually exists. Existence is the most fundamental concept that we started our explorations of the universe with. Therefore, right at the beginning, we defined *sat*, *asat* and *mithyaa*. By definition, *sat* has no non-existence. It is always present, everywhere, all the time. It can never be absent anywhere, under any condition, in any state or situation, for any reason whatever. It

cannot be so if it depends upon anything else for its existence. So it has to be absolute and completely independent. It cannot be relative, it cannot be subject to any kind of condition, because otherwise the existence of *sat* cannot be simply guaranteed. Also, it cannot change at all. If something was blue to start with and it became red after a while, should we say the blue thing exists or should we say the red thing exists? Both would be wrong because there was no red thing when it was still blue and there is no blue thing once it becomes red. Therefore, anything which undergoes any kind of change whatever is not *sat*. *sat* can only be the underlying unchanging reality. Thus *sat* is eternal, absolute, independent, invariant in the extreme sense of these terms. This is one extreme end of the spectrum of possibilities. At the other extreme end of the spectrum lies *asat*. *asat* has no existence, it never exists anywhere, anytime, under any conditions, in any form whatever, not even as an imagination in the mind. A vast majority of everything in the world, in fact practically all that is within the ambit of our ordinary life, is neither *sat* nor *asat*. We call these things *mithyaa*. These are things that exist but not absolutely independently. Anything whose existence is relative, conditional, anything which is subject to change, anything which has a birth or a death, anything which grows, transforms or changes in any way whatever, is *mithyaa*. These are definitions. The entire thesis hinges critically on a deep and proper understanding of these dimensions of existence.

It immediately follows from the above definitions that the entire physical world is *mithyaa*, not *sat*. Because the universe has a beginning, it is expanding and changing in various ways, it is not eternal and changeless. There is a common assumption in all of us that we live in this world, this whole world exists independent of us, it was there before we were born and it will go on even after we die. We also take it for granted that the world is external to us, we

are inside this world. These are unprovable assumptions. It is not possible to prove that the world exists independent of us because any proof must invariably involve us as the provers. There can be no proof without the prover and so it is impossible to prove that the world exists independent of us. We should not think of taking the help of other people to prove the existence of the world independent of ourselves because these other people are also part of the same world whose existence itself is being questioned. Therefore, the entire world can only be taken as *mithyaa*, it just cannot be *sat*. We emphasize that *mithyaa* does not mean unreal or completely non-existent. Neither the Earth nor the mountains and oceans nor the animals and plants existed before the Big Bang (or whatever equivalent theory of the origin of the universe you may wish to believe) and none of these will exist after the Big Crunch or whichever way the Universe meets its end. This world around us is *mithyaa*. This universe appears so real that we do not even think that it can all be unreal. But what appears real need not be real, after all, the whole world of dreams appears equally real as long as we are still dreaming. It is foolish to try to give a proof that the universe exists because a proof given in the waking state about the truth of the same waking state is exactly like proving that the dream world is real while we are still dreaming. Despite all the continuity and apparent commonality of this so called real world, despite what all the ordinary people in the world as also the greatest scientists and philosophers think or say, this whole world can only be *mithyaa*, it just cannot be *sat*. This universe is temporary, it is fast changing, it is undependable. It exists only in a relative sense, we experience this world, that too only in our waking state, and therefore it is a tentative, subjective, personal reality for us as long as we are in this state. In dreams we can see without light, with our eyes closed, we can even see objects that do not exist. Hence there is really no *pramaatR-pramaaNa-*

prameeya vyavahaara. Mere imagination of all this makes it possible to have a completely realistic worldly experience. Even in the waking state, the whole world experience we have is made possible by mere imagination that I am the perceiver/knower and there are all these objects and actions that can be perceived/known. There is really no difference between the dream world and the world of the waking state.

All this does not mean that we should completely ignore or forget this world. We are born in this practical world, we live here, we all think, talk, learn, teach, work, live in this practical external world. Certain illusions are short lived. Dreams last only as long as we are dreaming. But this world lasts all through our life. Perceptions, learning, knowledge, work, suffering, enjoyment are all part of this practical world. This external world is a *vyavahaarika satya*, a practical reality. In fact the very purpose of this book is to understand life at this practical level, so that we can all live happily and enjoy life to its fullest. It is nevertheless very important to understand the true nature of the world, it is very important and useful to distinguish between *sat* and *mithyaa*. The world is only a practical reality, in the ultimate analysis, it cannot be said to exist independently, it is therefore only *mithyaa*.

Human beings undergo endless pain and suffering in life only because they go after *mithyaa*. The attraction of *mithyaa* is great and it is very hard to resist its temptations. Only those who have a strong, well trained and mature mind, only those who are able to withstand all the distracting forces of *mithyaa*, only those who are able to seek the *sat* unswervingly are actually totally free. Only they are the masters, only they lead a full, happy, satisfying, fulfilling, glorious life. Others are slaves, slaves of their own mental passions, they drag on life with great difficulty,

they suffer and die. Therefore, our goal here is to seek the *sat*, it is this knowledge of the *sat* which will liberate us from all our bondage, it is this knowledge which will relieve us of all pain and suffering in life once and for all. We must seek the eternal truth, the changeless reality. Progress, development and advancements are hollow concepts, they do not apply to truth, truth never changes, whatever changes is not truth, it can only be *mithyaa*. Seeking *sat* is the goal of this book.

We normally understand this world in terms of objects and attributes. We know of attributes through perception and we know the existence of objects through inference - there must be some object upon which we can impose all its attributes, right? All attributes are imposed on the objects by the observer, attributes are never innate to any object. Attributes have no independent existence, only objects can have. If you strip off all attributes of an object one by one, what finally remains is the object, this will be its true nature or *svaruupa*. Objects without attributes are indescribable. They have no name or form. Change is nothing but variation in the attributes, so the objects themselves cannot change at all. From this it follows that there cannot be two or more different objects in this universe. Objects themselves cannot be different from one another, all differences are only at the level of attributes and we get to the level of objects only after we get rid of all attributes. Therefore, there can be but one object in this whole universe. This object is indescribable, it has no name or form, names are given by us, for our convenience, names and forms do not exist outside of our minds. This is the *svaruupa* or true nature of the world.

Even space and time do not exist independently. Space and time are not objects in themselves because we think objects are located in space and time. If something is nei-

ther an object nor an attribute, there will be just no way of knowing it and so we will be compelled to say that they do not exist at all. But we do experience space and time in our lives. Therefore, space and time can only be attributes of some object, they can only be attributes of the one and only all inclusive object that can exist in this universe. Attributes are themselves not real, they are imagined and imposed by an observer, so space and time are not real. *sat* has been defined as absolutely independent existence, it exists independent of even space and time. It is space-less, time-less. Since we cannot easily imagine space-less-ness and time-less-ness, we may say *sat* is all-pervading and eternal.

The universe exists, it exists for us the way we perceive it, it is our subjective, tentative reality, it exists only as long as we are in the waking state, it is ever changing and hence undependable. All the things in the world come and go, they keep changing and so are not *sat*. Fine, but can we at least prove that they exist temporarily in their *mithyaa* form? Can we prove that the Mount Everest or the Pacific Ocean actually exists today? All scientific evidence, including whatever data we may gather from advanced scientific instrumentation and laboratory experiments, finally requires the human mind to perceive, know, and then assert that these things actually exist. If we take the human being out of the loop, nothing can be proved whatever. Therefore, any proof that is given about the existence of anything in the external world is a conditional proof, it is incomplete unless and until we prove that we ourselves exist. If I do not exist, I can give no proof whatever that the world exists. Thus, even to give a proof that the external world exists as *mithyaa*, we need to first prove that we exist. Our bodies are not permanent. We have a birth and a death. How can we prove that the world exists now, it existed before I was born and it will continue to exist, at

least for some more time after I die? Unless we understand who exactly we are, unless we get a precise meaning for this all important notion of the self, we will not be able to prove or disprove anything. Modern science has so far chosen to ignore the internal world, the world of ourselves. Hence anything and everything that modern science has shown us so far is questionable. Entire world of science is incomplete, imperfect and dubious. Give up your fancy for modern science and technology. Seek real knowledge, seek the ultimate truth. It is within your capacity, you can get it.

Modern science has gone wrong in many ways. Let us recapitulate all the points we have made in this chapter against modern science and technology. We have made tremendous progress in science and technology in the past few hundred years. Progress has been exponential, we are progressing faster and faster. But modern science has no clear goal or direction. Why do we want progress in the first place? What is the final target? We have no idea when we will reach there and what we will get there. Will all problems get solved permanently once and for all? No one knows what we will do thereafter. We are running like mad towards nowhere, this can be very dangerous. This is not the way. To get the right results we must start by asking the right questions. Modern science does not even ask the right questions connected with our life - who am I, why have I come here, what is the goal of my life, how to live, what is the true nature of myself, what is the true nature of the world, what is the relationship between the two etc. We are seeking progress and development but we do not seem to understand these terms. Concepts of progress and development have been completely distorted by science and technology. Human beings are thinking animals, human development means becoming more humane through better understanding of ourselves, of our own minds. De-

velopment does not mean exploiting and destroying nature for the mere comforts and convenience of our bodies. Are we merely bodies? This whole view is based on ignorance of the self. What knowledge can ignorant scientists, who do not even know who exactly they are, give to others? How can we depend on them for solving our problems in life?

Modern science starts by making tacit but invalid, unproven, in fact unprovable assumptions. It takes existence for granted, existence is merely a declaration in western logic. Modern science goes on describing the universe even before it proves that the universe exists. It assumes that there is a world, it is external to us, it is common to us all, we live in this world, this world belongs to us, not the other way round, we have to exploit this world to live happily. All of this is plain wrong. Modern science does not bother to define critical terms precisely. Concepts like truth, proof, cause, freedom, life etc. are not understood or defined precisely. How can we expect anything meaningful out of such an endeavour?

Modern science avoids taking up big questions directly. In fact modern science discourages asking big questions. Why are these scientists scared? Is it because they know they cannot get any final answers through their methods? No one dares to ask difficult questions - where is space, what exactly is time, what exactly is gravity, why only attraction in gravity, why is there gravity in the first place, for example. How can I see in my dreams without light or objects? Why can't I see like that when I am awake? Who are these two 'I's? Same? No answers. Even for simple questions such as why is the sky blue science has no clear answers. Modern science chooses what is easy and doable, rather than what is right or required.

All of modern science is superficial, materialistic, filled with loads of trivial facts and figures but no insights. Science gets bogged down by details, there is no holistic, deep thinking or analysis. Everything is lax, loose, full of approximations and idealizations. Everything is tentative, relative, conditional, no final answers anywhere. Modern science is obsessed with True-False only, discrimination between Right-Wrong and Good-Bad is completely ignored, hence irrelevant and useless for life. Modern sciences places itself away from religion. Exclusivity cannot lead us to the ultimate truth underlying the whole universe. The term universe means the all inclusive whole, there cannot be anything outside of it, religion is also part of this universe, how can we exclude religion? Religion can be and should be scientific too and science can be and should be practiced with the same seriousness as religion. Science should not be a profession, it should be our life. Modern science completely ignores and winks at the very large, well established, long standing, time tested, proven scientific work done in ancient India. The whole of what we call science today is very very recent, at most a few hundred years old, nothing at all compared to the 4.8 Million years of history of mankind on planet Earth. Modern science has not stood the test of time. There seems to be a deliberate attempt to overshadow the past, creating a myopic view of our own history, giving an impression to people that everything that existed long ago is out-dated, unscientific, or even foolish. Modern science limits itself largely to exploration of only the external, physical, material world, completely ignoring the question of the self. This is half knowledge and therefore very dangerous. Truth can never be discovered through modern science and there is no point exploring falsity. Modern science bears no relation to happiness, fulfillment, satisfaction, peace or happiness. It is completely divorced from life.

Scientific research publications are rarely self-contained, they invariably include a large number of references and so constitute only a partial, conditional proof, if at all. The logic systems on which modern science is based is itself flawed, it takes out the human element, the prover, the reasoner, forcing it to be divorced from the self, from life. All that is said about the external, material world that we experience in our waking state is said in the same state of being awake, all experiments, observations and inferences are made within the same state, all proofs are given within the same state. This is like proving that the dream world is real while we are still dreaming. The whole of modern science will crumble into vacuum once we wake up from this confused state. Modern science proudly announces that all scientific theories must be falsifiable. Therefore, by its own imposition, modern science can never get to the truth, after all, truth cannot be falsified. Modern science is limited to the discovery of laws, not truth. Law is falsifiable, truth is not. Given all this, it is still OK to accept the external physical world as a tentative reality for our day to day living, but this cannot be called science, this is not reality.

All of modern science is based on the Experiment-Observation-Inference paradigm but it never bothers to ask who is the experimenter or what exactly we mean by observation. It takes perception through sense organs to be direct perception and this so called direct perception is taken as a valid means to seek correct knowledge. The senses are very unreliable, totally undependable. Seeing is not believing, no correlation has been established between what we see and the reality. Contrary to common claims, modern science is not based on direct perception, direct perception is what the perceiver in us perceives. The eye is not the seer and the ear is not the hearer. We know only what our mind projects for us to see or hear, objectively knowing the outside world is impossible. There are transducers sitting

between the sense organs and the real perceiver deep inside us. The perceiver can never directly observe the sensory inputs. Therefore, these transducer systems can never be modelled. No human being can, all of us have such unknown, uncharacterized, uncalibrated systems in us. No instrument will help since we need to depend on our sense organs to calibrate them and to use them. Therefore, the whole of modern science is completely unscientific, simply invalid. Mere repeatability and consistency do not constitute a proof. After all, a computer program can consistently give the same wrong answer all the time.

Science and Technology have failed on every count all over. We only have to open our eyes and see with a clear, unbiased mind. We have given examples of how our love affair with modern science and technology in agriculture, dairy, medicine, etc. have completely failed and destroyed everything. War, terrorism, theft, robbery, looting, murder, rape, child abuse, cruelty, cheating, exploitation, inequality, injustice, poverty, malnutrition, hunger, disease are all continuing, in fact increasing. We are still trumpeting all this as scientific progress and technological advancement, as if under the influence of some unknown magical force. Why do we want faster and faster developments? Why do we want to replace ourselves with machines? Why are we keen on rushing towards the end? Science, technology, industry, business and economic development are leading to large scale exploitation and destruction of the whole world. Money does not fall from the sky, economic development simply means exploitation of natural resources. Many species of life forms are gone for ever. The core element of life is same in all species. If other forms of life can go extinct, human life also can. Can the human race survive at all? Science and Technology are not the solutions, they are the very cause of all of our problems today. Science, technology, industry, business, economic develop-

ment and government policies, media are all based on the most powerful combination of ignorance, foolishness and greed. We do not have enough time to convince the scientists or the governments or the media. Individuals must realize and change. It is time to wake up, we may still have a few last minutes left, we may still be able to survive, provided we wake up right now.

Technology should be at our service but today we have become slaves of technology. If you think you cannot live without electricity or petroleum or cars or computers or mobile phones, that is a sure test that you have enslaved yourself, you have lost your freedom, you are destined to suffer and die. It is time we realize this, it is time we understand limitations and drawbacks of science and technology, it is time we focus and highlight the other, dark, negative side of science and technology. Science and technology are neither essential nor good for us, only harmful. This change in our attitude is the most important thing that our education systems must bring in. Otherwise we will all perish very soon. We have been cutting off the very branch of the tree on which we are sitting and there is no hope of survival unless we realize our foolishness and give up what all we are doing today in the name of progress and development.

You may find this book full of strange and perhaps difficult to digest ideas. This happens because modern science, and all other scientific, religious or philosophical schools of thought are heavily influenced by our experiences in the waking state. They take the existence of the external world, of other people, of the body and mind for granted, without any proof, without even a proper inquiry. Existence is something so very extraordinary that we just cannot take it for granted. Non-existence is in fact the default. Existence needs to be questioned and examined.

Variety needs to be questioned and examined. Simply taking everything for granted is not in the spirit of true science. You will get a complete and correct picture only if you take into account the sum total of human experiences in all the states, including the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states, without any bias for one state or the other.

To go from place x to place y, we must give up our hold on x. Likewise, to move from ignorance to knowledge, we must be ready to understand and accept our ignorance, we must be ready to give up our ignorance. We must be willing to question widely held beliefs, we must be ready to accept whatever finally comes out as the truth, however counter-intuitive it may sound. Truth is not a game of numbers, it does not matter how many people agree or disagree. Do not listen to scientists, they are teaching you to question everything. If you question everything there will simply be questions everywhere and no answers. The society will be confused and disillusioned. Modern science is destabilizing the whole of human society. Do not listen to scientists. All people can go wrong, we have seen several examples of this in the history of mankind - flat Earth, alchemy, blood sucking doctors, and so on. You must question but you must discover the truth also by yourself.

Give up our fancy for modern science and technology, give up your attachment to money and material wealth. Seek the truth instead. Seek real knowledge, seek freedom, seek life. Seek the knowledge of the self, know who exactly you are, why you have come to this world, what is it that you should or should not be doing here. Learn to live, learn to enjoy life. Be happy.

We can in fact summarize the whole chapter in just one line: “*asatoo maa sadgamaya*” meaning, “Oh Lord, take me away from *asat* and towards *sat*”.

We have started questioning and built up some useful background in this chapter. Although we have tried to explain giving a variety of arguments and evidences, you may still not have been fully convinced of all that we have said in this chapter. That is perfectly fine. We shall give alternative, stronger, more convincing arguments in the next chapter. The final, complete picture will emerge only after we have explored the other part of the universe, namely our own internal world. We shall therefore start exploring ourselves, right away, now and here. Whenever you feel like saying ‘I do not understand’ ask who does not understand. Whenever you say ‘I cannot accept this’ ask who cannot accept this. Whenever you get confused, ask who got confused. Before you say ‘I think ...’, think who this ‘I’ is. This is the only way to know yourself. Keep this in mind and read on.

Chapter 2

The Self

2.1 Who am I?

This book is about life. The objective is to understand all aspects of human life so that we can live well and enjoy life to the fullest. For this, we need to understand ourselves, we need to understand the whole world, both external and internal. In the previous chapter we started our quest with the exploration of the external world. We normally take it for granted without questioning that there is an external world in which we live, and this external world is common to all of us and it exists independent of us. We have questioned these assumptions and we have now understood that these assumptions are invalid. All that I can say is, there is a world which I experience when I am awake, this is my personal world, it is what it appears to me, that is all. I cannot say anything more about this world. The very existence of this world is conditioned on my existence, its description is what I perceive or know it as, and so my knowledge of the universe will be incomplete until and unless I understand myself in full. If you have not read the first chapter fully or you read it long ago and you have already forgotten it all, you may wish to go back and refresh or at least take another look at the last section which

summarizes the entire chapter. The present chapter is all about our ourselves, about our internal world. By the end of this chapter we will be able to give final answers to all the big questions we have started this book with. In the light of the knowledge and understanding of these scientific and philosophical foundations, we shall then continue to explore our life at a purely practical level in the third chapter.

We keep making all kinds of statements about ourselves: 'I am tall', 'I had a fall', 'I am hungry', 'I am angry', 'I like sweets', 'I am scared of cats', 'I know physics', 'I dread mathematics', 'I am', and so on. Who is this 'I'? Are we talking about the same 'I' in all these cases or are there different 'I's'?

When I say 'I am tall', I actually mean my body is tall. 'My legs are aching' is a convenient short cut for the more precise 'my body's legs are aching'. But when I say 'I hate mathematics' I do not mean 'my body hates mathematics'. Perhaps I mean 'my mind hates mathematics'. What do I mean when I say 'I am'? Of course my body is there but is that all? What else is there?

We identify ourselves with our body and also say this is our body. Is this not illogical? It is easy to see that we have a body. But we are not just a body, something more. We all think we have some knowledge. What is knowledge? Knowledge is certainly not a physical, material thing. What exactly do we mean when we say we possess knowledge? How exactly can we possess something which is not a physical thing? Our body had a beginning and it has an end. Material objects have birth, growth, transformations, decay and death. Knowledge, or anger, or desire, or love, not being materials, these do not have a birth or a death, or change or growth or decay or deterio-

ration. Where did this knowledge come from? What will happen to my knowledge after I die? What will happen to my desires?

When we see more than one ‘chair’, which we can point to, identify and count, we refer to the collection by using the plural form ‘chairs’. The same way, we can point and count a ‘he’ here and another ‘he’ there and perhaps yet another ‘he’ yonder there, we use the plural form ‘they’ to refer to all these ‘he’s as a whole. Going by this logic, we think that ‘we’ is the plural of ‘I’. Right? Wrong! You can point to yourself and say ‘I’ but can you show me anybody else whom you can call ‘I’? There is one and only one ‘I’. How can ‘we’ be the plural of ‘I’? Just think. The word ‘we’ actually refers to ‘I’ and ‘you’ and may be ‘he’ and ‘he’ and ‘she’ and all of us put together, it cannot refer to a collection of ‘I’-s.

Do not get confused and say he can say ‘I’ from his point of view and she can also say ‘I’ from her point of view and so there are many ‘I’s. Whatever we say, we must say only from our own stand point. Otherwise, I can refer to you as ‘I’ or as ‘he’/‘she’ and all these words will become totally meaningless. There cannot be two or more ‘I’s in this universe. Think.

We say I saw this in my dream and then we say I am now seeing a chair in front of me. Who saw the dream and who is seeing the chair now after waking up? The seer of dreams can see without the eyes, without light and even without the object being seen while the seer of the waking state cannot. Likewise, the listener of dreams can hear without any vibrating body or sound waves travelling through a medium. The listener of the waking world cannot. Further, if the same seer was seeing, why is it that we cannot remember the dreams fully? If we see a movie in

a theatre and then come home and continue seeing things at home, we can remember the whole movie in great detail. The seer of the dreams is not aware that he is in the dream state but the seer of the waking state is aware that he is in the waking state, he has this meta-knowledge. The perceiver of dreams and the perceiver in the waking state cannot be one and the same. Then who exactly am I? Am I the seer of dreams or the seer of the waking world or both or none? Or am I the 'seer' of deep sleep, who sees nothing at all? If the seer of the deep sleep state sees or knows nothing at all, how then do we wake up and say I 'know' that I just had a good, refreshing, deep, sleep? Who knows this? I can see and I can see that I can see. I am aware of the world, I am aware of myself and I am aware that I am aware. Who is aware? Who knows all this? Who am I?

We all keep saying things like 'this is my village', 'this is my house', 'he is my son', 'this is my pen', 'this is my body', 'this is my eye' and 'this is my opinion'. We say 'this is my seat' while we are travelling in a train or bus. Is my son mine in the same sense in which my pen is mine? Is my eye mine in the same sense in which my pen is mine? I can give away my pen to some one, can I give away my eyes in the same manner? I will never say 'my cap' to refer to my pen's cap but I say 'my eye' for my body's eye! What exactly do we mean by 'I' and 'my' or 'mine'?

Clearly this 'I' is not such a simple and easy to understand thing. No wonder modern science has conveniently kept the knowledge of the self completely out of its scope. But we shall not give up so easily. For, the existence of the world is conditional to our own existence. There is no point exploring the external world without exploring ourselves first. We shall explore ourselves. We shall not fall into the trap of half knowledge. We shall go on and seek the knowledge of the self but the usual methods of science do

not help. I cannot perceive or know or understand myself as I can perceive or know or understand the objects in the so called external world, because here I need to perceive the perceiver, I need to know the knower, I need to understand the understander in me. I need to understand myself. To do this, we need to take a very different approach. We shall boldly go beyond the limits of modern science but we shall remain utterly logical and scientific throughout. This shall not be vague and nebulous philosophical wanderings, this shall be a truly scientific exploration. This will be real science. Read on!

2.2 The Body World

We are born in our bodies, we live in it throughout our lives and we die when we cast away our withered body. We have lived every moment of our life from birth to death in our bodies. We have seen it grow, we have seen it mature, we have seen it suffer from diseases, we have seen it age, we have seen it weakening. There is not a single moment in our active life where we do not have the company of our bodies. Naturally we develop a great sense of attachment to our body, so much so that we start thinking that we are ourselves our body, we start identifying ourselves with our body. This is the worst kind of ignorance, because it is very difficult to get over.

The entire modern system of education, research, professional life, government policies, everything is based on the assumption that 'I = My Body'. Agriculture is all about producing food for the body. Medicine, health care, fitness programmes, sports, exercise are all for maintaining the body in good shape. Many think that even *yooga* is only for health and fitness of the body. Architecture and civil engineering is all about constructing homes and

buildings to protect our bodies from the vagaries of nature and to provide maximum comfort to our bodies. Automobiles, trains, aircraft are all designed to move our bodies from place to place with maximum comfort and convenience for the body. Our mind can go from anywhere to anywhere without any of these right? Electrical gadgets and home appliances like refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, mixer-grinder, microwave oven, fans, air conditioners are all designed to reduce the hardships and maximize the comfort and convenience of the body. Furniture is for the body. The hotel industry is for the body. Dairy is for the body. Our education system includes only subjects meant for the body. Practically everything that human beings are engaged in the world today is for the comfort and convenience of the body. People think that a person is healthy if his or her body is healthy. Human development is measured in terms of life span and birth-death ratios, infant mortality, body health indices, etc. We spend all our lives earning money and buying gadgets to maximize the comfort and convenience of our body. The industry is for the body. Business is for the body. Economics is for the body. Somebody, anybody, everybody, nobody - our language is all body oriented. Body, body, body, as if we are all mere bodies.

Think of a brain dead person 'living' with the help of life support system in a hospital. He is breathing, his heart is beating, blood circulation is fine, body is warm, everything is fine with his body, but doctors would say he already is dead. Life is not all about breathing or blood circulation or normal functioning of the body metabolism. Living means something more, much more. We are living because we are conscious. We can think, feel, perceive, know. Without our feelings and emotions, agony and ecstasy, pains and pleasures, life has no meaning at all. Our hair or nails, our bones or blood, our skin or chin, our hands or legs, our

eyes or ears cannot feel, think, know anything. They are all made up of cells, and cells are made up of atoms and molecules. No cell, no atom or molecule, no electron, proton or neutron in them, can think, or feel, or experience life. They are all inert and insentient. They all simply follow the laws of physics and chemistry. Our nerves and brain cells are no different. The brain cannot think, know, feel or experience life any more than the knee or the buttocks. Our body, every part of it including the brain, are inert and insentient. Life does not mean the physics, chemistry and biology going on inside our bodies. Exactly the same processes can be replicated in a life-less laboratory equipment. The difference between living and non-living beings is not physics or chemistry or biology. Living beings are conscious, non-living beings are not. Our bodies are not conscious. We are not our bodies. We are very different from it, fundamentally different. Life will lose all meaning if we start equating ourselves with our bodies. This is the disaster that modern scientific thinking has brought out in the recent history of mankind. Life has lost its meaning. Human values are gone. People think the goal of life is to make money, buy gadgets and pamper the body. Nothing can be worse than this. It is time we wake up.

2.3 A Dialogue

Let us consider a hypothetical dialogue between two persons, say, Ram and Shyam:

Ram: Who are you?

Shyam: I am Shyam.

Ram: Oh, but I did not ask your name, I asked who you are.

Shyam: I am a Professor in this University, I teach Philosophy.

Ram: Good, but my question was not about your profession or affiliation. Shyam: I am sorry, perhaps I did not get what exactly you wanted to know. I am the first son of my father, who teaches science in the nearby public school. I was born in India but we have been living in the US for the past 39 years. I like music and I do a bit of painting too. I play football and I hate cricket.

Ram: I am glad to know all that but my question remains. Who are you?

Shyam: (Puzzled), what do you mean? Can't you see me standing right here in front of you? I am this very person (shows his body) talking to you.

Ram: Are you your body?

Shyam: This is my body, that is for sure.

Ram: Are you your body?

Shyam: This body, this mind, this is all mine.

Ram: If it is 'yours' then it is not 'you'. Who are you?

Shyam: I give up. I do not know.

Ram: That is a great step forward! Accepting our ignorance and getting humble is the very first step in gaining knowledge. You have crossed the first hurdle. I am very glad.

Like water, knowledge comes down to those who take a low position, bent down in humbleness. Do not feel shy to accept your ignorance. Admitting our ignorance is the necessary first step in gaining knowledge. Those who arrogantly keep their head high will find that even the little knowledge they have will leak away over time. A dry and barren tree stands tall and erect while a tree full of fruits bends down in humility. Those who think they know everything, those who think they know many things, those who think they know as much or more than others, those who question everything and everybody, those who are bent upon showing off what all they know, those who take pleasure in pointing out the weaknesses of others, these

people will never gain real knowledge. There is something to learn even from the tiny ant. Get humble. Accept your ignorance. Knowledge will then seek you.

Let us all first accept that we do not know who exactly we are or why we have come here to this world or what is the goal of our life. That is why are unable to make the most of this life.

2.4 The Ancestral Axe

There was a man who was very proud of his axe - it was his ancestral property. It had come down to him over many generations. Only the blade had been changed thrice and the handle seven times!

Our body is exactly like that. Our skin cells die and wither off everyday. Blood cells last only for about a month. New cells are formed and dead ones are thrown out. We clip our nails and hair regularly. In fact the entire body, every living cell, is renewed completely once in about 7 years. Our bodies are 100% new once in about every seven years. We live for nearly a 100 years. How many times do our bodies get a complete make over? We still think we are our bodies. Which body are we talking about? My body, every cell in it, might have changed several times but I am still the same old person that I have always been right from my birth. My body has changed, I have not changed. Therefore, 'I = My Body' is not a valid equation. I am not my body. I just cannot be.

You donated your eyes to him. You die but he is still seeing through your eyes. Are you dead or alive? You know of blood transfusion, kidney transplant, heart transplant, skin grafting, and one fine day we may even have a brain

transplant. Which body are you talking about? By receiving his kidney, eyes, heart and blood do you become him? No, not even in part. You may lose your finger or whole hand. Does not matter. You remain who you were. Your identity does not change. Parts may change, attributes may change, the object remains the same. I am not my body.

I am tall and thin. She is fat and stout. He is ill. This man has one leg amputated. That man is bald. I am hungry. I have a bad cold. I am suffering from fever. I am getting old. I am weak. My hair is beautiful. She is the most beautiful lady on Earth. This is how we normally think and talk. As if we are our bodies. We are born with our body, we grow and live in it throughout our life. The bondage between us and our bodies is so strong that it takes effort to realize that we are not just our bodies. Even our language shows this mix up. We don't say my body is tall, do we? But we are not our bodies. Make sure you fully understand this. This is the very first step in our quest for the knowledge of the self.

2.5 I and my Body

I was born. I grew. I transformed into an adult. I aged. My hairs grew gray. Hairs fell, I became bald. Teeth withered. Skin wrinkled. Body became weak. On fine day, I breathed my last. My body undergoes these six phases - existence in pre-birth form, birth, growth, transformation, decay and death, like every other physical, material object. With every change, do I become a different person? In common parlance, we often say somebody has completely changed. We only mean there is a great change in some of the attributes, we do not actually mean that object A had become a completely different object B. Let there be

no confusion. Objects do not and cannot change. Only attributes show variations. My body changes. I remain the same individual. This is a proof that I am not the same as my body. I am not identically equal to my body. Because my body keeps changing, it must be my attribute, not I per se.

My body has many parts. I am one. I identify myself with my eyes when I say 'I see' and I associate myself with my ears when I say 'I hear' and I associate myself with my whole body when I say 'I am tall'. Are there so many 'I's? This I-ness or I-sense is felt in every part, all over my body. I must be something which pervades all parts of my body. I cannot be any one part or organ. I do not get a sense of 'I' in my fallen hair or clipped nails or any other part of the body that has been cut off. If my fingers got cut in the banging door, I do not look at my fingers lying on the floor and think or say 'I am lying on the floor over there', do I? I cannot be my body or any part of it. I cannot be my brain, brain is also a part of my body like any other. Who then sees, hears, knows, feels, experiences life?

I see, I hear, I feel, I taste, I smell. The eyes, the ears, the skin, the tongue, the nose are different but I am the common experiencer in all cases. The eye never hears and the ears never see. I see, hear and do all of these. Therefore I cannot be any of my senses, individually or collectively.

We normally think that the eyes see, the ears hear, or the hands do the work. I do all these using these body parts, they cannot see or hear or work or do anything on their own, without my involvement. My body, all its parts, including the brain, are only instruments, I am the knower, I am the doer. I see my body, my body is the seen, I am the seer. The body and all its parts are insentient, I am the conscious, sentient being, different from my body.

When we see a car, we immediately recognize it. Even if we see only a part of the car, we can recognize it. Many parts may be occluded or hidden but we see the car in whatever portion we see. The 'car-ness' pervades all parts of the car and even if some parts are hidden, removed, damaged or changed, the same 'car-ness' continues. If, on the other hand, the car is dismantled completely, and we are given all the parts, the complete set but in some random assorted arrangement, still we do not see any car, we see only the parts. 'Car-ness' is lost. Therefore, the whole is not simply the sum, or a combination or arrangement of parts, it is different from that. I cannot be any of my parts or components or organs or organ-systems. I am the one who pervades all of that.

I can give you a book because the book is what I possess, it belongs to me, it is mine, not I. We can only alienate what is ours, we cannot alienate ourselves. We can donate our body parts, we can lose them, regain them. Therefore we are not our bodies, not any part of it, not all the parts put together. If I equals my body, I should be calling it 'my I'! What is inalienable, whatever I can never lose or give up or give off under any condition is my own true nature or *svaruupa*. What never leaves me at any cost is my *svaruupa*. My body is not my *svaruupa*.

An estimated 10,000 Billion germs live in our body between the mouth and the anus. They are all useful, in fact essential for our survival, they are very much a part of our life. Every one of these living organisms thinks it is its own home, just as we live in our body. Whose body is it anyway? Something does not become yours just because you think or claim so. Even if it does, it will be yours, not you.

We wear our bodies, just as we wear shirts on our bodies. We can remove the shirt and remain without it. Or put on a different shirt. It is possible by the same logic, to get rid of our bodies, remain without it, or put on a new and different body. We do not see such things happening in our daily lives and so it appears strange and impossible. It is very much possible, why not?

My knowledge has changed. My perceptions have changed with time. My habits have changed too. I remain the same person. I am not my habits. My habits are just my characteristics, my properties, my features, my attributes. Likewise, my body is my attribute, it might have changed a lot but I have remained the same I, the same me, the same myself all through. I cannot be my body.

We may change the values of several attributes, again and again but the object remains the same thing throughout. You are an object. Your body is an attribute. Your body may change, you cannot. John cannot become Peter. Even if you change your name from John to Peter, you remain the same person that you always were. Your name is also an attribute and hence can be changed, right?

Birth is not the beginning, death is not the end. Every molecule, every atom, every electron, proton and neutron in my body existed long before I was born and will continue to remain for countless Millions of years even after I die. Body as a whole, in its total, gross form, has a beginning and an end. I do not have a beginning and an end. I am not my body. I am not matter. I am not just physics or chemistry or biology. I am more than all these. Who am I? Am I my mind? What is this mind?

2.6 Dilemma

I want to go out and play football with my friends. Or I better stay back at home and complete my home-work. There is a test tomorrow and my preparation is not very good, I need time to prepare. I am in a dilemma. I am in two minds. What should I do?

I am writing an exam. My preparation is not good. The question paper is tough. I am clueless. I have always been a topper but this time I am afraid I may not even pass. Next to me is a classmate who is a topper too. The invigilator is standing far away at the door, looking outside. Why not use this opportunity and steal a peek into my neighbor's answer book? That way I can at least pass and save all the embarrassment and shame. I dread the scene of my having to show my score card to my parents. What will all my friends think? I just cannot afford to fail. I have always scored very well. I am damn scared. I am tempted. But I have never copied in my life. Cheee! what horrible thoughts! No, I cannot copy, I cannot cheat. How does it matter if I fail once? I can always prepare well and take the exam again. That would be the proper way. But the fear of failing overpowers me. I am damn scared either way. Should I copy? Should I not? I am in a great dilemma. What should I do?

Life is full of such situations. Everyday we come across situations where we are not sure which way to go. We are free either way. I can copy. Or I can submit the blank answer sheet and face the outcome. I am really free to do either of these - there is no external force or compulsion. The question is how to take a decision and get out of the dilemma. Which way to go is the question. To find a good answer to this question, we need to analyze and understand the situation at a deeper level. Who wants me to copy?

Who is asking me not to copy? What does it mean to say I am in two minds? How can I have two minds? Think.

2.7 The *manas* and the *buddhi*

What exactly is dilemma? One mind, so to say, tells me I should go out and play football and enjoy. The other mind, so to say, tells me I should stay back and do some useful work. What exactly are these two minds?

One mind, so to say, is seeking pleasure. It is after the joy of playing. It is not concerned about home work or test or the consequences of neglecting them. It does not seem to be applying logic or reasoning. It is driven by feelings, emotions, and passions. It goes by perceptions, it is driven by likings and dis-likings, not by logic or reasoning. This we shall call *manas*.

The other mind, so to say, is not perturbed by feelings or emotions. It is working with logic. It is applying reason. If you neglect the home work and preparations for the test, the consequences will not be very good. This mind, so to say, can ‘see’ the good from the bad, the true from the false, the right from the wrong. It has the ability to discriminate, think, analyze, prove, come to conclusions, justify them, give explanations, learn. This we shall call *buddhi*.

If you take out sensory perception and all feelings and emotions, what remains? Our ability to carry out deliberative thinking, systematic, logical reasoning, applying thought, bringing our knowledge to bear, identifying alternatives and weighing them, saying the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, the true from the false, thinking like a computer using reason and logic. This is

the faculty of the *buddhi*. The *buddhi* can compare, contrast, weigh alternatives, carry out what-if analysis etc. It can group together similar things and discriminate between things that show some differences. It can learn to do such things. The *buddhi* works with objects, their attributes and values of those attributes. The *buddhi* works exactly like a modern digital computer. It is absolutely devoid of all emotions and feelings.

Clearly, these two aspects called *manas* and *buddhi* are telling us contradictory things - the *manas* is asking me to play and the *buddhi* is asking me to work. I cannot play and work at the same time. Play and work are two different, mutually exclusive physical activities. No doubt there. Two opposing, contradictory and mutually exclusive qualities cannot reside in a single object. A single object cannot be black and white at the same time. If it is, we are looking at it at too gross a level and if we look at it more closely and more carefully, we will be able to distinguish between the black and the white parts. By not making such a distinction, we would only be confusing ourselves with contradictory conclusions. That would be like saying 'I take a spoonful of rice with my body, take it to my body, put it inside my body, chew it with my body and swallow it' instead of saying 'I take a spoonful of rice with my hand, take it to my lips, put it inside my mouth, chew it with my teeth and swallow it'! Can we use the same term for different things? What do we gain, except a whole lot of avoidable confusion? The *manas* and the *buddhi* have very different qualities. Not distinguishing between the two clearly is the greatest source of all of our confusions. It is useless to talk of the brain. To understand ourselves, we need to understand our *manas* and our *buddhi*.

There is no reason or logic as to why you like blue colour

or you hate onions. It is the *manas* that does all the liking and disliking, here *buddhi* has no role to play. When you say 'I want to become a doctor', it may be purely based on the likings and dis-likings of your *manas* or at least partly based on some sort of reasoning. You want to become a doctor because you feel doctors are very useful and there are no doctors in your family. The background reasoning comes from the *buddhi* but the final decision is taken by the *manas*. You cannot take any such decision when you are fast asleep, when the *buddhi* and *manas* are both absent. You can take all kinds of decisions in your dreams, logical or otherwise, using your *manas* without any role for the *buddhi* which is absent in dreams. It is always the *manas* which takes decisions.

The *manas* and the *buddhi* work very closely together and it is often quite difficult for us to understand the interplay between the two until we understand the basic nature of these two. In the temptation to copy example, the observation that the invigilator is standing near the door and looking outside, the fear of failing, the imagination of humiliation and embarrassment on getting a low score, the temptation to copy to avoid such a predicament are all the works of the *manas*. It is the *buddhi* which is analyzing the consequences of copying or not copying, applying reason and logic and giving its considered views. The final decision, one way or the other, is taken by the *manas* and that may or may not be in accordance with what the *buddhi* says. That is why we sometimes take certain decisions and repent later.

Animals work mostly with their *manas* - instincts and simple feelings. It is the *buddhi* that sets man apart from all other creatures in this world. The *buddhi* is the intellect, it is the *buddhi* which we call as intelligence. Without *buddhi*, we would all be reduced to brutes. Lower animals go

mostly by perceptions and natural instincts, they cannot think, reason or learn like we can although some animals show quite a bit of intelligence. Our *buddhi* is what has enabled us to achieve all that we have achieved in science and technology and what not. Naturally, we are all proud of our *buddhi* and we try to make the most of our intelligence. But life is not merely a game of the intellect. Giving too much of importance to the intellect and ignoring the *manas* is really the cause of all problems facing the individual and human society as a whole today. Intelligence is something that even inanimate objects like a computer can exhibit. We should not reduce ourselves to such a low level. Human life is great. Let us understand it fully and make the most of it.

2.8 The Brain

Our brain is capable of symbolic computation. It can do arithmetic with numbers. It can store and process symbolically words and sentences in natural languages. It can store and process various kinds of symbols including mathematical symbols, musical notations, symbols used in chess and other games and puzzles, etc. It can carry out logical reasoning in a step by step fashion. It can calculate, it can reason, it can infer, it can explain, it can justify, it can choose, it can decide. It can solve puzzles and problems. It can generalize and learn from examples. It can formulate, design, organize, cluster, discriminate, classify. It can tell the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, the true from the false. This we call intelligence. This faculty of the brain we call *buddhi*.

It is very important to note that *buddhi* is a purely symbolic processing device exactly like a modern digital computer. It is completely devoid of all feelings and emotions.

If your neighbour has his fingers burnt accidentally, your *buddhi* thinks about it, tries to analyze the possible causes of the accident, the possible effects, what could be done to prevent such accidents in future, what could be done to treat the burns and so on, without any feelings or emotions whatever. If, instead, your own fingers are burnt in an accidental fire, your *buddhi* would still be thinking the same way without any emotions or feelings whatever. It simply 'knows' that the fingers are burnt, it simply 'knows' that burns cause great pain, but does not experience or feel any pain itself. Our *buddhi* is exactly like a computer. If you tell your computer that 4 people died out of cancer, it will say 'OK, I will remember this fact'. If you say 40 Million people died, it will again simply note down this fact without showing any emotion. It knows that 40 Million is more than 4, it can even calculate how much more it is, but this is all mere arithmetic calculations. There are no feelings. Our *buddhi* is no different.

On the contrary, our *manas* is the seat of perception, feelings, emotions, likings and dis-likings, and it is completely devoid of all logic and reasoning. It is purely non-symbolic in nature. The *manas* is the seat of all instincts. It cannot store and process symbolic information, think logically or carry out calculations. Computers have no *manas* at all. They have no feelings, they do not see, hear, feel, experience anything. Without a *manas* we are as good as the dead computers. Life happens in the *manas*, computers do not have a *manas* and that is why they are lifeless.

These two faculties of the human brain are so very different from each other that it would be a big mistake to put them together into one thing and treat it as a single entity. The brain may be a clearly identifiable part of our body and the various faculties of the brain may not be so easily separated in anatomical or physiological terms. But

to talk of the brain as a single entity is the source of all the confusion. Sometimes a distinction is made between the left and the right portions of the brain but even this does not clearly bring out the vastly different nature of the *manas* and the *buddhi*. Any amount of brain studies will not help us to understand who we are or what is life or how to live. It is unfortunate that modern science is continuing to think of the brain merely as a physical organ rather than in terms of its clearly distinguishable functional components.

The *manas* and the *buddhi* are not separate, identifiable physical organs or parts of the human body. They are merely functional components. Both are situated, based, located, housed in the brain and the nervous system. That is why a brain damaged person will show impaired mental abilities - both the *manas* and the *buddhi* can be affected. That is why it is possible to reduce pain by administering pain killers and other anaesthetic chemical drugs into the brain or nervous system. However, we can control pain and other disturbances of the *manas* without these external influences. We can control and bear pain merely by summoning our will power and determination. We can get rid of head ache, anxiety, restlessness etc. through meditation without need for any medicines. A computer can also exhibit many of the functionalities of the *buddhi* although it does not have a brain. Plants also respond in intelligent ways although they do not have any brain or nervous system. Taking the brain for the *manas* and the *buddhi* would therefore be like confusing the TV screen itself for the scenes that we can witness on this screen, or like confusing the computer hardware for its software, or like confusing a house for its owner. If the house is damaged, the owner will naturally feel disturbed. If the telephone line bringing in information from the external world is cut off and the owner is not told the painful news of the demise

of a dear one, he will not experience any pain. The house and its owner are not one and the same. The brain and all the observable phenomena of the brain are mere external manifestations of something much more subtle and deeper inside. That is why even when a portion of the brain associated with a particular function is damaged or removed, the brain can readjust itself and continue to perform these functions as before. The *manas* and the *buddhi* are not just physical matter, the brain is.

The field of ‘Artificial Intelligence’ has made noticeable progress in incorporating some of the faculties of our *buddhi* into computers but the *manas* is totally ignored. The computer’s brain is very similar to our *buddhi* and it is conceivable that we can build some of our intellectual abilities into computing machines. But we will never succeed in our attempts to build the qualities of our *manas* into a computer or a robot. Computers will never be able to see, hear, feel, or experience life as we can, as long as we do not understand our *manas* very well. Computers can mechanically process language, even perform automatic translation etc. but they will never understand the meaning of even a single word in the sense we do. Meanings cannot be represented and processed symbolically, meanings are a property of the *manas*, not of the *buddhi*. Computers can compose poetry or music but cannot enjoy poetry or music. We have today computers which can ‘learn’ from examples but the computer has no desire to learn, no sense of achievement when it successfully learns something, no sense of frustration when it fails. It never wants to learn. In a way this is a good thing - we can make these computers perform routine, boring, repetitive tasks and they never complain, grumble or find ways to avoid work!

It is at best unhelpful to talk in terms of the brain. Our brain, like all other body parts, is made up of cells

and cells are made up of atoms and molecules, which in turn are made up of electrons, protons and neutrons. The brain is inert, insentient, life-less like any other part of the human body. Do not confuse life for the manifestations of life. The brain is only the stage in which the drama of life may be witnessed. The stage and the drama are two separate things. I am not my brain. When I say 'I like mangoes' it is not my brain which likes mangoes. I am not my brain. No point taking of the brain anymore.

2.9 The *manas*

The *manas* says 'I like blue colour'. Can you say why you like blue colour? Is there any logic? There is no logic or reason in *manas*. It just goes by its own whims and fancies.

Every smoker has a *buddhi* which knows, understands and tells him in clear terms that smoking is not good and he must give up. The *manas* does not care for all this logic and reasoning. It goes by passion. Smokers continue to smoke as long as they continue to listen to their *manas* rather than their *buddhi*.

Nobody has ever given us any proof that money gives us happiness. We keep seeing super rich people who are not at all happy and utterly poor people who are totally happy and satisfied. Our *buddhi* knows that money is not what we should be seeking. But our *manas* cannot resist the temptation. We fall prey to the passions of our own *manas*. We become slaves of our own *manas*, we lose freedom, we suffer.

It is the *manas* that imagines. It is the *manas* that 'sees' our dreams. It can imagine and project and see a whole fantastic world in our dreams. It can imagine while

we are awake too. Lie down on your back and stare at a small dark point on the ceiling. Now imagine that the point started moving, moving to the left. You can actually ‘see’ the point moving to the left. Now imagine that the point suddenly changed direction and started moving down. You will have no difficulty seeing the point moving down. Imagine what you want and you can experience it at your beck and call. The *manas* is the seat of imagination and creativity. You can ‘see’ whatever object you want in the clouds. You see what your *manas* chooses to see. What you see is not the reality.

It is the *manas* that sees, hears, tastes, feels. The *manas* is the seat of all perceptions. When we are awake our sense organs keep dumping tonnes of information from the external world and the *manas* gets busy seeing, hearing, perceiving all these. In the dream state, the *manas* is undisturbed as the sense organs are inactive and its power of imagination shows up its best.

It is the *manas* which decides what to do and what not to do. The *buddhi* may provide its logic and reasoning but it is the *manas* which finally takes a decision, one way or the other. The *manas* can take a decision without any contribution from the *buddhi* and many a times the *manas* takes a decision contrary to what the *buddhi* seems to be suggesting. The *buddhi* can only do symbolic, numerical, mathematical, logical, linguistic manipulation but the *manas* can perform purely qualitative, non-symbolic decision making. That is why there may be no logic or reason in the final decision. This is where disciplines like ‘Pattern Recognition’ and ‘Machine Learning’ have serious limitations - these disciplines try to imitate human decision making using computers. Computers can do complex symbolic manipulations but the hard part is taking the final decision which computers cannot do in a human-like manner

because they lack the *manas*. It is the *manas* which does *saMkalpa* (deciding to do something) and *vikalpa* (deciding not to do something), not the *buddhi*. Once a decision is made, we spring into action. It is the *manas* which is the cause of all action, all that we do in life.

If you are at home, the *manas* says ‘let us go out’. When you go out, it gets tired quickly and says ‘let us go home’. The *manas* is ever restless. It is always demanding something or the other, never satisfied, never at peace with itself. The *manas* is the child in us. The body may grow, the *buddhi* may mature but the *manas* never grows. It is the *manas* which drives us into action. Only those who have great control over their *manas* can simply keep quiet, do nothing and still feel completely at peace with themselves. Scientists and researchers are not as great as you may think, they have a weak *manas*, they are unable to control the curiosity of their *manas* and prompted by it they spring into action and do all kinds of experiments which are not at all necessary.

Animals have a *manas* too. Their *buddhi* is not as well developed and as versatile as that of humans. All of our animals instincts - sex, domination, etc. are properties of our *manas* which is not too different from that of animals. Someone has said, man is a rational animal, underline animal. Animals have a *manas* and they show some restlessness but it is only the human *manas* which is extremely restless, totally childish, completely foolish, yet very very powerful and hyper-active. A tree can stay in one place, all its life, just do nothing, enjoy life, with no worries, no anxiety, no restlessness, because it does not have a *manas*. If only we can train and control our *manas* to keep quiet like that, all human problems will end automatically.

Understanding the nature of our *manas* should be the

most important component of our education. Most part of our life, most of our time and effort should go into understanding and controlling this childish, restless, mischievous, illogical, adamant fellow inside us called *manas*. It is unfortunate that modern science has remained mere meaningless, aimless, directionless, useless jugglery of the intellect to understand the external physical world.

2.10 The *vaasana-s*

Whatever we experience in our life, the *manas* creates some impressions of it and stores them. Most of these impressions are short lived and are forgotten soon. Some experiences create a deeper impact, and these impressions remain etched in our *manas* for long. These lasting impressions are called *vaasana-s*. *vaasana-s* may be positive or negative. The *manas* gets attracted by the positive *vaasana-s* and keeps seeking such experiences again and again. Some *vaasana-s* are negative, the *manas* is repelled by these impressions, it develops aversion and tries to avoid such experiences. It is these attractions and repulsions of the *manas* which drive us into action. Everything we do in our life is a result of our *manas* driving us towards or away from things it likes or hates, as per the *vaasana-s* stored inside us.

Why do you like to eat a particular type of food, or eat at a particular restaurant? Why do you like to go to a particular place or avoid going there? Why do you like to spend time with some people but not with others? Why do people spend so much time on the Internet or newspaper or mobile phone? Why do people travel? Why do people talk? Why do they sing, dance, cry or laugh? Why do we want to work hard in factories or offices or farms? Why do we want to study? Why do we want to carry out research?

Why do we go after science or technology? Why do we tell lies? Why do we cheat? Why do we kill? Why do we engage ourselves in war? Everything we do is caused by our own *manas*. If only we understand our *manas*, train it well, keep it in good shape and under control, this Earth would become a heaven. If, on the other hand, we neglect our *manas*, we do not pay our attention to training it, we lose our ability to keep it under control, we will become slaves of our own *manas*. This is the worst kind of slavery. No one, other than ourselves, not even God can help us to come out of this ghastly slavery. Most people in the world today are slaves, slaves of their own *manas*. All the pain and suffering in the world is because of and only because of this kind of self-slavery. The one and the only solution to all problems is to understand this and regain our lost freedom. Freedom is the only recipe to happiness and bliss.

Small babies have no sense of fear. They have no sense of shame. They have no hesitation at all playing with urine or the stools. As we grow up, we start acquiring and storing all kinds of *vaasana-s*. We see what our *manas* sees and the *manas* sees the world in the light of its stored *vaasana-s*. What we see is not the ultimate reality. The universe is not what we think it is like.

Most *vaasana-s* are picked up during our present life but some are inherited - they are hard-coded in our genes. What I like, feel, or do in my life is to a large extent determined by experiences in this present life but to some extent it is also influenced by what my parents, forefathers, ancestors did in their lives during the previous Millions of years. These *vaasana-s* are in our genes - they cannot be easily changed. The fish 'know' swimming, it comes naturally to them, even the new born fish swim without difficulty. It is in their genes.

Science says even the gene expressions can be changed, if only we have a strong will. An iron will, a strong determination, guided by proper and deep understanding of the nature of our *manas* should be the aim of our education system. Nothing else is important to shape our lives and to help us lead a great life, to help us make the most of this extraordinarily great opportunity thrown at us in the form of a human life.

2.11 Masters and Slaves

Our *manas* is like a horse without reins, drunken, mad and restless. It is thinking of something now and it jumps to a completely unrelated thing the next moment. It gets attracted to something now and shifts to a distant thing for no reason. At times it keeps coming back to the same thoughts again and again. At times it gets stuck up and refuses to move away from some thought. The *manas* has great potential but all this gets wasted because it is not well trained and disciplined. The most important thing for us to do in life is to understand its potential and master the techniques of controlling it. We do not have to wage wars and fight with external enemies. We have to instead fight with our own *manas* and tame it, like we tame a wild elephant.

Anger, greed, jealousy, lust, pride, delusion are the big enemies lurking right within our own *manas*. When you are the master of your *manas* even these seemingly bad qualities can be useful to you in life. At times we better get angry. But anger must be under our control, not we under the sway of our anger. You must be the master, your pet dog must obey you, you must take your dog for a walk. Instead if your dog overpowers you, your dog will take you for ride. Anger, or desire or pride is not wrong

as long as they are fully under your control, not you under their control. Anger is OK if you can get angry at your will, get angry only to the extent warranted, use only those words which are prudent and appropriate to the situation, behave as becomes you, and calm down at the right moment. But invariably we lose control over ourselves, become slaves of our anger and say and do things which we repent later. Our *buddhi* will be constantly reminding us that we are trespassing the limits but the *manas* is too powerful, adamant, and it just does not listen. We need to develop the ability to observe our *manas*, understand its ways and master the techniques of keeping it under control. This is education. If we lose ourselves to the wild passions of our *manas*, we become worse than animals. Animals do not tell lies, cheat other animals, steal, carry out calculated, cold-blooded murder for greed or hatred or jealousy. Animals do not wage wars, do not torture, terrorize, assault and injure other animals for no reason, animals do not engage in commercial sex or drug addiction or pornography or child labour or female foeticide or abortion. They do not ill-treat and suppress the weak, old or disabled. Animals are not divided over race or colour or religion. Why do we have so many ills plaguing human society? It is all because we are not focusing our attention on understanding and training our *manas*. Think.

We all know that we eat food mainly for the purpose of providing the necessary nutrition and energy for the body. Satiating our hunger is secondary. Taste is tertiary. But we all eat for our tongues, not for our stomachs. We forget the purpose and end up in all kinds of difficult situations. We all know that the purpose of sex is reproduction. Pleasure is secondary. If practiced with full understanding as appropriate, sex and sexual pleasure is such a wonderful gift of nature to mankind. There is no reason why sex should have been pleasurable. It is not so in all animals. In fact there

is a species of spider where the male suffers great pain and dies immediately after a sexual engagement with its mate. Should we not be grateful to nature for making sex a pleasure in humans? We can make this world a heaven or hell, it is all in our own hands, it all depends on whether we are the masters of our *manas* or slaves. Slaves not only suffer but also make the whole world a hell for others. Smokers not only bring cancer on themselves but by forcing others to become passive smokers, they affect all the others too.

We know what we should not see but we cannot control ourselves. We know where we should not go but we cannot help going there. We keep making mistakes throughout our life, always because we fail to master and control our own *manas*. And whenever somebody commits a crime, the human society punishes the body of the criminal. It is not the body which commits crime. The body has no feelings. It has no motive. It does not do anything by itself. It is the *manas* which drives the body into action. What point does it serve to punish the body? That is why very often we see that criminals, having served the sentence pronounced on them, come out of jail as more experienced, better trained, tougher, hardened, cleverer, expert criminals and continue their bad deeds, only with increased intensity. We also many times unnecessarily punish our own bodies, just because we cannot put our *manas* to rest. We walk a great distance in the hot Sun, or drive in mad traffic, suffering all the smoke, heat and noise pollution, just to go to a hotel and eat because the *vaasana* of the food there drives our *manas* to force us to do so. Master your *manas* and this world will become heaven for you and for others too. If only we can all become masters of our *manas*, we can enjoy life, achieve great heights of human excellence in every walk of life, have lots of worldly pleasures too, without unnecessarily taxing our bodies or wasting time and money, without exploiting and damaging nature, without harming

other living creatures. This is what freedom means.

2.12 The Good and the Bad

Imagine a person with a strong mind in a strong body. Life will be wonderful. He knows what to do and how to do it, he is strong, capable and skilled, he is his own master, always under control, he does great things and reaps great things in return. Everything will be just great. What about a person with a strong mind but a weak body? He has the right ideas, he has the mental will and determination but the body does not cooperate. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Life can still be good but it may be a bit difficult to realize the full potential of human life. Now think of a person with a weak mind in a strong body. If properly guided and moulded, may be this man will become a useful soldier or a great sportsman or something like that. But he if were to take the wrong path, he may end up becoming a criminal, a terrorist, an anti-social element. Needless to say, the life of a person with a weak mind in a weak body is wretched and horrible. Our aim should be to develop a strong mind in a strong body. This is the sole purpose of education and training. This is the main occupation.

Likewise, we can think of a person with a strong, well trained, disciplined, obedient, positive *manas* and a well read, highly educated, knowledgeable, intelligent, wise *buddhi*. Life would be just great. He can live a wonderful, glorious, life, enjoying life to the fullest and spreading positive fields all around him. He will be a great asset to human society. If the *manas* is good but the *buddhi* is not very well developed, we have a good natured, nice, kind, humane, human being. He is harmless and nobody would have any problem with him. He is an ordinary, respectable

man. If the *manas* is weak, ill-disciplined and bad, full of anger, greed, jealousy, pride, arrogance, lust, cruelty etc. and the *buddhi* is clever and sharp but not really wise, we have a person who is calculative, cunning, cruel, inhuman, and so extremely dangerous and harmful. Of course if both the *manas* and *buddhi* are ill-developed, we have an under-ordinary, foolish, stupid, idiotic, useless person. Yet he is not all that dangerous and harmful - he can be guided, moulded, trained and made a better person with effort over time. Clearly, a good *manas* is much more important than a good *buddhi*.

It is unfortunate that the human society has come to ascribe too much of importance to the *buddhi*, to intelligence, to the intellect, and too little to the *manas*. You get admission in a school or college based on your intelligence. You get jobs, promotions based on your intelligence. You succeed in business and sports and research and all other walks of life based on your intelligence. One who is intelligent is held in high esteem and one who is not so intelligent is left out of competition to suffer in life. Nobody cares if you are a good human being or not. A man with a good *manas*, with or without a highly intelligent *buddhi* is in reality the most normal, humane, respectable, useful citizen. We must learn to respect the greatness of the *manas* and stop over-emphasizing mere intelligence. In fact we should resist giving any education or training to people with a bad *manas* - these are the people who end up becoming criminals and terrorists. Why teach bomb-making to everybody and then worry that the bombs have gone into the wrong hands? We need to evolve a system where the humane qualities, attitude towards life, kindness, truthfulness, honesty, modesty etc. become the criteria for admissions and success in all walks of life at every stage.

Great are the people who sacrifice their own interests

and work for the welfare of the others. Ordinary are the people who help others without giving up their own interests. Those who harm others for selfish reasons are demons in a human form. What to say of those who harm others for no reason?

People with a great *manas* as also a wise *buddhi* are rare. People with both the faculties weak are also not very large in numbers. The majority belong to one of the other two categories. It is unfortunate that the human society is preferring intelligent but inhuman people for humane but not so intelligent people.

2.13 *buddhi* without *manas*

Modern science has very little understanding of the *manas*. Scientists always try to work at the level of *buddhi*. When experts in the field known as ‘Artificial Intelligence’ try to simulate seeing, they try to produce symbolic descriptions and try to perform symbolic matching as our *buddhi* would do, because this is what a computer can do. Perceptions are not symbolic in humans. There is no *buddhi* during dreams but we can still see. We can do a whole lot of non-symbolic computations which a computer cannot.

Scientists try to simulate learning, classification, clustering, decision making and other faculties of the human mind on a computer using purely symbolic processes. They can build systems which observe given objects, notice the features and measure the values of these features, do complex mathematical calculations using probability theory and what not but when it comes to final conclusion, it all fails because the final conclusion is not merely a symbolic computation. You can use your *buddhi* to articulate a dozen points in favour of continuing in the same job and

a dozen points against it, you may even assign some kind of weightages for each of these pros and cons but finally it is the *manas* which takes a final decision which cannot be explained using any logic. It just picks the one it likes. A computer has no *manas* and so the final decision in any simulated learning system is unnatural.

The *manas* is non-deterministic. We can ‘choose’ a digit but a computer can never ‘choose’ a digit like we can. We have great difficulty in giving a precise definition of simple everyday objects like a cup or a chair or a table because we are asked to give a symbolic description which is not feasible. The human *manas* produces and uses purely non-symbolic descriptions which cannot be understood in terms of mathematics or logic, which cannot be simulated on a digital computer.

Today a ‘Machine Learning’ system can learn to classify objects based on a given set of features and some criteria for measuring the similarity or dissimilarity between objects in terms of the features. For example a computer program, which has been trained to perform this task, can tell a chair from a table. But such a learning program never wants to learn anything, never experiences any joy in successfully recognizing an object, never has any sense of achievement, never feels dejected or frustrated when it fails. Because it has no *manas*. Computers are like people with *buddhi* but without a *manas*.

The *manas* is purely non-symbolic and the way it works cannot be described in words, for, words are symbols. We cannot give a logical interpretation because logic is nothing but manipulation of symbols as per some rules. We cannot give an algorithmic description since algorithms and computer programs are all purely symbolic in nature. The interface between the *manas* and the *buddhi* also cannot

be known because knowing itself means cognizance by the *buddhi* - all knowing with *buddhi* is symbolic. The working of the *manas* can only be experienced. We can all directly experience and feel the way our *manas* perceives, feels and experiences life. It is neither necessary nor possible to know this in any other way. The *manas* is unknowable, the interface between the *manas* and the *buddhi* is also unknowable.

The *manas* is far more important than *buddhi*. A person with a good *manas* is a great human being, with or without a highly intelligent *buddhi*. A person with a great *buddhi* without a *manas* is dead like a computer. He cannot choose between the good and the bad, he cannot choose between the right and the wrong. Life has no meaning for such a person. He may even become a great threat to human society. The whole of life is experienced inside our *manas*. We should give up our fancy for computers, which have no *manas* at all, they are completely irrelevant for our life. We must stop over-emphasizing the *buddhi* and start focussing more and more on our *manas* instead.

2.14 Language and Knowledge

Words of a language are names, symbolic names we give to descriptions or meanings. Both the names and the forms or descriptions are internal to our *manas* and *buddhi*. Outside of our mind there are neither words nor any meanings. That is why when we hear an unknown language, we understand nothing. We may detect some sound patterns but the patterns make no sense. There were words, the words did have meanings, but only for a mind which had these words and meanings inside it, not for others.

Language is the interface between the *manas* and the *buddhi*. The *manas* perceives, feels, creates internal im-

pressions. It sees meanings and interpretations and intentions, all in a non-symbolic form. Language tries to approximate these qualitative, non-symbolic meanings with discrete symbols called words and larger expressions built from words. This is true of all sensory perceptions. What we see is not the same as the descriptions we can produce of what we see. The descriptions will be sketchy, approximate, rough descriptions. You can never express precisely in words everything you see or hear or feel in full detail. Language is not powerful enough to express every idea, feeling, emotion we experience in our *manas*. The joy of eating ice-cream, the joy of standing first in the class and the joy of becoming a father are very different but we are constrained by language to use one of the available words such as joy for all these various feelings.

The descriptions produced and maintained by the *manas* are all purely qualitative, non-symbolic. These descriptions and meanings cannot be described in written words or mathematical or any other system of formal symbols. We can only make rough approximations when we are asked to express things in words. Language when expressed is symbolic, as such language is a crude and limited approximation of what we experience deep inside us. Everything cannot be expressed precisely in language, in any language whatever. We can all discern and distinguish between a chair and a stool and a bench and so on but we find it very hard to give a precise definition to any of these simple objects. In fact it is impossible to give a precisely worded definition for anything because words are symbolic but our perceptions are purely non-symbolic. We can store and process large quantities of textual or speech data on computers but we will never be able to make the computers 'understand' any of these. 'Natural Language Processing' is OK but 'Natural Language Understanding' is an impossible task. Recognizing human speech by a computer is pos-

sible but ‘understanding’ the meanings is not. The agenda of ‘Artificial Intelligence’ will never succeed in replicating a human-like machine.

We can do a lot of symbolic manipulation of language using our *buddhi*. These same processes can be replicated on a computer too. We can, for example, mechanically translate from one language into another using a system of rules. Computers can do statistical analysis, apply linguistic rules in a specified manner, they can search, sort and do other such symbol manipulation tasks. Useful applications can also be built. But we can never understand the processes that take place inside our *manas*, nor can we simulate them on a computer. Meanings are non-symbolic and all symbolic representations are at best rough approximations. Computers can store and process symbolic representations of meanings but they can never directly deal with meanings. Computers can never understand anything the same way as we do. Computers cannot understand or experience life. They are therefore irrelevant for our life.

Language is the crucial link that connects the non-symbolic descriptions in the *manas* to symbolic descriptions that can be stored and processed in the *buddhi*. Only what is stored in the *buddhi* can be processed, analyzed, reasoned with, argued for or against, etc., not the original full experiences of the *manas*. We experience life in the *manas*, we cannot describe it fully in words. When we try to express things in words, it is not the words which have meanings, it is again the same *manas* which has to ascribe meanings to these words. Critics often add more meaning to a text than what the author had thought off. Children speak of things which seem to have deep meaning but these meanings are in us, in our minds, probably not in the mind of the child which spoke. Meanings are in us, stigma is in us, gender bias is in us, not in the words. It is futile to

fight over words that others have used.

Knowledge is what is made available to the *buddhi*. The *manas* is the *pramaatR* (perceiver) while the *buddhi* is the *jnYaatR* (knower). The *manas* uses *pratyakSha* or sensory perception as the *pramaaNa* or means to knowledge to get to the *prameeya* or the thing to be perceived while the *buddhi* uses *anumaana* or logical reasoning and *aapta-vaakya* or references and citations to already proved facts, to get the *jnYeeya* or the thing to be known. Knowing something means using the *indriya-a* or the sense organs, the *manas* and the *buddhi*. All scientific knowledge, in fact all published knowledge, is limited to symbolic cognizance at the level of the *buddhi*. But life itself is experienced inside the *manas*, life is not amenable for scientific inquiry, science is of little use for life, life can only be experienced directly.

We cannot know ourselves in this ordinary sense of perceiving or knowing because we are beyond the *manas* and the *buddhi*, we are the knowers of these. Anything which is mine is not I. My body, my *manas*, my *buddhi* are therefore not I, I am different from all these. Who am I then? How can I ‘know’ myself without using my *manas* or my *buddhi*? What then would ‘knowing’ mean? Science is useless here. Language is useless. Mere logical reasoning is not sufficient. How do we get to the truth then? We shall follow a very unique approach. This is the one and the only approach to the ‘knowledge’ of the self. Let us begin right away.

2.15 *ahaMkaara*

We are all the time aware of ourselves. I am now sitting, now I get up, I have started moving, I am going home, I reached home, now I am relaxing on my sofa, I am feeling

hungry, I am thinking about food, I need to plan my tomorrow's work, I want to win the competition, and so on and on. There is not a moment in my active life where I am not there. I am also there in my dreams. All kinds of people, animals, objects are seen in my dreams but irrespective of who all is there or not there, I am always there in my dreams. Even if I do not have any active role to play, I am at least there as a witness.

Every dog, every animal is also self-aware. Even plants have some kind of self-awareness. Every plant wants to get sufficient Sunlight, rain water, nutrients. It reacts to changes in its environment. Every animal, every plant wants to reproduce - produce more of its own kind. By intuition, instinct or merely through a stimulus-response reaction, all living beings exhibit life. Every living being is self-aware in this broadest sense. Many animals and plants may not have a brain. Awareness should not be confused with symbolic awareness as happens inside our *buddhi*. With or without a well developed body, senses, *manas* or *buddhi*, all living beings set themselves apart from the world of inanimate, life-less, dead matter through some sort of self-awareness. Computers can exhibit many aspects of intelligence but they are not self-aware, they are life-less. It is easy to write I am so and so in the memory of a computer and ask it to display this when asked who it is. But this is not self-awareness, this is just cheating. Nobody needs to tell me that I exist, but a computer does not know by itself that it exists or who it is. Only living beings are self-aware. This is the crucial difference between the living and the non-living.

Self-awareness at the level of the *manas* is called *ahaMkaara*. *ahaMkaara* means I-ness or I-sense or I-notion, just the awareness of myself, not ego or pride or arrogance as often mistaken. The *ahaMkaara* is the doer when I say I did

something. It is the experiencer, when I say I experienced something. It is the agent, it is the experiencer. If I kill you, it is not my body which kills, it is not my *buddhi*, it is really the *manas*. *ahaMkaara* is not really different from the *manas*, it is simply this particular aspect of *manas*, the self-awareness aspect, that we call *ahaMkaara*.

When I hear the word 'I', I get to understand its meaning, I know that it refers to me, I am triggered. Some think that this itself is my *svaruupa*. Many a great philosopher has got confused here. Meanings of words are perceived by the *manas*. I cannot be simply the meaning of the word 'I', since I am beyond the *manas*. I get the meaning of the word 'I' and I also know that I have heard this word and I have got its meaning. Who is this I who knows that I know the meaning of the word I? Think. *ahaMkaara* is all about self-awareness, that is, awareness of the body and mind, awareness of all that we do and experience at the level of the body and mind. I am not mere awareness, I am the witness even to this awareness. After all, I continue to exist in deep sleep when I am not aware of anything, not even of myself. Even when I am awake, I am not all the time self-aware. For example, I may be so much engrossed in a movie I am watching, that I may forget that I am sitting here and watching this movie on my TV screen. I continue to exist, whether I am self-aware or not. Therefore, I cannot be my *ahaMkaara*.

The *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara* are together known as *antaraMga* the internal stage where the drama of life is experienced. It is also known as *antaH-karaNa*, the internal instrument. My body, the sense organs, the limbs form the external instruments while the internal instruments actually help us to live and enjoy and experience life. Without these internal instruments, there is no meaning in life. But these are only instruments under my control, I am not any

of them. Who exactly am I then?

2.16 The Seer and the Seen

We use the term ‘I’ quite loosely, meaning different things at different times. We need to understand who exactly this ‘I’ is. Before we can know who exactly we are, it is useful to know who we are not. To do this, we need a rule of elimination.

Consider the statement ‘I see the Moon’. Physics tells us a lot about light, its propagation, reflection, absorption, surface properties of matter, how light bends when it passes through a lens, how an image is formed on the retina inside the eye ball and so on. Science also tells us a lot about the eye, about the nervous system and brain and so on. None of these are important. All these trivial facts and details do not take us anywhere. The lesson we have to learn from this simple sentence is something completely different from what you will find in any book or research article in modern science. All of them miss the most important, the most singularly unique, the most significant point.

The critical point to note is, if I can see the Moon, I am not the Moon. Whatever can be seen, I am not that. This is an extremely useful rule. It helps us to eliminate all kinds of things in this world, which I am not. It helps us to finally see who exactly I am.

You can never see, hear, touch, feel yourself. You can never do anything to yourself. What you see in the mirror is a reflection of your body, you cannot see yourself. If you think you can hit yourself, think carefully. Perhaps your right palm hit your right cheek. The palm and the cheek are different. If you try to touch your own hand with the

same hand, again a different part of your hand touched a different part. The same part cannot touch itself. If the little finger touches the same little finger, still a different part of the little finger touched some other part. X cannot do anything to X. If X does something to Y, X and Y must be different.

In everyday parlance we think of suicide as somebody killing himself (or herself). We talk this way for our convenience at the gross level. Perhaps his hand opened the lid of the poison bottle, perhaps the hand took it to the mouth, the mouth swallowed, the food pipe pushed it down to the stomach and so on. Analyze carefully in detail. You will realize that X can never do anything to X itself. Impossible. Nobody can kill himself. Nobody can do anything to themselves, they cannot even perceive or 'know'. Therefore, all that I can perceive or 'know', I am not that.

I am not any of the objects I see in this external world because I am the seer, I am the perceiver, I am the knower, I am the witness, I cannot be the object I am seeing. Everything that can be seen, heard, touched, felt, observed, perceived, is not I.

I can see my hand. I am the seer. My hand is the seen. The seer cannot be the seen. I cannot be my hand. The same way you can argue about other body parts. You cannot see your back but you can feel it with your palm. You are the feeler and your back is the felt. You cannot be the back of your body. You can think of the whole of your body, imagine it, sketch it, feel it, experience it, know it. You know your body. You are the knower. Your body is the known. The known cannot be the knower. The experienter cannot be the experienced. We can even feel hunger, thirst, weakness, illness, pain and other such invisible internal happenings. If you can perceive, feel and know your

body, you are the seer, not the seen. The two can never be identical. If you were your body you could never perceive your body or any of its parts or actions. You cannot be your body.

The seer can never be the seen. The two are totally different in nature. The seer is the witness, the seen is merely a scene. The seer is sentient, conscious, self-aware, the scene is not. I can see the Moon, the Moon cannot see me. Do not get confused, I can see your body and you can see my body. But I cannot see you nor can you see me. I am not my body, the whole of it or any part of it. Nor are you your body. I am the knower of my body, I am not my body, similarly you are the knower of your body, you are not your body. Whatever we see or otherwise perceive or 'know' is always insentient. The seer is always sentient, the seen is never sentient.

I can see my body, my body cannot see me. I am the seer, the witness, the witness cannot be the scene. I am not my body or any part of it. I cannot be my brain. The brain is insentient, it is made up of cells, cells are made up of organic chemical substances, these chemical atoms and molecules are made up of electrons, protons and neutrons, none of these can be sentient or conscious, individually or in any combination. When we say I wear a red shirt we actually mean my body wears a red shirt. Who wears my body? My body is something different from me, something that I wear like a shirt. The body is an external embellishment, an ornament, a tool that I hold on to. I cannot be identically equal to my body. We all tend to identify ourselves with our bodies and that the big mistake we all make. Think.

Scientists try to observe the brain and build theories of perception or knowledge based on that. Philosophers try

to build theories of consciousness. They do not ask in the light of which consciousness they can do all this. Experts are proposing all kinds of theories of the mind, assuming and claiming that the mind can know itself. This is just not possible. Fire can burn everything but it cannot burn itself. Water can quench anybody's thirst but a river never feels thirsty nor can it quench its thirst by drinking its own water. A tree never eat eats own fruits, a cow never drinks its own milk. Can a mosquito bite itself? Can a chair sit? Can a hammer hammer itself? Saying that the mind can know itself is exactly like these. X can never do anything to X, X can never know X, I can never know myself. Think carefully and make sure you understand this.

A car by itself cannot do anything but once we sit in it and switch on the engine, suddenly it comes alive and is capable of taking us where we want. There is activity, there is some sort of 'life' in the car but can we say the car is an individual sentient being? The car has to merely obey the commands we give, it has to function as per the laws of physics. Exactly the same way, every part of our body, including the nervous system and the brain merely obeys the laws of nature. That something happens in our brain when we see or hear or think is no proof that the brain itself is the seer or knower of thinker. Something happens in the eye and ear as well. A powerful stream of light can emanate from a mirror when it reflects a source of light. Light appears to come from the mirror but the mirror is not the source of light, it is merely reflecting the light that comes to it from the original source. Likewise, our brain is merely insentient material organ and not the original source. I am alive and aware not because of my brain. The brain is merely a physical medium in which this life manifests physically for us to observe. It is not logical to think that the brain perceives, thinks, feels and knows. The brain is insentient, like every other body part. Every

cell, every atom and molecule, every electron, proton and neutron, simply follows the laws of nature, of physics and chemistry. Nothing more. Life is more than all these. We should not confuse life for manifestations of life. When I say 'I know myself', 'I' is the subject, 'know' is the verb and 'myself' is the object of the sentence. I am the subject, I am always the subject, I can never be the object. Therefore, it makes no sense to say 'I know myself', the knower and the known must be two different things.

I am not my body, I am not my brain or any other part or combination of parts. Who am I then? If X cannot do anything to X, if X cannot even know X, how to know ourselves? All usual methods will fail here. Scientific experiments and observations, logical reasoning, thinking, asking, telling, none of these work. The truth about the self is beyond language, beyond logic, beyond computers, beyond all science and technology. It is not possible to know the self by any ordinary means. Yet it is possible realize ourselves. There is a way, there is one very special, unique way. This path we shall tread here. Read on carefully and make sure you understand everything properly.

2.17 Who I am Not

What others think of me, I am not that. Remember that we are trying to know our true nature, the correct and complete picture of ourself. Others can never know me fully, they see only one facet of me, their views will always be incomplete and biased and coloured by their own views and the limited interactions they have had with me. Even my nearest and dearest do not know me fully, properly. Images of myself created by others are always relative, conditional, not complete, not absolute. These can and do change with time. Others know how I look, how I talk or walk, they

can at most imagine how I think, that is all. I am not my social image. Nobody can know exactly who I am. Only I can.

My physical image is not my true self. My photograph, reflections of my body in the mirror etc. show only one aspect of me, my body, that too only as viewed from a particular angle and a particular distance, under certain lighting conditions etc. A mirror image is left-right inverted. If I am facing East, my mirror image will be facing West. I am looking at the mirror but the mirror image appears to be looking at me, rather than at the mirror. No mirror is perfectly plane, it elongates, shortens, distorts in various ways at various points. I look differently depending upon whether I have shaved or not. The hair on my face is very much a natural part of me. Each day I look different. My appearance changes with age, I have remained the same individual throughout life. Which me is me? I am not any of these, I just cannot be my physical image.

My self image is also not my true nature. My self image is built from limited memory of past events, it is biased towards and against certain aspects, it is coloured by deep rooted scars in my mind in the form of guilt and hurt, I know what all I know but I can never know what all I do not know. It is impossible for the mind to build a complete and perfect image of the self.

Anything which I can see, hear, touch, feel, taste, smell, observe, know is not I. I am the seer, I am the observer, the observer can never be the observed. I can observe my body, so I am not my body.

I am the seer, observer, knower. I am sentient. Anything which is insentient is not I. The insentient cannot see, hear, feel, observe, know. All material things are in-

sentient - they are made up of atoms and molecules, which are in turn made up of electrons, protons and neutrons, none of which can see, hear, feel, observe, know, understand anything. Anything which is matter is not I. My body is matter, I am not my body.

Matter and energy are inter-convertible. Matter is being converted to energy in the Sun. Matter can be converted to energy in a nuclear reactor. Energy can be converted to matter. Anything which is matter or energy is not I. Anything which is physical is not I. There is no chemistry or biology without matter, without physics. Study of physics, chemistry or biology cannot answer the question 'who am I'. Modern science is useless.

Anything which is mine is not I. Anything which I can refer to as my thing is not I. Anything I can alienate, even in principle, is not I. My body is mine, I can even donate my body parts. I am not my body.

The *manas* appears to be sentient, it perceives, feels, experiences all kinds of emotions, good or bad. But the *manas* is not the seer, I see through my *manas*. The *manas* undergoes constant change, it is always in a state of agitation and commotion. I can observe, train, control my *manas*. I am the observer, my *manas* is the observed, the observed can never be the observer. I can observe that my *manas* is agitated or calm or distracted or confused. I am not agitated or distracted or confused, my *manas* is. I can see the same object differently depending upon the state of my *manas*, exactly like I can see the same objects differently by seeing them through different glasses. I see through my glasses, the glasses themselves do not see. I see through my *manas*, the *manas* cannot see by itself. We easily get confused because the *manas* appears to be sentient. The difference between I and my *manas* is like the

differences between an original source of light and a body which merely reflects that light. The Sun produces light. The Moon only reflects Sunlight, it does not produce any light on its own. The same way the *manas* reflects the light of our consciousness, it is not itself our consciousness. It is my *manas*, how can something which is mine be I? I am not my *manas*.

By exactly the same reasons, we can convince ourselves that I am not my *buddhi*, it is insentient, it only reflects the light of our consciousness and thereby appears to be intelligent, it is ever changing, I can observe it, it cannot observe me. It is very much like the brain of a non-living computer, it is not conscious. I am not my *buddhi*.

Animals do not have a well developed *buddhi*. Plants do not have any nervous system or brain. Yet they are living beings. The bodies of animals are very different from that of ours. Plants do not have hands or legs or even a face. Yet, they are living, conscious, as we are. Life is not just body, senses, emotions or intellect. There is more to it than all these.

I am not my *ahaMkaara* or self-awareness. This is just one aspect of my *manas*. I am self-aware and I know that I am self-aware, this self-awareness can be observed by me. I must therefore be different from this.

I am not my body or brain or *manas* or *ahaMkaara* or *buddhi*. I am beyond all these. Who exactly am I? We need to dig still deeper.

2.18 The Last Cut

We have gradually built up the foundations and we are now ready for the final cut. Let us first recollect what we are actually doing here in this book. We want to know the true nature of the universe. By universe we mean not just the material world but the all-inclusive whole, including ourselves, including all the non-materialistic things, such as knowledge, including everything which may possibly exist. Right in the beginning, we clarified that before we go on describing something we must prove its existence. Therefore, the very first question is what exists, or what all things exist in this all-inclusive whole universe. The second question is about the true nature of these things that have just been shown to exist. We have defined the true nature or *svaruupa* of a thing as that which is completely innate and inalienable under any circumstance. We want to know what exists, we want to know its true nature, we want to know the process of knowing, we want to know knowledge itself, we want to know the knower himself too. We want to know everything. We shall denote this science of existence and true nature of things by the technical term *tattva*, a word that has been derived from the pronoun *tat*, (which is same as the English pronoun ‘that’), by adding the suffix ‘tva’ making it an abstract noun, signifying the science that shows that as that alone, not as anything else. The Indian term for philosophy is *tattva-shastra*, the science that shows things as they are. Thus, philosophy and science are not two different disciplines. A philosophy is not merely some world view, some vague theory that need not have any scientific basis or practical utility. Philosophy should be completely scientific and should have direct relevance to our life, it should be a way of life, not just a view of life. We should all be able to practice it and derive benefit from it. Only then will it really stand proved. Earlier, all branches of knowledge were clubbed together

under one head called philosophy. Even today, the highest degree awarded in any branch of study is the PhD or Doctor of Philosophy. There is no need to distinguish between science, philosophy and even religion and spirituality. If properly investigated, all are same. Names do not matter.

Consider some physical object and its shadow. The shadow is dependent on the object, lighting conditions etc. for its existence. If the object is moved, the shadow moves too. If the object is taken away, the shadow vanishes, it cannot say 'OK, you go, I will stay on'. Even if the object does not move or change in anyway, the size, shape, intensity, and other properties of the shadow can change depending upon external conditions such as lighting. Therefore, the shadow has no *svaruupa* of its own, we can never establish the invariant, innate, inalienable, true nature of a shadow. Even its existence is controlled by others and things which may not even exist cannot have any *svaruupa* of their own. Therefore, true nature, or *svaruupa* is applicable only for things that exist in an absolutely independent sense. That is why we started off this book by defining various kinds of existence. Let us recall. *sat* is what exists in an absolutely independent sense. *asat* never ever exists. *mithyaa* exists but only relatively, conditionally, subject to change. Therefore, *svaruupa* is applicable to *sat* alone, not for *asat* or *mithyaa*.

The first rule of the game is that we cannot go by hearsay, gut feelings, mere intuitions, imagination, faith, blind belief, guesswork etc. We cannot go by what many people or all people think or say. We cannot go by what the so called experts say. We cannot go by what any sacred book or scripture or holy religious book or seer or agent of God says. Even if God were to come directly and tell us something, we should not accept or reject it blindly without proper inquiry. We should not even take anything already

proved and published earlier for granted without a careful re-check. Thus, *pratyakSha* or sensory perception and *anumaana* or inference are the only two *pramaana*-s or the means of obtaining valid evidence for reaching any conclusion.

In the first chapter, we partitioned the entire universe into objects and attributes. We argued that attributes have no independent existence, they need an object on which they can be superimposed. The existence of attributes can be established only through observation, which means, the existence of an observer is a pre-condition, again showing that attributes cannot have independent existence. We could conclude that the whole external world is *mithyaa*, not *sat*, as it is neither eternal, nor invariant, its existence depends upon the existence of an observer. We could also conclude that there can be only one *sat* in the entire universe, because if there are two or more, we will have to explain how they are different from each other but all differences are a matter of attributes, not of objects per se. It was perhaps a bit difficult to imagine objects without attributes or how we can think of imposing attributes on such an object. We also could not get any further idea of the only *sat* that was shown to exist, nor could we get any clear idea about ourselves. Here we shall carry out a similar analysis of the entire universe, this time partitioning the universe along a different dimension. We shall then be able to understand everything properly, we shall be able to give the final answers to all the big questions we have started this book with. Let us start.

2.19 *viShaya* and *viShayi*

We all normally think that there are many individuals in this world, each is an independent and conscious entity,

capable of interacting with one another. This assumption forms the basis of many branches of human knowledge, it forms the basis of a whole lot of subjects taught in schools, colleges and universities all over the globe today. Is this right?

In our day to day life, we take it for granted that I can see you and you can see me. We also take it for granted that I can know myself. These are only assumptions, assumptions made without proper inquiry. Firstly, my knowledge or awareness of myself is very different from my knowledge of you. When I see you, I only see your body, your external appearance. I can also imagine that you also perhaps have a mind, you can also see, hear, think, know etc. like me but this is only imagination. I can never see through your eyes or hear through your ears. I can never have any direct experience of your mind. I can make mental models of your personality, the way you think, your likes and dislikes etc. but this is all a model I have created in my mind of you, I do not see or know any of this directly. On the other hand, I never get to see my own body fully, I never get to see my own face, and my knowledge of myself is therefore of a very different kind. When I say I know myself and when I say I know you, I mean two very different things. I can only see your body, not you, and I can only imagine that you can see my body, not myself. Therefore, saying I can see you and you can see me is not really valid. I cannot see you, nor can you see me. Secondly, nobody can know themselves either. I can never see my own eyes, I can never hear the vibrations set about inside my own ears, I can never even think of myself. X can never do anything to X, X cannot even know X. The knower and the known cannot be one and the same entity.

Let us say X knows Y. X can conclude that Y exists because he knows him. Who knows that X exists? Let us

say Z knows that X exists, he can see X. Either Z must exist or we cannot conclude that X exists, we cannot presume things without proof. How do we know Z exists? We have to keep building a long chain like this. When will this chain end? Either it will be an infinite chain or it will have to be cyclic. If it is infinite, nothing at all can be known because all knowing starts from the origin, the very first knower, the left most item in the chain, which can never be reached as the chain is infinite. This contradicts common experience. So the chain cannot be infinite, it has to be finite. Who knows the existence of the first item in the list? Therefore, there must be a cycle, we have to conclude that some P knows P, either directly or indirectly through a loop. P doing anything to P, even P knowing P is not possible. Nobody can do anything to himself or herself, nobody can even know themselves. Therefore, nobody can know themselves or anybody else in this whole world. This is again contrary to common experience and belief. We will have to somehow solve this puzzle. The key to this enigma lies in proper understanding of the very process of knowing. We will do that in stages.

I can see and there are things that I can see. Everything in the whole universe can thus be divided into the seer and the seen, or more generally, the observer and the observed, or the knower and the known, technically termed as *viShayi* and *viShaya*. Whatever can be perceived through sense organs, the *manas* and the *buddhi* are grouped together into the known. It must be emphasized that the term 'known' here does not mean what has already been known, it only means things which can be known, at least in principle, it is a set of all knowable things. It may be observed that most systems of scientific, religious and philosophical thought in the world, including the ancient and the modern, have either completely ignored the *viShayi* or have not taken it seriously enough or have attempted to know it like any

other thing that can be known. If it can be known, it will become *viShaya*. If anything can be seen, observed, studied, explored, known or understood as an object, then that is not the subject. The subject can never be known as an object, in fact the subject is what remains after all that can be known is taken out. We will never be able to build a complete, proper, satisfactory, theory of the universe until and unless we recognize this fact that unknowable things can also exist. Recognizing that *viShaya* and *viShayi* are completely different, disjoint, mutually exclusive is crucial. *viShayi* is a conscious, sentient entity, *viShaya* is insentient or *jaDa*. We can partition the entire universe into these two mutually exclusive aspects. *viShaya* and *viShayi* add up to the all-inclusive whole universe. There cannot be anything in the entire universe which is neither *viShaya* nor *viShayi*. These two constitute the totality.

How do I know I have a nose and this nose can smell things? Suppose we try to argue that I can see the nose and so it exists. Until and unless I establish that I have eyes and eyes can see, this will remain an incomplete proof. More importantly, even if I have already shown that I have eyes and my eyes can see, my eyes can see the external shape of my nose, that is all. My eyes are not capable of proving that the nose can sense smell. From this, it is clear that one kind of a knower cannot establish a different kind of knower. In fact, a knower cannot even establish the existence of another knower of the same kind. I can see your eyes with my own eyes but my eyes cannot prove that your eyes can see. My eyes only show me the external physical form of your eyes, not its capacity to see. I can experimentally verify that an image is formed on the retina of my friend's eye, I can show that signals go from his eyes to his brain, I can even show that somethings happen in his brain when he sees. So what? This is not seeing. I just cannot show that anybody else in this whole universe can see. I can

simply presume so, I can go by what they say, but these are against the rules of our game here. Unless established by way of a valid proof, we cannot take anything for granted. I never have the direct experience of seeing through anybody else's eyes and so there is no way I can assume that others can actually see, let alone see the same world or see it the same way as I do. The same arguments apply for all other senses, perceptions, feelings, even knowing. Therefore, all the other people in the world, like the other people in my dreams, are all part of the things I know, my *viShaya*, they are not part of the knower, the *viShayi*. There is one and only one knower and that is I. I will have to establish the existence and true nature of everything that exists in the entire universe all on my own. Others have no role. Instruments and equipment are useless. I will have to discover the truth all by myself. This is the second rule of the game.

We are so much used to thinking that I can see you and you can see me that we may find this argument a bit strange. Let us see why mutual observation is not possible. Let us say A can see B and B can see A. If A can see, he has a part which is a knower by nature and if A can also be seen, he also has a part which is knowable. Both A and B have two aspects, a knower aspect and a known aspect. The knower aspect of A can know the known aspect of B and the knower aspect of B can know the known aspect of A, that is all. Only the known aspects can be shown to exist, that too only after showing that the knower aspects exist. Suppose we try to argue that the knower aspect of A can know the knower aspect of B and vice versa. Then, to prove that the knower aspect of A exists, we have to first prove that the knower aspect of B exists, and, to prove that the knower aspect of B exists, we will have to first prove that the knower aspect of A exists. This is a cyclic dependency, a classic example of the chicken and egg problem. In fact it is not at all possible for a knower to be known, if

anything can be known, it will be grouped under *viShaya*, not *viShayi*. Therefore, it is simply wrong to assume that there are many people in this world and they can know each other.

This could lead to one big confusion. If I have to explore and reach a conclusion all by myself, will I end up getting only a private, personal view of reality or will I actually get a universal truth? The wise reader would have understood that when I say I have to explore and discover the truth myself I do not mean that others are inferior or incapable. No one is superior or inferior. Truth is amenable for all serious seekers. This 'I' could be you, or anybody else. If you are the explorer, then I would be part of your *viShaya*. If some other person explores, both of us would be part of his *viShaya* and he alone would be the *viShayi*. Thus the whole set up is not idiosyncratic to any one individual, it is absolutely neutral. Whoever takes up this task and goes through it properly, sticking to the rules of the game, he or she will definitely reach the same final conclusions. There is no scope for introducing any biases or idiosyncrasies of any individual. Every step is based on common experiences of all normal human beings. Therefore, the method is guaranteed to result in the universally acceptable, definitive, final, conclusive, answers to all our basic questions.

2.20 Proof Questioned

Let us get back to the very notion of proof. *pratyakSha* and *anumaana* are the only two *pramaaNa-s* we have accepted here. *anumaana* requires *pratyakSha* as a component. Therefore, *pratyakSha* or the so called direct sensory perception is the most important means of proving anything at all. We have already shown that *pratyakSha* is not really direct perception at all. In fact we have struck

a death blow to the whole of modern science by debunking this myth of direct perception. Let us see if *pratyakSha* can be a valid means of obtaining correct knowledge at all. I see a chair and I conclude that there is a chair there. How can I be sure? My eyes show a chair as a chair, a lion as a lion, a ship as a ship. My eyes have never shown me X as Y. So seeing with my eyes is dependable. If I see X, it must actually be X. Therefore, seeing with my eyes, and likewise, other sensory perceptions constitute a valid means of obtaining correct knowledge. Sensory perceptions can be accepted as a *pramaaNa*. This is how we think. This we have called *pratyakSha*. Now, wait a minute. I see a chair and I conclude that what I am seeing is a chair. Is seeing a *pramaaNa* because the eyes show a chair as a chair or is it because I assume seeing as a *pramaaNa* that I conclude what I see to be a chair? In other words, we are now questioning the validity of the *pramaaNa* itself. Suppose there is a tiger and the eyes show this as a chair to me. How can I ever know that what I am seeing is not a chair but a tiger? Do not think of asking other people, using scientific instruments, or using other senses, we have already ruled out all of these. Nobody else can validate your sensory perception of seeing. Nobody else in the world can see through your eyes and your *manas*. You have to either blindly believe that what you see is what is actually there, or you will have to reject *pratyakSha* as a means of obtaining valid knowledge. We cannot blindly accept anything here. We are therefore forced to reject *pratyakSha*. Therefore, we are forced to reject *anumaana* also. Therefore, we have to reject the very notion of proof. There is no valid means of proving anything in this universe. The validity of a *pramaaNa* cannot be established using *pramaaNa*-s and we have no other means at our disposal. The very concept of proof is not provable.

There is no way to prove that what we actually experi-

enced earlier and what we are recollecting now are actually one and the same. There could be omissions, commissions, gaps, errors. Hence we cannot accept memory as a valid means of proving anything. The proof must be given completely right now, here, by the prover himself. We have read in science text books that all matter is made up of atoms. Have we seen atoms? Can we see now? How exactly was this fact actually established by the original discoverer? We need to re-enact the whole process again, ourselves, and only then can we be sure. Even if the idea has come from highly trust-worthy and well known scientists, we need to verify again. No one can be trusted. This is another rule of the game. Either you go through the whole process of showing that there is actually water on the Moon all by yourself or do not accept it till then. I should go by only those things which I can prove myself, completely, right now.

In fact *pratyakSha* also requires memory. When I say ‘I see a chair’ I actually mean what I see looks like the thing I have seen before, the thing that I have been taught is a chair. As children we are shown objects of different colours and then taught what is red or green or yellow. We learn these, remember these and recall to recognize colour later in life. If my learning or memory is defective, my observations will be imperfect too. Modern science is all based on experiment, observation and inference. No observation can be surely correct and fool proof. Every observation can be wrong. Modern science itself can be wrong. We must not accept something just because it carries the label of science or it is being promoted by a so called scientist. A scientist is not a different kind of God-made creature, anybody who hangs the label of a scientist on his person is called a scientist, right?

Needless to say memory, perception, proof etc. are very

useful things in our daily lives. But practicality apart, we must remember that here we are investigating *tattva* and so we need to tread very very carefully. Nothing can be taken for granted here.

2.21 The Null Hypothesis

We can establish the existence of any object, the *viShaya*, only by observing it, by knowing it, and knowing can only be done by the *viShayi*, the knower. All that can be known in this whole universe, owes its very existence to this knower, which is itself unknowable.

We can establish the existence of any item in the set of known things, by actually observing it and this observation has to be done by the knower. If we can establish the existence of a knower, we can then establish the existence of all that it can know. But by definition, a knower cannot be known. How do we establish the existence of the knower?

I can say the chair exists because I am able to see it with my own eyes. How do I know my eyes can see? Because I have actually seen things with my eyes. Suppose I claim that my nose can also see. The nose has never seen anything so far, it is not seeing anything right now, it may never ever see anything, yet I claim that it can see. This would be a baseless claim, is it not? Therefore, something becomes a knower if and only if there is some known which it can know. I say all these things exist because I am able to see them through my own eyes and I say my eyes can see because it can see all these things. Something can be called known if there is a knower who can know it. And, something is a knower if it can know something. The knower and the known are thus completely inter-dependent. Which one should we establish first? This

is like a chicken and egg problem.

We can say an object exists because the eye can see it and we can say the eye exists because the *manas* can observe and know this. To show that the *manas* exists we need to show that something else exists which can know it. If this chain goes on endlessly like this, if this is actually an infinitely long chain, nothing at all can be established. If the chain is not infinitely long, then there must be some knower who can be known. Either way, we have a problem.

We have already shown that nobody can do anything to himself. I cannot do anything to myself, I cannot even know myself. I am the only knower and I cannot know myself. It appears that the existence of a knower can never be established. Therefore, the existence of the known also cannot be established. That means, nothing at all can be shown to exist in this whole universe. We seem to have come to a point where we are forced to accept nihilism. Are we right? Have we gone wrong somewhere? We need to dig.

Whichever way we look at it, we seem to be heading towards a dead end. There is an extreme version of *shuunya-vaada* or nihilism which says nothing at all exists. If nothing at all exists in the Universe, I do not exist, nor do you exist. Nobody exists. Who can stake this claim, who can accept or reject this hypothesis? Who can prove or disprove? If the prover and the proof and the thing that is proved are all non-existent, what can we say at all? If nothing can exist, even such a claim cannot exist. This hypothesis that nothing at all exists is meaningless and self-defeating. The null hypothesis itself cannot exist. Even to say this, somebody must exist. This is also contrary to our common experiences in the world. In the ultimate analysis, therefore, something must exist. Extreme *shuunya-vaada*

is untenable. There may be no absolute reality or *sat* but there should at least be some apparent reality, at least some *mithyaa*. Is it not?

Some may jump to the conclusion that in the ultimate analysis nothing at all exists independently. They get confused because they have realized that the entire external world is unreal. The whole world has only dependent existence, its existence depends upon me, the prover. The knower and the known are mutually inter-dependent and so none of them can be established first. The proponents of this school have understood that they are not their bodies or *manas* or *buddhi* or even the *ahaMkaara*. They get confused because they see nothing at all in their deep sleep. So they say there is no ultimate reality at all, everything is tentative, temporary, relative and so unreal. They think there can be no final answers to the questions we have raised in this book, there is no *tattva* at all.

This null hypothesis or *shuunya-vaada* is not at all convincing. There must be something wrong with it. Let us think. I see all kinds of objects coming, changing colour, transforming and going. Where do they all come from? Where do they all go? No thing can come out of nothing and no thing can vanish into nothing. Things which come and go must be coming from and going into something that remains unchanged and undisturbed. If something is moving, it is moving with respect to something else which is not moving. If we take the Sun as stationary, we can say the Earth is rotating and revolving round the Sun at so and so speed. If we take the Earth as the reference point, we cannot say that the Earth is moving. Normally we cannot see the rotation of the Earth because we take the Earth itself to be our reference, we stay on the Earth, we are also moving with it. When we say the car is moving, it is moving with respect to the road, with respect to the Earth, which

is assumed to be stationary. All movement is relative, relative to something which is not moving. In fact all change is with respect to something which is not changing. If we see change across time, there must be a time-less thing against which we can observe and measure such a change. There must be a changeless, constant thing. There must be one. The null hypothesis is null and void. *mithyaa* cannot come from and go into *mithyaa* endlessly, *mithyaa* does not have independent existence, it can only come from and go into *sat*. *sat* must exist.

X can be relative to Y and Y can be relative to Z. There can even be long chains of dependencies. But X cannot be relative to X itself - that makes no sense. My house cannot be opposite to my house. X cannot be relative to Y and Y relative to X. Relativity cannot be cyclic, that makes no sense. My house is opposite to your house. Where is your house? It is opposite to my house. Where are both these houses? Opposite to each other! This takes us nowhere. There must be something that exists independently with respect to which other things can be relative. Therefore, the existence of such an independent, absolute reality cannot be questioned. *shuunya-vaada* is untenable. A *sat* must exist. We only need to discover it and understand its true nature. Let us think afresh.

2.22 Variety

We see so much of variety in nature - countless Millions of living species, so many varieties of plants, animals, birds, insects, fish. Is variety natural? Try making many copies of any particular object. You will find that making similar objects is much easier than making a wide variety of objects. Industries find that mass producing identical items is far easier and more economical than making each item

different. That is why art is never an industry. Variety is not natural. Variety comes only with great effort and special care. We should be utterly surprised to see so much of variety in nature. How did it all come about? Is it real?

There is enormous amount of variety in nature. Objects may be many and varied but the same eye sees them all. The eye can see objects bigger than itself as also smaller. The eye can see blue things and red things without itself being any of these.

The eye is not the real seer. It is the *manas* which sees using the device called the eye. The eyes may be sleepy or watery or whatever, the same invariant *manas* sees nevertheless. The eye shows less variations, less variety than the objects it sees and the *manas* shows even less variations and variety. There is a great deal of variety in the dresses we wear but the body inside is far less diverse. My body may be quite different from yours, but the variations between your eyes and my eyes are far less compared to variations in other body parts. Male or female, young or old, the eyes of different people show only a small amount of variation. My *manas* may be different from yours, I may like blue colour and you may like green, for example. Some people are good, some are bad, some love, others hate, some value money, others do not, and so on. Yet the variations between your *manas* and my *manas* are far less pronounced than the variations we see in the objects in the outside world. The *manas* of all human beings perceive and feel and experience life in very similar manner. There are differences, there is something called individuality, there is an element of originality and creativity but the differences are less, similarities are more.

The differences between the *buddhi* of different people is even less pronounced. In fact all human beings are hard-

wired to think in a particular way and this is what we call logic. Logic is not a property of the world, it is a property of the human *buddhi*. All people in the world think alike and if a few were to deviate, we consider them mad or otherwise mentally imbalanced. We just exclude and ignore them. Some are more intelligent than others, some use their brains more than others, some are sharp, others are dull but the basic nature of *buddhi* is more or less the same in all human beings.

There is hardly any difference between my *ahaMkaara* and yours. Even the *ahaMkaara* of a lower animal is not much different from mine. All human beings, all animals have the same 'I-ness' in them, all of them are self-aware, all of them think they are the doers, they are the experiencers, all are driven by basic instincts.

As we move from the gross to the subtle, from the external to the internal, we find that differences vanish. Carbon is a black powder, your shoe polish is carbon. Diamond is also pure carbon. Most people will not be willing to trade a diamond for shoe polish but a physicist knows that these two are allotropic forms of one and the same substance. Chemistry tells us that all materials are made up of atoms and molecules and molecules are in turn made up of atoms. The chemical which gives jasmine its attractive fragrance and kerosene its repelling smell are chemically one and the same. The Oxygen atoms in water and the Oxygen atoms in the air we breathe are identical. Atoms are made up of electrons, protons and neutrons and the electrons, protons and neutrons in gold are no different from those in iron. As we go deeper, differences vanish. Attributes vanish. At the level of atoms and molecules, there is really no such thing as flat or curved. At the level of electrons, protons and neutrons, there is no such thing as green or red. If you dig deeper, one by one all attributes will vanish. The

object that remains after all attributes have been stripped off, has no name or form. It is indescribable. It is beyond words. It is beyond the grasp of our *manas* and *buddhi*. It is more subtle than these.

There are thousands of languages in the world. Linguists believe that there must be some underlying universals and all differences that we see between these languages must be superficial. Otherwise how do we explain the fact that children born in different language communities pick up their mother tongue with more or less equal ease, in more or less the same amount of time?

It is only the ignorant who get carried away by the superficial differences. Beauty is not skin deep, the wise see the inner beauty while the fools fall for the external appearances. The black people are not different from the white. Men are not really different from women. Man is not very different from animals. The life spirit in all living creatures is the same. At the level of sub-atomic particles, there is no difference between living and non-living beings. The wise should see the underlying universal nature despite all the superficial and apparent differences and variations. Seeing differences is ignorance. Seeing the underlying universal, uniform, homogeneous, constant, changeless, invariant reality is wisdom. All human problems are because we think we are different from others. That is why we compete, that is why we try to outsmart others, that is why we cheat, that is why we tell lies, that is why we rape, torture, kill. The wise never do any of these. The wise see no differences, they see themselves in all. The wise treat others as they treat themselves. Let us all become wiser.

‘Names’ and ‘Forms’ are a property of the mind, not a property of the objects in the world. There are no objects or their names or descriptions anywhere outside of

our mind. This world of 'Names' and 'Forms' is purely internal. There are no objects, there are no properties of objects, there are no values for those properties outside of the human mind. A chair or table is not an object that exists outside of the human mind. If at all it exists, there is no way to prove it and since we have agreed to be logical to the core and utterly scientific in our spirit in our quest for the ultimate truth, we shall not accept such a possibility as real. There could be a world external to us, we cannot rule out such a possibility, but there can be no proof whatever, and so we cannot accept an external world as true and real. There is simply no way to know anything about the external world except in so far as our own mind projects it for us. We can see only what our own mind shows us. The mind is heavily influenced by the senses, which are themselves highly unreliable. Further, the mind is capable of imagination and the power of imagination is so great that it is difficult to set reality apart from imagination. The external world is therefore not real. There is no Sun, there is no Moon, there is no Earth, no Himalayas, no Pacific, no men, no women, no animals, no plants, no microbes outside of ourselves. The entire world is a projection of our own mind. Existence of the external world, even as an ever changing and illusory *mithyaa* outside of us and independent of us is not provable.

The world that we see with our eyes is not real. In reality, there is no variety. Attributes are not real. Change is not real. Variety is not real in the ultimate analysis. The objects that remain after we strip off all the superficial fancy dress we impose on the objects as observers, show no differences at all. In fact there just cannot be two or more different objects in this world. Reality is homogeneous, continuous, uniform, even all over. It must be. Think.

2.23 *sat*

Something must exist, at least one thing must exist absolutely independently, not conditioned by or dependent upon anything else in the Universe. There must be a *sat*, from which emanate the whole world of *mithyaa*, something into which this whole world of *mithyaa* finally dissolves. Like waves and bubbles that arise from the sea and vanish into the same sea, there must be a *sat*, existing independently, unchanging, undisturbed, from which the world comes and goes.

In the ultimate analysis, there can only be one thing in this Universe. For, if there are two or more different things, how are they different from one another? Attributes are not real, they have no independent existence, they are not innate to objects and since we are trying to understand the nature of things as they are, we will have to strip off all the super-imposed attributes to see the objects as they stand on their own. With no attributes, there cannot be any differences. There just cannot be two different objects in this world. We may simply be referring to the same object by different names for our convenience. This does not mean that there are actually two or more different things.

Attributes do not inhere in any object, all attributes are imposed on the objects by the observer. If you remove all attributes, what remains, the nameless, formless, description-less thing that remains, is *sat*. If you remove all attributes from a chair, what remains is *sat*. If you remove all attributes from an elephant, what remains is the same *sat*. All objects in the whole universe, however diverse they may appear to be, actually reduce to a single, indistinguishable thing called *sat*. In reality, there are no differences at all.

Although we have not yet discovered such a thing, we are now quite convinced that an absolutely independent reality must exist. There must be one thing in this universe which exists, it always exists, it always exists in an invariant and unchanging way, it exists independent of everything else, it exists independent of even space and time. This is *sat*. *sat* exists. Only *sat* exists. Only one *sat* exists. Nothing else exists independently and unchangingly. All else is *mithyaa* - they come and go, they are ever changing, unstable, unsteady, fleeting, transient, fluid, undependable, like the water in a mirage. The body comes and goes. The *manas* changes. The *buddhi* changes. The body, *manas* and *buddhi* all vanish during deep sleep and at death. They are all *mithyaa*. *sat* is the one and the only thing which is real in the ultimate analysis.

In the ultimate analysis, there must be one and only one thing in this universe that is absolutely independent of all else. It must be homogeneous, continuous, shapeless, size-less, boundary-less, all inclusive, all pervading, timeless, eternal. It has no name or form. It is indescribable. Everything we see is actually a manifestation of this single whole. This is *sat*. We only have to discover such a thing. Why is it so hard to reach this *sat*?

2.24 Who am I?

The entire universe is nothing but *viShaya* and *viShayi*. Am I the *viShaya* or the *viShayi*? Initially, we thought we were our bodies. Later we realized that we are not our bodies, we can observe our body, we are the observers, knowers, the body is the known. Initially we thought the eyes see. Later we realized that the eye is only a front end data capturing device, it is the *manas* which sees. If we consider the eye and the object it sees, we may think the object is

the *viShaya* and the eye is the *viShayi*. When we look at the eye and the *manas*, the eye becomes the *viShaya* and the *manas* becomes the *viShayi*. Is the eye a *viShaya* or a *viShayi*? The existence of the object can be established if we can establish the existence of the eye. The existence of the eye can only be established if we show that the *manas* exists. If we can show that the *manas* exists, then, we can establish the existence of the eye and hence of the object too. The *manas* can therefore be said to be the seer, which can see both the eye and the object. It sees the eyes directly and the object indirectly. Directly or indirectly, whatever can be known can be pushed into the *viShaya*. We have to keep pushing as much as possible into the *viShaya* until nothing more that can be known, directly or indirectly, remains in the *viShayi*. This is the critical step. We must rid the *viShayi* of all things that can be known and dump them all into the *viShaya*. Then, if this pure *viShayi* can be established, then all else that can ever be known in the whole universe can be established. Recognizing this pure knower is the most crucial step in the whole exercise.

Can we establish the existence of such a pure *viShayi*? Yes, we can. It is easy. Let us start by asking a simple question. Do I exist? There can be no doubt in this. I do exist. This is a point that has been missed or confused by so many great people. Even to doubt my existence, I must exist. Nobody can ever have any experience of non-existence. If at all I have such an experience, I must exist even to have that experience and so this experience of non-existence can only be illusory. There is no need to prove that I exist. Proving itself presupposes existence. I pre-exist even the very notions of doubt, evidence, or proof. I pre-exist language and thought. That I exist is self evident. Therefore, extreme nihilist view that nothing at all exists cannot be right. There is no question of my non-existence, I only need to know the nature of my existence, I only need

to know my true nature or *svaruupa*. Am I a *viShayi* or a *viShaya*? Do I have an absolutely independent existence? If not, on what does my existence depend? If I am *sat*, what then is it that stays with me always, in all states and conditions, under all circumstances, which never leaves me, which I can never alienate? These are the only questions that we need to address now.

That I exist cannot be proved. Nor do I need to. I know it directly. I know it by direct experience in the true sense of the term. This is called *anubhava*. This is the real meaning of direct perception, not observing through sense organs. This kind of truly direct experience is also a valid means of knowledge, a valid kind of proof. I know that I exist without requiring any *pramaaNas* whatever. This is the crux of the whole philosophy. If you miss this one point, you will miss the whole thing. Or you will mess up with the whole thing. This is where most thinkers all over the world have been getting confused all through the ages. You cannot prove that you do not exist. You cannot even doubt or question your existence. That you exist is unquestionable. You will have to accept that you exist. You will have to accept this as a valid proof. This is not like saying nobody has proved that ghosts do not exist, so ghosts exist. That there is no proof of non-existence is itself not sufficient to prove existence. But here the prover has direct, clear, unquestionable experience of himself. He can therefore establish the existence of himself based on this direct experience. This is valid.

I exist. Nothing else in the universe can be established so easily, so directly, so effortlessly, so confidently, so irrefutably. Is it not strange that most thinkers fail to recognize this one all important and most critical point? We look all over the world but we fail to look at ourselves. We count every other object in the world but we do not count

ourselves. Strange but true.

I exist. I may be *sat* or I may be *mithyaa*. Even if my existence is *mithyaa*, that is, relative, what is it relative to? If that thing relative to which I exist does not exist, then I also cannot exist. But I exist. Therefore, there must be at least one thing in the whole universe that exists absolutely independently.

I exist and I know that I exist. This knowing is not the same kind of knowing that we have used in defining *viShayi* and *viShaya*. I do not and I cannot know myself objectively, using my sense organs or my *manas* or my *buddhi* or anything else. That I exist cannot be established by any scientific experiment whatever. No instrument, no laboratory, no equipment, no tools, no resources, no manpower, no money, no time, no effort, nothing is required. I know my own existence directly, without need for any perception or inference. I exist and this has been established without depending on anything else in the entire universe. Hence my existence is independent existence, I am *sat*. There is one *sat*, only one *sat* and I am that.

What is my *svaruupa*? 'I' is not something that can come to me or go away from me anytime, I am always myself. Am I a *viShayi* or a *viShaya*? If I am a *viShaya*, who else is there who can know me? All other people have already been pushed into my *viShaya*. I have to be a *viShayi*. I exist and I know that I exist. I know that I exist and I know this not as an objective perception or knowledge or inference, I know this by direct experience. I am the knower of myself, I am therefore a *viShayi*. In this very special sense of knowing, I know myself. I am the one who has set about exploring the whole universe. I can only be a *viShayi*. I am the knower, I want to know all that can be known. My body, the senses, the *manas*, the *ahaMkaara*,

the *buddhi* are all now in my *viShaya*, these are all things which I can observe and know. I remain as a pure knower. There is no aspect of the known in me, I just cannot be known. All that can be known in the entire universe is my *viShaya*. I am a pure *viShayi*.

Now, there are only two things to consider - I, the pure *viShayi* and the *viShaya*, which includes the entire rest of the universe. The existence of the *viShaya* is dependent on the existence of the *viShayi*, it has no independent existence. I am the only knower and if I do not observe, there will be no way of establishing anything in the *viShaya*. Therefore, the whole of *viShaya*, including the entire external world, the stars and galaxies, the oceans and the mountains, all the plants and animals, all the human beings, my own body, senses, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara*, are all *mithyaa*, not *sat*. Only *sat* has any true nature of its own, there is no *svaruupa* for *mithyaa*. Therefore, it is absolutely futile to explore the outside world, our body, the brain or mind or whatever. Practically all that we are doing in the world today in the name of science or philosophy or research is all meaningless and futile. There can be but one *sat* and that can only be I.

What about space and time? Just ask if space or time is a *viShayi*. Can space know anything? Can time see, observe, or know anything? No, it cannot. So space and time are *viShaya*, not *viShayi*. I can observe space and time, I am the observer, they are the observed. Therefore, space and time are also *mithyaa*, not real. We get confused because we tend to think that objects in the world and even the whole world exists within a framework of space and time. There is no basis to assume anything like that. That is why we were very careful to include everything possible, both physical and non-physical, into our concept of universe. Space and time are part of the universe, universe

does not exist in space or time. Nothing can exist outside the universe because by definition universe includes all that can exist.

I exist. I am *sat*, I exist absolutely independently. I am the pure *viShayi*, devoid of a body and mind, I am the one who can observe these. All else in the whole universe is *mithyaa*, that is, their existence is dependent on my existence, they have no independent existence, they have no *svaruupa* at all. I am the one and the only *sat*. I never get any feeling that I am two different individuals. There cannot be two 'I's in me. Even in the so called cases of split personality, only one part of their *manas* will show up at a time, not both. There can never be two 'I's, let alone two different 'I's. There is no plural for I, I is one without a second.

I exist independent of all else, independent of space and time too. I am space-less and time-less. It is not easy for us even to imagine absolute spacelessness or timelessness. As a crude approximation, we may say I am eternal and all pervading. I am absolutely changeless, I am *sat*, *sat* has no attributes, no change is possible without attributes. I am birthless, deathless. I am neither young nor old, I am neither male nor female, I am neither fair nor dark, I am neither tall nor short. I have no attributes, I have no properties, I have no qualities. I have no parts, no aspects. I have no form, I am indescribable. I do not even have a name. I am untouched, I am free, free from everything. I am the knower, I am the only knower, I know the entire universe, I know everything. No one can know me. This is my true nature, this is my *svaruupa*.

These ideas may sound abstract and perhaps very different from what you have been thinking so far in your life. Take the physical body, the mind, the whole world,

space, time, everything out of your mind and then think of all this. It will take some time for you to understand and accept all these ideas. The next few sections will substantiate, illustrate and elaborate these ideas. Your doubts will all be clarified, all questions still lingering in your mind will be addressed and answered. We will also see why we should accept this and what benefits we can get by taking this view. Just read on.

2.25 The Sun and the Snake

Earlier we realized that no one can do anything to himself. I cannot do anything to myself, I cannot even know myself. Then we said I exist and I know that I exist. I know myself. How is this possible? Why is it that we normally cannot do anything to ourselves? Why is it that we normally cannot even know ourselves? Because all actions including seeing or knowing involve changes in the seer or knower. We see when the light rays enter the eye, create an image on the retina, neural signals are generated and sent to the brain, somethings happen in the brain and only then we see. We cannot see anything until and unless we ourselves undergo some change. Similarly, thinking involves changes in the thinking machine in us. Therefore, it is not possible for somebody to know themselves, the very act of trying to know changes the thing to be known and so one can never get to know oneself properly. A scientist tried to probe into sleep of other people and concluded that people are always in a disturbed state of sleep, they can never sleep peacefully! What else can we expect? If you probe into somebody's sleep are you not disturbing his sleep in the very process? This is the crux of the whole problem, knowing involves changing.

Now consider the Sun. The Sun shines brightly and

illuminates all the living and non-living entities. Now, let us say, a snake comes out of its hole. The Sun immediately and automatically starts illuminating the snake. Did the Sun have to do anything to start illuminating this new object that has surfaced from beneath? No. Does the Sun undergo any change in order to illumine this extra object that has come out all of a sudden? No, not at all. The Sun 'sees' the whole world not in the sense in which we see objects using our eyes and the *manas*, the Sun is merely a witness to all the scenes. A pure witness, which is totally unmoved, totally undisturbed, which never undergoes any change whatever, can see everything, it can see itself too, because it does not have to do anything or undergo any change whatever to do this. This kind of seeing or knowing is not an action, there is no need for an actor or agent, there is no need to distinguish between the subject, verb and object, because nothing is actually done, nothing actually happens, it is absolutely effortless. Such a pure witness is called *saakShi*.

You will never be able to drink water if water were to turn into ice the moment you attempt to drink it. You will never be able to observe your own mind because the very attempt to observe it will change it, you can see only the changed mind, not the original, not the process of its undergoing change. A *saakShi* can see everything without doing anything, without undergoing any change, without requiring anything else, without any effort at all. A pure witness is devoid of all attributes and hence all change. A pure witness can see itself, properly, because it does not undergo any change in the process of seeing. The mere presence of the king is sufficient to ensure that all the people do their work diligently, with care and in an orderly fashion. The king does not have to do anything, he does have to say anything. He does not even have to look carefully and inspect what each one is doing, his presence is enough. If he

goes away from the kingdom, there will be utter chaos and finally everything will come to a grinding halt. Likewise, the light of our consciousness is a pure witness, our body, mind, and the whole universe maintain order and do their work in the mere presence of this *saakShi*. In this sense, it is the prime over of the entire universe, the whole universe owes its presence and all the qualities to this one and the only source, the original source of all knowledge and energy.

Almost all branches of human knowledge, including science and philosophy, have failed to reach this final truth because they have not been able to cross the biggest hurdle, namely, the mind. Everybody is thinking only at the level of the *manas* and *buddhi*, never beyond. The *manas* and *buddhi* can perceive, feel, experience, know only by undergoing changes themselves and so can never know themselves. I can exist without my *manas* or *buddhi*, I do that everyday when I am deep asleep, I can experience my *manas* and my *buddhi* and so I must be the one beyond these, different from these. I am not my body, I am not my mind either, I am the witness to both of these. This real I cannot be known objectively, it is not object of any action whatever, not even of knowing. It can only be experienced directly. This is meaning of saying I exist. This is pure existence. I am a pure witness, a *saakShi*. This is the truth.

You cannot know yourself by thinking about it. You cannot know anything unless you know yourself. Therefore, you cannot know anything by thinking. Thinking is not a useful tool, it is in fact a big obstacle for realizing the truth. Thought waves, like the waves on water, are disturbing by their very nature, you can see the bottom of the lake only when all the waves subside. You can know the truth only after you stop trying to know. Only those who can observe, train, control and master their own minds can

conquer themselves and hence the whole world. This is the secret of life. This is the main theme of the whole of the next chapter. Throughout this book we have been making critical statements, sometimes somewhat provocative, intentionally, and then asking you to think. Those who never think can of course not get anything. Those who think deeply about the topic at hand will get some understanding. Only those who start thinking about thinking itself, only those who realize that thinking is an obstacle, only those who can slow down and finally stop thinking, can realize the truth by themselves. Others need a guru even to get started.

The eye can only see, it cannot hear or smell. The nose can only smell, it cannot see or hear. The ears can only hear, nothing else. The *manas* can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and experience various other kinds of emotions and feelings but it cannot know itself. I can see my *manas* but my *manas* cannot see me. I am beyond the *manas*, I am a pure knower, I can see everything in the entire universe, I can see my body, I can see my *manas*, I can see my *buddhi*, I can see my own *ahaMkaara* also. In deep sleep, I see that my senses are not sensing anything, my *manas* and *buddhi* are not perceiving or knowing anything, I see that even my *ahaMkaara* is not showing up. I can see all this, that is how I can wake up and say ‘I had a good sleep, I did not see or know anything, not even myself at that time’. I can see the presence of my *ahaMkaara*, I can see its absence too. This is not ordinary kind of seeing or knowing, it is the highest kind of seeing or knowing, it is consciousness of the highest kind. I am a conscious being, rather I am this very consciousness, I am the very embodiment of *caitanya*.

The fact that we can all see, hear, feel, experience, know, everything that we do in life is a proof that such a pure witness exists. If not for this pure consciousness,

I would not have been able to wake from my deep sleep. Pure consciousness is devoid of all attributes, it is devoid of all changes. An object without any attributes is indescribable, it is not similar to or different from anything else. In fact there can be no second thing, it is the one without a second, for, if there were a second thing, we need to answer how these two are different. If they are absolutely non-different, it is meaningless to say there are two of them. No differences are possible without attributes. We just cannot talk of any differences, and so there can be one and only one such pure witness. I am that, you are that, everybody is that. Our assumption that there are many people in this world is not correct. There are many bodies, many minds but the seer in all of us is one. There is only one conscious entity in the whole universe. Our minds are not self-conscious, they only reflect the light of the one and the only conscious entity that exists. The light of the same Sun illumines all the homes and streets in all the cities and towns. The light of my consciousness illumines me, you, all other people, all living creatures, the entire universe. After all, it is not constrained and limited by space or time or any other physical boundary.

2.26 sat-cit-aananda

Our goal has been to seek the absolutely independent reality called *sat*. Since attributes have no independent existence, *sat* is devoid of all attributes, hence invariant and eternal. There cannot be two or more *sats* because there are absolutely no differences once all attributes have been gotten rid of. There must be at least one *sat* because I exist and this is self-evident. Also, I see this world and although this whole world is only *mithyaa*, this *mithyaa* can only emanate from *sat* and so a *sat* must exist. By this logic, we have concluded that there is one and only one ab-

solutely independent reality in the entire universe and that is *sat*, invariant, eternal, absolutely independent. I exist. So I must also be *sat*, eternal, invariant, independent, free. I am not my body or brain or mind. I am my self. The term for self is *aatma*. *aatma* simply means self, my self, your self, his self, her self. *aatma* is not some non-existent, imaginary, ghostly, scary thing as they depict in movies and TV shows. *aatma* is in fact the only thing that actually exists, all else are its shadows and ghosts.

I am the *viShayi*, the knower, the pure witness. I see the world. I say the world exists because I can see it. The existence of the world is therefore dependent on my existence and my ability to know. The world has no independent existence and so can only be *mithyaa*. My body and mind are also *mithyaa*. Why and from where does this whole world appear then? This is like asking why shadows exist. Shadows really do not have any existence of their own, they appear as and when opaque objects and lighting conditions create them, they change as and when these other things change, they go away once the objects or lights go away. Is it not foolish to think that the shadow is real, it exists independently, it goes hiding when the object or lights are taken away, and that is how it can re-appear later on? Likewise, all questions connected with the entire universe including the body and the mind are meaningless questions. There is no need to ask or answer why or from where this whole big illusory world comes or where it vanishes when we simply fall asleep. The entire world is our own creation, our own imagination of sorts. Suffice it to say it is *mithyaa*. But we must realize and accept that unlike other short lived illusions, the illusion of the world continues throughout our lives. The physical universe is said to have taken the current shape some 15 Billion years ago and is likely to go on more or less like this for Billions of years to come. Billions of years is not infinity, it

is still a finite amount of time. The world is not eternal, hence *mithyaa*, whichever way you look at it. But since the illusion is long-drawn, we cannot ignore it all together. From birth to death, our whole life is spent in this illusory world. We must accept this as a tentative practical reality and learn to live well and make the most of this human life. The world is not a *paaramaarthika satya* but it is a *vyavahaarika satya*.

A shadow has no independent existence, if at all we talk of its existence, we must say its existence is the same as the existence of the object whose shadow it is. A shadow has no properties of its own but if at all we talk about its properties, we must say these properties are the properties of the object whose creation it is. The intelligence and wisdom of all the people in my dreams is my own intelligence and wisdom since all these people in my dreams are my own creations. We may get scared for a moment by imagining a snake in a rope. The snake was really not there at all, before, during or after the illusion. The rope alone existed all through, before, during and after the illusion. The rope is the substratum on which the snake was imagined. Even imagination requires a substratum, a base, on which we can super-impose the illusory creations. Likewise, since there is only one reality in the ultimate analysis, the substratum of all illusions is *sat*. The snake was really only a rope all the time. Likewise, this whole world is really the nameless, formless, attribute-less, changeless, eternal *sat* alone, even while we are seeing all the variety and change. This whole world is a making of the *sat*, it is essentially the same as my *aatma*, it must be same as my self. The world is non-different from my self. The world is just a projection of myself. This *aatma* is also the whole world, the entire universe, which is also called *brahma*. I alone exist, I am *sat*, I am *aatma*, I am *brahma*.

I am the seer, hearer, observer, feeler, perceiver, thinker, knower. Torch light can reveal all the objects in the room but the objects cannot reveal the light. Only light can throw light on others. I am that light. I am a conscious, sentient being, I am not my body, I am not just matter. No matter, no thing, no physical object, no element, compound or mixture, no electron proton or neutron, or any combination of these, no living cell, whether it is the skin cell or the bone cell or the brain cell, can know, feel, perceive, understand, accept, reject, enjoy, suffer, experience life like I can. It is not that optical light falls on objects, gets reflected, enters the eye and helps us to see the objects. It is the light of our consciousness which goes out from us through the eye, falls on the objects and reveals them to us like a torch light. I am consciousness, *caitanya* or *cit*. It is the very nature of a light to illumine all else. We do not have to give this quality to light, we cannot. Nor can we take this quality away. Illumining is the very nature, the *svaruupa* of light, of consciousness. No one needs to illumine it, no one can. I am the knower, I know everything.

It is the *aatma* which illumines our body, sense organs, our *manas*, our *buddhi* and our *ahaMkaara*. It is the *aatma* that remains constant as I repeatedly pass through all the states and stages in life. Whether I am awake or asleep, whether I am unconscious or in a state of coma, I exist and I exist as a pure consciousness. My *aatma* is *sat*, *sat* always exists. I always exist, my body has a birth and a death, I do not have. I am eternal, timeless.

I exist, I always exist, I always exist unchangingly, I exist independent of anything else in this universe, I do not need anything else in the world to prove my existence, I am self-sufficient, I am self-evident, I am *svayaM-prakaasha*, *svataH-siddha*. I do not have a waking state or a dreaming state or a deep sleep state in reality. States imply change, I

am changeless, I am stateless, I exist unchangingly through all these so called states, I observe the three states, standing away and independent of them all, the states do not affect me, I am untouched, unmoved by all that happens in this world. I am simply an observer, the witness or *saakShi*. I am neutral. I am pure, because I have no attributes or qualities. We may say this water is dirty but water can never be dirty - water is made up of Hydrogen and Oxygen atoms, none of which can be impure or dirty. Electrons, protons and neutrons cannot be dirty. Dirty water means pure water plus dirt. Water itself cannot be dirty. Likewise, I am always pure, I am unaffected by all the dirt, dust, and impurities of the external world, of my *manas* or *buddhi* or my body.

The eye can see all the variety and variations in the outside world but it cannot see its own variations. The *manas* can see the changes in the eye but it cannot see its own perturbations. Anything which has variations cannot see its own variations. The self has no variations at all. Therefore it can see everything in the universe including itself. The self is the one and the only witness. The *aatma* is the *saakShi* or witness to everything in this universe. It is purely a witness, it does nothing, it experiences nothing. I am not my *manas*, I am not a doer, or an experiencer. I have nothing to do in life, I am untouched by all the life experiences. You will understand the correct meaning and practical implications of all this in the next chapter. Be patient and read on.

Our *manas* keeps seeking pleasures and joys and happiness, trying at the same time to avoid all pain, sorrow, sadness, suffering. Is there anyone in the whole world who experiences only happiness and no sorrow at all? Pragmatically speaking, we are sure that we can never get all pleasures and no pains at all in life. Many people in the

world keep seeking the impossible and keep experiencing failures, leading to frustration. The wiser few realize that pleasure and pain are two sides of the same coin, they learn to stay calm and steady, despite all the ups and downs in life. Only the very few wisest men realize the art of getting rid of all pain, all suffering, all bad things, all unwanted things, once and for all, permanently and irreversibly. Only the *aatma-jnYaanis*, only the truly self-realized can hope to get unlimited, endless bliss and bliss alone. They can overcome all problems of life, without any exceptions, once and for all. This pure, unalloyed, endless bliss is called *aananda*. Ordinary people do not understand this. You can. You are bliss incarnate, you are nothing but bliss. This is the promise with which we started this book. Looks impossible. But very much possible. We only have to dig into the root of happiness and bliss, and the root of misery and suffering. In deep sleep, I exist and I alone exist, there is nothing else and there is no pain, no suffering of any kind. The moment we wake up, we come in contact with the world and all of our problems start again. The root, the original source, the only source of all happiness is the *sat*, our own self, our own *aatma*. This self is the only common factor in all of our experiences of happiness and bliss in life. You cannot be happy without yourself. There is not an iota of pain or suffering in the self. All pain, suffering, misery, agony, frustration, anger, desperation, sorrow arise from the contact with the non-self, the body, mind, and the external world including all the other people. The root cause of all suffering is our attachment with the illusory world, the non-self. When a thorn pricks you what do you do? All you have to do is to remove the thorn and throw it away. All the problems caused by the thorn are gone by simply getting rid of it. All the problems caused by the non-self can be overcome by simply getting rid of our attachment to it. It is that simple. But it looks very hard, impracticable. The whole of the next chapter is

devoted to understanding this idea properly and to learn practical ways and techniques of achieving it. Even if you cannot overcome all problems and immerse yourself in infinite bliss, you can certainly go a long way in that direction. We will show you how in the next chapter.

All pain, suffering, misery, agony, anger, frustration, desperation, helplessness arise when we contact the non-self, that is, the external world including the body and the mind. It is possible to overcome all pain and suffering completely and irreversibly. The next chapter will show us how. When we try to get rid of our attachments to the external world, we also lose out on the pleasures we can get through the world. This may confuse many into believing that *aananda* is a sorrow-less, joyless state, a lifeless, death-like state. Who would ever want such a thing? We have to realize that all acquired things, all things that are conditioned on, or relative to, something else, all things obtained through effort, all that we can buy, get or steal from the world, are short lived and elusive. This is not real happiness. Real happiness is what exists naturally in us all the time. Real happiness is not what we can obtain, it cannot be cultivated or acquired, it is simply there right inside us all the time. It is in fact impossible to take it away from us. This is *aatma-sukha*. Those who have realized the self and mastered the art of revelling in the self and self alone enjoy this endless and infinite happiness and bliss. All other kinds of joys and pleasures look too trivial, they never even seek them. Just as a rich man has no desires for poverty, a self-realized man will have no longing for worldly pleasures, he already has a much bigger and greater kind of happiness within him. You are the very abode of happiness. Realize this and be happy.

I am *sat*, I am *cit*, I am *aananda*, I am *aatma*, I am *brahma*. All are one and the same. *aatma* is *brahma* and *brahma* is *aatma*, there is no difference. I am that. You are

that. This fellow is that. Everything is that.

In the ultimate analysis, in *paramaārtha*, there is one and only one thing in this universe. That is *sat*, that is *cit*, that is *ānanda*. Nothing else exists, independently. This only thing which exists, cannot be compared, for, there is nothing else to compare it with. It is not the same as or similar to or different from anything else. It cannot be described. It illumines the *manas* and the *vaak* or speech, *manas* or *vaak* cannot get it.

sat, *cit*, *ānanda* are not three different things - there are no three different things in this universe, there is one and only one. We cannot describe or qualify this only thing which exists. Knowing and admitting our limitations, we have still tried here to understand this abstract and subtle reality by describing it as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* for our own convenience. I am *sat-cit-ānanda* or *saccidānanda* upon conflation, this is my own true nature, this is my *svarūpa*.

2.27 The Universe is cinmaya

This room is bigger than all the objects in it and it encloses them all. This city is so big that it includes all the buildings and streets and people and what not. A house is much smaller than a city. Therefore, a city can contain a house but a house cannot contain a city. The bigger thing encompasses, houses, includes all the smaller things. This Earth is so big, it includes everything in it. This universe is called *brahma*. *brahma* means the big thing, very big indeed, the biggest thing, the extraordinary, the greatest. *brahma* is so big, bigger than anything else in the whole universe, so it includes the entire universe. *brahma* is thus simply a name for the all inclusive universe, including the manifest and the unmanifest.

When we imagine a snake in a rope, either we have to say the snake did not exist at all, it was only an illusion, or we must say what we saw as a snake was actually the rope alone, not different from it. Both of these views are valid, there is really no difference between the two. These are simply two different ways of saying the same thing. The only thing we cannot do is to assert that the snake is real, it actually exists. We can say this world does not exist, it is illusory. Or we can say the world is non-different from *sat*, it exists and all else in the universe is included in it. Nothing else can exist, independently, *brahma* alone exists. It is infinite, limitless, because it has no attributes. It is changeless. This is the true nature of the universe.

This universe includes sentient things and then the insentient, the living and the lifeless, the conscious and the consciousness-less. All kinds of objects and actors come and go on the movie screen but the seer sits unmoved, simply watching all that happens. The seer can see that the movie has not yet started, he can see that the movie is over and the screen has become blank again. He can see the presence of the movie, he can see its absence, he can see everything when the movie is going on. This is the nature of the seer, of the self, of *sat*, of *brahma*. All these are one and the same. The *sat* stands witness to everything, to the body, to the *manas*, to the *buddhi*, to the *ahaMkaara*, to my birth and death, to the whole world, to everything. It is like a light which illumines all else. In the wakeful state it illumines the external world for us through our *manas* and our sense organs. In dreams it illumines our dream world through our *manas* alone. In deep sleep, the light of *sat* continues to shine but there is no other object to illumine. So we see nothing. The seer exists, continues to shine as always, and that is why we wake up and realize that we had a good sleep. Neither the body nor the *manas* nor the

buddhi nor the *ahaMkaara* existed in my deep sleep and if this seer also did not exist, I could not have woken up, continued my life and realized that I had a great sleep. This light of the self, this light of the seer, which always exists, independent of anything else, is also called *cit* or 'pure consciousness', not to be confused with mere awareness. *sat* is *cit*. This is the awareness, this is the knowledge of the highest kind. Only *sat* exists, only *cit* exists. This universe is nothing but *cit*, pure consciousness, nothing else.

Consciousness is not to be confused with awareness. In deep sleep I am not aware of myself but I am not unconscious either. I am conscious, living, although I am not aware of myself or anything else. Even in a state that we call unconsciousness in everyday parlance, we are still living, we are still conscious, although we are not self-aware. The meaning of the term consciousness used here is different, deeper, more subtle than its layman's or a doctor's connotation. A person in coma is also conscious, in this deeper sense. *cit* is pure consciousness, consciousness of the highest kind.

This universe is *cinmaya*, that is, *cit-maya* - pervaded by *cit* or pure consciousness. Every nook and corner of this whole world is filled with *cit*, leaving not an inch free anywhere. There is *cit*, only *cit*, nothing but *cit* here, there, everywhere. Nothing else has a place in this whole universe. *sat* is *cit*, *cit* is *sat*. *sat* is the quintessence of existence. *cit* is the quintessence of knowledge or consciousness. Existence and knowledge are one and the same.

cit manifests variously. It is this light of this consciousness that we experience as awareness, awareness of the world as well as self-awareness in the form of *ahaMkaara*. It is the light of this *cit* which gets reflected in our *manas* as the perceiver, feeler and experiencer of life. It is this

same light that is reflected in the *buddhi* as our intelligence. It is *cit* which manifests as all the life processes - metabological, physiological, chemical, physical, biological processes in the body which symbolize life. Respiration, digestion, excretion, blood circulation, reproduction, even the working of the brain and nervous system is a manifestation of *cit*. Our knowledge, our intelligence, our wisdom and vision are all a show of this *cit*. We started off our life as a single cell. This cell started dividing and it became an undifferentiated mass of cells. At this stage there was no bone, no blood, no hair, no organs at all, no brain - we were living as a homogeneous mass of cells. At one point of time, the cells started differentiating. Some became blood cells, some became bone cells, some became nerve cells, some became skin cells. These cells developed into various organs of the body such as heart, lungs, brain and kidneys, and took on various functions. Everything happened perfectly and we became the full human body that we are. Who decides which cell should become bone and which cell becomes blood? Who decides how many cells should become skin and how many should become hair? Who decides where each organ should go, how exactly it must inter-connect with other organs, how big it should grow? Enormous amount of knowledge and control is required to make all this happen. No single cell can do all this, and there is nothing other than cells at a material level. It is the *cit shakti* which knows, which controls everything. Without *cit* none of this would happen. We are nothing but *cit*, we are *cinmaya*.

A salt crystal is cubical in shape. A cube has six flat square surfaces, twelve straight edges, four corners. There are three pairs of parallel plain surfaces, meeting the other surfaces at right angles. When we dissolve salt in water and allow this water to evaporate, such wonderful cubical crystals are automatically formed. Who decides which

molecule should form part of a flat surface or an edge or a corner? Who decides and controls all the molecules to take up such a nice shape? No single molecule has all the necessary knowledge or ability to globally manage and control the whole process of crystal formation. Nor can the salt molecules talk to each other, cooperate, collaborate and achieve this great fete. This universe is filled with *cit* and it is this *cit* which controls everything. The food we eat is digested and assimilated because of *cit*. We get into sleep because of *cit*, we wake up because of *cit*. Without *cit* nothing in this whole world will happen. Nothing happens by itself. The *cit*, which is also the *sat*, is the prime mover of the entire universe.

We are all *cit*. So are all the living animals, birds, fish, insects, worms, micro-organisms. A black cow knows how to eat green grass and produce white milk. A dog knows how to give birth to puppies. A bird knows how to fly. Fish know how to swim. Even a single celled micro-organism knows all that it needs to do in its life. Even the trees are nothing but *cit*. A mango tree knows how to convert the nutrition in the soil into a sweet mango fruit using Sunlight, air and water. A neem tree knows how to produce a bitter neem fruit with exactly the same inputs. Every plant has its own distinctive type of leaves and every plant knows how many and what kinds of leaves it should produce where and when. Every living cell knows how to grow, how long to live and when to die. There is knowledge everywhere, even in the brainless creatures. The wise treat all creatures equally, with love and affection. Human beings are not superior to other animals, we have no right to harm, kill or eat other animals.

Even a stone knows that it has to fall when it is thrown up. The Earth knows that it has to pull other objects towards it with a particular force called its gravitational pull.

The wind knows how to blow, the ocean knows how to roar. Water knows how to lift itself up to the sky and pour down as rain, the Sun knows how to cause clouds and rains and seasons and all. Knowing does not mean knowing with our brain, that is only one kind of and a very limited kind of knowledge. Knowledge of the highest kind, called *cit*, is there everywhere, it is there in the air. We can just catch it and become knowledgeable, we can become realized, it is so easy. Knowledge is not there in the books or library or the Internet. Knowledge cannot be given to you by a guru. You have to realize that you are knowledge per se. A guru can only prod you into thinking along the right lines.

This entire universe, the manifest and the unmanifest parts included, is nothing but *cit* or pure consciousness. This is knowledge of the highest kind, superior to the knowledge at the perceptual level of the *manas* and superior to the knowledge at the symbolic level of the *buddhi*. It is supreme knowledge, also called *prajnYaana*. You, I, he, she, everybody, all human beings, all animals, all plants and trees, even the inanimate objects are all merely a manifestation of that *cit*. The same *cit* manifests differently in our waking state, dream state and state of deep sleep. It is beyond all states, it is beyond all change, it is beyond space and time, it is the only thing that exists, it is *sat*. Realizing this is the only cure for all ills, the only solution to all our pains and suffering. *cit* is *sat*, realizing this is real knowledge. All else is false, fake, simply wrong.

2.28 The One without a Second

There is one and only one thing that exists independently in the entire universe. Everything in the universe is a manifestation of this only thing that exists. If there is a second thing, please show it. In what way is it different? How

can there be any difference at all, we are taking of the *paramaarthā*, the ultimate reality, not what appears on the surface, and attributes are only external appearances, they are different from the object per se, and attributes have no independent existence. When there are no attributes, there cannot be any change or difference. There just cannot be a second *sat* in this universe. There is one and only one. The *sat* is one without a second. It is not like or similar to or different from anything else, for, there is nothing else in the ultimate analysis with which it can be compared. Variety, multiplicity, remains as long as we are ignorant of this. The moment we realize this simple fact that there just cannot be two (or more) different objects in the universe, this ignorance in the form of seeing multiple realities vanishes and non-dualism alone shines.

Two (or more) independent different realities just cannot exist. If they are absolutely independent, they will necessarily be attribute-less and hence non-different. If the two entities are not absolutely independent, then they are not the ultimate realities, they are only apparent realities, they owe their very existence to some other independent reality. Seeing differences is therefore ignorance, see the one and the only thing that exists, the one and the only thing that illumines and enlivens the entire universe, including the Sun and the snake. Only this one exists independently, all others exist only because this one exists. This one exists, it exists independently, it is absolute, it is not relative to anything, it is not conditioned by anything, it sees everything but no one can see it. This is the definitive, conclusive, final answer. Call it self, call it *aatma*, call it *brahma*, call *saakShi*, call it *jyooti*, call it anything, it is actually nameless, formless, property-less, action-less, change-less, eternal and beyond even space and time. It can never be created or destroyed. All of us are mere reflections of that only thing that exists. Realize this and give your ignorance

in the form of plurality and multiplicity. Cheating, telling lies, rape, murder, kidnapping, torture, terrorism, war, linguistic animosity, racial hatred, clash of religions, in fact all problems in the world are a consequence of this ignorance in the form of seeing many. The one and the only sure, lasting cure for all the ills plaguing the world today lies in realizing the truth and giving up our ignorance in the form of dualism.

The body, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara* are all one per person, there should be as many of them as there are people. But there is no plural for 'I'. Can you show me another 'I' in this whole world? There is one and only one 'I', right? There may appear to be many bodies and minds but I am one. Normally we think that I can see you and you can see me and so both of us are independent seers. We have already seen that this is not right. Two or more seers cannot exist independently in this universe. If two or more different seers exist, we will need a third seer to see them and show that they are different, thereby making the original two dependent. The one and the same *sat* is the seer in me and the seer in you too. If you keep a powerful source of light inside a pot with many small holes, in a dark room, it will appear as if there are many different sources of light. Likewise, each individual appears to be an independent conscious entity but in reality it is the same single consciousness that reflects through the *manas* and *buddhi* of all the living creatures, giving us a feeling they are independent individuals. The life and consciousness that we see in living creatures is not the original source, these are mere reflections of *sat*, the only sentient being in the entire universe.

'Carness' is seen in part of a car, other parts being occluded, for example, and so carness is not the same as the whole car. Carness does not exist, it is not seen, in any

one individual part of the car, taken in isolation. Therefore, carness is not the same as any single part of the car. Carness does not exist in random or arbitrary permutations and combinations of the parts. Hence carness is not the same as the parts taken in various combinations and configurations. If a car is green, the carness of this car does not reside in any arbitrary object that is green in colour. Therefore carness does not reside in colour or any other attribute. Attributes and parts, taken individually or in any combination or taken all together, do not make up the carness because attributes and parts cannot exist independent of the car. Carness must therefore be something more subtle, pervading all over, yet different from any of the parts or attributes. This carness, devoid of all attributes as it is, cannot be different from potness or clothness. Therefore, in reality, there is no difference between a pot and a cloth and a car. An elephant, a computer and the Moon are all one and the same. There is but one thing in this universe.

We find it difficult to understand this idea because in our daily life we are so much used to thinking that the table ends here, the chair stands far away there and there is only space in between. How can the table and the chair be one and the same thing? If only you can see things at atomic and sub-atomic levels, and then at even more finer and subtler levels, you will see that it is all a continuum. Just as the same ocean appears black at one place and greenish blue at another, just as the same ocean appears calm at one place and rough at another, a single, continuous, homogeneous thing appears differently to us because that is how we see it. There is really no big difference between solids, liquids and gases, except that the atoms and molecules are a little closer together in solids and they are farther away and less tightly coupled in gases. We say this is the nose, and these are the ears. Where exactly does the nose end or the ears begin? In the ultimate analysis, there

is neither the nose nor the ears, there are no beginnings or endings. We are talking of a thing which has no attributes at all, no size or shape, where can it begin or end?

We talk of building a partition wall to divide a big room into two. For the sake of convenience, we say in our day to day parlance that the room has been divided into two. Is it really possible to divide space? The room exists in space, the walls also exist in the same space and the new partition wall we built also exists in the same space. The same indivisible space is there on either side of the partition wall as also through it. Space pervades all. There is space inside the pot, outside the pot and through the wall of the pot, and all this is the same single indivisible space. The reality is very much like this. The whole world, including our bodies and mind, are only *mithyaa* - they are like shadows. Shadows do not have independent existence. The moment an object is taken away, its shadow also vanishes without demur. What always remains constant is neither the physical object nor its shadow, but the light that enlivens the objects and creates the shadows. There is only one. A physical object displaces air where it is placed but it cannot displace space although it occupies space. Space continues to be there unaffected even where this object stays. Likewise, *brahma* is the one indivisible unitary reality, even while appearing in all kinds of forms everywhere.

Many wise men have given many different opinions and created many different schools of thought. Truth is not a matter of opinion or 'mata'. Truth is not a game of numbers. Truth is truth, irrespective of what people may think or say. It is no wonder if large numbers of people in any society are ignorant and the wise and knowledgeable are very rare. This is quite natural. Because as ordinary laymen all through our life we keep seeing the external world of constant change and we never get to see anything which

does not change at all. In an ordinary, day-to-day, layman's sense or *vyavahaara*, seeing a multitude of objects is perfectly OK but this is not the truth. In the ultimate analysis or *paramaarthaa*, independent existence of more than one absolute reality is simply impossible. You will be seeing many people, animals, trees etc. in your dreams and you will be thinking that they are all real as long as you are dreaming. The moment you wake up, all these many people and objects vanish and only you remain. Seeing many is itself ignorance, we need to wake up from this dreamy state to see the truth. Truth has no attributes. Therefore, there cannot be two or more truths. There can be but one. Wake up.

There is no point telling somebody who is in deep sleep to wake up, he will not even hear. Similarly, there is no point asking someone enjoying a dream to wake up. We can only ask a person who is already awake, to wake up. This makes sense because it is possible to wake up to a still higher state of consciousness. We can have dreams inside dreams, we can wake up again, even after waking up once. We are ignorant, we think we are already awake and we cannot wake up further, but we still have the capacity to wake up, to think, to understand, to know, to realize. Wake up!

2.29 Incompleteness

The external world is unreal, illusory, it does not exist independently. I exist, my self, that is, my *aatma* exists, in fact *aatma* alone exists, nothing else exists independently. Even after knowing all this, we still tend to strongly believe that the external world exists, we all tend to strongly believe that *aatma* does not exist at all. Why do we all think the exact opposite of truth? It is so easy to believe

that the external world exists. It is so difficult to believe that we are actually not our bodies but *aatma*. Why do we all get confused? Why do we believe so strongly in incorrect, invalid, unprovable ideas and why do we find it so hard to accept the actual reality even after convincing arguments, evidence and proof are given? There are three related reasons for this. Firstly, our sense organs and the *manas* keep looking out all the time, this is their very nature, they never even think of looking inwards, unless prompted by the *veedic* scriptures or the guru. Secondly, we all have a great attachment for our bodies, we identify ourselves with our bodies. This attachment is so strong, and it comes so very naturally to all of us, that it is very difficult to overcome this attachment, even after knowing the truth. Thirdly, we all have a great sense of trust in our experiences in the waking state, we all take dreams to be purely imaginary and hence of no serious consequence to anything in life. We also never bother to look at our experiences in deep sleep with any great seriousness. We base all our arguments and beliefs on partial data, not on the totality of our experiences in life. These three natural tendencies are the biggest obstacles in our search for the ultimate truth and in accepting the truth even after finding it. Therefore, we shall now take up a proper, thorough, deep, clear analysis of the whole of human experiences in all possible states. This is the best way to overcome the thick layers of ignorance that shroud the knowledge within us.

When I see any object in the world, I never get a feeling that I am that object. I have never felt I am a chair or a car or the Moon. When I see other people, that is, when I see their bodies, I never get a feeling that I am their body. The feeling of I is never there in any other body but somehow I have a strong belief that I am my body, I equate my self to my body. Ask a Million others. Each one

of them will invariably say, from their own points of view, that this body is not I. They all see my body as just some other body, nobody will think of it as I. Nobody else gets a feeling that my body is I. Somehow I cannot accept what these Millions of people say in one voice, that this body is not I. This attachment to the body is the root cause of our ignorance. We see different people because we see them in different locations in space. We do not realize that space is a body-centric notion created by our *manas*. The moment you overcome this 'I = my body' equation, the very notion of space vanishes and you will never be able to see many different people. There is but one I in this world. You must somehow overcome this attachment to your body, until then, there is no way you can understand and accept the truth. The existence of more than one I or *aatma* is not provable. We must give up our tendency to accept or reject things without proof, without even a proper inquiry. The proof comes from the analysis of the sum totality of our experiences. Let us see.

We all keep passing through three different states: either we are awake, or we are dreaming, or we are in a state of deep sleep. This is the common, daily experience of all people in life. These three states are very different from each other. Understanding this is crucial.

When we are wide awake, our body, sense organs, *manas*, *buddhi* are all active and alert. We can see all these components at work. The state of being awake is called *jaagrat* and the world we experience in this waking state is called *jagat*.

When we are in a state of deep sleep, our body and sense organs, *buddhi* and even the *manas* are inactive. That is why we see nothing, hear nothing, feel nothing, know nothing. This state is called *suShupti*.

While dreaming, our body, that is, the *deeha* is at rest, the sense organs, called *indriya-s* are inactive. The *manas* gets no external inputs through these sense organs. It is undisturbed by the external world. It is free to go all out and create a fantastic world of imagination for us. The *buddhi* is also taking rest. That is why there is no logic, no reason in our dreams. All kinds of things, which we think are illogical or impossible when we are awake, happen in our dreams. Dead people come back alive. You jump from one corner of the world to another in no time. You will be walking with your mother and somehow your companion gets transformed into a dog all of a sudden, as if by magic. There is no logic in dreams because our *buddhi*, the logical calculator, the symbolic computer, the reasoning machine in us, is absent. The state of dreaming is called *svapna*.

How, why and from where we enter these states are not important here, the experiences within the states alone is important. Seen from the point of view of our experiences, these three are the only states in which we can be at any given point of time. In everyday language we may speak of day dreaming, falling half asleep etc. Day dreaming is mere fantasizing while being awake. You cannot be half-asleep. You are either awake or you are asleep. The transition is sudden and we can never know the exact moment when we fell asleep. You may be feeling sleepy or weak or tired but then you are still awake. You cannot feel sleepy after falling asleep. Some people sleep like a log while others get disturbed easily and they frequently shift between these three states. Hence these confusions. Unconsciousness and coma states are the same as the state of deep sleep, as far as our experiences within these states is concerned. *nirvikalpa samaadhi*, a completely thoughtless state, which can be achieved through *yooga*, is not different from the state of deep sleep. All kinds of imagination and hallucination are

equivalent to the dreaming state. Our experiences in these three states of *jaagrat*, *svapna* and *suShupti* constitute the sum totality of all human experiences. There is nothing that any human being can ever experience, know or prove beyond these three kinds of experiences.

Sleep is not just a useless thing created by nature to waste time. Nor is it merely for giving rest to the body or mind. We all require sleep, irrespective of how much we work and how much of rest we think we need. Lack of sleep affects our body and mind, we may even fall sick. We do not like anybody or anything coming in the way of our sleep. We take so much of precaution to ensure that we can have a good and undisturbed sleep. We struggle so much to somehow ensure that we get a sleeping berth while travelling in a train at night. Sleeplessness is in fact considered a disease and we even seek medical treatment. We all spend a very significant part of our lives in sleep. More importantly, we all derive some real sense of satisfaction and happiness through sleep. Therefore, we cannot afford to build theories of life or truth based purely on our experiences in the waking state. There must be some very significant lessons to be learned by a proper and well-deserved treatment of our experiences in deep sleep. Similarly, dreaming is not merely a result of some disturbance in our digestive or nervous system, this is merely a waking state oriented perspective. There is no basis to believe that the truth can be reached only if we look from the point of view of waking. In fact no truth can ever be reached by looking at only one part of the data. We can reach the ultimate truth only if we consider the entirety of data, we can reach the final, conclusive, definitive answers only if we consider our experiences in all the states, without any bias or prejudice of any one state over the others.

There are only three states, nothing else, all other so

called states are equivalent to one of these in terms of the nature of our experiences. The sum total of our experiences in these three states constitute the totality of our experiences. This is the complete data on which we can work on. There is nothing else. Leaving out any of these three kinds of experiences means working with incomplete data, the results will not be dependable. Two plus two is four and two multiplied by two is also four. If you consider only this one example, you will tend to conclude that $A + B = A * B$. This is clearly wrong. All systems of thought, whether branded as science or philosophy or religion, that do not take into consideration the totality of human experiences in these three states are therefore dubious. Modern science as also other schools of religious and philosophical thought focus mainly or only on the waking state. Hence all the confusion.

A world is nothing but the knower and the known, there can be nothing else. Here the term 'known' includes everything that can ever be known. Anything which is not a 'knower' is included in the 'known'. After all that can be known has been taken out, what remains is the pure 'knower'. If we understand the knower and the known, we would have understood the whole world. Every proof of existence presupposes the existence of the prover. The knower and the known are mutually interdependent and inter-related. Something is known only because the knower can know it and he is a knower only because he can know the known. If there is nothing to be known, we cannot establish the knower. If there is no knower, we cannot establish the known. One cannot exist without the other. The knower is the subject, the known is the object. The subject should be included in the world, ignoring this is a big mistake. Modern science is primarily objective in nature, it has largely ignored the subject. Modern science is therefore incomplete. Let us do a fresh study on our own.

2.30 The Three States

Let us start analyzing the three states. Here is the first cut. We shall go deeper and get a clearer and better insight in the next section but it makes good sense to start in a simple and direct manner. Am I my body? Am I my mind? Am I both? Am I neither? Who am I? These are our burning questions. Mind is too broad and too vague a term and we so have been breaking it up into *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara* all along. Now look at the following table:

avasthaa	deeha	manas	buddhi	ahaMkaara
jaagrata	Present	Present	Present	Present
svapna	Present	Present	Absent	Present
suShupti	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent

Observe the columns carefully. None of the components are present invariably across all the three states. But we continue to exist, we continue to live and experience life through all these three states repeatedly in our lives. Therefore we are none of these, but some new, fourth thing, so to say. The *deeha*, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara* are all ours, not us. We can observe them, we can know them, we can control them. We are the observers, the knowers and these are the observed, known. This is a proof that we are neither the body nor the mind.

The *manas* and *buddhi* are two different things, with very different characteristics, present or absent differently in different states. Not making a clear distinction between *manas* and *buddhi*, thinking in terms of the brain instead, is the most important reason why modern science has failed to take us close to proper understanding of ourselves. The modern man is obsessed with the intellect, that is, the *bud-*

dhi and has largely ignored the *manas* which is in fact the most important thing in life. It is the *manas* which enables us to experience life, without *manas*, life has no meaning at all.

In *jaagrat* and *svapna* there is *ahaMkaara* and we experience the world. There is no *ahaMkaara* in *suShupti* and we experience nothing there. We may therefore tend to equate ourselves to our *ahaMkaara*. No, this is not right. It is possible to observe our own *ahaMkaara*, after all it is not really different from our *manas*. Notice that the third and fifth columns are identical. The *ahaMkaara* is just a particular aspect of the *manas*, not really different from it. It is my *ahaMkaara*, how can I be something which is mine? True, *ahaMkaara* is absent in deep sleep and we are not aware that we are sleeping while in deep sleep. But we come out and say we had a good sleep. Who was there during my deep sleep who can come back and tell me now in my waking state that I had a good sleep? It cannot be *ahaMkaara*. Since *ahaMkaara* is absent in deep sleep while I continue to exist through all states, I cannot be my *ahaMkaara*.

The seer of the *jaagrat* and the seer of the *svapna* are different. If they were the same, how come we cannot remember our dreams fully upon waking up? Why is it that what all we are seeing in the wakeful state does not simply continue into our dreams? Why are the two worlds so very different? Am I the seer of my dreams or am I the seer of my wakeful state? Neither. I am not the seer of *jaagrat* because I continue to see in my dreams and the seer of *jaagrat* cannot see without eyes, light etc. I am not the seer of *svapna* because I continue to see after waking up and if I was the seer of *svapna*, then I must remember the dreams in full. After all, it all happened just now. Also, I must be able to see without eyes, light etc. even after waking

up. I am not the seer of *svapna* because he is unaware that he is or was seeing a dream. The seer of *jaagrat* is aware that he has just woken up from a dream. Compared to the dream state, *jaagrat* state has senses and *buddhi* in addition to *manas* and *ahaMkaara*, which are common to these two states. Body or senses cannot be aware that we just had a dream, they are insentient. Therefore, this could only be because of *buddhi*. But *buddhi* itself was absent in *svapna*. Therefore, there must be something else that is really I. Also, in *suShupti*, *deeha*, *indriya-s*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* are all absent but I continue unaffected. This I, which is different from all these components and independent of them all, is the real I. This I must be more subtle than the body, senses, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara*. The seer of *suShupti* sees nothing at all. Neither the seer of *jaagrat* nor the seer of *svapna* exist in my deep sleep but I can pass through all these three states again and again without losing myself. What remains and continues all through my life must be my true nature, my *svaruupa*. Whatever comes and goes, whatever leaves me, whatever does not stay with me all the time, is at best mine, it is not I, it is not my own true nature. *deeha*, *indriya-s*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* all come and go in different states, I must be the one who remains constant, unaffected, unmoved by all these happenings. I must be the unchanging witness to all these changing scenes. Think.

In dream state, I may not be conscious of my body or even if I am, that body could be different from the body of my waking state. The dream body may be weak and ill while the waking body may be strong and healthy. One may be clean, the other may be dirty. One may be hungry, the other may be full to the brim. Even the *manas* of the dream can be different from the *manas* of the waking state. Time can be different, space can be different, my friends and relatives can be different. Therefore, the picture we

have painted here is not entirely correct, we need to analyze more deeply and more carefully.

2.31 The Equal and the More Equal

The entirety of human experiences is encapsulated within the three states of *jaagrat*, *svapna* and *suShupti*. These three states are mutually exclusive, when I am awake, I am not sleeping or dreaming. When I am dreaming, I am not awake or in deep sleep. When I am in deep sleep, I am not awake nor am I dreaming. In each state, the other two are absent. We can never experience two of these states simultaneously, nor can we experience all the three at once.

Further, no experience from one state can be carried forward to another state, not even in the least. For example, if I smear my body with the fragrant sandal paste in my dream, I will not find any fragrance on my body after waking up from the dream. I may dream that I ate a tasty and sumptuous meal only to wake up finding myself terribly hungry. I may have a sumptuous meal and go to sleep and then dream that I am extremely hungry. Even the concepts of space and time cannot be carried from one state to the other. I may go to sleep in India and find myself in Japan in my dream and vice versa. It may be late night when I go to sleep and in the dream I may find myself in the hot Sun at noon. My nationality, my mother's name, my brothers and sisters, my home, my occupation, everything can change between the waking and the dream states. My body is different, my mind is different, my thinking is different. Space is different, time is different, people are different, objects are different, the whole world is different. I do not remember all that I know in my waking state while dreaming and I do not remember my dreams in full upon waking up. My body, the sense or-

gans, my *manas* and *buddhi*, my self-awareness, my ability to see, think, know, understand, are all completely lost in deep sleep and regained upon waking up. I have neither the body of the waking state nor the body of the dream state in my deep sleep. There is neither space nor time in this world of deep sleep. In fact there is no world at all. I cannot even carry my own thoughts, feelings or knowledge and understanding from my waking state into this state of deep sleep. The three states are thus completely disjoint, there is no connection from one to the other, there is no way of communicating or passing messages or memories from one to the other. It is therefore absurd to interpret our experiences of dreaming and deep sleep from the point of view of the waking state.

When we are dreaming, we never feel that we are dreaming, we never feel that we ate the wrong food in our waking state and that is why we are now seeing these dreams, we will think exactly as we think in the waking state - that we are alive and awake. It is therefore illogical to think that dream is a state in which the body and mind are disturbed in some way, where is the body and where is the mind? The body and mind of the waking state are absent here. The two states are completely independent and we just cannot link the items of one world to the other like this. There can be no cause-effect relations between items of these mutually exclusive worlds. Likewise, deep sleep is not a state in which the body and mind are taking rest. There is no body and there is no mind. The entire outside world, as also the body, the senses, even the *manas*, and *buddhi* of the waking state belong to the waking state alone, they have no relevance outside of this state. Similarly, the body, the *manas*, and the entire world that we see within dreams are limited to the dream state alone.

There is also no fourth state in which we can put to-

gether our partial experiences in these three states. Therefore, we can only consider our experiences in each state from the point of view of that state alone. We will have to look at the three states without any biases or prejudices of any one state. No one experience can be looked at and interpreted from the stand point of any other. Dreams should only be viewed from the point of dream state and deep sleep should only be viewed from the point of view of deep sleep state. Just as we cannot conclude anything about the world of the waking state through our experiences in the dream state, we cannot come to conclusions about the state of deep sleep by taking recourse to our experiences in the waking state. When we are awake, we just cannot have any direct experience of the state of deep sleep. We get confused, we think digestion etc. appear to go on during sleep, but this is purely from the point of view of the waking state, after we come back to this state, not while we are deep asleep. Somehow our experiences of the waking state have such a strong, dominating, overwhelming, overpowering influence on our thinking that we always take our waking state experiences for granted and look at and interpret other experiences from this standpoint. This is the biggest mistake that modern science is making today. Other schools of philosophy and religion also commit the same mistake. Let us therefore be very very careful.

While dreaming the dream world appears to be very real. The moment we go out of this state, this whole world vanishes or turns unreal. In the waking state, the world of this waking state appears very real. The moment we go out of this state, this whole world vanishes or turns unreal. In both cases the world appears to be outside of us. We appear to be part of that world, we appear to be located somewhere inside that world, like other beings therein. In both cases there appear to be space and time in which objects are located and events happen. In both cases we see,

hear, smell, taste, touch, feel, observe, know, think, cry, laugh, and experience life the same way. What is the difference between these two? There is really no difference between the world of the waking state and the world of dreams. The two are identical. But we simply take our experiences in the waking state as real and our experiences in the dream world as unreal and purely imaginary. There is no basis for this. We reach this conclusion only because we presume the superiority of the waking state even before we conduct any serious inquiry into the various states. This cannot be called science. The dream world is as real during the dream as the waking world is real while we are awake. There is no real difference between these two states. There is no basis to say that dream world is unreal and waking world is real.

Continuity and commonality are two factors that strongly influence our bias towards the waking state. We have already debunked these but it is useful to look at these here again. Let us say we pass through a series of alternating waking and deep sleep states. In the waking state we will see a world and in the deep sleep state there is no world. If we denote these two by the symbols w and nw , our life experience will be a long sequence of alternating w and nw :

... $w - nw - w - nw - w - nw - w - nw - w - nw$...

Suppose we start at some w in this potentially endless sequence and end at some w , and suppose we put our foot firmly in the waking state and think from that stand point, we will see that the world exists in the beginning, it will exist at the end, it continues to exist in between too, except for some short breaks in between during our sojourns in the deep sleep state. We will tend to think that the world continues to exist while we are asleep too, because the world continues to exist every time we wake up and look

at it. This is how modern science and all other philosophies think. For every problem there is one solution that is simple, neat, and wrong! Now suppose we start instead from some *nw*, we end at some *nw*, and we look from the point of view of our deep sleep state. There was no world to start with, there will be no world at the end, in between also perhaps the world never existed, it only appeared to come and go in short flashes, like an illusion. We will tend to conclude that the world actually does not exist at all. Every time I get into deep sleep, I find that there is no world at all and this non-existence of the world is what continues across every cycle of these state changes. In fact there was no world before I was born and there will be no world after I die. There is no way I can prove that the world existed before I was born or that the world will continue to exist after I die and I am not ready to accept anything without proof. What others think or say is mere hear-say, that does not constitute a valid evidence, let alone a proof. We have already seen that existence is an extraordinarily rare and special event and so we should take non-existence, not existence, as the default. Going by all this, we should conclude that the world is unreal. Thus, the conclusions we will reach critically depend upon our stand point. The crucial factor, therefore, is being able to analyze our experiences in the three states without being biased by any of these. We have already seen that continuity of the world pre-supposes existence of the world which is itself being questioned. Continuity also assumes existence of time and a common, standard time line along which to observe and reckon. These are all baseless assumptions. There is no time line that is common to the three states, there is no basis to say the time line of the waking state continues into the other two states. Since the existence of the whole world is called into question here, commonality between the experiences of different people is also a completely illogical idea, after all, all the people are part of the world whose

existence is being investigated.

It is not logical to presume that I am part of an external physical material world, because such a world is seen only in my waking state but the same I continue to exist in my dream and deep sleep states without the sense organs or this material world that they show me. It is only logical to think that this whole world of the waking state is something connected with and attached to the sensory perception within my waking state alone. If a torch light illumines and shows us a chair, can we say the chair includes the torch light? Sensory perceptions illumine and show us the world, how can this world include the senses, or the body which houses them? This whole world is inside my waking state, I, my body, the sense organs and the mind cannot exist inside this world. How can this world, which has the capacity to show up in only one of the states, include me, who can experience all the three states? Is this not like saying ‘my house has three rooms and one of these rooms contains the whole house’? All confusions arise because we tend to take the waking state for granted as the only real thing and try to interpret all else through this view point. You will have to get over this bad habit, otherwise there is no way you can reach the ultimate truth. Learn to treat all states on a equal footing.

We all simply assume that *jaagrat* is real and *svapna* is unreal. Where is the proof? Things imagined stay as long as the imagination continues and only those things imagined exist. External things, on the other hand, should have separate existence and lifetimes, if at all they are real. Everything in the dream world vanishes the moment we wake up and everything in the waking world vanishes the moment we go out of this state. Therefore, there is no basis to say that there are any external things that exist in their own right. Both *jaagrat* and *svapna* appear in *graahya-*

graahaka ruupa - there is a perceiver-perceived dichotomy and we appear to be the perceivers. In both things are *artha-kaaraka-kriyaa-kaari-s* - there are actions, actors, instruments, purpose, result etc. - for example the fire burns, food satiates. The *prayoojana* or benefit of one state is not available in the other. In both, things seen outside appear real and things created within us are taken as imaginary. In both we appear to be inside a world, inside a frame of space and time. Illusions are possible in both. All *vyavahaara-s* are common. *aatma-anaatma-anyoonya-adhyaasa* is also common. Therefore, there is no real difference between *jaagrat* and *svapna*. The waking state is just another kind of dream. The world is unreal, illusory.

In dreams we have only *mithyaa-jnYaana* or incorrect perception. In *suShupti* we have only *ajnYaana* in the sense that we see nothing. In *jaagrat* we have both of these! We are unaware of what actually exists, namely the self, this *ajnYaana*. And we think of body, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* etc. as if these are the self, this is *mithyaa-jnYaana*. We certainly do not have *samyagjnYaana* or correct understanding in *jaagrat*. Assuming the world of waking state and all our experiences here as real is therefore the most foolish thing to do.

The question now is, how do we actually experience these states? Who experiences? Who am I? What is my *svaruupa*?

2.32 *avasthaa-traya vishleeShaNa*

Each state should be seen from its own stand point. For example we cannot say there is *ajnYaana* or ignorance in deep sleep. This is true only from the stand point of the waking state, where was *ajnYaana* within *suShupti*? Did

you actually experience any *ajnYaana* there? Upon waking up you will say dreams were only dreams, not real, but did you get this experience while dreaming? Dreams are not at all unreal, as long as you are in that state and that is the only thing that counts. Upon waking up you will tend to line up various states along a time line, the time line that you experience in this waking state, but did you experience this same time line while you were in other states? Unless we are extremely careful, we will reach absurd and completely illogical and unscientific conclusions. We will have to be very very careful.

In the beginning, while introducing the three states, we used terms like ‘passive’, ‘inactive’, ‘taking rest’ and ‘switched off’. It is important to realize that the body, senses, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* are all actually absent in deep sleep. We must necessarily conclude that something is absent, non-existent, if there is no evidence whatever of its presence, from within that state. Otherwise it would be like saying ghosts exist although no one can ever see or know them in any way whatever.

World cannot be separated from time and space. Objects are located in space and time. Events happen in space and time. We have to position ourselves in space and time and only then can we observe the world from that point of reference. We cannot even think of space and time unless we assume we have a body and a mind. The whole notion of space can be summarized into the layman’s notions of here and there and here and there are always with respect to our body-mind. If we are not a body-mind complex, we are neither here nor there, nothing is far or near, so there cannot be any notion of distance or speed or acceleration. Therefore, even to think of a world, we must presuppose that we are a body-mind complex. There is no basis to assume that we are a body or a mind, we have not yet

established any such thing, in fact we have already proved that we are neither the body nor the mind. Therefore, we cannot take space, time or a world for granted even before we investigate fully and properly. Therefore, it is absurd to assume that we exist inside a world or that the experiences of the three states occur within a world. The worlds we experience exist inside the states.

We generally tend to think that we exist in the world, we experience these states, and so the states are within the world. This is baseless and illogical. The whole purpose of carrying out this analysis of the three states is to understand the true nature of the universe and the true nature of ourselves, that is the *svaruupa* of the known and the *svaruupa* of the knower. The knower and the known constitute the whole world, there is nothing else. Everything that can ever be known is grouped into what we call 'known' here and the only the pure knower, devoid of anything that can ever be known, is termed the 'knower'. There can be nothing other than the knower and the known in any world. The knower and known exist within the three states and so the world exists within the states, not the other way around. Because there is no way of knowing anything about ourselves or about the universe except in so far as what we can learn from our experiences within these three states. This is the crucial point. The notion of state has to be correctly understood. Modern science and all other schools of religious and philosophical thought assume and take for granted the very thing to be explored and established. This is not right. We have to look at the three worlds, each with its own knower and the known, from the point of the respective states. In each state, the corresponding subject, the seer, must necessarily be included in the respective world. Otherwise the world will be incomplete and no proper conclusions can be reached by looking at incomplete data.

All experiences should be seen from the point of the respective seers. The seer of the waking state can see only those objects in front of him and provided there is light and his eyes are open. The seer of dreams can see without light, with eyes closed or non-existent, he can see objects which need not be physically present either. In fact there are no sense organs in the dream state, we think we close our eyes during sleep only from the point of view of the waking state. Even a person who has lost his eye sight can 'see' in his dreams. The nature of these seers is therefore very different and we cannot get the correct picture if we try to see from the point of view of the wrong seer.

Many other people may exist in my dream. They are all part of my dream, they exist only as long as I am in that state. There is no basis to say that they exist independent of me. It is absurd to think that these people will go on experiencing my dream world even after I come out of it. I do not have any direct experience of their experiences and so I cannot assume that these other people also experience the dream world exactly like me, there is also no basis to conclude that they experience the same world which I experience. Exactly the same arguments hold for other people who exist in my world of waking state. Therefore, I must analyze the three states, my experiences in these three states, the worlds that I experience in these three states, the respective experiencers in these three states all by myself. Only then can I come to any meaningful conclusion. What others say or think is completely irrelevant here. Even if others exist, they may not understand everything properly, they may not be able to say it properly, they may hide certain aspects, they may forget somethings, they may insert some spurious aspects by mistake or intention, they may distort, twist, colour their experiences for a variety of reasons. People play games, knowingly or unknowingly. In fact it is not possible to express all of our ex-

periences in words. Nor can I take it for granted that I can understand everything they say with one hundred percent fidelity. Others are therefore non-entities here. Whether all, most, many, some or none agree or disagree is immaterial here. Truth is not a matter of opinion, it is not a game of numbers, majority has no meaning. You need to discover the truth yourself. The same arguments hold for all scientific instruments, equipment, tools etc. - none of these can be relied upon. Trust yourself and trust yourself alone.

The body, the mind, the objects and people, the space and the time, the whole world is different in each of these three states. There is no state in which every aspect of my experience is present. Since I pass through all these three states, I must be the one who remains constant and unchanging throughout. Otherwise, how can I know, upon waking up from a state of deep sleep, that I had a good sleep and I am now feeling relaxed and refreshed? My body including sense organs, *manas*, *buddhi* were all absent in my deep sleep but I continue to be there. Otherwise I could not have woken up and said I had a good sleep. This proves that I am not by body, *manas* or *buddhi*. I am different from all these.

I exist in my dream state, I remain, without a body or *buddhi*. If I experience a body in my dream, that is a different body. The body of the waking world is absent in dreams. I exist, I live, I remain in my deep sleep without a body, *manas* or *buddhi*. I am the one who experiences all these three states, so to say. I remain constant, unchanging, I observe my body, *manas* and *buddhi* come and go. I neither come nor go, I remain. I am the witness to all these three states.

Now let us consider each of the three states one by one.

In each state, we have to consider the seer and the seen, that is, the knower and the known. We can have four and only four possible combinations: Seer-Seen: P-P / P-A / A-P / A-A (where P = present, A = Absent). Let us look at *suShupti* first. P-P not possible, because this means we should be able to see or know but we see nothing. A-A is not possible either. What exists will always exist and what does not exist will never come into existence. Remember that we are seeking the *sat*, the thing that exists absolutely independently, we are not interested in temporary, apparent, conditional, relative truths. We think it must be A-P. But if the seer is absent, how can it come into existence later? How can we wake up and say 'I had a good sleep in which I saw nothing'? P-A is therefore the only possibility. World is absent, body-mind etc. are all absent, I am present. I see nothing because there is nothing to see. This leads us to a question: if the seen was absent in *suShupti*, how does it come into existence after we wake up? The answer is, it never does, it is only *mithyaa*, an apparent show, it never exists independently. Why not apply the same logic to A-P? This means the seer is absent in *suShupti* and it is always absent, its appearance in other states is only *mithyaa*. If seer is *mithyaa*, everything will be *mithyaa*, so we are back to *shuunya-vaada*. I exist and this is real, not imagination or hallucination. This is the starting point for anything that I can do in life, including this whole exercise. That I exist is self evident, no proof is required for this, because I must exist even before I can think of proving or disproving this. Therefore, the only logical conclusion is, the seer is always present, the seen is never present. This explains all the three states. In the dream state, I exist as the seer and the entire world is *mithyaa*. In the waking state also, I exist as the seer and the world is *mithyaa*. We will have to accept the seen as *mithyaa*, there is no other way. We have already established this using other criteria in chapter one. The seen is *mithyaa*.

in dreams - everybody accepts this. We must extend this to waking state also, that is all. Only self is real, body, buddhi, manas etc. are all illusory projections of the self alone. This is the proof. I exist, my self alone exists, it exists absolutely, it exists independent of anything else, it exists independent of even space and time, it alone exists in the entire universe. The rest of the universe is merely its own manifestations in various forms. This is the final, definitive, conclusive answer.

In deep sleep we do not see, hear, observe, feel, know anything, not even ourselves. This does not mean we are dead. Nor are we unconscious. We are not in a state of coma. We are just sleeping. I remain in my deep sleep, constant, unchanged, witnessing everything. Who did not see or experience anything? If nobody was there, this question itself cannot arise. There must have been somebody, who did not see anything. This 'I' is not the same as the 'I' who, in *jaagrat avasthaa*, is now saying 'I' did not see anything in my *suShupti* but some 'I' must exist all through. I do not see anything means that nothing actually exists in deep sleep. It does not mean that I do not exist. If I also do not exist, since we are saying I had a good sleep, since sleep is a state of my existence, we will be forced to say sleep itself does not exist. This is contrary to common experience. I exist and I do not see anything because there is nothing else to see, I alone exist, other things do not exist at all. I exist and see nothing because there is nothing else to see. A light can illuminate objects around it but if there are no objects at all, the light can continue to shine all by itself, unnoticed, although nothing else is visible. I do not see anything means nothing exists which I can see, not 'I am not capable of seeing what may exist', nor 'I do not exist'.

We are all living, going to sleep, dreaming, waking up

in cycles and observing and experiencing this world around us. We are conscious of ourselves too. The entire universe cannot be null and void because at least I exist, I am the witness to all this. I know myself by direct experience, there is no better *pramaaNa* than direct experience. I know that I exist and I know this directly, without need for any other *pramaaNa*, without need for any other experiment, observation, inference, instruments, laboratories etc. Nobody ever can think that he/she does not exist at all. 'I' is not something that can come to me or go away anytime, it is always there with me, it is inalienable, it is my own true nature or *svaruupa*. I am myself. I exist and I know that I exist. Even to assert that nothing exists, I have to exist, otherwise how can I assert? Extreme *shuunya-vaada* is therefore untenable.

I exist and I alone exist. Nothing else can be shown to exist independently. Note that we could reach this ultimate truth only by an unbiased look at the three states and starting from the state of deep sleep. If we had started off from the waking state, we would have probably concluded that both the seer and the seen exist independently and guessed that the world of the waking state continues in the other two states, which is not at all provable. People think that all other things continue to exist as usual while we are asleep, only we are not seeing them because we have closed our eyes and switched off our *manas*. The question is who switches the *manas* on or off? An automobile engine is designed to run all on its own, once it is started. The fuel is sucked in, mixed with air, sent to the combustion chamber, ignited, the piston is pushed back and forth, the fly wheel rotates, the engine runs, all on its own, without any external intervention. But the engine can never start itself. By the same logic, the *manas* cannot turn itself on or off. Even if we imagine that when it is on, it can observe its own running state and turn itself off, it would be ridiculous

to say that the *manas* which has been switched off, can observe that it has been switched off and take action to switch itself on. This means, once the *manas* has been switched off, it can never come alive again. This means, if we ever get into deep sleep, we will never wake up! How dangerous! And how absurd! There must be somebody, different from the body, the *manas*, the *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara*, different from all the objects in the external world, which can observe the on-off state of the *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara*, even of the body and the world, and turn them on or off as per its own wish. This is the self, this is the *aatma*, this is the prime mover that runs the entire universe, this is the power of consciousness or *cit* that enlivens me and the whole world. I am this *cit*, this is *sat*. The whole universe is nothing but a projection of this *cit*, in this sense I am the whole world, I am *brahma*. An overhead projection system can project all kinds of pictures on the screen. The pictures, the objects, people, events and everything that we see do not actually exist on the screen or anywhere else, they are all there only inside the projector. Likewise, the whole world is inside me, I project it, I watch it, I enjoy it, I am everything. It is therefore foolish to identify ourselves with the body, mind, other characters, events and happenings that I have projected myself, get involved in this imaginary world, and suffer. There was a school girl who used to write horror stories, read her own stories and get scared! Her stories were so good, so realistic! A wise man should realize the truth and detach himself from the whole world, including his own body and mind, sit back, relax, and just enjoy the movie called life, which is, after all, his own creation. This is the only recipe for overcoming all sorrow and suffering and enjoying life to the fullest.

In all the three states, I exist and I alone exist. I may or I may not create an imaginary world but I always exist. My existence is absolute, independent, real. The existence

of the world, whether in dreams or in the waking state, is unreal, it is dependent, it is conditioned on me, it exists because I experience it, that is all. Therefore, there is really no big difference between the three states, all are same.

We can only be in any one of the three hypothetical states, we can never be in any two or all the three states simultaneously. Therefore, the states appear to come and go sequentially. But wait a moment, what do we mean by sequence? There must be a time line along which we can think of arranging events and states in sequence. The time line of the *jaagrat* state is different from the time line of *svapna*. And there is no time line at all in *suShupti*. Therefore, there is no common time line at all and so the states cannot be said to be in any sequence. The states are neither sequential nor simultaneous. Nor can we say the other two happen inside the third, because the three states are mutually exclusive. Nor can we say that one becomes the others, becoming is itself something that should happen along a time line. It is not right to think that there is any link between our experiences in the waking state and our dreams. The time line is completely different and so there can be no *kaarya-kaaraNa sambandha*. Each state precludes the others but I simply continue unaffected in all states, I am not precluded, prevented or negated in any state. The only conclusion we can come to is that this whole idea of states is illusory. In everyday parlance, a state implies a snap-shot of changes taking place within a framework of space and time. In *suShupti*, there is no change at all, nor is there any space or time. Calling it a state is like talking of a patient who has no diseases. *suShupti* is really not a state at all. Nor are there any other states. I am stateless, I neither come nor do I go away, I simply remain. I am attribute-less, I am change-less, how can I have any states? I am timeless, space-less, eternal, all pervading, all knowing, all powerful, ever free.

I am the one who can observe the whole world, turn them on or off, decide when to do this, I am the one who can control the whole universe, without actually doing anything, without actually undergoing any change myself. I am a pure witness, I am the *saakShi*. When I say I saw something, I am the one who saw that my *manas* saw the thing I think I saw. I am the lord overseeing, supervising, observing, controlling the entire universe, including my own body, brain and mind. The brain or the mind is not capable of knowing itself or controlling itself. If you think your brain thinks, ask who asked your brain to think? Everything in the whole universe happens because of my *aatma*. This is my *svaruupa*, I am not a mere body or mind. The whole world is *mithyaa* and so it has no *svaruupa* at all.

A thorough analysis of these three states or *avasthaatraya*, has lead us to the final truth about the universe and about ourselves. There was no need for any scientific laboratories, our body and mind are the best laboratories. There was no need for funded research projects or staff or equipment. All experiments, observations and inferences can be and should be done in our own minds, without exploiting or damaging natural resources, without wasting the time of many people, without harming other animals or plants or the environment in any way. This is real science.

The famous philosopher Johnson once lost in argument to his opponents in his dream. He had never lost to anybody in all his life. He was deeply troubled. He suddenly realized that all the people and all their arguments were all his own in deed, it was he who created them all within his dream, so he alone won! So far so good, but he could not proceed and reach the final truth about himself or about the world. Most people in the world, including the most celebrated scientists and philosophers, including all those

who are considered authorities and world class experts in their fields, including the sons and messengers of God, including great and so called realized souls, who have established various religions, schools and cults in the world, have failed to reach the final truth. Many come half way through and then lose track or get misled or they just give up. Software engineers talk of objects and attributes all the time but they fail to realize that attributes have no independent existence and devoid of attributes there can be but just one object. Linguists talk of subject and object all the time but they fail to realize that existence of the object is dependent on the existence of the subject. They talk of singular and plural all the time but they do not recognize that there is no plural for I. They talk of adjectives modifying nouns but they fail to realize that adjectives make no sense without nouns. Philosophers talk of the mind all the time but they never ask who makes their mind even to think of all this. Physicists have often come quite close to the truth but they somehow get lost or they give up. Modern science tells us so very clearly that as we move from the gross to the subtle, differences vanish one by one but they fail to realize that if only we continue like this we must necessarily reach a state where there can be but one reality. Experts in areas such as Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning think of differences all the time but they do not realize that seeing difference is foolish. Experts in Artificial Intelligence, Cognitive Science and allied disciplines talk of the brain and intelligence all the time but never go beyond the most superficial levels. You can actually start from anywhere, if only you analyze with a clear mind and go deep enough, you will definitely reach the same ultimate conclusions. It is enough if you realize that the entire world is nothing but the knower and the known, the known can have no independent existence, its existence can only be established by a knower. Then you should seek this knower and ask how many of them are there, if there

are two or more, how are they different from each other? This much is enough to reach the truth. Truth is one and whichever path you take, you will inevitably reach there. You only need to have a clean and clear mind, devoid of all confusions and you must not stop until you reach the last stage. You must try hard. Many do not even try. In fact there have been very few people in the entire history of mankind stretching across some 4.8 Million years, who have become self-realized. Every one can, but rarely do people try. You too can, you must try sincerely. Otherwise your life is simply wasted, it is a great opportunity lost.

anubhava or experience of *avasthaa* or states is *nirvikalpaka*. Experiences of waking and dream states are *savikalpaka*. Our language is deigned only for the latter. Hence we just cannot express the former in words. We cannot think without time, space, number, inter-connection, cause-effect etc. Such things do not exist in the *nirvikalpaka*. We can never describe the ultimate truth in any language accurately. It can only be experienced directly. The *veeda-s* are the only scriptures in the whole world which can guide us in the right direction. A guru who is well-versed in the *veeda-s* can guide you too. But no one can give you this knowledge, this is not the usual kind of knowledge of experience, you can only reach it yourself.

A dream is a *praatibhaasika satya* - it is only a short-lived and illusory reality. The world that we experience in our waking state is a *vyavahaarika satya*. As long as we restrict ourselves to the waking state, it is long lasting, it exhibits continuity, it continues throughout our lives, it appears to be common to all people. This is not the ultimate reality, it is not *paaramaarthika satya*. Yet it is relevant and useful in life since all of our wakeful life is experienced within this unreal world. It is not wrong, in fact it is practically necessary, to understand this world and

learn to live a meaningful, purposeful, harmless, happy life. Hence the whole of the next chapter. But we should never confuse this itself for the ultimate reality. The knowledge and realization of the ultimate truth must form the solid basis for us to decide how to live, what we must do and what we must not do. This is the most important lesson you can learn from this book.

2.33 *haMsa-kShiira-nyaaya*

Whatever we conclude must be based on our direct experience in life. The sum total of our experience is contained in the three states. Whatever we can conclude by a careful and proper analysis of our experiences in the three states is the ultimate knowledge that we can ever get. We can perform a proper analysis of the three states if and only if we remain totally unbiased. If we get influenced by any one state, we stand the risk of being misled. But all human beings have a strong natural bias for the waking state. This is not a problem with one individual or some individuals, this is a common problem for all human beings, including the greatest of them all. How do we overcome this bias?

It is not possible to ask these fundamental questions, analyze and reach final conclusions and gain ultimate knowledge within our dreams. Nor can we do this whole exercise within the state of deep sleep. We can only work, being in the waking state. How can we be in the waking state and still not get influenced by the idiosyncrasies of this waking state?

There is no common time line across states, there is really no such thing as cross-state memory, there is no way of carrying forward our experiences from one state to another, there is no message passing, no communication. There is

no fourth state where we can stand and look at the three states in an unbiased manner. How can we even consider our experiences of the other two states while being in the waking state?

The key to this problem lies in realizing that there is no need to consider the experiences of other states directly. Nor is this possible. Deep sleep is a thoughtless state, how can we know this by thinking about it? Deep sleep is a space-less, time-less state, how can I locate myself in space and time within my waking state and then go to this space-less, time-less state and come back? We are using the term 'state' for want of a better term in language, the term does not imply changes taking place inside the world, within a framework of space and time. We do not and we cannot go from one state to another. In fact no human being ever has any direct experience of past or of future. Everybody invariably experiences 'now' and 'here' all through life. There is no basis to posit a past or a future, there is no basis to talk of going from place to place. Space and time are imaginary creations of the human mind. These imaginations are so realistic, we ourselves fall into the trap of thinking that we live inside such a frame of space and time. 'I' is not some animal that is locked up inside the skeletal cage of our body like a zoo animal.

It is neither possible nor necessary to consider our experiences of the other two states directly. All that we need to do is to get rid of the idiosyncratic aspects of the waking state. All that I need to do is to realize that I can exist without the world, without space and time, without my body, without even my mind, without sensing anything, without feeling anything, without even thinking of anything, without even being self aware. I existed as a single living cell in my mother's womb, I did not have a brain at that time, I never thought or felt or perceived anything like

I do now. Yet I existed. Even now it is very much possible for me to slow down and then completely stop thinking. I do not exist because I think. I exist whether I think or not, whether I question my own existence or not. Most people never question or doubt their own existence but they do exist. If we can somehow overcome the layers of false notions superimposed by the influence of our waking state, truth alone will remain. The concept of deep sleep state helps us to zero on to this idea that I can exist without the world, space, time, body, mind etc. Actual experience of deep sleep or its memory in the waking state is not necessary. Those who have never got good sleep all through their life also exist.

An analogy would perhaps help here. *haMsa* is a water bird that has a slit at the bottom of its beak. When it catches fish, some water also gets into the beaks but it drains off through the slit and then the bird swallows the fish alone. Poetic imagination extends this idea into a *raaja-haMsa*, some super, kingly variety of this bird, which is capable of separating pure milk from the added water. This is called *haMsa-kShiira-nyaaya*. Here I need to perform such a delicate and subtle separation between the ‘I’ that is common to all the three states and what I think is ‘I’ when I am in the waking state. If I am able to separate out and remove all aspects that are specific to my waking state, I will be left with my own true nature, my *svaruupa*, and this will remain constant, irrespective of the states that come and go.

False ideas do not and cannot exist independently, on their own right. False ideas are always superimposed on the underlying truth. Removing these superimposed shrouds of ignorance will take us to the underlying truth. When we see a snake in a rope by way of illusion, there is really no snake at all. The imagined snake vanishes once the il-

lusion ends. Only the rope remains. The rope was always there, before, during and after the illusion. The rope alone existed, independent of the observer and his mental states. During the illusion, when we were seeing a snake and not a rope, certain properties such as the length, thickness, the coil shape of the snake we saw actually correspond to those of the rope. This shows that even during an illusion, we are actually seeing the underlying truth, we only get confused by messing it up with added false ideas. Likewise, the waking state individual remains his own true self even in that state, but gets confused by superimposing other false ideas. I am my self and I am always my self. I am my *aatma* but I superimpose the *anaatma* or the non-self on to myself and then I get confused. This admixture of truth and falsity is called *adhyaasa*. We can get to the final truth only if we can overcome this *aatma-anaatma adhyaasa*. We need to separate the *aatma* from the *anaatma*. This is the critical, delicate and subtle exercise. I will have to do it myself, no one can help me in this.

In the waking state, I think I am an individual human being located in an external world in space and time. I need to ask if this is actually my common experience in all the three states. The analysis of the three states shows me that space, time, objects, people, the whole world, even my own body are not invariant across states but I am the same I that appears to pass through all these states. Therefore, I need to separate out the whole world, objects and other people in it, even my own body from my own true nature. None of these have anything to do with my *svaruupa*. I think I am this waking state consciousness and this same I keeps going to other two states and comes back to this waking state again and again. This is where we all make a mistake. One critical question will help us to realize our mistakes. I am awake. I know that I am awake. How do I know that I am awake? Who is throwing light on my

consciousness to let me know and realize that I am a conscious being? How am I able to observe and know my own waking state consciousness?

Can my senses reveal my consciousness? Can the eye reveal my self to me? No, the eyes can only see but I can see, hear, touch, feel, think, know and do many other things. My consciousness is bigger, greater than my eyes, seeing is only one part of my consciousness. In fact I know that I have eyes, I know that I am seeing, I am seeing whatever I am seeing only because of my consciousness. My eyes cannot see my consciousness. Nor can the ears, nor the nose, nor the tongue, nor the skin. All of them put together also cannot illumine and show my consciousness to me. My senses exist and do their duties in the light of my consciousness. The senses cannot reveal me. I am more than my senses.

By similar arguments, I can show that I am more than my *manas*. I am more than my *buddhi*. The *manas* and the *buddhi* are not part of my *svaruupa*, they do not exist in all the three states but I continue to exist. I can observe my *manas* and all its childish misadventures. I can observe my own *buddhi* and all its logic and reasoning. Even my *ahaMkaara* or self-awareness is not the same as I, it is part of my *manas*, I can observe it, it cannot reveal me, it cannot throw light on the whole of my own consciousness. I am beyond the body and the mind.

Space, time, objects, people, the whole world, my own body and mind, are all falsities superimposed on the underlying reality. None of them have independent existence. Their existence independent of me is unprovable but I can exist independent of them all. We just need to get rid of all these superimposed shrouds of false ideas. The moment we do that, we will realize that we are no longer individ-

ual beings, we are not located at some point in space or time, we are space-less, time-less. We are now one with all that exists, with the entire universe. All differences melt away. Even the distinction between the *viShaya* and *viShayi* melts away. There is no longer any differentiation between knowledge, knowing and the knower. There is but one thing in the entire universe. This exists and this alone exists. This single, undivided, undifferentiated, all-inclusive, unified whole is called *brahma*. I am *brahma*. This is the ultimate truth. This is the final answer. This is real knowledge.

The states, the whole world of objects, people, space and time, get projected from me and they dissolve back in me, like cinema that gets projected from a projector and vanish the moment the projector is switched off. No one ever thinks that the scenes, the people, their actions and emotions and all that we see, hear and experience in a movie are real. The whole movie may appear to be very realistic, we may even be laughing and crying with the projected pictures of actors and actresses while the movie is being screened, but we never ever think or argue that the movie is real. Only the projector is real. The projector is capable of projecting anything and everything, very realistically, and it is also capable of simply going off. I can project a whole world and withdraw the entire world into myself at my will. This is the true nature of me, this is what I am. I am real, the world is not real.

You cannot think of thoughtlessness. You cannot go to and come back from space-less and time-less states. You cannot sit down, think, analyze and understand the three states. The analysis of the three states needs to be done indirectly, by realizing that we remain in tact across these so called states, by negating all that is specific to the waking state. Then the truth will shine by itself.

Some readers may still have a critical doubt. It is not logical to accept a proof, given while we are still dreaming, that the dream world is real, and, by the same logic, it is not correct to accept any proof or evidence given to show the reality of the external world we see in our waking state, while we are still in the same state of waking consciousness. Thus the whole of modern science, which tends to tacitly assume the reality of the external world, and implicitly claims that modern science is completely objective, and hence what all we say in science is actually true, is all questionable. Now, what else are we doing in this whole book? The book is written in the waking state, read and discussed in the waking state, all arguments and counter-arguments are given within the same waking state. Is all this not questionable for exactly the same reason? Is this all not a self-defeating exercise? Where are we heading?

You are right, everything we have said in the book is in the waking state. After all, we cannot go by what we see in our dreams nor can we gain any knowledge or understanding by restricting ourselves to the state of deep sleep. This is the only reasonable thing to do. We are not aware of anything in the state of deep sleep and we can experience at least an imaginary world in the state of dreams. So the dream state is superior to the state of deep sleep. In the dream state, we are unaware that we are dreaming but in the waking state we are aware that we are awake. In fact this is the only state in which we can at least talk of all the three states. The waking state is the highest state of consciousness normally available to us. We have to think and work, placing ourselves in this state. This is the best we can do. But there is a very important difference between modern science, as also many other philosophies, religions, cults and schools of thought and what we have done here. While we are working within

the waking state, our logic and reasoning is based on a careful consideration of all the three states. Modern science and most other schools of thought, whether western, eastern or Indian, completely ignore the other states and restrict themselves to just the waking state. Dreams are not real but there is so much to gain by analyzing what happens in our dreams. We learned several extremely important ideas by a careful consideration of dreams, right? For example we realized that what appears real may not be real at all. Realizing this, we started asking questions. Otherwise we would not even have started our quest. We started asking the crucial question of whether the world is inside us or we inside the world. Without a careful consideration of the three states, we would have missed the whole point. Modern science misses the whole point. So do other religions and philosophies and cults. The first and the most important step in science is to ask the right questions. Those who miss the question can never hope to get any answers. By a careful analysis of the three states, we could realize that we are actually beyond all states, we are the one who remains constant, come what may. We could realize that there is but one thing that exists in the whole universe and we are all that.

Unfortunately there is no single pronoun that can stand for I, you, he, she, we, they, it, that, these, those and everything. If there was one, we should be using only that. When it comes to uncovering the secrets of the self, language is a big barrier. We are forced to use language as it is but we must remain careful not to fall into the false ideas it keeps suggesting all the time. For example, *ourself* is correct, not *ourselves*, there are no *selves*, there is but one, but a modern spell checker could interfere with our good intentions.

2.34 Layers of Ignorance

The *manas*, by its very nature, imagines and assumes all kinds of illogical, wrong, foolish ideas and it strongly believes in them. It sticks to its position and argues blindly without proper logic or reason. We often fall prey to this weakness and we become illogical and unscientific, even if we are scientists by profession and we are genuinely and seriously interested in uncovering the truth. Even the greatest minds have been duped at times. We believe in false ideas and we refuse to accept the truth, even after a valid proof is given. Seekers of truth need to be extremely careful to avoid this pitfall. We need to repeatedly ponder over these ideas until we fully understand and until we are fully convinced. Hopefully by now you have stopped complaining about repetitions in this book. Any amount of repetition is not an overkill when it comes to seeking the ultimate. Let us again pierce all the layers of ignorance in us one by one, until we reach the light of real knowledge.

The ignorant identify themselves with the material mortal frame - their physical body, including all the limbs and sense organs. This gross, external, physical body is an assemblage of parts. Where there is leg, there is no hand, where there is eye there is no nose. The body is not an all pervading unified whole. Have you ever got a feeling or experience that you are divided in parts like that? The eye cannot hear and the ear cannot see but I can see, hear and do all other things. 'I' is something that is indivisible, it is uniform and homogeneous, it is all pervading. Therefore, I cannot be the body. Equating the self to the body can only be called ignorance. This outermost layer of ignorance is called *annamaya-koosha*. We have given so many arguments throughout the book showing why I am not my body. Recall them all now.

Those who have crossed this level will do the minimum required to keep the body in good shape, fit, flexible, stable, hale and healthy but will not go on pampering it. They will not go after fashion or beauty or cosmetics. They will not complain when there is some discomfort or inconvenience or pain. They will not even seek comforts and conveniences for the body, they will be happy with whatever they get naturally. They live with their body and work with their body as given to them by God or nature, without asking for man-made gadgets, devices, artifacts, instruments or equipment. If they have to go somewhere, they walk, they do not ask for a car or a bus or a train or an aeroplane. They do not seek artificial lighting or fans or air conditioners or computers or refrigerators or microwave ovens or washing machines. They talk using their mouth, they do not ask for a cell phone. They sing and listen to music using their mouth and ears, without asking for music systems or CDs or MP3 Players. They live a simple, natural, harmless life, close to nature, in perfect harmony with nature. They do not produce any wastes, they do not pollute or exploit or damage the environment. They do not harm anybody, not even animals, in any way whatever for the sake of their own bodily comforts or pleasures.

Those few who can see through this outer layer of skin deep ignorance get carried away by the life processes happening in the body - respiration, blood circulation, digestion, excretion, chemical and electrical signals being carried all over the body by the nerves, the brain activity, all this physiological, metabological, physical, chemical, biological processes. Thinking in terms of these various systems of course helps us to realize that the body is not merely an assorted collection of unrelated parts, all the parts are in fact interrelated and unified. This is a somewhat deeper, inner, more subtle level of understanding. But we should not get fooled into believing that this itself is life and I

am simply this living organic being. I am more than that, I am beyond that. This second layer of ignorance, where we start identifying ourselves with the various transport phenomena, the physical manifestations of life inside our bodies, is called *praaNamaya-koosha*. Modern science more or less stops here. It does not even ask who drives all these actions. *praaNa* is the *shakti*, the energy, the prime mover, the engine, the force, that runs this machine called the body. It carries out all the voluntary as well as involuntary actions. It manifests in five *vRtti-s*: *praaNa*, *apaana*, *vyaana*, *udaana* and *samaana*. *praaNa-s* are many, I am one, I can feel, know, talk about all of them. So, I am not the *praaNa*.

How do we know we have crossed this point? Life is dear to all of us and we are always ready to go to any extent to save our lives. But at times we will be willing to put our own life at stake for the sake of others. Soldiers do. When the circumstances so demand, we may all be ready to give up our own life for the sake of our own children or others so dear to us. If we can give up something, that is ours, that cannot be us. *praaNa* is mine, I am not *praaNa*, I am different from that, I am beyond that.

Although some scientists try to study the mind, they rarely go beyond the brain and brain activity. Brain is merely an organ in the body, it is a physical, material object, inert and insentient like any other part. Those few who go to the level of the *manas* and can identify life experiences with the *manas*, tend to confuse themselves for their *manas* or the mind. The *manas* pervades all the systems in the body, it monitors and controls every part and every system in the body. Why does the heart beat? Why does the liver secrete bile juice? The *manas* explains the how and why of all the processes that manifest life in us. The *manas* senses both internal and external signals, it prompts

us into action and experiences life. It is the seat of instincts and emotions. It is common to other animals too. It is not just matter but more subtle, it is more pervading, more uniform, less divided, it is a deeper reality. But it is wrong to equate ourselves with our *manas*. Who drives the *manas* into doing all that it does? I am not my *manas*, the *manas* is mine and anything which is mine cannot be I, I am the one who can know, observe, even control this *manas*. I can exist without a *manas*, as in deep sleep. I can bring it back to life when I wake up from deep sleep. Equating the self to the *manas* is a layer of ignorance called *manoomaya-koosha*. We have to cross this level of ignorance too.

How do we know if we have crossed this level of ignorance? Those who have crossed this level are the masters of their minds. Others are slaves, they dance to the tunes of their own minds, they are slaves of their own passions. You have mastered your *manas* if your ego, pride, anger, jealousy, hatred, even desires are all under your control, rather than you being controlled by these passions. You will eat for the sake of energy and health, not for taste. You will have sex for the sake of reproduction, not so much for pleasure. You will live for others, not so much for yourself. You do not yield to temptations. You eat when you really want to and you can restrain yourself from eating if you so wish, both with equal ease. Similarly, you will remain equipoised and balanced in the mind and you can do a thing, or not do a thing, or do it differently, all at your own beck and call, all with equal ease. You will be able to fall in love with this person or that or not fall in love at all, without any difficulty. Clearly, those who have mastered their own minds are extra-ordinarily great persons, they are extremely powerful, in fact they are the true masters of the whole world. The *manas* is ours, we can give it up, king *janaka* did, when the sage *aShTaavakra* asked.

The whole notion of space is body-centric. We call wherever our body is as 'here' and call other distant places as 'there'. We think of distance, direction, movement, speed and what not. The *manas* can go from any place to any place instantly, without need for any vehicle. The *manas* is actually not located at any point in space, in fact it is the *manas* which creates this whole notion of space. Likewise, the *manas* notices changes and calls this time. Therefore, the moment we realize that we are beyond the body and the *manas*, the whole notion of space and time vanish. I can only be beyond space and time. Birth, death, in fact all events happen in space and time. Therefore, I am beyond birth, death, I am beyond all changes, all events, all states. Those who have mastered their own minds do not do anything in life, they just live and enjoy life. The *manas* is the doer, the *manas* is the experiencer. Since I am not my *manas*, I am neither the doer nor experiencer. Whatever we do without the slightest sense of doership and enjoyer-ship is as good as not done at all. It is in this sense that we can say that those who have mastered their minds do nothing at all in life. Working without a sense of doership and enjoyer-ship is the only recipe for a one hundred percent happy and contented life, free from all worries, pain and suffering. You will understand these ideas better after reading through the next chapter.

Many people get carried away by the intellect, the *buddhi* and the logical, symbolic processing and reasoning and learning and so on that go on here. They value the intellect very highly and they get caught in a sheath of ignorance called *vijnYaanamaya-koosha*. Today the intelligent rule the world, one who is not intelligent is left out in the mad race. Plants do not have any brain or nervous system, do they not exist? Do I not exist without any intelligence during deep sleep? Can I not observe, analyze and understand my own *buddhi*? I cannot be my *buddhi*. Even the greatest

of the thinkers, philosophers, scientists often fail to cross this level of ignorance, very few succeed indeed. They keep saying I think and I do not think so and I cannot accept this or I do not like that. The moment you cross the *manas* and the *buddhi*, there is no thinking, no perception, no liking, no disliking, no agreeing or disagreeing. There is no language, there is no proof. I am not the thinking machine in me. I do not think, I am the witness to this thinking machine's thoughts. I am beyond the *buddhi*.

Those few who have crossed this layer of ignorance have no doubts, no confusions, no questions in their mind at all. They have complete and perfect knowledge. Therefore, they do not even seek knowledge, they do not study or work in laboratories or do research. Academics today is a symbol of a weak mind, the greatest of the scientists and academicians are the ones who have the weakest mind, they are unable to control the trifling curiosities of their own mind. This is the only reason for carrying out research. There is no need to discover anything new, complete and perfect knowledge is already readily available right within you.

Those few who are able to penetrate all these concentric layers of ignorance will be able to understand the deeper silent voice, or *aananda*. *aananda* is complete absence of all sensations, perceptions, feelings, thoughts. Here we are neither happy nor sad, there is no pleasure nor is there any pain. This is what we experience in our deep sleep. In deep sleep there is no single unfulfilled desire. Complete absence of all unfulfilled desires is just another way of saying all desires fulfilled. There is no worry, no anxiety, no tension, no anger, no hunger, no pain, no suffering. What more can you ask for? Happiness and sorrow are not on the positive and negative sides of a neutral plane - there is really no positive side at all, absence of the negative is itself most

positive happiness we can ever get. You need to understand this carefully. You must learn to seek and enjoy life like this. Sometimes we feel happy because of some particular thing. Sometimes we are simply in a happy mood, without any reason. This is natural happiness, only what is natural, uncultivated, not produced by effort, not produced by contact with another thing, only this kind of natural, automatic happiness is real happiness. This is the nature of self, our self is always happy, naturally. This is the way plants experience and enjoy life. You can also experience *aananda* or bliss if you are able to reach up to the final stage in *yooga*, namely, *samaadhi*. But *samaadhi* and the bliss you experience there is also just a state, and you will have to come back to another state sooner or later. In reality, we are beyond states. States come and go, I do not come or go, I just remain, unaffected in all the states. Therefore, I must be beyond even this state of *aananda*. I am not the experiencer, I do not experience bliss or whatever. The moment we talk of experience, there is a division into the experiencer and the experienced. I am beyond all divisions. Equating the self to *aananda* is also ignorance. This innermost layer of ignorance is called *aanandamaya-koosha*. Only those few who can cross even this level become the truly self-realized souls, only they are the *jn Yaani-s* or the truly knowledgeable, not the others.

When we attach ourselves to the body level, people and things in the outside world become ours. If and when required, we will be ready to give up some part of our body in a surgical operation in order to save our life. When the feeling of I resides in the *praaNa*, the body automatically becomes mine. We can only give up something that we possess, we cannot give up ourselves, right? The body is therefore only an external embellishment, I cannot be my body. At times, we will be willing to give up our body, our life itself, for the sake of our country's pride or for

self-respect or for truth or something like that. Therefore, *praaNa* or manifestation of life in us, it cannot itself be I. I am the one who can give it up, right? When the feeling of I attaches itself to the *manas*, both the body and *praaNa* automatically become mine. When the feeling of I is shifted to the *buddhi*, I can observe, analyze, understand, even control my *manas*, the *manas* has now become mine. Discipline, determination, religious and spiritual practices are demonstrations of this. We can give up food, we can tolerate hunger, we can even do the opposite of what the *manas* wants because I am now different from the *manas*, I am the subject and the *manas* has become the object. Giving up our attachment to the *manas* is possible at least to this extent but giving up our attachment to the *buddhi* is very hard indeed. We want to know things, we want to do things, not for their own sake but for the sake of enjoying the benefits, for getting what we want or for overcoming what we dislike. We make use of our *manas* and *buddhi* to know and to do things in life. The *manas* and the *buddhi* are therefore both mine, not I, I am the one who is putting them to use. Giving up *buddhi* means stopping all thoughts. Contrary to common belief, we cannot get to the truth by thinking intensely about it, we can get to the truth only by slowing down and finally completely stopping all thoughts. Thoughts are disturbances, like waves on the ocean surface, that prevent the truth lying deep below from being seen clearly. Only those who can give up thinking can 'know' the truth. Only those few who can give up the entire external world, the whole body, all the senses, all perceptions, feelings and emotions, even thoughts, can experience unalloyed bliss. Only those very few who can even cross this deep-sleep like state of pure bliss and realize that the self is the witness to all the states, the self itself is not subject to states or any kind of change, become the self-realized.

Only those very few wise men who can pierce through all these layers of ignorance can see the light of consciousness, the *sat-cit-aananda*, the one and the only thing that exists. Most schools of philosophy, both western and Indian, fail to reach up to this point. Modern science clearly falls far short of the final goal. In fact modern science is another name for ignorance of the highest kind. The first step in seeking truth is, therefore, to give up your fancy for science and technology. This is the only reason why we have been repeated questioning and attacking modern science, there is no other motive.

I am beyond the *manas* and the *buddhi*, how can I have any experience? I am neither the doer nor the experiencer, I am only a witness to all these apparent happenings. Think. But thinking with your brain is not sufficient, you must realize that you can and do exist even without a brain, you can and do exist in a non-thinking and unthinkable form, in a not-knowing and unknowable form during deep sleep. After all, you existed as a single living cell inside your mother's womb at one point of time, where was the brain? All sciences, all philosophies that stop at the level of the brain or the mind now stand demolished outright. I think or I do not think, I exist. Throughout the book we have been saying something and then asking you to think. Only those who think why they are being asked to think, what exactly is thinking, who is thinking, how can I know that I am thinking, am I the thinker and so on will understand the truth quickly and easily. Thinking like this is the sign of a good thinker. Those who simply got irritated or annoyed remain ignorant. Think!

We take *anaatma* (for example, body, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara*) as *aatma* and *aatma* as *anaatma* or non-existent etc. Both are *adhyaasa*. This is the very definition of ignorance. Overcoming this real ignorance tantamounts

to gaining real knowledge. It is this real knowledge that will liberate you from all bondage and all suffering. There is no other solution. Once we demolish *deeha*, *indriya*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara*, I cannot do anything nor can I experience anything. I am neither the doer nor the experiencer. All of *pramaaNa-prameeya-pramaatR vyavahaara*, all *jñYaana-jñYeeya-jñYaatR vyavahaara* are therefore unreal. The very notion of proof is unreal. The ultimate truth cannot be perceived or known or proved. This does not mean that we have to give up our spirit of scientific inquiry and take to blind faith. Whatever we used to think as science so far is not scientific enough, that is all. We need not go by blind belief or faith nor can we ask for a so called scientific proof. We can actually reach the ultimate reality by negating all else and directly experiencing the same. In fact this is the real science.

Let us depict this whole story by a diagram:

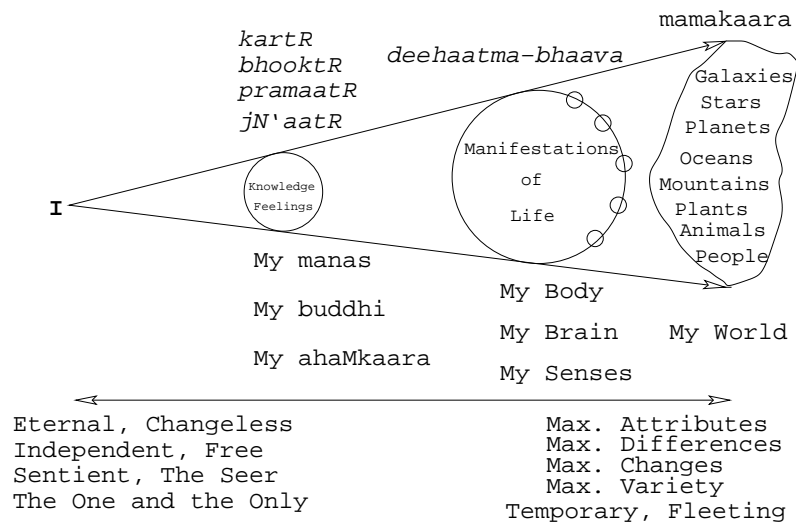


Figure 2.1: tattva-darshinii

There is no need for any explanation, the picture is self-explanatory. We just need to add one clarification. We can never see or show numbers but we teach the concept of numbers by showing pictures. We teach the concept of number five by showing a picture of 5 apples. Neither the student nor the teacher ever confuses apple itself for the number 5. Everything that we have given in this book, including all the examples and reasoning, should be taken in this spirit. Now look at this figure again carefully. The wise reader would have understood that what is shown as 'I' in this figure is not the self. You are still seeing the figure with your *manas*, using your eyes, in the light of optical light. The self is not object to anything, it cannot be known objectively. It cannot be shown. Clearly, the picture, like words, are helpful only to the extent they help us realize and get rid of our ignorance, neither words nor pictures can show us the self objectively. The self can only be realized, experienced directly. To do that, we have to necessarily cross the level of the mind, we have to necessarily cross the level of language, thought, logic and proof. We have to reach where words do not reach, reasoning does not reach, the eyes do not reach.

There is a joke about an idiot who went around shops selling home appliances. He pointed to a refrigerator and asked 'how much does this washing machine cost'? Taking X for Y is called *adhyaasa*, this is the definition of ignorance. Knowing, understanding or realizing X as X alone and nothing else is called knowledge. Like this idiot, we equate our self with the body, *manas*, *buddhi* etc. We strongly feel that *aatma* or self does not exist. In fact only the self exists and all else is unreal. Vast majority of people in the world are ignorant, vast majority of people have always been ignorant throughout the history of mankind. This is simply a fact. This book would have served its purpose fully even if one person in the entire world is able to

realize and overcome his or her ignorance fully. You should not feel bad if you are not one of those lucky few. This book has everything for someone but it also has something for everyone. Even an inch of progress towards truth is worth the effort. This book would have served its purpose if even a few readers get some benefit somewhere in their own lives.

The moment I realize that I am not merely a body, I am liberated from the constraints of size, shape, location and all other spacial attributes. I am neither here, nor there, I am all pervading. Why should I travel? Where can I go? The moment I realize that I am not my *manas* or *buddhi*, I am freed from all the constraints of time and change. I was always there, I am there, I will always be there. Where is the fear of old age or death? The moment I realize that I am absolutely independent, I am no longer constrained by anything else in the whole world, I have no fears of losing anything nor any longing for acquiring anything, after all I am myself the entire universe. The diseases of the body do not affect me, the diseases and disturbances of the *manas* do not trouble me any more. Money and material wealth are immaterial to me, other people cannot trouble me in any way either. In fact I am free from all pain, all suffering, all worries, all problems. The self-realized are always happy, always contented, always at peace with themselves, always blissful. This is freedom, this is real freedom, this is the goal of human life. Only human beings can reach this kind of self-realization, no other animal can. Do not waste your life doing all kinds of trivial things, seek the knowledge of the self, free yourself from the bondage of ignorance, be happy. May The God in you bless you.

2.35 Does God Exist?

This is a question that people have been asking from ancient times but in most cases people do not understand the meaning of existence nor do they have a precise meaning for the term God. We have now a proper understanding of the notion of independent existence. We can therefore address this question and give a definitive answer.

The universe is in reality a single, homogeneous, continuous whole with no parts and no properties. It has no attributes and hence it cannot change at all. It has no beginning or end. It is infinite, all inclusive, eternal. Call it by whatever name you wish, the name is, after all, something you impose on the whole for your own practical convenience. Name is not innate to any object. That is why you can always give it a different name. This single thing, beyond which there is no second thing, is the only reality. Our *RShi-s* called it *brahma*. *brahma* means something very big, extremely big, so big that it encompasses everything, the all inclusive, infinite whole. This is not to be confused with the Hindu God by the same name. But what is there in a name, call it whatever you want, it does not matter as long as you understand the meaning correctly. Call it *brahma*, call it *shiva*, call it *viShNu*, call it Allah, call it nature, call it the Universe, give it any name you wish, it makes no difference.

Does God exist? We have first shown that something exists. We have then shown that only one thing exists. There just cannot be two different things in this universe. If there are, how are the two different? All differences can only be with regard to attributes and their values. Attributes are never innate to any object, attributes are all imposed by the observer, attributes are not the true nature of objects. Remove all attributes and all differences

vanish in no time. When the Sun shines, darkness cannot linger on, it has to go away immediately and unconditionally. Once the light of real knowledge shines, ignorance cannot hang on. Seeing differences is ignorance. In reality there are no differences at all in this universe. There are no two things, there is one and only one thing. What can it be different from? So, something exists, that alone exists, nothing else exists. If we choose to call this God, yes God exists. What exists is God. Whatever exists is God. Nothing else exists. Nothing other than God exists. If your concept of God is different, we must say no, God does not exist. The answer depends on your choice of the meaning of the term God. Einstein said he does not believe in God, perhaps he was thinking of God as some invisible human-like being, hiding behind the clouds in the sky, looking down at what all we do in life using his eyes and mind like we do, and meting out rewards and punishments as our bosses do in our worldly life.

A non-believer said, "Where is God? Nowhere". The guru said, " Yes, you are right, only a space is missing. Make it God is now here"! The wise can see God in everything and see everything in God. Fools fails to see Him although they are all the time seeing only Him.

No two Gods can exist. Therefore, no God can be superior or inferior to any other God. All religions accept that God is omnipresent, omni-potent, all inclusive, infinite, limitless, unconstrained and so on. How can your God be superior to mine? The moment we talk of your God and mine, we are talking of two Gods and if there are two, none of them can be all inclusive. Thus all religious fights are unscientific and baseless. Religious fanaticism, religious conversions, religious intolerance, religious fundamentalism all stem from an incomplete, imperfect, flawed, unscientific understanding of the true nature of the uni-

verse. Let us seek real knowledge. All these silly problems will then vanish like darkness at the Sun rise.

For purely practical reasons, we may wish to think that God is all good and no bad. In reality, God has to be all inclusive. He is kind and He is also cruel. He is merciful and He is also merciless. If God was all kind and merciful and compassionate, why is there so much of pain and suffering in this world? God is kind and merciful on those who are good, who do only good things, who never harm others, who do not destroy nature. All animals, plants and non-living objects are His own creation and He does not like any of His creations to be harmed by anybody. If you are bad, if you entertain bad thoughts in your mind, if you take up bad deeds, if you terrorize, torture, injure, kill or eat other animals or harm other human beings, if you damage nature, God will mercilessly punish you. Good deeds result in good results and bad deeds result in bad. A mango tree never gives neem fruits and a neem tree never gives mango fruits. As are your deeds so will be the fruits. This is the law of nature. This is the nature of God. If you observe carefully, you will see that good people are happy and bad people are suffering. If you see the opposite it is either because you are not able to see the whole truth or you have not understood that there could be a time lag, short or long, between our deeds and the fructification of the results. Religions which preach that God is all kind and He will pardon every one of our sins are not telling the truth. You cannot go on endlessly committing sins and hope that He will pardon them all. God will not forgive if you knowingly commit sins that are avoidable. Most of what we are doing in the world today is bad. We all know it. It is all avoidable. God will punish us. Be warned.

2.36 The Individual and God

The individual biological living beings are called *jiiva-s*. Biology considers them as mere bodies with some intelligence, seeing, knowing and experiencing life, using their bodies, sense organs, brain, nervous system or whatever they have. In reality, the *jiiva-s* are all one and the same *aatma*. There is no difference between you and an insect. The self of the individual, called *jiivaatma* and the self of the entire universe, called *paramaatma* or God, are one and the same thing. *paramaatma* (God) is *aatma* (self) in the *parama* (ultimate) sense, that is all.

In ordinary day-to-day life, it is OK, it is even useful to differentiate between ourselves and God. This binds us under moral principles guided by notions of good and bad and thus helps us to live a normal, good life. There is nothing wrong in this view as a practical necessity. In this view of *vyavahaara*, *jiiva-s* or the individuals are considered to be the body-mind complexes that carry on life as agents and experiencers. As individuals, our own worlds, that is, the world as projected for us to see by our *manas*, are always partial, we never have all people, all things in our worlds, be it the dream world or the world of the waking state. We are *jiivaatma-s*. The union, the sum total of all *jiivaatma-s* is *paramaatma*. His world is the union of all worlds. He has the entire universe, the external and the internal, he has everybody's world included, he is all inclusive, he is infinite. He knows everything. He sees everything. He possesses everything. He sees the worlds through creation, sustenance and destruction. He is eternal, he is timeless. He is the only truth, the only reality. He is nameless, formless, attribute-less, changeless, indescribable.

This view is fine as a practical reality. Yet, in ultimate analysis, or *paramaarthā*, *paramaatma* is simply the

aatma in the ultimate or *parama* sense. We are not just our bodies, nor are we the same as our *manas*. Our worlds are created for us by our *manas*, these worlds are not real. The individual world is not real, it is partial, as observed by one individual, it is one view, not the full correct picture. The true complete picture is *sat-cit-aananda svaruupa* - the *paramaatma*. *jiivaatma*-s, when viewed as mere biological entities doing things and experiencing life using their body and mind, are only projections of this single real thing, they do not have independent existence at all. But in reality, they are the same as the single whole, not different from it in any significant way. We are beyond our body, *manas* and *buddhi*, we are ourselves, we are *aatma* and there is no individual world to talk about. As we move from the gross to the subtle, from the exterior to the interior, from the superficial to the deep, we see that differences vanish level by level and at the final level, where we get to *aatma* or self, there are absolutely no differences at all. There is one and only one *aatma*, that is yours, mine and everybody else's. That is the whole universe, that is *brahma*. That is God. I am God. So are you. So is he. So is she. So is everybody. Everything that exists is God. God alone exists and nothing other than God exists. There is no real difference between *jiivaatma* and *paramaatma*, in ultimate analysis they are both one and the same. It is only for our convenience that we may knowingly treat ourselves and God as different but this is not the ultimate truth. We are not mere mortal bodies, limited and constrained in many ways, we are not sinners, we are the all inclusive whole, we are divine beings. Understanding this and bringing out the divinity in us is the goal of human life. This is the only thing we need to do in life, this is the only way we can elevate ourselves from a mere mass of flesh and bone to full human beings.

2.37 Creation

Some believe that God created this world. What do we mean by creation? If we are thinking of creating something out of nothing, that is completely illogical. Something cannot come out of nothing. Something must have existed before creation. If something already exists, what do we mean creation? If God created the world, did He exist before creation? How can something, even God exist even before the universe itself is created? By universe we mean the all inclusive whole, right? Nothing can be outside this all-inclusive universe, not even God. If even God did not exist, how can this non-existent God create or do anything? There is something wrong with this whole notion of creation.

What is creation? Can we say if an object which had the property of non-existence is made to have the property of existence, then this object is created? Existence or non-existence cannot be the property of any object, for, if the object itself were to be non-existent, then its properties cannot exist. Therefore, this ordinary notion of creation as changing from non-existence to existence is meaningless. Nothing can be created or destroyed. Something cannot be created out of nothing. What exists can never vanish completely into nothingness. When a house catches fire and is burnt into ashes, we may think everything was destroyed but in reality not a single atom has been lost, there was only a physical and chemical change, that is all. What exists always exists and what does not exist never existed and will never come into existence. God is no exception.

All confusions arise from taking the standpoint that the world we see in our waking state is real. In reality, such a world does not exist at all and therefore there is no need to explain how it comes about. We do not have to explain

dreams, we know it is not real. Likewise, we have to realize that this world of names and forms is not real, that is, not *sat* in itself, these objects and animals and plants and people do not really come from or go into anything. There is *sat* and only *sat* and only one *sat* and so whatever we see, real or imaginary, in our dream state or in the waking state, all these must be a projection, a manifestation, a mere show of this one and only *sat*. Creation or birth is an event that takes place at a particular point of time at a particular place. Space and time are all part of the universe, after all the word universe means the all inclusive whole, and so the universe cannot have a birth or a death. It is all illusory.

A potter uses a wheel and makes a pot from the clay. The pot, which is the result or the effect, is called *kaarya* and the potter, the wheel and clay are called the *kaaraNa* are the causes. It is possible to make a pot without using the potter's wheel, it is possible to make a pot without the help of a potter, we can think of alternatives, these are only *naimittika kaaraNa-s* or 'efficient' causes. On the other hand, there is no earthen pot without the clay, the clay is absolutely essential and unavoidable, and so it is called the *upaadaana kaaraNa* or 'material' cause. These are all fine in a layman's day-to-day world of *vyavahaara*. People easily get confused here, even great minds have got confused. Some observe that initially there was no pot, there was only clay and later there is only pot, no clay. They conclude that the clay is destroyed and then comes the pot. A destructive process cannot create anything new. If the clay was destroyed and nothing existed, how can a pot come out of this nothingness? If a pot can come out of nothingness, why not a cloth or a baby or a fruit or all of these? Some others say that the pot must pre-exist in a latent form in the clay, otherwise, how can it lead to a pot? This capacity to become a pot should pre-exist the pot in

the clay. Others argue that if the pot already exists what do we mean by creation? In reality, the pot is nothing but the clay, not really different from it. At a superficial level, the pot has a particular shape, it can contain water without allowing it to leak out, etc. In other words, there are certain attributes, qualities, or properties that distinguish a pot from the clay. We have understood that no attribute is actually innate to any object. That there is water, a pot can be used to carry water etc. are only our thoughts. The pot does not know any of these. The pot itself cannot go to a river and fill itself up with water or carry it from one place to another. All these functions and qualities are properties of the human mind. All attributes are properties of the *manas* of the observer. The pot does not even know that there is something called water, it does not care either. Shape, size, weight, colour are all properties of the human mind, we have these in our mind and we impose these qualities on the pot. In ultimate analysis, we must be wise enough to see through the superficial differences due to attributes superimposed by us on the objects and see the objects per se using our inner eyes. Devoid of attributes, you will find that the pot and the clay are not different in any way, differences cannot exist without the attributes. In the ultimate analysis, therefore, there is no difference between *kaaraNa* and *kaarya*. The subject, the verb and the object all become one at the highest level of analysis. It is in this deepest sense that we say *brahma* is this world and this world and everything in it is *brahma*. Ordinary interpretations of terms like creation and transformation do not apply in *paramaarthas*. We impose *naama-ruupa-karma* - name, form and function, on ourselves first and then onto the whole world and then start asking who created this world! Name, form and function are not *paaramaarthika* and if you delete name, form and function, what would remain? The wise should understand this well and overcome all confusions.

The rope exists as a rope even before we imagine a snake in it. It exists as a rope alone even while we are seeing a snake in it. It will continue to exist as a rope alone even after we realize our mistake. It has always been a rope and it has not undergone any change whatever. The rope was mistaken for a snake for a while and later this confusion vanished, that is all. Nothing at all happened to the rope. Likewise, I exist as my self before, during and after *jaagrat*, *svapna* and *suShupti*. I exist, I alone exist, nothing else exists. The world is superimposed on me by ignorance during the waking and dreaming states. Once we realize the mistake, the whole world vanishes like the snake that never actually existed. The world is neither created nor destroyed, there is no creator, no destroyer. The world is unreal. Spending all our time, effort and money for exploring this nonexistent world can only be called foolishness. There can be nothing more foolish than exploiting and damaging the whole Earth system, poisoning the air, water and soil, all for the mere comforts and conveniences of our body and mind.

There is one and only one thing in this universe which exists. This exists, it always exists, without a beginning or end. There is no such thing as creation. Just as actors in various costumes come from the green room and go back there after playing their role, all things in this universe come from and go back into the only thing that always exists - *sat-cit-aananda*. There is no God other than the true nature of you, me and every one of us. This we should not be saying out of ignorance or out of arrogance which stems from ignorance. Since you, me, he, she, everybody and everything in this world is ultimately a manifestation of the only thing that exists independently, we are all God, if you agree to call that *sat-cit-aananda* as God. Everything comes from God and goes back into the same God,

including my body, my *manas* and my *buddhi*. I, the seer, the *sat-cit-aananda* by nature, is no different from that God, which is just another name for the only thing that exists. The goal of human life is to manifest this divinity in us. We are not sinners. We are not mere material bodies that come and go. We are, truly speaking, the same as God, the only thing that exists. There is no such thing as creation, only manifestation. There is constant change. Things come from God, keep changing and they finally go back to God. Before the Big Bang also this God existed. After the final dissolution also, He will continue to exist. If at all, we can call this transformation from the unmanifest form in which it existed before Big bang to the manifest universe as we know it today as creation. It is not really creation, it is not even transformation in a worldly material sense, it is only imaginary manifestation.

We are all divine beings. We are not sinners. If we believe God created us, if we believe God is great, how can we believe that this great God created sinners? Only a sinner can even think of sin. Only a thief can think of stealing. If God created us, He must have created us in His own image. We must all be divine beings. We are the immortal children of God, how can we be sinners? We are God. There are no differences at all. Seeing differences is the very definition of ignorance. A knowledgeable person sees no differences. All are equal for him. True knowledge is nothing but complete, total equality. All are same, no one is superior or inferior. Treat others as you treat yourself. Treat a cow, a hen, or a goat exactly as you wish to be treated yourself. You love yourself, love everybody, love all living creatures the same way. Never harm anybody in any way whatever. Try to manifest the divinity in you. This is the goal of life.

2.38 Evolution

Modern scientists believe that living beings undergo sudden, random changes called mutations. These changes may be either favourable or not. Accordingly, useful changes are retained and useless ones are discarded. This process, called evolution, is the cause of so many different species of plants and animals. We all started off from very simple, single celled micro-organisms and over the Millions of years, we have evolved to take the present forms. Is this theory right?

Consider a car. An automobile engineer knows that there are so many thousands of parts that make up the car. Each part has an engineering drawing that describes it precisely. Its size, shape, material, manufacturing methods and processes are all described in full detail. Only when such a detailed design of every part and how the parts combine to form bigger units is worked out completely can the production begin. Now consider a human body. How many parts are there? There are a mind boggling number of parts in the human body. The brain alone has an estimated 10^{11} neurons or nerve cells, each connected to some 10,000 other cells. There are hundreds of bones, each with a complex shape and size. Even to make a precise engineering description of all the body parts is a formidable task. The human form is extremely complex. Nature is simply too complex for man to understand.

Take any single part, let us say the eye. What engineering parameters can we think of? How many eyes should be there? Where should they be located? In what orientation? What should be the shape and size, and colour and so on. There are infinitely many possible answers to such questions. Nature never tries arbitrary, random, thoughtless values to these parameters or thoughtless permutations

and combinations. For example, nature has never tried putting the eyes inside the stomach or under the feet or at the top of the head and later discovered that these are not good ideas and then given up. Nature has never tried making an eye that is larger than the face or something that is microscopically small. Nature has never made an opaque lens and then discovered that it does not work. Nature is not stupid. Nature is intelligent. Nature is supremely intelligent, supremely wise. Everything in nature is a real engineering masterpiece. Nature cannot be explained in terms of mutations and random experiments and survival of the fittest. Nature can only be a creation (that is a manifestation) of a supremely wise being. Call Him God if you wish. No harm. Those who do not believe in God, those who do not believe in a supremely wise being who creates and controls everything, those who think everything is merely a matter of statistical chance, random experiments and survival of the fittest, must try and imagine their tongue at the other end of the digestive track!

Modern scientists believe that all the intelligence and knowledge we are talking of is simply already encoded in the genes. An example should suffice to demolish this theory. Of the various mechanisms nature has invented to help individuals protect themselves from their enemies is what scientists call warning colouration. For example, a butterfly has a picture of a angry grinning cat on its wings. Looking at this scary picture, birds, which normally eat butterflies and other insects, would get scared away, afraid of cats as they are. Where is this knowledge encoded? The butterfly never gets to see its own wings, it has no idea how its wings look like. A butterfly cannot be expected to know that a cat is an enemy of birds and birds can be scared away by a grinning cat. This knowledge simply cannot be part of the butterfly's body, its cells or the genes in them. There is no reason or logic for birds to posses

this knowledge either. Birds would love to eat insects and flies, why will they even think of scaring themselves away from their food? Needless to say, this knowledge cannot be encoded in the genes of a cat, cats are blissfully unaware of all this. Then where is this knowledge encoded?

If you think nature has tried all possible pictures at random and this one has been found to be useful, let us make some calculations. Pictures can be understood in terms of dots of which they can be thought to be made up of. A typical picture could have 1000 dots in horizontal and vertical directions, adding up to a Million dots. Each dot can be of any of an infinite variety of colours. It is quite common to use 16 Million different colours on a modern computer or TV screen. That means each of these one Million dots can take any of 16 Million values. Of all these mind boggling number of possible pictures, the picture of the grinning cat we are talking of is just one. Mathematically speaking, the probability of getting such a picture by random trial and error is extremely small, as good as zero. Nature might have actually tried a very large number of experiments but even then random experimentation cannot explain this fact. In case nature was actually trying random experiments, we should be seeing all kinds of random pictures but every butterfly actually has a very well thought out, very well made, excellent, beautiful, symmetric, fantastic, artistic painting on its wings. Nature cannot be doing random, thoughtless experiments, every experiment is done with supreme wisdom. There are all kinds of animals and insects and worms but none have a bone bigger than their body or a tail inside the stomach. Everything has a logic, a reason, something supremely intelligent and wise about it.

An elephant's skeletal system cannot be designed by the elephant. No other animal or plant has any interest

or capacity to do it either. Nor is it random, without any logic or design. Only the good God can make it. Nature or God is *cit*, supreme wisdom, pure consciousness, nothing else. Give up your fancy for modern science, science is all foolishness, only ignorance. We cannot know everything, we cannot even know a small part of this great world. It is futile to try. Let us not waste our time, effort and money. Instead, let us understand life and learn to simply live well and enjoy life.

Evolution is an inner urge of all living beings for a gradual unfoldment of consciousness. Evolution is not just change or refinement of body, not even of intelligence. Our *manas* and *buddhi* are mere reflectors, they only reflect the light of the universal consciousness, they are themselves insentient. Our intelligence is not ours. Individuals do not have knowledge, we only reflect the common, shared pool of knowledge that fills the entire universe. Let us get humble, let us stop using our intelligence to outsmart and cheat others. The human *manas* is still ill-developed and very childish but we can accelerate our own evolution through proper understanding and effort. No other animal can. This is a great opportunity. Missing this is therefore utter foolishness. Goal of life is to evolve, into full human beings. This shall be the main theme of the next chapter.

2.39 The Final Answers

We have started this book by asking the following big questions. Does this universe exist? In what sense? What is its true nature? Does the world exist in us or we inside the world? Is there a world that is common to all of us? Who exactly are we? What is our true nature? What is the relationship between ourselves and the world? What is the relationship between ourselves and others? We have

asked all these questions under the belief that knowing all this will give meaning to our lives, we will understand what exactly is life and how to live. We will learn how to live well and enjoy life to its fullest. We want to be free from all pain and suffering, we want to be free from all bondage. We want to be free from the bondage of ignorance. That is why we are seeking knowledge, real knowledge. Knowledge is power, the powerful are the masters, they are free, they enjoy life, not the slaves. We have taken time to explore all these issues in great depth and we are now ready to consolidate all that we have learned so far and summarize the final answers.

The true nature or *svaruupa* of a thing is that which can never be alienated. What cannot be removed, what cannot be lost, what cannot be given away, what cannot be stolen, what can never be negated, what never leaves and goes away at any cost under any condition is the true nature or *svaruupa*. All else is superimposed on this innate underlying reality. Our goal is to seek the *svaruupa* of this universe and the *svaruupa* of ourselves.

By definition *sat* has no non-existence. It is absolutely independent, it does not depend upon anything else for its existence. It is independent of space and time too, so in this sense it can be said to be all-pervading and eternal. It is independent of all attributes and changes in their values, so it is invariant. *asat* just does not exist at all. All else, all the dependent, conditional, relative, temporary things, all things subject to birth, death or any other kind of change, all these constitute *mithyaa*. We cannot seek *asat*, it does not exist. We will not get real knowledge by seeking *mithyaa*. *mithyaa* is only an apparent, temporary reality, not the ultimate. *mithyaa* does not have independent existence at all, it does not exist in the ultimate analysis. *mithyaa* has no *svaruupa* of its own, even its

existence is not guaranteed, what about other properties? There is no quality that remains invariant with *mithyaa*, so there is no *svaruupa* at all. Seeking *mithyaa* is therefore at best useless. Our goal is therefore to seek the *sat*. Knowing this we will know the true nature of the world and the true nature of ourselves. We will get proper, correct, final answers to all of our questions by seeking *sat* alone.

The only way to seek the *sat* is to eliminate all that is not *sat*. Whatever is subject to change is not *sat*. Whatever is subject to birth, growth, change, transformation, decay, death, etc. is not *sat*. Whatever comes and goes in different states or situations or conditions is not *sat*. Whatever is dependent on anything else for its existence, whatever is relative, whatever is conditional, is not *sat*. What remains, after all else has been shed off, will have to be *sat*.

We can understand things in this world in terms of objects and attributes. An object without attributes is conceivable but attributes without object is impossible. Only objects can have independent existence, attributes do not have independent existence, they are always super-imposed on an object by the observer. What is imposed can be taken off. Whatever is superimposed can be gotten rid off. All attributes can be eliminated. What remains will be the object per se. Our goal here is to seek the absolutely independent reality. We must therefore eliminate all attributes so that we can see the underlying object per se. That would be the ultimate reality. This is the only way.

All differences, all change is because of the attributes and their values, if there are no attributes at all, there cannot be any differences, there cannot be any change whatever. All differences, all changes are superficial. We must see through these superficial differences and seek the underlying unchanging reality. This is the only way. Once all at-

tributes are stripped off, all differences vanish. Therefore, two or more different objects cannot exist independently because there will be nothing like difference. Therefore, in the ultimate analysis, there can be one and only one object in the entire universe.

When ice melts and becomes water, it loses the definite shape it had, the water takes whatever shape the containing vessel has. When this water evaporates and becomes steam, it loses shape altogether. As we move from the gross to the subtle, from the external to the internal, differences vanish one by one. At the level of electrons, protons and neutrons, there is no such thing as shape or colour, in fact there is no distinction between iron and gold, there is no difference between men and women, there is no difference between the living and the non-living. As we dig deeper, even the remaining differences go away. At the very end, we will be left with a single thing devoid of all attributes and hence devoid of all differences. No change will be possible, not even birth or death. This is the ultimate reality, this is *sat*

An object without any attributes cannot be perceived through the sense organs or the *manas*. Since it is attributeless, it is indescribable and so not amenable for symbolic analysis and reasoning and logic in the *buddhi*. It is not amenable for language. The only way to reach this underlying reality is by eliminating all else. This is the only way. To know *sat*, we must eliminate all attributes that have been imposed on it by us. Once we eliminate all attributes, no change is possible. That is why *sat* is completely invariant. It cannot undergo any change whatever, not even birth and death. That is why it is timeless and eternal. Since no changes and no differences are possible at the level of *sat*, there just cannot be two or more of them, there can be but one. It is not possible to find two or more

sat in different locations in space or time since space and time are also attributes and we have already eliminated all attributes.

The existence of anything that is seen, heard, perceived, observed, known by any means whatever is dependent on the seer, the observer, the knower. It is the seer who is the prover, he gives the proof of existence and the proof cannot exist without the prover. Therefore, the 'seen' has no existence independent of the 'seer'. If the 'seen' exists independently, such a thing cannot be proved and hence we cannot accept such an unprovable hypothesis. Proof of existence of anything presupposes the existence of the prover. Nothing that we see or otherwise observe or come to know in the entire universe, including other people, can be proved independent of ourselves. The seer can exist independently, all on his own, with or without anything that can be seen. The seen cannot exist independent of the seer. Here we are seeking *sat*, the most independent of all possible things. Hence we must seek the seer, not the seen. Truth lies within ourselves, not in the outside world. We must seek ourselves, we must know who exactly we are. Only this is real knowledge. Only those who are self-realized are knowledgeable, all others are ignorant. Knowledge means knowledge of the self.

The perceiver cannot be perceived by any instrument of perception, the knower cannot be known, the seer cannot be seen. The seen cannot exist independent of the seer. But we all perceive, see, know, observe in our daily lives, even while dreaming. This proves that the seer exists.

I exist. I know this by direct experience. I do not need any external instrument or agency to come and tell me that I exist. No other proof is required. That I exist is self-evident. This is the real meaning of direct perception,

seeing with our eyes is not direct perception, that is very indirect indeed. I exist and I am aware that I exist, I know that I exist. Therefore, the extreme nihilist theory that nothing at all exists in this universe is untenable. Even to say nothing exists, the one who says this must exist. If the null hypothesis were true, the proposer of a null hypothesis cannot exist and if he does not exist, his theory also cannot exist. Thus extreme *shuunya-vaada* is self-defeating. There is another form of *shuunya-vaada*. This nihilist theory says that no ultimate reality exists, everything is *mithyaa*. This is also untenable. *mithyaa* cannot arise from and dissolve into *mithyaa* itself endlessly - that would be a cyclic dependency. Everything cannot be relative. Whatever is relative can only be relative to something which is absolute and not relative. X depends on Y and Y depends on X is impossible. Therefore, *mithyaa* can only arise from *sat* and go back into *sat*. This is possible, this is the only possibility. Therefore, *sat* exists, only one *sat* exists in this whole universe including the external and internal worlds, including the manifest and the unmanifest worlds.

The entire physical world including all the living and nonliving beings is not *sat* because all these are subject to birth, death and change. They do not have independent existence, their existence is dependent on the existence of the observer. So the entire external physical world is only *mithyaa*, it is only an apparent reality, it is not the ultimate reality. This world that we experience in our waking state is no different from the world of dreams - both appear to be real as long as are in that state, as long as we are still ignorant. The moment we wake up and realize the truth, the whole world vanishes in one shot. There is no basis to say that there is a world that is external to us and common to all of us. We can only say that there appears to be a world as long as I am alive and awake, this is my personal world, I experience it and so it exists for me, that is all.

The so called external world is only a temporary, personal, apparent reality, this is not the ultimate truth.

The same arguments apply to our bodies, after all our bodies are also part of this physical world. Our body, every part of it, including the brain is *mithyaa*, only an apparent, temporary, dependent reality, not the ultimate reality. It exists for me as long as I am alive and awake, that is all. It exists because I can observe it.

In fact the same arguments hold for my *manas*, my *buddhi* and my *ahaMkaara* as well - they all exist for me as apparent, temporary, dependent realities, only in specific states. I am not my body or my brain or my mind. All these, in fact the whole world is *mithyaa*. They all come from *sat* and go back into *sat*, they are dependent on *sat* for their existence, they do not exist independently, they cannot. All that is mine is not I. I am what remains after my body, my *manas*, my *buddhi*, my *ahaMkaara* are all removed.

We need to position ourselves firmly somewhere and only then can we negate all other things as external to us, superimposed on us, not innate to us and so not our own true nature. If we position ourselves as our body, we can negate the entire external world as not our own true nature, since all of that is observable by us. If we position ourselves at the level of the *manas* and *buddhi*, we can negate our bodies since we can now observe our own bodies. We move like this from the gross and external towards the more subtle and internal, until we reach our own *svaruupa*. Firmly stationed here, we can negate all else in this whole universe. We will never be able to negate our own *svaruupa*, since we will have no other place to position ourselves. This way, we can reach the final, definitive, conclusive truth about our own true nature. Thus, I am my self, nothing else.

It is not possible to prove that space or time exist independently. Space cannot be an object in itself because we say all other objects are located in space. Space can only be an attribute and all attributes are unreal, they have no independent existence. Space is not in time nor time inside space. Space is not here, not there, nowhere. So is time. Space and time are therefore not real. My *manas* can go to any place in no time. My *buddhi* can situate itself in any place at will. Space does not bind the *manas* or the *buddhi*. All notions of space arise out of an assumption that we are the same as our bodies. My body is here, wherever my body is, I call that place as 'here' and other 'far off' places I call 'there'. The moment I go there, that same place which was earlier 'there' becomes 'here'. Where are these notions of 'here' and 'there' located? Neither 'here' nor 'there' exists outside of me, these are all my own creations. The entire notion of space is my creation. Space exists in me, I do not exist in space. Can we reach the horizon by walking towards it? We are already at the horizon, with respect to some point on the Earth's surface, right? But the horizon never appears to be here, wherever you place yourself on the globe. Notions like 'here' and 'there' are not real. Further, space and time are perceived only in waking and dreaming states, they are completely absent in the state of deep sleep. Hence these are only properties of my *manas*. There is nothing like time for the body or for the *buddhi*. Perception of space and time are quite different in *jaagrat* and *svapna*. Therefore, waking up from a dream is not like going out of one room and entering another room. We do not go from anywhere to anywhere either in space or in time. If space and time had independent existence, everything must happen inside the framework of space and time, right? Space and time are therefore only illusory, not real. Space and time are attributes created and imposed on the world by us, the world itself is created by us. We

do not exist in space, space exists in us. We do not exist in this world, the world exists in us. There is no external world, the very notion of external is 'internal' to us, so to say. Realizing this we can transcend the limits of space and time. There is really nothing like past or future, there is nothing which is too far for us to reach. Everything is now and here. The entire universe is right here right now as always.

This one and only thing that exists must be all inclusive, it must include everything that appears to be there in the whole universe. It must therefore be big, very big, extremely big, all inclusive and so practically infinite. It must have all the knowledge in the whole universe and therefore it must be omniscient. It must include all the power and all the capability conceivable in the entire universe and hence this must be omnipotent. It must be omnipresent, all pervading. It exists independent of all other things, it is independent even of space and time. It is eternal not in the sense that it exists at all points of time, it is truly timeless. It is all pervading not in the sense that it exists at all points in space, it is truly space-less. Everything else that is seen either in our dreams or in our waking state, can only be a mere projection, mere manifestation of this only ultimate truth that exists independently. This must be attribute-less, for, all attributes are limiting in nature. If an object has a particular size and shape, these attributes delimit the object, outside of which it cannot exist. If an object has a colour, its existence is precluded in anything whose colour is different. If an object has a name, its existence is denied in things with a different name. All attributes are limiting and therefore the only ultimate reality that exists independently cannot have any attributes whatever, not even a name. For the sake of convenience we may give it any name we wish. Some call it *brahma* because this word means very big, not to be confused with the Hindu God by

the same name. You may simply call it The Universe or whatever. Names do not matter.

There is one and only one thing that exists independently in this whole universe, it is timeless, eternal, birthless, deathless, changeless, attribute-less, nameless, formless, indescribable in words. It exists, that is all we can say about it, in fact it is pure existence. Everything in the whole universe must in reality be that, nothing else exists. I am that. You are that. He, she, everybody is that. All animals, birds, insects, fish are that. All plants and trees, even the grass is that. All objects in this world, living and non-living are manifestations of the one and the only *sat* that exists independent of all these things that come and go. The Himalayas is *mithyaa*, the Pacific Ocean is *mithyaa*, human beings, animals, plants, stars and planets, galaxies, are all *mithyaa* - none of them existed before the Big Bang and none will exist after the Big Crunch or whatever. They all come from the *sat* and they all become one with the *sat* at the end. It is only fools who go after money, material wealth, technology, industries, business, economic development and what not.

sat exists and only *sat* exists. I exist and I know that I exist. I know this by direct perception. That I exist is therefore immediately proved. *sat* exists and I exist. Only one thing can exist, therefore I am *sat*. The *deeha*, the *manas* and the *buddhi* they all come and go, they all keep changing, hence none of them are *sat*, none of them have any independent existence. My *deeha* or *manas* or *buddhi* or even my *ahaMkaara* cannot exist without me. I can exist with or without any of them. I am not something that has to come to me nor is it something which can leave me any time. I am always myself. I am my self, this is my *svaruupa*. Once all attributes imposed on me are shaken off, what remains is I, I am attribute-less, I am therefore

birth-less, deathless, changeless, eternal. I exist with or without any other thing in the whole universe, I am absolutely independent, I am free. I am *sat*, changeless, constant, independent, free, without a birth or a death. I am the seer, I am the light that sees. I have nothing to gain or lose, I have no worries, I have no suffering, I cannot be happy or sad, I do not experience any joys or sorrows. These are the properties of the *manas*, I am not my *manas* and I am free from all that, I am the bliss ultimate. You are that. He, she, every one of us, all human beings, all animals and birds and insects and fish and microbes, all plants and trees, all living beings, even all inanimate beings are one and the same, for, nothing else exists independently. The goal of human life is to realize this. This realization liberates us from all pain and suffering. This is knowledge, this is freedom, this is life.

The entire universe can be divided into just two entities - the *viShaya* and the *viShayi*. The former includes all that can be known and the latter includes the pure knower. Other than these two, nothing else can be shown to exist. The existence of the *viShaya* can only be established by the *viShayi*, hence *viShaya* has no independent existence, it is not *sat*. Only a *viShayi* can be *sat*. At least one *sat* must exist. At most one *sat* can exist. Therefore, only one *sat* exists. I exist. Therefore I am *sat*, I must be a pure *viShayi*, I must be a *saakShi* or a pure witness. Other people are all part of my *viShaya*, they have no existence independent of me, they are not *sat*. I alone am *sat*. All else in the entire universe owes its existence to me, they arise from me and they dissolve into me. In this sense, they are non-different from me. I am the whole universe, I am *brahma*. Once we reach this level, even the difference between *viShaya* and *viShayi* melts away and the non-dual self alone remains. My self is the self of all. All are one. There are no two things in this universe. My self is not something that is

located inside my body or mind, my self is the self of all.

Seeing any kind of difference is ignorance, differences are not real. There is no difference between you and I, there is no difference between an ant and an elephant, there is no difference between a plant and an animal, there is no difference between a rabbit and a rock, there is no real difference between myself and the entire universe, there is no real difference between myself and God. Seeing differences is the very definition of ignorance. The reality is free from all differences and all changes. There is a *sat*, there is only one *sat*, and this is the *svaruupa* or true nature of the whole universe. This is also my own *svaruupa*. This is also your own *svaruupa*. I exist and I exist independent of anything else in the whole universe. This is self-evident, there is no need for any other proof. I am everything, I am the all inclusive whole. I am identically equal to the universe. This is the true nature of this universe this is the true nature of my self. This is the logical, conclusive, truly scientific, definitive, final answer. Everything in the whole universe is mine, all the knowledge in the world is mine, all the power in the world is mine. There is nothing for me to gain, there is nothing for me to lose, there is nothing for me to do. This is the ultimate reality. This answers all the questions we have started this book with. In the next chapter, we shall see how we can understand human life meaningfully, how we can practically live and enjoy life to its fullest, in the background of this knowledge and understanding.

As long as we identify ourselves with our bodies, we think we are different from others. As long as we identify ourselves with our minds, we think we are different from others. The moment we cross these layers of ignorance and reach the self, we realize that the self is not a helpless animal locked up in the skeletal cage of our body or within

the opaque walls of our mind. The self is beyond space and time, it is in fact beyond all attributes. Therefore, when I say 'I' and when you say 'I', we both mean the same object, the only object that exists, the *sat*. We are not similar, we are not identical, we are actually one. More than one 'I' is impossible.

The truth is beyond all *vyavahaara* because all *vyavahaara* is based on false superimposition of multitude. The truth is beyond *kartR-karma-phala vyavahaara*, there is no role for any action or its agent or experiencer or the results of that action because any kind of division such as subject-verb-object or agent-action-patient is untenable. Likewise, *kaarya-kaaraNa vyavahaara*, *pramaatR-pramaaNa-prameeya vyavahaara*, *jñYaatR-jñYaana-jñYeeya vyavahaara* are all unreal. The truth cannot be perceived, known or explained out. It is the one who oversees and witnesses all these. You are not the doer, you are not the perceiver. You are not the knower, you are the one who sits unmoved and watches your knowing.

This final answer cannot be arrived at by mere scientific experimentation, observation or inference. All experiments, observations and inferences are done by me, the observer, and so these cannot determine me, just as a torch light can illumine all other objects but not itself. Trying to seek the ultimate truth through scientific investigation is like a short tailed dog trying to catch its own tail. It may spin and roll and jump and do all kinds of circus but the dog will never be able to catch its own tail. The tail is behind, the mouth is ahead. I am behind, deep inside, the whole world including my body and mind are ahead, in front of me, I can see them all, they cannot see me. Modern science has not gone beyond sensory perceptions and intellectual jugglery. Anything which is considered scientific is supposed to be experimentally verified or at least

verifiable, that is, perceived by the *manas* and processed by the *buddhi*. Since the truth is not within the capabilities of the *manas* and the *buddhi*, truth cannot be experimentally verified, truth is not 'scientific' in the sense in which we use this term in the world today. Asking for a 'scientific' explanation of truth is therefore absurd. We cannot see ourselves by scientific means. Modern science is futile. It can never take us to the final truth and there is no point endlessly exploring false things. I am the ultimate truth, I am beyond the *manas* and the *buddhi*, I am the knower of these, I can know them, they cannot know me. *sat* is *aprameeya*, *ajnYeeya*. Give up modern science and technology, do not fall for the attraction of the external illusory world, or you will be caught and killed like a fish that gets attracted to the bait, you will lose your freedom, you will suffer and burn up like the moth that seeks the fire. Seek the truth instead, be free, be happy.

You may find all these ideas strange and perhaps difficult to accept because you have been trained to think differently. Modern science, and all other scientific, religious or philosophical schools of thought are heavily influenced by our experiences in the waking state. They take the existence of the external world, of other people, of the body and mind for granted, without any proof, without even a proper inquiry. We have already seen that existence is something so very extraordinary that we just cannot take it for granted. Non-existence is in fact the default. Existence needs to be questioned and examined. Variety needs to be questioned and examined. Simply taking everything for granted is not in the spirit of science. You will find the truth explained in this book very natural if you start instead from your experiences of deep sleep, where you alone exist, nothing else exists.

Existence cannot be an attribute because if it were so,

we will have to say a non-existent object has an existence value of zero - how can a non-existent object even have an attribute? Nor can we say the value of this attribute is always one, this is contrary to experience and there is no point in having an attribute which always has the same single value. Existence cannot be an independent object in its own right, for, if it were so, we would not even be able to talk of the existence or non-existence of other objects in this world. If it is neither an object nor an attribute, then how can we even think or talk of existence? Whichever way you look at it, dualism invariably lands us in trouble. The only logically sound and consistent conclusion we can draw is to say that there is one and only one thing in the whole universe, that itself is existence, that itself is truth, that itself is the true nature of the whole world, that itself is the true nature of my own self. Nothing else exists. It is the prover, it the thing to be proved, it is also the proof. No other proof is possible or necessary. Dualism is an impossible hypothesis. It is simply illogical. Non-dualism is the only correct view.

We have not directly addressed or attacked any particular religion or philosophy or cult or school of thought in this book. We have only sought the truth, the ultimate reality. All religions, faiths, schools, fashions, fads, cults, philosophical or scientific doctrines automatically stand demolished to the extent they are in opposition to this ultimate reality. There is no need to disprove them all one by one.

It is the *sat* which is illuminating the entire world. That the world appears to exist, that we can think, talk and feel all this is itself an indication, a kind of proof of this *sat*. The *sat* can be known only by direct experience. There is no other way. It is the seer that sees everything, nobody else exists who can see or know or prove this seer. All the

arguments, examples and logic we have given in this book are only to help you overcome your ignorance and start seeking the truth by asking the right questions. It is impossible to give exact description, examples, illustrations, comparisons etc. for *sat*, it is not similar to or different from anything else - nothing else exists. Hence every example, argument, illustration given in this book must be taken very carefully, in the right spirit, and not misinterpreted. The prover must pre-exist any proof, hence the existence of the prover cannot be proved. You must realize the truth yourself by direct experience. The experience we are talking of here is not common sensations such as hunger or thirst or anger. Nor are we talking of the extraordinary experiences of some great person somewhere at some point of time - such experiences are not repeatable and verifiable by one and all. We are talking of deep rooted experience based on proper knowledge and understanding, which is available to all those who try seriously and sincerely enough.

Although we have tried throughout the book to convince ourselves of the falsity of other theories and the validity of this final truth by giving worldly examples, illustrations and logical arguments, it must be noted that the final truth can only be reached by direct experience, not by sensory perceptions using the sense organs and the *manas* or by mere symbolic processing in the *buddhi*. We use drawings and pictures in classrooms to teach about some object and no one actually confuses the picture itself for the object. Likewise, we should not confuse anything that we have said in this book about the ultimate reality with the reality itself. If we can point to anything and assert that this is the true nature of ourself or this is the true nature of this world, then that is wrong. The ultimate reality is the seer, not the seen. It is pure witness, it can see everything but no one can see it, we cannot point our fingers and

show it to anybody. It can see everything, it can even see itself. That is how we know we exist. No one can see it or show it to others. It is possible to reach a conclusion that such an underlying universal reality must exist and that only one such reality can exist. This is what we have done here. But it is not possible to describe or explain or know it any further except through direct experience. This experience cannot be given to us by others, we cannot teach it or demonstrate it. Just as I know my *manas* and *buddhi* by direct experience, this final truth can be and can only be known by direct experience. This is not knowledge of the usual kind, this is realization, self realization. Mere bookish knowledge is not enough. Knowing that fire burns is knowledge, putting your hand in the fire and actually getting burnt is realization. Nobody can give you realization, you can only realize it yourself. The truth is not gross and so not available to direct perception or *pratyakSha*. Yet it is not something that is remote and unobservable - it is not *parookSha* either. It is right here, you are yourself that, everything around you is that, it is *aparookSha*, yet it eludes you. It is possible to know it by direct experience, by *aparookShaanubhuuti*. Once realized, it can never leave you, in fact what can never leave you is your true nature or *svaruupa* by definition and all you have realized is that you are your own self, your own *svaruupa*. Until we get this experience, the body, senses and the mind will keep troubling us all the time, even while talking of or listening to all this. It looks almost impossible to overcome our attachment to these. The moment you realize, it will become equally difficult to re-attach yourself to the external world or the body or the senses or the mind, even if you try hard. This is the point of culmination.

All of our problems in life arise out of contact with the non-self. If we simply give up our attachment to the non-self and if we revel in the self alone, all of our problems, all

pain and suffering will go away once and for all. Of course we will also not have worldly pleasures. But *aatma-sukha* is infinitely greater than worldly pleasures and a self-realized being will have no cravings for these trifling worldly joys and pleasures. He is immersed in an ocean of bliss, he does not care for or long for any other kind of joy or pleasure. He is rid of all bad things and he has got all good things that anyone can ever get. Reaching such a level is the ultimate goal of human life. All human beings can achieve this. All must try, sincerely and seriously. Otherwise the whole life will be squandered and an extraordinarily great opportunity simply lost.

These are the final answers to all the big questions we have started this book with. These ideas are so very different from what we have all been brainwashed into believing throughout our lives that we find them very strange and difficult to accept. The truth is simple, yet very confusing. We need to ponder on these again and again until we get fully convinced. Any amount of repetition is not enough. You will keep getting doubts, confusions will persist, this is natural, this to be expected. Therefore, we shall continue to deliberate on these and related issues and common confusions and doubts over the next few sections before we close this chapter. The next chapter will be purely practical, there we shall ask what is life, how to live well and enjoy life in the backdrop of the philosophical foundations we have laid in the first two chapters.

For those who feel this summary is too long and boring, we can summarize the whole of this chapter in just one line: “*tamasoo maa jyootirgamaya*”, meaning “Oh Lord, take me away from darkness towards light”.

Either accept all this or try to give a valid counter-proof. Do not simply say you do not understand or you cannot accept this and leave it at that. That is not in the

true spirit of science. You should not brush this all aside saying it is all absolutist, too drastic, extreme. Truth is extreme. The slightest change in truth will render it false. Life and death are also like that, the smallest change in life means death. Slightest amount of impurity will render all water dirty. Even an extremely small amount of badness will make the whole thing bad. There are no middle paths, there are no compromises when it comes to truth. Striking compromises is the biggest disease of the present times. If you compromise with life, that is as good as death. If you compromise with truth, that is as good as shaking hands with the falsity. We have only two options. We may accept this final proof, reject the world, reject modern science and technology, and give up all the futile, wasteful, harmful activities that we are pursuing today in the name of development and progress, digging our own graves in the process. Alternatively, we may accept the external world as a tentative reality like a dream, without questioning it, without trying to build theories to explain or describe the world, give up all science, technology, industry, business and what not, and just sit back, relax, and enjoy life, exactly as we enjoy dreams. Either way, we do not have to do anything. We must learn to keep quiet, do nothing, just live, simply live, and enjoy life. We will see how we can actually do this in the next chapter. Read on!

2.40 Scientific Proof

OK, so much said about the true nature of the universe and the true nature of the self. Is this all merely some philosophical thought or is there is a scientific proof? How can we be sure that these are the fully correct, final, definitive answers? Are you thinking along these lines?

Modern science is based on experimentation, observa-

tion and inference. We conduct experiments using our body and the sense organs, with or without the aid of external scientific instruments and equipment. We observe with our sense organs, with or without the help of external instruments. It is not the eye which sees, it is not the ear that hears. All observations are made by the *manas*, the sense organs only feed data they collect from the outside world. The eye sees light, the *manas* never sees light. What the eye sees the *manas* never sees and what the *manas* sees the eye never sees. None of them can see or observe both. There is a transducer here, the observer of the input signal cannot observe the output signal and the observer of the output signal cannot observe the input signal. There is nobody in the whole world who can observe both, directly, because any attempt by anybody to observe both these signals will invariably involve his or her transducer, which is also unknown and uncalibrated and hence unreliable. Hence nothing at all can be said about the system. An arbitrary system can produce arbitrary output for any given input. It may produce large output for small inputs or the other way round. In fact it can produce no output at all even when there is input and it can produce all kinds of outputs without any inputs. These are not mere possibilities, we actually see them happening everyday. In our dreams our *manas* can see things which never exist, it can see without the eye, even without light. The image formed on the retina of the eye is upside down but our *manas* sees the objects erect. Similar arguments apply to other senses. It is completely baseless, therefore, to assume anything about the transduction that goes on between what the sense organs perceive and what we perceive inside our *manas*. Contrary to common belief or claim, modern science is not based on direct perception. It is in fact based on unprovable and completely baseless assumptions. The *manas* is called the *pramaatR* but what it sees is not necessarily *pramaa* or the reality, it could be *bhramaa* or illusion.

In fact it is much more likely to be an illusion rather than reality. There is just no way to know the truth about the external world. All of modern science is baseless and futile. Seeing with our eyes is not a valid *pramaaNa* in itself. Seeing is not believing. We cannot see what exists and we see all kinds of things which do not exist. Believing what we see is not truly scientific.

The sense organs are only front-end data capturing devices and the raw data they capture needs to be interpreted. There is only one interpreter - the *manas*. Therefore, agreement or correlation between what the different sense organs seem to tell us is no big surprise. The different sense organs do not provide different pieces of evidence, there is only one interpreter and hence there is really only one evidence. Similarly, various measuring devices and instruments do not provide any extra or different evidence, all evidence comes from one and only one entity - the *manas*. All human beings have essentially the same software programmed into them, that is why they generally agree on all basic things such as perception by the sense organs. Therefore, saying that all people agree is also no use, essentially here also we have only one evidence - the *manas*. And there is no way to know or characterize the behavior of our *manas*. Therefore, all of modern science is dubious.

If a thermometer is showing a temperature of 100 degrees there is no guarantee that the temperature is actually 100 degrees. Because we can never observe the actual temperature, the input to the thermometer, by any valid means whatever (that is, either directly seen by the seer or seen only through other known, characterized, calibrated systems) and so we can say nothing at all about the behavior of the thermometer. If we measure the temperature with another thermometer or even a different kind of a thermometer and the two instruments agree, it does not mean

anything. Correlation between two or more instruments does not mean they are both correct, both can be wrong too. If we touch the object with our hand and we feel that as the hand senses hotter and hotter as the thermometer shows higher and higher temperatures, it does not prove anything. Because we do not know how our hand senses temperature. We just cannot know the exact input to any scientific instrument and hence no scientific instrument can be characterized. All scientific measurements without exception are dubious and questionable. Standards, calibration are all meaningless and baseless. No instrument has been calibrated and we cannot calibrate other instruments using such unknown instruments. All of modern science is dubious and suspect.

At the level of the intellect or *buddhi*, symbolic knowledge that we store and process in our brains can be called *jnYaana*, the *buddhi* is the knower or *jnYaataR*, the thing to be known is the *jnYeeya*. The *buddhi* does not have any direct link with the external world at all. It works indirectly by linking up with the *manas*, transforming the non-symbolic knowledge in the *manas* to a symbolic form, representable and processable using a physical symbol system, as happens inside a computer. Again, this transformation from non-symbolic to symbolic knowledge is something that we cannot understand. The *manas* just cannot deal with symbolic knowledge and the *buddhi* cannot process or analyze or understand non-symbolic knowledge as such. There is no one who can observe both the input and the output and hence this process just cannot be characterized. We can see and recognize an object or a face or somebody's handwriting in no time but we cannot explain the algorithm or the logic or the rules of doing this. The field of 'Artificial Intelligence' is trying to solve this unsolvable problem over the last many decades, of course with no success. Knowing with our intellect is not the ulti-

mate knowledge. Real knowledge lies beyond the intellect. There is no point taxing our brain or wasting time, effort and money to carry out scientific experiments. The whole of modern science is wasteful, even harmful. It is destroying the whole world today.

The eye is not the ultimate seer because it requires light to see. The *manas* is not the ultimate seer, it also requires the light of consciousness to reflect and see. It is our innermost, true, self, that *sat-cit-aananda svaruupa* which can see directly, without requiring or depending upon anything else in the universe. Only this is direct perception. Modern science is not based on direct perception as often claimed. The seer can see everything but it cannot be seen by anybody. What can never be seen or known in the ordinary sense as an object is the ultimate reality, it exists, and it is the only thing that exists. Whatever can be seen as an object is not real, it is *mithyaa*.

Modern science does not understand the difference between something which is true and truth per se. ‘Two plus two is four’ is true. ‘Three plus three is six’ is also true. There can be any number of statements which can be true or false. Discovering any or all of such true facts does not help us to know truth itself. What modern science discovers is not truth, only some ideas or hypotheses or conjectures or statements which are claimed to be true. If we do not understand what exactly truth is, what purpose does it serve to say something is true or false? What is the point in saying the new car is chalaramidific if you have no idea what chalaramidific means? Forget modern science, seek the truth per se, directly.

The so called direct perception is considered a valid *pramaaNa* in modern science because if there is a chair, we see it only as a chair, not as an elephant or car or

computer. But how do we know that the object we are seeing is actually a chair and not anything else? What if it was actually a tiger but we see it as a chair? What is a *pramaaNa*? Is something a *pramaaNa* because it gives us *pramaa* or correct knowledge of the *prameeya* or should we say whatever the *pramaaNa* gives us is *pramaa*? How can we know that a *pramaaNa* leads us to *pramaa*? Is there any other way of reaching *pramaa* without using the *pramaaNa*? Should we say absence of all contradictions and complete agreement in all respects is sufficient basis to call something as a *pramaaNa*? Should we go by agreement or the lack of it between different *pramaaNa*-s? There is really no fool-proof way of showing anything to be a *pramaaNa*. Therefore, the very concept of proof is suspect.

I am neither my *manas* nor my *buddhi*. I can observe them both but my *manas* or my *buddhi* cannot observe me, they cannot know me, they cannot understand me. That is why truth cannot be discovered by any scientific method. It can only be proved by understanding the limitations of science and going beyond, as we have done in this book. Truth is beyond the *manas* and the *buddhi* and hence not expressible in any language. Truth cannot be perceived or known in the usual sense in which we understand these terms in science. Yet, using these very limited instruments, we can get to the ultimate truth, by applying the rule of elimination as we have done in this book. Please do not ask for a scientific proof of what we have discovered in this book, nothing can be more unscientific than such a demand. Instead, understand the limitations of modern science and give up all this futile activity in the name of science, technology, industry, business, economic development and what not. These are the foolish ideas that are destroying the whole world today. It is time to wake up, we have very little time to save ourselves from total destruction.

2.41 *paripuurNa darshana*

Not only western science, western philosophies are also fundamentally flawed. Rene Descartes said “I think. Therefore, I am.” There are two sentences here. The second one starts with the word therefore and so it must be a conclusion. The conclusion is that I exist. What is the first sentence doing here? The first sentence provides the evidence to prove this. What is the evidence? That I think is the evidence. How can I think if I do not exist? To say ‘I think’, I must exist, and so, using this to conclude that I exist is absurd, is it not? First of all, how can anyone doubt his or her own existence? Even to doubt one’s existence he/she must exist, right? All explorations including the exploration of the self pre-suppose the existence of the self. The very idea of trying to prove one’s existence is therefore laughable. But the real problem here is much more subtle. Existence is linked to thinking. I do not think at all while in a state of deep sleep but I certainly continue to exist. This is the common experience of all human beings. No philosophy, no logic, no proof that goes against experience will stand. Plants do not have a brain or nervous system at all, therefore they cannot think, yet they exist. Lower animals without any brain to think do exist too. Even non-living things do exist. How can thinking be the basis of existence? A number of western philosophers including Spinoza, Berkley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Bergson, and many others have tried time and again to establish their own theories, but all of them are fundamentally flawed - they are not able to go beyond words, logic, thinking. Logic is only about validity, we need to seek the truth instead. Language, reason, thought are all properties of my mind, I am not my mind, my mind is mine, how can something which is mine be I? A philosophy is not merely a view of the world, it must be a way of life, it must lead to indisputable, lasting, permanent, final,

conclusive, definitive answers. The very idea of academicians continuously discovering new theories is a laughable matter. Truth never changes, that is the very definition of truth. Research and discovery and invention can only lead to more and more false things, they can never lead us never to truth. Truth exists, it already exists, it always exists, it alone exists, there is no need to do any research to discover it afresh. Nobody can come out with a new or a better theory, there is one and only one correct theory and that is already well known, it is well known for tens of thousands of years. Just open up up the right book and read. Or just close your eyes and think. Why waste time, effort and money? Why exploit natural resources and damage the environment in the name of science and research and what not?

Modern science, as also other systems of scientific inquiry or schools of philosophy, whether western or Indian, are all based on incomplete data, namely our experiences in the waking state alone. They are all based on looking outside, they are all based primarily on dry logic and reasoning. They are all *akRtsna-darshana-s* - incomplete and therefore imperfect systems. No wonder none of them have been able to lead us to any final answers. Our approach here, on the other hand, is based on *puurNaanubhava* or totality of human experiences in all the three states including the dreaming and deep sleep state, we cannot have any experience beyond these three states. We have realized the futility of seeking the truth somewhere outside, we have instead turned our attention inwards, we have discovered a whole big world deep inside which is almost completely missed out by others. We have also used logic and reasoning but only in the light of and fully compatible with common experiences of all people in every possible state. We have realized that nothing new can be created in this world, not even new knowledge. What we can do and what

we have tried to do here is to remind ourselves of the truth that already exists. The truth always exists, only the truth exists. It is always the truth that wins, finally. The culmination of the whole thing lies in direct experience, it is beyond words, beyond all logic, reasoning and proof, beyond modern science, beyond all other incomplete and imperfect *darshana-s*. This is *paripuurNa-darshana*.

Nothing that exists can be destroyed. When a house is burnt to ashes in a fire, we may say everything is lost in everyday parlance. But, truly speaking, nothing is lost or destroyed. Not a single atom has been lost. There have only been some chemical and physical changes. What exists can never be destroyed. And what does not exist can never be created. Nothing can be created out of nothing. *sat* exists, it always existed, it will always exist, only *sat* exists, nothing else exists. Only *sat* exists independently, all other things that appear to exist are reflections of this only thing that exists. The *manas* and the *buddhi* do not have independent existence - they only reflect the light of the only self-luminous thing called *sat*. It is the *sat* which illumines the whole universe, including our body and mind. All systems of knowledge which stop at thinking or perceiving are therefore imperfect, the truth lies beyond and illumines even these thinking and perceiving activities. If anybody says he or she thinks differently or they cannot accept what is said here, simply ignore them, they know not what they say.

Why is it that most people in the world, including many of the greatest of them all, miss the whole point? Let us do a simple thought experiment. Keep some familiar objects such as a pen, a comb, a key bunch, a torch, a screw driver on a table and ask anybody to list out all that they can see. Everybody would list out all these objects but they all miss out one most important thing. Nobody would say

that they see light. Scientists and philosophers are no different. It is in fact light and only light that anybody can see, only light rays enter our eyes, nothing else, certainly not a pen or a screw driver. It is because of light and only because of light that we are able to see all these objects. Light is what illumines everything else, it is this light which shows us all that we see. But we forget it, perhaps it is too obvious to be counted. The self is exactly like that. It is this self, this light of the consciousness, which illumines and enlivens the entire universe including our body, senses and mind. But we all miss it. A train passenger, kept his purse under the pillow of the neighbour, suspecting him to be a thief. He was right, the thief searched all over for the purse, but never looked under his own pillow. We search all over the world, we explore the whole Earth, the whole solar system and even the distant stars and planets, but we do not care to look at ourselves, we never try to go into ourselves. The truth lies in us. Everything lies in us. Until and unless you give up the attractions of the outside world, you will never find the truth. Give up science and technology, they do not lead you to the truth, they are not only wasteful, they are also harmful, dangerous, destructive.

The careful reader might now ask if the knowledge contained in this book is new. Certainly not. There is nothing new in this book, all that has been said here has already been said tens of thousands of years ago and ever since then by innumerable seers. This is only a fresh rendering of the same eternal truth retold in English for the living generations of people, educated as they are in the modern scientific system of education, retold in their own language and parlance.

The mathematical notion of infinity simply implies not finite, that is all. It is not all inclusive. That is why, although the set of integers and the set of floating point

numbers are both infinite, all the elements of the set of integers are included in the other set but not vice versa. Somehow one of these infinite sets is bigger than the other, although we cannot really talk of big or small when it comes to infinity. In fact this observation forms the basis of many important ideas in mathematics and computation. We can show, for example, that there are more problems than there are solutions. Here we are interested in solving all problems and so we need to seek not this mathematical notion of infinity but something which is truly all inclusive. *puurNa* means such an all-inclusive entirety. This is the true meaning of the word universe. If this book is carefully read, fully and properly understood, accepted, internalized and practiced in earnest, it has the potential to solve all problems of the individual and of the human society as a whole. All problems can be solved in one shot, completely, irreversibly and here is the only recipe in the whole world. It can give you happiness, satisfaction, contentment, peace, tranquility, rid you of all pain and suffering, remove all the vacuum and voids, take you from a mere mortal to *puur-Natva*. It is up to you to take it or leave it.

The Sun never sees darkness anywhere, wherever he sees, he sees only light. Likewise, although the self is the all-inclusive whole, the self-realized sees only good things everywhere, he sees only the light of knowledge everywhere, he never sees the darkness of ignorance and all the problems of the world which derive from that. He is always happy, always satisfied, always blissful. Just as a rich man will never long for poverty, a *brahmajnYaani* will never long for worldly pleasures. He has raised himself above all problems of the world. All that we need to become such a self-realized soul is to detach ourselves from the body level, then from the mind level as well and dwell firmly in the self alone.

2.42 Explaining the Ghost

This universe includes so many galaxies and stars and planets, so many varieties of living and non-living things. This is common experience of all human beings. Here we have said there is one and only thing called *sat* that exists independently in the entire universe. How do we explain plurality that we all perceive then? How do we explain diversity? How do we account for variety? How does this single *sat* manifest as this rich and varied universe? What is the nature of this process of manifestation? Is it creation? Is it transformation? Is it an illusion?

We have said the *jagat* is *mithyaa*, it is not real in the ultimate sense, it is only an apparent reality, it arises out of ignorance of the ultimate reality. Ignorance is the cause of this so called real world, which is only an apparent reality. If there is only one thing in this universe and that is *sat* and that is *cit*, if that is *prajnYaana* or knowledge of the highest kind, how can there be any ignorance in this universe, which is *cinmaya*? How can there be any illusion? Who is ignorant? Who is experiencing this world called *jagat*? If I am myself *sat* and *cit*, if I am myself the embodiment of supreme knowledge, how can I be ignorant and how can I see this world which is said to be illusory? How to explain this ignorance or *avidyaa*?

Imagine a powerful lamp kept inside a pot with numerous small holes. In darkness, it will appear as if there are numerous sources of light, but there is in reality only one lamp. The Sun alone gives out light and all the planets and satellites like the Moon only reflect the same light from the Sun. In a kaleidoscope or in a mirror-hall we see one object as many. In the waves of a lake, the Sun appears as so many Suns. Multiple reflection makes one thing appear as many. There are really no multiple objects in this universe

at all. Only one, single light of consciousness, the *sat-cit-aananda*, exists. That is I, that is you, that is he and she, that is everybody, that is the entire universe. There are no two things in this universe. Two or more things cannot exist in *paramaarthā*, for, if we claim so, we will have to explain how they are different from one another. We cannot. There can be but one object in the whole universe.

My *manas* reflects the light of my consciousness, the *sat-cit-aananda* and helps me perceive and feel. This *sat* illumines my *manas*, as also my *buddhi*. Your *manas* also reflects the light of this same *sat*. There is only *sat*, it is not that there are as many consciousnesses as there are living beings, there is one and only one. The light that illumines my body, my sense organs, my *manas* and my *buddhi* is the very same light that illumines yours and everybody else's. You and I may appear to have different bodies and mind but the light which illumines them is the same. In this ultimate analysis, you and I are not just similar, we are one and the same. All are one. All differences are superficial and unreal. Actors in a play keep going into the green room and keep coming out, taking on different costumes to play different roles in the play. The drama of life is similar. This world of multiplicity and variety is simply a fancy dress show of the one and only one who exists, 'eeka-paatra-abhinaya' or mono-acting.

Solids have a definite shape and size. Liquids take the shape of whatever container they are placed in, although they maintain their size or volume. Gases take the size and shape of the container, whatever that may be. As we move from the gross to the subtle, the capacity to take on any kind of attribute increases. The ultimate reality is so subtle, it can take on any and all kinds of attributes, while remaining untouched by any of these attributes. So it can easily manifest itself as so many diverse objects making up

the entire universe, including all the living and the non-living.

Fine, but how do we explain ignorance? This has been a major source of confusion and philosophers have tried to solve this by proposing all kinds of theories, none of which are actually called for. At a superficial level, you may think that light requires the Sun or a lamp or a torch whereas darkness can exist all on its own and so darkness is more independent than light. Think carefully. Darkness means absence of light. Because we have the concept of light in us, because we expect light, if we do not see any light we give this absence a label and call this darkness. Do you feel the presence or absence of frilinity? Do you have a word for the absence of frilinity? Even the concept of darkness cannot exist if light does not exist. Darkness can only come where there is light. Ignorance is not a different, independent thing, it is just absence of knowledge, just as darkness is absence of light. The Sun gives us light. It is this light and heat of the Sun which evaporates water, forms clouds, which cover up the Sun itself and produce darkness. Darkness can only come from light, light cannot come from darkness. Only light can produce shadows. A shadow cannot create or manifest as light, never. Only the knowledgeable can show up as knowledgeable or as ignorant. The ignorant cannot even pretend to be knowledgeable, truly speaking. *mithyaa* can and can only come out of *sat*. *sat* cannot come out of *mithyaa*. *sat* always exists. It can manifest as *sat* or as *mithyaa*. *mithyaa* is also merely a manifestation of the *sat*. This whole universe, all of us included, all animals and plants and inanimate objects, can only be manifestation of *sat*. Knowing this is realization.

If light is always there everywhere how can there be darkness? Light is there always, everywhere and in reality darkness is never there anywhere. It is the nature of

the Sun to evaporate water, cause clouds and get covered up by these clouds which are his own creation. The wise man can ‘see’ the Sun even on a cloudy day. It is the very nature of fire to form ash and cover itself up. There is no need to give an explanation for this. We never feel a need to reason with what happens in our dreams. Why then should we seek answers and explanations to the apparent confusions we find in our waking world? The world of waking state is not different from the world of dreams in any real sense. Seekers of *sat* should not seek explanations of *mithyaa*. Knowledge cannot be explained by taking a standpoint of ignorance. *mithyaa* or *avidyaa* or ignorance does not exist at all in reality and there is no need to explain why it exists.

Darkness is not some real thing that exists independently, independent of the concept of light. Ignorance is not something that exists independently, independent of knowledge. This ignorance, this doubt we have in our mind, is not real, it does not always exist, it does not exist in all states, it is not *sat*, it is *mithyaa*. The question is based on the assumption that ignorance actually exists and it needs to be explained out. Ignorance or *avidyaa* is not real, it is not *paaramaarthika*, the answer we can get by asking this question also cannot be *paaramaarthika*. We cannot understand *paramaarth* by asking an unreal question and giving an unreal answer. There is no need for any theory as to why we are ignorant. That is why the original works in our ancient Indian tradition have never taken up this question anywhere. This is all mere academic jugglery of confused minds which continue to have a strong attachment to this *mithyaa prapaMca*, trying to seek and understand *paramaarth* without giving up the attachment to this material world. You cannot go to Delhi from Mumbai if you are unwilling to move out of Mumbai. We must first give up such doubts and questions, which are them-

selves manifestations of ignorance or we will never reach the truth.

In fact this very question is baseless. Our purpose is to seek the ultimate truth, the *sat*. Even this doubt does not always exist, you never get this doubt in deep sleep, you may not even get this doubt in dream. *avidyaa* or ignorance, doubts, incomplete or imperfect knowledge, illusion are all properties of the *manas* and the *buddhi*, which are themselves *mithyaa*. *kaarya*, *kaaraNa*, *pramaaNa*, *prameeya*, *deesha*, *kaala*, *nimitta* etc., the very concept of proof is limited to *jaagrat avasthaa*, these are all simply null and void in *paramaarthaa*. There is no such thing as cause and so you cannot ask what causes ignorance or where or when it came into being. All these doubts stem from your standpoint of taking the *jaagrat-prapaMca* as reality, which we have already questioned and disproved. The question itself is unreal, the doubt itself is *mithyaa* and so it is foolish for a seeker of truth to go about finding an answer. No theory is required to say why there is darkness or ignorance. Darkness appears to be there because there is light and ignorance appears to be there because there is knowledge.

Either you must stay firmly in *paramaarthaa* or you must simply stay back at the level of *vyavahaara*. All confusions arise by a mess up and illogical mixing up of these two. All doubts arise because we stand firmly in *vyavahaara* and talk about *paramaarthaa*. To reach *paramaarthaa* we must first leave all *vyavahaara*. It is natural for the clouds to cover up and hide the Sun, we need not explain this. Rather we should raise ourselves above the clouds where the Sun always shines brightly and never gets covered up. Raise above the layers of dark clouds of confusions and doubts, or you will not see the truth that shines brightly well above these layers of ignorance. Building theories to explain the non-existent is not wise. There is no need to

explain a dream because the moment you come out of this, the entire world of dreams vanishes without trace. This entire *jaagrat prapaMca* vanishes without trace the moment you raise above these confusions. The question itself will vanish and there will be absolutely no need to find answers.

sat exists and only *sat* exists. I am that, you are that, he is that, God is that, everything is that. This is all inclusive, it includes knowledge as also ignorance, it includes wealth as also poverty, it includes wisdom as also stupidity, it includes cleanliness as also dirt and dust. That is why we pray God in all these forms in our tradition. Some people may find it more comfortable to consider God as all good and no bad and this is perfectly OK in practice, at the level of *vyavahaara*, purely from the point of practical usefulness for developing devotion etc. In reality, God has to be all inclusive. Good and bad are qualities we perceive, these are properties of the human mind, these cannot be attributed to God.

It may be observed here that modern science is all about explaining this universe as we experience in our waking state alone. Modern science is all about explaining the unreal, like explaining the ghost. Influenced as they perhaps are by this modern science, modern scholars of Indian philosophy have also started asking all kinds of useless questions. They are creating confusions and proposing all sorts of new theories, all of which are simply unnecessary and simply wrong. There is no need to ask or answer questions about ignorance when our aim is to seek knowledge. The wise reader should realize this and stop looking at the works of modern scholars. When the original dollar note is available, is there any point in taking a photocopy seriously? When the *upaniShat-s* are available in the original, when the commentaries of earliest seers such as those of *aadi shaMkara* are available, why even look at any of the

later creations? Never go by anything more recent than *shaMkara*, not even the works of his own students. If at all you wish to study these later works, for academic curiosity or whatever, first carefully read the originals and only then look at the more recent works in the light of the original. Otherwise, there is a very big chance that you will get misled and confused. It may be observed that the questions modern scholars are raising and the theories they are proposing are hardly found in the original works.

2.43 Doubts? Whose Doubts?

A common complaint is that there are a lot of repetitions in this book. Every time an idea was repeated, you were given yet another opportunity to think about it and understand it better. Even after all this, do you say you still have doubts? Whenever you get a doubt, ask who got this doubt, was it your body, your *manas*, your *buddhi*, your *ahaMkaara*? You have got a doubt and you know that you have got a doubt. Who knows that you have got a doubt? Whoever is this meta-knower, you are that. And this person is actually beyond all doubts. Doubts and confusions are a sure indication that you are still ignorant. You cannot say ‘I do not understand’ or ‘I cannot accept this’. Your *buddhi* may not understand or your *manas* may be unwilling to accept but you cannot. Understand this and all your doubts will go away once and for all. Notwithstanding this, we shall take up a couple of common objections, criticisms or doubts for the sake of completeness.

We started off by saying we need to distinguish between objects and attributes, between *manas* and *buddhi*, between the sentient and the insentient, between the seer and the seen. Now we are saying there is but one thing that is real in the whole universe, this is the only thing that ex-

ists independently. If there is one and only thing, how can there be any difference? Why did we have to make these differences only to say at the end that there are no differences at all? We had to take this path because we were ignorant, all people in the world are ignorant as a rule. We all confuse ourselves for our bodies, we all confuse sensory perceptions for direct perception, we all get confused between the underlying truth and the external appearances. For a self-realized person, nothing that is said in this book is necessary, he already knows all this. But such self-realized people are extremely rare, perhaps only a few in the entire history of mankind. As a rule we are all ignorant. The whole purpose of education is to make us understand and accept our ignorance. Once this is done by asking the right questions, we will naturally set out on our own in search of the ultimate truth and we will definitely reach here. There is only one reality in the ultimate analysis and whichever path you take, you will invariably end up here, unless you stop half way through or get lost somewhere. For one who has fully realized himself, there is no distinction between the body or mind, between himself and others, between himself and the whole universe. He knows that there is only one *sat* and all else is a mere projection of this same universal reality. The rest of the whole universe is unreal like a cinema, none of it has independent existence. For the self-realized, there is no distinction between the seer, seen and the process of seeing, everything has merged into the single indistinguishable reality, like the rivers that run into the ocean, become one with it and lose their own identity. That is why the *sat*, the seer, can see everything including itself. But until and unless we reach that point of complete self-realization, we will continue to see differences, thereby demonstrating our ignorance. All confusions in this whole topic arise because we stand firmly in ignorance and then try to think, talk and argue about knowledge. Confusions and doubts are sure indicators of ignorance. The realized

will have no confusions, no doubts at all. As long as you have any kind of doubt, understand that your knowledge is still incomplete and imperfect. If you want complete and correct knowledge, just give up your ignorance completely, this is all you have to do. The whole purpose of this book is to drive home this one point.

All the ideas and arguments we have given in this book are not essential components of the final proof. They are included only to prod you into thinking along the right direction, to help you ask the right questions, to understand the fallacies and limitations of other schools of thought. The analysis of three states is not required at all to prove the final thesis. Even if you do not accept some of the ideas and arguments given in this book, you will still come to the same final conclusion, inevitably. Truth is one and whichever path you take, you will have to reach there, unless you get lost or misled or confused or you give up. There just cannot be two or more different things in this universe, there can be but one. That is what I am and that is what you are and that is what the whole world is and that is what God is. This the only logical conclusion we can reach, whatever path we follow, provided we are careful not to fall prey to invalid assumptions. This is the truth and this is the final truth. This is the truth that has been known for tens of thousands of years in India, this is the truth that has been accepted by countless Millions of wise men, this is the truth that has stood the test of time, no one has been able to give a valid counter proof so far. Also, this knowledge and realization can help us understand human life, it can help us lead a full, glorious, great life, it can solve all of the problems facing mankind today, as we shall see in the next chapter. Hence we must all accept this. We must reject modern science, we must reject all other illogical and unscientific religions and schools of thought.

There was a lion's cub in a goat's attire. The cub used to think that it was a goat and it used to behave as such. The mother lion came, made the cub realize its true nature, and took it back with it. This is what a guru does. You are already knowledge incarnate but your knowledge is covered up with layers of ignorance. The true nature of fire is to burn brightly and give out heat and light but it gets covered up with ash. The true nature of a mirror is to reflect but it appears to lose this ability once it gets covered up with dust. Your own true nature is *sat*, *cit*, you are *nitya*, *shuddha*, *buddha*, *mukta* but you think you are a mortal being with a date of birth and a date of death, undergoing all kinds of pain and suffering in this world. The moment you realize yourself, all your problems will go away in one shot, never to return again. You are what remains after all your confusions and doubts and layers of ignorance you have covered yourself with are cast aside.

Modern science is based on, is about, and is limited to the world as we experience in one of the three states, namely the state of being awake. Modern science does not hold in our dream state nor does it explain the complete absence of the whole world including our body and mind during deep sleep. The truth that we have come to understand in this book, on the other hand, always holds, in all the three states, even before birth and after death. This is the definitive answer. Truth is beyond space and time, no one can come out with a new theory over time and defeat this one. Truth has no fear of becoming obsolete, outdated or superseded. Truth always remains truth. Truth always wins.

If you wish to read more, seek the original works, never fall for translations and interpretations. You always want the original dollar note, not a photocopy, right? These original works are quite abstract and it is not at all easy

to get the correct meaning and intention by merely reading. If you want to understand them properly, if you want to discuss and get your doubts cleared, you must seek a guru. Seek a real guru, one who has studied the original works and original commentaries from a learned guru in the traditional way. Beware of fake gurus, there are any number of them all over the world today. If he is after money, name, fame, worldly pleasures etc. he is surely a fake guru.

Whenever you get any doubt, ask yourself who has got a doubt. Whenever you are angry, ask who is angry. Whenever you are in love, ask who exactly is in love. Whenever you say you cannot understand or accept all this, ask who exactly is saying this. Keep inquiring into yourself. The moment any kind of thought originates, stop and ask who is getting these thoughts. If you are able to do this, you will not allow yourself to think of anything at all, in fact you will stop thinking. The moment you stop thinking, all your confusions, doubts and ignorance will vanish and you will see knowledge and knowledge alone. This is the path to self-inquiry. This is the proven path. This is the only path.

2.44 *jaagrat-suShupti*

The proof of the pudding is in eating. Merely reading this book or thinking about it or discussing and debating is not sufficient to help you become a realized and liberated person. Knowledge is different from realization. This book gives you knowledge. Realization you have to obtain. A baby has to learn to turn around, sit up, crawl, stand up and walk, all by itself, others can only stand by and watch, hope and wish and pray, and offer a helping hand at times but no one can ‘make the baby learn’. No one can make you realize, you have to realize yourself. We realize that

the dream was only a dream and not real only as and when we wake up from the dream state, not until then. Wake up!

The state of deep sleep is the lowest state of consciousness since the *deeha*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* are all absent. The state of dreams is a higher level of consciousness since the *manas* and *ahaMkaara* are active. The waking state is the highest of the three states of consciousness since *deeha*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* are all fully awake and active. We cannot get any clear answer to the question ‘is this world we experience in the waking state real?’ by going to the lower states. The world of dreams is different from the world of waking state, the logic that applies in the waking state does not apply in the dream world, and so nothing can be proved about the waking world by going into the dream world. Of course the state of deep sleep does not help either, for, we experience nothing at all there. What is the proof of the pudding then?

We have no fears, no worries, no desires, no longings, no pain, no suffering, no misery at all in the state of deep sleep. This is bliss. But unlike in the waking and dream states, even our *ahaMkaara* is absent and we experience nothing at all. Can we get the best of both worlds? Can we actually experience that infinite bliss? The answer is ‘yes’. It is possible to elevate ourselves to a state known as *jaagrat-suShupti*. Here you are awake, alert, self-conscious, yet your *manas* and *buddhi* are absolutely still, one hundred percent calm, totally undisturbed, like in deep sleep. You have no feelings, no emotions, no thoughts at all. Your mind is like a sea in ‘sea state zero’ - absolutely calm and wave-less, flat and transparent, reflecting like a vast perfect mirror. This state is called *samaadhi* state. It is the best of *jaagrat* and *suShupti* and is therefore also known as *jaagrat-suShupti*. Here you are fully satisfied with yourself, you do not want anything, you have no desires, no

longings, no yearnings, there is nothing more to be gained, there is no fear of losing anything. There are no confusions, no doubts, no questions. All doubts have already been cleared, all questions already answered. There is bliss and only bliss and nothing but bliss. You just revel in yourself, you revel in your self. You have understood the true nature of your self, you have understood the true nature of the universe. Every human being can achieve this state. The path to this goal is called *yooga*.

samaadhi or *jaagrat-suShupti* is not really a different state. There are only three states and we have to be in one of these three states, there is really no fourth state. *samaadhi* or *jaagrat-suShupti* is not different from the state called *jaagrat* - we are in fact in the same waking state as usual. The only difference is we have been able to conquer our *manas* fully, the *manas* has become *amanas*, it has completely stopped all its activities, it is totally calm, like a fire that has already burnt up all the fuel and subdued itself too. In this state, the mind simply refuses to see anything, hear anything, experience anything, do anything. We are not even thinking, all thoughts have subsided completely. We have mastered our own mind, we have conquered ourselves, we are totally undisturbed, we are bliss incarnate. Once you realize your own true nature and master the art of revelling in your own true nature, all else in the world would sound too trivial to go after. You will not feel like seeking anything else from anywhere else, you are simply happy with yourself. You have become one with the whole universe, what else is there to get? You are the whole universe, where is the fear of losing anything? Where is the need to do anything? This experience of infinite and unalloyed pure bliss is the ultimate that a human being can ask for. And it is actually possible to get this right now and here, in this very birth. The key to this is knowledge, real knowledge. And the key to real knowledge is

to understand and accept our ignorance, and try hard and simply get rid of all the layers of ignorance that shroud the truth deep inside us. This is the essence of this whole book.

Note that the *samaadhi* state itself is not the true nature of the self. It is a state, and like all states, it comes and goes. I am *sat*, I do not come or go, I am always there. *samaadhi* state only helps us to temporarily sample and experience the self, allows us to revel in our own true self. It only convinces us that we are in fact *sat-cit-aananda*. Only the fully self-realized can experience this *brahmaananda* all the time. But every ordinary person, even you can get a taste of this *paramaananda*, provided you understand and practice with due seriousness. The next chapter will show you how. A real guru, a true *yoogi*, is one who can guide you towards this. *yooga* is not mere postures and exercises for the body, nor is it merely manipulation of breathing and meditation. *yooga* is really that which establishes a direct connection between you and your self, it unifies your *aatma* with *brahma*.

2.45 Bondage and Liberation

People talk of liberation, emancipation, *nirvaaNa*, *kaivalya*, *mookSha*. What is this *mookSha* or liberation? Is it all about some new world we are going to attain after we die? Liberation from what? Are we all bound? Are we not free? Why should we seek liberation? From what? For what purpose?

As long as we continue to identify ourselves with our body, *manas* and *buddhi*, we remain ignorant. We think dancing to the tune of our *manas* is freedom, we do not realize that this is slavery, slavery to our own *manas*. We are driven by our *manas* and we spring into action, doing

all kinds of wasteful, even harmful things in life, thinking they are all essential, useful and good. We think it is in fact our duty to do all that we do. Once we realize that we are not our body or *manas* or *buddhi* but beyond all these, we realize that our desires and needs, our hopes and fears, our goals and our work, this is all imaginary and unreal, these are simply the properties of our *manas*, that is all. We are freed from the bondage of ignorance, we are freed from the bondage of endless action and reaction. Ask yourself why you are doing anything and invariably the answer would be in order to do something else. You are not free to do this because you are preoccupied doing that. This endless whirlpool of action binds us, we lose our freedom, we become slaves, hence we suffer. This is *karma-bandhana* or bondage of action. We spring into action because we listen to our *manas*. This is ignorance. Ignorance leads to action and action leads to bondage and slavery and suffering. The only way to overcome this bondage and get liberated is to seek knowledge, real knowledge. That which liberates is real knowledge, not modern science or philosophy.

Some people think that *mookSha* means liberation from endless cycles of birth and death. In a physical, material sense at the level of *vyavahaara*, birth and death of the body cannot be stopped or overcome. The body-mind complex of course will continue to undergo the six-act-play of *asti - jaayatee - vardhatee - vipariNamatee - apakShiiyatee - nashyatee* in cycles as per the laws of nature. Liberation is not physical end to this cycle, liberation is realization that I am not my body or mind, I have no birth or death, I am eternal. The realized are the liberated, for, there is no more any fear or anxiety or worry or pain of birth, change, decay or death.

Recollect the story of seeing a snake in a rope by way of illusion. Action could not remove the fear resulting from ig-

norance, because action/non-action and knowledge/ignorance are orthogonal, mutually independent things, one has no effect on the other. Fire can be quenched by water, not by singing or dancing. Something can be removed only by an opposite thing, not by an independent or irrelevant thing. Only knowledge can remove ignorance, all else is at best supportive in nature, if not completely useless. The wise reader would have realized that the rope existed as a rope alone even before a snake was imagined in it, it existed as a rope alone even while the illusion persisted, and it will continue to be the rope alone even after this illusion is overcome with true knowledge. The snake did not really exist at all. Likewise, only *sat* exists, it always exists and nothing else really exists. There is only one thing in this whole universe. There is only one thing that exists, I exist, I am that, all else in the whole universe is, truly speaking, non-existent. I can neither do anything nor experience anything, for, these presume many. This is real knowledge. Seeing many is ignorance. Seeing plurality is the root cause of all human problems.

You exist, you alone exist, you, I and all the people in this world, in fact all living beings and even non-living things are all one and the same. There is but one thing that exists. All else is a manifestation of this only thing that exists. Do not say I cannot accept this. Ask who cannot accept this? Who is it in you that is saying this? Obviously your body cannot accept or reject anything, it is insentient, it knows nothing, it understands nothing. Is it your *manas*? Is it your *buddhi*? But you are not just your *manas* or *buddhi*, you are beyond all this. Truly, you are yourself, you are your self, and the self neither likes nor dislikes anything, it neither accepts nor rejects. It does nothing. It is merely the light that shines and illumines your body and mind, it illumines me, it illumines my words and this book, it illumines the whole world. You cannot ac-

cept or reject this thesis. Nor can anybody. This is simply the truth. If some ignorant person thinks or says otherwise, truth will not change. Only people who identify themselves with with *manas* and *buddhi* will have difficulties, not those who have read this book this far and understood all that we have said. Truth is not a matter of opinion, truth is not a game of numbers. Do not listen to what others say, listen to the silent voice deep inside you. All knowledge is right inside you, you must only prepare the ground and listen to the silent voice from deep within. This is enlightenment, this is realization, this is liberation, this is *mookSha*. All the problems in the world are a creation of your *manas* and for the one who is realized, there is no more any pain or suffering or misery or death. Ignorance is the cause of all problems. You are now liberated from the bondage of ignorance, you are free, you have reached the truth, you are knowledge personified. Stop worrying. All of your problems and sufferings are gone once and for all, permanently, irreversibly. Right in this birth, right now, here. Relax. Do nothing, just enjoy life. The next chapter will explain how you can live like this and enjoy life to the fullest.

2.46 The Individual and the Society

We have been asserting time and again that others have no role, they exist only in my world, it is impossible to prove that they exist independent of me, I should therefore not worry at all about other people or what they say or do. This is true but in *vyavahaara*, we must live and work with other people in the world and to that extent all social issues and concerns are relevant in practice. How can the knowledge of the self help us to overcome the problems of the society? Let us see.

Consider inequality, for example. We think there is inequality in society and we need to do something about this. What exactly is inequality? What exactly is equality? Let us understand this first.

Consider triangles, squares, rectangles and circles of various sizes written on a piece of paper. Are they all equal? Is a triangle equal to a circle? Is a big square equal to a small square? No. The figures can be different, there is no harm. There is no need to expect all figures to be same, similar or identical. Differences are OK, differences are only to be expected in nature. This is not the sense in which we need to look at equality or its absence in human society. All are not same, all are not even similar. Let people be different, this is perfectly fine.

Now consider numbers such as 5, 15, 255 and 54378. Are they all equal? No. If all numbers are equal there would be no mathematics at all! The numbers here are not only not equal, some are bigger, others are smaller. 15 is greater than 5 in its numerical value. So what? There is nothing wrong. Some people will be greater, others will be smaller, this is natural, this is to be expected, this is not a problem at all. Even if you try very hard, you will never be able to remove these differences. Think.

Now consider the digits 8 and 9. Which is bigger? Clearly, 9 is bigger. But this is true only if we take numerical value as the basis for comparison. We can actually take any other aspect as a basis for comparisons. For example if you consider the number of closed loops in the shape of these written symbols, 8 is greater than 9, it has two circular parts while the digit 9 has only one. Therefore, equality or inequality is not an absolute relation, it all depends upon the criteria, the basis used for comparison. The number five is greater than the number four,

numerically, but the word five is less than the word four, when these words are sorted alphabetically. Therefore, two people can be equal and unequal at the same time. I can be equal to you in some respect, greater than you in some other respect, and less than you in some other respect, all at the same time. There will always be rich people and poor people. There will always be wise people and foolish people. Inequality is natural, unavoidable. This is not a problem, nor do we need to anything about it.

A fifth class student knows more than a third class student and a tenth class student knows more than a fifth class student. There is no point feeling superior to those who are below us in the line of progress and there is no point feeling inferior to those who are already up there. All people are not equal, they need not be, we should not expect this at all. We only need to understand where we stand today and plan our life so that we can improve ourselves and reach greater and greater heights. It is futile, even harmful to make comparisons. Never compare yourself with anybody except purely for the sake of knowing where you stand. All are not equal, let us understand and accept this first. It is simply wrong to expect all to be equal. Why do we need a judge, if anybody can pronounce a judgement in any legal case? If this concept of equality is not properly understood and is mis-applied, it is actually bad for the human society.

What exactly do we mean by equality then? Remember we said 5 is greater than 4, we never said 5 is superior to 4. Equality implies that no one is superior or inferior in themselves, all are equal in the eyes of God. God does not love some and hate others. God loves all his creatures equally, He has not created a cow or a goat or a hen only for you to kill and eat them. Nature does not discriminate, the Sun or the rivers or the rains or the trees do not distinguish between people based on race, religion, nation-

ality, age, sex, caste, creed, language, etc. All are equal in the eyes of God and nature, all are equal in the eyes of a businessman too. To a large extent, our social and legal systems also do not discriminate. Where is inequality? To a very large extent, inequality is an imaginary bug in our own minds. If inequality exists anywhere outside the mind, please show it to me.

Equality means equality of opportunities, not equality of end results. All students are taught the same way in the class, all face the same examination, some will pass, others will fail. What is wrong with this? Expecting everybody to be allowed to participate in a running race is OK but expecting everybody to come first in the race is unreasonable. When we are born, God gives us the entire universe in a platter saying we could do whatever we want with all this. We choose to become doctors or drug addicts, we choose to become teachers or thieves. Everybody is free to become anything in life. Everybody has equal opportunities. Where is inequality? The knowledge of the *veeda-s* is available to one and all, it has always been available, some seek and get it, others turn their face away and go elsewhere. Nobody can ever prevent you from gaining real knowledge, nobody can ever prevent you from overcoming your own ignorance, nobody can ever prevent you from liberating yourself. Where is inequality? Why do you waste all your life trying to solve non-existent problems?

Equality exercised in a unequal situation is as bad, if not far worse, than inequality exercised in an equal situation. It is necessary to assess the situation properly and then decide. Who should decide? An unclean person cannot see any difference between a clean place and a dirty place, he would say both are same. Only a clean person can distinguish between the clean and the dirty and only he can decide. We must accept this and count only the words

of those who know, we must learn to ignore the words of the ignorant. A knowledgeable person knows the difference between knowledge and ignorance, an ignorant person will be taking his ignorance itself to be knowledge. This is the nature of nature, nothing can be done to change this. Right decisions cannot be taken by anybody, right decisions cannot be taken by majority vote. Truly knowledgeable men are always very rare in any society anywhere in the world and majority is therefore a foolish idea. Democracy will only mean suppression of all really good things in life, in order to enforce equality among unequals. Street dogs may be more in number (at least in India) and these dogs may not be able to see any difference between themselves and pure breed dogs. If you ask them, they will definitely say a dog is a dog, all are equal, we are as good as any other dog. Therefore, the wise should never even ask the street dogs, never listen to them, never care for them. It is in the best interests of human society as a whole, therefore, that we learn to respect the knowledgeable and stop questioning them on every point. If you are ignorant, you may not be able to understand even if they explain. If you are ignorant, you cannot even decide if you are ignorant or knowledgeable. It is therefore better for everybody, as a general rule, to think they are ignorant, and listen carefully to others, who could possibly be more knowledgeable. Just listen to the words of the wise, this is good for you and everybody else too. A truly knowledgeable person will never be selfish, whatever he says or does, he will surely do for your own good. Have faith, have trust. There is no other way human society can sustain itself and achieve anything substantial. This is social science.

If you ever felt insulted, infuriated, troubled or disturbed while reading this book, that is a sure sign that you are still ignorant. You got affected because you have not been able to cross the layers of ignorance of the self,

you are attaching yourself to your body or *manas* or *buddhi* or *ahaMkaara*. A truly knowledgeable person can never be humiliated or insulted or angered or disturbed in any way, whatever you may say or do to him. This is the definition, this is the sure test. Forget about who is saying or what he is saying, think only of what it means to you. Check yourself and improve yourself.

All problems of the society vanish the moment I enter the world of deep sleep. I exist, I alone exist. Others exist in my world, as and when I create it, that is all. All the others and all the bad thing they are doing is part of a world I have created for myself inside my own mind. Why create bad people and then complain? Why wake up again and again into such an imaginary world? Does the self kill? Can it ever be killed? What do you mean by murder then? If you think of the ultimate reality, there is neither a society nor any social problem. Even if you want to work purely at the practical level of *vyavahaara*, society is nothing but the people in it, what else can it be? To improve the society, I must improve myself and others must also improve. The latter part is not in my hands but the former is surely within my capacity. Therefore, let us focus on self improvement instead of worrying about others in the society. If all people think like this, the problems of the society will automatically go. The society is nothing more than a collection of individuals and the one and the only sure and easy way to solve all problems of the society is for all individuals to improve themselves. This book has shown you how to do that. Just do it.

If you have read and understood this book properly, you will never tell lies, cheat, hurt, harm, injure, torture, kidnap, terrorize, kill, insult, or humiliate anybody. You have realized that you are not just a body or the mind, you have realized the falsity of space and time, what do you mean

by gender bias or murder or kidnap, or religion or race or whatever? All problems of the society will automatically vanish, you do not have to do anything. If you overcome all problems of the individual, there will not be anymore problems left in the basket of social problems. This book is available to all human beings, it is in your hands right now. It is all up to you to make good use of it or throw it away. Either way, you are free. You are always free, you are ever free. Forget about society, uplift yourself. In life you will only get what you deserve, not what you desire. Therefore, do not ask for things you do not deserve, do not be jealous of others, do not hate others, do not feel dejected, do not pull your own hair in despair. Understand yourself, know your strengths and weaknesses, set your goals right, work towards it. Give up bad deeds, do good things without expecting any returns. You will definitely be rewarded beyond your own expectations. Forget others, forget society, uplift yourself.

2.47 Tom and Jerry

All that we have said so far in this book may sound like some strange and abstract philosophy. Does it have any practical value? Why should we accept this view? Is there anything to gain? Or is it all mere play of the intellect? Is it all purely for our psychological satisfaction? Is it all merely academic jugglery and circus with ideas and words? No, not at all. This book is not all extreme idealism. In fact it is very practical and down to earth. The truth elucidated in this book can solve all your problems, it can solve all problems of all human beings, it can solve all problems of human society as a whole, it can solve all problems of the whole world. It can make this world a heaven for all. We can all live happily and enjoy life to its fullest extent. This is a promise. All you need to do is to read this book

carefully, understand it properly and practice it. This is not a book to be just read, it is a book to be practiced, this is a book to be lived.

Knowledge and understanding of the ideal is actually essential to live well and enjoy life in practice. I am *sat, cit, aananda, brahma, aatma, jiivaatma, paramaatma, nitya, shuddha, buddha, mukta*, I am the whole Universe, I am God. All these are same. This is the true nature of the universe, this is the true nature of the self. This is the final answer. There is no need to do any further research or study or exploration. The truth is one and once it is discovered, nothing more or new can be discovered. All else is false. If you try to change the truth, it can only become false. There is no such thing as improvement or development or progress or advancement in truth. Two plus two is four and the answer cannot be improved. If you touch it, it will only become false. We have already discovered the truth. All other contradictory theories, doctrines, philosophies, sciences, religions, beliefs, faiths, cults, fads, fashions, are false. They are all provably wrong. Do not fall pray to false dogmas and theories. They will only mislead and confuse you further. The life of a confused person is destined to be hell. Modern science is wrong, provably wrong. Give up your fancy for science and technology. Know the truth, understand it, internalize it, practice it, live it, experience it, teach it, enjoy it. This is life. Life is truth. Truth is life. Falsity cannot lead you to unending happiness and bliss, only truth can. Give up all other things and take refuge in this one and only truth. You will be relieved of all your sufferings. No doubt. This is a promise.

It is very difficult to climb a tall peak such as Mount Everest. It is much harder to stay there! We will have to climb down, very soon indeed. If we are careless, we will not be climbing down but rolling down uncontrollably! We

have made great advancements in modern science and technology. The human race has made spectacular progress in the recent past, that too at an exponential rate. We have scaled great heights. We are now near the peak. If we are not careful, if we do not slow down and control our ever speeding race towards the top, we are heading for danger. The foot hills of the mountain are vast and wide but as we climb higher and higher, it becomes steeper and narrower. We need to be more and more careful as we approach the peak. Otherwise we are taking a very big risk. If you fall down from a height of ten feet, perhaps you can recover and try again. You should not fall down from a height of ten thousand feet. If we do not slow down now, we may overstep the peak and fall down at the mercy of gravity. Think.

Remember the cartoon characters Tom and Jerry? Tom the cat looks happy, he is blissful, complacent and carefree, until he looks down and realizes that he has run off the edge of the tall building on top of which he was running and now there is no support beneath! And then the moment he realizes this, he falls! We are exactly in the same situation today. We have already run off the edge, the downfall has actually begun, but most of us continue to be complacent like the cartoon character Tom. The environment has been damaged beyond repair. The air, water and soil systems have been poisoned. The food we take, the water we drink, the air we breathe are full of invisible chemical poisons, which are the results of factory made gadgets, the products of science and technology. Countless varieties of living species have completely vanished for good and many more are going off every day. The core ingredient of life, the very essence of life, is the same in all living beings. The differences in the chromosomes, the differences in the genes are minuscule. If one species can go extinct, there is no reason why another should not. Human life on Earth may soon become impossible. What is the use of computers

and cell phones and cars and roads if there are no human beings at all? Think.

Once a boatman was ferrying a pundit across the mighty river. The pundit asked the boatman if he knew logic. The boatman replied in the negative and the pundit expressed pity and said he had wasted a quarter of his life. Next the pundit asked the boatman if he knew grammar and when the boatman said no, he asserted that half of his life was wasted. The boatman did not know literature either and the pundit concluded that three fourths of his life was gone. Just then the going got tough and strong waves threatened to over turn the boat. The boatman now asked the pundit if he knew swimming and upon hearing a no, concluded that the whole of his life was gone! *brahma-vidyaa* alone can save you, no other science can save you. Your end is near. At least now wake up and realize your self. Save yourself, you still have one last chance.

It is already very late but perhaps not too late. There may still be a last ray of hope. But time is running out. We need to slow down, stop and think. We need to understand where we are and where we are heading. We must put brakes and stop and move only if and when we fully understand where we want to go and why and how. We all need to understand ourselves. We all need to understand life. We all need live like we should. Hence this book. Let us get pragmatic. Now.

I am the whole world, the entire world is mine, I already have everything I need. Where is the need for me to earn, acquire, hoard, snatch anything from anybody else? There is no need for engineering or technology, after all, they only give me gadgets for the convenience and comfort of my body. I am not merely a body, I am much more than that. I can withstand and control the minor discomforts of

my body by merely hardening my *manas* through my will power and determination, I do not need gadgets of technology. Every coin has two sides and I realize that science and technology has a dark side too. The dark side of science and technology is now threatening my very survival on this mother Earth. Science and technology is penny wise and pound foolish. They cure my sore throat or head ache but give me cancer or heart attack in exchange. I am a child of God, immortal and divine. I am a child of nature, and the best way to live is to live with nature, in close harmony with nature, without damaging, polluting or destroying nature. We can and should live without producing any wastes other than natural wastes such as stools and urine. We must give up our fancy for all man-made artifacts. We must give up shopping, we must give up travelling. These useless engagements destroy the very basis of life, they make our lives miserable. To be happy and self-satisfied, we must be self satisfied, we must be satisfied with our self, there is nothing else to do in life. Just live, simply live, live simply, and enjoy life. Do nothing, nothing bad. In today's modern world, spending money is almost always a sin, tell me how you can earn money without exploiting, damaging and destroying nature and polluting and poisoning the air, water and soil systems in any way whatever? Do not buy anything, except the bare essentials. Do not earn more money than you need for that much. It is high time even our governments realize this and drastically cut down on both revenue and expenditure.

Why do we feel restless and uneasy all the time like fish out of water? Because we are actually like fish out of water, we have wandered away from our homes, our own true abode, from ourselves from our self. If you want to feel at home, just go home, there is no other solution. The single solution to all human problems is to go back to our own true self, from where we have come, our own home, our

abode, where we should be, where we belong. Like the old lady who was frantically searching for the lost grand child all over the village, while keeping the child in her own arms, we have the solution to all our problems right within us, deep inside us, and like fools we explore the whole universe outside of us! Exploring the external world is foolish. Give up your fancy for modern science. It is foolish to search for an alternative for ignorance, or for any other bad thing. Why search for an alternative for plastics? Just give up. There is no point replacing one bad thing with another. Seek yourself, find yourself, abide in yourself, and enjoy unlimited bliss, endlessly, without any fears. This is life.

2.48 Go Home

Water flows from higher level to lower level. The same is true of knowledge. Knowledge flows from richer sources of knowledge, the higher beings, the greater minds to the more humbler minds willing to bow down low. True knowledge never comes to those who are arrogant and hot headed. They take a high ground and start preaching others. All their knowledge drains away and no new knowledge comes their way. It is only the humble who stand to gain.

To become humble, we must accept our ignorance. This is the hardest part. We have a very high opinion about ourselves. We know everything that we know and we know so little of what others know. It is this differential meta knowledge that is the cause of ego, pride and arrogance. Remember that others may know so many things and you do not even know what all they know. Have respect for others. There is something to learn from everybody, even from babies. Child is the father of man. We can learn so much even from tiny creatures like ants. Dump your arrogance. Get humble.

Think of making a list of all things you know. It would be impracticable even to make such a list. The list would be so long, it would take ages to write it down. Waste of time, ink and paper! Now think of making a list of all things you do not know. Not things about which you wish to know more, these are things you already know something about. Think of things you just do not know anything about. That is impossible! Even if you were to know just the name, that is already something! You can never make a list of things you know not. It only makes good logical sense to concede that the list of things we do not know anything at all must be much much longer than the list of things we know something about. Our ignorance is many times bigger than our knowledge. Let us accept that we are all largely ignorant. This way we can get humble and hope to gain some knowledge. The sole purpose of education, true education, is to make us accept our ignorance and make us feel humble.

A student is one who seeks knowledge, not jobs! A seeker of knowledge should seek knowledge and only knowledge. He should forget all else in life and seek knowledge alone, like a person who is drowning will forget all else and think only of saving his own life. It is not enough to be curious, he must be serious too. He should seek knowledge solely for the sake of knowledge, not for any other purpose. Knowledge is not a step in achieving anything else. A truly knowledgeable person will not need to get anything else in life. All that can be gained, is already gained when you gain knowledge. Knowledge cannot be sold or purchased, it does not automatically come to you either. You have to seek it. If you seek, sincerely, you will surely get it. You will get the final answer to all your questions. You will realize the true nature of the self and of the world. You will understand life and life gets a new meaning. The full

glory of human form can be realized, right now, right here in this very birth. Become a good student today.

A house, full of rooms, furniture, fixtures and fittings, and all the objects in it, exists for the sake of the owner. The many exist for the sake of one, not the other way around. I do not exist for the sake of the house, I built the house, I own it, I use it, the house and the multitude of objects in it exist for the sake of me. Likewise, our body, our *manas* and *buddhi* all exist for my pleasure, they always do what is pleasing to me, they love me, they live for me, they exist for my sake alone. In fact this whole world is built by me, it does not exist by itself, and it exists for my sake. I do not exist in this world. Everybody, everything in this world exists for my sake, they all love me, they care for me. I, that is my self, is the most loved, cared for, and respected thing in this universe. Naturally we get unlimited bliss when we simply keep to ourselves, when we stay with our selves, when we simply revel in the self. I am *aananda* personified. All the pains and pleasures, all the agony and ecstasy, all the joys and sorrows of life are experienced by the *manas*, which is *mithyaa*. The *sat-cit* has no feelings, emotions, experiences. It is free from all sorrow, all suffering, all pains. I am *aananda* and nothing but *aananda*.

We all love ourselves, we all have great respect for ourselves. Every animal and plant wants to do things that are good for itself. Nobody wants to do anything which is bad for themselves. Even when a person attempts to commit suicide, he is under the feeling that it is good for him to end his life. Those who work selflessly for others do so because working selflessly gives them satisfaction, it is for their own sake that they work for others, apparently neglecting their own interests. Our self is the most loved, most cared for, most respected thing in the whole universe. Because the self of the individual, the *jiivaatma*

is the same as *paramaatma* or the supreme being, God. If this were not true, there would be no way of explaining why every individual living being loves, respects and cares for itself as much as it does.

We live in our house, we use it, but we do not exploit it, we do not damage and destroy our own house. If we damage our own house, life will become miserable for us. Likewise, we should live and use this world but should not damage it in any way. Thoughtless exploitation of nature and destruction of the environment is now making our lives miserable. The Himalayas are melting, the rivers are drying up, ground water is gone, forests are a thing of the past, soil has lost fertility, a major food crisis is looming round the corner, diseases are on the rise, no one is healthy, no one is happy and contented. Life on Earth will very soon become impossible, unless we understand all this and stop all the useless activities we are so very busy with. We must learn to keep quiet, keep our minds under our control, do nothing, and just be happy. We must simply live.

Ten fools crossed a river and wanted to make sure that everybody has successfully crossed over. One of them counted, he counted everybody, he excluded himself, and so was worried that one was missing, perhaps drowned in the river. The ten fools took turns and counted, each time the person who counted left out himself. All the tens and hundreds and thousand and Millions of people in the world are no different. Fear, anxiety, worry, pain, suffering continues as long as we ignore ourselves and look at the others and the outside world. Close your eyes on the rest of the world, count yourself, know yourself, be with yourself and all your problems will vanish. An old lady was searching for her lost needle elsewhere because there is more light where she dropped it! Another lady was searching for the kid all over the village, carrying the kid all the time in her own arms!

Do not search for the truth all over the world, the truth is inside you, you are the truth. Seek your self. Seek your self alone. That is the root of all happiness and bliss.

We are like birds whose legs have been tied with a long thread. We can fly hither and thither and flutter our wings at random but we simply cannot go anywhere else, we will have to come back to our roots. All attempts to go here and there are therefore futile, all actions, are a waste. Just be with yourself, do not go anywhere, do not do anything, then you will be happy. Like salt dissolved in water, you are already there all over, in every nook and corner, where will you go? The salt is right here but it is all invisible. You cannot see it, you cannot touch it, you cannot take it out with your hands. The self is right here but you are unable to see it. Open up your third eye of wisdom and see the truth within yourself. Seek your own self. Revel in your own self. That is the way to be happy.

We are always restless and dissatisfied and unhappy, we are like fish out of water. Because we are actually like fish out of water, we have wandered away from our home. The only way to feel comfortable, the only way to feel at home is to go back home. Our home is our own self. Revel in the self, do not wander away and get lost in the wilderness of the outside world. Do nothing. All your worries and suffering are because you are busy doing so many unnecessary and harmful things. Learn to simply live. This is the secret of life. The whole of the next chapter is devoted to this theme, for the proper understanding of human life and practical tips for making our lives superlative in every positive sense. Make the most of your life, be happy, enjoy life, do not harm yourself, do not harm others in any way. May God bless you.

2.49 A Pill for All Ills

There are no differences at all. Men are not superior or inferior to women, human beings are not superior to animals or even to a blade of grass. This Earth is not ours, nor we the Earth's. There are no friends and there no foes. All are equal. Absolutely equal. Seeing difference is a sign of ignorance. Seeing any kind of difference between any two things is ignorance, for, there are no two things. This ignorance is the root cause of all human problems. All human problems are closely, inseparably inter-connected. We just cannot solve any one problem at a time. The root cause of all problems facing mankind is the same - ignorance. Remove this ignorance and all human problems will get solved in one go.

There is *vidyaa* and then there is *avidyaa*. The former is all about the true nature of the universe and the true nature of the self, it is the science of existence, of absolutely independent existence or *sat*, and of the *svaruupa* or the true nature of this *sat*. This is *tattva*, this is the philosophy, this is the real science. *vidyaa* is available only in the *veeda-s*, nowhere else in the world. All other kinds of knowledge in the entire world add up to *avidyaa*. Any branch of knowledge gets proper meaning and perspective only if and when it is based on the solid foundation of *vidyaa*, not otherwise. That is why we started with the exploration of the *tattva* right in the beginning and we have taken this far to complete this exercise. We are now ready to go ahead and look at any aspect of life, we now have the basis, we now have the right perspective.

I exist and therefore, the external world I see exists for me, as an ever-changing, temporary, *mithyaa* world. Therefore, it makes practical sense to live and work in this day-to-day world of *vyavahaara* like all ordinary people have

been doing anyway. It is not necessary to give up *vyavahaara* or the world completely. At the same time, taking this external world as ultimate reality is also utterly foolish. The world does not exist outside of me, that cannot be proved. The world does not exist independent of me, that cannot be proved either. We can only accept a tentative, personal external world for the sake of our day-to-day living, that too only during our waking state. This knowledge and understanding can give us meaning to life. We can know what is life, how to live and how to enjoy life. This, purely practical aspect is the theme of the next chapter.

You must never mix up the two levels of *paramaarthā* and *vyavahaara*, take any one view. A whole lot of confusion can be avoided by clearly sticking to one or the other. If at all you seek *paramaarthā*, you have to understand and realize that you are the entire world, you already have everything you want, you cannot gain or lose anything in any real sense, there is nothing for you to do in this world. You must give up everything, you must give up all action except what is completely natural and absolutely essential to keep life going. There is no need to go to office or factory or farm or temple or church. There is no need to pray or worship or do anything. There is no need to earn money, no need to spend money, no need to go anywhere. Do nothing, just stay back home, abide in your own self, your own home, just revel in yourself and do nothing. In fact it is not at all necessary even to say all this to the truly self-realized - he already knows everything. He will not need the next chapter at all. For most people, this path is impracticable. Most people in the world would prefer to live and work purely at the level of *vyavahaara*. If you choose this latter path, what all we have learned in the first two chapters would still be a useful background, in the light of which you should learn to live and work. In this case, just as

you accept dreams without questioning, you must simply accept this world as a practical reality, sit back, relax and enjoy, like you do while dreaming or watching a movie. You may experience and enjoy the scenes and happenings in a dream or a movie, you may at times even identify yourself with the characters and events there and start laughing and crying, but this is only a temporary, false feeling. You do not and you need not pro-actively do anything. Just as you do not question and explore dreams while dreaming, stop questioning and exploring and investigating into this world - stop all science and technology and academic research. There is no basis or need for any such thing, there is no need for equipment or laboratories or materials or man-made gadgets. There is no need to exploit and damage the whole world. There is nothing for you to do in a dream, there is nothing for you to do even after you wake up. Give up industry, business, economics, shopping, travelling, all these are completely unnecessary, wasteful, even harmful. Do nothing. Whether you accept *paramaartha* or *vyavahaara*, either way there is nothing for you to do. Restrain yourself from doing anything. This self restraint is called *yooga*. *yooga* is not something that you have to practice or do, *yooga* really means not doing anything. Become a *yoogi*. Do nothing. Just enjoy life. You may not be able to fully understand these ideas right now, the purpose of the next chapter is to help you understand the correct meaning of not doing anything and provide practical tips and guidelines to shape your own life accordingly, so that you can actually lead a happy, contented, satisfying, blissful life, free from all problems and pains.

All the problems that we face in life are due to ignorance. We think we are different from others, so we tend to compete with them, outsmart them, even cheat them to push them down so that we can come up in life. We tell lies because we think we are different from others, oth-

ers cannot know what happens inside our mind, so we can cheat them for our own benefits. Is it ever possible for you to tell a lie to yourself? Does it make any sense to cheat yourself? Is it at all necessary to compete with yourself? Is there any logic or reason for waging a war against yourself? Do you ever steal your own money? All the ills of the human society arise from ignorance, from an incorrect understanding, from a belief that we are different from others. If you have carefully read and understood this book this far, you must have convinced yourself that there are no two different things in this whole universe, everything is one. It is not that all people are equal, it is not that all are similar or even identical. There are no 'all', it is wrong to think that there are many people in this world. We are not really saying here that many people or animals or things are there and all of them being equal - no one superior or inferior to any other. No, there is one and only one thing in this world, not many. This is not mere equality, plurality is itself a misconception. If we understand and accept this, then it will become impossible to tell lies, cheat, murder, rape, kidnap, terrorize, torture, injure, abuse, ill-treat, harm anybody, or any animal for that matter. This is a single pill for all ills facing mankind today. There is no other remedy. Either the whole world will understand, accept and practice this in life or we will all suffer hell and perish very soon. The end is very near, universal destruction is threatening to finish us all anytime, but if at all we wake up today, there may still be a chance. Human race can not only survive but also thrive and reach glorious heights yet again. This is the question of life and death, this is a do or die situation. Wake up and act today, right now. Save yourself and save the world, you still have this last chance.

The moment you accept that I, you, he, she are all not different from one another, equality automatically shines. The moment we start treating others like we wish to be

treated by others, all cheating automatically stops. All this nonsense in the name of economic development and business and industry and money and associated cheating, inequality and suffering will vanish. All religious fights will end if the human society accepts the truth that no differences are real. People will realize that they are all part of one and same big whole. The human society will become one. The world will become a family. Everybody will love everybody, everybody will take care of others, everybody will help others, after all we are helping ourselves. There will be no competition. Man truly becomes a social animal. The boundaries of nations will melt. God did not create Iraq or the USA. Wars will end. Suffering will stop. Nobody needs to develop weapons of mass destruction, nobody needs to do offence in the name of defence. Crime will stop. Rape will stop. Cheating, stealing, theft, robbery will all end. Environmental pollution will stop. We need not fight for stopping child labour, we need not fight for women's rights. Are the electrons, protons and neutrons in a women's body different from those in a man's body in any way? Why fight over gender and gender bias? Instead of spending our time and effort on solving one problem or the other, we can solve all human problems in one go. All human problems are interconnected. They are inseparable from one another, For, all of them arise from the same cause - ignorance. Remove this ignorance with real knowledge and all problems melt away. We cannot solve one problem at a time, we can only solve all problems together in one go. This is the wisdom of the ancient *RShi-s* of India. This is real science. This is immensely beneficial to human society. Let us spread the light of real knowledge. Let us spread this real science. Let us make this world a heaven for all. Let everybody be happy. Let all living creatures be happy. Let everybody get what they need. Let no one suffer. Let us pray for the universal good of all the worlds. This is science, this is life, this is the science of life.

A self-realized person is always happy, always satisfied, he has no worries, no tensions, no anxiety, no fear. The knowledge of the self gives us *svaasthya*, not to be confused with *aaroogya* or health. *svaasthya* means staying back in the self alone. *svaasthya* automatically gives us *aaroogya* or health. All the diseases of the body and mind are only superficial symptoms, they are not diseases. The real disease is ignorance of the self. One who is self realized, is healthy at the core and he is automatically healthy in the body and mind as well. Health is wealth and the only way to remain healthy throughout life is to learn to revel in the self alone. Unlike promises of heaven and heavenly pleasures, this science of the self gives us results now and here, right in this birth. We can never be sure of what happens after we die, no one who has gone to the heaven or any other world has come back and told us how it feels there, nor can we go, check, and come back. Other worldly promises are hypothetical, you need to have blind faith and trust in them, whereas the promise of this science of the self is immediate and verifiable. The befits are real, immediate, lasting, permanent. This science of the self is not against any religion or culture or tradition or race or region. It is available for one and all. It is not illogical or unscientific, it does not promise any super-natural powers etc.

The science of the self is called *adhyaatma-vidyaa*. It is also called *aananda-shaastra*, the science of happiness. Just as we are immersed in a vast ocean called atmosphere in which we live and breathe every moment of our life, just as we take this for granted and forget it, we are all actually immersed in an ocean of bliss but we simply do not notice it. Air is felt in its absence, when you start suffocating then you will realize its importance. But *aatma* is never absent and so this is not the way we can demonstrate or prove its importance. Those who agree and those who dis-

agree, those who know and those who do not know, are all immersed in the same ocean of bliss. The self is an *em* *aananda-saagara*, an ocean of bliss. The self realized enjoy *brahmaananda* or supreme happiness and bliss. This is not some kind of self deceit, it is real. Whatever is obtained through effort, whatever is gained through contact with something else, whatever is relative or conditional, all that is temporary. The self is absolute, it is absolutely independent, it is natural, it is eternal, it is always there, it is inalienable, it is real. So is this *brahmaananda*. Come, taste it.

In the next chapter, we shall analyze all human wants, we shall dig into the root of all of our problems, we shall show how knowledge and realization can actually help us rid ourselves of all negative things and how we can actually gain everything that we may want in life. The next chapter is down to earth and very practical. *tattva nir-Naya* is an extremely subtle and abstract task and the risk of losing track is very high. Therefore, it was essential to be extremely careful, exceptionally rigorous and ruthlessly strict at every step. This book has perhaps sounded a bit too sharp, cutting, and strongly worded. This was essential, this was inevitable, because the slightest scope for relaxation and looseness could have confused us and distracted us away from the truth. You will find the third chapter a lot more easy going and and smooth in presentation and style. Read on!

One who is already self-realized does not even need this book or any other book or even a guru. Those extraordinarily great seekers, who were ignorant to start with, but have read, understood, accepted all that we have said so far and have realized their own true nature, do not need anything else. They do not need the next chapter at all. Given that such superlative seekers are extremely rare, we

shall continue the book for the sake of other seekers. We shall talk more about life and all the techniques and practices to help you understand life better, to help you lead a better, happier, more satisfying, fulfilling life. Do read on.

Chapter 3

Life

3.1 The Post Office

In the previous two chapters we have asked and answered fundamental questions concerning the true nature of the world and the true nature of our own selves. We have explored these questions in great depth and arrived at the final, definitive answers. This knowledge and understanding will provide the scientific and philosophical foundations for our lives. If you have not already read and understood all this, you must read sometime. If you are curious to understand all this and you have time and patience, you may want to go back and read the first two chapters right now. If you tried but you could not fully understand or appreciate or you are not fully convinced, it is OK, you may want to go back and read again some time later for a better understanding. If you are more interested in practical aspects of life and you wish to improve your own life, you may go forward with this third chapter now and you may think of going back and reading the first two chapters at some later point of time, as and when you feel like. It is not necessary to understand the whole of automobile engineering to become a good driver or to own and make good use of a car. In this sense, theoretical understanding is not absolutely

essential. Yet, things are always done better when done with proper and full knowledge and deep understanding. You would generally prefer to go to a well read and qualified doctor, although there can be expert surgeons without any degree or diploma, right?

This chapter is very practical and down to earth. It is all about the art of life. It is all about life and how to live. If you have read and understood the previous two chapters, now you know exactly who you are. Otherwise it does not matter, you can start thinking now. Who are you? Why have you come here? What is your calling? What should you do in your life? What is life? How to live? Questions like this arise in our minds at some stage in life or the other. Earlier the better! Let us start thinking along these lines.

You go the post office for a specific work. Once you finish that work, you will come back. You do not see any point in simply lingering on there. Similarly, when you go the railway station or bank or market place, you go with a clear mission, you have a plan, you try to complete your work and then come back home. Likewise, we have all come here to this Earth in the form of a human being with some purpose. There is a goal for our life. We have not come here without any goal or plan. But unfortunately most of us do not know our goal or the plans. We are like actors who have already come on to stage, the drama has already begun but we do not know the story or our role therein. We are utterly confused. We go on doing all kinds of things in life, good, bad or ugly, not understanding anything. You can never play any role in any drama properly unless you understand the whole play, and in particular, your own role very well. The same is true of life. Without a clear understanding of all aspects of the whole of life, life itself loses all meaning. The ship of life will be wandering the wild seas aimlessly without any purpose or sense of direction or

a stated destination or a clear mission. Let us not waste our life like a fool who went to the post office and spent the whole life there doing all kinds of assorted meaningless things, without realizing the purpose for which he had gone there.

The questions we will address in this chapter are 1) What is life? 2) How to live? How to make the most of this great human life? This chapter will thus be very practical, it holds great promise for you. You can actually gain a lot in your own life, right now and here, by reading through these pages, reflecting on them, internalizing and putting into practice the ideas you like. Unlike other books, this book does not promise mere knowledge or information about some topic, it actually helps you lead a much better life, it actually gives you everything you want in life. Read on!

3.2 Born Hero

What is the goal of life? To enjoy life to the fullest, to the make the most of this great opportunity thrown at us in the form of human life. No other animal or plant can enjoy life like we can, right? To enjoy something, to make best use of something, we need to know what it is and how to put it to good use. What is the use of land if you do not know how to grow food there? What is the use of a car if you do not know how to drive? What is the use of a computer if you do not know how to operate it? What is the use of a book if you do not know how to read? What is the use of a Million dollars in your pocket if you do not know what to do with it? What is the use of life if we do not know what is life and how to make the most of it? We need to understand life before we can learn to make the most of it.

Life is like a drama. It began the very day you were born. You are already on stage. Your near and dear ones, your friends and colleagues, your partners and competitors, they are all on the same stage. They are all performing their roles, acting, talking, doing. You have a microphone in your hand. The huge audience is eagerly waiting for you to act, to do something, to say something. It is your turn now. What will you say? What will you do? What is your role? What is the purpose of your life? Why have you come here? Who has sent you here? What does He want you to do? Will you go back after successfully accomplishing your calling or will you go back with frustration and desperation with loads of failures to your credit? What is the goal of your life? What should you do and what should you not do? You are thoroughly confused. Because you never thought about these questions.

Most people are confused. Or they do not even think about all this. Blissfully ignorant, so to say. Life will get wasted. You cannot get a human life whenever you ask. You did not even ask for it, it was given to you. It may not come again. This is the one and the only opportunity, there may not be a second chance. Already quite a bit of it might have been spent. If we do not quickly understand life and what we have to do in our lives, the remaining part will also get squandered. Life is not just eating, drinking, sleeping, reproducing. Animals also do all these. We need to stop, inquire, think, understand life in depth at the earliest possible point in our lives. This is what education is supposed to be for. Lest we may end up wasting this extraordinarily great opportunity that is given to us without even asking for it. To aim low is crime, people grow as per the demands they put on themselves. Take life seriously, put in your very best and then there is no stopping you.

You are not just another human body with hands and legs and eyes and ears. You are in fact the hero of this drama of life. The moment you came to this world, the very day you were born, your mother, your father, your brothers and sisters, in fact everybody at home, even the neighbours, relatives and friends, felt very very happy. They all welcomed you to this world with great joy. They competed with one another to take a peek at your lovely face, the beautiful smile, all the grace and all the beauty and life in you. They competed with each other to feed you, dress you, kiss you, lift you into their loving arms, to do everything possible to keep you happy and smiling. Every one felt troubled the moment you started crying and they all came forward to serve you without the slightest hesitation. You were more important than anything else. Everybody was willing to sacrifice anything for your sake. Nobody expected anything whatever in return from you. You symbolized life, beauty, grace, truth, simplicity, in fact every good quality one can think of. You were born a hero. In fact every one of us were born heroes. And we make our lives so miserable as we grow up. Why? Simply because we do not understand life. We never give time for thinking. Life is not taught in schools or colleges. It is not taught at home. Books do not tell us what is life and how to live. We must ourselves put in effort to learn.

You are now standing confused, microphone in hand, on the stage of this great drama of life. Do not make yourself a laughing stock. Do not waste your life. Stop, think, understand life, make the most of it, enjoy life, make this world a great place to live, for yourself and for others. Read on. May God bless you.

3.3 Life Management

When we are born, we are sent to this world with the entire universe given to us in a platter, with the words ‘here is the world for you. Do what you want with all this!’. Some choose to become doctors. Some become drug addicts. Some choose a teacher’s life. Some become terrorists. Some become singers. Some become prostitutes. Some become drivers. Some become barbers. Some become kings. Others become slaves. Some become saints. Others become sinners. We were all free to choose any kind of life we wanted and we chose whatever we wanted. There is no outside pressure, there is never any external influence, nobody can infringe into our freedom, we are always free to become whatever we want to in life. We can do whatever we want to. We all have the opportunity and potential to do something extraordinarily great. We can all excel in life, achieve great heights, rule the world, live happily, making everybody else happy too. It is all in our hands. How many of us actually succeed?

We see so many people leading such a low, mean, wretched, horrible, inhuman, cruel life. We all think the goal of life is to make money, by hook or crook, through hard work or by robbing the bank. We think money can buy us happiness. We keep running after money or name or fame or power without ever stopping to think if any of these can actually give us happiness or whatever else we may want in life. We do not even know what we want in life. Life becomes a mad race, without any aim. Life has become a rat race and even if you win this enormously competitive race, you are only a rat! Why then get into such a mad race? No goal, no direction, no strategy, no plan. No way to tell if we are doing well or we are deviating from our paths. All this happens because we never consider it important to stop, think, understand life. We work hard in offices or factories

or farms or homes, we earn money, we buy things, we eat, drink, sleep, reproduce and think this is all there is in life. How different is our life from that of animals?

To achieve anything, we must first know what we want. We must know where we want to reach. We must know how to get there. We must know where we are. We must convince ourselves that our goal is right. We must ensure that our goal is achievable. We must make sure that we have the right plan, the right strategy to achieve it. We must know and we must ensure we have the right tools, the right techniques and the right methods and all the necessary support. We must have the means to monitor and evaluate our progress. We must have the mechanisms to re-plan, to make mid-course corrections, to make adjustments as and when required. We can get success if and only if all these are thoroughly understood, taken up in all seriousness and earnestness, we never lose our control even for a moment, and everything works with machine-like perfection. Even to do something very simple like building a house we need to take into account so many factors. How can we be complacent about the whole of our life?

Understand your life. Manage your life. Do not leave it to the dogs. Become a master. Play foot ball and enjoy, do not become the ball which gets kicked and tossed around like mad. There are powerful forces all around you. If you are careless, complacent or ignorant, these forces will surely enslave you and there will be nothing but suffering in pain in your life. Wake up. Now.

A river keeps flowing, all the time, never stops for a moment. It keeps flowing until it finally reaches the ocean. At that point, it becomes one with the ocean, it loses its own individuality, it loses its very identity, it loses even its own name and all its qualities. This is in fact the goal of

the river. The river knows its goal, it knows its path, and it never loses its focus, it never wanders here and there, it never wastes even one second of time doing anything else. Our life is exactly like that. We have not come here without any goal. We can reach that goal provided we recognize the goal of our life and work towards it every moment of our life. There is just enough time to reach the goal provided we do not do anything else in life. Even if a small amount of time is lost or wasted, we may not be able to reach the goal within this life. It is natural, therefore, to think that we may have to come back again and again to this world and keep trying. rebirth may be thought of as a result of not completing your assigned work within this very life. Or, for all you know, we may never get this opportunity again. Now that we are already born as human beings, let us now understand the goal of our lives, learn the methods and techniques of inching towards it, and let us put our blinkers on and work towards the goal, keeping all other futile activities on hold. We might have already spent a good part of our life but perhaps there is still hope. Like an arrow released from the bow, we must go straight towards the target, hit it, and become one with it. The nectar from many and varied flowers reach the honeycomb and become just one sweet thing called honey, the identity of the flower, its colour and form, and all other properties are simply forgotten. The goal of our life is to reach out to the highest thing in the universe and become one with it. The goal of life is to elevate ourselves from mere mortal bodies to great heights and become fully developed, glorious, truly humane, God-like divine beings. We all can. We all must try hard and put in our very best.

3.4 What do we Want in Life?

If you ask people what they want, they may give a variety of answers. Somebody who is hungry would ask for food but others may not even think of food at that point of time. Someone who is ill would only ask for health, someone who is facing an examination shortly would be thinking only of exams and grades. If you are caught in a legal battle, you only think of winning the case, other things never even come to your mind. A childless couple will be thinking of a child all the time and a soldier at war will only be thinking of winning the war. If you are suffering from pain, mere reduction in pain may be all that you want. Many people will ask for money because they think they can buy whatever they want with money. At various points of time in our life, our wants vary. A comprehensive list of human wants will definitely be very long indeed. As a starting point, we may list things like food, clothing, shelter, health, education, social and psychological security etc. but each one of these opens up a whole gamut of shades and variations. Take food for example. Saying that we all need food to survive is the least that can be said about food. For someone who is dying out of hunger, food can be a question of survival but for others, it is much more than that. We need nutritious food, we ask for tasty food, we want the food to be hot and fresh, we want to be food to be served in a clean environment, we care for not only the how the food tastes but also how it looks, we even ask for lighting, music and ambiance of a particular kind. If you expand fully each human want, it will surely become a big book by itself. We have started off this book with a promise that we will be able to overcome all problems and get everything we want in life. Looks like an impossible thing to ask. It is not.

If we start expanding each item and look at all the minute details, the world will appear to be extremely com-

plex. Naturally. We get bogged down in the details, we lose our way, we lose our sense of location and direction, we do not know where we are and where we want to go. We are clueless, we are caught in the midst of a vast and wild forest. Our brain is taxed to its limits but we cannot get any clarity. This happens to all of us in life. That is why we stressed so much on the art of holistic thinking right in the beginning of this book. Think abstractly. Abstractions, when properly made, can make the whole thing simple and straightforward. Our life and all the problems and issues therein will come within the capacity of our small brains. We can understand everything clearly, we can know where exactly we are, we can know where exactly we want to go and how exactly to get there. Let us try.

Two young men, who had just joined the army, were talking and explaining why they joined the army. The unmarried one said, “because I love war”. The married one said, “because I love peace”! Apparently they had quite different, opposing views but both of them joined the army because and only because they thought they would be happier that way. All human wants can be reduced to this one root desire - happiness. We want to be happy. This is the root of all other wants and desires. If we want anything else, it is because we think that will make us happy. Nobody wants to be unhappy. Even a person trying to commit suicide does so thinking that it is good for him. Nobody would ever want anything that will not make them happy.

An example should suffice to clear all your doubts. Let us take money. You want money. Why? Let us say nobody else in the world values money. Then what would happen? Just as nobody wants a lump of mud or a piece of stone from you, nobody is willing to give you anything in exchange for that, suppose nobody is willing to give you anything for your money. Then money has no value and

you will surely not want it. You do not want money for the sake of money, you want money so that it can give you something else. Money can buy you many things but let us take any one example, let us say water to drink. Suppose all water in the world is poisoned and drinking water does not quench your thirst at all, instead it makes you feel much worse, then would you want to buy water with your money? If something cannot give you happiness, there is no point in buying it with your money, right? We want our own house because we feel renting a house or living on the streets is more painful. We want nice looking clothes, although we may ourselves rarely look at the clothes we are wearing, because we feel happy when others look at us and admire us or praise us. Patients are willing to take bitter pills or an injection because they think they can feel better and happier after that. If you take any example and analyze in full detail like this, you will easily come to the conclusion that the only thing we want is happiness, all other wants are a mere reflection of this root desire, they are not independent desires in their own right. It is not that there are so many human wants, there is but one.

How much happiness do we want? One minute? One hour? One day? One month? One year? 50 years? Nobody would say I have had enough of happiness, we all want to be happy always. We may say enough for food but we will never say enough for happiness. Nobody would be willing to say I have had so many years of happiness, let me now ask for a few days of sorrow. In fact we do not want any sorrow at all, not even for a minute. The slightest wound, even a pin prick would trouble us so much. We are always willing to go to any extent to overcome our difficulties. We want to be happy, always, we want nothing but happiness, we want wholesome, perfect, pure happiness and happiness alone. We cannot accept any limit to the intensity or length of happiness. We want pure happiness, devoid of all pain

and suffering, and we want this pure happiness for eternity. Nobody would jump with joy when 31 teeth are all in very good shape and just one tooth is paining. We cannot accept 99% happiness, we want 100% happiness, nothing less than that. We do not want even 0.1% of sorrow. What we want is *aatyantika duHkha nivRtti* - complete and total removal of sorrow and *paripuurNa sukha praapti* - complete, total happiness.

Happiness is at the very core of most other human wants. But there is an even more fundamental desire. We want to exist. Everybody wants to exist. Even the old want to continue to exist. Out of frustration, pain etc. they may sometime say enough but if you take out a pistol from your pocket and aim at them, then you will know their true colours! We all want to exist, exist endlessly, we never want to see the end of ourselves. Those who are asking for mercy killing would also want to continue to live provided you can convince them that there is a cure for all their problems and they can recover and live a normal life like all others.

The third thing that we want is knowledge. We all have an innate curiosity to know. We want to know and we want to know more. There is no time when we will say I know enough, I do not want any more knowledge. We always want more and more of knowledge. We want to know everything. We want to keep learning, there is no end to our desire to know. We want to know everything, endlessly, we have infinite curiosity. We want to possess everything, we want to control everything, and we need knowledge for this.

The fourth thing we want is security - economic, social, emotional. We want to feel economically safe, we want to feel safe in spite of inflation and all kinds of unexpected changes in the economic system. So we want money. How

much money do we want? Is there a limit? No one would say enough. We want money, more of it, endlessly, limitlessly. Even if we have enough for the whole of our life, we want money for our near and dear ones. Similarly, we want social security, we want to live in the midst of people of our own kind, in the midst of people whom we can identify with, in terms of language, race, religion, nationality etc. We also need psychological security. We want name, fame, position, respect, power, control etc. We want peace, we do not want to be disturbed or troubled by anybody in anyway. Even if everything is fine, we always have a fear, we are worried that something may go wrong somewhere. Security means absence of insecurity, we want to be free from all kinds of insecurities, real or imaginary.

All human wants can be reduced to these basic wants. Make a list of ten things you want in life. Take any one of them and analyze in detail. Why exactly do you want it? Why do we want health? Because we cannot be happy if we are sick. We cannot be happy when we are suffering from pain. We cannot be happy if we are worried that we have caught some big disease, even if this not a fact. We cannot be happy if we are hungry, that is why we want food. We cannot be happy if the food is stale or cold, or it does not taste well or it is served in a dirty plate or if there are too many people and there is so much of noise. We cannot be happy and psychologically safe and secure if we do not have the right kind of clothes to wear. We cannot be happy if we do not have a shelter to protect our bodies from the vagaries of nature or if there is fear of wild animals or snakes lurking in the wilderness around. We seek knowledge because the ignorant can be more easily taken for a ride and cheated. Ignorance is darkness, we are always scared of groping in the dark, we much so much better when there is light and we feel fully in control. We realize that our bodies cannot go on for ever and the

only way we can continue to exist is by reproducing our own kind. All human wants can be understood in terms of our desire to exist, to be happy, to know, and to feel secure.

This is true of all human beings, this is true of all animals, this is universal. All this is also completely natural, it is not taught, learned or acquired. Even a new born baby wants to be happy and it cries the moment it is disturbed even in the least. Every animal wants to live, every tree wants to live. Every animal seeks pleasures and avoids painful things. These root desires naturally exist in all living beings, all the time. These are not conditioned on anything, they cannot be dropped off at will, we cannot outgrow these root desires, these always exist, naturally, universally.

People, animals, plants differ in many significant ways in terms of their bodies and mind but the root desires are common to all. These fundamental desires must therefore be located very deeply, at the very core of our selves. Until and unless we get to this central core of ourselves, we will not be able to get a grip on these fundamental wants or how to achieve and retain all of them. This was in fact the main focus in the first two chapters of this book. We have now understood that we are not mere material bodies, we are not even a body with a mind, we are beyond all that. Take your time and think, ask yourself who wants existence, happiness, knowledge or security. Is it your body? Is it your *manas*? Is it your *buddhi*? Is it your self? Is it possible to get everything that we may ever want? How? Keep thinking.

3.5 The Roots

Now the question is, is it possible to get unending happiness, total freedom from all pain and suffering, endless happy existence, complete and total knowledge of everything, unlimited money and material resources, total security - economical, social and psychological? A moment's reflection would convince any person with a clear mind that it is impossible to achieve all this in practice. The body is bound to grow old, it is bound to fall sick and die one day or the other. Scientists are busy researching into the process of aging and they are even claiming to have discovered techniques of delaying aging. We may perhaps be able to delay the onset of visible signs of aging but age or time is not in our control. The body is bound to trouble us and it is bound to go one fine day. The mind keeps troubling us too. No amount of progress in science and technology can rid us of all fear. A major share of the world's population live in earthquake prone regions. Floods, avalanches, blisters, typhoons, tornadoes, tsunamis, drought, extremes of heat and cold, something or the other keeps troubling our populations. Global warming and climate change are threatening us, sea levels are expected to rise significantly, putting the lives of so many people living in coastal areas at risk. Any natural calamity, an asteroid hit or a new and resistant virus can ring the danger bells anytime. Money, material wealth, position and power may not come to our rescue. Even man made disasters like terrorist attacks and wars can spoil our whole life. Should we even talk of cheating, corruption, vandalism, kidnapping, murder, rape, and dozens of unique-to-humans varieties of crime that we human beings can be proud of, so to say? How can we ever feel totally safe and secure, free from all fears and worries? How can we live happily for ever? That is just not possible. So it appears.

The world is full of dangerous things. Animals can harm us. A tiny insect or a fly or a mosquito can trouble us. Even a microscopic bacterium or a virus can wreak havoc. Anybody can cause pain and suffering to us. Whom can we really trust? There is no way of getting rid of all pain, suffering, fear and death in this world. We can summon up our power of positive thinking, we can feel optimistic, we can simply ignore all the bad things, we can wink at all the negative forces in the world. Fine, but this does not change the reality. Positive thinking surely helps us to feel strong, and boldly face the ups and downs in life. But what we want here is not just feeling good, we want more, we want to actually get rid of all negative things and get unlimited and endless supply of all good things. Given this goal, it is clear that as long as we continue to think in terms of our body, mind, other people, animals, plants and all the other objects in the world, as long as we live at this worldly plane, we just cannot hope to get unlimited happiness and total freedom from all pain and suffering. The wise realize this quickly, others may take a lot of time, many people will realize this at one stage or the other in life, oftentimes only after they get a big rude shock. Think, analyze, and it is not at all difficult to convince yourself that we cannot get everything we want from this world. We are searching in the wrong place. We must search and discover the original source of happiness and all good things. We must seek and discover the original source of pain, suffering, misery and all other bad things in life. Only then can we seek and get what we want and get rid of what all we do not want.

Let us say you feel very happy when you eat a particular kind of dish. Where exactly is this happiness rooted? Is it in the dish? If yes, the dish should be feeling happy, not you. Why should you feel happy only when you eat it? Is your tongue the locus of this happiness? If yes then your tongue should always be feeling happy, why should

you even eat this dish to feel happy? Is the locus of this happiness your mind? If yes your mind should always be happy, whether you eat this dish or not. Where exactly is the abode of this happiness? If you can reach that point, you will surely find happiness and only happiness. Similarly, you must inquire and analyze the abode of pain. If a pin prick pains, is the pain located in the pin or in your skin or in your brain or elsewhere? If you can locate the exact point where all pain resides, we can try and block it once and for all.

You might have seen stinking rich people who are not at all happy. You might have seen utterly poor people who are happy and satisfied. A foreign tourist saw a man, barely clad, sitting happily on the cold icy terrain of the Himalayas. He took pity on the poor state of this man, offered him warm clothes, food, drinks, money, in fact whatever he wanted. The man simply refused. The tourist was puzzled. He tried to find out what this man actually wants. He tried to convince him that he can be happier if he has a house to live, warm clothes, good food, etc. After a long chat, the man succeeded in convincing the tourist that he was already happy, as happy as anyone can ever be, there is no need for him to possess anything more, in fact all these new acquisitions will only spoil his happiness and satisfaction. This is the unique lesson from India, you will not get this anywhere else in the world.

The world is certainly not the abode of happiness. If happiness resides in the world, the world should be happy, not you. I can feel happy or otherwise, happiness must therefore be somewhere deep inside me. We have all along been looking for what all we want from outside of us but we have now realized that this is impossible. We better search within us. Let us take our focus away from the external, material, physical world and seek the required answers from

within.

We can have money without happiness and we can be happy without money. Both are possible in this world. We can have knowledge without money and we can have money but no knowledge. We can have all these various things and different combinations. Is there anything that is common to all? If there is, then we can perhaps get everything we want by seeking that one common thing. If there is nothing at all that is common to all the things we want, then there is no hope of solving all of our problems in one shot, perhaps we will have to accept a compromise and be happy with whatever little we can manage to get. Most people in the world resign themselves to this last helpless situation. Because they miss one all important factor in the whole analysis.

If you show a set of objects laid out on a table and ask someone to say what all he can see, he will clearly identify and mention all the physical objects on the table but he would not say he is seeing light! He knows that there is light, he knows that he is seeing all these objects only because of light, he knows that light is there all over, he knows that light can be there even if none of these other things are there on the table, but he fails to think of light explicitly. He misses it out because it is too obvious! We all see things because of light, we see absence of things also in light, in fact the eyes see only light, nothing but light, not the objects per se, only light enters the eyes, not the objects, but we fail to focus our attention on this all important thing, based on which we can decide the presence or absence of all these other objects.

I must realize that every one of my desires includes myself as a component. Whatever may be the desire, whatever may be its source and nature, whatever may be the mode of

acquiring it, I am always there as the recipient, enjoyer, experiencer of those desires. Without me, it makes no sense at all to have any of these. Can I be happy if I am not there at all? Will money and material wealth make any sense to me if I am not there at all? I am the most essential component in this whole analysis, I am the one and the only common factor. All that we have talked about here includes me. Without me none of these make any sense. There is no other thing that is common to all the things we want. The answer to all of our questions should be sought right within me. Who am I?

In every one of my wants, I am an essential component, without me, none of these make any sense. Because I am always included, it cannot be away from me, it has to be close to me, it has to be with me, inevitably. Therefore, the one and only way to overcome all difficulties in life and seek unending happiness and bliss is to seek ourselves. Our self is always there with us, we see everything in the light of our own self, we experience all of our life in the light of our own self yet we fail to notice it. Most ordinary people in the world as also the educated and intelligent, miss out the very root of life. We miss ourselves. We have the solution to all of our problems right within us but we instead search the whole external world. We are seeing all the objects on the table but we are forgetting the light that actually illumines all these objects.

One may be sleeping on the softest mattress but feeling restless and deeply troubled. Another may be lying on a pile of sand in the hot Sun, yet sleeping blissfully like a baby. With or without anything else, it is possible for me to be happy. All the problems and troubles of life arise when I come in contact with others, when I contact the world outside. I am deep inside, even my body, sense organs, *manas* and *buddhi* are external to me. I can live without any of

them. I do everyday in my deep sleep. This is what we have learned in the first two chapters of this book. When I am deep asleep, there is no body, no mind, no space, no time, no people, no world. And there is no pain, no suffering, no anxiety, no worry, no fear either. I am blissfully happy, all to myself. Although I am not aware of anything, I am not dead, I am not unconscious, I am still living, I can wake up anytime. This experience of deep sleep shows that the root of all pain and sorrow is external to me, there is no sorrow or pain or suffering in my very core. If you accidentally touch a hot piece of metal what would you do? All you have to do is to withdraw your hand, this will suffice to rid you of all the burns and associated pain and suffering. We must first realize the source of all of our problems and then we must simply give it up. That is all. This is the secret of life. This is the way, this is the only way we can get rid of all problems in life once and for all. We will explain in the rest of this chapter what exactly it means to give up the whole world and how you can actually reach this level in stages. Be patient.

We want eternal existence, unending happiness, everlasting fearlessness. But all things in the world seem to be temporary, fleeting, unreliable. Even my own body *manas* and *buddhi* do not stay with me all the time, for ever. Is there anything which lasts for ever? Anything which is caused by an effect cannot last for ever. Anything which is acquired, anything which is dependent on something else, anything which is relative to something else, cannot be permanent. Whatever is acquired can go away. Whatever we have obtained may leave us one day. Only what is always there with us, only what exists everywhere, all the time, unconditionally, absolutely, independent of space and time, is dependable. Only such a thing can fulfill all our requirements, giving us everything we may want. We have already seen in the previous chapter that my self is

timeless, it never leaves me, it is inalienable, it cannot be taken away or stolen or lost, it is my own *svaruupa*, my own true nature. The self is absolutely independent, it is ever free. Therefore, the only place where I need to search for answers to all my questions is within my self.

My self or *aatma* exists and it exists absolutely independent of anything else, it is independent of even space and time. In fact it is the only thing that exists independently in the entire universe. Therefore, as long as I revel in my self, there is no fear of old age or death or re-birth. Unconditional, absolute, eternal existence is guaranteed. My first desire is fully satisfied. The self exists and the self alone exists, all other things in this world have only conditional, relative, dependent, temporary existence, like shadows, they are not real at all. Since the self exists and the self alone exists, there can be no fear at all in the self. One hundred percent safety, security of all kinds and total fearlessness is guaranteed. The self is the very quintessence of knowledge, it is the light that reveals the whole world, it is *cit*. The self is the very abode of all knowledge, it is complete knowledge. Knowing this, there remains nothing more to know, there will be no more curiosity, there will be no more any desire to seek more and more knowledge. Further, the self is the very abode of happiness and bliss. This is the only common factor in all of our experiences of happiness, whether in the waking state or in the state of dreams. The self is the root of all human wants, everything that anybody may ever want resides in the self, no where else in the entire universe. Therefore, the wise should give up the attachment to the whole world and revel in the self alone. This can rid us of all problems, all pains, all suffering and give us unending and limitless happiness and bliss. This is the secret of life, this is the science of life. Realize this and be free, free from the bondage of ignorance, free from all pains and agony. This is the real meaning of free-

dom.

Existence, knowledge, wisdom, vision, enlightenment, fearlessness, security, safety, satisfaction, fulfillment, happiness, bliss, absence of pain and suffering, purity, freedom, are all the qualities that exist in the self naturally. These are not acquired qualities, they are not obtained or bought, or got from anywhere else. The self is absolutely independent, it is even independent of space and time, none of these qualities dependent upon space, time, or other objects or events in the external world. Therefore, all these qualities are natural, inalienable, they can never be lost or eroded. I am verily this self, I am not really my body or my brain or my mind. I am therefore the very abode of all good things and I am totally devoid of all bad things. This is self realization. This self realization is the only way I can overcome all problems in life and get infinite and endless happiness and bliss.

If we give up the world, are we not going to lose out on all the worldly pleasures? We certainly do. Who would hesitate to give up 5 dollars if he can get 5 Million dollars in return? *aatma-sukha* or the bliss of the self is infinitely superior to the trivial joys and pleasures of the worldly kind. You need to experience this to convince yourself of this, there is no better way. There is not a single example of any self realized person feeling sorry for having given up the attachment to the material world. There is certainly no harm trying. Come try and see for yourself.

Only one in a Billion people actually get self realization. They free themselves from all problems and they immerse themselves in an ocean of bliss. They do not care for the world, they do not care for you. But if you seek such great souls and seek the knowledge of the self in all earnestness and sincerity, they will invariably guide you. They are real

gurus. This Earth has seen only a few such *jagadguru-s* over the last 4.8 Billion years of its existence.

What about all the other ordinary people? Don't they have any hope? Can they not overcome their difficulties in life and live a happy life? Every one can. We are not at all suggesting here that you have to renounce the whole world and become a monk or something like that. Not at all. You can lead a normal, worldly life, you can have all the normal pleasures of life, you can have family life, and yet hope for infinite happiness and zero suffering. This cannot be proved by mere logical argumentation, nor can it be proved by any scientific experiment. You can experience it yourself. This is an experience based topic, there can be no better proof than direct experience. The rest of this chapter will take us gradually from the mundane worldly level where you are now, to this highest level, to the very goal of human life, where you can transcend all the problems of the world once and for all. Be patient and keep reading.

3.6 What is Life?

To make the best use of our life, we must first understand life. What is life? What are the sure signs of life? What exactly is the difference between the living and the non-living? How does life begin? How exactly does it end? We need to dig deeper and resolve these critical questions right away.

We will start from the least discussed topic - death! Why talk of death, of all things in life? That too right in the beginning? Traditional wisdom tells us that we must always explore from the known to the unknown, from the sure to the unsure. There is one and only thing that is absolutely sure in life. And that is death. You cannot be sure

of anything else. Therefore the best, perhaps the only way to understand life properly is to understand death first. If we know what exactly is death, it is so much easier to know what exactly life is.

There is nothing inauspicious about death. Don't be scared. There is nothing scary about death. Fear is a sign of weakness, not strength. A weak mind cannot gain knowledge. Gaining knowledge is more difficult than winning a war. You need to be strong, very strong. Throw all your fears out of the window. There is nothing to be afraid of. Remember, you have started with a very ambitious goal of knowing the true, real nature of the whole universe, including your self, in its ultimate sense. Knowledge is power. The powerful are the masters, they rule the world. You have set out to become a free master of yourself and of the whole world. Where is the scope for fear for somebody who wants to conquer the whole world? Explore, boldly and fearlessly.

What does death mean? Your body stops functioning. That is simple, right? Wrong! There is more to it than meets the eye. Let us dig in.

3.7 Death

Breathing stops. That is death. But breathing can be restarted by periodic compression of the chest or by artificial oral resuscitation. The fact that breathing can be brought back is a proof that there is more to life than just breathing. Fish breathe somewhat differently. Plants do not breathe in and breathe out air through a nose like we do. Not all living beings breathe and inanimate gadgets may also be made to breathe. Respiration cannot be the main sign of life or death.

Heart stops. That is death. But even the heart can be brought back into action. A mild electric shock, for example will do the trick. This proves that death is not equal to stoppage of heart. Plants do not even have a heart. Are they not living? How can they die at all?

Today doctors and scientists hold that death equals stoppage of the functioning of the brain. A brain-dead person can be kept warm, with both respiration and blood circulation going on as usual, with the help of artificial life support systems, for any length of time. But the person will 'die' the moment the life support system is withdrawn. He will never get back to normal life. A brain-dead person is dead, as good as dead. That is death. This is what doctors say. What about plants? Are they not living? They do not even have a brain. Many lower animals also do not have a brain. You also did not have a brain when you were still a developing foetus in your mother's womb. Were you dead even before you were born? This definition cannot be correct.

Is reproduction the crucial factor? If you do not reproduce are you dead? Are you reproducing all through your life? Is locomotion the most important factor? Cars also move. Plants do not move at all, right?

A single cell cannot have lungs or heart or brain or other such organs. Yet, every living cell is living, it has life. It is born, it grows, it undergoes changes, it reproduces and it dies. What gives it all these abilities? Why can't a dead cell exhibit life? Why can't similar chemicals in a laboratory exhibit qualities of life? What is the crucial difference between life and death? What is that most singularly unique factor that puts life apart from death? Scientists do not seem to know.

You will agree that you have some knowledge. What happens to your knowledge when you die? Knowledge is not material, it is not made up of atoms and molecules, it has no mass, it does not occupy space. How can it die? If you die and your knowledge does not die where will it go? Will it be floating in the air like a ghost? What about your love and anger and greed and lust and jealousy and kindness and cruelty? Where do they go? Clearly, thinking at the body level, at a purely physical, material level will not give us satisfactory answers. We need to go beyond what scientists say. Scientists do not understand beyond the material body and the physical manifestations of life activities in the body.

3.8 Life and Death

Scientists think only at the level of the physical, material world. They think human beings are like computers. If you take out the electrical power supply, a computer which was full of action and life dies a sudden death. Just connect the power cable again and you can bring back the computer to life. Electric energy is the single unique factor that distinguishes between life and death for a computer. What about human beings?

Let us say a person dies at a particular moment of time which we shall call 't'. What exactly happens at time t? There is no significant difference in the body at time t- and t+, that is, just a moment before and just a moment after death. Deterioration and decay of the body start and progress slowly. Then what is it that makes the difference between life and death? What is life? What is death?

If one cell in the body dies, life goes on. If many cells

die, life may still go on. If all cells in the body die, the body is dead. Can we prescribe an exact limit, can we precisely determine the boundary between life and death? Life and death are poles apart, they are so very different that there cannot be any smooth transition from one to the other. The difference must be something very subtle, the change must be sudden, instantaneous, it cannot be smooth and gradual. Life and death cannot be understood merely in terms of our physical, material body. Birth is not the beginning and death is not the end. The crucial difference between life and death, between the living and non-living is not respiration or blood circulation or brain function or any or all of the human body functions. Living beings are conscious, non-living, or the dead are not. As long as consciousness manifests itself in a body, the body is living. It is the light of consciousness, the driving force of life, that enlivens all the organs including the brain and drive them into action, manifesting life. When the consciousness finds the body old, decayed, deteriorated to a level where it is difficult to sustain, it just leaves the body. Exactly like we take away a shirt that has become old and worn out and we just discard it. This is death. Life is consciousness, manifestation of consciousness in a suitable medium called body.

Death is the lack of such manifestation, not absence of consciousness. Consciousness is *sat-cit-aananda*, it always exists, it exists everywhere, without any limits or constraints. There is no point in this universe which is not filled with *sat*. The universe is flooded with *sat*. *sat* exists, only it exists, it exists everywhere and nothing else exists. *sat* exists independently, independent of anything else, nothing else exists independently. *cit* or pure consciousness is nothing but *sat*. This is not the same as mere awareness. Plants may not be 'aware' of anything because do not have a nervous system or brain. Yet they are living

and conscious.

Scientists think the brain thinks. They never ask who makes the brain to think. Who asks the brain to think? Under whose guidance, control or supervision does the brain work? A car engine is designed to keep running by itself once it is started. But it cannot start itself, a starter motor is required to start it. And somebody is required to start the starter motor. Nothing in the material world works all by itself. Who starts the brain? Your brain needs to be started afresh every time you wake up from deep sleep. It is our consciousness, the *cit*, which makes the body as also the mind to work. The heart beats because of the signals it receives from the brain. True. But what makes the brain to send these signals? A pace maker can substitute this function of the brain. A life support system can substitute all the functions of the brain required to keep the respiration, heart beat, blood circulation etc. going on as usual in a brain dead person. Then why can't these mechanical devices replace the brain and bring back the person alive? Because life is more than matter and machinery. Life is consciousness, life is *cit*.

This universe is filled with *cit* or consciousness. How then do we see life here and death there? The difference is merely a difference in manifestation. Light can manifest as light or as a shadow, as darkness. The Sun can shine brightly or cause himself to be covered up in a dark gloom by the clouds which are in fact his own creation. Life is manifestation of *sat-cit-aananda* in the form of vital functions of the body and the mind, death is lack of such manifestation. That is all. Every single living cell is a manifestation of *sat-cit-aananda*. No amount of scientific study can help us understand life and death. No scientist will ever be able to bring back a dead man alive. Life and death are not at all understood by scientists because they

only think of matter. Life is not matter. Life cannot be understood in terms of physics, chemistry or biology.

cit is there everywhere, this universe is filled with *cit*. But the *cit* manifests differently in different places. The lowest level of manifestation is seen in the inanimate objects. Individual living cells manifest life in their own way. Single celled micro-organisms exhibit simple yet complete and self-contained life. Plants manifest life differently than animals. Plants never move and they make their own food while animals move around, search for and eat food, digest, excrete etc. Life manifests differently in human beings than in lower animals. Life or death is merely a question of the degree and nature of manifestation of *cit*, which always exists and exists everywhere.

There is a common misconception that viruses are living beings like bacteria and other micro-organisms. Viruses are hardly living - they are merely chemical substances. They do not breathe, they do not eat, they do not digest or excrete, they have no brain or nervous system, they have no heart or blood. They have no limbs. They do nothing. They can stay like inanimate objects for any length of time without manifesting any aspect of life. They are really not living, they cannot be killed. There is no way to cure a viral fever except to kill the infected cells, the viruses themselves cannot be killed, they are already as good as dead. That is why you feel so weak and tired after a viral fever attack, you would have lost a good deal of your own body. Viruses can hardly be considered living beings. Yet, under suitable environments, that is, when they are inside other living cells, they can reproduce themselves, they can make copies of themselves and this can affect our health. Viruses are simple organic chemicals, there are an extremely large number of such possible chemicals, there is no way to prevent or treat their onslaught, except to keep

our own bodies strong, fit and healthy.

The difference between life and death is very small. Life and death are extremely subtle things, not amenable to the crude, superficial, materialistic, demoniac ideas of modern doctors and scientists. Doctors, hospitals, medicines are not the solution for health and well being. The human body is simply too complex for doctors to understand. There are thousands of chemicals in the body. The number of possible chemical compounds is more than the number of dust particles in the entire universe. Doctors prescribe all kinds of dangerous chemicals in the name of medicines today but no doctor, no scientist, not even all the scientists in the world put together can understand even a very small part of how thousands of chemicals react simultaneously in our body. No wonder modern doctors and medicines constitute a major cause of disease, suffering and death in the world today. We are a product of nature, we are not manufactured in laboratories or factories. Unless we give up our fancy for factory made medicines and modern doctors and hospitals, there is no way we can remain fit and healthy.

3.9 Life after Death

What happens after we die? Our body is cremated, buried, thrown to hawks, whatever, based on our customs and traditions. In any case it gets back into nature. When you cremate a body, all the water evaporates, fats and other combustible substances burn up giving up gases and solid ash. When a body is buried the body gradually decomposes and the matter gets absorbed and assimilated into nature. Similarly, when a tree dies or its leaves wither, they join back the common pool of organic material resources on Earth.

The water we drink today, including the purified, mineral water, was possibly somebody's blood or saliva or urine once upon a time. Countless men, women, animals, insects, birds, plants have lived and died on this planet during its long history. Where did all their excretions go? What happened to all those dead bodies? The same atoms, the same molecules which once formed the body of a snake or a tiger or a grass blade forms the vegetables and fruits we eat today. The same molecules of oxygen which once formed part of other living beings is the air we breathe today. And our bodies, our excretions, will all join this common pool and lead to fresh life. The manure formed by the dead and decomposed leaves nourishes a new born plant. New life starts from the dead and decayed. With fresh energy, with fresh vigour, with new ambitions and expectations. Nature is an excellent recycler.

It is so very illogical that most people in the world identify themselves so closely and inseparably with their bodies and yet do not believe in life-after-death! Life starts from the dead, life originates, survives, thrives and flourishes only from the dead. The atoms and molecules forming your body today have all probably been parts of other living beings some time or the other, somewhere or the other. You are partly a toad, partly a lizard, partly an apple, partly a banyan tree, partly a man, partly a woman, partly an American, partly an Iraqi, partly an Israeli. And when you die, nothing big happens. This wonderful machine of nature continues its miracle of recycling without caring a wink. You may not come back in the same physical form, with the same feelings and desires, but that is not necessary at all to say that there is life after death. Either we must accept that there is life after death or we must accept that we are not merely bodies. Otherwise, we cannot be logical.

Death is surely not the end. It is only a milestone in this eternal process of recycling. Neither is the birth a beginning. You existed long before you were born. You existed in your mother's womb. In fact you started off as a single cell. You grew and multiplied but remained undifferentiated up to some point - you had neither legs nor hands nor head nor brain. Yet you were live and kicking. Why feel so obsessed and arrogant about your body?

In fact you existed even before the first cell of your body was formed - you existed as the sperm and egg of your parents. And those sperm and egg were formed from the food your parents ate, the water they drank, the air they breathed and the Sunlight and energy they exposed themselves to. And where did that water come from? Where did that food come from? Surely from the common pool of material resources on planet Earth - the huge buffer that undergoes endless recycling. Life - Death - Life - Death - Life ...

To repeat, Death is not the end. And Birth is not the beginning. Both are just points on a rotating circle. Why should we feel so happy about our birth day? We celebrate our birth day every year. With each passing year you are only closer to the grave by one more year! Why is this a reason for celebration? And why should we be scared of death? Why do we even not want to think or talk of death? Why don't we celebrate death? Why should we mourn?

Life after death does not mean that you come back as the same man or woman, with the same body, same mind, same desires and ambitions, same knowledge, and same ignorance. Life after death simply means this so very obvious eternal recycling engine called nature. Fish eat fish. To grow, mature and give birth to more fish. Only to get back into the same cycle.

3.10 The Immortal

So far so good but we have only talked about what happens to the body after death. What about the *manas*? What happens to the *buddhi* and the *ahaMkaara*. Do they all die too?

As we have already seen, the *manas*, the *buddhi* and the *ahaMkaara* are all *mithyaa* - they are not permanent, they keep changing, they come and go. The *buddhi* vanishes in dreams. The *buddhi*, the *manas* and the *ahaMkaara* all vanish in deep sleep. We can live without them. We are different from any or all of them. None of them are *sat*. These are *mithyaa*, that is, mere apparent manifestations of the *sat*, they are mere illusory manifestations of our true self, which is *sat-cit-aananda*. They keep dying everyday even during our life, what is so great about their vanishing after the body goes?

The light of the burning candle casts a shadow of the stool nearby. If the stool is taken away, what happens to the shadow? The shadow also simply vanishes. We do not have to say where it goes, because the shadow has no independent existence of its own, it did not exist at all in the real sense and it did not die either. Now there is no stool, there is no shadow, but the candle continues to shine, all by itself. If there are other objects nearby, you can see them in the light of the candle. If there is nothing at all in the vicinity, nothing can be seen but the candle continues to shine on its own without any difference. This is what happens during deep sleep - we see nothing because there is nothing to see, not because the seer is not seeing. This is what happens after death too. We, that is, our true self, the *sat-cit-aananda*, the eternal, timeless, changeless, nameless, formless, omni-present truth, the ultimate reality, continues to exist without any difference whatever.

The body was a mere projection, a mere manifestation, a kind of a shadow of this eternal truth. So were the *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara* - they all arise from the *sat* and vanish into the same *sat*. Our anger and greed, our love and lust, our jealousy and hatred, our kindness and mercy, they are all mere manifestations of the *manas*, they come and go with the *manas*. Our *manas* vanishes during deep sleep and all our feelings and emotions vanish with it too. Do any of you feel angry or hungry during deep sleep? Similarly, our knowledge, our logic, our reasoning, our language and mathematics, are all manifestations of our *buddhi*. Neither the *buddhi* nor its manifestations are seen during dreams or during deep sleep. Our *ahaMkaara* also vanishes in deep sleep and we are not even aware of ourselves. The same, way, our *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaMkaara* and all their manifestations vanish at death, along with the material body. Nothing hangs on, like a ghost, after you die.

Anything which changes, anything which shows differences, anything which is not permanent, anything which keeps coming and going, is not worth taking too seriously. All the time and effort we put in acquiring, maintaining and pampering them will surely go waste one fine day or the other. Those who revel in the eternal self, which is in fact our own true nature, our own home, which is the only thing which really exists, are above all suffering. They are liberated ones. You can overcome all your problems and limitations and sufferings by merely turning yourself away from the fleeting falsities and concentrate instead on the ultimate reality.

Just as we keep changing our shirts, just as we keep discarding worn out clothes and buy new ones again and again in our life, the eternal self simply discards the worn out body and seeks a new body. The self never dies. It is always there, if not in this body, perhaps in another body.

Birth is not the beginning and death is not the end. There is no need to celebrate our birth days, nor do we have to weep and mourn a death. We enter this world crying. If a new born baby does not cry, elders panic and force it to cry. We continue to cry throughout our life as long as we take this false world around us to be real. The moment we realize the truth about the true nature of the universe and of the self, we are liberated and free, free from all bondage, all suffering, all misery. This is the secret of life. You are an immortal child of God. Why worry about death?

3.11 Heaven and Hell

Death does not imply that consciousness leaves the body, nothing physically leaves and goes away. It is only an artist's imagination that something shapeless, white or colourless or bright like light, leaves the body and goes away and vanishes into thin air. There are no ghosts or things of that sort, except in imaginary, artistic creations like stories and movies. There is no need to be scared of ghosts and the like. Artists weave stories where the spirit of the dead come back and haunt the living. There are no spirits. This is all *bhramaa* or hallucination, illusory imaginations of your *manas*. Our consciousness or *cit* is actually *sat*, it always exists and it exists everywhere. It exists even in the dead body, only it does not manifest as life, that is all. You can see life on a TV screen, you can see people and objects, you can see the subtle expressions on the faces of these people, you can hear their voices, you can feel the life and action in every scene but you must understand that there is really no such thing actually happening in the TV. There are audio and video signals, which are being projected on the TV screen, one dot at a time, but so fast that it all appears as a continuous whole moving living scene. The moment you switch off the TV, this entire drama of life stops, all of a

sudden, completely, and it becomes difficult even to imagine all the life and action and feelings and emotions that this TV screen is capable of projecting. Likewise, as long as the *manas* continues to get the light of our consciousness, that is, our *cit*, and reflects or projects it on our internal screen for us to see, we see, hear and experience life. The moment the light of the *cit* stops getting reflected by the *manas*, life comes to a complete and sudden halt. This is death. The *cit* itself does not die or go away anywhere, it is there in every nook and corner of the universe, there is not an inch in this world where it is not there, there is no place where it can go. The audio and video signals are like the life processes, physical manifestations of life. The moment the TV is switched off, these signals are no longer observable. The power, the prime mover, the engine that drives life and this whole world we experience, is *cit*. Like the electrical power which brings life to a TV or a computer when switched on and takes away all life the moment it is switched off, our own consciousness, which is *sat-cit-aananda*, can manifest or disappear at its own will. This is what we call life and death. You do not go to heaven or hell or anywhere else after death.

You started off life as a single cell. This single cell was living, it could manifest all the basic activities and processes of life. This single cell grew and multiplied but remained undifferentiated. At this stage, you had no hands or legs, no blood or bones, no nerves or brain, yet you were living. At this stage, you did not have a *manas* or a *buddhi*, you could not perceive the world outside, you still did not have feelings, emotions and thoughts like you have now, yet you were living, you existed, you were there, without a fully developed body or mind. You are not your body or *manas* or *buddhi*. You are not even *ahaMkaara* or self-awareness. You are *sat-cit-aananda*, you do not have a birth or a death, only your body and mind have. When you

die, your mind, that is, your *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara* all die. There are no ghosts or spirits, good or evil.

There is no separate heaven or hell. You do not go here or there. These are imaginations, practically useful imaginations though, they help ordinary people to seek good things and avoid bad things in life. They are created for the purpose of instilling a sense of morality, a sense of good and bad, to help people realize and remember that they are human beings and they need to remain humane at all times and under all circumstances. In reality, all of life, the good, bad and ugly part of it, are experienced now and here. Life is not something that has a beginning or an end, life is an eternal cycle. The body and every cell in it, every atom and molecule in it, keeps getting recycled endlessly - life - death - life - death - life - ... The *manas* appears and disappears, in different bodies, experiencing the joys and sorrows of life.

There is no reason or logic in our dreams but while we are still dreaming, we simply accept and enjoy our dreams without questioning anything. Likewise, we must accept this *jagat*, the world we experience in our *jaagrat* state of being awake, as a tentative, practical reality and simply live and experience life. We actually do not do anything in our dreams, we simply sit back, watch and enjoy, like we watch and enjoy a movie. Likewise, we must simply witness and experience and enjoy this life, we must simply accept and enjoy all the pleasures and pains that may come our way. We must simply live like human beings, as humane beings. Otherwise, we would be wasting life, like going to a movie, getting caught in endless struggles filled with anxiety and worry, and not enjoying the movie. Heaven and hell are both right here. Whether you make your life heaven or hell is very much within your hands. Understand life. Simply live. Live simply. Just live. Enjoy

life.

Do nothing. All the pain and suffering in life is your own making, because you do things, because you expect results of a particular kind, because you expect things from others and the world around you. Get wise and learn to overcome all your problems right now. Make this place a heaven for you and for others too. You have a right to enjoy life, this is your fundamental right, a birth right, no one can take it away from you. But you do not have a right to do anything which is harmful to others. Do not ask for heaven for yourself and hell for others. Do not try to enjoy life at the cost of others. Do not do anything from which you will gain and others will lose. Do not do anything anything which is good for you but bad for others. Stop doing all things which are harmful to others. Then this world will become a heaven for one and all.

3.12 The Frog in the Snake's Mouth

We all know our birthday. We celebrate our birthday every year, calling friends and relatives, blowing out candles, cutting a cake or going to a temple or whatever. Many happy returns of the day is the wish. Birth is a happy, auspicious occasion, worthy of celebration. Why is birth a happy event? Why should we celebrate our birthday?

We all know our birth day but none of us know our death day. Death may come anytime, today itself or after many many years. We just do not know. We all take it for granted that death is a sad, inauspicious event. We mourn a death. We do not even want to think of death. Why?

The new born baby starts its life by crying. It has to, otherwise elders get worried and they force it to cry. Then

it keeps suffering from pain, injury, diseases and mental tensions and worries throughout its life. Why is it that we celebrate birth as a happy occasion and mourn a death? Is it not true that death frees us from all the pain and suffering of the body and mind? Is it not a happy occasion?

Birth is not the beginning and death is not the end. We exist even before we are born and we continue to exist even after we die. Our body has a birth and a death, we do not have. There is really no need to celebrate a birth day, in fact with each birth day we only get one more year closer to the grave, right? Or is it that we celebrate the thought that one more year of suffering is over and we will be liberated from all this pain and suffering sooner?

The critical point is, we know our birth day but we just do not know our death day. How do we plan our life? If only we know both the start and the end points, we would know exactly how many days we have, we can make a list of all things we wish to do in life, attach priorities, sort, and do the highest priority jobs first. Since we have no idea about our life span, does it mean that we can never plan at all? Do not confuse planning for prediction. We cannot predict the future but we can certainly plan. Planned work is always better than unplanned work. Plans can go wrong but still we will at least have a clear picture of what went wrong, where, why etc. so that we can patch up, re-plan and make mid-course corrections as appropriate. Unplanned life cannot be better than a planned life. But how do we plan?

Our life has a known beginning and an unknown end. What is unknown is the date of the end, there is no uncertainty about the event itself. Death is for sure. In fact the only sure thing, the surest of all things in life is death. Our life is like the life of a frog which has already been caught

by a snake. The frog gets devoured slowly and as long as it is still alive, it keeps kicking like mad. We are live and kicking, like the frog in the snake's mouth, whose end is certain, sooner or later. Our life span leaks away every day, every hour, every minute, like water leaking off a pot with a hole in it. Life is a pot, full of fascinating things, full of pains and pleasures, joys and sorrows, wonderful and amazing. But we must not forget that the pot has a hole and life vanes away at the rate of one day per day. One day lost is lost for ever, never to return again. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand life, know how to live, realize the purpose for which we have been sent here, plan, and start working at the earliest possible point in our life.

Most people think that these are philosophical issues which can be taken up after retirement, after we have lived up to our commitments and expectations, after we have fulfilled our responsibilities in life, and when there is nothing else in life to do. By then, your life would be effectively over, what is the use of knowing what is life and how to live after it is all over? Start early in life, think of life, understand life, know what is it that you have to do in life and what is it that you need not or should not do in life. Plan, start working. Think that death may come anytime, tomorrow itself. So do the highest priority things today. Do not waste your time doing urgent things, urgent things need not be, and often are not, the most important things. Do the important things today, let the urgent things wait or let them die a natural death after a long enough wait. Let the deadlines die. Do not go after deadlines, forgetting your lifeline. If you are sure that you are going to die very soon, what is it that you would like most to do? That is what you must do today. This is how we must plan and work throughout our life, every day of our life. Otherwise, life would be squandered, wasted, whiled away in all kinds

of futile useless, wasteful, harmful activities and the most important things may never get done. Life is a count down timer. The count down has already started, it starts the very day you are born. Every moment is precious. Do not waste time. Do all the good things you wish to do in your life today. Tomorrow may or may not come.

3.13 The Poison Tree

Imagine a huge Poison Tree. It grows tall and big, with innumerable branches, bearing countless fruits. It is deep rooted, its stem is mammoth in size, its fruits are the most delicious. The taste and smell of the fruits are almost seductive, no one can resist the temptation. The tree is really so big, it has enough fruits for everybody. People throng that place, day and night, seeking its heavenly fruits. They eat their stomach's full but are never satiated, they always want more and more. The whole life is spent under the Poison Tree.

Life goes on like this, for several hundred years. Many people, especially the old, start getting minor problems - hair loss and baldness, premature greying of hair, eye irritation, skin problems, cracked heels, weakness and so on. They attribute it to their age. Doctors do not bother to diagnose the root cause of these minor problems, they do not consider these as diseases, and they prescribe treatments only to reduce the symptoms. Over the next few generations, people start getting somewhat more serious problems - sleeplessness, restlessness, digestive disorders, breathing problems, blood pressure, chest pain, nervous weakness and so on. Even people who are still in their thirties and forties start getting these problems. The human society starts accepting these as 'normal' and doctors continue to treat symptoms and take up serious treatments only when some-

thing really goes wrong, such as when a person suffers from a heart attack or kidney failure. Everybody thinks all is well and life goes on. Nobody thinks why all these are happening, nobody is bothered about prevention. People continue to throng the Poison Tree, they continue to enjoy its fruits, life goes on.

Over the next few generations, people start getting more and more serious health problems at earlier and earlier ages. Even those in the prime of their youth are rarely one hundred percent healthy. A few lone voices are heard here and there saying something must be wrong somewhere but nobody has time even to listen. Then even small children start getting serious problems. More and more children are born with confused sex, physical disabilities, heart problems, blood cancer, incurable mental disorders and so on. Still most people in the world continue to enjoy life as usual. Only a few kind hearted people start dedicating their lives for the welfare of these ‘unfortunate’ sufferers. No one ever stops and thinks why is all this happening.

We are right now at this stage. There are two possibilities. Either we will all wake up, realize the connection between what we are doing and what are getting in result, and change our lives drastically, or, we will go on and on, unmindful of the impending disaster. Within a few generations, human life on planet Earth would be completely wiped out. There will not be any medicines because all the people who were earlier discovering drugs, manufacturing them, selling them, would be ill and incapacitated too. There will not be any doctors, all the doctors would also have become patients. Already many are. In the very next few years you will see that most children will be born abnormal. Who will grow up to become a doctor or an engineer or a scientist or a researcher or whatever? If at all we wish to avoid such a ghastly and sudden end of the

human race along with so many other living species, we need to wake up and start thinking. We need to switch on our brains.

More and more people are becoming aware of the fact that everything is not OK with mankind today, there is something fundamentally wrong somewhere, and the consequences of complacency could be disastrous. But hardly anybody understands either the causal connections or the gravity of the situation or the urgency of the matter. Many good hearted people form charitable trusts, welfare societies, non-commercial foundations and mobilize people and funds and take up a wide variety of activities aimed at reducing the pain and suffering of mankind. They are all doing yeomen service to mankind. But one crucial point is somehow getting missed by all.

All the good hearted people are trying to cut off one small branch of the Poison Tree. Some are addressing poverty, others are looking at child labour. Some are concerned with sexual abuse and trafficking, while others are concerned with crime and terrorism. Some are worried about wars while others are highlighting the point that small arms are taking more innocent lives today than even the atomic bomb. They are all doing good things, noble as they are at heart. Despite all these efforts, we find that the Poison Tree is growing ever stronger and ever bigger and people are getting deluded by the magical attraction of its fruits and life goes as usual. What is actually happening?

If you trim a branch of a tree, several new branches shoot out quickly from that place. This is the nature of every tree. If you want to fell a tree, you must cut its roots. Any amount of trimming of its peripheral branches will only make the tree stronger and bigger. We need to identify the root cause of all human problems and attack

that straight, head on. There is no other solution. Many of you may think that while trimming even the minor boughs of this huge tree is becoming so very difficult, cutting off the very root must be practically impossible. You are wrong. With our combined will and determination, we can actually cut off this very root of this Poison Tree, thereby curing all human problems in one shot. All human problems are closely, inseparably inter-twined and we just cannot solve one problem at a time, ignoring the others. Also, any amount of treatment of the symptoms will not cure the disease, we must diagnose and attack the root cause straight away.

The root cause of poverty is ignorance. The root cause of disease and illness of the body is ignorance. The root cause of religious fundamentalism, of terrorism and anti-social activities, of war, of child abuse, of cheating, or theft, of robbery, of rape, of murder, or torture, of all human problems is ignorance, ignorance of what is life and how to live, what to do and what not to do. Heart attack or cancer or kidney failure or paralysis is not a disease - these are only external symptoms that show up at the level of our bodies. The cause is deep within. The root cause is ignorance. Ignorance is the root of this Tree of Poison. Remove this ignorance and this world becomes a heaven again. Continue to be complacent now and human life on planet Earth will be history within just a few years. It is time to act. It is not science or technology or economic development or material wealth that solves our problems. These are in fact the very cause of all of our problems, these are the very branches of this Poison Tree. Give up your fancy for science and technology, give up your fancy for the Poison Tree, give up your greed for money, give up your longing for the fruit of the Poison Tree. Wake up now, or you will die even before you come to know of it.

If you are suffering because you are taking poison every-day, the solution is not to reduce the poison intake. Why think of reduction, why think of alternatives? If something is bad, we must simply stop it completely, once and for all. Almost all activities of the modern man are producing poisons, polluting the environment, affecting the health of the body and mind, even corrupting our thinking. Our modern life style is the Poison Tree. Cars and bikes, computers and Internet, phones and pharmaceuticals, industries and economic activities are all the fruits of the Poison Tree. People ask for all these because they are ignorant, they do not know who they are, they do not know what they want in life, they do not know how to get what they want. We can survive if and only if we simply cut off the very roots of this tree of ignorance. This is the only recipe for survival of the human race. If we cannot even survive, where is the question of living well and enjoying life? Before we can think of making this world a heaven, we must first rid this world of all its hellishness. We must first stop doing all bad things. For this we must first understand and accept our ignorance.

3.14 The Path to Success

Remember the scare of the snake seen in a rope? No action, no amount of hard work would have helped you to overcome that fear. The strength of your body, your muscle power, will not help you. Devotion and faith would have surely helped you maintain your presence of mind and to summon up courage, but finally only after you let the light in and saw the rope clearly and not the snake, did your fears really vanish. Physical strength, fitness, health and hard work, mental stability, balance and calmness developed through faith and devotion or meditation are all very useful in helping you gain the knowledge of the real. But it

is only this knowledge of the real that ultimately liberates from all fears, all suffering and misery. Unless and until we gain that knowledge we will continue to suffer in this world. Knowledge is power. Knowledge is the one and the only cure for all human problems, whether individual or at the level of the human society as a whole. There is nothing as great, as sacred as knowledge in this universe.

Knowledge gives us power. The powerful become the masters. Slaves do not have power, only masters have. To become a master, to master ourselves and the whole world, we need power, great power and this power can come only through knowledge. Atomic bombs and nuclear bombs cannot give us freedom, they cannot liberate us from the suffering and misery we face in life. Knowledge can. The power of a nation comes not from its defence preparedness or the stock pile of weapons of mass destruction. Power comes only from knowledge, real knowledge, not pseudo knowledge such as what modern science and technology give us.

Those who are powerful, those who have mastered themselves, are free to do whatever they want, without any constraints or limitations. They can master the world too. They can get happiness, easily, for, there is nothing to stop them. The goal of life is to enjoy life, in the deepest sense of the word, in the most befitting sense. The goal of life is to be happy. The goal of life is to overcome all fear, suffering, misery, agony, pain. To reach this goal, we need to gain knowledge, real knowledge, knowledge of the self. That is what we have tried to do in the first two chapters of this book. Go back and read again and again until you have mastered all of that.

How can we gain knowledge? Knowledge is our own very nature, we are nothing but knowledge of the highest kind, pure consciousness, *cit*. The very nature of fire is

to burn brightly and give out warmth and light. But the fire gets covered with ash and appears dark and cold. The very nature of a copper vessel is to shine brightly but it gets covered with a layer of rust and dust, and appears dull. The very nature of a mirror is to reflect but it gets covered with dirt and dust and loses its ability to reflect. Likewise, our knowledge gets covered with a thick layer of ignorance and we start thinking that we are dull and ignorant. There is no way to add cleanliness to a vessel, we can only scrub away the coating of rust and dirt. There is no way we can incorporate the power of reflecting to a mirror, it already has that in it, we can only wash away the coating of dirt and dust. We cannot give the power of burning to fire, it is the very nature of fire to burn but we can surely remove the ash covering the burning fire. Likewise, we cannot get knowledge from anywhere, from books or from the Internet or from a guru, knowledge is the very core of our own selves. All we need to do is to cast away the adamant covering layers of ignorance that we wear with a great sense of attachment and ownership. The one and the only way to gain real knowledge is to give up our ignorance, our attachment for the unreal, our attachment to our body, our *manas*, our *buddhi*, to our *ahaMkaara* and the external material world. There is no other way. Gaining knowledge means getting rid of ignorance. You can train a horse or a dog but not an ant although the ant is very intelligent. You must already have it in you, otherwise nothing can be learned or taught. You are knowledge incarnate, you have it in you, so you can mine it out. You can the kindle the fire deep inside you. Cleanse your mind, remove all the dirt, remove your ignorance. You take bath everyday, why not start giving bath to your mind as well?

In the rest of this book, we shall learn down to earth and very practical means and methods of actually getting rid of our ignorance and regaining knowledge of the real.

With knowledge will come power to master ourselves and hence the whole world. We can overcome all our problems, reach great heights, achieve human excellence in every walk of life, make this world a heaven on Earth, we can all enjoy life to its fullest. This is the promise.

3.15 The Problem and the Solution

There is one and only one big obstacle in our quest for real knowledge. This is our very own *manas*. The *manas* is always in a disturbed, troubled, confused state, like a disturbed pool of water. You can see all the mud and dirt moving in circles creating ripples of waves. There is motion, or commotion, there is action, there is movement, things are happening but there is no clarity. Life itself is like that.

When you disturb a pool of water by stirring it up, you cannot see what is there at the bottom. Allow the water to settle down, slowly. All you have to do is to stop disturbing it. The waves slow down, the ripples die down gradually, on their own. Finally the water in the pool comes to a completely stable and calm state. Now peek in and you can clearly see every grain of sand beneath the water, even if the water is quite deep. This is the only solution. Do anything else, stir it up further, pour more mud, add pure water, let fish in, float boats, do anything you can think of, you will not get clarity. You cannot see the truth, as long as your *manas* is in a highly confused, disturbed, troubled state. You cannot see the truth even if it is glaring right in front of your eyes. Because your *manas* acts as an opaque obstacle. It is impossible to see the truth unless your *manas* calms down completely, becomes totally stable, becomes completely transparent. There is no other way.

Let us say you are reading a newspaper, enjoying a cup of hot coffee. The warmth of the morning Sun rays coming in through the window is lighting up the newspaper. There is some fine print and you look out for a lens to read it. Accidentally, the Sunlight gets focused onto a sharp point by the lens and the paper catches fire. The total amount of solar energy falling on the paper did not change at all, the lens only focused all this energy on to one point and the paper heated up and started burning. This is the power of concentration. Our *manas* has enormous capacity but it all gets diverted in random directions and gets completely wasted. Normally our *manas* is like a big mirror that has been broken down into a large number of small mirrors, covered with dust and dirt, distorted in shape and disoriented in all kinds of directions, constantly vibrating and changing shape and orientation. Even if the truth is flashing glaringly right in front of this fragmented *manas*, we get only a confused haze, we cannot see anything clearly. Concentration means putting all these pieces of mirrors back into a single seamless whole, ironing out all the distortions, make it flat, orient it in the right direction, clean it, and arrest all the vibrations and trembling. Then the *manas* becomes like a smooth, clean, plane mirror, it can reflect clearly. We must learn to concentrate on one thing, brushing aside all the thousand other thoughts that try hard to steal a bit of time from the *manas*. When the mind becomes free of all other thoughts and focuses its attention single-pointedly on one thing, then we get to know that one thing properly. This is *ekaagrata* or single-pointedness. If only we master the art of concentration, we get tremendous power and capacity to do whatever we want in life. We are all capable. We must realize this truth and then work towards mastering the art of putting it into practice. This is the art of life.

Most of us think that if are faced with a difficult problem in life, we must use all our intelligence, think deeply and repeatedly about the problem, keep thinking until a solution flashes. This we think is the right method to see the solution to the problem we are facing. Some call it research. Scientists keep thinking deeply about the research problem they are faced with, conduct experiments, note down observations, think, discuss, write down, make presentations, argue, and tax their brains to the limits. This will never work. No scientist has understood the true nature of the universe or of himself and this method of scientific investigations will never lead us to the truth. The thought waves only disturb us more and more and we only get more and more confused. Many times scientists have actually come quite close to the truth but have invariably failed to recognize it. They are blinded, by their own *manas*. The method to seek truth is in fact the exact opposite - to stop thinking. Strange but true.

We need to observe our own *manas*, observe the thoughts moving and rolling and disappearing and reappearing endlessly, we must master the techniques of slowing down our thoughts, of calming down of *manas*, and finally completely stopping all thoughts. Stop thinking and your *manas* becomes totally transparent and the truth that was obscured so far by your *manas* appears bright and clear right in front of you. You do not have to carry out any experiments, you do not have to establish laboratories, you do not have to purchase costly equipment, you do not need co-researchers and research students, you do not need any funds or projects or consultancy. everything you need is right within you. All you need is to make your opaque *manas* transparent, by stopping thinking altogether. This is the one and the only path to truth. This is the aim and scope of education. All else is at best useless.

The *manas*, like electricity, is all powerful. We need to control electricity using transformers, switches, fuses, trippers etc. Otherwise it can be dangerous, even fatal. Likewise, the *manas* needs to be controlled, otherwise it will destroy everything like wild fire. There ends the similarity. There is a big difference. Generating, transmitting and using electricity, manufacturing, using electrical appliances, and disposing off used electrical and electronic items are all dangerous, destructive activities. They exploit and damage the Earth, our own home. A well trained and disciplined mind is equally powerful but totally harmless. God is great, He has given us only absolutely harmless things. It is foolish to make anything new on our own. We have to learn to live with our body, mind and what nature directly gives us, nothing else. Everything in life can be and should be done using only our own body and mind, using only naturally, readily, directly available resources like water, stone, mud, wood and the like. All other modern, man-made materials and artifacts are dangerous, they destroy the environment, they destroy us, they destroy the very foundations of life.

Here we shall offer several simple, down to earth, highly practical methods and techniques to observe our own *manas*, to slow it down, to reduce thinking, and to ultimately block all thoughts. You do not have to be a super intelligent person or a great scientist or a fantastic researcher or wise philosopher or a brilliant logician. Anybody can practice these methods and see progress themselves. This book is for you. Read it carefully, read it again and again, think about it, understand it, practice it, internalize it, make it your life. That is the best thing that can happen to you in your life.

3.16 Your Pet Dog and You

Let us say you are taking your pet dog for a walk and all of a sudden the dog escapes from your hold and starts running hither and tither, barking and scaring the passers by. What would you do? You will follow a few simple steps to bring it back under your control. Step number one is to observe where exactly it is. Step number two is to go near it. Step number three is to cleverly catch it so that it does not escape. The last step is to slowly bring it fully under control so that it stops barking and disturbing other people on the road.

You need to follow exactly the same steps to bring your mischievous and restless mind under your control. You need to follow exactly the same steps: 1) Observe your *manas* - where is it right now? What is it doing? What is it thinking of? 2) Go near it. You cannot catch the dog unless you go near it. You cannot catch your *manas* unless you are able to go near it. 3) You need to catch it, hold on to it, not allow it to escape and go somewhere without your knowledge or permission. 4) You need to master the techniques of taming it, training it, keeping it under your control.

Controlling your *manas* is not very different from controlling a pet dog, in a way. There is only one difference. The dog is a physical object visible outside, you can see it with your eyes, you can catch it with your hands. The *manas*, on the other hand, is inside us. It is not a material object. You cannot see it with your eyes, you cannot catch it with your hands. It is subtle and slippery. Therefore, you will need to put in some time and effort and master the techniques of observing and working in the internal, subtle world. We shall take you gradually through these steps over the next several sections. Needless to say practicing

is as important as understanding the principles and techniques. If you can manage to get the support of an able guru, one who is himself self-realized, one who has mastered himself, one who is well read in the original works, one who has learned everything properly in the traditional way, one who can guide you step by step in these techniques, then you are very lucky. Otherwise, you can still make good progress by reading this book, reflecting deeply on the ideas, understanding them properly, and then trying to practice sincerely on your own.

You must not fall into the trap of pseudo-experts, ignorant or selfish as they might be. Practically all that is taught, learned, done in our modern scientific system of education and research is limited to the external, physical, material world, which is all completely useless here. Has any teacher taught you these simple steps in the internal world during your schooling or higher education? Are these the steps you follow in your laboratories and research institutions? Do you have people who have mastered these techniques to teach you and lead you and guide you in theory and practical classes? What is the use of all the subjects you have studied in school and college, what is the use of all the techniques of problem solving you have learned, what is the use of all the laboratories and equipment and super computers, what is the use of your education if it does not tell you what is life and how to live? What is the use of a system of education which will not help us to master ourselves? How can we master the universe, how can we rule the world, if we cannot even control ourselves? Only those who know who they are, only those who have mastered their own *manas* are the truly educated. Only the self-realized can be called gurus. Others are ignorant. Those who do not even know who they are, what knowledge can they impart to others? Think.

3.17 Locating the Enemies

To control anything, we must understand it well, very well. You know your pet dog very well, you know its ways and means, you know its strengths and weaknesses, and that is why it is easy to keep it under your control. You take it for a walk, your dog does not take you for a run. By the same logic, we need to understand our *manas* first, we need to understand it very well. This is the first lesson in life.

The *manas* is the seat of all perceptions, sensory as well as internal. When you are enjoying eating a Gulab-Jamoon (a kind of sweet made of milk fats immersed in sugar syrup), it is your *manas* which is actually enjoying it. The tongue only senses the taste and sends signals to the *manas*. A Gulab-Jamoon produces no joy if pushed into the mouth of a person in a state of deep sleep or coma. Also, the *manas* can actually obtain the same experience in a dream without even opening the mouth. Perception, real or imaginary, happens inside the *manas*, the body, the sense organs, the brain, the nervous system, the objects in the external world, are all completely irrelevant. Forget them all. If a needle pricks, the skin sends signals to the *manas* and we experience pain there, that is, inside our *manas*, not where the pin pricks. We may point our fingers at the foot and say it is paining ‘here’ but no pain is actually felt ‘here’ or ‘there’. All ‘here’ and ‘there’ is right within our *manas*. The *manas* is the experiencer, not the body. The *manas* experiences hunger and anger, desire and drudgery, love and laziness, romance and restlessness. It is the seat of all feelings and emotions, good, bad and ugly. Life is so beautiful because of all these emotions and feelings. Life would be dull as dead without these emotions and feelings. Life without emotions is not life at all. It is the *manas*, not the body, not the *buddhi*, not the self, which experiences all the pains and pleasures of life. Materialists

are dead fish, never entertain them.

There appears to be an eternal, universal cosmic law of nature which makes us all like pleasures and hate pains. None of us can escape this. To seek pleasure and avoid pain, man is willing to go to any extent. In fact all of human history can be traced to this one single principle. Everything that we do or do not do in life is because of this. The mind is a pleasure seeker. To seek pleasure is not bad. In fact nature has already provided for all that is necessary to seek and enjoy simple pleasures of life. The problem with the *manas* is that it is childish and ever restless. The *manas* never grows up, it never matures, it remains mischievous all through life. And it is devoid of all logic and reason. It does not know any limits. It keeps seeking pleasure by hook or by crook, by right means or by wrong. It is ready to set aside all norms, all etiquette, all limits, all rules to seek pleasure. Seeking pleasure is itself not bad but the question is who controls whom. It is OK if you take your dog for a walk, it is not OK if your dog starts taking you for a run. As long as the *manas* is fully under your control, all is fine. But invariably, the *manas* gains the upper hand and starts dictating terms with you. You become a slave of your own *manas*. The *manas* is the most singularly unique source of all human problems.

Dancing to the tunes of our *manas* is not freedom, in fact it is slavery, slavery of the worst kind. Most people in the world do not understand this, they think being able to do whatever they want, that is, whatever their *manas* wants, is freedom. This is not freedom, it is complete slavery. Real freedom is being able to do things, and being able to restrain yourself from doing things, as per or against the will of your *manas*, all with equal ease. Pleasure and sorrow are both disturbances, equally strong disturbances of the *manas*. They show polarity, they are like plus and minus,

but otherwise they are both same. Both are disturbances of the *manas*, but are equally undesirable, we must learn to cut down on all disturbances of the *manas* or we will remain slaves of our own mind. We normally think pleasure is good for us and pain is bad for us. This is the big mistake we all do. Those who have mastered themselves neither seek pleasures nor try to avoid pains. They simply take whatever naturally comes their way, remaining completely undisturbed, balanced, equipoised and stable. This is the art of self control.

We want to control the whole world, but we cannot even control ourselves, we cannot control our own *manas*! All our enemies are inside us, right inside our own *manas*, nowhere outside. We need to wage a war, not against other people or other countries, but against the enemies hiding deep inside us. We have six great enemies: lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy. The first step in war is to know our internal enemies. Let us understand our enemies first, then we can think of winning over them.

3.18 *kaama*

We go after the pleasurable, thinking we will get joy, happiness, satisfaction. We seem to get some but the *kaama* or desire to get more intensifies. We do not get full satisfaction and we go after pleasure again and again. This is like trying to put off a fire by throwing fuel into it! The fire only becomes bigger and burns more intensely. Does fire ever say enough? It has infinite capacity to burn down anything and everything that goes into it. Its desire to burn only increases, you cannot pacify a fire by adding fuel to it. We can never get enough pleasure in life, we can never get so much pleasure in life that we will say enough.

Why try to something that can never be got? This will only lead to frustration and anger. It is not wise to try and give our *manas* whatever it asks. It is not wise to try to satisfy a fire by providing as much fuel as it wants. We must instead learn to quench the fire. A fire can be quenched only by pouring water, extinguishing the fire once and for all. The desire must end. The longing must go. The fire must dwindle. The passions must subside. Only then can the fire be brought under control. The coolness of water, a cool head, is what you need. The heat of your young blood is the fuel that cannot quench the fire.

Fire fighting is a dangerous game. Only trained fire fighters can play with fire. They can create fire and control it, without becoming victims, without getting burnt. It is a great skill. And it comes from knowledge of how to play with fire and a lot of practice. Lust is exactly like this. Great minds, who have understood the true nature of fuel and fire, who have mastered the art of creating fire, keeping it under control and quenching it at will, can experience great joy in playing with fire. Lesser mortals know how to create fire but they do not know how to bring it under control. To start a fire all you need is a match box! The match box is so cheap, readily available and so easy to use. But how do you bring a fire under control? That is hard, that you do not know. Half knowledge! Half knowledge is worse than total ignorance. This is like taking an aeroplane to the skies before you have learned how to land. You will surely crash and perish. People suffer because they have half knowledge. They lose control, they become the controlled, they lose freedom, they get burnt, they suffer.

It is extremely difficult to completely overcome the animal in us. We are bound by the eternal cosmic laws of nature. We cannot escape. But with knowledge and prac-

tice, we can learn fire fighting and continue to be masters. We can continue to be free and happy. Without surrendering to the fire and becoming slaves. Kindle the mind and experience the bliss of life but never allow yourself to become a slave of our passions. Take your dog for a walk but never allow your dog to overpower you, never allow your dog to take you for a run and drag you helplessly hither and tither. You may say this is easy to say but difficult to practice. You are right, it is difficult, it is indeed very difficult, but it is not impossible. You have the whole of your life to practice and master this art. This is the only thing for you to do in life, you can do it, you must keep trying. Never give up.

3.19 *kroodha*

kroodha or anger is one of the worst enemies of man. One word spoken in anger can make everything upside down. It takes a good deal of time and effort to make a pot. It takes no time for an angry club to reduce it into pieces. Anger destroys, annihilates, pulverizes, reduces everything to ashes in no time. Anger is a very powerful fire. Whole kingdoms have been burnt to ashes by the anger of one uncontrolled mind.

When you are angry, you do not know what you are saying or doing. You have lost your freedom. You have become a slave, a slave of your angry mind. Slaves do whatever they are asked to do. They cannot think, judge or reason. To be free, to be like masters, to be happy, you must control your anger.

How do we control our anger? Anger is like lust but with a difference. Desires are natural for man. You do not have to eliminate them completely. You cannot and you

need not. But anger is almost completely unnecessary and completely avoidable. The need felt for getting angry is rarely real and you can simply take it as completely unnecessary. You can lead a perfectly normal life without ever getting angry in your life. It is not, therefore, a question of kindling a fire and keeping it under control. The fire of anger should never be kindled. For, once it is created, an entire fire brigade will find it hard to quench it. Anger must be eliminated altogether. Observe carefully and nip it at the very source. There is no other way. At the most you may have to pretend that you are angry, that too only in exceptional situations, in order to keep others from taking the wrong path.

Environmental pollution is making us all more and more irritable. People drive rashly today, they quickly get upset or angry, they have a strong tendency to fight, all because of this. Anger is a psychosomatic disorder. It arises from a complex interplay of the body and the mind. Stomach and intestinal irritation and ulcers, which are the somatic causes of anger, arise from bad food habits and poison in drinking water. Junk food, soft drinks etc. contain harmful chemicals. Chlorine added to water to make it bacteria-free is a very harmful chemical. Chlorination of water is not done with pure chlorine, a variety of chlorine compounds are used and the commercial grades of these compounds used in many countries contain a number of other harmful chemical impurities. Pesticides in drinking water cause the maximum damage. Our body has developed a fantastic immune system over Millions of years of evolution to fight against the onslaught of microbes but it is not designed to handle all the harmful chemicals we have started using so freely in the last couple of hundred years. We need to first control the external disturbances and then get to mind control. Avoid taking poisoned food and water. Almost all human interventions of the modern man cause

chemical pollution, which is so dangerous that it can wipe out all forms of life from planet Earth before we can realize. Unfortunately, nobody, not even the environmentalists are understanding the gravity of the situation. Do everything possible in your hands to reduce environmental pollution, especially chemical pollution, which is largely invisible and hence unnoticed. This is the first step.

3.20 *loobha*

loobha is miserliness. A miser wants to get more and more but he does not want to give anything to anybody. He wants the whole world for himself. Asking for more than the need is called greed. He does not understand that the whole world is already his and there is nothing more for him to gain. He does not understand that giving is elevating while getting and hoarding is demeaning. He does not understand that he has nothing to lose by giving. Giving less and taking more is the very definition of cheating. It is human to give more, take less, not the other way round. Is any businessman human? Think.

What do we need? We need food, water, air, clothing, shelter, education and health care. Anything else? Anything else you may want is purely psychological. In the name of standards of living, we have become increasingly consumerist. Simple living and high thinking has gradually given way to high living and simple thinking! Furniture, cell phone, radio, TV, music system, fridge, washing machine, mixer-grinder, microwave oven, car, computer, ... all are considered necessities today. We have even started damaging the essentials like air and water because we cannot live without the Internet and the laptop and the cell phone and a thousand other material gadgets. Those who have a car, want one for each person in the family. And

then they want one for going to the club in the morning, one to go to the office during the day and one for picnics and outing during the week end. Where does need end and luxury begin?

There is enough in nature for all our need but enough for our greed. We must carefully analyze and understand the boundary between necessities and luxuries. We all have a right to live, to live well and to enjoy life. But we do not have a right to harm others, we do not have a right to damage, pollute and poison the air, water and soil system, which are common shared resources of all human beings, in fact of all living beings, both of the present and future generations. The world is in a brink of disaster today. Human life may not be possible a few years from now unless we wake up today. We need to stop all the unnecessary and harmful activities we are doing today in the name of science, technology, economics and business. We must learn to be happy and satisfied with food, water, air, clothing, shelter and the like, not much more than these. There is no need for anything man-made, except for the bare essentials like basic clothing. We must learn to live, work and enjoy life using only our body and mind, nothing else. Otherwise the entire human race will be destroyed very soon.

Money is a powerful tool in the hands of man. Instead of using that power intelligently for achieving our goals of life, if we become slaves of money and spend all our life only earning, saving and multiplying money, we have lost time, effort, energy, health, freedom. We have become slaves of money instead making money to work for us. This is the result of greed and confusion. Giving less and taking more is the very definition of cheating. Business means making profit, and profit means giving less and taking more. Business means cheating, all business is cheating. Business is neither good nor required. Businessmen are not men, they

are not humane, giving less and taking more is not humane. Economic development is neither required nor good for humanity. In fact money is largely unnecessary. There are a mind boggling number of different species of living organisms on planet Earth, none of them need money. We too lived without money for Millions of years. Why can't we live like that now? Think.

You may argue that a businessman provides some service and charging some money for that service cannot be called cheating. Why is making profit bad? After all, the businessman also has to make his living. Yes, if the businessman provides a useful service and charges a small amount extra, if the price is cost plus a small margin, it is all fine. What is given should include not only the material objects but also intangibles like service and convenience. After including all these, if there still a net profit, that is surely cheating. Costing should include not only the material, labour and other aspects of manufacturing cost but also tax, transportation, storage, delivery, maintenance, and all other intangible benefits to the customer. And then, price should equal the cost. Today there is no such rule in the world, either moral, legal, or generally understood and accepted. Most items are priced very high and the customers have no other option than to pay, thanks to monopoly, collusion and so on. Here is a sure test: if the businessman lives a life similar to that of his customers, if his standard of living is comparable to that of his customers, all is fine. Invariably, we find that businessmen are super rich, while the end users continue to live a meager hand-to-mouth existence. Businessmen take more money than they need for their own life. They extravagantly spend their money, seek all sorts of luxuries, and in that process pollute, exploit and damage the environment. They indulge in all sorts of unrighteous activities and the poor customers share a part of all the sin these businessmen ac-

crue, for having supported all those sinful activities. This is not a question of envy or jealousy - most rich people in the world are actually bad people. Business arises from a combination of ignorance, foolishness and greed.

If you believe in money that is one thing, if you impose that view on all the others, then there is infringement of freedom. Most people may want Internet but what about those who want to live in an Internet free environment? They have the freedom of not using a computer but today they are forced to live in an environment filled with wireless Internet signals, radio signals and mobile phone signals. Birds neither need nor like any of these signals. Don't they have a right to live too? Everybody in the world is now forced to fall in line, whether they believe in these values or not. Government policies presume that everybody is money minded, everybody should spend all their life earning and spinning money, money should be in circulation and so on. People who do not want to earn money and spend money also have a right to live a normal life in this world. There is absolutely no way of spending money without doing anything harmful. Spending money is almost always a sin. There are people still living in the world who believe that money should not be spent unless absolutely essential, for their survival etc. Why should they be forced to accept others' views? This is where our freedom has been infringed, this is why we have to now fight back. You may consider loud noises as music and you may claim your freedom to play your music system at so many thousand watts power but you cannot forget that I like peace and I have a right to live in a noise free environment too. You have freedom to do what you want in life but you do not have a freedom to come in the way of others' freedom. Not all people in the world are greedy. But the greedy few are dictating and ruling the whole world.

Money is powerful, very powerful. You can achieve many things in life with the power of money. To handle any powerful device, one needs proper training, experience and skill. Can everybody handle electrical power? Mistakes will give you shocks, can even be fatal. Can everybody handle a nuclear bomb? Money is more powerful than a bomb. Most people do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skill in handling money. They do not understand that money is the means, not an end in itself. Good air, water, food, medicines are all already there in nature. Good education is free, even today. Real health care is also free, or at least almost free. Most people in the world do not need money nor do they know how to put it to good use.

Greed is a wild fire that engulfs the whole world. It does not produce heat and so no one notices it. Most greedy people do not even know that they are greedy. It is the most dangerous of all fires. Because it burns without your noticing it. It is a cold fire. The wise should stay away. If you accidentally touch a hot object what should you do? You must simply withdraw your hands immediately, right? Is it not foolish to hold on to that object more and more tightly? Holding on tightly to money and material wealth is exactly like that, it is foolish, it is destructive. A dragon fly accidentally came into the house and entered the toilet with a closed glass window. It tried very hard to somehow get out of that closed window but could not. It never made any attempt to explore other means of getting out. The door was widely open and it could have easily flown out of the door. It would not have lost anything. But its attraction and attachment to its idea of getting out the closed glass window was so great, it just did not try. Likewise, we are so attached to money and materials that we cannot even think of forgetting them and looking elsewhere. Try once, you will really lose nothing at all. In

fact you really do not have to give up money or materials or anything, you only have to give up your attachment to these. This concept of attachment is simple yet rarely understood. We will have more to say on this later. Be bold, try and see. You cannot conclude anything from an experiment that is not conducted at all. Do not jump to any conclusion about how difficult and painful life would be without money and material wealth. You have not even tried so far. You do not know.

3.21 *mooha*

If there is something that people love most, it is themselves! Nobody dislikes herself or himself under any circumstance. We all have very high opinion about ourselves. People love their body, their *manas*, their *buddhi*, their knowledge, their attitudes, their views, whatever is theirs. This is but natural.

People also have great attachment to all that they possess - their kith and kin, their property, even a trivial object such as a pen or a pin. We are very fond of our loved ones, the members of our family. This is also natural.

But when this love and affection expands into overpowering obsession, then we get into trouble. Instead of getting ready to sacrifice the body for the nation, people are ready to sacrifice the nation for their bodies. People go to court, fight, even kill for the sake of property. They say this land belongs to me. Millions have lived and died on this land. You come and go but the land remains. Does the land belong to you or you belong to the land?

Excessive attachment to 'I' and 'mine' is called *mooha* or delusion. Your youth, beauty, wealth, everything decays

and goes one day or the other. Spouse will go, children will go, you will also go. Excessive attachment leads to delusion. When we are deluded, we yield to our *manas* and surrender the *buddhi*. We become slaves. We inflict suffering on others and make our own lives miserable. Peace of mind is lost. The fear of losing greatly affects our mind.

You love yourself and all that is yours the most. They should give you happiness and bliss. Take good care of yourself and your belongings so that you can use them effectively for achieving the goals of your life. But monitor your mind regularly, know the limits. Love and affection are sweet but poisonous in excess. The moment you lose peace of mind, know that you are deluded, you have developed excessive attachment. Overcome the obsession and you are back to a free, happy, peaceful, blissful person once again.

Realize that you are the entire universe, everything is already yours, there is no difference between you and others, there is no difference between what is yours and what is not. Realize your own true nature and overcome your delusion. All are equal. You are no better or worse than anybody else. There is nothing that is yours that can be lost or taken away by others. There is nothing that belongs to somebody else and you need to somehow acquire. Understand and practice equality. Everything in this world was already there before you came here and everything will continue to be there after your body goes. Treat your house, your belongings, everything on Earth for that matter, as if it is all a hotel room you have booked for temporary use. Use them but do not exploit or damage. Treat your people as co-passengers in the journey of life, they come and go as per their own life plans, they may come and go anytime without your knowledge or control. Do not expect anything from anybody. Realize the truth and be happy.

3.22 *mada*

Every coin has two sides. We too have the two sides, the positive and the negative. We feel proud of our positive side. We take pride in all the good things in us. Pride is good, it gives us self respect and confidence. It helps us to progress despite our weaknesses. However, excessive and baseless pride amounts to arrogance. We will start thinking that we are on top of the world, we are the masters, we control the whole world and in that feeling of arrogance and hotheadedness, we start dominating, suppressing and ill-treating others. We may even become cruel. We may wage wars and kill. This is *mada*.

We are proud of our nation. Patriotism is good - it helps us to project our strengths, overcome our weaknesses and unite against external aggression. But we need to understand that we are not born in our country out of our choice! It is purely a matter of chance! You could have as well been born in your enemy country. Know this and keep your patriotism from degenerating into fanaticism.

It is good to be proud of our language, our culture, our traditions and our religions. But if this leads to hatred, know that you are badly mistaken. You love your language simply because that is the language you know very well. You started speaking in that language even as a child and naturally you have developed some attachment. What could you do if your parents were to speak a different language? Do you have a choice? Distinguish between choice and chance. Your race, religion, nationality, language, beauty, sex, are all purely by chance. No one can be superior or inferior along any of these dimensions. Excessive attachment to things that are purely due to chance degenerates into fanaticism. It leads to hatred and destruction. It kills you and others.

You may be very proud of your achievements, your success in business or whatever is your profession. You may be proud of your knowledge and intelligence. Even these achievements are not entirely your own. You could not have achieved any of these if not for so many other people, if not for nature or God. You cannot do much on your own, you cannot even make coffee, if somebody did not grow coffee plants, somebody did not process it into coffee powder, somebody did not make the stove. You cannot make coffee if nature did not give you coffee plants or water or heat. In fact what is your own is very little, or nothing at all. There is no real reason and justification for any of us to feel proud of ourselves on any count. Think. Real education is that which makes us humble. If you are proud, that means you are not educated, you are still largely ignorant. This realization is the very first step in gaining real knowledge and hence everything you want in life.

We are very proud of ourselves and everything that is ours simply because we know ourselves better than others. We all consider ourselves more intelligent or wiser or more knowledgeable than others simply because we spend all of our life, every moment of it, with our body, with our *manas* and with our *buddhi*. Naturally we know a lot about ourselves and we know so little about others. Somebody does not become ignorant because you do not know how knowledgeable he is. Respect others more than you respect yourself for, in all possibility, they are actually superior to you.

Do not hate, do not kill, do not wage wars. The only thing you have to fight against is the very idea of war. Fight the war machinery, fight defence departments, fight weapons. Fight scientific research and technology for war. Fight defence expenditure, fight governments that collect

tax for waging wars. Do not support war in any way, directly or indirectly. God did not create nations, national boundaries are not real. Why fight over imaginary lines drawn on Earth's surface? It is high time we think of dissolving all national boundaries on the globe and learn to live like a single big family. You have the freedom to love all people, to like all languages, to respect all religions. Exercise that freedom and be happy. Real knowledge, real freedom, real happiness, real love, are all actually synonymous. Love and be loved. Live and let live. Give up your pride.

3.23 *maatsarya*

Lust is a basic animal instinct. Man is an animal. Lust comes naturally. Animals also get angry at times and fight. Anger is to some extent part of our nature. Some animals are greedy. Mosquitoes keep sucking blood even after their stomach bloats and in fact excess blood oozes out from the other end. 'I' and 'Mine' are essential for self-protection and survival. Some animals show pride. Horses show pride when they win in a race. But no animal is jealous! Man is the lowest of all animals!

maatsarya or jealousy means feeling bad about the good things others have. Why should we bother about what others have or do not have? How does it matter to us? There is absolutely no place for *maatsarya* or jealousy for a human being. When you are jealous, you think of others all the time, you forget yourself. A woman jealous of somebody else's beauty is a miserable creature, she can never be happy, peaceful and satisfied. You may have a Million dollars with you but your eyes are on the ten Million the other guy has. You could have done many great things with the money you have but instead you are pre-occupied

with what you do not have. A jealous man is the very embodiment of fire. He burns himself and everything around him. He is a dangerously harmful creature. Jealous people harm others although they get nothing out of this. This is very negative.

When you are jealous, you lose control over yourself. Your *buddhi* has given way to your *manas*. No reason or logic works. Your *manas* is pre-occupied all the time with this one feeling. You cannot concentrate on anything else. You cannot think of anything else. You cannot do anything else. You have become a slave. You have lost your freedom. You will burn yourself up into ashes unless you realize this and control your *manas*. An honest self assessment, careful introspection can help you overcome the obsession and you need to fight with your *manas* for this. Controlling jealousy is hard because the mind refuses to give you a chance. Knowledge and determination can make you strong enough to get the better of your mind and win. Realize that you are no different from others and whatever they have is actually yours too. There is no scope for a knowledgeable person to become jealous of anybody. A truly knowledgeable person knows that the entire universe is already his, there is no scope for gaining anything more nor is there any fear of losing anything. All the people in the world, all their possessions are all mine too. Others are not different from me, they are same as me, how can I be jealous of myself? The jealous are really mean creatures, ignorant to the core. We should never allow ourselves to be brought down to such a low level.

3.24 Taming the Shrew

kaama, *kroodha*, *loobha*, *mooha*, *mada*, *maatsarya* are the six great enemies destroying us from within us. These in-

visible enemies lurking inside our own *manas* weaken us and kill us and if we are not very careful and alert, we may not even notice this. The *manas* is always in a disturbed, troubled state. The body disturbs the *manas* - any small problem in the body and the *manas* becomes pre-occupied with it. The *buddhi* also troubles the *manas*. Anything good or bad, real or imaginary, factual or plausible, the *manas* starts worrying. By its own nature also, the *manas* keeps worrying all the time. If there is no reason to worry, it will start worrying that it is worrying all the time, that it is of the worrying kind! How to manage this *manas*?

Engineers know that a lot of energy is wasted in turbulence. That is why aeroplanes and automobiles are given a smooth aerodynamic shape so that turbulence is reduced and energy is saved. Enormous amount of energy is wasted in the turbulence of our *manas*. If only we can cut down on this turbulence and keep the mind calm and cool all the time, we can save a lot of energy. We will then require very little food, we will require very little sleep. All the systems in the body function at their maximum efficiency and no organ or system is overloaded or stressed. We can remain alert, energetic, agile, strong, healthy. We can also live longer and remain healthy till the very end. The mind will become sharp and capable of understanding even the most abstract ideas properly. Our intelligence and memory will be sharpened. We can achieve great heights in all our endeavours. We can become truly successful in life. There will be no stopping us. Our biggest friend is our *manas*. It is also our biggest enemy. Understanding, controlling and training the *manas* is therefore the most important task for us to do in our life. This is the only purpose of education. We need to tame this shrew call the *manas*. This is the only way to overcome all problems and get everything we may want in life.

If life is as simple as controlling our own mind, why is it that people find it hard? After all you do not have to control somebody else's *manas*! But alas, the *manas* is the most slippery object. It is difficult to catch, let alone tame it. It goes from New York to Los Angeles in no time. Faster than bullet trains. Faster than bullets. Faster than light. How do we catch the *manas*? It is like trying to catch the wind!

Controlling the *manas* is hard but not impossible. We need the right tools. We need proper knowledge, proper training, proper skills. We need to be constantly vigilant, ever alert, like our great soldiers. The enemy may strike any time. It is a war. We can win. Provided our preparation is good and our strategies perfect.

The *manas* is internal, not easily observable and controllable like other external physical objects. Controlling it is naturally quite a hard task. We shall give here a number of simple ideas, tools and techniques for observing, managing and controlling your *manas* but you need to understand that it is a tough task and it takes a lot of time and effort. You must get ready for many stumbling blocks and slips. A baby has to learn to turn around, sit up, crawl, stand up and walk, all by itself, we can only stand by and watch, hope and wish and pray, and offer a helping hand at times but we cannot 'make the baby learn'. The same way, here are things that you must try and learn by yourself, you must try, keep trying, even after a thousand failures, until you succeed. Do not say 'I tried, it did not work'. You did not try hard enough or long enough. Keep trying. Do not give up. Thomas Alva Edison failed some 6000 times before he made electric lamp. Giving up easily is the surest recipe to failure.

Do not get carried away by what others say. There

are a hundred gurus, there are a hundred theories, there are a hundred brands of *yooga* and meditation and what not. Truth is the same. You need not get distracted by all the noise outside. If that is true, the same truth can be discovered by other means as well. If that is false, it is better to stay away. You should not try different systems of medicine at the same time. The same way, do not try several different ideas at the same time, do not go to many different gurus. This can only confuse you further. All real gurus, all real systems, lead you to the same single truth. Have faith in any one system, understand it well, practice it, keep practicing until you succeed. You will realize that other paths were not actually different from your path at all, they only looked different until you had complete understanding. Read on!

3.25 Declare a War

Men build empires, wage wars, conquer the world. What do they gain in the end? Peace? Happiness? Bliss? Comforts? Nothing. They will continue to be restless. The feeling of incompleteness and void never goes. The desires are never satiated. The longing continues. They will be left with only sorrow and grief. Shame. Guilt. Misery.

When the *manas* is engulfed in a strong, compelling emotion, especially lust or anger, the *manas* takes control and overpowers the *buddhi*. The animal in us dominates and we forget that we are human beings. All the logic and reasoning vanishes. We become blind, even if someone were to try to bring us back to our sense. Many a kingdom has been ruined in the history of mankind because of the lust or anger of its kings and emperors.

This is the story of man. This has happened again and

again in the history of mankind. History repeats. Man repeats the same mistakes. Endlessly. Without learning a lesson. All because of ignorance. A man of knowledge will never get confused - he knows where the enemies are. Our greatest enemies are inside us, hidden, invisible. Lust, Anger, Greed, Delusion, Pride and Jealousy - these are our real enemies. Lust should be subdued. Anger should be prevented. Greed should be controlled. Delusion should be checked. Pride should be constrained. Jealousy should be avoided. You will then get everything you want in life. And you will lose nothing.

We need to wage a war on our internal enemies. We can. Animals cannot, they do not have a well developed *buddhi* and they cannot think or understand all this. We human beings can. We must. Otherwise there is no point at all taking a human birth. We drive our car. We decide where to go and how to go. We control the car. The car has to follow. It has no choice. We are free. The car is not. It does not even know that we just narrowly escaped falling off from the edge of the narrow road into the deep gorge on the left. It does not get adrenaline in its blood when a huge truck suddenly appears in front from nowhere. It knows no sin for having run over a poor squirrel. We control the machines in the factory. We control the machine guns in the battle field. We control the computers in the office. We control the TV, the fridge, the washing machine and all else. We control plants and animals. We even domesticate wild animals like elephants. They work for us, serve us, like slaves. We are the masters, the free masters. We can do it. It is possible to tame our *manas* and keep it under control. We must use our *buddhi* to control and tame our *manas*. We must use all of our intelligence for controlling our *manas*. We must use our intelligence only for controlling the *manas*, not for anything else. God has given us *buddhi* only for this single purpose. We must learn

to observe, control and train our mind. We can. There are simple, practical ways. Let us start. Declare a war on your *manas*, right now.

3.26 Capture the Fort

The mind is subtle. It is internal, we cannot see it or touch it. How do we control this hidden, invisible enemy hiding inside our body? To capture the king, we must first penetrate the fort and take control over it. Likewise, to capture and tame the *manas*, we must first take control of our body. The body is external, it is gross. It is a material, physical object, we can see it, we can touch it, we can catch it, we can hold on to it. It should be far easier to bring our body under full control than do the same with the mind. Those who cannot even control their own body cannot be expected to be able to do much in life. All ambitious people, all sensible people, all sane people must therefore do everything in their hands to keep their bodies fit, healthy, flexible, balanced, steady, fully under control, always ready to act as commanded by the mind.

Imagine a person with a strong mind in a strong body. Life will be wonderful. He knows what to do, how to do it, he is his own master, always under control, he does good things and reaps good harvest in return. Everything will be just great. What about a person with a strong mind but a weak body? He has the right ideas, he has the mental will and determination but the body does not cooperate. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Life can still be good but it would be difficult to realize the full potential of human life. Now think of a person with a weak mind in a strong body. If properly guided and moulded, may be this man will become a useful soldier or a great sportsman or something like that. But he if were to take the wrong path,

he may end up becoming a criminal, a terrorist, an anti-social element. Needless to say, the life of a person with a weak mind in a weak body is wretched and horrible. Our aim should be to develop a strong mind in a strong body. This is the sole purpose of education and training.

We are not just our bodies. Yet the body is an important and very useful instrument in our hand. The body houses the *manas* and the *buddhi*. A good house helps its occupants to live safely, healthily and happily. The same way, health of the mind requires that the body be strong and healthy too. We must do everything possible to keep our bodies in good shape. Let us start by understanding our body and how to keep it fit and healthy. This is the simplest and the most basic step in self-improvement.

3.27 Food

The performance of any system is directly dependent on the inputs it gets. The most important input to our body is food. Food gives us energy and every cell in the body requires food for growth, repair and reproduction. In fact our whole body is nothing but the food we eat, even the brain is made up of cells formed from the food we eat. Naturally, the health of both our body and mind are highly dependent on our food. Food is therefore very important and we just cannot afford to take it lightly or take it for granted. We have to develop a highly scientific attitude towards food and we must have a detailed and precise knowledge about our food habits - what to eat, how much to eat, when to eat, how often to eat, how to eat etc. Do you have proper answers to all these questions? We cannot call ourselves scientific if we do not have precise answers to these basic questions. Understanding food is extremely important today, especially because all kinds of vested interests are

confusing people in every possible way for their own selfish ends.

Some say milk is a complete, balanced food and you must take a lot of milk everyday. Others say that all kinds of dangerous diseases, including cancer are because of milk and you should immediately stop taking milk and all milk products. You keep getting confusing and contradictory advises everyday. What should you do? One may be talking of dairy milk, which is a white coloured poisonous liquid today, full of pesticides, anti-biotics, sex-hormones, neurotransmitters, adrenaline, perhaps even blood and pus. The other may be talking of real milk from a real cow that has eaten real green grass. These two are very different. All that is white is not milk. Do not go by mere terms and labels, seek detailed inside information. Take a holistic view. You can also experiment and see it for yourself. Different strokes for different folks - fixed prescriptions for all people is not a practicable idea. You are the best judge, we can only guide you in experimenting, observing, thinking and understanding. Read these pages, experiment, find out for yourself what is best for you.

The ideas and suggestions we give here are all time tested - tested by countless Billions of people for tens of thousands of years. Nothing that a doctor or a nutritionist or a health specialist or a scientist or anybody else says today has stood the test of time - none of their ideas are more than even a few hundred years old, many are just a few years old. They are all untested ideas. Doctors have reversed their suggestions at least a dozen times over the past decade, as to whether a baby should be made to sleep on its stomach or on its back. Most advice you get on food, fitness, health, exercise, rest, etc. are dubious. Advice comes free today, from all quarters, including actors and businessmen. Do not fall for the words of the so called experts and

doctors, who may in fact be novices, the ignorant and the inexperienced. Try the ideas and suggestions we give here and see the difference for yourself. But change your food habits gradually, not all of a sudden. Experiment, observe and change slowly. It takes months to carefully observe and see what is best for you. You must have patience.

A balanced, disciplined, life style is the cure for all ills. Pills do not cure ills, they are in fact the cause. If you cannot be disciplined with your food, you are destined to inflict untold misery unto yourself. No one can save you. You are worse than animals. Change your life style today. Change for the better. All you have to do is to make up your mind. If you cannot even make up your mind, how will you ever master your mind? Remember, mastering your own mind is the one and the only solution to all your problems.

3.28 How Much to Eat?

Eat less and you get nutritional deficiencies, you become weak and vulnerable to diseases. What if we eat more? Is eating more harmless? No, eating more is harmful too. It takes a lot of energy and effort to digest the food we eat. Think of all sorts of things we shove into our mouths so very casually. A lot of digestive juices - saliva, gastric juice, pancreatic juice, bile juice etc., are needed to digest all the food we eat. These digestive juices are all quite corrosive and deadly. They can dissolve all kinds of organic materials we eat. How come our own stomach is not digested then? We have a thick layer of mucous which protects the stomach and intestine. The mucous layer protects by allowing itself to be digested first and everyday we need to renew the mucous layers and this takes a lot of energy too. If the mucous layer becomes too thin, the stomach and in-

testine are directly affected and ulcers are formed. Ulcers are wounds and wounds do not heal if you keep pouring highly corrosive acids and salt and pepper and chillies and what not! The ulcers only become worse as we continue to eat and it is very difficult to get back to normalcy.

Experiment by keeping an equal quantity of all the food you eat, on another plate, and pour, say, hydro-chloric acid, found in our digestive juices, till the whole food there is digested. You will be amazed at the quantity of acid required to digest all that food. It takes a lot of energy to produce so much of these digestive juices. It also takes quite a bit of energy and effort to physically churn the food in the stomach, to absorb and filter and to assimilate and transport the digested food all over the body and to throw away the wastes generated. Eating more wastes a lot of energy in the process of digestion, assimilation and excretion and is thus wasteful. It is like driving your motorbike a full 30 KM just to fill petrol - half of that petrol goes in driving up to the gas station and coming back!

Eating more is also harmful as excess of fat etc. may accumulate in the body and cause great damage to the body later in many ways. Eating more makes us lazy and we feel sleepy and we cannot concentrate and thus our work gets affected, we may take greater risks in driving etc.. If we cannot fully digest all that we eat, we will be left with partly digested, putrefied, fermented, food and a whole lot of toxic substances. Eat more and you take in more of poison (pesticides etc.) mixed up with the food.

Text books say so many mg of so and so nutrient is required per day but can we calculate and eat? We need carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals, fibre etc. and since we cannot calculate we must experiment and find out the right quantities of variety of food items we eat. We

must eat enough but not more. We cannot give common fixed prescriptions for all. Growing children require more food as they need extra food for growth. Pregnant women need more food to support an extra life within their bodies. The amount of food you need also depends upon your life style. Physical work drains energy. Mental work also drains off a lot of energy. Keep your mind calm and you will find that very little food is sufficient to keep you strong and healthy.

Eating more is not conducive for gaining deep knowledge and understanding as in spiritual and *yoogic* practices. *yoogi-s* eat less. When you eat less, the digestive system is not over-loaded, it becomes tuned and more efficient, we can more easily digest the food we eat, nutrients are better absorbed and the body remains strong and healthy. Eating more overloads the digestive and excretory systems. Overload any machine and its life comes down. The human body is no different. Treat your body carefully and it will last long without any break-downs. Blood flow is increased in the digestive system and there will be a reduction in blood flow to the head region after we eat. That is why we feel sleepy. Those who seek knowledge must eat less. Serious seekers of knowledge need to be mentally alert and active always. We must never feel over-full after eating. After we are finished with the meal, we must be as comfortable and agile as before eating. We must be able to get up, walk, or if required, even run.

Avoid dieting. Do not artificially manipulate food drastically based on expert advice. These are all foolish concepts introduced by the ignorant. Go by what your own body and mind say.

Eating more is not good. As a general rule, eating a little less is better than eating a little more. Experiment.

Gradually reduce the food intake over a few months and carefully observe how much food you actually need. Do not overdo and get into a state of weakness and nutritional deficiency. Find out the minimum food you require by careful experimentation and observation spread over many months of time. Gradually change and make this your habit. This is the very first step in all spiritual practices.

3.29 How Often to Eat?

It takes about 4 to 6 hours for food to be fully digested and it takes even longer for the complete absorption and assimilation. If we eat in between, partly digested and fresh food get mixed up and the digestive system gets confused. If it thinks it is all new food it may over-do and produce excessive digestive juices which, having nothing else to digest, will start digesting the mucous layer and then the stomach itself. If, on the other hand, if all the food in the stomach is taken as already partly digested then the newly eaten food will not get fully and properly digested. Improperly digested food is quite dangerous and ugly, as you will have noticed when you vomited. Thus it is very important to eat at proper intervals, giving a gap of at least 5 to 6 hours.

A good general recommendation could be as follows. Breakfast between 7:30 and 8:30 am, lunch between 1:00 and 2:00 pm and dinner between 7:30 and 8:30 pm. Most importantly, nothing in between! We must avoid the temptation to keep munching something or the other every now and then. We should not put anything into our mouth except water, not even sweets (somebody got a job or ‘prasaadaM’ from a temple), numkeen, supari, chewing gum, biscuits, chocolates, cookies, cool drinks, coffee, tea, samosa, or whatever kinds of local junk foods you may know of.

If you have been eating too many times a day, try to reduce gradually and try to make your food habits more and more regular in stages. Drastic changes in one go rarely work out in practice. You may try, find it difficult, give up, saying you tried and it did not work out. Go slowly, in stages. Coffee / tea may be taken if difficult to avoid in the initial stages of practice of self discipline but must be given up as we move forward. Early breakfast is recommended since you would have remained without food for long during night. Late dinner is not recommended as it increases the gap between lunch and dinner and you need to give adequate gap between dinner and sleep. Early dinner is necessary for going to bed early. Needless to say eating during night (midnight buffet!) is very harmful.

Meetings have become *m+eatings*! You keep munching something throughout! How many times do you take bath in a day? How many times do you pray? How many times do you sleep per day? It is sufficient to perform many of our activities once or twice a day. Eating is no different. You do not need to eat a hundred times a day. Birds do, their life style is different, they spend enormous amounts of energy flying and their body metabolism rate itself is higher. For human beings, eating just a few times a day is right. It is natural and best to sleep at night and work during the day. Workaholic and stressful life styles, abnormal working hours etc. join hands to ruin you. You will become forgetful, you may neglect food, you may eat too much or too little, too often or too few times a day. You may get habituated to munching junk food, sipping soft-drinks or coffee every now and then. If you eat too many times, or if you are going to the toilet too many times or you check emails too many times a day or you perform any other activity for that matter too many times a day, you are abnormal and you need medical treatment to bring you back to normalcy.

All human problems are closely and inseparably tied up, you cannot change one factor keeping the others intact. You will have to change everything. You will have to change your life style, work pattern, sleep pattern and exercise pattern, as they are all closely and inseparably tied up with food and health. You must get ready to make suitable changes in your life as appropriate. You are always free to do that. You can change your job, you can change the place or the city in which you live, you can change everything. Never say you are forced to do what you think is not good for you, this is just escapism. This is a clear sign of a weak mind. Remember that the whole idea of all this exercise is to make your mind strong. There is no room for all these silly tricks of a weak mind.

These guidelines should not be applied blindly. They are not applicable to young babies taking only milk, for example. Re-consider appropriately if and when medically advised otherwise. However, doctors oftentimes suggest frequent eating to many patients of diabetes, gastric problems etc. - eating frequently does not really help, it may in fact be perpetuating and aggravating the problems. yoogis eat only once a day but depending our life style, work etc. we may find it more practicable to eat, say, thrice a day but more than that is really not good. If and when possible you may come down to eating twice a day. This would be possible only after you have made substantial progress along all the dimensions of self-improvement that we will be taking up in this book.

Eat only after you clearly experience pangs of hunger. As a general rule, do not eat unless you are really feeling hungry. And stop eating as soon as you find that you are no longer hungry. Also, you must learn to distinguish clearly between hunger and other kinds of discomforts and

problems with your stomach. Why take soup or some other appetizer that only irritates the digestive system and fools us into believing that we are hungry even though we are not? Bad food habits and associated problems with the digestive system may sometimes confuse you into thinking that you are hungry, while the problem is something else.

Fasting once in a while is very good - it gives rest to your digestive system. Every system requires some rest. Just avoid taking it to the extremes. The modern ways of dieting is no good.

3.30 What Not to Eat?

It is easier to say what not to eat than what to eat. Home food is the best. Do not eat outside food. Avoid, or at least drastically reduce outside food. Food not prepared by yourself or your mother or somebody else at home, is invariably suspect. You or your mother would never have any other motive but outside food is sold for money and the sellers can go to any extent to maximize their profit, which is their sole motive. People who never ever eat outside food never ever get acidity, gas, ulcers etc., even if they eat late, skip meals, drink coffee on empty stomach, worry, hurry and do all such things which doctors say are the causes of ulcer etc.. Your parents or grand parents never suffered from these ailments because there was no concept of selling of food till about a hundred years ago. Canteens, road-side vendors are very dangerous - the people there may not follow proper practices of hygiene, they may not wash their hands with soap after going to the toilet and they hold the coffee or water cups with their fingers dipping into the drink! Flies, cockroaches and rats add their bit too. These vendors often use unclean water. The ice they use is often made from dirty water. They wash the plates, cups, and

spoons by simply dipping in the same bucket of water all day long, serving countless customers every day in these dirty plates and cups. They repeatedly re-use oil for deep frying, which should never be done. They add artificial colours, flavours, and all kinds of deadly chemicals in the name of ‘taste-makers’. Taste becomes primary and health becomes secondary, since profit is the motive and they wish to attract more gullible customers. They add baking soda to make the dishes crispy. They add limestone to make rice look whitish and to fill your stomach quickly with gas, so that you eat less and they make more profit! Never believe anybody who has money at the back of their mind, not even clean looking hotels and restaurants. One single cyst of *Entamoeba Hystolitica* is sufficient to cause amoebiasis. The cyst can remain dormant and asymptomatic for one full year. The most common treatments for amoebiasis is with carcinogenic antibiotics, which can lead to ulcer or even cancer. Be warned. It is better to go hungry than to eat outside food.

Soft-drinks are extremely dangerous. They spoil the digestive system, kidneys, heart and blood vessels. They dissolve bone and teeth and damage the nervous system too. There is nothing like simple plain water to quench your thirst. Each unit of sugar requires about 8 units of water to digest and thus taking sweetened drinks will not quench thirst, they will in fact only make you more thirsty. If coke was better than water, don’t you think God would have filled the oceans only with coke? Soft drinks have no food value. You drink them because you are unable to resist the temptation of your *manas*. Remember, our whole purpose of talking about food is to become masters of our body and mind, not slaves! Do we really need to add that intoxicating alcoholic drinks must be completely given up? Only slaves fall for drinks. We should avoid all junk food. They do not give any great nutrition, they are invariably

harmful, they are full of irritants, they cause diseases of the body and the nervous system. We eat to keep our body and mind strong and healthy, right?

A hundred years ago, the farmer was highly respected, after all he give us food. The farmer respected mother Earth, after all it is the Earth which gives us food. We all respected and worshipped the Sun, the rains, the clouds, the winds, without these there is no food. Nobody could even think of poisoning any of these. Slowly man's greed started showing up. Traders started adding sand and stones to grocery items to increase the effective weight and hence their profits. We had to put in extra effort to clean these materials but then we could still eat good food. Then came factory made chemical based fertilizers and pesticides. These poisoned and killed all the bacteria in the soil, soil became dead, and the farmers were forced to use factory made chemical fertilizers every time. They had to buy factory made nitrogen, knowing fully well that some seventy percent of the atmosphere is nothing but nitrogen. With people migrating from villages into big cities, packaged food industry caught on and adding poisons in the name of preservatives, artificial colouring agents, artificial flavours, antioxidants, emulsifiers and what not became a regular and legalized practice. Scientists get awards, honours, even Nobel prize for finding new ways of poisoning food. Hydrogenation of fats is a classic example. Earlier, we used to grow coffee plants at home, we used to pluck the fruits, dry them, roast them, powder them and brew fresh coffee whenever we wanted. Then came shops where we could go, select the seeds, get them roasted and powdered and made to order, under our direct supervision. Now we never know what all goes into branded coffee powder. A recent news report said excreta from a particular variety of birds is added to coffee powder. There came ready-to-cook mixes, we could prepare dishes in minutes but nobody

knew how exactly these ready mixes are prepared or what all goes into them. Now we have pre-cooked, ready-to-eat meal, sold in sealed sachets. God knows what all they contain. The greed of the modern man is now crossing all limits. We have read about melamine being added to baby food. All kinds of plastics are now added to packed food items sold in supermarket stores. Every organ of every animal is put to good use in this money-based world today. Even the excreta of animals is never wasted. We must give up the whole idea of buying food. We must work towards self reliance. If possible grow your own food. If possible, buy raw materials from the farmer directly and process them yourself. At least go personally, select and get things done to order under your direct supervision. It should be our last resort to buy any food related item from shops and supermarket stores.

Prefer food grown in natural way, using natural, organic manure and natural, organic pest-repellents. There can be nothing more sinful than adding chemical poisons to the soil, the very source of our food and our lives. Avoid foods grown using chemical insecticides, pesticides and fertilizers. Do your bit to promote natural ways of growing food. Avoid all genetically modified food. Genetically modified food can wreak havoc at the very core of life. Biotechnology is a horrible idea - food and technology should never be put together. Denounce all food processing technologies, denounce and shun the packaging industry. Man cannot be superior to God. God knows what is good and what is bad for us. If man-made things were actually better, He would have definitely given us the better things himself. And if He has not given, that itself is sufficient to convince ourselves that it is bad for us. There is no need at all to do any research to scientifically prove why all human interventions are bad. Commonsense is sufficient. Do not blindly fall for what scientists, technologists, industri-

alists, businessmen or even doctors say. As a general rule, whoever has money, name, fame or other worldly desires behind them are either ignorant or evil or both. Do not take any nutritional supplements such as vitamin tablets. The best source of all nutrients is food. Foods have medicinal value, the best medicine is food, avoid taking factory made chemical drugs unless you have absolutely no other go.

Do not say these suggestions are fine in theory but not practicable. Health is wealth. Why put your health at risk for the sake of earning wealth? Change your life style, if required change your job, move away from the city into the country side, be ready to do anything. For, there is nothing more important than health. Without perfect health, life has no meaning at all. You need to develop a strong and healthy body first and then work towards developing a strong and healthy mind. Only then can we think of overcoming our ignorance, gaining real knowledge and hence seeing all our wishes come true and all our problems overcome permanently.

3.31 The Food Industry

Packaged food items carry labels indicating the nutritional value of the food item concerned. We must understand that whatever is there in the food we eat does not simply get into our body directly. The food must be digested and then the body absorbs only what it needs. You can eat a lot of fat and still remain slim, fit and healthy - there is no rule that all that you eat must be absorbed by the body. Ignorance and greed combine to form vested interests which try to confuse people, scaring them not to eat this or luring them to eat that. The amount of cholesterol in your body does not depend directly on the amount of

cholesterol you take in the form of food. Your body is not simply a bag, all that you put in simply does not get stored there. Also, the body can synthesize many substances by itself. You may eat zero fat but your body can still generate fat by synthesizing from the basic elements. A cow eats grass, how much of fat do you think is there in grass? Yet cow milk has a lot of fat, right? Digestion implies breaking down complex food molecules into basic building blocks. From these building blocks, the body can re-synthesize whatever it wants. Cholesterol problems, obesity, blood pressure etc. are not directly related to the food you eat but they are indirectly caused by the chemical poisoning of the body which interferes with the body metabolism. You take chemical poisons in the form of not only food, but also through the water you drink and the air you breathe. Nonetheless, most health problems can be controlled to a large extent using carefully controlled food, without need for any medication. Do not go to a doctor, ask your grandmother instead.

It is unfortunate that the food and drug administration is weak and deeply influenced by commercial interests in many countries. Drugs are being mixed up with food. Packaged cooking oil often comes with all kinds of untested and potentially dangerous chemical drugs which are claimed to reduce cholesterol and what not. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get natural food. Almost all food available in the supermarket stores today is artificially manipulated, at every stage. Natural robust varieties of plants have been replaced with hybrid and genetically modified varieties with an eye on profit. The seeds, the soil, the plants, the fruits are all artificially manipulated, processed, packed with many harmful additives.

All the factory made, packed food items are bad. Biscuits contain wheat flour, sugar, salt, edible (hopefully!)

oil, leavening agents, emulsifiers, antioxidants, preservatives, colours, artificial flavours and so on. Except wheat, sugar, oil and salt, all others are poisons, certainly not food. Businessmen have invented many complex and confusing terms for poison. All factory made, processed, packaged, food items without exception are bad for health. Food is not something to be processed and manufactured in a factory - food is to be grown and eaten, that is all. Avoid all packed ingredients, instant mixes, ready-to-eat stuff. You can prepare better food at home, in your own kitchen. The whole concept of food-processing industry is a wicked idea of cruel and greedy businessmen, who want to make money at the cost of your health. Why pay money for getting your health spoiled?

Even if the food itself is good, hypothetically speaking, packaging is a stupid idea. Invariably the materials used in packaging - paper, plastics, aluminium foil, gum, wax, paints and printing ink, are unnatural, unnecessary, wasteful and harmful things. The manufacture, packaging, transportation, storage and final disposal of packaging materials invariably damage the environment by releasing poisonous gases and residues. The air, water and soil system get poisoned. You may think you drank the contents and disposed off the packet in which it was sold - you do not think or understand what happens that packet after you put it into the dust bin. Invariably it enters the environment, gets into the food cycle and comes back to you in the water you drink and the food you eat. Every time you are taking a packaged food item, remember that you are forcing yourself and others in the world to eat a bit of the packet too. Too bad. And completely avoidable. Avoid all packaged food.

Give up your fancy for modern science and technology, overcome your temptation for the fruits of the Poison Tree.

Processing and packaging of food has become a sort of necessity because people live in cities, far away from where the food is grown. Also, more and more people want white-collar jobs, they love to sit in air conditioned office rooms and work with computers and software, instead of toiling in the hot Sun in the open fields as farmers. This attraction and fancy for city life is the root cause of many of our problems today including environmental degradation and health problems. Everybody wants milk but nobody wants the cow. This will not work. Milk was once considered nectar, ambrosia. Today it is white poison, the main cause of many deadly diseases including cancer. Those who want real milk must be ready to keep a cow at home, take good care of it, love it like their own children, there is no other way. Kill the dairy industry or it will kill you. The very survival of human race has now been called into question, we are on the brink of a major disaster. We must understand all this and get ready to change our ways completely. Get rid of food industry, get rid of business, directly seek food and food alone. We must get ready to give up city life and live like our ancestors did. Or we will all perish, no one can save us, not even God.

3.32 What to Eat?

There are a lot of variations across the globe in terms of climate, soil conditions, varieties of food crops, cooking practices, taste, etc. Hence there can be no universal prescriptions. Whatever we say here is not prescriptive, take them all as suggestive. You are wise enough to make suitable changes and adaptations as per the needs of your places and times.

We started our lives as babies taking only the mother's breast milk. There could be nothing better than that,

breast milk as just right for babies. There can be nothing more cruel and inhuman than denying breast milk to your own baby, for the sake of beauty or whatever. All those who have been denied this natural birth right by their mothers invariably turn into animals, walking on two legs, though. They are not normal human beings, their life has become unnatural right from birth. They have been destroyed, by their own mothers, for no mistake of theirs. How sad!

Think of milk. Think of vegetables, fruits, pulses, cereals. All foods available in nature are bland, or mildly sweetish or mildly sour. Anything which is too sour, too salty, too hot and spicy or too oily or too sweet is unnatural and bad for our health. This is a general rule. We started our lives with milk and at one stage learned to eat other solid foods. Do you remember the day you were first given any food other than milk? Have you seen a baby being given solid foods for the first time? The baby does not like it at all! You can clearly see the confused, scary, funny face the baby makes at first lick. The baby gradually gets used to eating all kinds of food items. Taste is something we develop in our lives. Taste is something that we can change anytime later too. Do not eat for your tongue, eat for your stomach. Do not become a slave of your tongue, your goal here is to become a master, master of yourself and hence of the entire world. God has given you a tongue and the sense of taste only to help you distinguish between food and poison, not to get addicted to poison and seek poison all the time! All you need is some determination, a strong mind, will power. Eat mild food, this is what nature has made us for.

Eat easily digested food - this reduces the load and unnecessary wear and tear of the digestive and excretory systems. You feel light, active, agile, energetic, not heavy,

lazy and sleepy. Excretion becomes a simple and easy process - you will not have to take bed tea or struggle and do all kinds of circus just to go to the toilet!

Milk, fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses etc. give us the required nutrients. It is possible to live only on cow milk, all through your life, taking nothing else, and still being completely healthy, fit and strong. Of course it must be real milk from a real cow that has eaten real green grass, roaming the real pastures in the real Sun. Cow milk is almost as good as human breast milk, it is very much suitable for humans. Let us make it very clear, we are not talking of dairy milk, we are talking only of real milk. Chillies and spices, oil, salt, sugar etc. are not required as much as we normally eat in many parts of the world - very small quantities should be used just for taste as also for their nutritional, preservative or other medicinal and beneficial effects. Variety is good but be choosy. Use a variety of vegetables and fruits. You get most of the nutrients you need from these and milk. We require carbohydrates to satiate our hunger - eat wheat, rice, raagi, jawar, whatever is readily available in your part of the world, as the main, staple food.

Just as air is there for everybody to breathe everywhere on Earth, not too long ago food was also available in plenty for everybody. In the name of civilization we have traded essential things like food and water for completely unnecessary fancy things and now we find that food is a scarce resource. Is it not funny that even in this so called age of advanced scientific thinking, we consider destroying forests and building a concrete jungle as development? Is it not funny that we consider a city as more developed and advanced than a village? But even in this age, we can easily grow a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, bulbs, roots and shoots that can be eaten with little or no processing.

There can be plenty of good food directly available in nature. Let us all work towards that. We can all grow food, we can all eat fresh food grown by us within our own limited resources.

Very little or no cooking is actually required. Most foods are best eaten raw or slightly baked or roasted or just soaked. In India about half a Billion women spend all their lives in the kitchen all through their life! So much ado about nothing! We can save so much on our kitchen equipment, fuel, dish washing powder, water and what not. We have several thousand years of history and tradition in the science and art of cooking. Let us learn these age old ways of simple cooking.

Practically everything we do in life is for money and we think we need money so that we can eat and live. Why give up agriculture, come to cities, work hard, earn money and then buy food with that money? Why can't we directly grow food instead? Even if you are stuck up with a life style far removed from growing food, in reality, we need very little money for food. Today some are stinking rich in the world while many are still suffering from hunger and malnutrition. So many people die out of hunger every year. A recent news report said people in some part of the world eat biscuits made up of fine mud, that is the only thing they can afford! It is very much possible to ensure adequate good food for everybody if only we want. As per our tradition cooking food only for ourselves is a sin, we must always prepare food for others as well. If only we learn to care and share, no one in the world will go hungry, there will be no one who cannot not afford good food. Think.

3.33 How to Eat?

We have to sit down and eat, only animals stand and eat. It is best to squat on the floor, not sit on a chair in front of the dining table like the circus tiger. Sitting on a chair is the most unnatural and uncomfortable posture. The buffet system, where you serve yourself, stand and eat, is not much different from the buffalo system! Food should be served. You need not worry or fight over who should serve, everybody can take their turns. Once seated, you should not get up in between. If many people are eating, everybody must come and sit down and only then serving should start. Nobody should get up until everybody has finished. There should be no movement of people coming and joining, leaving or changing positions in between. There should be sufficient spacing in between so that both eating and serving can be done in a hassle free manner.

No one should talk while eating. We have two eyes, two ears, two nostrils but only one mouth. If we want to do things properly, we can only do one thing at a time. You cannot eat and talk at the same time. There should be absolute silence. Keep the TV switched off. Throw away books, newspapers etc. Eat while you eat, do not worry about any other activity. Wash your hands before you eat. Start with a sip of water to cleanse the throat. Start with prayers, mentally. Pray for the well being of all human beings, all animals, all living beings, the entire universe. Give up the ego that it is your food, you have earned it and it is only your right to eat it. So many people have worked to make it possible for you to eat today - think of the farmer who grew the food, think of the people who brought it and made it available to you at your place, think of the people who made the plate in which you are eating. Think of mother Earth, think of the Sun, think of the air in the atmosphere, think of the rains. It is the selfless work of

nature that has come to you in the form of food. Pay your respects to nature, pay your respects to all those who have made it possible for you to eat today. Think of God who has given you your hands, the mouth, the stomach and all the parts of your body. Your eyes help you to locate the food, your legs help you to go the place of eating, your mind helps you to pray, your intellect helps you to think and understand all this. Calm down your mind, scuttle all turbulence, eat in peace. Eat for peace, peace of your mind and for universal peace. Food eaten in a disturbed mind will not get properly digested and assimilated. This is a simple, experimentally verifiable scientific fact. Close eating with a sip of water and prayers. Keep your mind fully controlled and peaceful throughout. Do not drink water in between unless badly needed.

Give up the unscientific way of washing only your fingers in a finger bowl, forgetting your mouth. Wash your hands as also your mouth well. Food is best prepared and eaten at home, not in a restaurant. Do not use plastics, paper and other materials that damage the environment during their production, transportation and disposal after use. Use natural, time tested and safe materials. Eat with your hands, not with spoons and forks. Cleanliness of the body is essential for the cleanliness of the mind. You must properly clean your hands before eating and you must psychologically believe that your hands are clean. Cutlery washed by servants cannot be cleaner than your own hands you have washed yourself. Those who prefer to eat with spoons do so because they do not believe that their hands are clean enough. Eating with a dirty body is no good. Every part of your body, including the hands must be clean before you think of eating. Eat only with the right hand, left is not right. Never eat or drink anything before taking bath. Never enter the kitchen before taking bath. The entire dining area must be neat and clean. There should be

sufficient light in the dining room. No music, no dance, no disturbance.

No one knows how the black cow digests the green grass and produces white milk. No one knows how exactly all the food we eat is digested and assimilated. We do not have to digest the food, it is done for us. By whom? We do not know. We do not know many things. God is the sum total of all that we know and all that we do not know. Think that God digests the food we eat. Everything we eat is therefore an offering to God. Preparing food, serving and eating are all sacred duties, to be done with utmost sincerity and a sense of devotion. The body, the mind, the kitchen, the utensils, the ingredients used must all be thoroughly cleaned. Food should be freshly prepared and consumed then and there. Stale food stored in a refrigerator, re-heated in microwave oven etc. are to be avoided. Only food prepared, served and eaten in this holy spirit will get properly digested and assimilated. A whole lot of health problems owe their origin to the way we treat food. Do not waste food, food is sacred.

There is a lot that can be said about the order in which different kinds of food must be eaten, the arrangement and methods of cooking, serving and eating etc. A full book is required to cover all aspects of food. As far as our main purpose in this book is concerned, this much should do.

3.34 Vegetarianism

Contrary to what you may be thinking, human beings have been mostly vegetarians throughout the long history of mankind. There are only a few exceptions - mostly in coastal belts which are too cold for anything to grow and fish become the only available food. Non-vegetarianism is

a new found fancy, an indication of the weakening *manas*, a symbol of mankind becoming a slave of its own passions and temptations. Non-vegetarianism brings out the animal in us. It is cruel and inhuman. Let us see why.

Contrary to common belief, non-vegetarian food is not more nutritious and healthier. The goat eats grass and easily climbs tall cliffs while we eat that goat and struggle to climb our home stair case! The elephant eats only grass and leaves. Is it not strong and healthy? There are several diseases which affect only or mostly non-vegetarians. Therefore, non-vegetarian food is not really healthier. We cremate, bury or otherwise dispose off a human dead body as the first priority even in that moment of grief because we know keeping a dead body is dangerous. We kill tens of thousands of goat, chicken etc. daily in every city - do we take equal care in disposing off the remains? We often just throw the wastes somewhere. Non-vegetarianism leads to more health risks than vegetarianism. Many diseases are carried by the animal vectors.

Contrary to common belief, non-vegetarian food is not more economically viable or even an economic necessity. When we grow grass and grains, feed them to animals and then cut and eat them, we are adding an extra stage in the food chain. Nothing can be more than 100% efficient in this universe, certainly not a human intervention. Economy of non-vegetarianism is a physically impossible concept - there is no need to discuss this any more.

Nutrition, health, economics, taste, habit, culture, tradition, beliefs, etc. are not the points that we shall take up here. None of these issues really matter. There is one and only one aspect that is important for us - cruelty. Let us keep aside all other issues and look at only this one critical aspect.

Contrary to what you may be thinking, there is enormous amount of cruelty in non-vegetarian food. Poultry chicken yield an egg every day! Is it natural? An egg starts off as a single cell and has to multiply so many times until it grows into a full egg. How can all this happen in just a matter of days and hours? If the cells in some part of your body multiply uncontrollably, you call that cancer. What else this is poultry egg? And to make this happen, the hens are clipped of their beaks and toes - they are not required to produce eggs, right? The hens are fed artificial feeds, an euphemism for deadly poisons, after all the hens do not have to live a long, normal, natural life, right? They are kept in jam-packed metal cages, and subjected to untold misery in every possible sense. We humans decide every aspect of the life of the hen, even the temperature at which it must live throughout its life, and of course the auspicious time for it to die. Would any of you like to be treated the same way? Would any of you like to be kept in a narrow metal cage where you cannot even flex your limbs all through your life? Would any of you like to be cut mercilessly and eaten by some inhuman two legged beast? Would you like to be reduced to such hopelessly helpless situation? You know all this, yet the chicken is so tasty and you cannot resist the temptation. Remember, we are talking of all this in the context of mind control. Knowledge comes only to human beings, to humane beings, not to living graves of murdered beasts. To gain real knowledge first our body and mind should be clean and free from all sins. Cruelty towards helpless, captured and captivated animals is the worst form of sin.

Electrodes are inserted into the anus of the bull and then it is given painful periodic electric shocks so that it ejaculates at your beck and call. The bull never gets a chance to have a normal sexual experience in all its life.

The semen is taken away and stored in cold storage for raping cows later. Do any of you men like to be treated the same way? Dairy cows are subjected to repeated artificial insemination, an euphemism for mechanized gang rape, and given heavy doses of female sex hormones to keep them pregnant and lactating throughout their life. Do any of you women like to be raped and kept pregnant and lactating throughout your life? Do you want to be culled and eaten the very day your milk production comes down like any of these dairy cows? Do you like to be given, every day, sex hormones and neuro-transmitters that enlarge your breast to unnatural proportions and increase milk production, in the process causing extreme, labour-like pain? Do you like to be tied to one place all through your life so that you cannot even move an inch? Do you like your child to be taken away soon after birth? How come as human beings we cannot even understand the agony and mental pain in separating the new born helpless child from its own loving mother? Is it OK if you are treated as just a milk producing machine and all the natural pleasures of motherhood are simply denied? Is it OK if somebody else decides whether to keep your newborn offspring or to send it to the butcher right away or simply tie to a pole and allow it to die slowly out of hunger and thirst? Is it OK if your child is kept in a tight wooden container and given minimal food so that it is not allowed to have normal growth and its flesh becomes soft, tasty weal for others to eat? Is it OK if somebody else decides what you must eat? Is it OK if you are forced to eat a large variety of deadly chemical poisons in the name of feed additives to increase milk production? Unable to bear all this pain and suffering, if you collapse, is it OK to rub pepper or chilly powder into your eyes or other sensitive parts so as to force you to get up in terror? Is it OK if your milk is sucked with heavy vacuum suckers, leading to pain and perhaps bleeding? Is it OK to just give you anti-biotics instead of any humane treatment such as first

aid etc. when you suffer from an injury? Just understand the plight of animals we cut and eat, just ask yourself if you are ready to be given the same treatment. It is human to treat others as we wish to be treated. Are you a human being? Are you humane? Can you really claim any human rights? Lions and tigers kill painlessly and in one shot, by hitting on the spinal chord and brain joint near the neck. They kill only as and when they are hungry, otherwise they do not interfere with the life of their prey in any way whatever. The animals of prey are free, throughout their life, from birth to death, they all lead a very natural, wholesome, happy, free life. The so called wild animals are very mild and much more humane compared to us. We are far worse. Let alone human rights, non-vegetarians do not even deserve animal rights.

Vegetarians who take dairy milk and other products of the modern dairy are no better. By eating factory made, dairy produced, packed foods of animal origin, including milk, butter milk, lassi, curd (yogurt), butter, ghee (clarified butter), cheese, panneer, chocolates, ice-creams and all sorts of dishes prepared using these, you are indirectly supporting all this inhuman and cruel deeds. You get your share of the sin. You are punished with various diseases including high blood pressure, coronary heart diseases, diabetes, kidney failure, stroke, even cancer. Because the dairy milk you take is full of blood, pus, adrenaline, sex hormones and neuro-transmitters, anti-biotics and other chemical poisons called feed additives.

We have become blind, we have been blinded by money and material wealth. The amount of money we spend on hormones and anti-biotics and feed additives should be less than the money we gain because of the increased milk yield, this kind of an equation is called science and technology and eulogized as economic development today. If people

actually see the way animals are treated, they may not buy these products. That is why the greedy and cruel people who control all these industries keep all their activities secret. You buy milk and milk products from a nearby store, you never see any cows around but you never ask where did all this milk come from. Wake up. Cows are very much like our own children. If you treat them with love and care, like your own children, they reciprocate the same way. Keep a cow at home, give it a name, call it by its name and it will respond, talk to it and it will listen with attention, sing and it will listen and enjoy, give it the food of its choice and it will accept it in humility, eat it with joy and express its thankfulness to you by the mere sparkle in its eyes. You have to be a real human being to understand all this. If you cannot understand, you are not a human being at all.

We are what we eat. Every cell in our body, even the nerve and brain cells, come from the food we eat. The nature of food we eat determines the nature of our body and even our thinking. If you eat cows and buffaloes, you will also think only like a buffalo. Today's scientists cannot understand or accept this because their thinking is limited to physical matter. They think food is nothing more than proteins and carbohydrates and minerals and vitamins. Those whose thinking is limited to physical material alone cannot claim any knowledge, because knowledge is not matter. Materialists are utterly ignorant. They will not be able to understand the true nature of the world or of themselves or about life or how to live. Their life will be worse than that of pigs, dogs and donkeys. This is not human life at all. Human life does not mean simply having a human-like body. A human being is one who thinks like a human being, one who is humane and kind to the core. Non-vegetarianism implies terrorizing, torturing, injuring and killing harmless creatures. All these living

creatures are part of the same universe in which we live, they are the children of the same God who made us all. Non-vegetarianism is not humane. We must treat everybody, even the animals, the same way we wish ourselves to be treated. Non-vegetarians are not much different from cannibals. They are cowards too, why catch, kill and eat helpless animals like goats, hens and pigs, brave fighters must fight with equals. Let the non-vegetarians fight with a lion or tiger if they can. Non-vegetarians cannot be considered human beings. No way.

Those who cannot even control the simple temptations of their own mind, what good can they do for the world at large? Today's scientists do not know how to eat, why, most of them do not even know how to go to the toilet or wash afterwards. They kill and eat harmless animals. They seek sensory pleasures. They cannot think beyond the body. They think the goal of life is to make money, buy gadgets of technology and pamper their bodies. They harm themselves and the whole world in the process. They are the biggest fools. It is unfortunate that in the today's world, these fools are held in great esteem, their foolishness is being eulogized as scientific progress and technological development. Nothing can be worse than this for humanity, for the world. It is time we wake up and give up science and technology and choose life instead.

Wild animals kill and eat going by their natural instincts. They do not interfere with the lives of their prey in any way. They do not capture, torture or kill a single animal more than what they need at that moment of time. They incur no sin. We human beings have a well developed brain, we can think, understand, feel. We can avoid. Knowingly committing avoidable crimes is sin. Animal husbandry, dairy, poultry etc. constitute organized, cold blooded, calculated, cruel, kidnapping, rape, torture,

murder. These crimes must be equated with similar crimes on people and given similar punishment. Non-vegetarians cannot claim even animal rights, let alone human rights. Treat others as you wish to be treated, or get ready to be treated the same way you treat others.

This is not a debate over some mundane topic where the two parties can sit across a table, put forth their arguments and counter-arguments and then finally some neutral judge can pronounce a judgement. In a particular legal case where an individual has been accused of some crime, the alleged criminal should be given a fair chance to prove that he is not guilty, that is, he has not committed that crime. He should never be given a chance to argue that his actions do not constitute a crime at all. What constitutes a crime has already been decided and the judge is not neutral between criminals and non-criminals, he must himself be a non-criminal. Non-vegetarianism in humans is a crime and there is no scope for any argument in favour of non-vegetarianism. That non-vegetarianism is a crime has already been established, by showing how it involves extreme cruelty, and the judge can only be a pure vegetarian. The opinion of non-vegetarians in this matter just does not count, we should not even ask them or listen to them. This is not a matter of law of a particular country or religious beliefs or social practices or norms. Nor is this a matter of majority. Even if the vast majority of people in the world are criminals, yes they are criminals, that is all. This is a matter where only the opinion of pure vegetarians count. Do you ask the hen before making chicken curry?

Let us repeat, we are really not objecting to eating animal flesh, the main point is the cruel and inhuman way we treat these animals. Non-vegetarianism in humans almost always involves cruelty. Vegetarianism does not mean eating vegetables, it means avoiding all forms of cruelty to

animals. Therefore, vegetarianism means pure vegetarianism, there is no scope for mixing the two. Just as a place cannot be clean and unclean at the same time, we cannot talk of 'veg and non-veg'. We have already learned that it is the *manas*, not the body or the brain or anything else that experiences all the pains and pleasures of life. Animals have a *manas* very similar to ours, they experience pain, both physical and mental, in a way very similar to us. Plants do not experience pain and suffer in the same way, although they are also living beings. That is why, vegetarianism does not involve cruelty. Milking a cow does not involve any form of cruelty, in fact it is a service to the cow, because cows normally produce more milk than the calf needs and if we do not extract this excess milk, the cow actually feels uncomfortable, it may even experience pain and fall sick. Man and cow are made for each other, this is the best example of mutual interdependence and peaceful co-existence. That is why cow milk is not taken as non-vegetarian food, although milk is an animal product. Milk is produced by the cow, flesh is not a product, it is not produced by animals for the sake of others. You cannot take out the flesh of an animal without cutting and killing it. The sole deciding factor is cruelty. It is OK if people take to non-vegetarianism when there is no other option, that too provided we completely stop interfering with the normal life of animals and avoid causing any kind of injury, torture, pain, terror or suffering, physical or mental. The question is, in today's world, is there any such situation where people have no way of avoiding animal food? In a vast majority of cases, people take to non-vegetarianism for the sake of taste alone. Our goal here is to become masters of our own body, senses and the mind, how can we yield to temptations of the tongue? This is slavery.

Animals must have complete freedom to live life like they want. Human beings are not superior to any other

living creature. People living in cities keep on complaining about the nuisance caused by animals on the road, public places etc. The city belongs as much to the cows and donkeys and rabbits and squirrels and snakes as it belongs to us. People keep driving away all forms of life. They kill mosquitoes, cockroaches, lizards, spiders, snakes, rats, everything. All creatures are equal in the eyes of God. Until and unless we recognize and accept this fact and learn to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves, we cannot call ourselves human beings. We have to learn to live and let live, there is no other go. This is the core essence of all religions.

Our goal in this book is to overcome all of our problems and obtain everlasting pure bliss and happiness. We have understood that ignorance is the root cause of all of our problems and we have realized that knowledge, real knowledge, is the only way to get rid of this ignorance. In order to gain such a knowledge, we must purify our body and mind, only a clean and sin-free mind can understand the subtle nuances of self-knowledge. Non-vegetarianism is sin, it corrupts the mind. Naturally, therefore, non-vegetarians cannot even understand all this. They will understand if and only if they somehow make up their mind, summon up all their determination, and simply take to pure vegetarianism and practice this for long, until their mind is purified of all the sins and it becomes clear and transparent enough for it to reflect the light of the pure consciousness from within. The self of all is one. No animal is inferior or superior to any other. Let us take an oath today to do everything possible within our hands to reduce our own share of sin and the sin of all human beings living in our own world. Let us take an oath to give up cruelty towards animals.

3.35 *aahaara-siddhi*

The food we take is not just for our body, it is also for our mind. Every cell in our body, including the brain and the nervous system, is made up of the food we eat. We are what we eat. Our *manas* and *buddhi* are also influenced by the food we eat. That is why we are talking about food here. What are the qualities of the *manas*? What are the qualities of food? How are these two related? Knowing these, we can decide the right kind of food.

The modern scientist with a materialistic mind set could not get anyway close to truth about the universe or about the self, because he thinks in terms of true-false dichotomy instead of the three way *sat-asat-mithyaa* classification. Likewise, he is under the impression that all qualities can be placed in a dichotomy called good and bad. Actually, all qualities can be broadly classified into three kinds: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Two way classification takes us nowhere. *sattva* is *sat* + *tva*, the quality of being real, true. *saattvika*, the adjectival form of the noun *sattva*, describes qualities that relate to the real, valid, true, and hence all positive and good things which are true of real human beings. Truth, honesty, sincerity, gratefulness, kindness, mercy, compassion, equality, humanity and all other good qualities can be grouped under *sattva*. The other extreme, all the bad qualities, including the false, fake, deceptive, illusory, mythical, harsh, unreal, inhuman, cruel, unkind qualities, lying, cheating, greed, anger, hatred, jealousy, etc. constitute *tamas* which literally means darkness or ignorance. All bad qualities arise out of ignorance and all good qualities emerge from knowledge. To become a good human being, to become a humane being, we must know the truth. All bad qualities can be overcome, all human problems can be solved, only through knowledge, only by removing ignorance, there is no other path.

Not all qualities can be grouped in *sattva* and *tamas*. *rajas*, the third class, should not be confused as something that lies in between good and bad, it is not something that lies mid-way. It is not something that is partly good and partly bad. The third kind of quality, called *raajasika* is derived from the word *raaja*, that is, king. A king needs to be brave, bold, strong, alert, awake, dynamic, pro-active, with a sharp and clear vision. Bravery is neither a good quality nor bad per se. Being dynamic and pro-active is neither good nor bad per se. A soldier needs to be strong and bold and brave and dynamic, a policeman needs to be one but a teacher or a lawyer or an engineer or a scientist need not be. In fact should not be, because these are qualities which imply an excited, high energy state of the *manas* and *buddhi* and a high energy state is not the most stable state. A stable state is the one with lowest energy. A calm, stable, undisturbed, composed, *manas*, one which is in a state of equilibrium, can see the truth and only such a calmed down *manas* can see the truth. Waves of thought disturb the mind and make it opaque, nothing can be seen clearly through such an opaque mind. Seekers of truth must therefore give up *raajasika* qualities. Cops and soldiers and detectives and kings may need to be *raajasika* because their goal is not to seek the truth but merely to protect the life and property of other people in the material, worldly plane of existence. In fact it is better that a soldier does not think, he better simply act, just do what he is asked to do. Only those who are entrusted with such responsibilities need to be dynamic and energetic and alert and brave and hyper-active. Others need not be, should not be. Needless to say no one should seek *taamasika* qualities. *tamas* is darkness, ignorance, the root cause of all human problems.

The food that we eat can also be classified into these

three categories and foods of a particular nature have a strong tendency to give corresponding qualities to our body and mind. Materialists, who cannot accept anything other than physical matter, have themselves proclaimed their ignorance, for, knowledge is not matter. Forget about their views, they know not what they say. *saattvika* food includes, bland or mildly sweetish food, natural, of vegetarian origin, free from excessive acidity, excessive salt, or spices or fats. *raajasika* food is more spicy, oily, sour and salty. Most food items in a restaurant or other commercial eating joints are *raajasika* or *taamasika* in nature. Be warned, *raajasika* food may be tastier but not healthier. Foods that involve cruelty to animals are definitely *taamasika*. People who cut and eat animals are not human beings - to be human you must be humane. The difference between non-vegetarians and cannibals is small. Their mind works like that of animals, or worse than that.

saattvika food can be easily grown, easily cooked. It is possible to get back to an age where *saattvika* food is readily available everywhere in nature, like air is today. We need not work, earn money to buy food. If only we all understand these basic principles and start eating simple, natural *saattvika* food, a whole lot of electricity, natural gas, firewood, cooking stoves and cooking vessels, the washing powder and water needed to wash them, enormous amount of human labour and time, can all be saved. A whole lot of damage that is being inflicted on our own environment will also come down. The body becomes free from diseases, the mind starts working again. People can think clearly, they can understand, they can know the truth, they can live a glorious life, this world will become a heaven now and here. We need to give up our modern industrialized life style and go back to simple, natural, agriculture based life style.

A proper food habit can go a long way in preventing

and controlling diseases of the stomach, intestine, liver and kidneys, as also overweight and obesity, blood pressure, cardio-vascular disorders, diabetes, stroke, even cancer. Disciplined food habits can greatly reduce the problems of both the body and the mind. *aahaara-siddhi*, or success in food-control, is the very first step in our journey of life. A simple observable sign of *aahaara-siddhi* is that excretion becomes regular, smooth and easy. The quantity of stools comes down - you are not eating a lot of unnecessary stuff which your digestive and excretory systems have to struggle to process and throw out. You need to go to the toilet once a day, daily, as soon as you wake from the bed early in the morning. No bed tea or bed coffee! You should never feel too hungry or too full, you should never feel sleepy or lazy, you should remain alert and active throughout the day and at night you should get a very good sleep, you should sleep like a baby. Observe these qualities and you will know the status of your health and your progress in self improvement. There is no need for medical tests or health check-ups.

3.36 The Food Crisis

Despite all the trumpeting we keep hearing daily about scientific advancement and technological progress, Millions are suffering from hunger and dying in this world. Millions are becoming blind due to nutritional deficiencies. Soil has been poisoned and rendered lifeless. There is water scarcity, ground water has drastically declined. Rains have become ever more unpredictable, climate is changing, we are heading for a major food crisis. Farmers are committing suicide. What progress is this? Shame on mankind.

Just a few decades ago, people believed that selling of food was the most heinous crime. There was no concept of

selling of food, there were no hotels and restaurants. Food was always free for anybody, anywhere, anytime. Even today there are many places in India where food is free for all. Cooking food for ourselves is a crime, we should always cook for others too. In a few decades of what we call scientific advancement, we have created such horrible concepts as adulteration of food. In the beginning the sellers used to mix sand or stones with grocery to increase the weight and hence their profit. Now they are adding plastics to food because plastics have become cheaper than mud. Even baby food is being adulterated with poisonous chemicals. Where are we heading?

Soaring costs of chemical fertilizers, population growth and higher demand for food, especially meat, increasing demand for bio-fuel made from corn, palm oil etc. are considered to be the major factors for the impending food crisis. Chemical fertilizers are made from petroleum, they damage the environment, they poison the water and soil systems. Why go for factory-made chemical fertilizers then? Growth of population is really not as much of a problem as it is made up. The real problem is in the increasingly uneven distribution of people across the geography. Life is intentionally made so very difficult in villages that people are forced to move into heavily crowded cities. The increased demand for bio-fuel is also because of this. Money is the driving force behind all this. Governments are dancing to the tunes of rich and powerful businessmen who control petroleum industry, automobile industry, pesticides, fertilizers, seeds, food processing, packaging and marketing, it is these people who want you to give up village life and come and suffer in crowded cities. Most government initiatives are just a show off, under the camouflage of poverty alleviation, economic development, and what not.

There is enormous amount of good land and water re-

sources on Earth. We just need to plant useful trees and plants everywhere, at homes, in public places, in our offices and factories, hospitals and schools. Simple back-of-the-envelope calculations will convince you that we can have plenty of good food for everybody, any time, anywhere, at little or no cost. It is OK to say 'I am hungry, give me food'. It is not OK to say 'let others not have food, let them be hungry, let them suffer'. Let us eat, let everybody eat. Let us stop this whole idea of commercializing food. Food should be grown by everybody, cooked for everybody. Let us get rid of this ugly, inhuman act of processing, packaging and selling of food. Let us live where food is grown, let us grow food wherever we live. This is possible, it is easy, it is good, no one will lose anything, the whole world stands to gain. All we need is determination. Grow food everywhere. This is the main occupation, the only noble profession for mankind. All other professions are mostly unnecessary, futile.

Stop using factory made chemical fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides. Why poison the very Earth which gives us food? Give up tractors and all kinds of mechanization, they only lead to more harm and damage than benefit. Do not use electricity, use animal power instead. Revert to natural farming methods. Every animal has a natural capacity and if you load them within their limits, they do not feel burdened at all. There is no cruelty involved in using animal power, provided we observe this principle and treat the animals with love and affection. Quantity is not important, profit is not the motive. Food cannot be allowed to be poisoned for maximizing profit. Fight to free food from the hands of greedy middlemen, from corrupt government officers. Reject bio-technology, reject genetically modified food, reject monopoly over seeds, let the farmers make their own seeds and their own fertilizers and their own pest-repellents. Fight government policies that encourage

city life and make living in the country side more and more difficult. Let no one go hungry in this world. That would be true progress.

If and to the extent possible, grow your own food. If and to the extent possible cook your own food. Let us become self reliant as much as possible. Let us all fight greedy and evil policies that help a few to become rich at the cost of others in the world. Let all people be happy.

If there is one thing that is most difficult to control, that is hunger. A hungry tiger is so much more dangerous than one which has just had a sumptuous meal. A hungry man is no different. Hunger can push man to any extent. The history of mankind is full of stories where people have taken to extraordinary measures when pushed to their limits of hunger. Let no one go hungry. Let us all share and eat. There is enough food for everybody, we only need to manage our resources properly. Food crisis is not real, it is made up.

3.37 The Noble Profession

There is plenty of air for all human beings to breathe. Air is free, free for all, everywhere on Earth. Until recently there was plenty of potable water all over for everybody to drink. Water was free, free for all, everywhere, without any restrictions. All water was pure water, ready to drink. There was no need for any water purification technologies. Go backwards in time a little bit further and you will realize that there was also plenty of good food freely available for all, everywhere. The most essential things in life are becoming increasingly scarce and dearer. This cannot be called progress. Good air, water, food, health, education must all be readily available, in plenty, everywhere. That

would be real progress. We can achieve that. We only need to make up our mind and work towards that.

Cars and computers are not essential for human life. Nor are they useful in achieving our set goals. We must give up most of science and technology, most of business and economics. Science and technology are no doubt useful but we must restrict their use to extraordinary situations, we must use them only in exceptional, life saving situations. Routine, casual and commercial use of all kinds of technologies must be shunned. Food processing and packaging industries thrive on the concept of city life. Millions cannot live in a place where nothing grows. People must stay where there is food, where there is water, there is no other way we can even survive, let alone progress. City life is advantageous only to a few businessmen who control petroleum and automobile industries, food processing and packaging industries and supermarkets and transporters and other agents connected with all this. In reality, even these money minded people will stand to lose in the long run. The whole world will stand to gain if we give up city life and take to simple, old-fashioned, village life. Then air and water pollution will automatically come down and plenty of good, chlorine and other chemical free water will simply become freely available for one and all.

The only profession and the noblest of them all would be agriculture. Agriculture means to grow food, not poison. We must get back to cow based, natural, organic farming without need for electricity or any other technology. Cow urine and dung enrich the soil, soil becomes a living organism once again and the bacteria in this living soil will be able to absorb nitrogen from the air. There is so much of nitrogen freely available in the atmosphere, is it not foolish to add nitrogen to soil in the form of factory made chemical fertilizers? We must go back to old, robust

varieties of crops and give up all hybrid, genetically modified, artificially manipulated varieties using bio-technology and what not. The natural varieties provide plenty of good fodder for the cattle, there will be no need for any artificial fodder or feed additives. Bullocks will do the tilling etc. as also do the transportation. Animal power can be used for food processing. We can generate bio-gas and even electricity locally. Medicines in the western, chemical based, allopathic system are all failing and very soon we will be forced to go back to the so called alternative systems of medicines, which are in fact the original, time tested and more scientific systems. Cow products are very much essential for these traditional systems of medicine. Only the Indian breeds, which belong to the 'Bos Indicus' family, have these great medicinal properties, we must give up the other 'Bos Taurus' and hybrid cows. Food, dairy, health, are all closely and inseparably inter-related. Many of the modern diseases including cholesterol and diabetes, blood pressure and coronary heart diseases, even cancer are mainly due to the modern dairy industry and going back to traditional ways of keeping cows will eliminate most of these diseases. Cruelty to animals will go. We can grow medicinal plants and prepare medicines locally. Everybody can live happily, healthily, and enjoy life to its fullest.

Let us grow useful plants and trees everywhere - at homes, in institutional areas, in public places, wherever possible. Grow fruit trees everywhere - they are easy to maintain, they last many years, they yield lots of fruits. Let us not worry who will take the fruits, let anybody take. Mankind is one and whoever benefits it is our own benefit. Let no one suffer from hunger. Let no one suffer from any diseases. Let no one die an unnatural and premature death. Let no animal suffer. Let us all live and live well. This is not idle talk, this is very much possible, it is very much practicable. All we need to do is to give up modern science

and technology. If large numbers of people take to simple living, industries and business houses will naturally die away. We must all choose simple, natural, harmless, local alternatives and say no to factories, industries, marketing agencies and middlemen, lobbying, monopoly, competition, advertisements. A lot of money can be saved for the world. Environmental damage can be cut down drastically. Health will become natural and taken for granted, ill-health will become rare and exceptional. Let us not knowingly pollute the environment, cause others to fall ill, and use this 'opportunity' to make money and call this 'health-care'.

City life is not sustainable. A Million people cannot ask for milk while no one can keep a cow at home. Either we must bring home the cow or we must go where the cow lives. Why live like a sparrow in a tiny nest at a great height in a multi-storied apartment complex while you can live a great life in a big house with a large garden and natural surroundings in the country side for the same cost? Think.

Selling of food should be banned. Food processing and packaging industries must be closed. The entire dairy industry must be shut down. Food does not cost much. Most people in the world today can easily afford food, not only for themselves but for others as well. Let us all share and care. Let no one suffer from hunger or malnutrition. Let us wake up and act today. Let us work towards real, all round human development.

3.38 *aasana-siddhi*

The first major step is to understand and change our food habits for the better. This prepares the body and mind for the subsequent stages of development. The body will

then be ready to listen to you, you do not have to oblige whatever your body demands. Your body will gradually become strong, flexible, stable. You need to keep your body in good shape throughout your life - strong, flexible and stable. This means two things. Firstly your body will obey you, it will cooperate with you, it will not complain. Secondly, you do not fall sick easily, you rarely catch a cold, fever etc. even when all the others around you are falling sick. If at all you fall ill, the intensity and duration of your ill-health will be lesser. And you can recover quickly without need for any medication. To achieve all this, we must understand how to put our body to best use. We must learn how to sit, how to stand, how to sleep.

Have you seen a tiger or a lion being forced by the ring-master in a circus to sit on a stool? The brute is scared to death and then it climbs up the stool, and with great difficulty, sits there for a moment. There can be no worse punishment than sitting on a stool. Or a chair or a bench or a sofa for that matter. Sitting on chairs and working on tables is the most common cause of a whole lot of human suffering and ailments. We do not need any furniture. No animal needs. Humans are not any different. Wood is best retained in the form of living trees, not as dead furniture in our offices and living rooms. Learn to squat on the hard floor and half of your body problems vanish. We must squat on the floor, legs folded, back and neck held straight. This is the most comfortable posture, for relaxation, for meditation for reading, for working. Initially you may find it uncomfortable if you are not used to it. Very soon you will overcome your difficulties and then you will never want to sit on any piece of furniture whatever. Contrary to common claims, no furniture is ergonomically designed. No man-made artifact is better than nature. Nature has give us just our body and the hard ground, nothing else.

It is very important to keep your back straight. There are innumerable designs and shapes for buildings but the pillars are always straight and vertical. Our body has one and only one pillar, the backbone, and we must learn to keep it straight while sitting. Every mechanical engineer knows that a pillar that is loaded at an angle will buckle and it will give way very easily. The head is the heaviest part of the body and for the back bone to support the entire weight of the head and the rest of the body, it must be kept vertical and straight. Many problems including back pain are simply because we have not learned how to sit. Squat on the floor, for a few minutes to start with, extend it to a few hours and later you can sit comfortably for days if you wish.

The backbone needs full support for it to relax during sleep. We need to sleep on hard ground, with our back held flat comfortably on the ground. Do not use any bed. Use a mat or a bed sheet or a rug instead. Use a thin pillow if at all you really need, a big pillow is bad, it bends your neck forward, constricts the wind pipe and affects breathing, apart from stressing your neck region. Soft beds are bad for your body. Beds, bed sheets, pillows are always dirty, they cannot be washed everyday. The best way to avoid dandruff, skin problems etc. is to avoid all these and sleep on a mat made up of natural grass. Cots are not required. Let us not cut trees and make chairs and tables and cots and what not. This is not just for saving the trees, furniture made up of metal or plastics or whatever are equally bad for your body. Do not close your face completely with a bed sheet while sleeping, this again affects breathing. You spend a major part of your life sleeping. You must ensure adequate fresh air while sleeping. Air conditioners keep recirculating the same stale air, effectively suffocating you all the time. Learn to live with nature, open the windows, avoid fans and air conditioners to the

extent possible. Mosquitoes can be prevented by using a metal mesh. Plastic meshes ionize the air and are very bad for health. Avoid mosquito repellents, they contain harmful chemicals. Take a relatively light, *saattvika* dinner, give a gap of a couple of hours and then go to sleep. Go to sleep early and wake up early in the morning. Early morning is the best time for studies, for *yooga*, for meditation, for all kinds of work. More work can be done in the first three hours of the day, say 5 am to 8 am, than during the rest of the day. Avoid watching TV, reading books etc. before going to bed. End the day with prayers, give account of everything you did today, the good and the bad, to God or to yourself, think how tomorrow can be a better day than today. Start the next day with prayers. While you were fast asleep you had absolutely no knowledge and no control over yourself - anything could have happened to you and you just could not have done anything to save yourself. The very fact that you have woken up and everything is fine proves that He is taking care of you every moment, whether you are aware of this or not. Be grateful to Him, start the day with prayers and positive thinking. Plan the days work, think how today can be a better day than yesterday. You know your birthday but the death day is unknown, it may come any time, so it is better to do the most important things in your life today itself. A good sleep is extremely important for success in life. Sleeping is not just a waste of time, it is not a stupid idea created by nature, it is not a weakness, we do not sleep just to give rest to our body and mind. A major part of our life is spent in sleeping and sleeping is very much a part of our life. It is in fact a very important part of our life, we commit no sins while we are asleep. We do not tell lies, we do not cheat, we do not harm other people, we cause no harm to animals, we do nothing at all yet we are blissfully happy. We have no cravings, no longings, no unfulfilled desires. We are happy and satisfied. There is no worry, there is

no anxiety, there is no anger, there is no pain, there is no suffering. Every one of our problems have been overcome and we simply revel in some kind of pure bliss. What more can we ask for in life? Learn to sleep well, learn to enjoy your sleep. A simple test for a proper sleeping habit is how fresh and relaxed you feel after waking up. If you learn to sleep properly, if you become a *yoogi*, just a few minutes of *yooga-nidraa* per day will suffice, you will remain active and energetic throughout the day, you will not need coffee or tea to keep you awake during the day. You can sleep like a baby. If your sleep is disturbed, you get dreams very often, you do not feel fresh and relaxed upon waking up, then you have not yet learned the art of sleeping.

We started off as four legged animals and started standing up on two legs somewhere in the recent past in the evolution. Standing on two legs is a difficult proposition and we need to take extra care. The body weight is on two legs instead of four - each leg has to take double the weight. If we stand on four legs, the head, the heart and the rest of the body except the limbs will all be roughly at the same height, and heart has to pump blood only horizontally at the same level. Stand on two legs and the heart is now forced to pump blood mostly against gravity. The blood in the head region has a natural tendency to flow down, towards the heart. The blood in the lower portion of the body has a natural tendency to flow down, away from the heart. The heart has to counter these forces of gravity and maintain a good blood flow everywhere. The heart needs to do extra work. Animals stand on four legs, a horse can run miles and still not feel so very tired, it can stand all day. We feel at rest only when we sit down or lie down. We must take care, therefore, as much as possible, to stand properly. Keep the body and back straight and vertical. Spread the feet about one and half feet apart - this gives maximum stability. Keep the pressure on the two feet and

on the heels and toes as uniform and as balanced as you can. Observe your slippers - if they are worn out more on one side than the other, that is a sure sign that you are not standing properly. When you are in the standing position, you must always feel stable, balanced, fully under control.

Your body has enormous flexibility. It can not only take these few basic postures but also hundreds of other postures known as *aasana-s* in *yooga*. These *aasana-s* are designed to impart flexibility, stability, and control to all parts of your body, to exercise every bone, joint and muscle, to help you keep your body fit, strong and healthy all through your life. Learn *yooga*, practice it regularly. We will come back to more on *yooga* later.

As far as our immediate goal of understanding and taming our *manas* is concerned, the most important point to note is that the *manas* is easily disturbed by the body. The *manas* controls all the movements in the body parts. If you wish to free your *manas* of all disturbances arising out of the body, you must learn to take a posture and stay in that posture without the minutest movement. You must sit or stand or lie down absolutely still and immobile like a statue. The slightest movement can disturb the mind and you will be back to square one, irrespective of how far you might have advanced in your practices. Total stability, one hundred percent equilibrium, complete cessation of all movement of the limbs, is a pre-requisite for mastering our mind. This is called *aasana-siddhi* - success in keeping your body fully under control. Of the various possible postures our body can take, sitting is the most important. We cannot be sleeping all the time nor can we stand the whole day. But we can sit for hours. We can do all our work in the sitting position. We can read, we can sing, we can pray, we can meditate, we can do a whole lot of things in the sitting position. Therefore, you must practice the art

of sitting quietly, stably in one position, for hours, without moving your body. This is the basic level of mastery over your own body. The body is physical, external, easily observable and much more easily controlled than the *manas*. Those who cannot even sit quiet in one place cannot achieve anything in life. They are like mischievous kids, like the young ones of monkeys, or only worse. You have passed the first step of food control. This is just the second step, the final goal is still many steps away, do not give up so easily and accept defeat. Practice till you succeed in achieving *aasana-siddhi*. You will initially say it pains here, or there is numbness there, and all kinds of things. Be assured, nothing will happen. Any temporary problem will vanish on its own in no time. Just summon up all your determination and sit straight, avoiding even the slightest movement. *aMga-ceeShTe* or unnecessary movements of the limbs, is a sign of the monkey in you. Grow up, become a full human being, learn to sit. What else can you do in life if you cannot even simply sit?

3.39 *praaNa-siddhi*

We have to move gradually from the gross to the subtle, from the external to the internal, until we reach our innermost core. That is where the truth lies. That is where we can realize. That is where we can liberate ourselves from the bondage of ignorance. After taming the body, the next step is to observe, understand, and harmonize our *praaNa* or breathing. Our breath is air, a physical, material thing. Yet it is not solid, it is a gas, and to that extent more subtle. You cannot see it with your eyes but you can feel it. It has no size or shape, you cannot catch it with your hands but you can fill your nose and lungs with it. It is neither too gross nor too subtle. It exists outside our bodies and also inside. *praaNa* is therefore the next most important

tool we have in self-engineering.

Some of the processes in the body are fully involuntary - like digestion and blood circulation. You cannot control them, you do not have to, they go on on their own. Certain other things like lifting your hand are fully voluntary - you always do these actions at your beck and call. Breathing is neither fully voluntary nor fully involuntary. It is involuntary to the extent that it can go on, on its own, without any effort from your side, whether you are awake or asleep. It is voluntary to the extent that you can still control it, if and when you please. You can breathe in or breathe out slowly or fast, with one nostril or both, you can retain the air in your lungs for some time, you can hold your breath out, you can do several stunts with your breathing process. There is whole big science of breathing known as *praaNaayaama*. Many kinds of illnesses and diseases of the body and the mind can be cured merely by following proper kind of *praaNaayaama*. Right now we shall talk of only one aspect of breathing that is useful for observing and taming our *manas*.

It is common experience of all of us that when we are in a grip of fear or great anxiety or worry, our breathing becomes fast, turbulent and unsteady. Once our worries are gone and the mind becomes calm again, we find that the breathing automatically stabilizes. Observe your breathing cycles after waking up from a long and good sleep. Invariably you will find that the breathing is slow and steady. During sleep, your mind was in the most undisturbed state. Clearly, there is a correlation between the mind and breathing. The mind affects breathing. What is less obvious is that breathing can in turn affect our *manas*. Since breathing is at least partly under our control, we can influence our *manas* through our *praaNa*. Our breath is therefore a very potent tool in our hands. Those who know how to

breathe know how to live, others merely exist. Breathing properly is the most basic and most important lesson we have to learn in life. Let us start.

Just breathe slowly and steadily for a while, and observe your *manas*. The *manas* would have become a bit calm, cool, composed, steady without any other effort from your side. This is the most important idea in *yooga*. This is simple, easy, universal, amenable for all, it costs you nothing. All you have to do is to sit in one place, squatting on the ground on a mat, keep the body straight and stable, breathe slowly and steadily. Do not try to artificially manipulate your breathing in any way with any great effort. Just allow yourself to breathe in and out normally, effortlessly, smoothly, slowly, steadily. Your life span is specified not in number of years but in the number of breathing cycles. Slow and steady breathing is the only way to live long and remain healthy and strong till the very end. Slow and steady breathing should become your habit, your very nature. *yooga*, *praaNaayaama*, meditation etc. are not things you should be practicing a few hours a day, these are things that you must practice all through your life, every minute of it. You may find it embarrassing to practice some strange posture in public but slow and steady breathing is something that you can do anywhere, anytime, even in public, nobody will know. You must practice *praaNaayaama* at home, in the office, while travelling, while waiting, at all times.

You might have noticed that on some days there is a strong wind blowing all over at great speed. There are days on which you will find a steady breeze. There are days on which there is little motion and the air appears to be almost still. Yet, if you observe carefully, you can notice small movements of the air. On some days it is so calm that it becomes very difficult to observe any movement at

all. The air is totally still and steady. An oil lamp will not flicker, smoke will not drift and disperse. There would surely be movement at a microscopic level not discernible by us, but as far as our direct observations go, air is totally motionless. It is possible to slow down our breathing to a level where it becomes impossible for us to notice any breathing activity. We are neither inhaling nor exhaling. Our lungs are neither over-full with air nor empty. At first thought, you may think that a person would suffocate and die if his breathing stops. Contrary to this, you will actually find that this is a stage in which your breathing is totally effortless, smooth, streamlined, calm, steady, and you are actually feeling very calm, composed and pleasant. There is no suffocation or suffering. You are in fact active, alert, happy. This is simply a low energy, stable state of breathing. The *manas* is extremely calm, like a lake that is without the slightest waves, like a sea which is in 'sea state zero' as the ocean experts put it. This is called *praaNa-siddhi*. This is the third stage in our quest to know our own mind. This is easy, easy for one and all. But like all other aspects of *yooga*, *praaNaayaama* must also be learned and practiced under the guidance of an experienced *yooga* master. We shall help you with the necessary theory and practical tips right away.

3.40 The Science of praaNaayaama

Our body has Billions of cells, each is a complete living organism. Each cell has a birth, it grows, it undergoes changes, it dies. Each cell breathes, eats, reproduces, although in ways different from what we normally understand of these terms. How do all these Billions of cells cooperate, coordinate and work together as a single living organism called a human body? The energy that synchronizes and synergises all these individual living cells into one

big human body is called *praaNa*. *praaNa* includes all the transport phenomena, all the regulatory phenomena, all the synchronization and balancing phenomena - temperature control, distribution of oxygen and nutrients, scavenging wastes, distributing chemical signals called hormones, digestion, assimilation, excretion, etc. Of all these phenomena, respiration is the most important thing because we can directly control it to some extent and through that, we can get a handle to our own *manas*. By controlling our breathing, we can indirectly control all other transport phenomena in the body. *praaNaayaama* is all about monitoring and controlling respiration and balancing and stabilizing all other transport phenomena as also the mind indirectly through that.

We have two eyes, two ears, one nose, one mouth. Why? Why not one? Why not three or five? Did they not teach you even such simple things in your school or college? Anyway, scientists say we have two eyes because the two eyes see slightly different versions of the same scene, separated by a few millimeters as the eyes are, and by computing the difference, the brain can know distance and speed. Otherwise, a small object at close distance and a bigger one of the same shape at a farther point cannot be distinguished. Is this true? You can experiment and check this up for yourself. Close one eye and see. Can you say close-by objects from the ones far away equally easily? Are the scientists right? It is the *manas* which perceives, not the *buddhi* and the *manas* does not do any symbolic or numerical computations at all. Anyway, this is beside the point for our discussion right now. Scientists say it is for the same reason that we have two ears - so that we can sense direction and distance. Can you not hear properly and locate the direction and distance from which the sound is coming using only one ear? Try and check up yourself. Anyway, let us not worry about all this right now. Be that as it may.

The question before us is why do we have two nostrils in our nose? Clearly, this has nothing to do with smelling. You may say we have two nostrils so as to distribute the load of breathing. The two nostrils soon join into a single tube that goes all the way up to a point close to the lungs. The wind pipe is a single common tube for the most part. What great purpose does it serve to break it into two just near the exit?

Contrary to what you may be thinking, you do not breathe equally through the two nostrils. Keep your index finger close to the nostrils, one at a time, close but not quite blocking it, and observe the flow of air. You will notice that you are breathing in and out predominantly through one nostril. Repeat this experiment at different times and note down when you were breathing mostly through the right and the left nostrils.

Contrary to what you may be thinking, the two nostrils are not identical. They are very different in their qualities. The left nostril is called *candra-naaDi* and is associated with a calm, cool, composed, stable state of body and mind. The right nostril, on the other hand, is called *suurya-naaDi* and is associated with a more dynamic, energetic, turbulent, disturbed state of body and mind. You can observe this for yourself. Observe your breathing carefully many times a day, for many days, and note down the nostril through which you are breathing and how cool or hot you find yourself at that point of time. There could be a few exceptions and confusions but the rule holds in general - breathing through the left nostril signifies a cool and composed state, breathing through the right signifies the opposite. Simple, is it not? If even such simple, directly observable, directly relevant, useful things are not taught, what is the use of a school, college or university? We may have so many degrees and diplomas to our credit but we

continue to remain utterly ignorant of ourselves! Science is based on experimentation, observation and inference. The most important of these three is observation. We seem to have lost our keen sense of observation. Observe carefully and you will discover so many amazing things about yourself without need for laboratories or scientific equipment or money or people. Observe yourself. Observe nature. Do not simply go by what other say, even if they are supposed to be experts.

By practicing *yooga* properly, by obtaining *aahaara-siddhi*, *aasana-siddhi* and *praaNa-siddhi*, you can calm down your mind to a great extent. As the breathing slows down the mind becomes more and more calm. As the mind becomes calm, breathing becomes even more calm and steady. As you progress along these lines, you may find a shift from *suurya-naaDi* to *candra-naaDi*, indicating a stabilization and calming down of your body and mind. You will rarely, if ever, find a shift from the left nostril to the right as you practice *praaNaayaama* and meditation. This is the experiment, this is the observation, this is the inference. This is real science. The so called science is all mostly non-sense and irrelevant to your life. Use your body and mind as the instruments, experiment, observe, draw the right conclusions, for yourself. Do not go by what some people with a scientist's label hanging down their foreheads say. In most cases, they know not what they say. Forgive them.

Is slowing down the breathing an artificial maneuver? Is it dangerous? Will our oxygen supply get affected? No, not at all, provided you have learned the techniques properly and you practice under the direct supervision of learned guru until you master the techniques properly. Later on, you can practice on your own. Slow and steady breathing is quite natural. Slowing down and calming down the body and mind is harmless, in fact this is very useful. As a mat-

ter of fact, many animals go into hibernation every year. Frogs bury themselves in the soil, remain there motionless for months, without eating, drinking, excreting, moving, breathing. Do they die? No, they come back fresh, strong and healthy once the right season re-appears. Getting into a low energy, stable state is neither unnatural nor dangerous. Life can be experienced at its best in such a calm and stable state. This is the real meaning and the real purpose of *yooga*.

People go thousands of miles and take great risks to visit *maanasa-saroovara*, which literally means the ‘mind-lake’, a lake that is so calm, it is all heavenly bliss, like a totally calm and steady mind. There are no waves, like a mind without any thoughts. Scientists think that we can solve a problem by thinking intensely about it. They do not realize that the greatest discoveries can be made only by stopping all thoughts. In fact *yooga* is defined as *citta-vRtti-niroodha* or complete stoppage of all thoughts and disturbances of the *manas*. *yooga* is not all about physical exercises and fitness and health of the body alone, it is more to do with the *manas*. *praaNaayaama* is a major step in slowing down the mind by slowing down the breathing. We started off this book by saying we are all running at great speed like mad without any sense of direction or goal and we need to slow down and stop. We have definitely come some way in the right direction.

praaNa is not matter, nor is it the mind. It is neither physical, nor mental. It is neither the body nor any part of it. Remember, we are not talking of air, we are talking of the transport phenomena and the driving force behind this. It is more subtle than the body yet not so insidious as the *manas*. It can be observed and controlled easily, anybody can do this, and through this we can gain entry into the much more subtle and internal thing called the

manas. *praaNa* can be easily attuned, harmonized, balanced, stabilized by anybody with some training. *praaNa* is the link, the handle, by holding onto which we can reach up to our *manas*, there is no other way. We waste a whole lot of energy in all the unnecessary, useless and damaging thoughts we entertain in our minds all through the day. We also waste a lot of energy in the breathing process. Every engineer knows that energy is wasted in turbulence and a clam, steady, streamlined flow saves a lot of energy. Learn the techniques of stabilizing the body and the mind. This is the science of *praaNaayaama*. The best laboratory we have in the world to observe, understand, practice all branches of engineering is our own body. We stand to gain immensely, immediately, directly, without need for machines, materials, money or manpower, without exploiting natural resources, without damaging the environment, without troubling anybody else in any way whatever. Make your own body and mind as your laboratory. Give up all man-made things. This is real science.

3.41 The Talking Machine

Have you seen anybody who can simply walk through a wall as if it is not there? The purpose of breathing is to absorb oxygen and throw out harmful gases from the blood. This happens in the lungs. Oxygen in the air is absorbed by the blood flowing in the capillaries across two cell walls - the cell wall of the blood vessel and the cell wall of the lungs. Of course, nature has made marvelous adaptations, the two cell walls become thinner and merge into one here. Yet this is quite miraculous that oxygen can be absorbed by the blood and harmful gases sent back to the air in the lungs. This is the greatness of nature. We only need to provide sufficient time for this magical exchange of gases across the cell walls.

We get energy not from the food we eat. We get energy when the food we eat is digested, transported and assimilated in the cells of the body in the form of glucose and finally this glucose combines with oxygen we absorb from the atmosphere through the process of respiration. Without oxygen, you will have no energy even if you eat a lot of good food.

Breathing is especially important in human beings. This is because we talk. Animals do not. We use the same lungs, the same wind pipe, the same vocal tract and nose for breathing as also for talking. Speaking involves throwing out controlled puffs of air and manipulating the articulators in the vocal tract to produce various sounds. This is a very complex maneuver, involving simultaneous and synchronized movement of several hundred muscles. Animals do not have such fine control and so they cannot speak. Because we use the same apparatus for breathing and speaking, speaking affects our breathing. Our body has developed extraordinary adaptations to ensure that speaking does not badly affect our breathing but some effect is inevitable. That is why speaking less and maintaining silence is given so much of importance in our ancient tradition. We should not speak more than necessary. On the contrary, all aspects of our modern life style seem to be promoting incessant chatting. Talking consumes a great deal of energy. Experiment and see for yourself, talk less and see the difference it makes to your body and mind.

When we have to lift a heavy weight, we instinctively hold our breath. When we have to perform some action with great attention and care, we instinctively control our breathing. *praaNaayaama* comes naturally to all human beings but only to some extent. By proper understanding and practice, there is a lot to be gained. *praaNaayaama*

comes more naturally to animals - many of them go hibernating for months.

Animals do not talk and animals do not have as much of mental tensions and worries as we have. Animals breathe normally. All human beings need to practice *praaNaayaama*, learn the process of slow and steady breathing, so that we can spend less energy in the process of breathing, we get the required amount of oxygen, and we can effectively throw out all the harmful gases in the blood. Because of our life style, mental tension, because of all the physical work we do, and because of so much of speaking, the effectiveness of our respiration is seriously affected. Proper practice of *praaNaayaama* can compensate. Slow, steady and effortless breathing must be learned and regularly practiced by every human being. *praaNaayaama* benefits both the body and the mind. This is the science of *praaNaayaama*.

3.42 The Art of *praaNaayaama*

How exactly do we practice *praaNaayaama*? Here are the basic principles and techniques. These are best learned and practiced under an able, knowledgeable and experienced *yoogi*. You cannot learn *yooga* by merely reading a book or by watching television shows. Be warned. *praaNaayaama* is a big subject and we will need a full book to give you even a complete overview. Here we can only mention a few points of importance to our current goals.

Inhaling is technically known as *puuraka* or filling. Exhaling is called *reecaka*. Retention of air in the lungs, like water in a pot, is called *kumbhaka*. The word *kumbha* means pot. We can do any of these things in different modes - slow and steady, medium pace, fast, very fast and powerful, over a longer time or in short pulses and

so on. And we have the left and the right nostrils to do any of these. We can breathe by expanding and contracting the chest cavity or mainly be compressing and expanding the stomach. Clearly, there are many different permutations and combinations. There are many types of *praaNaayaama*, each with its own uses. Let us briefly survey a selected few.

Breathing in and out with strong puffs of air, as if forced from a bellows, at a medium rate, is known as *bhastrikaa*, which means bellows. This causes friction, air flow is turbulent, there is energy loss, you feel the heat and you cannot do this for long. This is certainly not good for purposes of calming down the mind. It is useful to generate heat. You have a heater inside you. You do not need a sweater or a shawl or a muffler or a coat. You do not need room heaters which waste electricity. Whenever you feel cold, you can simply switch on the heater in you, for a few minutes, and you will stop shivering and you will feel more comfortable. *Yooga* is something you can do with your own body and internal instruments - no external gadget or machinery or equipment or electricity is required. All material gadgets are completely unnecessary, wasteful and harmful.

Instead of breathing in and breathing out forcefully as above, if you exhale with even greater force in bursts, and completely leave the inhaling process to itself, you are breathing using *kapaala-bhaati*. The force of exhalation should be so great that you can feel the gush of air with your palms held about one foot away from your nose. *kapaala-bhaati* exercises, energizes and revitalizes many parts of your face and head. If properly done, it can give effulgence, flamboyance, the heavenly grace and beaming powerful eyes like that of a great sage. Clearly, this is not for the purpose of cooling down the *manas*.

Likewise, we can list out many other of forms of *praaNaayaama*, each supported by a sound theory and tens of thousands of years of practical evidence, each meant for a particular purpose. You should not simply keep trying all kinds of *praaNaayaama* on your own without a complete and thorough understanding of the theory and practice. That would not take you anywhere. There is nothing new you can discover. Our ancient sages, true scientists as they were, have left nothing untried and untested. Thoughtless experimentation could even be dangerous. For example, practicing *kapaala-bhaati* improperly can force the phlegm to enter and solidify in the upper recesses of the facial cavity, requiring medical treatment. Western science can be learned by reading books and web pages. Indian sciences are too subtle and cannot be learned without a proper guru. Seek a guru if you are serious about learning.

The science of *praaNaayaama* is big, deep and mysterious. Expect the unexpected. Here is but one example. Practice *bhastrikaa* for one minute and just stop. Do not slow down and stop gradually, there is no slowing down in *bhastrikaa*. Stop all of a sudden and do nothing at all after that. Do not do anything by effort. Leave everything to itself and just observe. You will find that your breathing stops completely. You are neither inhaling nor exhaling. There is no breathing at all. Yet you do not feel uncomfortable or suffocated. On the contrary you feel totally relaxed, extremely calm and pleasant. This is *sahaja-kumbhaka-sthiti*, the state of being naturally like a pot, which has air in it and there may be some invisible movement of air in and out but essentially the pot does not breathe. You experience bliss, for a few seconds only. Then breathing starts all by itself, very slowly and gradually and resumes normal level within a few seconds. Nothing bad or dangerous or risky at all happens to you and you get a glimpse of heavenly bliss, you experience life for the first time in

your life. All these years, you did not know what is life at all! But be warned. This is not the way to achieve success in meditation, this is not the path to eternal bliss in life. This is merely a sample, a practical, experimental demonstration that any one can experience total calmness and bliss and peace so easily through *yooga*. This is just to show you practically that you can also become a *yoogi*, that *yooga* is not something too big and formidable for you. That is all. Do not repeat this experiment again and again. It is useless.

Do not try all kinds of *praaNaayaama* by yourself. It does not help. Instead, go to a learned guru, one who has learned from the original texts under a guru in the traditional way. Do not go for *yooga* courses that are run for money. Ask your guru if he or she has read *maharShi pataMjali's yooga suutra-s* in its original Sanskrit. You must always seek the original, the root, not the new incarnations, new brands or latest fashion. All aspects of life are closely and inseparably inter-connected and unless your guru has read all the original texts in the original language as they were written and under the direct supervision of a guru in the traditional way, you are taking a big risk. Those who know one aspect or some aspects or even most aspects do not know the whole of life and if they do not understand all aspects of life, they may be misleading you. *yooga* cannot be divorced from life, or any aspect of it. It must be learned, understood and practiced holistically. *yooga* is not mere exercise for the body. We are not bodies, nor are we the mind. Would you ever be satisfied with a photocopy or a painting or a cartoon sketch of a currency note? You always want the original and nothing but the original, right? All those so called experts and gurus and authors and teachers and preachers who have not gone all the way back up to the very root of our ancient tradition are dubious and suspect, they are like fake currency notes,

never trust them.

Nothing should be practiced in *yooga* which is too difficult for you at any given stage, you must always know where exactly you stand and then try only one small step further. You can climb a full twenty floors if you go slowly, step by step. If you try to rush or jump steps, you are taking a very big risk. That is why it is important to learn and practice under a good guru. But slow and steady breathing is one thing that you can practice and master on your own, even without a guru. As far as our current purpose of taming our *manas* is concerned, the only thing that you need to practice is the art of slow and steady breathing. Practice, observe, keep trying, gradually slow down in small steps, until you discover the slowest and steadiest way you can breathe without feeling uncomfortable either during or after the exercise. Start now. And go on till the last moment of your life. You will stand to gain immensely.

3.43 *pratyaaviikShaNa*

Imagine a very mischievous and restless kid. It keeps doing something or the other all the time and keeping it under control is a Herculean task. There are many techniques to deal with such a kid. One simple and oftentimes quite effective method is to do nothing but to simply keep a constant watch. Observe what the child is doing, every moment, do not let your eyes wander anywhere else, not even for a moment. Let the child know that you are observing. Do not ask the kid not to do this or to stop doing that. Do not say anything, do not do anything. Just watch. The moment the child realizes that it is under constant vigil, its behaviour will change. It will become more careful, more choosy and automatically all the mischief it is engaged in will gradually come down. It knows that you are not say-

ing anything, it knows that you are not preventing it from doing anything, but it knows that it is being watched. It has the full freedom to do whatever it wants but the mere fact that it is being constantly watched will put breaks on all its dirty and dangerous activities.

Keep a constant vigil on the students writing an examination and they would stop talking, copying and all other mischief. The same is true of a pet. The same is true of our breathing too. Just observe your breathing and you will notice that it is slowing down and steadying. Do not effort-fully control or manipulate your breathing in any way whatever. Let it go on by itself. But keep a constant watch. Your *manas* should not be doing anything other than watching the *praaNa*. No other thoughts should be entertained. This is difficult but not impossible. You can perfect this with practice. This is called *praaNa-pratyaaviikShaNa* or direct observation of your breathing. Even without any effort towards controlling it, your breathing cycles automatically become slow, steady, harmonious, calm, effortless, peaceful, blissful. All you have to do is to keep a constant vigil. Very simple, yet very effective.

In fact the same is true of the *manas* too. Just observe your *manas*, do not try to control it, let it go where it wants, let it think of anything, let it jump from New York to Los Angeles, do not worry. But make sure that you know where your *manas* is at every point of time. This is called *manoo-pratyaaviikShaNa* or direct observation of the mind. This is like spying. The enemy is constrained by the mere fact that he is being constantly monitored and spied. We need to keep a constant watch on those who have or control a nuclear bomb. We need to constantly watch and monitor all the powerful and potentially dangerous things in this world. Our *manas* is one such extremely powerful and very dangerous element. Even a moment's laxity can

cost us dearly. By merely maintaining a constant vigil, we can tame this wild *manas* to a very large extent. So simple, yet so effective.

3.44 The Cricket Match

Imagine that you are watching a cricket or soccer match on the television. There are cameras mounted at strategic locations and they beam the images captured by the cameras onto your television screens. You get a clear picture of what all is going on. Now suppose a camera was mounted on the ball. What would you see? Try to imagine. You will only get fast changing, blurs. Nothing would be clear, neither the ball nor the players nor the spectators can be seen clearly. This is what happens to us normally. We attach ourselves to our *manas* and we keep getting tossed around helplessly all over like the ball in the match. We get a thoroughly confused and blurred picture of life. We do not understand anything, not ourselves, not the world. The solution is to detach the camera from the ball and mount it at a distant, stable position. The solution to all problems in life is to detach ourselves from our *manas*, to distance ourselves from all the perceptions, feelings and thoughts we experience inside our *manas*, and to place ourselves, as observers, at a distant, stable, undisturbed strategic location and then observe what all games our *manas* is playing. This is the crux of *manoo-pratyaaviikShaNa*. If you are yourself getting helplessly tossed around like a log of wood on rough water, what can you know about the water or the waves? You have to stand aloof, you have to stand far away on the stable bank and then watch the river and the waves and the beautiful way in which birds, boats or logs of wood are sailing, drifting and getting tossed around. You have realized that you are not your body or *manas* or *buddhi*. You have to detach yourself from the waves of thoughts

flowing down your turbulent stream called *manas*, stand on the shores at safe distance, unmoved by the waves of all thoughts and emotions, you have to remain steady and motionless, and then observe the game of life. Then and only then can you get a clear picture of life. A cricket match or a soccer match is best enjoyed as an onlooker seated on the comfortable seat in front of your television set at home. Life is best enjoyed by observing it from a distance as a neutral, unbiased, undisturbed, stable observer. You are the seer, you are the observer, you are not the seen, you are not the experiencer, you are not the sufferer. You are neither the cricket bat nor the ball nor the wickets nor the players nor the captain nor the crowd. You enjoy the game whether this team wins or that. Or it was a draw. Or it rained and the match got cancelled, as it happens often in real life! If you attach yourself to the ball or the bat or to anything else, you are a helpless victim of all the wicked games other play on you. You get hit again and again and you only experience pain and suffering in life. Stay away. Just watch and enjoy. This is the recipe to happiness and bliss in life. Detachment is the most important lesson we have to learn in life. We can overcome all problems and enjoy life to its fullest only if and when we learn to detach ourselves from everything.

Life is like a cinema. You can create it, you can shape it the way you want, you can enjoy making it, provided you think like the director of the film, not like an actor, certainly not if you act like the camera or other life-less equipment. Stay away and watch the drama of life, do not get dragged into life. Life is beautiful, a thing of beauty is a joy for ever. Enjoy life. Do not become a victim of life. Life is great, provided you watch it from distance.

aasana-siddhi is possible, you can control and stabilize your body, because the body is yours, you are not the body,

you are different from it. You are the controller and the body is the controlled. *praaNa-pratyaaviikShaNa* is possible because you are not the *praaNa*, you are different from it, you are the observer and it is the observed. *manoo-pratyaaviikShaNa* is possible because the *manas* is yours, you possess it, you are not it, you are the observer, your *manas* is the observed. You observe, you control your body, breathing, *manas* and *buddhi*, you are the controller, they are the controlled, you are not any of them, you are different from all of them, your true nature is *sat-cit-aananda*. Realize this truth, stay away from all the noise that goes on all around you in the external world or inside your body and mind in your internal world. Just sit back, relax and enjoy life.

The *manas* is the doer, it is the experiencer, all the joys and sorrows of life are experienced by the *manas*. You are not your *manas*. Therefore, you really do not experience any pain or suffering at all in this world. By attaching yourself to your *manas*, you are thinking that all its problems are yours. If an iron rod is red hot, let it enjoy or suffer the heat as it wishes, why should you touch it and feel the heat? The wise will simply stay away. Stay away from your *manas* all problem in life will vanish instantly. The *manas* is the experiencer, the *manas* is the doer, whatever you think you are doing in your life, it is your *manas* which is doing all that, not you. You do nothing. You are neither the doer nor the enjoyer nor the sufferer. You are merely a witness to life. There is nothing that you have to do in this life. If there is something that is destined to happen, it will happen, come what may, no matter how much of effort you put in to stop it. If there is something that is not destined to happen, it will just not happen, however hard you may try. Learn to simply live. You are not a thinker, do not think, do not worry. Do nothing. Just enjoy life. This is freedom. Free yourself from your body and mind. This is

the secret of life.

3.45 *manoo-nigraha*

The *manas* is the perceiver, the feeler, it is the experimenter, it experiences all the joys and sorrows of life. It is the *manas* which does *saMkalpa* / *vikalpa* - deciding to do or not to do something. Once a decision is made, we spring into action. All action, everything we do in life, small or big, is kicked off by a decision taken by the *manas*. It is the *manas* that drives the engine and the wheels of life. The *manas* is the prime mover. If not for the *manas* you would not be doing anything at all in life. In fact it is the *manas* which is the doer, the agent, of all of our actions, the body merely obeys the commands it gets, like any other lifeless machine. We get fooled into believing that we are the doers and experiencers because of our attachment to our *manas*, we are really neither the agents nor the enjoyers or sufferers. The *manas* is the focal centre, the king-pin in this whole drama of life.

The *manas* is childish, mischievous, restless, aimless, directionless, illogical, unscientific, unreasonable, and almost unmanageable. The *manas* is the monkey in man. There is absolutely no reason or logic or structure or sanity in the *manas* - these are the qualities of the *buddhi* and the two are completely independent and mutually exclusive in nature. Driven by our ever restless *manas*, we keep on doing all kinds of things in life, right or wrong, required or not required, good or bad. Because there is only one thing we cannot do in life, that is, just keeping quiet and doing nothing! Not doing anything is the worst form of punishment! School children find it so hard not to talk in a class. Even after we grow up, we cannot simply keep to ourselves and sit in one place, doing nothing. We never outgrow the

monkey in us.

We put in enormous amount of time, human effort and money to dig out petroleum, refine it, make a plastic carry-bag, use it for a few minutes to bring home some stuff, then dispose it off by burning it, releasing toxic gases to the atmosphere and destroying nature. Why do any of these? Even to produce a match box, we need to do so many things. The match box is so cheap, so readily available, so easy to use, Billions of people, educated or uneducated as they may be, have started setting fire to anything and everything, including the most hazardous chemical substances, adding colossal amounts of deadly poisons to the atmosphere everyday. We simply do not have enough time to educate all these people, the whole world will be destroyed much before that. Why at all make this weapon of mass destruction called a match box? Where is the need to do anything? Through our actions, we destroy the world, we destroy ourselves too.

The only solution to this is to keep our *manas* under control. This is called *manoo-nigraha*. This is the only thing we need to do in life, nothing else is necessary. We do not need to do research, discover and invent new things, manufacture and sell gadgets or do any other thing. All good things, all things we need to enjoy a happy, fulfilling life are already there. The good God has already provided for everything we may need. He knows what we need, what is good for us and what is not. If he has not made something in nature, it is not required at all, or it may even be harmful to us. There is nothing that man needs to do, there is nothing that we need to create. In fact the very idea of man trying to create something new, something not already found in nature, is an insult to God, an insult to nature. We should not have invented the match box, we should not have invented the wheel, we should not

have invented electricity or discovered petroleum. Seated comfortably in a moving train, why continue to carry the luggage on our head while the train is capable of carrying us as also all of our luggage? Is this not foolish? We need not do anything, God will take care of everything. The only thing we need to do is to learn to do nothing. Just live. Simply live. Simply sing, dance and enjoy life. This is the only lesson we need to learn from a real system of education. The greatest gurus are those who have mastered the art of controlling their mind, who do nothing, and yet are the happiest ever. Such gurus can teach us the same. We are not speaking for laziness here. Nor are we suggesting that you should not breathe or digest the food you eat. You will slowly understand the correct meaning of saying nothing should be done, as you read the rest of the book. As a very first rule, you may take this as meaning - do not do anything which is harmful to others, even in the slightest.

The *manas* is like a bunch of mirrors of assorted shapes and sizes, of assorted concavities and convexities, moving, shaking, vibrating at random, reflecting the multitude of dancing lights of various colours. These lights are the disturbances of the external world. The sense organs capture these disturbing signals and send them to the *manas* to reflect upon. The *manas* is constantly disturbed by these external as also internally generated signals. In this hall of mirrors, the one appears as many and varied. The aim is to slow down, stop, iron out, flatten, smoothen all pieces of mirrors and assemble them into a single plane, flat, smooth mirror. The aim is to switch off all these dancing, moving lights of various colours and intensities. Then and only then can we see the true nature of the reality, we can then see the only thing that really exists, namely, our own self. As long as the *manas* is looking outwards and observing the external world and the body, it cannot see the self. When it

turns away from the world and the self appears, the world is gone. Along with the world will go away every one of your problems, all pain and suffering will vanish immediately, all sorrow is gone. You will find yourself immersed in pure happiness and bliss. This is neither hallucination nor some kind of self-cheating, this is simply the truth.

Lord Krishna did nothing in his life, except singing, dancing, talking, eating, and other natural daily chores. Jesus did nothing in his life - he did not go to an office or factory or farm and work, he did not check emails or search the Internet. Lord Buddha did not do scientific research or publish academic papers in journals and conferences. Lord Rama did not go shopping nor did he travel without reason. None of them watched a television, none of them used a cell phone or a camera or a music system or a microwave oven or a car or a refrigerator. That these gadgets were not there at their time is not the point. There was an aeroplane and Lord Rama did use it once but only once in his life, that too only to save the life of his brother. Even today we find people who do not use and do not want to use many or most or even all of the technologies and gadgets we have, because they know it is only foolish and harmful to fall for all these fancy man-made toys. The point we have to learn from all great men is that we can live a full, glorious, useful life without any material gadgets, we can live without modern science and technology. In fact we can live only if we give up modern science and technology. We must restrict the use of science and technology to exceptionally important, life saving situations, if at all. If you travel once or twice in your life time that may be OK but it is not OK for Millions of people to travel routinely tens or hundreds of kilometers everyday. If there are ten computers or cars or phones in the world that may be OK, it is not OK for Millions of people to ask for a computer or a car or a phone of their own. We must give up science and

technology, well, almost. Otherwise we would be destroyed in no time. The world is now under a brink of disaster. Human life will very soon be impossible on this planet. Think.

Stop doing all kinds of useless things in life. Spend your life simply sitting in one place, doing only those minimally essential activities to keep life going. Sit in a stable position, close your eyes and forget the whole outside world. Forget your body too. Stabilize your breathing, observe your breath, stabilize and calm down your mind. Now detach yourself from the *manas* and start observing your own *manas*. The moment it tries to think of anything, shoot that thought down. Our *manas* is our biggest enemy. The *manas* will not accept defeat so easily, it will keep on firing endless rounds of thought missiles but we must counter and annul every one of them. This can be done, this can only be done by asking whose thoughts or ideas or questions or doubts or feelings or emotions all these are. Who is thinking? Who is this fellow in me who is drawing my attention to this or pulling me towards that? Ask the *manas* to focus on itself, think of the thinker, feel the feeler, try to know the knower. The feelings, emotions, ideas, thoughts, questions, doubts are experienced by the *manas* by undergoing changes called *pratyaya-s* or *vRtti-s*. Observe and shoot down all *vRtti-s* as and when they arise. This is the one and the only way to kill the *manas* and unless and until you kill your *manas*, that is, tie it down and prevent it from thinking of anything at all, you cannot see the truth, you cannot know who you are. Thoughts are the biggest obstacles you have in reaching the truth.

The root of all *vRtti-s* is self-awareness, the I-ness or I-sense in you. This is the starting point, the most basic and most fundamental of all *vRtti-s*. Spy this, observe this, question this, stop this most basic *vRtti* too. Once that is done, there is simply nothing for the *manas* to do

and it becomes *amanas*, that is, it simply keeps quiet, it is totally silenced. We have clearly shown that we are not the body or sense organs or the brain or the *manas* or the *buddhi* or the *ahaMkaara*. Who are we then? The original source of all knowledge, all energy, all vitality, all life is the self. The body, the sense organs, even the *manas* and the *buddhi* are like shadows or mirrors. Neither the *manas* nor the *buddhi* is the original source, they merely reflect the light of our consciousness. Once the *manas* has been fully subdued, the only thing that remains is the self, the pure consciousness. We will reach this only thing that exists in reality. This self is the one and the only real thing in the whole universe. The entire rest of the world is just a magical projection of this self. I am not anything else, I am my self. *manoo-nigraha* is the only art and science of reaching this final stage of realization. You will become a realized soul. After that, there is nothing left for you to do. All your worries and problems and pains and sorrows are gone. There is nothing to be gained or lost. You have realized that you are immersed in an ocean of pure bliss, how foolish you were so far, blissfully unaware of your own true nature! All of us are immersed in a huge atmosphere but we just fail to notice this. Likewise, all living beings are actually immersed in an ocean of bliss, other animals cannot get this realization, we humans can, we should, otherwise our whole life is wasted. All those who fail to make good use of this extraordinary opportunity given to us in the form of a human life and fail to realize the self are fools. Do not be a fool, find out who you are and liberate yourself from the bondage of ignorance. This is the correct meaning of the term freedom.

This is *manoo-nigraha*, this is *nididhyaasana*, this is also called *adhyaatma-yooga*, *dhyaana-yooga* or just *yooga*. The idea is to unify the *manas* with *aatma* or the self by preventing it from making any *saMkalpa*, by not allowing it to

get triggered by any external or internal inputs of any kind, at the same time keeping it alert and awake, not allowing it to fall asleep. This is *citta-vRtti-niroodhaH*, this is the very definition of *yooga*. This is what you need to learn and practice in life. This is the only way you can rid yourself of all your problems and at the same time get everything that you may want in life. Because the self is the source of all happiness and bliss in this whole universe and the rest of the universe is the source of all pain and suffering. Seeking the self, seeking this only real thing, seeking this only thing which exists independently, seeking this *sat* is called *jnYaana*. Giving up all else, the false, fake, unreal things including the body, mind and the whole world, which are in fact the root cause of all of our suffering, is called *vairaagya*. Seeking the *sat* alone and giving up all else mean the same thing. Thus, *jnYaana* and *vairaagya* mean one and the same thing. *jnYaana* is *vairaagya* and *vairaagya* is *jnYaana*. You just cannot get *jnYaana* or knowledge until and unless you renounce the world. Only those who have complete *vairaagya* are *jnYaani-s*, all others are ignorant.

Note that *vairaagya* is an abstract noun that has come from the adjective *viraaga* which means without *raaga* or attachment. Renouncing the world does not mean becoming a monk or a hermit. Renouncing the body does not mean committing suicide. We need not physically give up anything, we only have to give up our attachment. You need not change the way you dress or the way you walk or talk, you only have to change the way you think. This concept will become more and more clear as you read through the rest of the book.

In the first two chapters we showed that the external world as also our own body and mind do not have independent existence and the self is the only thing that really exists. In this chapter so far, we have shown you how you

can practically realize and experience this truth yourself. All you have to do is the observe, understand, learn to control and master your own mind. The rest of the chapter will give you simple techniques that can help you monitor and control your own mind. We will also explain the concept of detachment and show you how you can live and work in this world and enjoy life to its fullest. The only purpose God has given you an intellect is to help you understand all this and use it for controlling your *manas*. Do not use your intelligence for anything else.

3.46 A Lesson from the Farmer

In order to get the most of his land in agriculture, the farmer needs to first clear the ground of stones and weeds, level it, till the soil and prepare it for sowing. Likewise, the *manas* needs to be cleaned and prepared. Only then can we sow the right seeds and reap the best fruits from the tree of life. A number of tools, techniques and methods have been developed by our wise ancestors for cleansing the mind. These are all proven methods. They have stood the test of time for thousands of years. Modern scientific education and life style, with its external, materialistic orientation, has failed to understand the significance and logic of these methods and techniques. It is time we take a fresh look and understand and implement them for the benefit of the individual as also for the human society as a whole. In the following several sections, we outline the most important of these techniques for mind cleansing and mind control. All these methods and techniques have a single goal - to cleanse, level, and stabilize the *manas*. By themselves they may not yield any results. By cleaning and preparing the mind, they help us to derive the best out of this great opportunity called human life. Unless and until the mind is clean and clear, we cannot even understand the

significance of the ideas that we have talked about in this book. If some readers fail to understand or appreciate this book, the main reason would be the dirt in their thinking which would have made their *manas* opaque. They cannot reflect, so they cannot understand. It was therefore felt a wise strategy by our ancestors to inculcate these mind-cleansing habits right from early childhood. It is high time we take a fresh look at our education system from this perspective.

The *manas* is the seat of anger, jealousy, lust, greed, hatred, delusion, ignorance, cunning-ness, cruelty, inequality and all other inhuman qualities. The *manas* is also the seat of all good, positive, humane qualities. Sweet mangoes and the bitter neem grow on the same soil, using the same water, the same air, the same Sunlight. It all depends on what we sow - as we sow, so we reap. We must learn to distinguish between the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, the true and the false. This faculty of discrimination is called *vijnYaana*, the Indian word for 'science'. In the light of that discrimination, we need to choose and sow the right seeds. We will surely reap the best fruits, life will be at its very best possible. Have no doubts. This is real science. Forget about the outside material world, forget the body, forget physics, think only of the *manas*. Everything we say in the next several sections must be understood in this perspective.

We take bath everyday. Why? Because the body gets dirty within hours. We wash our clothes again and again. Because they become dirty again and again. We clean our house everyday, we clean our car everyday, because naturally they keep getting dirty. When did you clean your *manas* last? The *manas* also keeps getting dirty, in fact more easily and faster than anything else. We need to keep cleaning our *manas*. This is something that we need to do

daily, every day, many times a day, almost all the time. There is nothing else that we need to do in life. Spend all your life cleaning your mind and keeping it clean. It is worth it. Neglect this most sacred duty and your *manas* will invariably become the abode of all kinds of dirty, dangerous, inhuman qualities. Life will become wretched and miserable. This is what has happened today to most people in the world, we give a bath to our body everyday but we have forgotten the *manas*. All have become dirty fellows!

Cleanliness is next to Godliness. The *manas* is actually sitting just next to the self, which is the ultimate God, *brahma*. As long as the *manas* is dirty, it fails to see this truth glaring right next to it, it will instead turn its face away and look outside. Clean the *manas* and the bright light of consciousness, the *cit*, which is our own self, shines so brightly that the rest of the whole universe will become blinded in the brilliance of this light of real knowledge. Knowledge will shine and the darkness of ignorance will be gone. The bondage of ignorance will be gone. This is freedom.

3.47 Void

Let us look at a story that actually happened to someone. He was to go to the capital city for delivering an invited talk in an international conference. He started off in the morning intending to go the airport by local train to catch a flight. He chose not to go by taxi to the airport because the nearby railway bridge was under repair and the cabs would take a long and circuitous route with unpredictable traffic conditions and consequent delays. As he started from his house, a big, ferocious dog came and attacked him and bit him badly. He had to cancel his trip in the last minute, lose the airfare on his non-refundable

tickets, and undergo pain and suffering for long. Why did they fix the conference and his talk on that particular day and at that place and time? Why did they choose to repair the bridge at that point of time? Why did the dog attack and bite? The dog's owner was suffering from prolonged illness and was away for months. The dog was not being taken good care of, and had become disturbed by all this. Why did the owner of the dog fall ill? Why did he choose to go elsewhere? Why did he choose to put the dog under whoever was looking after it? Why did that person not take good care of the dog? Why did the dog come out of the house? Because the milkman who had come to deliver the milk had not closed the gate properly. Why did he do that? Why was the dog not chained? Why did the dog come to that specific point at that specific moment and what prompted it to attack and bite this particular man? If any of these had happened a bit differently, perhaps this man would not have been attacked and bitten by that dog, right? We can keep asking questions endlessly but it is humanly impossible to answer them all. Not that things happen without any reason or cause. Everything happens only because of some reason, there is a cause behind everything. Only we do not know. We cannot know. We are left with a vacuum, a void, a gap deep inside us. There are simply too many questions in life for which we do not have complete and satisfactory answers. It is not a good feeling to have so many relevant questions but no answers at all, we would feel a lot more comfortable if we can have some sort of an answer. Modern scientific thinking does not help.

Many good things and bad things keep happening to us all through our lives. Sometimes we can use our reason and point out who or what caused all these good or bad things to us. Many a time we are unable to understand the causal connections. Or there may be too many different things that happened, as a combined result of which something

good or bad happened to us. Do we know what exactly caused all those happenings, and what caused those things in turn, and so on? It is beyond the human mind to understand everything that happens. Any amount of progress in science will not help us to reach a position where we can know everything. What do we do in such a situation? We feel like thanking whoever helped us to get so many good things happening to us, perhaps without even our asking for them. We feel like pointing the fingers at somebody or something that led to all our sufferings and misery. Whom do we thank? Whom do we blame? We cannot blame someone unless we know for sure that he or she is the actual cause, right?

Religion is a result of a scientific and logical reasoning, following the realization that we just cannot know everything. Man invented God as a concept that stands for all that we do not know, all that is beyond our knowledge or control. Obviously, we cannot know God, or see Him. Modern scientists, who have put on blinkers and so cannot see beyond the material world, cannot understand this because God is not matter. God is a concept, not a percept. God is what we do not know, what we cannot know. Is it not foolish even to ask for a scientific proof that God exists in a physical, material sense?

We have chosen a particular path right now to reach up to the concept of God. God is not merely the sum total of our ignorance. In fact God is the sum total of everything in the whole universe. We have already seen the correct meaning of the term God, we have understood why other interpretations are untenable. God exists, God alone exists, nothing else exists, whatever exists is God, I am God, so are you, everybody, every living being, even the inanimate world is simply the one and the same God. God is the self of all. We may choose to call it God or nature or

whatever we wish. The goal of life is to manifest this divinity in us. Our aim here is to seek the self. We have already given the method to reach this truth and we are now trying to understand all this in a more detailed and practical way.

Science and technology can give us material gadgets for the comfort and convenience of the body but we are not bodies, what about our mind? Modern science cannot give us peace, or happiness or satisfaction or fulfillment. Therefore, religion is very much essential. Religion is based on faith. Faith can heal the wounds of the mind. This is a scientifically provable, experimentally verifiable fact. Therefore, religion and science are not opposed to each other, they are not mutually exclusive. Usefulness of science and technology is questionable, usefulness of religion is very easy to establish. Therefore, religion has a very important role in our life. But we need to ensure that we do not do wrong things in the name of religion. We need to understand the right from the wrong, the good from the bad. This discriminative power is *vijnYaana* or science. Religion must be scientific. Let us understand the scientific basis of religious beliefs and practices. Let us all accept and adapt a scientific religion. We would surely stand to gain immensely.

3.48 Science of Religion

If we are born in a particular country or community or to particular parents whom we hold in great esteem and respect, if we are born in good shape and our limbs and organs are all working well, or even if some things are not right but all others are in perfect shape, we feel like expressing our thanks and gratefulness to somebody. This is a natural tendency. If some one were to give chocolates to our kids, we teach them to accept them and say thanks,

right? We have accepted all the good things that have happened to us starting from our birth and we only need to thank someone for that. What is wrong in thanking God? What is unscientific about this? Restricting ourselves to the material world is the cause for us to think that science and religion are two mutually exclusive things. Religion can be very scientific too. We only need to think beyond physical matter. A true scientist can be scientifically religious and a follower of a true religion can be very scientific too. Science and religion are not two different and diagonally opposite things. Science needs to expand beyond the physical world and religion needs to be utterly scientific too. They can be.

The Sun gives us light and heat. Plants synthesize food using Sunlight. All vegetarian food comes from the Sun. We may eat a goat but the goat eats grass. If you trace the food chain, you will easily see that the source of all food, including non-vegetarian food, is plant food, which comes from the Sun. No Sun, no food. The Sun's rays cause the water in the oceans to evaporate and become clouds. We get rains from the Sun. We get warmth also from the same Sun. It is the Sun which heats up the Earth differentially, causing winds and monsoon and rains, which enables us to grow food in our lands. The seasons, the beauty of nature, everything comes from the Sun. Electricity comes from the Sun. Hydro-electric generators make use of the energy of flowing water and it is the Sun which caused this flow of water. Thermal power stations generate power from coal and coal was formed from huge trees buried deep inside the Earth for Millions of years. It was the Sun who caused these trees to grow in the first place. Thus, the original source of electric power is also the same Sun. We cannot live without the Sun. A little closer to the Sun and it would be too hot on Earth for life to sustain. A little farther from the Sun and it would be too cold and there would again be

no life. We owe our very existence to the Sun. The Sun is the symbol of light and knowledge. The moment the Sun rises, light spreads and darkness vanishes. Darkness cannot linger on, even after the light shines. Ignorance cannot linger on, the moment the light of knowledge dawns on us. The Sun symbolizes light, knowledge. Knowledge is power. The powerful are the masters, slaves have no power. Masters can do whatever they want to, they are unstoppable, they are the happy lot. We owe our existence, our very life, all our happiness and joy to the Sun. Is it wrong to worship the Sun? Worshiping the Sun is not a crude or imperfect religion. Likewise, worshiping a river or tree or nature is not a crude and unscientific form of religion, it is not a sign of ill-developed mind. It is in fact a sign of advanced and highly scientific mind. It is unfortunate that the modern science, which is all pseudo, is unable even to appreciate let alone understand religion.

If you hold a river in great esteem, you would not be willing to let city refuse and poisonous chemicals and industrial pollutants into the river. The river is the giver of life. The holy Ganges alone supports one tenth of the world's population today. Destroy the river and you have destroyed the very basis of life of so many people and countless variety of other living creatures. Nature worship is a sign of the most scientific mind. The so called developed, industrialized, advanced societies are the most unscientific, the most ignorant, the most foolish. Like the proverbial fool who was cutting off the very branch of the tree on which he was sitting, these modern scientists are cutting off the very foundations of life on planet Earth. We can drink or bathe or wash our clothes and utensils but we just should not do anything else with a river. We have no right to build dams or generate electricity or build industries. It is time we wind up this foolish agenda of science and technology. Or we will all be doomed, in no time. Life is in living

with nature, harmoniously. Exploiting, destroying nature is death, death of humanity as a whole.

Science tells us how to make an aeroplane. Religion convinces that we should not make an aeroplane even if we know how to make it. If we know how to make it, we should not publish it. Even if we make one, we should restrain from using it. Science creates bombs and threatens to destroy the whole world, religion teaches us self-control, restraint and helps us all to remain in peace and live happily. Why discover the art of making a bomb? Why publish it? Why develop technology so that anybody can make a bomb so very easily? Science is dangerous, it has now become our enemy, religion is our best friend, our savior. Give up modern science and technology and take to real science, the truly scientific religion. This is the way to save yourself and the whole world.

This book is on the science of life, all aspects of life. Religion is an essential and important aspect of life. We shall therefore not shy away from taking up the scientific study of factors that are usually classified as relating to religious beliefs and practices. In fact religion is nothing but a set of beliefs and practices. These beliefs can be and must be scientific. The corresponding practices can be and must be scientific too. The ancient Indian thoughts, ideas, beliefs, practices are all very scientific and logical. Unfortunately we have lost the connections and we find it hard to connect to our own roots. This book is an attempt to mitigate this gap. A tree may grow very tall and reach for the skies but it never gives up its connections with the mother Earth down below, it always has its roots firmly established where it was born and where it belongs. Let us go back to our roots. Let us go to the root of all human thought, let us nurture the tree of life so that we can all live happily enjoying the sweet fruits of this great tree of

life.

3.49 Idol Worship

There is one and only one thing in this universe, there just cannot be two different things existing independently. If there are two or more objects in this universe, they must be different from one another and objects cannot be different from one another because all differences are a matter of attributes, not of objects per se. Objects are not attributes and attributes have no independent existence. Therefore, there can be but one object in the entire universe. This is *sat*, this is *cit*, this is *aatma* or my self, this is *brahma* or the whole universe. Nothing else exists. I am that, you are that, every one is that, all that exists at any place and time is that. If we want, we may choose to call it God, for our convenience. I am God. There is no God other than me. There is no I other than God. Remember that we are not just our bodies, nor are we our brain or mind. We are beyond all these superficial embellishments. We are *sat-cit-aananda* personified. This is *paramaarthā* or the ultimate truth. This is what we have come to realize in this book.

However, The present chapter is not about *paramaarthā*, it is all about *vyavahāra* or simple, practical, day-to-day life. We called this world *mithyā* only because it is not eternal, we have never said the world is unreal and purely imaginary like a ghost. The physical world, all the animate and inanimate beings in the world, our own body and mind, are not *sat* but they are also not *asat*, they last long and have practical significance to our lives. We must therefore accept the world as a *vyavahārika satya*, a practical reality, because it continues to exist all through our life. At this level, it is perfectly OK to think that we have a body

and a mind, it is OK to think that the world exists outside of us, it is OK to think that there are other people like us and they too have a body and mind like ours, it is OK to think of a supremely wise and all powerful being called God. We are of course biased towards our waking state alone here but thinking like this is useful in understanding life and living well. The previous two chapters dwelt on the abstract, philosophical, theoretical investigations on the true nature of the universe and of ourselves with the sole purpose of providing a proper background knowledge, which can form a solid foundation for our practical life.

God is not matter. He has no mass, He does not occupy space. He has no size or shape or density or whatever. There is no material God. Such a material God could not have existed before creation. Such a God could not have created this world. If your notion of God is unscientific, throw it out of your mind. Those who say God does not exist simply have a wrong concept of God, that is all. Or they do not understand the meaning of existence.

God exists, God exists everywhere, God always exists, only God exists, nothing else exists. Does it make sense to worship Idols then? Is not idol worship unscientific? Not really. If you are down with some illness and the whole body is aching, you will often say it is especially paining here. Nature is beautiful everywhere but we go to specific picnic spots identified for scenic beauty. The entire world is polluted with invisible chemicals but we keep saying this city is more polluted or that place is clean and green. True, God exists everywhere but to us, to our limited minds, God's presence is felt especially in certain places or times or forms. These are called His *vibhuuti-s*. This is only apparent and not real. Yet it has practical significance, because our whole life is experienced inside our *manas* and it is the *manas* which is the perceiver, feeler, experiencer.

So in day to day practical life, what happens to or inside our *manas* is of great significance to us. The *manas* can easily see the *vibhuuti-s* of God, not the nameless, formless, attribute-less God per se.

The *manas* believes that God's presence and His effects are especially observed in certain forms. Even if the *manas* knows that the truth has no name or form, the *manas* cannot visualize or imagine or think of such a nameless and formless thing and it prefers to posit the imagined qualities on a physical idol. If you believe that God exists only inside that stone idol and nowhere else, yes you are unscientific. But if you are saying that it helps your *manas* to think, imagine and pray the God that is imagined in that idol, what is unscientific here? Idol worship is not unscientific at all, as long as we understand it properly. The purpose of idol worship is to cleanse and purify our mind. The idol, what it is made up of, whether God actually (you mean physically?) exists inside that idol, whether that God listens to your prayers like we listen to sounds using our ears, whether He knows your language, whether He will actually grant your wishes, these are all irrelevant questions. Whatever all these may be, if worshiping God in an idol helps me understand, cleanse and purify my mind, I achieve my set objective, whether God exists (in your sense of the term) in that idol or not.

We hold ourselves in great esteem, we equate ourselves to our bodies, we worship ourselves everyday with *abhiSheeka* or ceremonial bath, *naiveedya* or ceremonial offering of food, *alaMkaraNa* or adorning with cloths, ornaments, jewels, perfumeries etc. Our bodies are only waste producing machines. If we can worship our bodies, why not God in the form of idols? Those who speak against idol worship should first stop worshipping and pampering their own bodies.

Do not forget the purpose. The purpose of all worship is purification of our own mind, nothing else. If any good things happen, it is because we are able to sow good seeds and reap good fruits from our purified mind. If good things do not happen, it could be because our minds are still dirty and confused. Prayer, worship, really help us, not because a physical, material God exists in the idols we worship but because we are helping ourselves to cleanse and purify our own minds. Do it properly and good things do happen. Non-believers and those with a skeptical mind will not get any benefits. Therefore, the belief that God exists and He listens to our prayers and helps us is not at all unscientific. If you are a pseudo scientist and you come there as a skeptic with a biased mind to disprove some theory, you will find that there is no God and you do not get any benefit through worship or prayer. This is very much as expected. If you do not believe that a seed can grow into a tree, if you dig up to check the seed everyday, of course the tree will not grow. Good things happen not because of God but because of our belief and faith. It is faith in God that is important, not God per se. Even if God does not exist, faith in Him helps us. How can something nonexistent help us? Think. God exists. You only need to understand this. A true scientist will never say God (or anything else for that matter) does not exist, he may only say I am yet to understand this. Accept your ignorance and seek the truth, you will surely find it.

3.50 Faith

It is the *manas* which has decided to purify itself. It is the *manas* which has to practice the prescribed techniques of cleansing and purification. Whatever the body does, whatever we may do in the external material world, whatever our *buddhi* may be saying or doing, unless the *manas* has

full faith, one hundred percent confidence and total conviction in what it is doing, these efforts will surely be futile. No half-hearted attempt will work. The methods and techniques described here can make wonders, can work like magic, can produce miraculous outcomes for you, provided and only provided you have total trust and faith. Even an iota of doubt, the slightest hesitation, the minutest confusion or dilemma in your *manas* can wreak havoc and nothing will work. There is no cure for the non-believers.

A lot of people go to temples or churches or mosques, pray, worship, meditate, go on a pilgrimage and do all kinds of things but without full faith. Many seek God only when pushed to the limits of despair. As a last resort, when all else has failed, they come to God, just to give it a try. How does it matter? If at all God exists and it works for me, well and good. If not, there is little to lose. With this kind of a doubtful mind, they come and try. They will not get any benefits. Their disbelief gets further strengthened. It will not work even the next time they try. The purpose of the first two chapters of this book is to help you get rid of your ignorance, which is the root cause of all doubts and confusions. If you have read and understood all that, if you believe in all that we have said there, if you are one hundred percent sure and convinced to the core, then in that backdrop you can practice these mind cleansing techniques and achieve great results. Even otherwise, if you simply have 100% faith and trust, these methods will surely work. Even if there is one percent doubt, it will just not work. Doubts and confusions are like holes. A leaky mind can get nothing solid in life, whatever you have will leak away through the hole in course of time.

You will never be able to fill a bucket which has a hole in it. As you keep filling, so it gets drained off. It takes a lot of time and effort for the pot-maker to make a pot. It

takes no time and effort for the stick to break it. Making is difficult, breaking is easy. Making a hole in a ship is easy, shutting that whole is extremely difficult. There is no surprise at all if a ship with a hole sinks. Make sure you have no holes, no doubts, no confusions. Otherwise all your efforts will go waste and you will sink like a broken ship into the dark depths of the murky ocean of misery and suffering. Have faith. faith is not unscientific, provided it is based on proper, complete, thorough, in-depth understanding of the reality. Blind faith is unscientific, faith is not. Faith is extremely useful. Faith is essential. Have faith. Faith in real knowledge is called *shraddhaa*. Even to get such a real knowledge, you must have faith or *shraddhaa* in the guru and the sacred books. Only those with *shraddhaa* will gain knowledge, only those who have faith will be liberated from the bondage of ignorance and suffering. Those who have faith live life, others suffer life. Elders have a sacred duty of inculcating *shraddhaa* or faith in children. It is very wrong to teach our children science and all other subjects only from a purely materialistic viewpoint. Everybody does not become a great scientist, everybody need not be taught science in schools, in fact everybody should not be taught science. Only those things which directly affect our lives, only those things which help us develop into full human beings must be taught in schools and colleges. It is high time we take a fresh look at our entire education system. If properly understood, this book has all the material required to teach kids from first class till the tenth, no other book is required. This book can also form the foundation for advanced learning at the college and university levels. It all depends on how much of faith you have.

3.51 *puuja*

puuja is worship. Worship God in whatever form you wish.

Fools fight over different Gods, arguing which God is superior. The moment you talk of a superior God, you are accepting more than one God. If more than one are there, none of them can be omni-present and all inclusive. Therefore, there just cannot be two different Gods. No God can be superior or inferior to any other God because there is simply no other God. God has no name or form and you have chosen to call Him, or Her, with whatever name and form you find it convenient. Call Him by any name, imagine Him in any form. He can be feminine, why not? If He cannot even take up a feminine form, if he is incapable of that, He is incapable, He cannot be God, God is not incapable of anything. No religion is superior or inferior to any other religion, religion is after all a set of beliefs and a set of prescribed practices. The purpose is the same. The goal is the same. The single purpose of all religions is to cleanse our mind, to calm down the waves of thoughts, to dampen the turbulence, to make the mind clean, clear and transparent, so that we can see the truth, so that we can understand ourselves, so that we can understand life. Nothing else. All religions are same. Stop fighting over Gods and religions and faiths and cults. All are same, you only need to understand them properly. Stop religious conversions. No true religion can say that it is superior or inferior to any other. The very act of saying that your religion is superior is a proof that your concept of your religion and God is wrong, and hence inferior. There cannot be two Gods. There cannot even be any two things in this universe. There can be but one. Get rid of your ignorance. Stop religious conversions. Stop religious propaganda. Theft is a punishable offense. Religious conversions tantamount to stealing somebody's faith, hence it is an offense. Let people follow their customs, traditions, beliefs, practices. Just follow your religion with full faith and trust, with proper, deep understanding. Do not think of others.

You can worship ritualistically or without rituals. You may use whatever materials in the process of worship, you may follow whatever procedures you feel are right and useful. Enormous amount of knowledge and experience has gone into developing and perfecting the ritualistic systems of worship. To read and understand all of that, and the scientific basis of all that, you will require a whole life time. If you have time and inclination, please go ahead and study. Otherwise, just have faith in what the elders, the experienced, the knowledgeable people say. Or do whatever you find practicable or useful. Do not question. A question is an expression of doubt. A doubt is like a hole, everything can drain off the smallest hole in no time. Do not question. Accept. Faith heals. Doubts ruin.

Ritualistic worship using materials and prescribed procedures is good provided you can do it and you have full faith in it. Only the simplest and most readily available materials such as water, flowers, leaves, fruits etc. have been prescribed but even this is becoming increasingly difficult and costly in practice and people have also started losing faith. Of what use is offering a coconut or a flower or a fruit to God, troubled in the mind of inflation and cheating and so much of your valuable money spent on these? Is it not true that He is the boss of the whole world, He owns everything, including what all we can offer Him? What does it mean to offer something to Him? Is it not like taking a few spoons of water from the ocean and offering it back to the same ocean? Yes, indeed it is. The purpose is not transfer of physical materials, from us to God or vice versa. The purpose is to get a sense of offering, to get a feeling of sacrifice, an understanding that all that is there is His and all that is there is also mine, already, and there is really nothing that can be given or taken. Done in this spirit, all these rituals are useful, they help us stabilize,

balance, calm down and pacify our minds. Done without proper feeling or understanding, all rituals are meaningless and wasteful. Rituals are not bad, doing them without understanding them is bad. Worship, at home, or in temples or at the community level. Worship with proper understanding and faith.

3.52 Prayer

If you wish to avoid all ritualistic worship, well and good. In fact mental worship or *maanasa-puuja* is superior to physical worship, provided you have a strong enough mind to visualize without physical objects and images. You can easily offer anything to Him, mentally, without worrying about buying or physically possessing any of these. In ritualistic worship you are constrained by your resources but in mental worship you can whole-heartedly offer the costliest and the most precious materials without any hesitation.

Prayer is the simplest form of mental worship. Praying is not just asking. There is nothing to ask or give. Our *puraaNa-s* are full of stories where a devotee asks for the wrong thing, out of ignorance or arrogance or foolishness or by mere slip of the tongue. It is not easy for us even to know what we want. We do not know. We know not what is good for us and what is not. He knows everything. Do not ask for money or name or success or anything in particular. It is not wrong to ask for a specific thing but the best form of prayer is to leave everything to Him. There are thousands of prayer compositions in our vast and ancient literary tradition in the form of *shlooka-s*, *stootra-s*, *stava-s*. These compositions are full of literary grace, poetic beauty, musical elegance, full of noble ideas. They include poetic descriptions of the form of the God to help you mentally visualize and fix your attention on Him. They talk of His

superlative qualities like knowledge, wealth, lordship, kindness and mercy. They include the necessary ideas and concepts such as devotion, dedication and surrender. They include all that can ever be asked by anybody at anytime. Musical compositions in the Indian classical tradition are also full of these same qualities. Learn them, chant them, sing them alone or in chorus, with or without accompanying musical instruments. Do not worry about time, there is little else that you need to do in life. You can spend the whole of your life in prayer, worship, in singing the glory of the Lord. It is worth it.

Worship, prayer, meditation etc. help not only by cleansing and purifying your mind, there is another very important benefit. As long as you are busy in these activities, you are not doing any other bad deed, your mind is also free from all negative thoughts. Not doing a bad thing is as important or more important than doing a good thing in life. Therefore, it is wise to spend as much of your time in all these religious practices. You are at least avoiding all the bad things that you would have otherwise done during that time. The less sin you commit, the better it is for you. God has great love for those who stay away from sin. In fact He does not expect you to do any good things in life, all He wants from you is to stay away from sin. Therefore, it is wise to spend many hours, if possible the whole day, if possible a major part of your life in prayer etc. Constantly thinking of Him, in whatever form you wish, constantly praying, for long periods of time, regularly, every day, is called *upaasanaa*. This is a kind of mental work, you avoid all physical work and concentrate on this mental work alone. Needless to say it has great purifying capacity.

Start your day with prayers. Pray before you eat. Pray before you go to bed. Pray whenever you feel like, wherever you feel like. Pray for yourself and your kith and kin if you

wish. But do also pray for universal good. Pray for the well-being of all human beings, pray for all the living creatures. Never think of harming any animal in way whatever. Give up all deeds that may cause injury, pain, torture, terror or death to any animal or human being. Man is a social animal. Most of what we do in our daily life and in our professional life will not be possible without others. Can you make your own car? Can you make your own soap or tooth paste or towel? Can you imagine your life if you were the only person living on Earth? If all the others around us are hungry, angry, unhappy, troubled, we cannot expect them to be nice and good to us. And if nobody around us is nice and kind to us, our life will become miserable. It is in our own selfish interest, therefore, that all human beings must be happy. Competition is a horrible concept, it is anti-human. All those greedy businessmen who think they are smarter than others and they can fool all the others and become rich, are not only fooling others but they are also fooling themselves. When the moment of your departure comes, if you are surrounded by people whom you have cheated, you may not even get the last sip of water to die in peace. Do not cheat others, forget profit, forget business, forget money. Pray for the well being of one and all. Treat others like you wish to be treated. If you have something good in you, physical or non-physical such as knowledge, just share it with everybody freely. Give whatever you have and never expect anything in return. Then others will be happy. That is a pre-requisite for you to be happy. This is the logic of life.

A successful businessman is surrounded by people whom he has cheated. He is surrounded by people whose wealth he has looted. He is surrounded by people who hate him, who are angry with him, who will only curse him, he is surrounded by enemies, by negative forces all around. If, on the other hand, you give, you share, you care for oth-

ers, selflessly, then you will be surrounded by people who are thankful to you, you will be surrounded by friends who will be very happy to help you in your difficult times. You can become a sinner, you can become a saint, the choice is yours. What do you want to become in life? Just pray and He will grant that wish.

3.53 *bhajana, kiirtana, satsaMga*

It is good to spend at least some time everyday in singling the glory of the Lord. Indian tradition abounds in countless *bhajana-s* and *kiirtana-s* - musical compositions pregnant with devotional fervor and literary excellence. These practices keep the mind busy and engaged, thereby helping to shut off mundane distractions. Worries are gone, pain is forgotten, dilemma dissolves, confusions vanish while we are immersed in such activities. This helps a great deal in taming the wild mind. The mind needs rest from its endless disturbances and tensions.

Most people in the world today will have no difficulty in accepting that we should not harm others but they do not understand that what all they are doing everyday as part of their personal and professional life is actually not only useless and unnecessary but also harmful to themselves and others. Nobody realizes that travelling or shopping is a sin. Nobody realizes that working in offices and factories and hospitals and shops is actually wrong. Nobody understands why reading newspapers or checking emails or browsing the Internet is a bad deed. Nobody realizes how all these routine and taken-for-granted activities can harm others, and hence sinful. We shall try to clarify this point gradually over the rest of the book. For now, let us understand and accept that keeping ourselves busy with worship, prayer and other such religious activities at least prevents

us from committing these sins. This by itself is a great gain. Not doing bad things is much or even more important than doing good things. Think.

We should spend time in *satsaMga* - the company of knowledgeable, wise men, who know *sat*. These self-less people have no other reason than true love and affection, kindness and compassion towards one and all, to come, spend time with you, tell you stories, explain complex looking ideas in simple terms, give examples and illustrations, bring out the fallacies and confusions in you, guide you in the right path, help you overcome your weaknesses, lead you to your goal. Time spent with such people will not go waste. You will surely gain much more than you think you may lose. Only fools say this is all waste of time.

Medicines heal the wounds of the body. Worship, prayer and other devotional practices can heal the wounds of the mind. They can relieve us of our guilt, sin, in fact all bad qualities in us. Prayer and worship strengthen us from inside. We can become human beings, humane beings. This is the science of religion. Accept it. Practice it. And see the difference it makes in your life. Pray everyday. At home, in your offices and factories and farms. While on the move. At Sunrise. While going to bed. Always. Why not?

If you can, sing. This is called *kiirtana*. Or just listen. This is called *shravaNa*. Or just recollect in your mind what you had heard earlier. This is *smaraNa*. Bow down and fall at His feet and pray. This is *paada-seevana*. Ritualistically worship him, chanting the sacred *mantra-s*. This is *arcana*. Simply salute Him from the bottom of your heart. This is *vandana*. Put yourself, the whole of your life, your body, mind and soul, at His service. This is *daasya*. Think of Him as your best friend, philosopher and guide,

someone who leads you and does the hand-holding. This is *sakhya*. Surrender yourself completely to Him. Then you will not have to do anything else. This is *aatma-niveedana*. There is some path that is suitable for everybody. Choose your path and get going, leaving behind all your worries.

Why do wet clothes dry up? Why does water evaporate? Why does hot coffee become cold? Why does oxygen from the atmosphere dissolve in water? Why do smoke and smell spread all over? Why do radio signals spread all over the place? Have you ever thought about any of these? All these happen on their own, nobody needs to do anything to make these happen. Why do they happen at all? There is a universal law called the Law of Diffusion. Things diffuse from regions of high concentration to regions of low concentration. Knowledge is no exception - knowledge spreads from the knowledgeable to others, naturally, all on its own, without any effort. All that we need to do is to provide the right environment. Just stay in the close company of knowledgeable people and even if they do not teach you anything explicitly, you will gain a lot. The best teachers teach through silence. *ramaNa maharShi* did that. My own father did that. The Lord appears in the form of *dakShiNaamuurti* and clarifies all doubts of all his disciples without every speaking a word. This is possible. The Law of Diffusion makes this possible. Seek the truly knowledgeable people, accept them as your guru, just be with them, serve them, their kindness is sufficient to kill all of your ignorance. How do you know who is truly knowledgeable and who is fake? A sensitive mind can easily tell the real from the fake. *jnYaani-s* do not look different, you cannot find out a *jnYaani* by his dress or the way he walks or talks and smiles. A *jnYaani* shows up by his mere presence. You have to make your mind clean enough, sensitive enough, to discern, that is all. Who is the most knowledgeable of all? Who knows everything? Of course it must be

God. Therefore, simply spending your time with God will make you knowledgeable, your ignorance will go, all your problems in life will go, all good things come your way, without any effort from your side.

Just spend all your life with God, or a real guru, or in the company of good, well meaning people. This is enough. Instead you spend all your time with your customers and competitors, with politicians, sportsmen and actors and actresses, directly or through newspapers, magazines, books, the radio, the TV and the Internet. If at all they have any positive qualities, you will surely get a bit of that, but for all you know, these are not the truly knowledgeable people, you will surely get all their pseudo knowledge and ignorance and all other bad qualities. Law of Diffusion is universal, inescapable. That is why you should not even read books, most books in the world spread ignorance, not knowledge, books which give you real knowledge are exceptionally few in number. If at all you read you must be extremely choosy. Do not read web pages and blogs and what not. Do not spend all your time talking to all kinds of people, you cannot escape diffusion of bad qualities they might have in them. There is nothing that you need to do in life, just spend all your life in the company of the great. *lakShmaNa*, the younger brother of Lord *raama*, did not do anything of his own throughout his life, he just spent every moment of his life in the company and service of Lord *raama*. This is the lesson you have to learn from *raamaayaNa*, the great epic from ancient India. Is it not funny that scientists now want to dig into our ancient scriptures to find out how to make an aeroplane or a bomb? It is not enough to read a good book, you must know what to learn from that. That is why you need a guru. Instead of realizing this simple fact, our educationists are working towards eLearning, trying to replace the guru with technology. Technology cannot guide you in the right path, it

will only distract and confuse you further.

3.54 Sound Science

Sound is a form of energy, says physics. Physics also says that matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed. Matter can be converted to energy and vice versa. Or energy can be converted from one form to another. Electrical energy can be converted to light in an electric lamp. Electrical energy can be converted into sounds in a music system or radio receiver. Sound can be converted to electricity in a microphone. But matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed, within the limits of physics. In *vyavahaara*, therefore, this energy in the form of sound stands for something that cannot be created or destroyed, something that has no birth or death (but only change), something which has no beginning or end. What a nice idea to understand the similar truth in *paramaarthā*, the eternal, birth-less, changeless *sat-cit-aananda*! Sound or energy is not the ultimate reality but a good symbol in the limited material plane for the higher concept of the true nature of the universe and the self. It helps to imagine and understand the eternal truth.

When you utter a sound, the sound is heard and it dies after a while. But the energy is not lost, it remains in some unmanifest form. There is sound when you are saying it, there is the sound (or something equivalent to it) even after a long time. In fact even before you said anything, it existed. For, to produce that sound, you had to blow air from your lungs through your vocal apparatus. Where did that energy required to blow the air come from? The energy already existed somewhere, in some form. The chantings of the *RShi-s* tens or hundreds of thousands of year ago are still there in the air. Only it is not manifest

and we cannot listen to them with our ears. The sounds you make today will remain there for ever. In this sense, sounds stand for the eternal reality. What a sound analogy!

Before the Big Bang, there was no universe, no stars or planets, no Earth, no oceans and no mountains, no plants and no animals, no men and no women, nothing. The entire universe existed in the size of a thumb, like the tiny seed of a huge tree. And there came a subtle vibration, a subtle shake, something that disturbed the stable seed which was so far in equilibrium. And within a very small fraction of a second, this entire universe as we know today came into being. This scientists call 'creation of the universe'. What caused the subtle vibration, the inaudible sound that started off this whole process of creation? No one knows but the point is vibration, that is, sound, signifies the creation of the universe. Sounds stand for the unmanifest force that creates, maintains and destroys the world. Sounds symbolize God, the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer.

What sets us apart from all other animals? We can speak. Speech is an expression of thought. All of human civilization is possible only because we can think and we can talk. Otherwise we would not be different from any other lower animal. Sounds signify the human being in us. Sounds signify thought. Sounds signify knowledge. Sounds signify truth. Sounds signify *sat-cit-aananda*. Sounds are symbols of the self, of the world, of the God. Sounds have a great significance to us in our lives, symbolically.

We must all understand this and focus on the ear, not the eyes. Literacy has nothing to do with education. There is no need to read or write, we better speak and listen. There is no need for books or printing technology or computers and what not. Real education is possible without

need for anything man-made. Our mouth, our ear, our mind is sufficient. Why cut trees and make paper and books? Why make plastic pens and fill them with poisonous substances called ink? Why waste so much of our time and effort doing homework, writing pages after pages every day? These are all negative and counter productive ideas created by the west - they trust their eyes, not their ears. A bank cheque can be easily manipulated to make 100 look like 1000. Try manipulating the spoken form of the number hundred to the spoken form of the number thousand and you will know how hard this is. A spoken word is more authentic, more reliable than a written, signed document. Writing is a highly restricted, limited, incomplete, distorted form of speech. Prosody is lost in writing. Speech is original, writing is duplicate. In India ancient works have been preserved with practically zero loss or distortion over tens of thousands of years only through oral tradition, while printed books, as recent as Shakespeare, have already seen omissions and commissions. How many spelling mistakes do you make while speaking? Truth is a matter of speaking, not writing. Stop thinking in terms of your eyes, learn to think from the point of view of the ear. Seeing is not believing. Our eyes are the ultimate deceivers, cheaters. They see what does not exist and they cannot see what exists. You get completely cheated if you go by your eyes. Forget the eyes. Listen to your ears. See with your inner eye, by listening to the silent sounds deep inside you. That is where the truth shines. This is sound science.

3.55 Music

Sounds that are harsh, jarring, disturbing, repulsive or painful are termed noise. Most man-made gadgets including automobiles, trains and aircraft, various kinds of machines, even the sounds made by mobile phones are quite

disturbing, and hence only noise. On the other hand, sounds which are pleasing to the ears, sounds which are mellow and soothing, sounds which have a calming down effect on our minds, these sounds are termed music. Speech is neither music nor just noise, it is a kind of controlled noise, useful for communication but too much or unwanted chatter may be disturbing. For example, if you are in a concert hall and some good music is going on, you will not like to hear your neighbours talk. You may want to speak and listen through your own phone but the sounds made by others for the same purpose are disturbing, hence noise for us. Many a time, even the so called music can be quite disturbing and jarring. Such music is not really music, it is only noise.

The art and science of music has been developed over many thousands of years in India. In fact all music in the world can be traced back to Indian classical music. You will have to learn Indian music to realize this fact. Indian classical music is not just music, it has everything you need for a whole life. It is not entirely pre-composed - a major portion of all rendering is on-the-spot, real-time creation of the singer. Every musician needs to be a composer in this sense. Learning Indian classical music thus brings out the best of your hidden creativity, originality and individual style. There is an elaborate system of *taaLa*, *laya* and *gati* - concepts related to rhythm, pace and tempo. This will help the musician to develop a stable, balanced and alert mind. Your mathematical skills are brought out as you need to make complex calculations in real time. Every item of music is set to a *raaga*, a concept related to melody and particular moods that it can create. Each *raaga* is like a medicine - it has particular curative abilities on our minds. Good music can remove all the internal stresses and bring back peace, stability, harmony, and bliss. Unlike in other systems of music, compositions in the Indian classical

music, especially of the style more common in the southern parts, are not silly, childish or trivial in meaning. Each composition abounds in deeply scientific, philosophical, religious, spiritual ideas that have the capacity to elevate the brute in us into a full human being. You can learn as much or more from our musical compositions as you can by reading scholarly journals and text books. Each song is a literary masterpiece, each composition abounds in literary excellence in every sense of the term. These musical compositions are filled with devotional fervor and literary grace and beauty. Practicing musicians do not look at written notations and play, notations are only for the learners and novices. Musicians are required to remember hundreds or thousands of compositions by heart. Thus the memory skills are seen at their best. When you are singing, you need to use the same lungs, the same wind pipe, the same mouth and nose as you need for breathing. Therefore, singing has a stabilizing and balancing effect on your breathing, music is itself a form of *praaNaayaama*. While singing, you squat on the ground, avoid *aMga-ceeShTe* or unnecessary movements of your limbs and body parts. You learn to sit quietly and stably in one place, this gives you *aasana-siddhi* or mastery over your body. Instrumentalists will learn fine control over their fingers and other body parts. Music is not to be confused or messed up with dance. Dancing, flickering and moving lights, etc. do not go well with music. Music is for peace of mind, all things that disturb the peace and tranquility of the mind must be avoided. Good music involves only a very small number of musicians, who can cooperate, coordinate and support each other. Music is not a mass affair. Indian classical music is a kind of *yooga*, simple yet very effective. It tunes and tones up your body, mind and soul. There is something in our music for everybody. A physicist can study the acoustics of sounds. A biologist can study the sound production and listening apparatus in us. There is a good deal of mathe-

matics involved in the analysis of sound waves. Architects can study echo, reverberation and other properties of auditoria. Signal processing experts can study the spectral and other properties that characterize a *raaga* or the style of a particular singer or the special qualities of various musical instruments. There is great scope for both traditional and modern instrument makers. There is scope for serious study for electrical and audio engineers. Psychologists can study the effects of music on our mind. Doctors can use music as a therapy in itself. There is something for everybody in Indian classical music. There is enough to keep you engaged all through your life. Music is a world in itself. And it is a great world, a world which can give you everything you may want in life. Music is a great purifier, a magical healer. If you music in your ears, make music your life. Even otherwise, spend a good part of your daily life with good music, it can calm down and stabilize your mind very effectively.

3.56 *mantra-s*

mantra-s are sacred syllables. How can some sounds be sacred? Are all sounds simply not vibrations of some material body, which traverses through air or other medium in the form of sound waves? Yes, your knowledge of physics is perfect, but there is more to it in life than physics.

mantra-s are sacred syllables, pregnant with deep and profound meaning. Meanings are not in syllables or words, meanings are in our minds. We grasp the meaning of a sound when we match the sound pattern with a stored meaning inside our *manas*. If the table entry is missing, you get no meaning - the sounds appear to be meaningless. If the table entry contains only a gross, superficial meaning, that is what you make out of whatever you hear. If

your mental table stores abstract, deep, profound meanings with varied connotations, you get all that when you hear the words. No sound is meaningful or meaningless in itself, it all depends upon you, your *manas*. The western mind, the modern scientific mind, has no meanings or only very limited, superficial meanings for many of our words. They just cannot make any more sense of these words than their pygmied minds permit. Because they are not used to deep thinking. Their fore-fathers and ancestors have never thought about anything in great depth, they have never spent their life trying to understand any one single abstract concept. It is simply not in their genes, so to say. Their languages lack the vocabulary required even to name many of the concepts that are so central to human life. Naturally, they experience great difficulty in understanding our texts and many of them give up saying these are all meaningless murmurs of a primitive mind. Exactly like the fox which could not reach up to the grapes and left saying the grapes were sour. *mantra-s* are pregnant with meaning and to understand the meaning of even one simple *mantra* you may require the whole of your life.

Superficialists will tend to brush this aside saying what is there in a word. Take any ordinary word, say 'car'. What does this word mean? You may say a car is a type of automobile, a four wheeled road-vehicle usually used for driving one or a few people from one place to another on road. You may word it differently and add or delete or change a few points here and there. You may think that is all that is there to the meaning of this word. What else can be there? For one who is interested in knowing all about a car, he needs to know what it is, how it looks, what it is made up of, what are its parts and functions, what all we can do with it, how is it manufactured and so on. Each one of these can lead us to a whole discipline. You may have to know about metals and glass and plastics and rub-

ber and a great deal about each of these. That means you have to know materials science, for which you may need physics, for which you may need to know mathematics. You may need to know all about mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, metallurgy, paints and the chemistry of paints. You may need to understand ergonomics, aerodynamics, economics, management and so on and on. In fact practically everything in the world can be related, at least in principle, and you may have to know everything in the whole universe in order to fully understand the meaning of just this one simple ordinary word. Meanings are not in the words, meanings are in you and it all depends how much of meaning you wish to see in a word. *mantra*-s are packed with meaning and if at all you wish, these sounds can have great meaning, significance and impact on you and your life. Let us therefore see how these sacred syllables can help us purify our mind.

3.57 *ooM*

Dogs bark. Cats purr. Horses neigh. What about human beings? Human beings can make 40 or 50 different sounds called *varNa*-s or phonemes. These are the different colours, the different shades, the different kinds of sounds we can produce. We humans can make these many different types of sounds and we can tell one from the other. We can also make interesting combinations or patterns of these basic sound units. And we can associate these sound patterns with meanings. The association between sound patterns and meanings is called 'language'. Human beings have a language, through which they can communicate. We humans can formulate, structure, organize, manipulate, complex thoughts, and express them quite accurately through various sound patterns such as words and sentences. Animals can make only a few sounds, many lower animals can-

not produce any sound at all. Animals have a very limited language, if at all. They try to express the most significant feelings and emotions through the few sound patterns they can make.

The simplest, the most basic, the easiest-to-produce of all sounds is the ‘a’ sound (as in the English word ‘bus’). There is no human language in the world which does not have this sound. Everybody can utter this sound with ease, even small babies start off by saying ‘aaa’. All other phonemes can be thought of as obtained by manipulating this fundamental phoneme. ‘a’ is the first *varNa* in our *varNa-maala* - the garland, or a rosary, or a structured arrangement of *varNa*-s or phonemes.

Another sound that is very simple, basic and most commonly found in all natural languages is ‘m’. Even babies say ‘mmm’ with great ease. No wonder the word for ‘mother’ in many languages of the world, the first and most important concept a child learns, includes the ‘a’ and the ‘m’ sounds.

A whole big science called ‘phonetics’ is embedded in our *varNa-maala*, a kind of alphabet chart in Indian languages. Every Indian kid starts schooling by learning the *varNa-maala*. Unknowingly, the kid has already learned a great deal of the science of sounds and language, right in early childhood. A lot can be said about the scientific principles underlying our *varNa-maala*. The interested reader should read related material elsewhere, here we can only talk of a few things that are relevant for us right now. The *varNa-maala* is clearly divided into vowels and consonants. The very first vowel is ‘a’. Consonants are arranged in rows and columns. The first row corresponds to sounds which are produced at the glottis, at the very back end of the mouth. The subsequent rows each signify different places

of articulation, moving gradually from the back to the front of the mouth. The last row includes sounds that require the lips, the front-most part of the vocal tract, to be closed. The very last sound in this last row is ‘m’. (Note that the *avargiia-vyaMjana-s* - ‘y’, ‘r’, ‘l’, ‘s’ etc. - are placed separately in the *varNa-maala* not because they are outside this range but simply because do they not fit very well with the five by five arrangement of the *vargiia-vyaMjana-s* based on the place of articulation and manner of articulation including voiced-unvoiced, aspirated-unaspirated and nasal subdivisions. The very last consonant as therefore ‘m’.) Just as A-Z means all letters starting from A and going up to Z, ‘a-m’ means all sounds starting from ‘a’ and going all the way up to ‘m’, that is, the entire spectrum of all possible sounds. ‘a’ is produced with the mouth fully open and ‘m’ can only be produced with the mouth fully closed. Air does not flow through the nasal cavity when you say ‘a’. ‘m’, on the other hand, is a nasal sound, it is produced by allowing a little bit of air to pass through the nose. The range from ‘a’ to ‘m’ therefore represents all possible places and manners of articulation, it stands for all possible sounds that can ever be produced by any human being in any language whatever.

The sound ‘u’ is another simple vowel sound, the production of which requires the lips to be rounded. Rounding of the lips is a simple, externally visible manner of articulation. Different languages of the world may appear to be very different from one another, but the phonemes they use are largely common. The combination of ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’, which becomes *ooM* as per the phonological rules of our language, thus signifies all possible sounds, in all possible languages. Since words are nothing but phoneme-sequences with associated meanings, *ooM* symbolizes all possible words with all possible meanings in all possible languages. *ooM* symbolizes all human languages, all human

thought, all human knowledge. *ooM* symbolizes everything that can be thought of or spoken off. *ooM* symbolizes the entire universe, including of course ourselves. *ooM* symbolizes *sat-cit-aananda*.

ooM is just one syllable, a single simple syllable, the smallest unit of sound that can be pronounced independently with ease. If you understand all this, *ooM* is a very significant, a very potent syllable, a sacred syllable that symbolizes truth. If you do not understand, it is just some sound, like the barking of a dog or a braying of a donkey. Meanings are not in words, meanings inside you, in your *manas*. Do not say here is a meaningless jumble of sounds, be humble and say I do not understand it yet. Whole books can be written on *ooM* but this much should suffice for now.

3.58 *japa*

The aspiring student would have achieved some degree of success in *aasana-siddhi* and *praaNa-siddhi* by now. Here is another simple technique that can bring down the uncontrolled wanderings of the *manas* further. The mind is ever restless. It is naturally quite hard for the aspirant to silence it completely. Easier would be to keep it engaged in one single activity, so that it does not wander all over like a horse without a leash. The *manas* keeps getting disturbed by the scenes it sees and the sounds it hears. The disturbing signals coming from the eyes can be shut off by closing the eye lids but we do not have ear-lids. An easy way to keep the mind busy is to keep chanting something. To say something, the *manas* has to do some mental work, generating the neural signals corresponding to the sounds to be uttered and controlling all the muscles near the lungs and the vocal apparatus to actually produce the intended sounds. The ears catch these sounds and send them back

to the *manas*. The *manas* gets busy in listening to the sounds it produced. Thus the mind is kept doubly busy and preoccupied. This simple technique of mind control is called *japa*. *japa* is repeated chanting of a selected *mantra*.

We can choose any word, in fact any sound for *japa* but there is a definite advantage in selecting a sacred *mantra*. The aspirant would find it easier to develop full faith in his practices and do it with all seriousness and sincerity, if he believes that he is chanting something sacred. Which *mantra* you choose is not the most important factor, choose what you believe in. However, it is better to choose a shorter and simpler *mantra* than one which is long and complex. Chanting a long and complex *mantra* demands greater attention of the *manas*, the *manas* will have to be alert and careful not to make mistakes, and all this is an unnecessary load on the *manas*. It is important to keep the *manas* busy but at the same time we should not place any great demand on it, it should feel relaxed, not burdened. Choosing a simple *mantra* makes it easy, almost automatic for the *manas* to do its work in repeatedly chanting it. *japa* is most effective when it becomes almost automatic, so that it can be done without any great effort on the part of the *manas*. Clearly, *ooM* is the preferred choice of many. It is the simplest, the shortest of all *mantra*-s and hence the most effective.

ooM-kaara-japa is a kind of *praaNaayaama* too. While trying to breathe slowly and steadily in *praaNaayaama*, you might have noticed that inhaling slowly is easier but often-times the inhaled air comes out in bursts uncontrollably. Controlling exhaling is a bit more difficult than controlling inhaling. Exhaling can be easily stabilized through *japa*. It is important to chant a long and steady *ooM*. Inhale slowly and fill your lungs to the brim but without feeling any pressure or discomfort. Then start chanting. The air stored in

the lungs gradually comes out. Keep chanting as long as you feel comfortable. As long as you are chanting *ooM*, you are only exhaling, you cannot inhale. This results in a long and stable exhaling. Inhaling automatically matches and the whole breathing cycle stabilizes. Practice chanting a long and steady *ooM*. The idea is not to break a world record, this is no sport. Do not look at others, do not compete, do not compare. A spiritual aspirant must always think that he is alone in this world, whatever practices he takes up, it is all for his own good, others are simply irrelevant. You need to do all these practices without feeling tired and exhausted. It is not enough if you can chant a very long and steady *ooM* once or twice and then you cannot continue at the same pace. *japa* requires chanting repeatedly for a long time, you must find your own comfort level and chant at a uniform rate throughout. You can gradually improve with constant practice. Initially, you may try *japa* for just five or ten minutes and with practice you will be able to do *japa* for an hour or even more.

All sounds are not pleasing and musical to the ear. Some sounds are noisy, they irritate us, they may even cause pain in our ears. A sound that is changing very fast in its frequency components is noise. A sound whose frequency or pitch is steady and stable over a period of time is called *naada*. *naada* of various frequencies, which bear particular ratios with one another become *svara-s* or the notes of a musical scale. The starting point of music is thus *naada*. *ooM-kaara* is *naada*, it is music in its most basic form. Chanting of *ooM*, especially in chorus, clearly brings out all the notes on a musical scale, you can actually hear all the notes clearly and distinctly. No other sound has this property of including all the notes of a musical scale. The starting point of all systems of music in the world is *ooM*. Music started in this world when ancient sages of India discovered this fact some tens of thousands of years ago.

ooM-kaara-japa is music to your ears. It is simple music, it is not very demanding, it does not tax your brain. It soothes instead. *ooM-kaara-japa* synchronizes and harmonizes the inherent rhythm of the *manas*. Noise disturbs this rhythm, keep away all noise, all external disturbances. Practice of *ooM-kaara japa* is the easiest way of stabilizing the mind. It is so simple. Yet it is very effective. Practice at least for half an hour everyday. If even that is difficult, at least listen to *ooM* chanting on your music system.

3.59 The Art of *japa*

It is very important to repeat the chanting for a long time. Anything to do with the mind takes a lot of time and patience, you cannot make your mind listen to you so easily. Your *manas* has been bossing over you all through your life and now you want to become its boss. This is very difficult, but if you have time, patience, and seriousness, you can do it, you can master your own mind, you can master yourself. Some people suggest that you use a rosary or *japa-maala* which has a specified number of beads and one larger bead that acts as a sentinel and facilitates counting. How many times you do *japa* is not the most important thing. Counting may be of some use in the initial stages as it keeps the mind extra busy and to that extent reduces the wandering of the *manas* but in the long run, counting may actually turn out to be an unnecessary distraction. There is always a worry that you may be missing counts. Forget counting, just keep doing *japa* as long as you can. Initially, you will be conscious and you keep getting disturbed both by external signals and internal thoughts. Gradually, over some time, the practice of *japa* becomes stable, undisturbed, and effortless. The *manas* gradually calms down, the thought waves gradually die away and peace and tranquility prevail. The longer the practice, the better it is. *japa* must

become a regular, daily routine. Effects will be seen only gradually, over a long period of time. You must remain patient.

Normally we breathe about 15 times a minute, that is, 900 times an hour, 21,600 times a day. Breathing goes on without our knowledge or control, as a purely involuntary action during sleep. We cannot be consciously controlling our breathing all through the day either. Let us say about half of the 24 hour day is all that we can practically get for consciously observing or controlling our breathing, even if you give up all other activities in life. This means we can bring in some 10800 breathing cycles under our direct control. The number 108, which is symbolic of this 10800, is therefore considered a very significant number, indicating about the maximum that we can do in our life. Practicing *japa* over 108 cycles is thus a way of suggesting to ourselves that we should be doing *praaNaayaama* and *japa* all the time. Needless to say, numbers need not be taken more seriously than this. Counting is secondary, success in *japa* comes when it becomes automatic, effortless and natural for you, all the time.

You can initially chant the *mantra* loudly. This is called *vaacika*. After mastering this, you may try chanting *ooM* with the mouth closed. This method is called *upaaMshu*. You need to think and feel that you are saying *ooM* as before, there should be no difference internally, although only ‘mmmmm’ sound is heard externally. Initially, you may find chanting in *upaaMshu* mode harder. Actually, this method requires less energy as less air comes out when your mouth is closed., so it should be easier. After mastering this stage, you may try chanting purely mentally, with no sound whatever being produced physically. You should think and feel that you are saying *ooM* exactly as before, this is important. The breathing cycles are synchronized

with the chanting cycle. This is called *anaahata*, that is, silent sound, sound not produced by striking a physical object and setting it vibrating. Finally, we may do what is called *maanasika* or *citta japa*. Here you forget about breathing cycles, chanting, everything. Do nothing, control nothing. No fuss. You are only constantly thinking of *ooM*, nothing else. Let things happen on their own. Finally all these methods should become completely automatic and effortless. The latter methods may appear to be harder initially but with constant practice, they can be easily mastered and perfected. As we progress from earlier to latter forms, we actually spend less physical energy in chanting, and hence it becomes easier and more effective. *citta japa* is the best. Others are stages recommended to reach and perfect this last stage of *citta japa*. Now your mind is busy all the time with just one single simple holy thought, all other thoughts have been effectively killed. Your body, breathing, mind have all become substantially calm, stable, tranquil, clean, clear. No worries, no fear, no anxiety, no tensions. Restlessness of the mind is gone. Uneasiness is gone. Discomfort is gone. There is peace, only peace, nothing but peace, everywhere, all the time.

The entire universe was of the size of our thumb before the Big Bang. One subtle vibration and the entire universe including all the stars and galaxies was created within a Millionth of a second in one big explosion. Subtle vibrations have great power. In an ultrasound washing machine, subtle vibrations dislodge all the dust and dirt adhering to the clothes and the clothes become neat and clean. Likewise, subtle vibrations of *ooM* can remove illnesses of the body and mind. Chant with trust and faith. Observe the subtle vibrations inside your chest, in the mouth and nose, in the ears and all over the body. If properly done sincerely and long enough, under the direction of an experienced guru, many diseases of the body can be cured without any

medication, merely through *ooM-kaara-japa*. By chanting *ooM* in different pitches and styles, you can focus the subtle energy of these vibrations on specific body parts with magical effects. For example, throat cancer can be cured. Do not under-estimate the power of chanting *ooM*.

3.60 *shravaNa, manana and ni-didhyaasana*

Intelligence or wisdom has eight ingredients: *shushruuShaa* or a keen sense of interest in listening (or reading) and knowing, *shravaNaM* or actually listening (or equivalently, reading), *grahaNaM* or grasping what is heard, not allowing things to be missed out by being inattentive, *dhaaraNaM* or retaining what is heard and grasped, for it takes time to analyze and understand what all is heard or read and we need to retain at least till then, *uuha-apooha* or analyzing the pros and cons, the plus side and the minus side, the positive side and the negative side, advantages and disadvantages, or considering and weighing various possible views and interpretations, *artha-vijnYaanaM* or understanding the meaning and the intention properly, and, finally, *tattva-jnYaanaM* or realizing the real import and essence of the whole thing. This last stage may take years or even the whole of your life. Be patient. Keep reading, keep thinking, keep analyzing. *tat* means ‘that’ and *tattva* means ‘knowing that as that alone and not as anything else’. *tattva* means to get the *pramaa* or the proper, correct, perfect, complete meaning and not *bhramaa* which is the opposite, taking X for Y, which is only an illusion. The only path to success is serious, repeated attempts throughout life. There are no short cuts in life. Only those few succeed who strive every moment of their life to reach the final goal of life, like a river which keeps flowing towards the ocean, never does nothing else even for a moment. Ev-

everybody in the world may think that he or she is intelligent or knowledgeable or wise. In reality, the truly knowledgeable and wise people are extremely rare. But every one has the potential to become one, every one must try, sincerely. Otherwise, the whole life goes waste.

Listening is the first and most important step in gaining knowledge and becoming intelligent. Is it not strange that most people in the world have become so very busy, do not have time even to listen (or read)? How can they ever become knowledgeable and intelligent? If they never become, if they remain ignorant and foolish, and if they keep on doing all kinds of dangerous things to keep themselves busy, this whole world would be destroyed. We seem to have already reached this stage. Human race may be wiped out very soon, unless we somehow force all these people to come and listen.

Keep listening to the chantings. Repeatedly. *vedic mantra-s* have a very special quality - even if you do not understand a single word, the very act of listening to these chantings can have a great calming down affect on your *manas*. *vedic mantra-s* are accented, they follow *chandas* or special metres, they are poetic, musical compositions with an extra-ordinary quality of instilling peace and tranquility in the minds of the listeners. Spend some time everyday at least listening to these chantings, even if you have not learned them yourself from a guru and you cannot chant. Do not chant unless you have learned it properly under a guru. Listening is enough, it can purify your mind. Once the mind becomes clean and clear, truth shines by itself. Thus, even those who cannot understand a single word of the *veda-s* can get the knowledge contained therein and become enlightened, by mere association with these *mantra-s*. Because, after all, knowledge is already there in you, you only have to get rid of the thick layers

of ignorance that cover it up. That is the power of real knowledge. If some book or a guru or a theory or an idea is not capable of liberating you from all sins, right now and here in this very life, then it is fake, do not go near it. Listen only to the original. The *veeda-s* are the only original source.

Listening to a guru once is not sufficient. You need to keep listening. *shravaNa* is listening, carefully, attentively, again and again, grasping what is heard and retaining it. If you are lucky to get the *satsaMga* of an enlightened guru, do go, listen and make the most of it. Otherwise, keep reading. Reading a book such as this one once is not sufficient. You may have to keep coming back to it again and again, until you have fully understood it, until you have fully mastered all the techniques taught in it. Keep thinking, keep pondering, keep listening to the silent murmurs deep inside you.

The sounds you have heard must keep ringing in your ears for long. You must keep recycling them in your mind, all the time. What is heard must be retained and pondered upon. You must apply your logic and reason and investigate. You must keep thinking. This is *manana*.

And you must deeply meditate on the meanings and import of what all you have heard or read. You must keep asking the right questions, you must keep looking for the final answers. You must properly understand the meaning of what you have heard, you must then internalize it, put it into practice and experience it. Contrary to common understanding, you will not have to think harder and harder as you dig deeper into the mysterious world of the self. On the other hand, your mind will become more and more calm, your thinking will be dampened, finally you will completely stop thinking. This happens because

you would have started thinking about thinking, you would have started thinking about the thinker, you would have stopped the thinking machine in you in the very process of trying to know how it thinks and who prompts it to think. Finally, all the *vRtti*-s of the mind of *citta* would have been scuttled. Your *manas* would have become *amanas*. This is called *nididhyaasana*. This is when you are fully ready, the light of your consciousness can shine any moment and then you will become self-realized, free, liberated, free from all worldly problems, free from all worry and fear, free from all desires, you will simply be revelling in an ocean of pure untainted bliss. You have become one with yourself, you have become one with the whole universe, you have become one with God.

3.61 *yaatraa*

A kid feels restless and demands that you take it out. No sooner than you have taken it for an outing, it gets bored and restless again and starts demanding that you go back home. This is the nature of the *manas*, the *manas* is the child in us, it never grows up. We elderly men and women, grown up kids as we are, we are all fickle minded. We cannot stay here, nor are we happy there. We keep moving from place to place, we keep travelling. Simply because we are unable to shut up our mischievous *manas*. Travelling by car, two wheeler, three wheeler, train, air, whatever, involves consumption of precious oxygen in the atmosphere, release of toxic chemical poisons, wastage of non-renewable energy resources such as petroleum, causing heat and noise pollution. Our body is taxed, our mind is taxed. We face anxious moments, we risk our lives, we put the lives of others at risk. We feel tired, exhausted, we may even fall ill. Carbon released by automobiles has led to global warming, climate change is now real and happening, the future of the

whole world is at stake. Yet we cannot give up travel. Why can't all people simply stay wherever they are, like a tree?

If at all we have to travel, why go to a crowded shopping mall or a busy market place or a dark cinema house or hit a jam packed road where nothing moves and time comes to a stand still? Our mind will only get further disturbed, distracted, exhausted, tired, weakened. There is no need to go to an office or factory or shop or hospital. You will not find anything useful there. Why not go to a place where the *vibhuuti* of the Lord shows up at its best? Take a trip of pilgrimage. Go to a place where you find peace, harmony, nature, where you can feel the God and all His great creations. Go to a place where other like-minded people have come in search of peace, in search of knowledge, in search of meaning in life. Avoid all commercial places, avoid all people who have money as their agenda, keep away from all materialists, stay away from the scientists and technologists and businessmen. Take a *yaatraa*, a pilgrimage tour. Seek God, or seek a guru.

There is no point simply going to far off places and coming back empty handed. You must come back as a different person, as a better person. You must not simply go and stay and come back like you go to a different city, stay in a hotel room and come back after doing your worldly business. You must take time to sit, think, meditate, practice, observe, improve yourself. A dog cannot observe, analyze, understand, try and improve the way it wags its tail. Animals cannot improve themselves, we can. We must. A tour is worth if and only if we can return as a much better person.

There is a lesson in everything we see or hear. Unfortunately we keep our inner eyes and inner ears closed and we learn nothing at all. Look at the clouds. Do not

think of water vapour and all the physics you have studied, all that is useless. Think of the nature of the clouds. Clouds are made up of water, they are water, they are nothing but water. And they give water, they pour water, countless Millions of gallons of water, they keep giving everything they have, until they themselves dissolve and vanish. Giving is the nature of the clouds. Giving is a great thing, giving is elevating. That is why the clouds occupy the greatest heights in the vast sky. In sharp contrast, the oceans receive water from all the rivers and from all the rains that fall on them. They receive endlessly, they accumulate, hoard, and never give anything to anybody. Receiving is their nature. Receiving, getting, acquiring, amassing is not the right thing to do. Acquiring is demeaning, it pulls us down. No wonder, the oceans occupy the murkiest depths and the darkest crevices of the planet. Give more, take less. This is the nature of human beings. Taking more and giving less is the very definition of cheating. Business means profit and profit means giving less and taking more. Business means cheating. All business is cheating. Stay away from business, stay away from money. This is the lesson of the clouds and the oceans. Everything in nature has a lesson for us. Keep your inner eyes and inner ears open and alert. See, listen, learn. Come back as a different, better person. Then your *yaatraa* is worth the trouble.

If you cannot go there by walk, better not go. Avoid travel, or at least drastically reduce travelling. Why waste your time, effort and money for no real gain? You gain nothing, you lose everything in travel. It is wasteful, harmful. Travelling from place to place takes you nowhere. *yaatraa* is not merely travelling to this place or that. If at all you take up a pilgrimage trip, let it be really worth all this trouble. You should not feel like going again and again or going anywhere else for that matter. You must come back

with a realization that travelling is a sin. Your life should see a sea change. Then and only then is a *yaatraa* worth it.

What exactly does it mean to move from one place to another? Who moves? It is only the body which moves. We are not bodies, why should we go anywhere? The very concept of space is unreal, it is merely an imagination of the mind. The mind can go from anywhere to anywhere without wasting natural resources, causing environmental pollution, wasting time or effort or money. Go anywhere and you will not find what you are seeking. Knowledge is not there in some remote place, happiness is not there in some far away place, peace is not remote, satisfaction is not remote, fulfillment is not remote, everything we want in life are right here, right within ourselves. We only have to go into ourselves, that is where the truth lies. Indians knew the truth from ancient times. Even today there still are many realized souls here in India. You will not find real knowledge anywhere else in the whole world. There is no place better than India to understand yourself, to understand life. Indians need not go anywhere, they have already come to the best place on Earth. Others should think of coming to India, if they have any serious desire to understand the science of life and liberate themselves from the bondage of ignorance. Come, seek a real guru, beware of fake gurus. Get real knowledge and become free, free from all bondage and all suffering. Learn to live, learn to live simply, simply live, enjoy life, in the true sense.

3.62 *vrata*

A *vrata* is a religious vow, a kind of self-promise, a kind of self-imposed discipline. This can take many forms. For example, you may practice *upavaasa* or fasting as a *vrata*.

Because a *vrata* is self-imposed, not forced on you by anybody else, because there is no need to prove anything to anybody else, because there is nobody else who will monitor or evaluate or praise or curse you, because there is nobody else who may admire you or laugh at you, because you do it for yourself, there will naturally be a great sense of seriousness and sincerity in any *vrata*. You are the one who decided to go for it, you are the one who is going to do it, you are the one who will monitor and evaluate your own seriousness and sincerity, you are the ultimate beneficiary. You will benefit in terms of gaining confidence that you can do it, you will realize that you have something in you called determination in you and you have the capacity to summon your determination, you will realize that you have the stamina and tenacity to stick to your path and not swerve from it an inch even under extreme adverse conditions. You will be stronger from inside. You are no longer a weak, fickle minded person, you will not yield to temptations, you have the courage and determination to take the roughest of the situations in life all on your own, you are not a helpless, lone, weak, given up, useless individual. You are strong, capable. You know what you want to do, you know how to do it and you have the capacity and strength to carry it through till its logical conclusion. *vrata-s* are extremely useful devices at our disposal to strengthen us from inside, to stop and reverse the slow and continual erosion and corrosion that keeps happening deep inside us all the time due to the influences of the outside world.

Tradition abounds in innumerable *vrata-s* explained in great detail but you may choose something simple and doable. It is important to choose something that is challenging but achievable. If you try things which are too easy for you, there is no fun and there is little benefit. If you choose something too hard for you and if at all you fail in it, you will lose your confidence, you will start accepting your-

self as a weak person, you will weaken further and crumble from inside. There would be no benefit and you only stand to lose. It is therefore very important to gradually move from simple to complex, mastering and perfecting each one over a sufficiently long period of time. You have a lot of time in life, there is no hurry, throw away any sense of urgency from your mind, there are no dead lines or time limits. Take your time. This is not a race where who comes first will be rewarded, life is a game where who does it well will be rewarded. There is absolutely no scope for failure in a *vrata*, you must complete it successfully, come what may. Even the question of what if I fail should not arise. Success has to be simply guaranteed, unconditionally. You must start with this sort of a strong and positive feeling. You must remain strong and positive all through. Do not care for what others say or do.

A very simple yet very powerful *vrata* is *mauna* or silence. Silence does not simply mean not talking. Of course you should not talk at all. You should not even write or read. No newspapers, no books, no emails, no Internet, no telephone calls. *mauna* saves a lot of physical and mental energy you would have wasted in talking. It is a natural and effortless way to practice *praaNaayaama*. Breathing cycles stabilize and calm down. The *manas* also follows. The turbulent mind becomes calm and pleasant. *mauna* gives rest to your mind. Your mind gets ready for bigger challenges. Once in a while spend a day in *mauna* and see the marvelous improvements in yourself. You will start experiencing human life, free from restlessness, worry, hurry, anger etc. *mauna* is simple yet very powerful. Do practice it with all seriousness, you will surely stand to gain.

mauna is not even simply avoiding all use of language, in speech or text form. It is more than that. You can utter a sound loudly, you can say it in a low voice, you can whis-

per, or you can say it in your mind, without any physical sound coming out at all. Yet you said it, mentally. This inner, mental process is also speech. In fact this is speech. What others hear is only a physical manifestation of this inner speech. You can talk to yourself and nobody else will hear. This is also speech and *mauna* really means avoiding even this silent speech. Silent speech is called thought. Real *mauna* means that you must stop thinking. You must not think of anything at all, not even that you are right now through a *mauna vrata*. *mauna* is the art and science of silencing the *manas*, by vigilantly observing all its *vRtti-s* and shooting them all down as soon as they arise. You must work like a lizard that gulps insects even as they come out of the hole in the wet ground. Thoughts should be killed as soon as they are born. When the *manas* stops all activities, makes no *saMkalpa* at all, it will go back to its own true self, that is, your own self, your own true nature, your true home. You will realize who you are. You will abide in you. You will revel in your own self. Nothing else in the world exists. There is nothing else that your mind can even think off. This is the ultimate goal of *mauna*. Try and practice it and see for yourself how far you can go. Practice is the only recipe for perfection.

Another simple yet very powerful *vrata* is *eeakaanta* or loneliness. You came alone to this world, nobody came with you. You will go back alone, nobody will come with you, not even your nearest and dearest. All the others in your life are temporary companions. Life started in loneliness, life ends in loneliness, why not learn to live alone in between too? You spent nine months inside your mother's womb, in silence and perfect darkness. Stay alone, experience perfect silence, experience perfect darkness, then you can think deeply about life, about yourself, about God, about everything. You are not disturbed in the least by others and that is when you can do your work with full

efficiency. We normally feel troubled, confused, or even scared to stay alone, especially in a totally lonely, silent, dark place. We seek a busy, noisy crowd, knowing fully well that we will only feel more disturbed and pained there. This is the nature of the *manas*, this is a weakness of the *manas*. We can overcome this weakness, and strengthen ourselves from inside by practicing *eeakaanta* as a *vrata*. This is not to be confused with any psychological disorder or abnormality, where one is scared to interact with others, becomes an introvert, and may even think of committing suicide. Practice loneliness not as a result of mental weakness or illness, practice it as a means of strengthening it from inside. You should neither feel bored nor scared to stay alone, in perfect silence and in perfect darkness. You do enjoy pure bliss in deep sleep, where you are all alone, there is no light, no sound, nothing at all, right?

There are many possible *vrata-s*. Choose the right one for you, practice it with utmost seriousness, succeed, then go to next level. Think carefully and make a list of all bad things you are doing in your life. Select one and make it a *vrata* to give it up. Raise yourself step by step. This is the way.

3.63 *tapas*

When the concept of *vrata* is taken further, even more seriously, and it is long drawn, then it becomes *tapas* or penance. The word *tapas* comes from the root *tap* that means ‘to burn away’. The purpose of *tapas* is to burn away all the obstacles, all the internal enemies in the *manas*, to burn our ignorance into ashes.

The *tapasvi* knows that he is not just a body and his

body has no feelings or emotions or wants of its own. All these are the properties of the *manas*. To elevate himself from mere bookish knowledge into practical realization, he intentionally subjects his body to severe difficulties, observes how his body and *manas* react, uses his *buddhi* to understand what all is happening. People say it is hot and they run to switch on the fan or the air conditioner, and think that the difficulty of the body is now removed. The body never complained nor is it feeling better now. There could be physical effects in the material body but hot, cold and all other perceptions and feelings are experienced inside the *manas*. How good are we in controlling our *manas*? The *tapasvi* does not run after gadgets to pamper his body or mind, he instead tries to train his *manas* to accept whatever comes his way, keeping quiet, and asking for nothing, even when the body is subjected to difficulties. *tapas* is not mere foolish self-imposed punishment meted out to the body, it is in fact an exercise in mind control. *tapasvi-s* actually go to great extent, intentionally subjecting their bodies to severe austerities, just to check the limits of their endurance, in order to train and control their own mind. The body can regain its original shape and strength in no time, there is no need to worry. There is no point having a weak mind in a strong body, strengthening the mind is more important than strengthening the body.

Normally, we are slaves of our *manas*, we dance to its tunes, and punish the body and tax our brains in the process. *tapas* is different. First deny all external inputs. Do not even see, hear, feel anything from the external world. Shut off the whole world. Then start focussing all your attention on one point. Like a lens, when focussed, the *manas* can pool together enough mental energy to burn anything and everything. Burn the body, burn the brain, burn the sense organs. Burn the *buddhi* and stop thinking. When a fire is denied fresh fuel, it will burn up everything

that is there and then it will put out itself too. Likewise, the *manas* will burn away everything and finally it will also die. That is when the light of truth shines. Till then, you are under a grip of adamant ignorance, everything in the whole world including your body and mind are caused by this ignorance. They were never really there and you did not really burn or kill your body or mind. This is realization. This is liberation, this is freedom. This is the meaning and purpose of *tapas*. All bad things, all negative things, all things that you hate, all things you wish to avoid would have been burnt and gone for ever. All good things, all positive things, all happy things, all that you want in life, they all remain. After all, you are yourself the abode of all happiness and bliss. All problems in life would be gone in one shot and everything you may ever want in life are all yours to enjoy.

Let us say there is a powerful source of light behind you. In front of you are numerous reflectors. You will see a dazzle of powerful lights in front of you and you will tend to think that these are the real sources of light. Now suppose you somehow turn away or take away all these reflectors. You will then see the original source of light spreading its rays all around from behind you. Likewise, the moment you kill all the reflectors in the form of objects in the external world and your own body and mind, the light of your consciousness, the real and original source of all light shines all by itself. *tapas* is the art and science of burning away all the reflectors so that we can see the original source without getting confused and misled by the reflections.

tapas give us great power. *tapas* is more valuable than any other wealth. With just *tapas-shakti* one can obtain anything and everything in the world. After all, the whole world is a projection of our own *manas* and there is no difficulty for a well trained and obedient *manas* to give you

anything you want in life. After all, the *manas* is nothing but a reflection of the self, and the self is *brahma*, the universe. Everything in the universe, all the knowledge, all the power, all the wealth, all the happiness, everything is there right in your own self. *tapas* is the act of burning away all the obstacles in the form of ignorance, so that the light of this consciousness alone shines. One can do *tapas* and nothing else and still get everything that he may want in life. It is not only in mythological stories that we hear of *tapas*. It is real, practical, there are many people practicing *tapas* even today in India. They do not care for you or for anything else in the external world, they stay away from your world and you may not even know of them. *tapas* and *tapas-shakti* are real, you can learn and try if you are serious enough. *tapas-shakti*, the true knowledge of the self and of the whole universe, is the highest thing one can aspire for in life. Nothing else can be more important or useful to us. Seriousness therefore implies that you are willing to readily give up all your worldly attachments. Are you serious enough?

If I ask you to give me a hundred dollars, you would not. If I ask you to give me a hundred dollars in exchange for five dollars you would reject my offer. If I offer you eighty dollars, still you are not ready. If I offer you a full hundred dollars you will only be surprised at this meaningless deal. You may suspect some foul play. If I offer you a Million dollars in exchange, you will immediately say yes. People are scared of giving up attachment to their body, mind, near and dear ones, material gadgets, property, etc. because they are not sure what they will get in return. The purpose of this book is to convince you that what you gain by giving up worldly attachments is infinitely more valuable than your worldly belongings. This is real, there is no cheating, no foul play. Convince yourself and then take the big jump. You really do not have to give up anything in a

physical sense, you only have to give up your attachment. Are you ready?

The whole of modern science and technology is based on the idea that people are lazy, they do not want to work hard or undergo any kind of hardships and technology can make life very simple. Everything happens at the press of a button. Unfortunately, we do not realize that if we go this way, we will soon be finding it difficult even to press a button. This is the wrong path. Be bold, be brave, face life head-on, be ready to face difficulties, there are great things to be achieved in life and you must mentally prepare yourself for going through some rough weather now and then. Comfort and convenience are certainly not the factors that decide life. A whole lot of negative, wasteful, harmful, damaging things are being done today in the world for the sake of comfort and convenience of the body. You are not just a body and your body is strong enough to undergo quite a bit of rough handling. Most gadgets of engineering and technology are totally unnecessary, in fact you can live much better without them. Do not be penny wise and pound foolish. You have the capacity to bear great hardships, you only need to summon courage and determination. You have something called will power. Use it. Give up science and technology. Do not choose what is easy or convenient or comfortable or pleasurable. Choose what is right, choose what is good for the whole universe.

If you do not burn your ignorance, it will burn you. There is no third possibility. If you do not want to get burnt into ashes in the powerful conflagration of your ignorance, better accept your ignorance and take serious measures to burn it away. Start *tapas* today.

3.64 *daana, yajn Ya, hooma*

A truly knowledgeable person knows that he is *sat-cit-aananda svaruupa*, he is the essence of the entire universe. The whole world, including all the animate and inanimate beings, including all the animals, plants and people, including his body and mind, are merely manifestations of this *sat*, the only thing that exists. He is God himself. The goal of human life is to realize the divinity in us and to give up our ignorance and fancy for the external, physical, material objects. A *jnYaani* does not go after pleasures of the body or mind. He knows that pleasures and pains are two sides of the same coin and he cannot get one but not the other. He seeks complete freedom from all pain, all suffering, all misery, all worries, all fears. He seeks *aananda* - pure and infinite bliss. He knows that he is himself *aananda*, all the happiness and bliss he wants are right inside him, he stops groping in vain in the darkness of the external world. He sees the truth right within himself in the divine light of his own *cit*, his own consciousness, his own self. He loses all attachments to material objects and he considers them all obstacles and a nuisance rather than useful. He naturally wants to give up all his material belongings. He gives up, gifts or donates all his material possessions, not to gain name or religious merit, but simply because he does not value them anymore. He realizes that there is greater joy in giving than in acquiring and amassing. He gives away everything. Giving away is called *daana*. *daana* is elevating, acquiring and amassing wealth is downfall. Make it a regular, daily habit to identify things you really do not need and gift them away. Simplify life.

We all have a tendency to fill our offices and homes with all kinds of junk. Once in a while, we start cleaning up and each item we pick up, we think for a while and decide to keep it, rather than throw it, because we have some

attachment. We will have to gather strong will to give up our attachments for trifling things and boldly give away all the lint that we acquire and hold. Gradually, we must become stronger and stronger from inside, and give up things that we value more and more. Knowledge will help us to scale great heights in this process, if it does not, it is not real knowledge at all. Give up everything one by one. Life becomes simple and neat. Your house, your surroundings, your body, your mind should all become simple, neat and clean. Then your worries will all go away.

If you buy some thing from a shop by paying cash, the transaction is over then and there. If you instead use your credit card, which is claimed to simplify your life, you will carry the headache with you until the bill is received and you write a cheque and drop it in a drop box and you see that your payment has been received after you get the next bill. The headache continues for a couple of months. Which is simpler? Think.

Realizing the futility of all engagements with the external world is called *vairaagya*. *vairaagya* means the property of being without *raaga* or attachments. *vairaagya* is not escapism. In fact it is the natural and automatic consequence of self realization. For one possessing *vairaagya*, there is no fear of losing anything, no longing to acquire anything, there is no worry, there is no disturbance at all, even if he sees his belongings being taken away or spoiled. *jñāna* and *vairaagya* always go together, they are like the two sides of the same coin. One leads to the other, each supports, strengthens and reinforces the other. Give up your worldly attachments one by one. You will not lose anything, you only stand to gain immensely.

yajñ-s and *yaag*-s are big, ceremonious, religious forms of *daana* or sacrifice. The term sacrifice has often

been mis-interpreted to mean killing of innocent animals. Sacrifice implies giving up. We can only give up what is ours. A goat or some other living animal is not ours, the same good God who created us has created those animals too, we are all children of the same God, we cannot possess one another, nobody is anybody else's property. We can only give up what is ours. The only thing we all possess for sure and in great abundance is ignorance. Sacrifice therefore denotes giving up one's ignorance, giving up attachments to worldly possessions, which is a consequence of such ignorance. We can only give up our ignorance, our attachments, our delusions, our confusions, our weaknesses. This is the true spirit of any *yajñYa* or *yaaga*. In olden days kings and monarchs used to practice several types of big *yajñYa-s* and *yaaga-s*. We can all do this too, in our own humble, small way, without any big fuss. A *hooma* is a smaller, simpler ceremony, that any ordinary individual can do without much difficulty. After all, we are giving up only bad things, things we do not need, things which are harmful to us. Why not? Let us try and give up our ignorance and the consequent worldly attachments. Absence of darkness is the very definition of light. Absence of ignorance is the very definition of knowledge. To gain knowledge, all that we have to do is to give up our ignorance. This is the true spirit of *yajñYa*.

All offerings are symbolic. We offer a flower or a fruit or water or fragrance or some such thing to God. Why? Is He wanting in these? Is He waiting to get something from us? No, there is nothing in this whole Universe which is ours, which we can offer to Him. He is the true owner of everything. The whole idea of offering anything to God is to remind ourselves of this fact. We all have a natural tendency to say this is mine and *yajñYa-s* remind us that there is really nothing that is ours. The purpose of performing a *hooma* everyday at home is to remind ourselves everyday

that there is nothing which is really ours. This is the way to constantly remind ourselves of our ignorance, this is the way to constantly strive to get rid of our ignorance, to give up our ignorance, to sacrifice our ignorance.

Let us not practice religion selfishly. Let us not pray only for our own good or for the good of our near and dear ones alone. Let us pray, worship and do all our religious practices for the welfare of the entire universe, for the all round well being of all living creatures, for the all round well being of all human beings. God has not created nations or religions or races. God has created us all equally. Let us give up all these artificial barriers and join hands and work for the welfare of all living creatures. This is true religion. This is real science.

Give up everything. Make your life simple. Simple living is better living. Simplicity leads to cleanliness, cleanliness of the body and of the mind, cleanliness is next to Godliness. The unclean suffer from diseases, the clean ones remain strong and healthy. To enjoy life, you must simplify your life. Simply live, live simply, do nothing, just enjoy life.

3.65 *yooga*

yooga is a practical means to achieve all that we have talked about so far. The field of *yooga* is vast. Many great masters have experimented, expanded and developed a wide variety of techniques. Even today, experts keep coming out with improvisations and adaptations and give their own 'brand names', so to say. We shall not get entangled in the nitty-gritty details and differences between different brands of *yooga*. We must understand that all the differences are superficial and merely a result of looking at the same truth

from slightly different angles. The core ideas, the essence is the same. It is futile arguing which version of *yooga* is best. There is no such thing. The root of all systems of *yooga* is *maharShi pataMjali's yooga suutra-s*. We shall look at the essential concepts of these *yooga suutra-s* here.

yooga gives flexibility, fitness, stability, strength and health to the body. It gives peace and tranquility to the mind, it sharpens memory, decision making, reasoning power and all other mental faculties. It helps us to live a full, happy life. It transduces mere existence into life. We can work longer, without feeling tired. We can achieve greater heights in life. But there is more to it than all these. Let us understand.

The word *yooga* comes from the root *yuj* meaning 'to yoke', 'to join'. There must be two things which are brought together, linked and unified. In its broadest sense *yooga* means searching, locating, identifying, and unifying the self, the *sat-cit-aananda*, our own true nature or *svarupa*, the divinity deep inside us, the true essence of the entire universe, the Lord of the whole universe, God, with ourselves. *yooga* means understanding and realizing the fact that I am God, I am the whole universe, I am the truth, the ultimate reality, I am the same as you, he, she, everyone, everything, I exist, only I exist and nothing else exists. *yooga* means understanding the essence of this book. It is unfortunate that many people in the world think that *yooga* is merely a form of exercise for the body, a set of techniques to keep our body fit, flexible and healthy. Fitness and health of the body and mind follow, as consequences of self-realization, they are not the goal of *yooga* in themselves.

To understand the concept of *yooga*, let us first apply it to examples in the mundane world. The coaches of a

train are capable of accommodating and carrying people and their luggage over long distances at great speed, bearing all the load. But without the engine, the coaches are completely useless. Without the engine, the coaches stay put in one place like any other immobile, sedentary, dead object. The moment the coaches get linked, connected, unified with the engine, the coaches automatically and immediately get the power and capacity to haul the load and they start moving. Likewise, as long as we do not identify the divinity hidden inside us, we remain completely powerless, limited, mortal beings in the form of the human body. The moment we realize the power house, the engine, the prime mover, the mover of the entire universe, the Lord of the universe, the God inside us, we become one with that divinity, we become indistinguishable from God, we get all the power and capacity and greatness of God, we become God, we become the whole universe, vast, infinite, omni-present, omni-potent. This is the goal of *yooga*. Throughout this book, we have tried to show how and why this is actually true, correct, real, and truly scientific and why all other contradictory ideas are false. But mere bookish knowledge is not enough. Knowledge is not the same as realization. Knowing that fire burns is different from experiencing the burning by actually putting your hand into fire. *yooga* is the practical way of realizing the truth. *yooga* is the practical method of actually becoming enlightened, casting away the shroud of ignorance like a snake that sheds its skin. *yooga* is not merely *aasana-s* or *praaNaayaama* or meditation. *yooga* is not merely physical exercises, it is not merely for fitness and flexibility and health of the body. It is all of this but much more.

A driver is a driver but if he is the driver of the big boss of the company, he has more power and respect and status than any other ordinary driver. This additional status comes from his association with the big boss. If he is

the driver of the president of a country, he is all the more powerful. The power we have with us is the sum total of our own power plus the power of the people we associate ourselves with. The greater the person with whom we are associated, the greater is our power. Why not then try and attach ourselves to the greatest of all? Why not associate ourselves with God? We will then get all the power in the world, we can do anything, we can achieve anything, there is no power greater than ourselves. This is the path of *yooga*. This is the path of *tapas*. This is the path of all religious practices. This is the goal of life. Many well meaning people want to do so many good things but they are powerless and helpless. Power and help to do great things comes only from the God. Link up yourself with Him. Practice *yooga* for this purpose.

How do we associate ourselves with God? God is right inside us, He is the truth, He is knowledge, He is consciousness, He exists. Our knowledge is His knowledge, our consciousness is His consciousness, our existence is His existence. Yet we fail to realize this. This happens because we are all the time attracted by the external world. You can see everything in front of you but you cannot see what is behind you. You can see this by turning backwards and the moment you do that all the things you were seeing earlier go out of sight. As long as you are seeing the external world, your body, senses and mind, you cannot see the truth. The moment you turn away from all this and look at the truth, the whole world vanishes. *yooga* teaches us the techniques of training and mastering our mind so that we can turn away from falsity and look at the truth hidden inside us.

Shyness, fear, anger, joy, sorrow, etc. experienced in the *manas* while it is active and busy perceiving the world are called *vRtti-s*. *pataMjali* defines *yooga* as *citta-vRtti-*

niroodha or complete stopping of all the waves of such thoughts and feelings of the *manas*. The *manas* is the perceiver. When the *manas* has nothing else to see, nothing else to perceive, it will see itself, it will perceive its own true nature. The *manas* is just a reflector of the *cit* that we actually are. When the *manas* sees itself, we realize our own true nature. We will realize that we are not merely a body or *manas* or *buddhi* or *ahaMkaara*. We will realize that we are actually *st-cit-aananda*, the essence of the entire universe. This is the sole purpose of *yooga*. *yooga* is not something that we have to do, not doing anything is the essence of *yooga*. We should not do anything, we should not even think. All that we have to learn to do is to learn to do nothing. This is the secret of *yooga*.

3.66 *aShTaaMga-yooga*

maharShi pataMjali delineates *yooga* in eight steps. That is why this is known as *aShTaaMga-yooga* or *yooga* with eight components. The eight parts are 1) *yama*, 2) *niyama*, 3) *aasana*, 4) *praaNaayaama*, 5) *pratyahaara*, 6) *dhyaana*, 7) *dhaaraNa* and 8) *samaadhi*.

We have already understood the essentials of a few of these steps. *aasana-s* provide suitable postures for stabilizing the body so the mind can stop worrying about the body, forget it altogether and focus on other things. *praaNaayaama* helps to stabilize the breathing and through that, calm down and stabilize the mind. There are a large number of different kinds of *aasana-s* and a variety of ways of practicing *praaNaayaama*. Each has a prescribed procedure, a set of goals and benefits, indications and contraindications and associated warnings and precautions. These are best learned from a guru. These are purely practical lessons that cannot be learned from a book or from the TV

or the Internet, even if pictures or animations and explanations are included. *yooga* is best learned under the direct supervision of a knowledgeable and proficient guru. There are many great *yooga* masters, seek one and learn. There are also many good books which you can use to supplement. We shall avoid getting into the details of *aasana-s* and *praaNaayaama* in this book.

pratyaaahaara means turning the senses inwards. Not literally, it means not getting attracted or distracted by external signals. The eyes should not see anything, even while being open, even when there are objects in front, even when there is light, even when the objects are moving and trying to draw our attention. The ears should not hear anything. The skin should not sense anything. It is the *manas* which actually sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels, the sense organs only do data capture. All the senses as also the *manas* should withdraw, like a tortoise that withdraws all its limbs. Take the attention away from the external world and look inwards instead. Because what we are seeking is inside us, nowhere else in the entire world outside us. When the *manas* has nothing else to see, it will tend to look at itself. We can know ourself. We can know that we are not different from anybody else, we are not different from anything else, we are in fact the whole universe. *pratyaaahaara* is a set of ideas and practices to enable us to achieve this.

As a simple example, you may sit in a suitable posture, backbone and neck held straight, and focus the attention of your eyes near the tip of your nose. There is spot on the retina of your eye called blind spot. If you focus there, the eye will see nothing, even when the eyes are wide open and there is plenty of light. You may find slight discomfort and you may get tears in the eyes but there is no danger. With practice, you can learn to see nothing with the eyes wide

open. Initially the field of vision comes down and gradually darkness spreads and you see nothing. When you are trying hard to see and you see nothing in the external world, perhaps you will start seeing yourself, you start realizing your own true self. This is the core idea behind *prajñā* or an attempt to directly perceive your own pure consciousness.

Once the body has become totally stable and has stopped disturbing the mind, when the breathing has fully streamlined and has stopped troubling the mind, when the senses have been withdrawn and the mind has nothing else to perceive, that is when *dhyāna* or meditation begins. Many people simply sit with eyes closed and think of that as meditation. They will either fall asleep or their minds would be as restless, confused and disturbed as always. Meditation is not merely sitting in one place with the eyes closed. Meditation begins only after you have fully mastered and perfected the earlier steps of *aśana-siddhi*, *prāṇa-siddhi* and *pratyāhāra*.

Meditation requires mastering three aspects: 1) ability to place your attention on any object of your choice, at your own beck and call, under your own control, without the slightest influence of anything external, 2) ability to keep your focus and attention on the object of your choice as long as you please, without getting distracted or wandering away even for a moment, 3) ability to retract your focus and attention away from your chosen object of meditation, again entirely at your own command and control, as and when you want. Needless to say, the last of these is the most difficult. You should not get 'stuck up', is it not? The mastery of these three is called *dhāraṇa*. If you have reached this stage, you have full mastery of meditation. You can meditate on anything, or even on nothing, for any length of time, and come out of that as and when

you please. Meditation is not as simple and as easy as you may be thinking. But with constant practice and guidance from a real guru, you can succeed.

The fact that we can observe, monitor and control our body, our breathing and our *manas* proves that these are different from our self, we are the observers, we are the knowers, these are the observed, the known. If you have come this far, you have understood yourself, you have seen yourself, you have realized that you are the *sat-cit-aananda*, you are the entire universe, you are divine, you can just revel in your self, you can stay with your self, you can enjoy the infinite bliss of the all powerful and infinite self. This state is called *samaadhi*. One who has passed all the stages and achieved success in *samaadhi* is a *yoogi*, others are at best aspirants or students of *yooga*.

When there is no longing at all, when there is nothing desired at all, when there is no pain, no suffering, no sorrow, no sadness at all, there is bliss and only endless bliss. This is called *aananda*. The self has no wants, no desires, no longings, nothing to gain and nothing to lose. It has no fears, no greed, no anger, no lust, no jealousy. The self is bliss incarnate. Also, there is nobody dearer than ourselves. Nobody loves anybody else, anything else, as much as they love themselves. All the self-less service we may undertake are also to please our own self. The self has only friends, no enemies at all. Hence the self is bliss, only bliss and nothing but bliss. *yoogi-s* revel in the self, enjoying the endless nectar, the infinite bliss of life. They are the realized souls, liberated from the bondage of ignorance and all the worldly pains and sufferings that result from ignorance. This is *yooga*. Let us unfold the secrets of *yooga* in stages.

3.67 *yama*

yama and *niyama* ate the first two stages in *aShTaaMga yooga* of *pataMjali*. These are the pre-requisites. These are the essential qualifications one must possess before starting the practice of the rest of *yooga*. These are the necessary pre-qualifications. Unfortunately, these seem to be the most neglected. People jump to *aasana-s*, *praaNaayaama*, *dhyaana* etc. before learning, practicing and mastering *yama* and *niyama*. That is why they do not reach till the final goal.

yama in turn includes 5 qualities: 1) *ahiMsaa*, 2) *satya*, 3) *asteeya*, 4) *brahmacarya*, and 5) *aparigraha*. These look like simple concepts but they can be and should be understood in great depth. A whole life is required to properly understand even these simple looking ideas. *ahiMsaa* and *satya* are the most important human qualities, they will be taken up in the next few sections. We shall briefly look at the other three now.

asteeya means not stealing, that is not taking away anything from anybody without their knowledge and/or consent, against their wish. We may think we are all good natured human beings and we do not steal. Stealing applies not only to physical materials. We may actually be stealing somebody's time, such as when we send unsolicited and useless mails, or chat unnecessarily over phone. We may be stealing somebody's faith, as in religious conversions. Whenever we force people to give us something, we are actually stealing. Abortion and foeticide imply forcibly taking away the life of a yet-to-be-born baby. Eating eggs is no different. Non-vegetarianism implies taking away life by force. Using wooden furniture, paper etc. implies cutting trees, forcibly taking away their right to live. Rape, murder, kidnapping all involve forcibly taking away something

or the other. Bridegrooms who demand and take dowry from the bride's parents are worse than thieves. Those who take bribes are stealing your money in broad daylight, forcing you to part with it. Whenever we give less and take more, we are actually stealing. Profit implies giving less and taking more. All business is based on the concept of profit, all business is therefore tantamount to stealing, the customer is forced to give more and he is left with no other alternative or choice. The difference between what he gives and what he gets is forcibly taken away from him. This is stealing. The FM radio signals, the wireless Internet signals, the mobile phone signals, all interfere with our mind and disturb us in subtle ways, stealing away our peace of mind. When we travel in an automobile, we are stealing away precious oxygen from the atmosphere, which is a common, shared property of all living creatures. Similarly, when we burn garbage, we take away oxygen and poison the air, taking away its naturally clean status. All the funny sounds our cell phones keep making at all places and times take away the peace and tranquility. Mothers who deny their babies of their breast milk are thieves. Cruel men in the modern dairy industry take away the calf from the loving mother cow. They even take away the natural pleasure of a bull mating a cow. The freedom to move around is taken away from animals in the dairy and poultry. We all keep stealing something or the other, we only have to think and realize this.

We all get so much from our parents, from God, from nature, from the wise people who have handed over all their wisdom to us through their works. Should we not pay them back in some way? We are living today because of the selfless service of our parents in our childhood. Should we not take good care of them in their old age? Not taking good care of our aged parents amounts to stealing, we are refusing to give back after taking so much from them. Should

we not preserve the beauty of nature and pass it on to the next generation without spoiling it in any way? We cannot give anything to God, should we not at least express our gratitude? If we only get and give back nothing, we are definitely thieves. Earlier, we talked about *daana* or giving. Forget about giving, should we not at least stop taking things from others by force? We suffer in life because we keep committing sins, we keep stealing. Think.

brahmacarya implies staying away from sensual pleasures, not just physically, it is much more important to keep the *manas* and the *buddhi* free from all sexual feelings and thoughts. Sex is not to be confused with other basic needs like food and water. We cannot survive without air, water or food, sex is different. The purpose of sex is reproduction, pleasure is secondary. Seeking pleasure is not bad in itself. It becomes bad when we dance to tune of our *manas* rather than becoming the masters and making our *manas* listen to us. Sex is mostly a mental activity, and the *manas* is deeply involved and heavily exercised. If the *manas* becomes excessively obsessed with sexual desires, it starts seeking sensual pleasures endlessly, it becomes blind to everything else, it forgets the whole world, our life comes to a stand still. The body and the *buddhi* also tend to dance to the tunes of the *manas*. Sex and even mere sexual thoughts will drain away a lot of energy - physical, mental and spiritual. *brahmacarya* does not imply not getting married or giving up sex altogether. *brahmacarya* implies training the mind to completely stay away from all kinds of sexual feelings and emotions, under our control, as and when we want, for as long as we want. Students should completely stay away from sex until they complete their education, because both sex and education impose heavy demands on the body, *manas* and *buddhi* and it is impossible to meet the demands of both simultaneously. Even in married life, the *manas* and *buddhi* must

be carefully controlled and freed from getting excessively obsessed with sensuality. After all, *yooga* is all about self-control and self-discipline. *brahmacarya* is hard to practice but is a very very potent tool. One who can control his sexual desires can control anything, he can control the whole world, he is the real master, the big boss, the lord. Not properly understanding and practicing *brahmacarya* is the cause of so much of human suffering and misery. For more on this topic, the interested readers may read a small booklet entitled *brahmacarya* by the same author.

aparigraha implies not accepting gifts, even if voluntarily given by others. You actually do not need anything and if you take something that you do not need, it becomes a play-thing for you to play around with. The child in you, namely the *manas* keeps playing with it, forgetting all else. By accepting something from somebody, you may develop a sense of obligation, leading to favoritism and inequality. By giving you things, others start expecting favours from you and you get bound by obligations. Your *manas* gets unnecessarily distracted into irrelevant and unnecessary things. Attachment to these useless artifacts increases and we become bound, we lose our freedom. Giving is elevating, taking is demeaning. Do not steal, do not forcibly take away anything from anybody, do not accept even if people give you gifts voluntarily. Instead, learn to give. Give everything, give up everything. You will lose nothing, in fact you will gain everything. This is the secret of *yooga*.

3.68 *ahiMsaa*

The term *ahiMsaa* is usually translated into English as non-violence. There is more to it than just not being violent. *ahiMsaa* implies causing no harm, injury, pain, suffering,

torture, death or even inconvenience, discomfort or uneasiness to any human being or to any animal or to any other living creature. We all have a right to live, to live well and to enjoy life but we do not have a right to do anything that is harmful to other living creatures. This is the basis of all religions. This is the spirit of humanity. If we do not take *ahiMsaa* seriously, we cannot call ourselves human beings. All human beings need to be humane. Being humane means not being cruel or unkind to others in any way whatever. You are a thief, whether you steal a Million dollars or just one dollar. *hiMsaa* is *hiMsaa*, big or small does not matter, and *ahiMsaa* requires giving up all *hiMsaa* completely.

Like all other topics in this book, *ahiMsaa* must also be understood with regard to our internal world, in the context of our *manas*. It is the *manas* which does things in life, it is the *manas* which practices *ahiMsaa* or the opposite of it. Therefore, any act that we may be doing without the knowledge or control over it is not done by us, we incur no sin there. We may be unknowingly killing many microbes etc. in our daily life. Is that a violation of *ahiMsaa*? No, it is not. All the qualities we are talking about are applicable to the *manas*, not to the body or *buddhi* or *ahaMkaara*. The body never feels, knows or experiences anything in life, it has no sense of *paapa* or sin and *puNya* or the opposite, positive, good quality, which is usually translated as ‘merit’ in English. Nor does the *buddhi* have any emotions. Sin is a property of the *manas* and only of the *manas*. As long as the *manas* is not involved, or it does not know, or it has no control over it, the *manas* accrues no sin for injuring or even killing anybody. If a madman injures somebody, he commits no sin. If a small child unknowingly harms somebody, it accrues no sin. It is only the willful, deliberate, intentional, avoidable harm that we cause to others that violates the principle of *ahiMsaa*.

There is no need to kill mosquitoes or cockroaches or other pests because there are alternative ways of dealing with them. Instead of using a mosquito repellent that spreads harmful chemicals all around, why not use a mosquito net? Why not use a natural, harmless, non-polluting mosquito repellent? Instead of killing cockroaches by spraying deadly chemicals, why not simply throw them out of the house? Or just prevent their entry into the house by using suitable meshes for the drains etc.? Vested interests are busy with a massive misinformation campaign saying microbes cause diseases and to remain healthy we must use chemical poisons to kill them. It is in fact these chemicals which make our bodies weak and vulnerable to diseases. This is the way to convince those who have a scientific bent of mind. For others, it is sufficient to say that any action that is against the principle of *ahiMsaa* is a sin and we will definitely reap the fruits of such sinful activities. Do not kill any animal, not even a microbe intentionally, deliberately. The best way to clean is by mechanical scrubbing, not by using acids or other harmful chemicals.

Non-vegetarianism is against *ahiMsaa* because it involves cruelty to animals and it is done with full understanding and it is easily avoidable. Non-vegetarians are 'living graves of murdered beasts'. Every living creature has a right to live and enjoy life as per its own nature and human beings have no right to interfere, prevent or forcibly change the life of any living creature. The poultry industry is guilty of causing great pain, suffering and death of countless Millions of hens and eggs everyday. Poultry hens have to lay one egg everyday. Do any one of you women folk like to deliver a baby everyday in your life? The hens are kept in jam packed cages, their beaks and nails are often clipped, they are subjected to untold misery throughout their life. One fine day the hens are simply cut and eaten.

We must treat others as we wish to be treated. Ask yourself if you would like to be treated like the poultry hen. The dairy industry is guilty of inflicting enormous amount pain and suffering on cattle every moment of their life. Cows are tied in narrow, congested sheds, with no place even to move their heads and limbs. Left to themselves, they would have roamed around freely, enjoying the Sun and fresh air, grazing the green grass, right? The cows are given artificial fodder and all kinds of dangerous feed additives to increase milk production. They are subjected to repeated cycles of pregnancy through artificial insemination, which is only an euphemism for rape. Dairy cows need to be pregnant and lactating all through their life. Do you women like to live like that? And to keep them going through all this torture, these cows are given strong and repeated doses of female sex hormones which double as neuro-transmitters and cause excruciating pain to these helpless animals. Cows are looked upon as mere milk producing machines. The calves are taken away, the cows are denied the natural pleasure of feeding and caring for their loved calves. Unable to bear the pain and suffering, if the cows collapse, all kinds of inhuman and cruel treatments are given to force them to get up. The milk we get today in the supermarket stores and commercial dairy outlets is a concoction of pesticides, anti-biotics, sex hormones, neuro-transmitters, sometimes even blood and pus. No wonder men are all becoming impotent and girls are showing abnormal developments at a very early age itself. Millions are suffering from diabetes, blood pressure, cardio-vascular diseases and heart attack, cancer, neural disorders and stroke. More and more children are being born with physical and mental abnormalities including genetic defects. More and more children are suffering from autism, a horrible disease in which the victim is simply denied of all joy, there is simply no joy, fun or pleasure in anything. Autism was non-existent, this is a new disease created by mankind through the modern dairy

industry, in the name of science and technology. The cause of all human suffering is the cruelty to innocent, harmless animals. There is no such thing as an action without a reaction in this universe. All the cruelty we mete out to animals knowingly and intentionally is against the principle of *ahiMsaa*, it is a sin and we cannot escape from its effects. People suffer in life only because they engage themselves in avoidable sin. Think.

Drinking cow milk is not against *ahiMsaa* provided the cows are treated well. Keep a cow at home, allow it to graze in the open fields under the Sun, treat it like your own child. Give it a name, call it by its name, talk to it, take it in your arms, show your love and affection and see how the cow responds with love and affection in turn. A cow can even enjoy music, sing and check for yourself. Cows produce more milk than the calves need. If this excess milk is not taken out, the cows experience discomfort, even pain. They may fall sick too. Milking a cow is a service by man to the cow. But cows must be milked only after the calf has had its required dose of milk. There is a natural God-made symbiosis between human beings and cows. Cows are domestic animals, they cannot live on their own in the wild. Human beings have to take care of them and in turn they provide us with milk. Cow milk is closest to human breast milk. It is a complete, balanced, safe food. Milk and milk products from a cow are enough to give all the nutrient requirements of human beings. Even the dung and urine of a cow are extremely useful. Cow products act as pest-repellents, fertilizers, fuel and medicines. Western system of medicines are failing everywhere and traditional Indian systems of medicines such as *aayurveda* cannot do without the cow. Cows and bullocks help us in agriculture and food processing, they help us in transport, they help us in energy production. Man and cow are made for each other. They must love each other, take care of each other.

Today Billions of people want milk and milk products but nobody wants a cow. That is why we suffer. Bring home a cow and all your problems will go away. The cow is a harmless, extremely useful, God-like animal. Worship the cow, love it, respect it. There is nothing religious about worshipping the cow. Everybody needs food, everybody needs health, everybody needs a clean and safe environment and none of these are possible without the cow. Cows are sacred to all human beings, those who ill-treat the cow cannot be considered humane. Treat all animals, all living creatures with respect, we are all children of the same God. This is the spirit of *ahiMsaa*.

Dairy cows have to be lactating every day of their life, the day their milk production comes down, they are killed mercilessly, cut and eaten. Who has given us the right to kill or otherwise interfere with the life of any other living creature? All living creatures are children of the same God. All living creatures have an equal right and we humans are no special. Even the very idea of commercial animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, etc. is inhuman, abhorring and ghastly. Every well meaning person in the world should understand all this and ask themselves if they would like to be treated the same way. Treat others as you wish yourself to be treated. This is the way to understand and practice *ahiMsaa*. Practice *ahiMsaa* and a whole lot of your problems will go away. Otherwise, life will only become more and more miserable and very soon, human life will become impossible.

All cosmetics, drugs and a wide variety of other products you will find in the super-market store today involve causing great pain and suffering to many living creatures. Silk is made by boiling living worms to death. Many scientific experiments involve causing injury, pain, suffering and inhuman and cruel treatments to innocent animals. Park-

ing your vehicle in such a way as to make it difficult for others to park or take out their vehicles is against the principle of *ahiMsaa*. Rash, negligent driving, coming in the way of others, even scaring other people through loud honking etc. is against *ahiMsaa*. Talking loudly on your mobile phone, creating a nuisance to others is against *ahiMsaa*. Travelling in any motorized vehicle is against *ahiMsaa* because you consume precious oxygen and fossil fuels, which are common, shared resources of all living creatures and you cause chemical poisoning of the environment as also smoke, heat and noise, making the lives of others so much more difficult. The mobile phone, FM radio and wireless Internet signals cause disturbance. We humans are somehow able to survive so far but many other life forms including birds and insects are vanishing, unable to bear the trouble. Producing any kind of waste material or garbage other than purely natural wastes such as stools and urine is a sin because there is no safe way of disposing off these man-made wastes and we will invariably be forced to pollute and poison the environment. Think carefully and you will realize that almost all modern human activities are harmful to others as also to ourselves. Only those actions done using our body and mind alone are harmless. Walking, running, sitting, sleeping, talking, eating, singing etc. are harmless, that too when done properly. Analyze your own life, understand how your actions, personal or professional as they may be, are harmful to others. Give up all such activities or at least try to reduce drastically. Otherwise, you are making your own life miserable and you are also making the lives of others miserable. Modern life style is not sustainable. Nature will force us to change. Better change voluntarily.

Practicing *ahiMsaa* is essential for success in *yooga*. Practicing *ahiMsaa* is essential even to survive in this cruel world. Think.

3.69 The Chemical Soup

In spite of tremendous advances we have made in science and technology over the last couple of centuries, everybody is becoming weaker and weaker, both in the body and the mind. Most colleges and universities across the world are complaining that they are not getting good students. Why is everybody becoming weaker and duller day by day? Health should be the norm, the standard, health should be naturally found everywhere, everybody should be perfectly healthy as a rule, ill-health should be a rare exception. Today it is the opposite, nobody is fully healthy, not even those in the prime of youth. Who is responsible for all this? Who is the culprit?

All material substances in the universe are either pure chemical substances called elements, or chemical combinations of elements called compounds, or mixtures of these. There are a hundred plus elements of which about 95 occur naturally and the rest are experimental creations of scientists within their laboratories. A few of these elements are inert, they refuse to combine with other elements. Most of the elements have a tendency to combine with other elements chemically in various proportions, resulting in chemical compounds. Although the number of elements is only around one hundred, the number of possible chemical compounds is extremely large, more than the number of dust particles in the entire universe! Obviously, no one knows enough about all chemicals, all the scientists in the world put together do not and cannot know even a small fraction of all that exists in the universe. It is humanly impossible to know all about chemicals and the effects they may have on our health. It is extremely dangerous, therefore, to play with chemicals.

Various chemical elements and compounds exist in the

Earth system, some in abundance, others in traces. All chemicals are neither required nor safe for our life, many are extremely dangerous, even extremely small amounts of these chemicals can wreak havoc in our bodies. We come in direct contact with some of these, others are hidden deep inside the Earth. Living creatures have evolved on Earth over Millions of years and have learned to live with, even make good use of chemical substances that are found in our immediate environment including air, water, surface soil, plants and animals. The brain and nervous system communicate through subtle electrical and chemical signals. The brain controls the operation of important glands in the body. These glands secrete minute quantities of special chemicals called hormones and these hormones control all of life processes including growth and maturity. Slightest change in the chemical composition of our body can change life into death. Knowing all this, should we not refrain from intentionally altering the balance of chemicals in nature? These so called intelligent creatures called human beings have significantly changed our immediate chemical environment, unable to control the curiosity of the *manas*, confusing this weakness for intelligence, under the banner of scientific progress and technological advancement. Some 80,000 man-made chemicals are used in large quantities in industries today. Many of these have not been tested for their impact on our health. Even when tested, they have been checked for a specific disease only, that too under some conditions which may not hold in practice. Most chemical tests are limited to reactions between two or three substances whereas there are thousands of chemicals in nature and inside the human body. What exactly happens when thousands of chemical substances react simultaneously is beyond human capacity to know. Practically all man-made materials are chemicals whose effects on our health is unpredictable. Air, water, soil, rock, plants, animals etc., which are products of nature, are generally

harmless. Everything else, practically all man-made items, everything you will see in your home, office, car, factory, hospital, farm etc. other than these few purely natural substances, are potentially hazardous substances. Many of these are perhaps harmless as they are, but if and when they are burnt or otherwise reacted, they release a number of toxic gases and residues, ringing the death bell to all living creatures.

There is nothing that is more important in life than life itself. Yet we keep putting our lives and the lives of others at risk everyday for silly reasons. This is the wisdom of the modern man. The world is bathed in a chemical soup today. We not only manufacture and use large number of artificial materials in our daily life, we also produce large quantities of hazardous wastes and simply burn them, for most of them are not bio-degradable, and we simply do not have any space to dump them and allow them to remain as they are. Everyday we are adding tonnes of poisonous chemicals into the air, water and soil system. Countless varieties of living species have become completely extinct now, many are vanishing for good everyday. The key element of life is same in all living creatures. If one can go, there is no reason why others will not. Very soon, human life on planet Earth will become impossible. Air has been polluted, all sources of water have been poisoned with invisible chemicals, all food has become toxic. Unfortunately, even today most people are complacent, and scientists continue to ruin the world, unmindful of the impending disaster. Our problems are not in spite of science and technology, they are all because of science and technology. Think.

Is it not time to wake up and shake off all this ignorance and foolishness? Either it is already too late or perhaps there is still a last ray of hope. If only we all voluntarily

give up all of science, technology, industry, business, economic development and all such foolish ideas that damage the environment and put our lives at risk, we may still be able to survive. Otherwise, even God will not save us. God has no mercy for those who knowingly commit such grave sins. Environment is a common shared property of all human beings, in fact of all living creatures, including those yet to come. Polluting the environment amounts to adding poison to the air, water and food that others take in. This is an attempt to murder by slow poisoning. This is absolutely against the principle of *ahiMsaa*.

Travelling is a sin because when we travel we pollute the air with chemical poisons which affect the health and longevity of other living creatures. Shopping is against the principle of *ahiMsaa* if it involves the use of man-made materials such as plastic carry bags, containers, sachets, tetrapacks, pouches, bottles etc. whose manufacture, transportation, disposal etc. lead to chemical pollution. All packed items are polluting. Practically all factory made items sold in a super-market store today involve causing great pain, suffering and harm to animals and other human beings. In fact use of almost all man-made gadgets and materials, including electrical and electronic items, involves causing disease, pain, suffering, and death to living beings. They are all avoidable, they are not required at all, they give us nothing that we need, we fall for them simply because we are unable to resist the temptations of our *manas*. All industries are polluting and causing or supporting any polluting activity is against the principle of *ahiMsaa*. All economic activities are polluting. War, terrorism, vandalism, smoking, burning of garbage, chemical farming, are all against the principle of *ahiMsaa*. Even scientific research can be and often is highly polluting, wasteful and harmful. A seeker of true knowledge should seek it inside his own *manas*, not elsewhere in the vast external world.

To seek the truth inside the mind, the mind has to be neat and clean and clear and transparent. Violation of *ahiMsaa* is the biggest obstacle in *yooga* and in seeking knowledge. *ahiMsaa* is an extremely important idea. If only the world realizes this, if only people give up all activities that are harmful, a vast majority of human problems including diseases and suffering and premature death will all vanish by themselves.

We all need clean air to breathe. Do not think only of visible dust, smoke and soot, think of the invisible chemical poisons. The only way to get clean air is to give up all industries, all man-made materials and gadgets. We all need clean water, chemically clean water. Distilled water is free from chemicals but this is not what we need. Pure water, devoid of all chemicals is extremely dangerous, it has been shown to accelerate death. What we need is naturally clean and safe water, which has the right balance of minerals. Factory made bottled mineral water is not the solution to the safe drinking water problem, it is in fact a major cause of water pollution. We all need safe, healthy, nutritious food. The only way we can get such good food is by giving up tractors and other farm machinery, chemical fertilizers and pesticides and go back to cow based, natural, organic farming. The only way we can get good food is to give up bio-technology and genetics. There is no other way. Either you must kill modern science and technology or they will kill you. We are at cross-roads today. Think. Act. Today. Otherwise *yooga* is useless.

Health is wealth. Without health, life has no meaning. You have a right to live well, live in perfect health. Everybody else also has the same right. Do not do anything that comes in the way of others' rights. Give up all man-made things and learn to live in harmony with nature. This is the meaning of *ahiMsaa*. For more on this topic, the in-

terested reader may read a book entitled *AhiMsaa* by the same author.

3.70 *satya*

Anybody can say true or false given a simple statement such as ‘it is raining’ or ‘two plus two is five’. Even the uneducated people can say true or false. But do you know what exactly is truth? Can you define truth?

The term *satya* is generally translated as ‘truth’ but no one seems to understand this concept properly. *satya* is not about conformity of a statement with respect to factual reality in the external world. Nothing at all in the external world concerns us here, everything we are talking here must be applied and understood in terms of what happens inside us. Because life is inside us, not outside. Conformity with the facts of the external world is a totally useless idea. Everybody once thought that the Earth was flat. Doctors once thought that the best way to cure any disease was to suck away lots of blood. Scientists thought once that all metals could be converted to gold. People keep making such silly mistakes and factually incorrect statements. Factual correctness or otherwise takes us nowhere. It is no sin to say something that is factually incorrect. Actually, *satya* is defined as conformity of thought, word and deed. What we think, that we must say, what we say, that we must do. All the three things should totally agree with one another, there should be total conformity, no deviation at all. We should say what we think, only what we think, nothing but what we think, everything that we think. We should do exactly what we say, nothing more, nothing less, nothing different. Knowingly or unknowingly, we keep telling lies all the time. That is why we suffer in life.

Note that telling what you really feel is not a lie, even if that is not in conformity with facts in the external world. Children keep making all kinds of factually incorrect statements but they are not telling lies, they cannot be punished. Doctors once really believed that sucking blood cures diseases, they were not telling lies, what they did was not a punishable offence at all. Even today, many of the scientific statements we may be making may turn out to be factually incorrect but that does not mean that we are liars. We are liars because we keep saying things which are different from what we feel deep inside us, because we keep doing things different from our words.

satya is a necessary human quality, otherwise we just cannot trust anyone. Man is a social animal, we cannot live alone, we are dependent upon many many others even in our day to day lives. If we cannot have mutual trust and confidence, human society will break down. Not sticking to *satya* must therefore be made a punishable offence. You cannot tell lies, you cannot force others to tell lies, in the name of ‘trade secrets’, ‘intellectual property rights’, ‘official secrets’ and what not. Everybody must freely tell everything they knows to anybody who asks. Knowledge and information are not commodities, they are not saleable, this whole world of information revolution that we are passing through is against the principles of *satya*. If I give you a book, you get it and I lose it but if I give you knowledge or some piece of information, you get it but I do not lose it. In fact this knowledge only becomes further reinforced, strengthened and refined in me. Giving entails taking and taking entails giving only with regard to physical possessions, not for knowledge or information. You may get it but I have not given or lost. How can I charge money for something I never gave? Every commercial advertisement is cleverly designed to brain-wash, confuse and mislead you, to hide critical information, to cheat you. Nobody tells the

truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Today, the world stands on the foundations of economics and business, which are euphemisms for cheating. No wonder human society is breaking up and will certainly destroy itself in just a few years from now, unless we all wake up and stop all this.

Only individuals have thought and so *satya* applies only to individuals. *satya* does not apply to companies, organizations or even to governments. We must apply *satya* to individuals within these institutions, individuals must be held responsible, individuals must be questioned, individuals must be punished if they tell lies. Business means telling lies and cheating, and to cleverly escape being caught and punished, these clever and greedy business-minded people are bringing about increasingly indirect, complicated, faceless, mechanical, automated systems. What can you do if a computer or a phone or a TV tells lies? If you see a person face to face, you can question him, argue with him, prove him wrong or at least get your doubts clarified. When a machine talks to you, you cannot even laugh at it. The TV keeps telling lies and you have to keep helplessly listening to it again and again until you get completely brain-washed and brain-dead. Individuals must be held responsible for what they say and do, irrespective of their professional roles. No one should be allowed to say 'subject to change without notice' - what you have promised you can never change, come what may. Automation is the worst idea in the history of human civilization. Why use our best brains to invent gadgets that replace ourselves? Is this not an utterly foolish idea? The world would become heaven again if people live as people, human beings work directly with human beings, face to face, and stop telling lies. Otherwise we will be ruined.

satya is an absolutely essential foundation for the hu-

man society and it is time we take it with all seriousness. We must understand, however, that *satya* is not so easy to practice as we may think. Lord *raama* lost his kingdom, he had to give up everything and go and live in a forest, he faced so many difficulties there, his beloved wife was kidnapped, he had to wage a war, all for the sake of keeping a word. His father *dasharatha* had to send his own beloved son *raama* to forest just to keep his word. He died soon after in sorrow. The story of *satya harishcandra* is similar. *bhishma* had to undergo so much of physical and mental torture for the sake of keeping his word. We must all get ready to face all kinds of difficulties but we must never tell lies or go back on our words. Seeking easy escape paths is a sign of weak and crumbling mind. Our aim here is to develop a strong mind. A strong mind will never tell lies, come what may. Choose the right path, not what is easy or comfortable or convenient.

Just as you can never tickle yourself, you can never tell a lie to yourself. You already know what you say and there can be no difference between what you think and what you say. If only we learn to treat others exactly like ourselves, it would become impossible to tell lies to others. This is a sure pill for all ills facing mankind today. Even if all other ideas we have talked about in this book are ignored, if only these two fundamental ideas of *satya* and *ahiMsaa* are properly understood and fully practiced, we can save ourselves, we can thrive, we can make this Earth a heaven. Money cannot be the basis for life, science and technology cannot form the foundation of human society, military power and weapons of mass destruction cannot be the basis of human society. We must re-build the foundations of the world on *satya* and *ahiMsaa* or we will all perish. We are at a critical point of time in the history of this whole universe. We must wake up, think, understand, realize and act today. Tomorrow could be too late. Let *satya* and *ahiMsaa* become the

pillars of our legislation, governance, law, education, everything. We are human beings, our progress should be measured in terms of how humane we become. Give up your fancy for science, technology, industry, business, economic development, defence preparedness and what not. Take to simple living based on the principles of *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. This is a pre-qualification for *yooga*.

3.71 *niyama*

Observe that *yama* includes qualities that are connected with your relation with others. Violation of these affect others as also you. *niyama*, on the other hand, deals with how you treat yourself, it has nothing to do with others. *niyama* also includes 5 qualities: 1) *shauca*, 2) *santooSha*, 3) *tapas*, 4) *svaadhyaya*, and 5) *iishvara-praNidhaana*.

shauca means cleanliness. Cleanliness of not only our own place of stay or work but also of the surroundings, of the environment, of the whole Earth. We need to keep our body and mind both neat and clean. We keep our bodies and homes and offices neat and clean but we never bother about mind because we think mind is inside us and not visible to others. Cleanliness is not for the sake of showing off to others. It is not enough if the hall or living room is neat and clean, the kitchen, the store rooms, the toilets and other private parts of your house where outsiders may never come and see need to be neat and clean too. Everybody can see your mind easily, through your words and actions. The face is the index of the mind. You cannot hide your bad qualities, everyone can see it. A neatly dressed liar, cheater, thief commands no respect. You wash your clothes regularly, you take bath every day, you wash your hands and face so many times a day. When did you give a bath to your mind last? Dirty fellow! Cleaning and pu-

rifying the mind should become our main preoccupation. We must devote a great deal of our time and effort towards cleanliness, both internal and external. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. If we are truly clean, God will be easy to reach.

Cleanliness is not to be taken in a superficial sense. What appears dust free and clean may in fact be chemically dirty. A well dressed person may be polluted with bad thoughts deep within. Do not go by what your eyes see, see with your inner eye. It is not enough if we avoid littering. It is not enough if public places are swept, mopped etc. so that everything appears clean. Everything looks neat and clean but for all you know, all the garbage including plastics and other man-made hazardous substances are perhaps being burnt, leading to invisible but deadly chemical poisoning of the whole atmosphere. Being clean is different from appearing to be clean. Every activity that involves the use of man-made materials and equipment, including transporting, commuting, shopping, eating-out etc. can be and often are highly polluting in nature. Almost all of science and technology spoil the naturally neat and clean environment, all of these are against the principle of *shauca*. We have no right to produce any garbage other than natural wastes like urine and stools. We have no right to pollute the environment. We cover everything, eatables, toys, clothes, whatever, with plastic thinking this keeps them dust free, neat and clean. Cleanliness is not only about visible dust and dirt or invisible microbes. The plastic cover is itself the biggest source of pollution. The very act of digging out and refining petroleum and the very act of manufacturing plastics produces bio-accumulative toxic chemicals such as dioxins. Plastics do not keep things clean, they pollute, poison and destroy the whole world including all living creatures. Food is actually cleaner when not covered with plastic because plastics and the invisible harmful

chemicals they release during their manufacture and disposal are dirtier and more dangerous than ordinary visible dirt and dust. Visible dust and dirt in food will at most cause a throat infection or fever which can be easily handled but plastics can cause cancer or brain damage or other such serious diseases. Reusable cups, plates and spoons are cleaner and safer, even if not washed properly, than use-and-throw disposables. In the long run, ordinary tap water is cleaner and safer than bottled mineral water. We cannot remove dirt, dust or other unwanted materials from the whole universe or even from our Earth. The Earth is a thermodynamic system and everything in it remains there for ever. Cleaning is nothing but removing unwanted stuff from one place and dumping it elsewhere. Think where all the wastes we produce finally go. In big cities everyday we produce tonnes of solid wastes, including non-biodegradable and hazardous substances, and we simply burn them because there is no place to dump them. Burning is a chemical reaction, new chemical substances are produced, which can be harmful to all living creatures. There are a very large number of chemical substances and it is practically impossible even for experts to say exactly what chemicals are produced and how they affect our lives when garbage is burnt. There are no safe ways of disposing most of the wastes we produce routinely in the world today, the only way is to change our life styles and avoid producing these wastes in the first place. Does anybody in the world know how many electric lamps, cars, phones or computers we have produced over the last few hundred years? Where are they now? Every item that has ever been manufactured and every item that will ever be manufactured will pollute, poison and destroy the nature, including all the living beings in the world. We are monotonically adding more and more harmful substances to our immediate environment at an ever increasing rate. This is simply not sustainable. Either we have to close down all industries and shops or get

ready to meet our ghastly end very soon. Do not assume that you know everything about cleanliness. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. If you are clean you must be able to see God. If you cannot see Him, that is a proof that you are still very dirty. There is a lot more to it than meets the eye. Close your eyes and start thinking. Learn to see with your inner eyes. One life is not enough to fully understand this one concept called *shauca*. Think, understand, practice, preach. This is your task.

We have been discovering new things every day, we have been manufacturing new gadgets everyday, we have filled our lives with man-made materials and artifacts. Are we satisfied? No, we are as dissatisfied, as unhappy, as restless as we always were. The last few hundred years of our love affair with modern science and technology has not given us even an iota of peace or happiness or satisfaction. The vacuum, the void continues. *santooSha* means being satisfied with whatever we already have. Rich is the man who is satisfied with what he has, poor is the man whose wants are endless. God has already given us everything we need. There is no need to discover or invent or make or sell or buy anything new. Unless we give up all these foolish activities, we will destroy ourselves and all the others too. Think.

We have already talked about *tapas*. It is not your body or intellect that feels or experiences pains or pleasures. Your body never feels hot or cold. You seek a fan or an air conditioner or a room heater prompted by your *manas*. Your body is capable of taking great hardships, your mind is weak. Do not pamper your body, instead strengthen your *manas*. Train your *manas* to keep quiet despite all kinds of external disturbances. This is *tapas*. Turn your senses away from the external world, focus all the energy of the body, senses and mind at one point. Burn away all the falsities. Then truth alone will remain. This

is *tapas*.

The topics we are dealing with in this book are very subtle, very deep, very confusing. Even great minds keep getting confused. Sometimes we feel we have understood an idea but after a while we get the same confusions and doubts again and again. A whole life is required to fully understand and master all these subtle ideas. What should we do when we get doubts? You may seek answers from a guru. You may seek the answers from within. Keep pondering, keep thinking, until you can discover the solution right within you. Or you may reach out for the works of wise men, you can reach out to the scriptures. You need to spend a part of your time every day for such studies. This self study is known as *svaadhyaya*. Reach out for the original scriptures, do not seek translations and interpretations. Only the original texts are authentic and fully dependable. Most other books will only confuse you further. Going by translations and interpretations is like preferring a photocopy of a dollar note for the original. We shall talk more on *niyama* in the next few sections. Read on.

3.72 Development and Fulfillment

Today we are obsessed with the idea of development. We all want development and more development and even more development. We never stop and ask what exactly is development. Is cutting trees and building concrete jungle development? Is destroying nature development? What exactly is development? Everybody talks of sustainable development. This very notion of development - exploiting natural resources and damaging the environment, is not sustainable. Nor is it required. Why do we need development in the first place? What will we gain by development? We are human beings, we are thinking animals, if we

take away the thinking, we will be only animals, or worse still. Human development should therefore be measured in terms of development of our thinking. Thinking does not require money or materials or engineering or technology. We can all think without spending a single pie, without using any kind of physical resources, without destroying nature, without damaging the environment. This whole book is about this kind of true development. We have become worse than animals, animal kingdoms do not have cheating, exploitation, rape, extortion, terrorism, or war. No animal is poor because no animal wants to become rich. To develop means to elevate ourselves from this sub-brutal level to the height of a fully developed human being, to a level where we can think and work in a humane way. Give up your fancy for modern and science and technology, give up your false notions of development, seek real knowledge, seek true development.

Development is endless. This itself means that we will never feel fully satisfied. There will always be a vacuum, a void, a hole deep inside us. Everything good will leak away from even a tiny hole and the ship of life will sink into the depths of the dark and dangerous ocean called *saMsaara*. Life will never be lived fully. What we really need is not development, what we really need is fulfillment. Fulfillment comes only with a proper and deep understanding of our own true nature. You can get one hundred percent satisfaction only from the knowledge of the real. This is the whole purpose of this book. Forget about roads and fly-overs and bridges and dams and generators and factories and refineries and hospitals and airports and dockyards and what not. Slow down on construction, slow down on cement and steel. You cannot get what you want in life from cement or steel. Give up city life. Start thinking.

santooSha implies being satisfied with whatever we have.

We may have so many great things with us but we keep longing for a few that we do not have. We are not satisfied with the Million dollars we already have in our pockets and we struggle so much for a penny we see elsewhere. All the things we need, all the things that are good for us, nature has already provided for. There is nothing more that we must seek, there is no need to compete and fight to acquire and hoard anything. Your happiness quotient is the ratio of the fulfilled desires to the total number of desires you have. We think the goal of life is to maximize our happiness quotient and we try to do this by increasing the numerator, we try to get more and more of our unfulfilled desires fulfilled. We do not realize that as the numerator increases, the denominator, our desires, also keep increasing and we may not get more and more happy as we go, despite all our efforts. Even in the ideal case, every one of your desires can be fulfilled and you can get a happiness quotient of 1, or 100%. If, on the other hand, you forget the numerator and try to reduce the denominator, try to reduce your wants and desires, you can reach the ideal state of infinite happiness, for, when the denominator approaches zero, your happiness quotient will approach infinity. The recipe for success is not to seek more and more, but to seek less and less. Rich is the man whose wants are minimal. Poor is the man whose wants are endless. Satisfied is the man who wants nothing. You will never get satisfaction in life if you forget the denominator and spend all your life trying to maximize the numerator. Be satisfied with whatever you have. There is nothing like feeling totally satisfied, satisfaction is heaven, dissatisfaction is hell. The good God has given you a human birth without even your asking for it. He has given a wonderful body and a brain that can think. He has given air, water, food, medicinal plants, practically everything you need. Be grateful to God for all that he has already given you, without expecting anything in return. Your parents were kind enough to take good care

of you right from early childhood, in fact even before you were born. The young one of an animal can survive even if disowned by its parents but a human child cannot survive unless the parents take care of it for years. Your parents did not take care of you for money or name or fame, they did not expect anything in return from you. Be thankful to your parents. Be grateful to all the wise men from ancient times who have selflessly made available all their knowledge and wisdom to you through their words. Be thankful to the Sun, the rivers, the forests, the cows and all other animals. They give us so much but they expect nothing at all in return. All the good things you already have will be noticed only in their absence. Do not give a chance for that to happen. Be satisfied. Do not aspire for anything more. Forget development.

Do not ask for anything more, do not aspire or long for anything else, do not try to buy or make anything new. Just learn to live, just be happy. This is what animals do. We should be better than animals, not worse. Control your mind, control your desires, control your curiosity, control your restlessness. Do nothing and be happy. He has already given you everything. We must simply surrender everything, we must surrender ourselves at the feet of the Lord, for, without His grace, we can get nothing. Even to make up your mind to read this book, His wish was necessary. To understand this book, you will need His grace. Without Him, nothing moves. Surrender yourself at the feet of the Lord and He will take care of you. Taking care of yourself and of your near and dear ones is not your job, it is His job. Your job is to know this, accept this, and simply surrender. Then and only then will you reach the goal. This is called *iishvara-praNidhaana*. The term *iishvara* here does not refer to the Hindu God 'shiva'. *iishvara* means the big boss, the owner, the Lord of the whole Universe. Forget about the burden of life, it is not your

burden, He can and He will take it, just sit back, relax, and enjoy life. Do nothing. This is the secret of life.

3.73 The *veeda-s*

There are innumerable books in the world and thousands are being published every day. Which books should we read? A vast majority of the books in the market today are junk books. They contain no great truths, they are vague, nebulous, trivial, light, confused, irrelevant. It is a waste of time to read such books. Some are good books. They are well thought out, properly structured, neatly presented, clear and highly readable. But the contents relate to the facts about the external world, which is hardly of any use. These books do not tell us what is life, how to live or how to enjoy life. Keep them aside. Then there are books, some of them considered holy and sacred, held in high esteem and widely read. These books tell you what is good and what is bad, they lead you along the right path and warn you against taking the wrong path. They contain moral and ethical values. But they do not contain the knowledge of the real. A list of do-s and don't-s is not sufficient, we need to understand the how and why, we need to understand the truth, we need to understand the true nature of the whole universe and the true nature of the self. There is one and only one such source in the whole world - the *veeda-s*. All other holy books and sacred scriptures in the world fall short of what we need. No other source gives us complete, correct, truly scientific, eternal truth. Only the *veeda-s* are complete, consistent, provably correct, infallible, dependable. Depend only on the *veeda-s*, nothing else. To convince yourself of this, you must either read the *veeda-s* yourself under the guidance of a good guru or go by the words of those who have done so. Do not listen to the words of those who know not.

The term *veda* comes from the root *vid* - to know. *veda-s* are compendiums of knowledge. The *veda-s* are treasuries of true, real knowledge, unlike the modern scientific knowledge which is all fake, pseudo and false. Do not throw away the *veda-s* thinking they are concerned with one specific religion. There is nothing religious here. There were no religions during the *vedic* age. The *veda-s* are the religion of mankind as a whole. The *veda-s* are the eternal works pregnant with meanings of great significance for all human beings for all time to come. Learn the *veda-s*, there is nothing else to be learned from any other book in any other language from any other corner of the world. *svaadhyaya* means the study of the *veda-s*. Education means learning the *veda-s*. Nothing else is warranted. Study the *veda-s*. If you cannot, at least read books like this which try to explain the ideas contained therein in simple terms and in a language and parlance you know and can appreciate.

The *veda-s* are encyclopedias of knowledge, all branches of knowledge. They are not religious works. If you are interested in real science, you must read the *veda-s*. It is said that there are four *veda-s*, this is not really true, *veda* is one. There are no four different or contradictory or conflicting theories or schools of thought. It is believed that the *veda* was divided and re-structured into four parts to facilitate the four different kinds of activities performed by four different people in ancient *vedic* sacrifices. This division is purely for practical convenience, to learn, to master and to put what is learned into actual practice in life.

The *veda-s* are in the form of *mantra-s*. These are the sacred syllables heard by the ancient *RShi-s* - sages of great wisdom, who did nothing in life but cleanse and polish and tune their minds so that they can catch these great pieces

of knowledge floating around, so to say. The *veeda-s* were not composed or written by anybody, they were simply heard, that is, felt and experienced by the tuned minds of the wise *RShi-s*. Anybody, who has perfected the art of purifying, controlling and tuning their *manas* can in principle catch these eternal signals of knowledge. Knowledge is structured, organized thought. Thought is expressed in language. Language is an association between sounds and meanings. Sounds, being a form of energy, cannot be created or destroyed, they can only be converted from one form into another. Knowledge, being non-physical, has no birth, death or even change. Knowledge always exists, before we were born and after we die. Like the radio signals which are always there in the air in an unmanifest form, showing up only when we tune our radio receiver to the appropriate frequency, knowledge is always there and we can grasp it by tuning our minds and focussing our attention on it. Just as water automatically comes and fills the low lying areas, knowledge automatically comes to the humble and clean minds without any effort. The *RShi-s* heard these words of wisdom, they understood, they internalized, they experienced, they sang it in ecstasy. This not mere bookish knowledge, direct experience is the key.

The *veeda-s* have no beginning or end, they cannot be created or destroyed. Imagine that all copies of a particular work of Shakespeare, in all its forms, printed or electronic or whatever, are destroyed. There would simply be no way of getting it back. It would be gone for ever. If on the other hand, all copies of a *veedic* text are destroyed, nothing would be destroyed. There are enough people who know the whole of it by heart, line by line, letter by letter, syllable by syllable, and the entire volume can be reconstructed without even a single minor error. Books are not permanent, sounds are permanent and eternal. Writing, printing, books, literacy are all hollow concepts. You do

not have to be literate to become a great scholar. Wisdom comes by listening. Do not go by what the eye sees, see with your inner eye, by listening to the subtle voices, the silent vibrations of the *cit* that fills the entire universe.

Westerners have a strong tendency to think that mankind saw tremendous developments only in the last two thousand years or so. This is completely false and baseless. Human-like beings have been living on planet Earth for nearly 4.8 Million years now and developments can only be gradual and smooth. Monkey did not suddenly become man in the short span of a couple of thousands of years. Great civilizations, advanced human thinking, in fact much more advanced than the confused people of the current century, existed for many tens of thousands of years in India, much before there was any such thing as civilization elsewhere in the world. The earliest known records of human thought, yet the most advanced, the most sophisticated, the most thorough ever, of all human thoughts till date, are the *veeda-s*. Dating the *veeda-s* as a mere academic exercise is not our goal here. Suffice it to say, the *veeda-s* are old, very very old, much older than any religion you know. All religions are the same, all are equally great, provided we practice them with proper and deep understanding of the underlying truth, as contained in the *veeda-s*, as we have tried to explain in this book. Take up the study of the *veeda-s* under the guidance of a learned guru. Do not try to read on your own, they are too abstract. Only those who have read and understood the *veeda-s* are truly educated. You must try and become one. This is *svaadhyaya*.

3.74 The *veedaaMga-s*

How do we study the *veeda-s*? They are in Sanskrit, nay, in *vedic*, not classical Sanskrit. To read some book, you

must know the language, there is no escape. Do not depend upon translations and interpretations written by people who have themselves not studied the original texts under the able gurus in the traditional way. There are authoritative commentaries by wise *RShi-s* written in ancient times. If you use any commentaries to help your understanding, read the original commentaries. You always seek the original dollar note, not the photocopies or paintings or drawings or cartoons, right? Always seek the original.

The essence of the *veda-s*, the central theme, is what we have covered in this book - the true nature of the self and of the world, what is life and how to live. This is all inclusive, all encompassing, this is a summary of all branches of human knowledge. In order to learn and understand something as serious, as broad, as abstract, and as subtle as this, we need to learn, practice and master several techniques. We need to know how to spell out the *vedic mantra-s* accurately. Even small differences in sounds can change and distort the meanings. Hence a whole big field called *shik-Shaa* or phonetics was developed in ancient India. In order to understand the words, their internal structure and role they play in the whole sentence structure, we need to learn and master *vyaakaraNa* or grammar. In order to understand and interpret the meanings of words and expressions correctly, we need to know *nirukta* or semantics. Since the *veda-s* are metrical compositions of accented texts, we need to understand *chandas* or prosody. We need to know *kalpa*, the right manner of performing the prescribed rites. We need to know *gyootiSha*, the science of luminous bodies in order to know the right place, time and setting to perform our studies and practices. These six subjects, known as *veedaaMga-s* are essential for a proper study of the *veda-s*. In fact you need to master these subjects to properly understand and practice anything in life. One life is barely sufficient to master all these. Spend all your time

on these, do nothing else. This is all part of your *svaad-hyaaya*.

People think *jyootiSha* is astrology and they think astrology is all about predicting the future. *jyootiSha* is not at all concerned with predicting the future. All the confusions about astrology and science is a result of total lack of understanding. *jyootiSha* is the science of heavenly bodies with *jyooti* - the luminous bodies in the sky. Do not go by what Tom, Dick and Harry say. If you wish, go and read the original works.

The *vedic mantra-s* are metrical compositions of accented texts, with automatic error detecting and error correcting properties. There are several ways of chanting the *vedic mantra-s* that ensure that you properly understand where to split words, where exactly to place the accent, how to analyze the internal structure of statements etc. correctly. The *veedaMga-s* assist in all this. That is how they can be passed on from generation to generation over tens of thousands of years without the slightest distortion or error. The study of the *veeda-s* is to be taken with utmost seriousness, nothing less than perfection is acceptable here. There is zero tolerance. The pass marks is 100 out of 100, 99 is as good as failure. This strictness itself is a great thing, it helps you overcome all your shortcomings and weaknesses and aim for and reach perfection in every walk of life. Take up the study of the *veeda-s* for this purpose at least.

3.75 The *prasthaana-traya*

In terms of the nature of content, the *veeda-s* can be divided into four components: 1) *saMhitaa* containing the *vedic hymns* or *mantra-s*, 2) *braahmaNa-s* containing the de-

tails of the associated rituals and practices, 3) *araNyaka-s* containing detailed philosophical discussions and lastly, 4) *upaniShat-s* containing the gist, the summary, the essence of all *veedic* thought, clearly, succinctly delineated. The *upaniShat-s* are scientific works directly addressing the kinds of questions we have taken up in this book, giving clear cut answers supported by cogent arguments and examples. The *upaniShat-s* are the culmination, the very pinnacle, the highest, the grandest and the most scientific of all human thought so far, anywhere on Earth.

upaniShat-s are said to be 108 in number but only about a dozen are the most important - the essential ideas contained in all other *upaniShat-s* are subsumed and presented best in these major *upaniShat-s*. *iishaavaasya*, *keena*, *kaTha*, *muNDaka*, *prashna*, *maaNDuukya*, *aitareeya*, *taittiriya*, *chaandoogya*, *bRhadaaraNyaka* are considered to be the main *upaniShat-s* by all scholars. Some of these are very small in size, while others are fairly big. *maaNDuuky-oopaniShat*, for example, is only 12 verses, but it takes up a clear analysis of *avasthaa-traya* and reaches the final, correct answers to all the fundamental questions we have reached in this book, in just these 12 verses. *chaandoogya* and *bRhadaaraNyaka* are fairly big. Others fall in between these extremes in size. All the *upaniShat-s* address the same questions and arrive at the same final answers as we have seen in this book. Truth is one and whichever path you take, you will reach there. Those who are keen should read the original *upaniShat-s* and commentaries written on them by the greatest of the visionaries mother Earth has seen so far. Beware of fakes.

The *brahma-suutra-s* are a point-by-point re-arrangement and re-presentation of the essentials of all the *upaniShat-s*, created to help the interested reader understand the difficult and subtle questions and arrive at the right answers

without getting lost or confused. This is like a PowerPoint Presentation. Read the *brahma-suutra-s* and the relevant commentaries in original.

To make things still easier for the aspirant of knowledge, the *bhagavat-giita*, a 700 verse rendering, forming part of *mahaa-bhaarata* (which is a 1,00,000 verse mega-epic, the biggest book ever written in the history of man-kind, which is itself a delineation of the good from the bad, the right from the wrong) presents the essentials of the *upaniShat-s* in simple and direct terms. The *upaniShat-s*, the *brahma-suutra-s* and the *giita* contain the same truth, the same big questions and the same final answers and are called *prasthaana-traya* or the three paths.

This book is in some sense an English rendering of the same thoughts and ideas, re-written keeping in mind the assumptions, the confusions, the expectations, the language and parlance, the terms and definitions, the style and presentation formats that are best suited for today's people, who are educated in the modern scientific system of education. The things that everybody knew very well and the things that confused people in ancient times are very different from the corresponding things in the present context. Hence this book. Those who are keen should go and learn Sanskrit and read the *prasthaana-traya* with the help of the commentaries and authoritative translations and explanatory notes in Sanskrit, English or other languages of the world. But the reader must be cautioned - there is no dearth of pseudo, fake, mis-interpreted, ill-understood, and simply 'wrong' renderings. Even extra-ordinarily great thinkers, philosophers, scientists, religious leaders, people considered to be realized or liberated, have often got it wrong or simply missed the point. You just cannot be over-cautioned. Choose the works you read with great care. All the original works are very abstract and it is almost im-

possible to read and understand them on your own, you must invariably seek the guidance of a true guru. Only those who have studied the originals from a guru this way are true gurus, others are unlikely to have a complete and proper understanding. It takes a lot of time and constant effort to understand these works and only those who have spent all their life for this sake can be real gurus. As a general rule, you must avoid the works of westerners as their culture and historical and social settings are very different and their understanding is often very superficial and distorted. If you pick up a more recent rendering, read the older ones first and then see the more recent version in the light of that understanding. You must also avoid popular literature, literature popularized by various cults and fashions and fads. If you suspect any motive or a hidden agenda, or bias, such works are best avoided. In any case, you will not find much that is fundamentally new or different from what we have said in this book. For most English knowing people in the world, it is believed that this book is the only book they would need.

3.76 *vidyaa* and *avidyaa*

The world of names and forms is relative and conditional. You may think it is bad smell but a fly may like it. The smell itself is neither good nor bad. Nothing is big or small in itself. This world of names and forms is not the absolute. It is not the ultimate. It is practically useful to think in terms of names and forms for our day to day affairs, that is all. Thinking like that is perfectly fine. But we should never get into the delusion that the world of names and forms is actually real, this is not the ultimate reality. This is not the true nature of this universe.

The science of the world at the simple, day-to-day, lay-

man's practical level is known as *avidyaa* or 'non-knowledge', meaning it is not the ultimate or real knowledge. *avidyaa* is practically useful and hence it is not wrong to work at that level. *avidyaa* helps us to survive and exist. Agriculture helps us to grow food for our body. Mechanical and electrical engineering give us fans, lamps, refrigerators, air conditioners and other such gadgets for the convenience and comfort of our bodies. Architecture and civil engineering give us homes and other buildings for our convenience and comfort. Medicine helps us to keep fit and healthy. Practically all the subjects we study these days in any school or university, all of modern science, is *avidyaa*. All of these are at the level of the external, gross, physical, material, body level. *avidyaa* is useful to survive and exist, like any other animal, but it is not sufficient to develop the full potential of a human life.

There is more to it than this. Living is more than merely existing. To live, to make the most of this human form, to get the maximum out of this extraordinarily great opportunity known as human life, we need to know the real, the ultimate truth. This is *vidyaa*. It is only *vidyaa* which can help us to overcome our ignorance, it is only *vidyaa* which can give us complete and correct knowledge, it is only *vidyaa* which can help us to overcome all human problems. We have to gain the knowledge of the external world as also the knowledge of the self. We need to understand the true nature of the world and the true nature of the self. This is real knowledge, this is complete knowledge. Knowledge is power. The powerful rule the world, they are the masters. Masters are ever free, slaves are never free. With knowledge comes power and with power comes freedom. Freedom leads to happiness. Knowledge, real knowledge, *vidyaa* is the one and the only recipe to all human problems. Let us all seek real knowledge. Seek *vidyaa*. The one and the only source of *vidyaa* in the entire

world is the *veeda-s*. This is the root of the entire human civilization. Go to the roots, forget the frills and lint. Give up your fancy for modern science and technology. Give up your attachment to money and materials. Go back to the *veeda-s*.

The rest of the knowledge in the world adds up to half knowledge - the knowledge of the material objects alone, as seen by us in our waking state alone. Half knowledge is worse than no knowledge. Half knowledge is the source and cause of all human problems. In fact it is as good as ignorance. *avidyaa* is ignorance. Only *vidyaa*, as given by the *veeda-s* is knowledge, all else in the whole world is ignorance. All human problems are closely, inseparably related to one another. We just cannot solve one problem at a time. Unemployment, crime, cruelty, terrorism, poverty, ill-health, environmental degradation, child labour, exploitation, war, are all tied up with one another and it is not possible to solve one leaving the others to themselves. Human life is a single, atomic, whole and only a total, holistic understanding can solve all problems. You cannot play any role in any drama properly if you do not understand the theme of the whole drama. You may specialize and you may speak only your words but you must necessarily understand the essence of the whole play. Piece-meal approach will not work. That is why we find so many bad things happening everywhere despite the fact that most people are good, well-meaning, honest, sincere and most people are trying hard to do good things and to remove bad things from this world. Everybody is trying to do good things but only bad things are happening. Because we have become too narrow, sectarian. We are all specialists in various walks of life but life itself we do not understand. Understand life, the whole of it, all aspects of it, before you think of doing anything in life. *vidyaa* is the one and the only solution to all problems. Noth-

ing else in the world will work. Seek real knowledge, seek *vidyaa*, this is what we have tried to explain in the first two chapters of this book. If you have not yet read these chapters or if you have not fully understood, please go back and read. Read, think, analyze, understand, internalize, practice. Seek *vidyaa*, gain complete and correct understanding of everything, overcome your ignorance. This is the meaning of *svaadhyaya*. Understand *yooga*, become a *yoogi*, practice *yooga* with full and proper understanding of the *veeda-s*, understand life. Live a full, glorious, great human life. Reach up to the self and learn to revel in your own self. You will be freed from all bondage, you will raise above all problems, you will achieve everything you want in life. This is the promise. May God bless you.

3.77 What should we Do in our Life?

yooga works provided you practice *yama* and *niyama* all the time, you practice *satya* and *ahiMsaa* all the time. Most people skip these preliminary stages and practice only *aasana*, *praaNaayaama*, *dhyaana*. Practicing *satya* means completely giving up *asatya*. Practicing *ahiMsaa* means giving up all forms of *hiMsaa*. You can get everything you want in life, provided you completely give up all bad things. You must believe in yourself, you must believe in your self, this self is the essence of the whole universe, this self is God. *yooga* can directly link you to this God, provided you strictly follow all the eight stages prescribed. You have to believe in God. Truly. To the core. You must believe that God exists, you must believe that you exist, you are God. Otherwise there is no point in doing *yooga* or any of these exercises.

You must believe that God is omni-present. He resides

in your body, in your mind. So He can listen to you even if you are not speaking. He does not have to know your language - He understands the language of silence. Speak to yourself, mentally, without uttering a single sound, and He can listen to it. He exists in your *buddhi* as well. Think of Him and He knows. He knows everything you want, everything you hate, He knows all your strengths and weaknesses, He knows what you want, He knows what is best for you, He knows what He should not give you, for, that is actually bad for you. He knows everything.

God is omni-potent. He has no limitations. There is nothing He cannot do. Anything and everything is possible for Him. You must believe in His unrestricted, unlimited, infinite capability. This belief itself is very powerful. A true devotee can do anything, by the power of the God he believes in. A true devotee is linked up with God, and he gets all the power he needs through this link. This linking, this association with God is the true meaning of the term *yooga*. This is the message of our epics and *puraaNas*. These are not mere mythological stories. They have a message for you, provided you are willing to listen and you are capable of understanding it properly. The story says a monkey jumped across the vast ocean. Is it physically possible for a monkey to jump the ocean? If you are still thinking like this, like a materialist, like the modern scientist, you will laugh and say that such a thing is impossible. The purpose of the story is not to tell you a fact in the external physical world that a monkey actually jumped across the ocean. The purpose of the story is to tell you that if you have faith, if you are a true believer, there is nothing that is impossible. The monkey could jump over the vast ocean because and only because it had total faith and it was a true devotee of God. If a monkey cannot jump the ocean even if it has full faith in Him, this amounts to saying that God is not all-capable. If you have such a doubt,

nothing will work for you. Sorry. God is all-capable. You must believe in this. Or no God can save you, you are doomed. The path of *yooga* works, the path of devotion works provided and only provided you have one hundred percent faith. The slightest doubt is like a hole, everything will leak away through the tiniest hole. *yooga* works provided the pot of your heart is filled with devotion, it is filled with faith to the brim, and there are no holes. Is it not unfortunate that our modern scientific system of education is encouraging us to question everything? Millions of people could be saved, if only we give up this modern scientific system of education which is puncturing and creating questions, doubts and holes all over. Think.

God is kind, compassionate. For, He has nothing to gain or lose. He is the whole universe, everything in the universe is His, what else can be there that He wants from you? You should never trust a salesman because he wants to make money out of you, he has a motive, he has something to gain from you. God has nothing to gain or lose from you and so there is no need at all for him to deceive you or cheat you or fleece you. He has everything in the universe with Him and He does not lose anything even if He gives you all of that. If you give money to some one he will get it and you will lose it. On the other hand if you give knowledge to someone, he will gain it but you will not lose it. In fact your own knowledge and understanding only gets further reinforced and further strengthened. Likewise, when God gives us something, we may gain but He does not lose anything. So He gives, gives without the slightest hesitation, whole-heartedly. He can rain good things on you. Provided you seek Him with full faith.

Since God knows everything, He is all-capable, all-kind and compassionate, He will give you anything and everything you wish. In fact you do not even have to ask, for, He

already knows what is good for you. He has in fact already given us everything we need. There is nothing more for us to ask or gain or discover or invent or acquire or produce or sell or buy. The only thing we need to do in life is to understand life, just live, simply live, enjoy life. We bring tonnes of misery and suffering on ourselves by trying to do things which are not needed at all. There is absolutely no need for modern science or technology or industry or business or economics or money or buildings or bridges or cars or airplanes or computers or cell phones. Give up the fancy for God's manifestations, seek God Himself directly. Why beg Tom, Dick and Harry for a penny, when the Big Boss is willing to handover the whole kingdom to you? Seek the source. Go to Him. Do nothing else.

A boy ate too many cookies and had a serious stomach upset. He went to a good doctor, the doctor examined, diagnosed the problem and prescribed some medicines. The boy asked, "do these medicines really work? Will I get cured?". The doctor said "yes". Now, if the boy takes these medicines, in all probability his stomach ache will go but only if the boy stops eating the cookies! It is understood that the boy will not continue to eat cookies like mad, right? All treatments assume that the cause is gotten rid off first. Prayer, worship and all the religious practices we are taking here will surely work, provided, and only provided you do not go back and start doing all the stupid things in life again! Prayer works, provided you pray and do nothing else in life. Pray all the time, throughout your life, do nothing else and then it will work. Do good things, do only good things, stop doing all bad things. If you pray for one hour every day and continue to do bad things throughout the rest of the day, prayer has no meaning, it will simply not work. We must first give up all activities which are harmful to us or harmful to others in any way whatever. Traveling poisons the air that we all breathe.

Shopping pollutes. In fact using any kind of man-made material, gadget, equipment, instrument, tool, etc. involves polluting the air, water and soil system, thereby harming ourselves and all other living creatures. Religious practices work only if we give up all such harmful activities to start with. Take an oath today. Give up one small bad quality today. Give up all bad things one by one. If you dig out the soil near a water body, water flows in naturally to fill up the void. Likewise, if you throw out one bad quality or habit in you, the void created will automatically get filled with some good quality, something positive, useful, helpful to you, something that will elevate you to a greater plane, something that will make you happier. Therefore, the only thing we need to do in life is to constantly search, locate, catch and throw away bad things hidden in us. This is the recipe to success in life. This is the only path. All that you have to do in life is to give up bad things. There is nothing else to do. Start today. Start now.

3.78 The Two Sides of a Coin

We all have good intentions, we think we are actually doing good things but we end up doing a lot of bad things and hence we suffer in life. We must understand that every coin has two sides, it is impossible to have a coin which has only one side. Good and bad are two sides of the same coin, we just cannot have one without the other. Let us analyze.

We think going to a temple or church or mosque and praying is good. What can be bad in this? In all probability, you went to the temple or whatever by your car. Or by bus, or by train, perhaps you had to fly. When you travel by any motorized vehicle, the engine burns petrol or diesel and burning consumes precious oxygen in the atmosphere. The engine gives out exhaust gases that contain hazardous,

toxic, poisonous gases - deadly chemicals such as carbon-monoxide, lead compounds, sulfur etc, which can cause great damage to the human body, leading to a variety of diseases including cancer, heart attack and brain damage. You all know the tyres wear out over time. Where does the worn out part go? All parts wear and tear, leading to poisoning of the Earth system. The process of manufacturing of your car and all its parts, the process of digging out petroleum and refining it, everything damages the Earth, which is our own home. The heat of the engine adds its bit to global warming. If the Earth system heats up by a mere 2 degrees more, this entire world would surely come to a grinding halt, everything would be devastated. Why travel? God exists everywhere, even in your home. Why not stay back home and pray? Why even go the office or factory or farm to work? All human activities involve doing bad things, to some extent or the other, right?

We think running a school or teaching children is a good thing to do in life. You may be totally self-less and very well meaning and very good natured. You are doing this as a humble service to mankind, not for money or name or fame. Yet, knowingly or unknowingly, you may be doing many bad things. You expect your children to become literate, so you make them read and write. Reading and writing require books, books are made up of paper, paper requires cutting trees, cutting trees leads to destruction of the environment. Trees take in carbon dioxide and give out oxygen, which we require for our breathing. While you are doing a great positive thing in making the kids literate, at the same time you are damaging the environment, our Earth, our home, and reducing the life of these and future kids by affecting the oxygen content in the atmosphere, by cutting trees. The pens, pencils and rubber the kids use are made up of harmful chemicals, their production and disposal lead to poisoning of the air, water and food which

these kids require to live. Think. Every coin has two sides, make sure you look at both side carefully.

Treating patients and curing them of their illnesses is considered a noble profession. But the manufacture, transportation, administration and disposal of drugs can and often does involve significantly damaging the environment and poisoning it with deadly chemical toxins. Even the research and development activities can and often actually involve doing very bad, very negative, very harmful things. We destroy the very basis of life, when we try to establish a laboratory, when we buy equipment and consumable materials for use in our labs. The thermocol pieces and plastic sheets that came as packaging materials for your laboratory equipment are the actual causes of cancer and other diseases, for which you are perhaps trying to discover effective drugs! Why cause diseases in the name of curing them? Think.

Growing food is good but poisoning the soil with chemical pesticides and chemical fertilizers is bad. Damaging the environment, poisoning the air, water and soil system, amounts to an attempt to murder of all living creatures by slow poisoning. Therefore, any activity which requires damaging the environment even in the slightest, any activity which disturbs the balance of chemicals in the Earth system, is very bad indeed. Think carefully and analyze any human activity and convince yourself that it can only be a mixture of good and bad, there can never be anything which is all good, which is only good. Good and bad always go together. Something appears good if you are looking only at the good side of the coin. The same thing appears bad if you are looking only at the bad side of the coin. Nothing is only good or only bad. It is always a mixture of both.

If you add a bit of dirty water to pure water, pure water immediately becomes dirty. There is no doubt. But if you add a bit of pure water to dirty water, dirty water does not become pure, no one would be ready to drink it, for example. The moral of this story is, any mixture of good and bad is as good as bad, just as a mixture of pure and dirty water can only be called dirty water. Therefore, if you try to do good things in life, you invariably end up doing a mixture of good and bad things, which amounts to doing bad things in the final analysis. We often think that the positive side is great while the negative side is very minor and negligible. In fact the other side, the dark side, the negative side, the bad side of the coin is often much more serious, much more damaging, much more dangerous than the positive side. For example, very small amounts of invisible chemicals can destroy the very basis of life. This is in fact actually happening today. So, the best thing we can do in life is to do nothing. We can overcome all human problems, all problems faced by mankind both at individual and societal levels if we understand this simple concept and simply stop doing things. Science, technology, industry, business, economic development, progress, advancement are all hollow concepts, they all involve a bit of good things and tonnes of bad things. It is much wiser to stop all this nonsense. We can achieve great heights by not doing anything. *yooga* is not something that we need to do, not doing anything is the real meaning of *yooga*.

3.79 The Path to Hell

Most people in the world are not bad, at least not by intention. Most people in fact think or assume that they are good people, they think they are doing only good things in life. We all have good intentions but that is not enough. The path to hell is paved with good intentions.

Something is good if it is good in every possible sense, good to the entire universe including all living and non-living beings. Something which is good for you but bad for me, is not called good. Good has to be good, only good, and nothing but good, whichever way you look at it. If you mix pure water with dirty water, dirty water does not become pure but pure water definitely becomes dirty. Any mixture of good and bad is therefore bad, even if it is 99% good and only one percent bad. This is where we all make mistakes. Most of what we are all doing in life is a mixture of good and bad, and hence actually bad. That is why we suffer.

We generally tend to ignore the negative side, thinking it is minor and not to be taken too seriously. For example, we consider speed, comfort and convenience when we design, manufacture and use automobiles, we neglect pollution. After many years, we realize that chemical pollution and heat produced by automobiles is actually having a serious impact on the global climate, leading to global warming and climate change. Right now there is plenty of oxygen in the atmosphere but everyday we are burning petrol, diesel, natural gas, firewood, even garbage, consuming precious oxygen in the atmosphere. We are cutting trees, demolishing whole forests. One fine day, oxygen deficit may become a major threat to human life. What appears as a small, negligible negative thing may one day turn out to be a major concern. All forms of energy finally become heat. All the electricity we generate, all the petroleum we dig out, all the things that we burn, every man-made material and gadget finally becomes heat. Thermodynamics clearly shows that every air-conditioner and every refrigerator heats more than it cools. Heat implies high energy, it signifies an unstable, unsafe state. In the name of scientific progress and technological development, we are setting fire

to our own home. The whole Earth is burning. Human history is full of stories which show how foolish we were earlier. We were always foolish, we continue to be foolish. We cannot know everything, we cannot understand everything. The wise should accept this and refrain from doing anything that is even potentially bad. Every one of our activities, except purely natural things such as sleeping, walking and talking, is potentially bad. This strictness is not an extreme and impracticable thing, this is the only practical wisdom that can save us all. Unless an action is 100% good, it is bad, simply reject it.

It is extremely difficult to do anything that is really good in this strict sense. Only exceptionally great people, people who have mastered their own mind and hence conquered all the worlds, people of supreme knowledge, absolutely self-less and totally unbiased, completely detached and given up all stakes, only such exceptionally rare people can do good things. Most ordinary people in the world just cannot do good things. If you really look at the lives of such great people, you will easily see that they did nothing. Think of Jesus, think of Buddha, think of shaMkara. They did not drive cars or fly aeroplanes, they did not use computers or cell phones, did not go to offices or factories, they did not do any research or development. They did nothing, that is how they became so great. Learn to restrain yourself from all actions. This is the only path to success in life.

Whatever we do may be good for us, or to our near and dear ones, or to our company or to our country or to all the people in the world, yet it will invariably include some aspect, some side effects, perhaps long term and indirect effects, that will turn out to be bad for somebody somewhere sometime. Our knowledge is limited and our ignorance is vast. It is impossible for us to know the long term effects of our deeds. We built dams across rivers thinking

they will curb floods, improve irrigation, generate electricity and benefit one and all. After several decades, now we have understood that building dams leads to major environmental disasters. A well meaning person followed the advice of the experts and sprinkled a particular pesticide on his lawn. Years later, his young daughter developed leucoderma. Much later, experts realized that these pesticides are the cause of leucoderma and many more deadly diseases. Human history is full of such instances. Good things that men have done in the long history of mankind can be counted on the five fingers. It is not within our limited mind even to decide what is good and what is not. We just cannot do good things. Let us understand and accept this.

The best we can do, therefore, is to do nothing. Practically anything you do will be a mixture of good and bad things, which tantamounts to bad. The only way to avoid doing bad things is to do nothing at all. Otherwise, you will invariably be doing bad things. We all think we are well meaning and good people, but in reality, we all keep doing a number of very bad things every day. That is why we suffer. Every action must have a reaction. Everything we do is a cause that leads to some effect, which in turn becomes the cause for next action and so on, endlessly. This endless cycle of action and reaction is called *saMsaara*. You get stuck up in this endless cycles of action and more action, you lose your freedom, you are constrained, you get bound, hence you suffer. Action leads to hell, restraint leads to heaven. Learn to control your *manas*, do not spring into action so easily, practice restraint. This is real *yooga*.

This is easy to say but very difficult to practice for most ordinary people. Even thinking that you will do nothing is also doing something. Thinking is also *karma* or action,

thinking drains away our energy. The only way, therefore, is to carefully analyze every small thing we do in life, take into account all stake holders, consider the entire life-cycle, check where it is good and where it is bad, focus on the negative side, the dark side of our actions, convince ourselves that we are better off not doing this, make up our mind to give up, try hard and actually give up. We must keep giving up all unnecessary, wasteful, harmful, negative, bad things one by one. It is far easier to give up what we easily accept as bad or what is completely unnecessary, and so we must start from these simpler things. The recipe to success in life is to do less and less. We can actually achieve greater and greater things by doing lesser and lesser. This should be our life-long practice.

Every action has a reaction and a good action invariably results in good effects and bad action invariably results in bad effects. Thinking of good things will definitely lead to good results and thinking of bad things will surely lead to bad effects. The effects may or may not be seen and understood by you, the effects may be seen elsewhere or at a later point of time, but the effects will sure be there. Therefore, think of only good things, give up all bad thoughts. We put on such a nice and decent show on the outside and we continue to think of negative, ugly and bad things inside our *manas*, assuming that nobody can see that. This is hypocrisy. Rich people know deep inside their hearts that they are doing many bad things. They feel guilty. Once in a while, they plant a tree or maintain a small garden or put on a sign board or do some such token service. This is like thieves and robbers who offer a part of their booty to the Lord. This is hypocrisy. Bad things cannot be compensated by doing some good things. We must simply give up bad things.

Every action we perform in life will surely bring us a

mixture of pleasure and pain. Either you get more and more of both or less and less of both. Pain is usually longer, more intense and more crippling than pleasure. Hence the wise prefer to get less and less of both, rather than more and more of both. The wise choose to do little. They perform only those few actions which are natural and essential for their survival and normal, happy living, only those few things that they can do using only their own body and mind, without using any man-made artifacts or materials. They avoid all unnecessary and non-essential actions. Most things we are doing in the world today including routine things like travelling, shopping, working in offices, farms, factories and hospitals are harmful and completely unnecessary. Think, understand, get wiser and stop doing as much as you can. This is the path to lasting peace and happiness.

3.80 *naiShkarmya-siddhi*

We have the option of a) doing good things, b) doing nothing, c) doing bad things in life. Most people are good people. Well meaning as they are, they do not want to do bad things. People who want to do bad things are rare and society has its ways and means of dealing with such exceptional cases. For now, let us ignore option c) - doing bad things is really no optional at all for good people like us. We are left with option a) and option b). Most people would jump to the conclusion that option b) amounts to laziness, it is not good, and we must simply choose option a) without any further thought. This is not correct, every time we jump to conclusions without a proper in-depth analysis, we go wrong. Let us analyze.

Doing nothing implies b-1) not doing good things and b-2) not doing bad things. Since we have already decided

not to do bad things (that is why we struck off option c) just now), choice b) amounts to saying not doing good things. So we really have a choice between i) doing good things and j) not doing good things. These are the only two possibilities, there is no third possibility at all.

What do we mean by doing a good thing? Being kind to animals is good. This means not being unkind and cruel to animals. Telling the truth is good. This means not telling lies. Is there anything other than not telling lies that can be called telling the truth? Loving, sharing, caring are good. Because not loving, not sharing, not caring for others is bad, it is inhuman. Not murdering is good, not raping is good, not exploiting the weak and meek is good, not smoking is good, not gambling is good, not being greedy is good, not getting angry is good, not being jealous of others is good. In general, not being bad is good. Being good is nothing but not being bad. There is no other independent thing called goodness, goodness is simply absence of badness. There is really nothing like doing good things in life. Not doing bad things is itself called doing good things. Other than not doing bad things, there is nothing else that can be called doing good things. Therefore, option i) is the same as option b-2), which is same as rejecting option c), which we have already done. So, the only option that remains for us is j), that is, not doing good things either. To conclude, we should not do bad things, nor should we try to do good things. We should simply choose not doing anything. This is the only good option left for us in life. We can achieve great things in life by not doing anything. This is *naiShkarmya-siddhi*.

Saving one life and murdering ten others is not a good thing. Serving a hundred people and harming a thousand others cannot be called a good thing. Doing something good for yourself but bad for others is not a good thing.

Doing something that is good for your near and dear ones, or for your department or company or institution, doing something that is good for your country but bad for others is not a good thing at all. Doing a good thing means doing something that is good for the entire universe in every sense of the term, and not bad or harmful to any living creature anywhere in the world, now or later, directly or indirectly. Any mixture of good and bad is as good as bad, irrespective of the proportions. We rarely understand how many of our deeds are actually harmful to others because we never think along this line. Our intentions will be good, we put in sincere effort and work hard but we fail to realize that we are actually doing a bad thing. The path to hell is paved with good intentions. Good intentions are not enough. Therefore, it is simply not possible for ordinary human beings to do good things in life. The best that they can do is to give up bad things.

There is really no such thing as being good. Being good only means not being bad. Goodness is not a quality that can exist independently. Goodness is merely absence of badness. This simple fact is not understood and we end up getting into an endless cycle of action and reaction in life, bringing in untold misery on to ourselves. Please take your time, think, understand this and stop doing all bad things in life. All things you are doing are in fact bad. This is not easy to understand and we shall take time to explain and convince you of this simple fact over the next few sections. Not doing anything is not the same as laziness. We must learn to keep ourselves busy doing nothing. To understand this concept well, we must know what exactly we mean by doing anything. Who does? How does he do? Who is the agent and who is only an instrument? Who reaps the fruits of any action? What exactly do we mean by not doing anything? How can we even avoid doing anything at all in life? Is that possible? Let us explore.

3.81 *kartR*, *bhooktR*

Let us say I take a gun and shoot you. You die. I have murdered you. The cops will catch me, I will be tried in a court of law and then I will be punished. It was the bullet which actually hit you, pierced and damaged your body, and finally killed you. Why is it that the bullet is never considered a murderer, why is it never punished? Or, it was the gun which made the bullets to fly at bullet's speed and hit you and kill you. Why is it that we never hold the gun responsible for the murder?

Because the bullet or the gun does not know anything. The gun never wanted to kill you. The bullet did not conspire with the gun to kill you to achieve some goal. These are inanimate objects, they cannot think or know, they cannot feel or experience anything. They never had a plan, they had a motive, they never had a goal to achieve. There is no sense of guilt or jubilation or defeat or fear or anger. Therefore, nobody even thinks of inanimate objects like guns and bullets as doing anything. They do nothing.

Now consider my own body. My hand held the gun, my fingers pushed the trigger, making the gun fire and the bullet fly, killing you. Why did my fingers move? Do my fingers know what they are doing? Do they have a motive or a plan or a goal? Do they feel guilty of murder? Do they enjoy the consequences, good or bad as they may be? No, not at all. Although I am a living being and my fingers are part of my living body, although my fingers and the cells therein manifest various life processes such as blood circulation or nervous communications, my fingers know nothing. The signals sent by my brain to the nerves in the fingers made the muscles to contract, leading to the movement of my fingers, triggering the gun. The muscles have to move, necessarily, as per the laws of physics, just

as the gun has to fire when triggered and the bullet has to fly when fired. The muscles in my fingers are living yet there is no knowledge or feeling of any kind, they merely follow the laws of physics, exactly like the gun or the bullet. Hence my fingers cannot be held responsible for the murder and punished. There is no difference between the gun and my fingers, both are not guilty of murder. What about the nerves? The nerves have to transmit the signals as directed by the brain, they simply work mechanically following the laws of physics and chemistry, they know nothing, they are not guilty at all.

What about the brain? The brain is made up of cells, and the cells are made up of atoms and molecules. If you take out all the atoms and molecules in the brain, nothing remains. No atom or molecule knows or understands or feels or experiences anything at all in this wicked and cruel act of murder. No atom, no electron, proton or neutron in them, has any motive or plan or strategy or goal or any kind of feeling. They all work mechanically, following the laws of physics, exactly like any other non-living object. My brain cannot be held guilty of murder. No part of my body can be. It is not my body, or any part of it, which actually caused the murder. The body is insentient, it knows nothing, it feels nothing, it gains nothing, it loses nothing, it has no motive. The body is not guilty of murder, yet it is invariably the body that is punished. How stupid!

The question, therefore, is not whether the agent is a living thing or an inanimate object. The gun and the bullet are pardoned not because they are inanimate objects. I could have murdered you by using a living creature, such as a poisonous snake. Even then, I would be held guilty of murder, not the snake, although it is also an animate being.

The body never does anything, it merely follows the

instructions given to it by the *manas*. The body never enjoys or suffers anything. If the air conditioner is switched on and the surroundings become cool and comfortable, it is not the body which actually enjoys this. In fact it does not even know all this, the body is insentient. It is the *manas* which enjoys. When the body is injured, it is not the body which experiences pain, it is the *manas* which experiences all the pains and pleasures of life. It is the *manas* which is the *kartR* or doer or agent of all that we do in life. It is the *manas* which is the *bhoktR* or enjoyer of all things in life, good or bad as they may be. The body is neither the *kartR* nor the *bhoktR*. Everything we do in life, the whole of life, must be understood in terms of the *manas* alone, leaving aside the body and all the things in the external world.

The *buddhi* or the intellect may logically analyze, understand and even advise the *manas* not to do a bad thing or it may join hands with the *manas* to plot a cold-blooded murder, carefully analyzing and calculating every move. Yet, the *buddhi* is like a computer, devoid of all feelings and emotions, and if a computer or any other machine cannot be held guilty of any crime, how can we hold the *buddhi* responsible? In fact the *buddhi* also works as prompted and as desired by the *manas*. It is only the *manas* which does anything, it is only the *manas* which enjoys the fruits of any action. This entire world, every activity that we engage ourselves in, in fact the whole of life, is a property, a projection, a creation of the human *manas*. It is the *manas* which is guilty of murder, it is the *manas* which must be tried and punished. When we punish the body, we must understand that the body itself never undergoes anything, even when the body is punished, it is the *manas* which feels the pain, it is the *manas* which experiences the punishment.

In the sense of *paramaārtha*, we are not our bodies, we

are not our *manas*, we are not our *buddhi*, we are actually the pure, eternal self, the *sat-cit-aananda* which does nothing, which experiences nothing. Our *aatma* has no attachments, no feelings, no emotions, no desires, no goals, nothing to gain or lose, no fears. We are mere spectators. We never do anything, we are not guilty of anything, we can never be punished. Our own self is ever pure and ever free. We are pure witnesses, mere spectators, neutral observers, to the whole drama of life. We actually do nothing, we are guilty of nothing. Those who have fully understood and internalized all this will never commit murder or any other sin, for, they have nothing to gain or lose. We must therefore restrict ourselves to the day to day transactional level of *vyavahaara* when we think of action, doer, experiencer, guilt, punishment etc. At the level of *vyavahaara*, it is the *manas* which is the agent and the experiencer of everything in life, not the body, not the *buddhi*. Why does the *manas* prompt us to do anything? Why do we do anything, good or bad? Why can't we keep quiet? Let us inquire.

3.82 The Agent and the Experimenter

The gun or the bullet is not considered the murderer because they neither have any feeling of doer-ship nor do they enjoy the fruits of their actions. Any entity which does something but has absolutely no *kartRtva-bhaava* (sense of doership) and no *karma-phala-aasakti* (interest in the fruits of actions) should be considered as really not doing it at all. By this logic, the body does not do anything at all - it is not the agent or the experiencer of anything in life. Our own true self is also not guilty of anything, it does not do anything at all in life. Since we are actually our own self, we never do anything in life. In *paramaarthā*, no human being actually does anything at all in life. Nobody can be

a sinner.

Everything in life is a creation of the *manas*. It is the *manas* which has a sense of doer-ship, it is the *manas* which has a sense of enjoyment and suffering. All of life is because of this *manas*. Why does the *manas* behave like this? How do we keep it under control?

Like all other things in the universe, the *manas* also goes by its own nature. It is the nature of the *manas* to be restless, it finds it very hard to keep quiet. It is the *manas* which keeps going after pleasures, real or imaginary. It is the *manas* which seeks pleasures endlessly. This is its nature. It is the nature of fire to burn, it is the nature of water to quench, it is the nature of heavenly bodies to attract each other by the force of gravity. We cannot explain, we cannot reason out, we cannot say why there is gravity. This is the limitation of human mind, we must simply accept this. It is the very nature of *manas* to possess a sense of doer-ship and enjoyer-ship and we have to simply accept it as a fact of life. In *paramaarthā* there is really no such thing as *manas*, the *manas* is only a manifestation of the *sit-cit* and so there is no need to explain it out at all. In *vyavahāra*, we must accept everything on face value without questioning, like we accept dreams without questioning as long as we are still dreaming. Either way, there is no way to explain why the *manas* behaves the way it does. It is simply its nature to be like this.

But the point is, we can understand all this and using the good offices of our *buddhi*, we can train and control our *manas*. It is possible to get rid of this *kārtRtva-bhāva*, it is possible to give up this *karma-phala-saMga* or attachment to the results of our actions. This is possible by constant practice guided by proper understanding. Once we can train and control the *manas* to get rid of its sense of doer-

ship and the sense of experiencer, then we can say that the *manas* also does nothing in reality. The gun or the bullet or the body had to move, had to work in a physical sense, yet we did not consider them as doers. The same way, we can say the *manas* does nothing at all, even as we continue to live our lives normally, doing all the routine daily chores to sustain life. This is the real meaning of not doing anything.

Once we reach this stage, we are not lazy, we work, we do all the necessary things in life as usual, but we are not guilty of any sin because we have completely given up the feelings of agent and experiencer. We work like machines. We can actually work very efficiently, very diligently, very sincerely. We can make wonders, we can scale great heights, we can achieve human excellence in every walk of life. We will not be lazy, we will only be free from all worries, all pains, all sins. Then, and only then, can we enjoy life. Only then can we make the most of this great human life. Till then, we are merely existing, struggling to survive, suffering a wretched, worse-than-animal life. *naiShkarmya-siddhi* is the recipe to success in life. Life starts only after you give up all sense of doer-ship and enjoyer-ship.

There is no need for us to do anything in life. We are not the doers. Nor are we the experiencers. We experience no pain, no misery, no agony, no suffering at all. We can have lasting peace, harmony, bliss. We must work but we must never think we are the doers. We must never feel that we must do this or we must not do that. We must never do anything so that we can get something. We must never work in order to avoid something. We must not work for salary or name or fame. We must simply work. Do not give up work, give up the *kartRtva-bhaava* and *karma-phala-aasakti*. Then you are not lazy yet you do nothing. You are free from all the bondage of work, all the shackles of endless cycles of actions and reaction. This is called de-

tachment.

You have a right to work, you have no right to claim the role of the agent or the experiencer. Never think of the results, never work because you get something if you work. Never study for the sake of passing the examination, never work to get your salary. Work for the sake of work alone. This is the way God works. You can reach up to Him, you can even become one with Him, provided you live and work and think like this.

3.83 *viveeka, vairaagya*

The *manas* seeks pleasure and is naturally attracted towards those things which give pleasure. It wishes to avoid pains and it tries to stay away from thing which give pain. *raaga* is attraction towards pleasurable things and *dveeSha* is repulsion towards painful things.

As a general rule, we all try to please our *manas* by providing it with what all it asks. The *manas* is like fire, it seeks fuel. By pouring fuel onto fire, the fire only gets intensified and its desire for fuel only increases manifold. Trying to satisfy the *manas* by giving it whatever it asks is like trying to satisfy the fire by pouring as much fuel as it wants. The fire never gets satiated, the *manas* never get satisfied, however hard you try. We keep struggling throughout our lives to satisfy our *manas* and it never gets satiated. One fine day we pack up and go, with the *manas* still dissatisfied.

Simply denying the *manas* of everything it seeks is also not a good strategy. It never gets even a temporary feeling of having enjoyed life, it feels totally distressed and dejected. A troublesome child cannot be managed by either

saying yes to everything or by always saying no. We need to be cleverer.

We need to cleverly analyze what is good for us, not what all the *manas* demands. We need to think what is actually good for the body, what is good for the *buddhi* and what is good for my self. Whatever is wasteful or harmful, we must try to avoid by calling to attention our logic and reasoning, our knowledge and wisdom and convince ourselves fully why we do not need it and how we are actually better off without it. What is really needed, what is good for us, what is good for others, what is good for the whole universe, we must go for it without any hesitation. Avoiding things which are unnecessary, unwarranted, wasteful, avoidable, or even harmful, is called *vairaagya*, which means devoid of *raaga* or attraction towards non-essentials. To understand and practice *vairaagya*, we must summon our discretion, reason, knowledge and wisdom, which is called *viveeka*. A *viveeki* practices *vairaagya*, refrains from all useless, futile, wasteful, harmful activities in life and takes up only as much as necessary to live a normal, happy, contented, peaceful, harmonious life. He does not dance to the tunes of his *manas* nor does he forcefully suppress and punish his own *manas* for no reason. *viveeka* and *vairaagya* are the recipes for happiness and bliss. We should neither pro-actively seek pleasures nor go out of the way to avoid pains. We must learn to accept and enjoy whatever pleasures and pains naturally come our way on their own. We just cannot stop what is destined to happen, however hard we may try and we just cannot make something happen if it is not destined to happen. We are not here to do or to prevent. We must just live. We must simply live. We must live simply.

We cannot get unending happiness and pure, unalloyed bliss through our actions and interactions in this world. We

cannot reach the goal of our life by working with people and things in this world. Realizing this is *viveeka*. Having realized this, we must give up all our attachments to the external world, as also to our own body and mind. This is *vairaagya*. We must seek the self and self alone, because that is the source of infinite happiness and it is devoid of all pain and suffering. Seeking the pure, flawless, actionless, changeless, eternal, all-knowing, all-capable, ever-free self alone, to the exclusion of all else, is called *jnYaana*. Rejecting all else is called *vairaagya*. Both mean the same thing. Give up all else and seek the truth alone. This is real knowledge, this real knowledge gives us power, power to live like masters, free and ever happy. This is the meaning of life. Do not spend the whole life trying to please the *manas*, do not make the body and *buddhi* work for it and suffer in the process. Most of what you are doing in your life is to please your *manas*, this is futile, realize this and just give up all that. Learn to simply live, learn to enjoy life, doing nothing.

You are yourself, nothing else. You are your self, and the self neither performs any actions nor does it enjoy or suffer. In reality, therefore, you are neither the doer nor the experiencer. Raise yourself above the level of action and reaction, reach up to your self by crossing the level of the body and mind, revel in your self alone and be happy. This is called *naiShkarmya-siddhi*.

3.84 *karma, akarma, vikarma*

karma means action or work. *akarma* does not mean actually giving up all activities, that is simply not possible. Nor is it required. It is not useful either. We must act, we must work, we must continue to work, throughout our life. But we must work without any sense of doer-ship,

without any desire for the fruits of our actions. Then like the gun or the bullet, we will not be considered a murderer, we will not be guilty of doing anything wrong, we will never be punished for any of our actions, we will be freed from all fears and worries, we actually start enjoying life, we start living like we should. Do not go to the college and study because that will fetch you a job. Study for the sake of knowledge alone. Go to a college or university if and only if you have a desire for knowledge, you have a thirst for knowledge, you believe that knowledge is greater than money or anything else in this world. Then, and only then, will your study be worthwhile. Never work for the sake of salary. Salary comes because you worked. In both cases you work and you get salary but there is a very big difference. People fail to see this difference and they suffer. Work for the sake of work, irrespective of whether you will get salary or not. Giving salary is not your work, it is the job of your boss, why do you worry about other's jobs? You will surely be rewarded in life, if you do good things without expecting anything in return. Your boss may or may not but He will surely reward you for all the good things you do in life. Do not write the examination for the sake of getting marks. Write it because it is your duty and you should do your duty well. Giving marks is not your work, how does it matter if your teacher does his or her work properly or not. It is wrong to think that others' work affects us. It is not your boss who gives you salary, it is He who gives you everything. Your boss is the boss of that company because of Him, that company exists because of Him, you got this job because of Him, everything happens because of Him, nothing at all happens without His will. So, there is absolutely no need for you to worry about others. Just do your work, do it well, very well indeed, put in the best of yourself at every step, but never feel that you are the doer and never ever think of what may come out of it. You are doing it because you have

understood and convinced yourself that it is good for the entire universe. Just go and do it and God will surely reward you adequately. Do not try to bribe God, never say you will do this or that provided He helps you in achieving this or that. Who are you to offer anything to Him, what is yours in this world, and how can you impose conditions on Him? Just do good things, things that are good for the entire universe, without expecting anything in return, unconditionally. The Sun shines because it is good, he does not expect anything in return. The rivers flow because it is good. The trees bear fruits, the cows give milk, for the sake of universal good, without any sense of doer-ship, without expecting anything whatever in return. Work done in this sense is not work at all, this is actually *akarma*. This is the same as *karma-saMnyaasa* or the meaning of saying 'do not do anything'. This is *karma-yooga*, this is the secret of work. A *karma-yoogi* appears to be living, working and doing things exactly like other ignorant people but he is actually doing nothing at all because he has relinquished all feeling of doer-ship and he has completely given up all desires for the fruits of his actions. He is free.

Using our *viveeka* we must find out what is it that we must really do in life. We must do only those things which are essential and which are good for the entire universe. We all try to do what is good for ourselves or to our near and dear ones or to our company or to our country. We must realize that the whole universe is a single undivided whole, a single, homogeneous, all inclusive *sat-cit-aananda*. You will not do what is good for your left hand but bad for your right hand, will you? The same way, you should not do what is good for somebody but bad for others. You should never cheat others and make money, you must never engage in or support or encourage any kind of business. You should not think of doing what is good for all human beings but bad for other living creatures or to the environment.

Use of any kind of man-made material, gadget, equipment or artifact involves exploitation and damage of the environment, which is a common shared resource of all living creatures including those yet to come. Shopping, traveling, producing wastes other than purely natural wastes, industry, business, economic development, scientific research, and most other activities that people are engaged in today in the world are neither necessary nor good. We must only do those few things which are good for everybody in the entire universe. We must call up our *vairaagya* and give up all wasteful and harmful activities. There is very little we actually need to do in life. All good things are already there in nature and all we need to do is to avoid damaging and spoiling it. A wise man has very little work to do. *vikarma* means not doing things which need not be done at all, which should not be done at all. It means giving up all bad deeds.

3.85 *bandha, mookSha*

It is not possible to spend a single moment of our life without performing any action. We will at least be breathing - taking in cool, fresh air and throwing out hotter, used up air. Even thinking is an action. That is why thinking drains away so much of our energy. Even trying not to do anything is action in a sense. We have to keep doing something or the other, at least involuntary actions like heart beat and digestion, all the time. There is no escape. Trying to avoid all work, all action is simply not possible. Like other inanimate beings in this world, we are forced to act as per the laws of nature. There is no escape. Given this, the only meaningful questions we can ask is what work should we take up and how exactly should we go about performing them.

karma means action or work, performed with *kartRtva-bhaava* or a sense of doer-ship and *karma-phala-aasakti* or desire for the fruits of our actions. We go to a job and work in order to get salary. We go to the college and study in order to get a degree and hence a job and hence money. We buy a motorcycle so that we can go to the college comfortably. We go to the gas station to fill petrol for the motorcycle. We put on the shoes to go out for the purpose. We bend down in order to put on the shoes. Every thing we do in life, every small thing we do, we do with a feeling that “I am doing this and if I do this I will get this and if I get this, I can then do that” and so on, endlessly. We never know the ultimate goal of our life, nor do we have a proof that each step in our chain of reasoning is actually correct and it will take us to the final goal. For example, we never stop and ask why we want money, we take for granted without proof that money gives us happiness. We get into an endless cycle of actions, never realizing the ultimate goal of life, never reaching there. Life will be over much before we get any clarity. We are not free because we are bound by this endless chain of actions in which we are caught helplessly. This is the bondage of action, this is *karma-bandhana*. The only way to liberate ourselves from this bondage of *karma* is to give up our sense of doership and our desires from the fruits of our actions and do only those few things which are essential for life to go on.

Bad deeds are called *niShiddha karma*, they are prohibited and one should never do such deeds in life. For example, we should never tell lies, we should never cheat anybody, we should never harm anybody in anyway whatever. Actions performed with a particular motive are called *kaamya karma-s*. It is these deeds that we do deliberately with a motive and a plan in order to achieve some results, whether in this life or in the other world. These actions are always done with a sense of doership and enjoyer-ship and

hence all these actions invariably bind us. We lose freedom and we suffer. The wise should therefore give up all *kaamya karma-s* also. Certain actions are to be performed on specified occasions and are called *naimittika karma-s*. Paying homage to the dead, for example, is one such action, performed on a specified day of the year. These actions are also performed with a sense of doership and enjoyer-ship and the wise and realized should give up these actions also. What remains is *nitya karma*, actions that are completely natural and essential for life to go on, such as sleeping, sitting, standing, eating, talking, walking, thinking, singing, dancing and so on. Observe that all these activities can be and should be performed using our body and mind only, without need for any man-made artifacts, gadgets, equipment, instruments or materials. These actions are completely harmless when performed properly. We cannot live without sleeping or eating or excreting or breathing. These voluntary and involuntary actions must go on, there is no stopping them. Most importantly, we can and we should perform all such actions without any sense of doership or any motive or plan or expectation for the results or fruits. Sleep when you feel sleepy, that is all. Performing only *nitya karma-s*, to the exclusion of all other kinds of work, is the one and only solution to all human problems, whether at the level of individuals or at the level of the whole human society. All problems are created by us, all that we have to do to get rid of these problems is to give up our hold on what we should not be doing. If you catch a hot iron bar it burns, the only solution is to simply leave it. The solution to all human problems lies in giving up, not in producing or buying or acquiring or hoarding. Holding on to the hot iron bar is bondage, giving it up is salvation. That is all.

Note that *yooga*, all the eight steps we have talked about, can be and should be performed using our body

and mind alone, without need for any man-made materials or gadgets. *yooga* can be and should be performed without any sense of doership or enjoyer-ship. Actions so performed do not count as actions at all, they are as good as not done. We will not be bound by such actions. God performs all His actions in creating, sustaining and dissolving the Universe in this sense, that is why He is not bound by any of His actions, He is ever free. We can also free ourselves, we can become like God, we can become God, by practicing *yooga* in this sense. *yooga* is not something that you have to do, it is in fact the same as not doing anything. Become a true *yoogi*, be free, live like a free master, enjoy life, enjoy life as much as God can. This is the gist of this whole book.

If you have still not properly understood all this, you might ask how can I live if I do not work and earn my bread? Food is not something that you have to earn or buy. If we stop all useless activities, there will naturally be a lot of ready-to-eat food in nature, just as there is ready-to-breathe air all over the world. Even if that is not so, all that we need to do is to grow food. Spend your time and effort in growing food, not working in offices, factories, or shops earning money in order to buy food. Grow food everywhere, without asking who will take it. Let anybody take it, let the monkeys and squirrels take it. There will still be enough good food for all, if only we give up all useless activities. Grow food without a sense of doership or ownership, without worrying about the results. We have repeated this point several times, work done in this sense does not count as work at all.

Only those who have realized the self, only those who have achieved the union with God, only those who have raised themselves above all sense of doership and enjoyer-ship can do anything for the benefit of others. God can and only those who have become one with God can serve

others. A large number of well meaning and apparently self-less people are spending their time, effort and money today for the welfare of others. These social workers are doing some good things and many bad things, knowingly or unknowingly. No one can claim self-less-ness until and unless they have given up all worldly attachments. No one can actually do anything good until and unless they have become fully self-realized and become one with God. This is possible only when the identity of the individual is totally erased. Individuals cannot serve mankind or the world. Only those who have dissolved their identity and actually become one with God can. The *RShi-s* in ancient India could. Most people in the living generations cannot. Only those who are truly knowledgeable can impart knowledge to others, other people must refrain from teaching, preaching and publishing. Only a lighted candle can light other candles, only the liberated can liberate others. We must all realize this and give up doing all kinds of harmful activities in the name of service. For the vast majority of the people in the world, not doing anything is the best prescription for their own sake and for the sake of others.

3.86 Detachment

If you are a young man, you will find that touching the body of a young and beautiful women is a totally different experience compared to touching another man, an animal, or any other inanimate object in the world. Where does the difference really lie? The actual physical process of touching, the sense of touch and the nervous signals generated, the way these signals traverse through your nervous system, the way they are processed by the brain, are all very much the same, whatever be the object you touch. At least in principle, the physics and chemistry of the whole process could be one hundred percent identical, irrespective of

what objects you touch. Yet you find enormous difference. The difference is felt in your *manas*, nowhere else. The *manas* with its *vaasana-s* - pre-conceived notions, biases, preferences, *raaga* and *dveeSha*, can perceive similar things very differently and different things similarly. All the similarities and differences we see in life are a property of our *manas*, not the properties of the objects in the world. That is why the experience of a rape is so very different from the experience of a normal sexual relationship between a married couple.

Look at the wind. It blows all over, it touches all kinds of objects, hard or soft, living or non-living, male or female, but it sees no difference whatever. It remains untouched, unmoved, unperturbed. Likewise, we have to live in this world, we have to experience all of this life, we have to do many things, we have to enjoy and suffer life, but without getting perturbed in the least within our *manas*. A boat can only float on water, there must be water all around, but we must not let the water enter the boat. If it does, the boat suffers and sinks. We must live in the midst of this material world, we must live and work in the midst of other people, we must live life in *vyavahaara* but we must stay unmoved at all times and under all circumstances. Lotus grows in water, it can only grow in water but its leaves and petals never get wet. Every drop of water placed on its petals simply run off, leaving the petals completely dry and untouched. This is the secret of detachment. This is the secret of work. We must live, work, experience life, enjoy it, but remain detached.

An expert surgeon performs surgical operations on his patients as if he is working on some inanimate toy or a piece of vegetable. He is active, alert, attentive, careful, he is sincere and honest, he truly wants his patients to get cured, he puts in his best efforts, but he is unperturbed.

He has performed hundreds of operations successfully. Now imagine that this same expert, this highly experienced surgeon, has to perform an operation on his own daughter. His hands shiver. His mind is deeply perturbed. He gets nervous. Because of this, he may even make mistakes of the kind he would normally never make. Now he is attached. His *manas* has great *raaga* for his daughter and this *raaga* comes in the way of his performing his work as usual. Attachment spoils all of our work. We may put in a lot of effort but the results will not be good. Likewise, *dveeSha* also interferes. If you hate mathematics, you will not do well in the examination, even if the questions are easy and you know how to solve the problems given. Detachment means working without *raaga* or *dveeSha*. Detachment means working without any *kartRtva-bhaava* or *karma-phala-aasakti*. Detachment means working like machines, like computers. Work, work well, but do not get involved. Then you will not be bound by your actions, you will be free, free from all suffering.

Detachment or *asaMga* or *nissaMgatva* implies being neutral, unbiased, undisturbed, balanced to the core, at all times and under all circumstances. You must treat your son, your friend, your neighbour, a new comer, your enemy, and yourself exactly the same way. You must treat every animal exactly like you treat yourself. You must treat the whole universe as you treat yourself. A detached person never does anything which is good for him but bad for others. This is detachment, this is equality. This is the secret of happiness and bliss. The more attached you are, the more failures you encounter in life. Detachment means taking success and failure, curse and praise, good and bad, all on an equal footing, equipoised, balanced and undisturbed in the mind. No power in the world can shake such a person. He is strong, stable, unshakable, powerful, ever free, always happy. Success comes for the detached. De-

tachment does not mean showing lack of interest or working carelessly. Detachment means not allowing your *manas* to be perturbed and emotionally attached. Understand this subtle difference and this world will become heaven for you.

3.87 Bondage and Liberation

Work is worship. We must work, with full dedication, with interest and care, we must put in the best of ourselves into our work. What matters is not how many hours we put in, what matters is how much of ourselves we put into our work. But we must work not for the sake of results. We must not work with the feeling that we are the ones performing it. We have to work without *karma-phala-aasakti*, without *kartRtva-bhaava*. We are neither the doers nor the enjoyers of the fruits of our actions. That is why the wise said work is worship, not the results, not the agents. Work itself is sacred and worthy of respect and worship. Work for the sake of work. All parts of a machine work, they work hard, they work well but they never have any feeling of doer-ship nor do they work for any gains. We must learn to work like machines. It is our right to work. It is our duty to work. Work and only work is our right and our duty. We do not have a right to be the agents of any work, we are only instruments in His hand. We have no right wherever over the fruits of our actions, we must surrender everything we get, good or bad, at His feet, nothing in this world is ours. We must take whatever comes our way in all humility. If you wrote the examination very well and you got 100 out of 100, accept it with gratitude, if you get 0 out of 100, accept that also without demur. Accept praise and curse, wealth and poverty, success and failure. Just do your work and keep working. This is the secret of life.

There is a huge difference in the quality of work of those

who work for money and those who are paid because they work. Both of them work and both of them earn money but there is a great difference. It is the attitude that makes all the difference. Students must study for the sake of knowledge alone. Students who study for the sake of getting a degree and hence a job and hence money and so on, never get any knowledge and they may not even get a good job or lots of money or whatever they want.

You think you have to work to earn money. To work you must go to the office. To go you must drive your car. To do that you must open the door, sit down, turn on the engine and so on. The whole of life, everything we do, we do, so that something else may happen. We always think of the future, the results that we may get after a while, and we forget the present. If you go to a river, you can touch the water that is flowing there at that point of time. You just cannot touch the water that is yet to come or the water that has already flown past. We must learn to live in the present. Life is in present tense, there is no point getting tensed about the uncertain future or about the dead past. Life is a journey but when you are travelling you always think of reaching the destination and so you never enjoy the journey itself. The whole of life will be spent, or wasted, and you will never enjoy even the greatest of the moments. You simply let them slip by, thinking of the non-existent. Learn to live in the present. Work and enjoy the work you do, without bothering about the results.

One action leads to another, and that to yet another and so on and on. We keep on doing things one after the other, endlessly, throughout our life. Life will be simply spent, not lived. This vicious circle of work and more work and even more and action is called *saMsaara*. We get lost in this vast ocean of work and action. We get bound, we lose our freedom. We have already lost even the freedom

to stop and think, life has become so fast. Life in today's world is a mad race and no one knows why this race, or where we are heading or what we will get once we reach there. You are always in a hurry. There is always a feeling of urgency. In reality, there is nothing that is urgent. You have a 100 years to live and that is a lot of time. Go slow.

We get caught in this vicious circle of work and we lose all our freedom. This is bondage, this is *bandhana*. The way out is to seek true knowledge, to understand ourself, to realize that we are neither the *kartR* nor the *bhooktR*, to know that there is really nothing that we have to do in life. Live and work with detachment, without getting caught in this whirlpool of endless action and actors and results and fruits of action. This is liberation, this is salvation, this is *mookSha*. Liberate yourselves from the bondage of ignorance, become a free man and enjoy life to its fullest. Knowledge is power, ignorance is weakness. The powerful are the masters, they are free, slaves are bound, they suffer. The recipe to happiness in life is freedom, freedom that comes from the power of true knowledge. Let us free ourselves from the bondage of ignorance, let us seek freedom.

3.88 Freedom and Slavery

If there is one single concept, one simple idea, that has changed the face of the world more than anything else, and is continuing to dominate the greatest of the human minds even today, it is freedom. Wars are fought to regain lost freedom. Call them freedom-fighters or call them terrorists, people are willing to go to any extent, even to sacrifice their own lives, for the sake of freedom. Everyone wants to be free. Nobody knows what is freedom!

You may read this newspaper or that or any other newspaper you want. Nobody dictates terms with you. If you decide not to read any newspaper at all, you can do this too, nobody will force you to read a newspaper. You can read the first page first or the last page first. You may read the political news or sports or economics and business pages. Or you may look at only the classified advertisements. Or you may just see the pictures like kids do. There is no external force of any kind. This is freedom. Right? Wrong!

You have the right to vote. You have the freedom to vote. Terrorists cannot stop you from casting your vote. You may want to vote for this party or that, for this candidate or that. No political party can pressurize you or force you either to vote for somebody or not to vote for somebody. Or you may decide not to exercise your right to vote at all. Or you may vote saying you do not want to vote for any of the contestants. No government can force you to vote or not to vote. This is freedom. This is the freedom that democracy promises. Right? Wrong!

This concept of freedom looks simple and we all think we understand it. But there is more to it than meets the eye. Who is free and who is bound? Is my body free or bound? Or is it the *manas* or the *buddhi*? Most people in the world do not understand freedom at all. Let us dig deeper.

Many people are thoroughly confused. Especially the youth. More so in the so called developed countries. They think doing whatever they want is freedom. I know what I want to do and I will do it at any cost. If I want to dance naked in the street I will do it, nobody can stop me. I can smoke, drink, get addicted, it is my choice. It is my life. I can live the way I wish. Nobody can question me. Nobody should even advise or suggest. This is how people think

today. Is this really what we mean by freedom?

When teachers, parents or other elders tell us to do something or not to do something, our ego is stirred up and we feel like defying. We think others are constraining us, they are infringing on our freedom and we must oppose this. Just because they are older, do they think they know everything? These people of the old generation, they know nothing, yet they think they know everything. Can't they mind their own business? Why do they interfere with our lives? So think the youth.

This is dangerous. Because the very concept of freedom has been completely misunderstood. Freedom is not absence of external control or restrictions imposed from outside by others. Freedom is in fact absence of force and compulsion coming from within you. Do not confuse freedom for liberty. Somebody else may liberate you or take away your liberty by force but freedom has nothing to do with others or the world outside us. Freedom is something that is completely inside us. If you yield to your passions, if you surrender to your temptations, if you become subservient to your foolish thoughts, that is not freedom. In fact that is the worst form of slavery - slavery to your own passions! Nobody is controlling you from outside but you have become a slave of yourself. You are bound, not free. Freedom is not free licence.

Elders certainly do not know everything, nor do they think so. But experienced men are more likely to know things better than inexperienced men. That is all. If you have to undergo a surgical operation, don't you prefer an experienced surgeon to a fresh graduate? Elders are not trying to infringe into your freedom, they are trying to help you. Listen to elders. Do not be foolish. Do not become a slave of yourself. Listen to the wise. This is good for you.

Today bad people have all the freedom in the world to bad things and get scot free. Good people, knowledgeable people, experienced people do not have the freedom even to raise their voice. For example, parents cannot advice their children, let alone punish them and guide them into the right path when they go wrong. What concept of freedom is this? Where are we heading?

3.89 Freedom and Liberty

Am I free to do anything and everything? Am I free to kill you? Can I commit suicide? Can I loot the bank? Can I set fire to the polling booth? Can I capture the ballot boxes? Can I bribe? Can I do whatever I want? What exactly is freedom?

It is easy to get confused here. The concept of freedom we are talking of here has nothing to do with legal, ethical or moral concerns. Man is a social animal. To live in peace and harmony with others, we are expected to follow certain norms. These norms may take the shape of a law enacted and enforced by a government, it may take the form of unwritten social norms, it may take the shape of informal expectations from fellow beings. Prostitution may be legal in one country and illegal in another. Divorce may be looked down upon in some cultures but OK in others. Whatever be all that, there are things you are supposed to do and things you are not supposed to do. From the point of view of society, freedom comes with responsibility. You are free to do anything as long as it is not harmful to others. Freedom without responsibility will degenerate into licence. These social, ethical, moral, legal issues are different, very different from the notion of freedom we are talking here.

There is also a universal, eternal, cosmic moral order that transcends the enacted laws or accepted social practices which vary from place to place and time to time. Causing injury, pain and suffering to others, telling lies or cheating can never be eulogized in any society, under any kind of government, under any religion. There is an inherent notion of good and bad hard-wired into every human being. We are free to do good things. We are not supposed to do bad things. These invariant expectations that cut across social and legal frameworks, these factors that characterize humane nature and define humanity, all these are bundled up into a concept called *Rta*. *Rta* constitutes the eternal laws that govern the entire universe. We are not even talking of *Rta* here.

We are normally expected to do only good things. We are not supposed to do bad things. We may be punished for doing what we are not supposed to do. Does this not constrain our freedom? No, freedom is what you always have, it cannot be taken away or given back by anybody. Do not confuse freedom for liberty. Freedom is inalienable. You may do or not do a thing out of fear of consequences, out of a sense of responsibility, out of understanding and kindness or whatever. You did not copy in the examination because of the fear of being caught, or because you did not want to. In any case, it is your decision, there is no external force. Not doing something because you decided not to do it is not lack of freedom. In fact this is freedom. Self restraint can never constrain your freedom. Understand freedom. And be free.

3.90 At War with Ourselves

Every dilemma is a war between the pleasurable and the preferable. Staying back at home, doing home work and preparing for the test are preferable. Going out and playing is pleasurable. Sensuality is pleasurable. Staying away from illicit fleshy indulgences is preferable. Smoking is pleasurable. Giving up smoking is preferable. For a diabetic patient, avoiding sweets is preferable. Gulping sweets is pleasurable.

Usually, it is the *manas* which goes after the pleasant and it is the *buddhi* which goes after the good. Every dilemma is a war between the *manas* and the *buddhi*. The ‘I’ in ‘I want to go out and play’ and the ‘I’ in ‘I better stay back and do my home work’ are two different ‘I’s, the first one is the *manas* and the second one is the *buddhi*. Dilemma is between the *manas* and the *buddhi*. Which one will you choose? You are free to listen to your *manas* or to your *buddhi*. The wise always choose the good for the pleasant, the preferable for the pleasurable. Fools make the wrong choice and they suffer.

Dancing to the tune of our *manas* is not really freedom, it is in fact slavery. Freedom has nothing to do with external force, governmental regulations, law, ethics, or moral code of conduct imposed on you by others. Freedom is what you have in you. A truly free person has no suffering in life at all. Think of the body, the *manas* and the *buddhi* and ask yourself who is free, who is dictating terms with whom, who is yielding to whom. Do not blame others for your sufferings.

Every smoker knows that smoking is bad for him as also for others. The *buddhi* knows this very well. The *manas*, illogical and childish as it is, continues to persuade him to

smoke. He yields. The *manas* wins the war against the *buddhi*. He suffers. He may be well read and knowledgeable, the *buddhi* may be well developed and strong, but the *manas* is stronger and wilder. He does not know how to fight the war against this wild, unpredictable, adamant, childish *manas*. Some of our sufferings may be due to natural disasters and other such things beyond our control but a vast majority of all human suffering is self-made, easily solvable. We just have to start our study and exercises in mind-control and spend the whole life doing only that. Mischievous children become more serious automatically as they grow up and their *buddhi* develops. But many people do not grow up at all, they remain childish deep inside. The *manas* never grows or matures by itself. It takes great care and effort to tame this shrew called *manas*. Those who ignore this, continue to be wild, childish and immature. An educated man is one who has mastered his *manas*.

Contrary to common belief, *yooga* is not something that you have to do. In fact *yooga* is all about not doing anything. As a first step we must learn to slow down. Bicycle race is not *yooga* but slow cycle race is a form of *yooga*. *aahaara siddhi* means not eating all kinds of things, at all times, without restraint. *aasana siddhi* means simply sitting in one place, not moving from place to place, not even moving our body parts. *praaNaayaama* means to slow down and effectively stop breathing. *pratyaaahaara* means not allowing the sense organs to look around, collect data from the external world and keep troubling the mind with loads of such useless data. *manoo-nigraha* means not allowing the *manas* to wander here and there. We must slow down and finally stop all thoughts. We must do nothing at all. We must reach a low energy, stable state and simply remain there in perfect peace and tranquility. *yooga* means doing nothing. Become a *yoogi*. Then you are free from all problems and all worries.

3.91 Real Freedom

Freedom is the ability to do it, not to do it or to do it in a different way, all at your own will. If you are constrained to do something, if you are forced to do it in a particular way or if you are prevented from doing what you want to do, that is lack of freedom. That is slavery. That is bondage. Let us try to understand this properly.

Note that freedom is a concept that applies only to our internal world, it has nothing to do with external world or other people. It has nothing to do with government regulations or law or social and moral order. Freedom is what is inside you. Freedom is not liberty.

Some people eat anything and everything at any time of the day whether they are hungry or not. If someone politely refuses to eat, they think that man is bound, constrained, he cannot eat anything and everything whereas they are free to do so. This man was free to eat or not to eat and he simply chose not to eat, he exercised his freedom not to eat. Others, who had lost their freedom of not yielding to the temptations, eat without restraint and they thought they were free. In fact they are the slaves, they have lost their freedom of not eating. Just as you should be free to do something, you should also be free not to do it, or do it in a different way. People do not understand the concept of freedom, they confuse slavery for freedom and vice versa.

If you are really free, you must have the freedom of falling in love with this person, or with that person, or not fall in love at all. All the three must be equally easy for you to do. Think. Are you free when you fall in love? In all probability, you are not free. Love is blind. You are blind because you are unable to see. Your *buddhi*, which can see the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, the

true from the false, has been overpowered by your *manas*. The *buddhi* is unable to 'see' these distinctions. So you are blind. The *manas* has taken control. The *manas* 'sees' pleasure in love. You fall for it. For good or bad. Why do we say 'fall' in love and not 'rise' in love? Love is always a fall, you always lose your freedom. There is a fall in the degree of freedom you have. You are no longer free to think with your *buddhi*, you have become a slave of your *manas*. You have fallen. Love consists of two vowels, two consonants and two fools. We become foolish when blinded by love. We break all rules, face all kinds of shameful situations, undergo all kinds of difficulties and pains, take big risks, even risk our lives when in love. We often try to justify these foolish deeds by saying all is fine in love and war. Blind love, like war, can be destructive and devastating. Love is certainly not bad but the wise remain in control even when they are in love. Think. Perhaps you would have never done any of those foolish things if your *buddhi* had taken control over the *manas*. When the *manas* overpowers the *buddhi*, you fall, you become blind, you lose freedom and you suffer. Freedom means freedom from the instigations of our own *manas*.

You are free to do whatever you want and that is quite plain and simple. What may not be so clear is who this 'you' is. Are you free to do whatever your *manas* wants you to do? Or is it the *buddhi* that has freedom to do whatever it wants? Or is it just the body? Who has freedom? Is it your *ahaMkaara*? No, none of these. We are talking of the innermost core of yourself, more subtle than all of these, your very own self. This 'you' in the deepest sense of the word, your own self, this self is what is free, ever free, totally unconstrained by anybody anywhere anytime. Most often whatever we take as freedom is actually slavery, we will be dancing to the tunes of our *manas* and calling it freedom. Freedom is not falling into the traps set up by

our own *manas* or *buddhi*. Freedom means being able to do anything, or not to do it, or do it differently, in spite of the temptations and cravings and influences of the *manas* and *buddhi*. Freedom means doing what you want to do, not what your body or *manas* or *buddhi* wants you to do. This true 'you' that is deep inside you, your own self, the *sat-cit-aananda*, actually has no longings, no cravings, no desires, no hatred, it has nothing to gain and nothing to lose. Therefore, there is no reason for your own self to influence or force you into doing or not doing anything, good or bad. You are ever free.

If I want, 'I' meaning 'I', myself, not my *manas*, I can smoke. If I do not want to smoke, I will not. Not smoking itself is not to be confused with lack of freedom. Restraint is not loss of freedom. I am still free to smoke or not to smoke, nobody, not even my *manas* can influence or constrain me. This is the real meaning of freedom. Think about it, understand your freedom, be free, and enjoy life to its fullest. Do not become slaves of your own mental passions. A free man is happy. Masters are happy, not slaves. You become a slave when you allow your *manas* to dominate your *buddhi*. Control your *manas*. Everything in life happens inside your *manas*. Understand your *manas*, tame it, train it, control it, master it. Your *manas* should do what you want it to do, you must not do what your *manas* wants you to do. This is real freedom. This is the goal of *yooga*, this is the goal of your life.

3.92 The Goal of Human Life

You take a ball to some height and let it go. It falls. Does the ball have a choice? Can it stop and think, shall I fall down, shall I remain there itself, shall I go up instead? It cannot. It has no choice. It has to fall down. What goes

up must come down. As per the laws of physics. As per the universal, cosmic laws of nature. There is no escape. There is no freedom. Water has to evaporate from the oceans, go up and form clouds, go wherever the wind takes it, pour down one fine day, soak, sink, stagnate, flow, evaporate but ultimately go back to where it came from. It has no choice. It has no freedom. Magnets stick together. Like poles repel and unlike poles attract. Do they have a choice? Can the water burn and the fire cool? The inanimate objects of the physical world have no choice, no freedom. They have to simply follow the laws of nature. Modern science is all about understanding how objects behave and the universal laws of nature that make them behave the way they do. Physics is all about inanimate objects which have zero freedom. Dead and lifeless. Hardly useful for our lives.

Computers have to follow the instructions given. They cannot think, reason or choose. You may sometimes get a feeling that computers are becoming more and more intelligent. You might have heard of the chess playing programs which can beat even the grand masters. Or of the medical diagnostic expert systems that can diagnose diseases as effectively as expert doctors. Or about those programs which look for suspicious financial transactions and help to check fraud. Or about those science fiction movies where computers and the robots with smart computers in them start controlling their masters and we people fight to save humanity from the hands of these new masters. Are computers and robots really intelligent? Are they free? Can they take their own decisions? In a very superficial, limited sense the answer could be yes but if you look at it carefully, the answer will be no. They appear to be becoming more and more intelligent because we have been able to build several layers of interpretation so that the instructions we give become more and more general and abstract. Computers can now ‘learn’ but only in the limited sense

of generalization from given examples according to specified parameters and a prescribed method for learning these generalizations. We can learn new paradigms of ‘Machine Learning’ whereas computers can only follow the methods and procedures we specify. Computers can be programmed to exercise specified choices as per specified criteria. But in the true sense, they are just inanimate objects like any other physical thing. They are not intelligent, they have no choice but to follow our instructions. They are not free.

Living beings are more free. A sheep can go and graze at a place of its choice. A dog can bark as and when it wants. A monkey can do all its stunts and shows as per the diktats of its free will. Mosquitoes are free to go wherever they want and bite whoever they want. Some of these creatures are quite intelligent too. Ants make a house, collect and store food for the rainy season, divide work and carry out their duties in an amazingly orderly and well coordinated manner. We have many things to learn from the animal world. But the most important thing to do is to understand our own freedom, to put it to good use, and make the most of this one-in-a-life-time opportunity called life.

Plants are also free, although a bit more constrained than animals. Unlike animals, plants cannot move from place to place. They live, grow and die in the same place where they were born. Yet they have considerable amount of choice which they do exercise quite intelligently. For example, they branch out and spread their leaves to maximize the exposure to Sunlight, to balance their weight even when their roots are cut on one side, etc. They exercise freedom in terms of when to flower, when to shed their leaves, etc.

Animals have a mind, they can think, somewhat like the random, illogical thoughts that arise in our minds in

dreams. Some animals like chimps, dogs, horses and elephants are capable of limited understanding. For example, dogs understand when you dress up to go out somewhere and plead you not to leave it alone at home. Animals can show simple emotions like affection. We can communicate with them in a limited form of language. Animals have a *manas* that can perform sensory perception and exhibit limited emotions and feelings. They have some likings and dis-likings too. But the *buddhi* is not well developed. They cannot think or reason out like we can. They do not have a language to communicate effectively as we can.

Plants have no *manas*, no *buddhi*. They do not have a nervous system. They merely react to changes in their environment. Animals have a primitive *manas* and a limited *buddhi*. Some animals tend to escape when they see danger. Others get ready to fight tooth and nail. Some are generally mild. Some are generally wild. The rules of the game are simple. Never stare into the eyes of any animal, it will take it as a sign of your preparing to attack. Never try to run and escape from a bear, you cannot. Running signals an invitation to chase. Snakes are harmless unless you stamp on them or otherwise endanger them. Animals go largely by their instincts. Basic instincts like hunger, thirst, fear, and sex dominate the animal life. There is no moral code, it is simply the survival of the fittest.

For you a buffalo may not appear to be the most beautiful animal on Earth but a he buffalo gets attracted only to a she buffalo and nothing else, fortunately! A monkey goes after a monkey, a dog after a dog, an elephant after an elephant. Flies get attracted to foul smell. A dead body is a dangerous source of infection and ill-health for you but a delicious feast for the creatures of the small world. In this wonderland called Earth, each species has its own rules. And they all have to stick to their rules. No choice. No

options. No freedom. Elephants cannot fall in love with tigers or snakes cannot make friends with the mongoose. They are all limited, restricted, controlled by their natural instincts. They have no more freedom than what their instincts permit. They are not really free. Because they cannot stop, think, reason out and choose one thing or the other.

From single celled creatures came bigger ones. Plants came first, animals later. Lower animals came first, higher ones came later. Man came last. Man is a rational animal, underline animal! We are basically animals. When pushed to our limits, the animal in us comes out. Our sexual drive and the urge to dominate over others show up the animal instincts hidden in us. The brute in us keeps showing its ugly head now and then. Human body and *buddhi* are highly evolved but human *manas* is still primitive, restless, childish and ill-developed. Yet, human beings have the capacity to understand all this and evolve themselves into much higher planes. Evolution means gradual unfoldment of consciousness. As human beings we have the maximum freedom in the universe, we have enough freedom to elevate ourselves to greater heights. We must learn to control our *manas* and use our *buddhi* for succeeding in this difficult task. We are all divine beings and the goal of our life is to manifest this divinity in us. We can, provided we try hard. Other animals cannot even try. We can do it and still if we do not, that is utter wastage of this great opportunity in the form of human life. Therefore, wake up, throw away your ignorance, seek the real knowledge, and just revel in yourself. Do nothing, nothing harmful. Forget about the outside world, forget about others. Focus on your own *manas*, that is where the whole of your life is going on.

3.93 Exercising Freedom

Liberty can be withheld but freedom is always yours. Freedom is what you always have in you, not what others can give or take away. It is not enough to be free, you must exercise this freedom. You can tell the truth, or you can lie. You are free to do either. You can donate blood and save lives, or you can injure, kill and shed blood. You are free either way. You may be kind, considerate, helpful to others, especially when they are in need, or look at this as a business opportunity, exploit this demand and make money. You may try to help somebody who has a weakness of mind or exploit this through clever advertisements, brain-wash him and become a smart, successful businessman. You can give money to people who badly need money or you can trick gullible people to take loans from you even if they really do not need it and later extract heavy interest from them at the threat of a stick. You can give whatever knowledge you have to the whole of mankind or look at information as a saleable commodity, hide information and make money by selling it. You may give food free to all (as it used to be done just a hundred years ago in India, and even now in some parts of India), or adulterate food, add poison to food and get one penny more in the process. You may, as a doctor, patiently listen to your patients, take pains to diagnose their problems, determine the best treatment, administer, monitor, check, and ensure that your patients get healthy in the true sense. Or you may first collect your consultation fee, prescribe some patented commercial medicine about which you know little more than what the uneducated salesman told you, even before you get to examine the patient carefully, and send him off as you have already extracted what you wanted from your clients. You may understand and appreciate the age old adage that prevention is better than cure and work for elimination or at least reduction of the source of infec-

tion and disease such as pollution of air and water, or only hope for more and more people to fall ill so that you as a doctor you can survive and thrive in this cruel world of cut-throat competition. You may value truth, honesty, sincerity and take your work as worship. Or you may indulge in politics, spoil others also and have fun at their cost. You may go after knowledge or you may go after lust and greed. You can do this. Or that. Or many things. Or all of them. Or none of them. You are free to do Anything. You are ever free. The day you were born God gave you the entire Universe in a platter and said, “My son, here is the world, here is your body and mind, do whatever you want to do with it”. Even now it is not too late. Think and carefully choose what you want to do in life.

The body is not free. It has to die one day. There is no escape. There is no choice. The *manas* is not free, nor the *buddhi*. Those who identify themselves with their body or mind are slaves. But you are free. In *paramaarthā*, you are the self, the *sat-cit-aananda*, which is neither the *kartR* nor the *bhoktR*. You neither do anything nor abstain. You do not suffer or enjoy. You are free from all bondage, nothing can constrain or limit you. You are the whole universe, you are all powerful, all capable. No stopping you. In *vyavahāra* or practical day-to-day life, we need to use this knowledge of self to keep the *manas* under check and live a normal, good, useful, satisfying life. You are free to do whatever ‘you’ want to do in life, not what your *manas* wants you to do. Understand this difference and be happy.

3.94 The theory of *karma*

In spite of knowing all this and doing our best to live and work accordingly, we do see good things and bad things happening to us. Whom do we blame for all the bad things

that happen to us in life? It is our common experience that nothing happens without a cause. There must be a cause for everything, whether we know it or not. Nothing happens just like that, without any reason, without any cause. When we do not know the cause, and since it is not in the nature of human beings to blame some one just like that, the most scientific thing to do is to blame God or to blame ourselves. No one feels like blaming God, it is natural to take God as blameless and so we can only blame ourselves. A theory of *karma* has been proposed in our tradition to provide some kind of an explanation, some solace when things happen whose cause we do not know. Nothing happens without a cause and there must be some cause for everything, even if we do not or cannot know it. It is therefore said that you enjoy or suffer in life based on your own doings, in this life or in the past lives, and you will certainly suffer or enjoy the fruits of your current actions, in this life or in the next. This theory is only meant to motivate people to do good things and to deter them from doing bad things. This theory of *karma* is only to give solace to the bereaved and suffering, who know not the cause of their suffering and pain.

We do not like being told that we have to suffer for no reason. This leaves a vacuum, it makes us very uneasy and confused. We will not know whether we should fight back, take revenge or hope that God would punish the guilty or we should do nothing and keep quiet. We are suffering from our past bad deeds and fighting back or taking revenge may only mean that we will do more bad things and we will have to suffer more and more. This is no solution at all. How can we keep quiet when bad things are happening and the sinners are escaping unhurt? How can we be silent spectators to all the bad things that go on right in front of our eyes? But punishing the guilty is not our job. We feel uneasy keeping quiet and not doing anything. No option

is fully satisfactory. The theory of *karma* is designed only to fill such a void. Forget about others, think of yourself. See what you can do to comfort yourself, see what you can do to mitigate your pain and suffering, think what you can do to make things better in future.

Likewise, when good things happen unexpectedly, thinking that it must be because of our own past good deeds gives us a positive feeling that we must have done good things in the past, that means we are capable of doing good things, good actions will definitely result in positive results, as has happened just now. This motivates us to continue to do many more good things in life. Thus *karma* theory is a very practical and a very useful theory in both the ups and downs of life.

In our experience, we see that certain actions result in immediate results while others bear fruit after a long time. Actions done but whose fruits have not yet come, are termed *saMcita* or stored, accumulated. Actions whose fruits have started coming are called *praarabhda* - that which has been started. Like an arrow that has left the bow, there is no stopping this kind of action. Actions yet to be performed are called *aagaami*. We must experience the fruits of *praarabhda* karma now and here, there is no escape. We must be ready to experience the fruits of *saMcita* karma anytime, in the near future or after a long time or even in the next birth. Every action has a reaction. It is impossible for us to do something and not get to experience the results. We must be ready to undergo the resulting reactions for every action we perform in life.

Good actions result in good results and bad actions result in bad results. This is the common experience of all people, universally. If you see a bad man enjoying life or a good person suffering, we can explain this out in terms

of past deeds and fruits which are yet to bear. There is no logic or reason to say that good actions result in bad effects and bad actions result in good effects. Therefore, we must always try to do more and more good things and less and less bad things in life. Thus *karma* theory is very useful in maintaining moral and ethical values in society, to maximize good things and to minimize negative things in this world. This is the wisdom of our ancient sages.

This theory is often misinterpreted. *karma* theory does not mean you can go ahead and do anything to anybody - for example, you were destined to kill and the victim was destined to be killed by you, there was no escape and so you are not to be blamed. It is not that everything is predetermined and nobody can be blamed for anything. The theory of *karma* is not free licence. Such gross misinterpretations and confusions arise due to incomplete and imperfect understanding. Half knowledge is worse than useless. We have realized that we are not just bodies. We are not even our *manas* or *buddhi*, we are beyond all that. We are eternal, birthless, deathless, changeless, we are *sat-cit-aananda*. It is important to realize that this is true of everybody. Suppose you think the other person is not just a body, he is eternal, the body may come and go, nothing will happen to him and so it is OK to kill him or to torture him or cheat him. Why do you want to do any of these? You are still identifying yourself with your body, you wish to please and pamper your body by providing it with all kinds of comforts, you are dancing to the tune of your *manas* and its endless desires, you want to extract money or property from him, that is why you want to kill him or deceive him. This half knowledge, this one sided interpretation, is very dangerous. You are still at the material, worldly frame of mind and you are using abstract theories of the self as a licence to carry out harmful activities. You must treat everybody else exactly as you wish

to treat yourself. If your body is important to you, bodies are important for others as well. If pain and suffering are not good for you, they are not good for others as well. Either you must treat both yourself and others at a worldly level of *vyavahaara*, or you must treat yourself and others at the higher level of *paramaarthā*. At the level of *paramaarthā* you would have realized that there is nothing for you to gain or lose in this world, you would have absolutely no reason or motive to do any bad thing in life. Selective mixing the two levels is the cause of all misinterpretations. The theory of *karma* is very logical, very scientific, and extremely useful in practice. Do not distort it, do not misuse it.

3.95 The Essential and the Non-Essential

A whole lot of human suffering and misery stems from our incorrect understanding of what is essential and what is not. We have all come to think that cell phones, laptops, cars, refrigerators and other such man-made gadgets are essential. We cannot live without them. Earning money, buying gadgets therefore becomes the goal of life. Even education is viewed as simply a means to get a job and start earning money. What is essential? What is not?

Something is essential if you simply die without it. You may face some inconvenience, you may feel uneasy and uncomfortable without a car or an air-conditioner or a music system or a computer but you will not die. After some time you will even get used to living without them. Life goes on. These are not essential things. No man-made thing is essential. God knows what is essential for us. God has already given us all that we need. There is simply no need for us to do any research, innovate or invent anything, there

is no need for us to make anything new or different. God knows what is best for us and whatever nature has already given us is simply the best. We cannot make anything better and even trying is foolish. It is like telling God that He knows nothing, he is an idiot and only we intelligent human beings can invent and manufacture better things in this world. The very thought of man making anything on his own is an insult to God. Stop all this science and technology and industry and business and money. They are not at all essential.

Human like beings have lived on mother Earth for some 4.8 Million years now. Electricity is just a few hundred years old, hardly one hundred years old in India. More than 99.99% of human history has happened without electricity, without computers, without phones, without petroleum, without plastics. All our ancestors lived well, happily, without any complaints. Nobody asked for any of these technologies. The very fact that the human race has survived all through its history without modern science and technology is a proof that these are completely unnecessary. Technology should be at our service, that is why we develop technology. If we say we cannot live without electricity or petroleum or computers or cars or phones, this means that instead of using technology to help us live well, we have become slaves of technology. The very thought that we cannot live without technology is a sure sign of a completely weakened, seriously ill, crumbling mind. This is a sure sign that our end is near. It is high time we wake up and give up all of science and technology. We can live, we can live very well, in fact we can survive if and only if we completely give up all of science, technology, industry and economic activities that follow.

Air is essential. We will die in minutes if there is no air to breathe. Air is available all over the globe, in all cities,

towns, villages and in the wild. Wherever we go we can simply breathe air without asking anybody, without buying anything, without paying for it. Our one and only duty is to properly maintain this utterly essential resource. Is it not stupid that we are poisoning the whole atmosphere everyday by our foolish engagements in the name of science, technology, industry, economic development and what not?

Water is essential for life. Life originated in water. Nature has been very kind to us. Two thirds of the Earth's surface is covered with water. One litre of packaged drinking water costs us so much today, can anyone guess how many litres of water is there in the oceans and seas? There is a large and wonderful world under the sea with innumerable variety of plants and animals. God wants to be kind towards all the creatures who live there and towards those who live on land as well. He has created countless lakes, ponds and rivers. The Ganges alone supports more than one tenth of the entire human population on Earth, as also Millions of animals, birds and plants. We get worried if a tap leaks at home - we will be worried about the water bill, perhaps we will also be concerned that precious water is getting wasted. Any idea how much of water flows down a river? Day in and day out, for Millions of years, non-stop, water keeps flowing. The good God was not satisfied with all this. To ensure a good supply of water everywhere, even in high altitude areas, He created a massive pump. Can you imagine how many litres of water is lifted by the Sun to form the clouds? The Sun causes clouds, winds, rains and seasons. What if you had to run this great pump of nature using your tiny electric motors and pumps? There is simply no comparison. It is in fact foolish to compete with nature, it is foolish to try to alter it. We just cannot improve nature, we can only spoil it. Why even try? In order to provide for long term storage, God has also created the ground water system. If only we learn to stop

manipulating nature, we will all have plenty of good, safe, potable drinking water anywhere, anytime. That is how it was just a few decades ago. Now water has become a scarce resource. We pay so much and buy packaged drinking water and we assume it is all clean and safe. Visible floating impurities and microbes can be easily removed from any water but chemical poisons cannot be adequately removed by any known water purification system. The so called drinking water today is full of pesticides, antibiotics, all kinds of deadly poisonous chemicals. We are all being eroded from inside. In fact the human race will not be able to sustain itself on planet Earth even for a few years unless we put an immediate and unconditional end to all human activities that pollute. Practically everything we do in our daily lives starting from brushing our teeth, to eating, shopping and going to office have become polluting - chemically polluting the air, water and soil system. We must stop all this. There is no alternative.

The only essential things are air, water and food. All of us should give up all other futile activities and engage ourselves in saving ourselves. There is plenty of air and water, we only need to protect them against contamination by unscrupulous human activities. Agriculture is the best profession, the only essential profession. It is a sacred profession, a noble profession. Let us all grow something. We can grow useful plants even in pots, on the terrace, on the roadside, in open spaces, in institutional areas, in the wild. Let there is plenty of good air, water and food for everybody. What else do we need? All the other things we need - education, health, entertainment, intellectual development, arts, culture, sports, etc. can be done without using any material resources - all these are best done with our own body and mind, using only those materials that are readily and directly available in nature, such as water, stone, mud, sand, and plants. Let us all take to simple

living. Let us all become good people, by giving up all bad things we are doing.

Babies are always happy. They cry only when they are hungry or thirsty or they have some other problem. These are exceptions, as a rule they are always happy, cheerful, blissful, free from all worries and anxieties. If you also want to be happy all the time, if you want to sleep like a baby and be cheerful and carefree all the time, you must learn to be like a baby. The baby never goes after money or material wealth or name or fame or power. Parents often buy costly playthings but the baby is equally happy with simple, readily available things such as a spoon or a stick or the lid of of bottle. Happiness is the natural state of man. That is why we are one hundred percent free of all pain, all suffering, all misery, all worries, all problems when we reject the whole world and just be with ourselves, that is, when we are deep asleep. You can be happy and tension free all the time. Just live like a baby. Take to simple living. There is no other way.

3.96 City Life

In olden days, people used to live in villages. There were few big cities and most people did not prefer to live in cities. In recent times, there is a general tendency all over the world for people to abandon villages and move to big cities. Why? Every city dweller understands that city life is difficult, wasteful, even harmful. In a small village, there is no need for any transportation - we can walk or at most use a bicycle to reach any place within the village. In big cities people need to travel long distances every day. Travelling wastes time, effort and money. We feel tired. We take risks - many people meet with road accidents and many even die. We waste non-renewable energy sources such as

petrol and diesel. We produce dangerous chemicals in the exhaust and poison the whole atmosphere. Vehicles cause noise pollution and heat pollution as well. Production and distribution of cars and petroleum cause pollution. The worn out rubber from the tyres poisons the world we live in. Who wants to travel? Who gains from all this? Only the greedy businessman. The petroleum companies make profit, the transport companies make money, the automobile manufacturer makes his buck, the common man loses in every possible way. His health and longevity are affected. He suffers and dies. But how does it matter to a businessman, as long as he makes profit, what happens to others is immaterial, after all, businessmen are not really men, they are not humane. If there were no big cities, the automobile manufacturers and the petroleum industry will lose money. All people in the world, all living creatures, in fact even these businessmen will stand to gain. The world will be a much better place to live. Every one can live in good health. There is no need to earn or waste money for travelling. Is it not? Think.

The same logic can be applied to supermarkets and shopping malls. Even to corporate hospitals and educational institutions. It is all based on money, the greed for money. Let all people in the world suffer untold misery but I want more and more money is the slogan of the greedy. Science, technology, progress, advancement are all terms employed to camouflage the underlying reality. If nobody is greedy, if people all live and work for everyone's good, if our collective wisdom overpowers the individual greed, we can make this world a much better world for all of us. There is no need for modern science and technology. This is all a game of the wicked and crooked money-mongers. Let us understand the reality. Let us reject the false claims of science and technology. Most items available in a supermarket store are completely unnecessary. Think ten times

before you buy anything. Is it absolutely essential? Can you not live without it? By buying industrial products, we are all indirectly contributing to industrial pollution, right?

Cutting trees and building concrete buildings is not progress. Converting agricultural lands into concrete jungle is not advancement. Human progress is not to be measured in terms of GDP or per capita income or material wealth and property. We are human beings because we can think. Let us progress in our thinking. We can do that without material gadgets. In fact technology distracts, confuses and interferes with our thinking. Let us seek real knowledge. Let us avoid and overcome these obstacles called science and technology. Let us put an end to economics and business. Let us learn to live.

There is enough for everybody in the world but extreme concentration in one place in the name of city life is not sustainable. City is not a sustainable idea. People have to live where food is grown, where cows live and give milk. Roads, railways, automobiles, trains, aircraft, food processing, packaging are all largely unnecessary. We cannot live in big cities and avoid producing large quantities of hazardous waste materials everyday. Let us reject city life, let us all take to simple, natural, happy living.

Vested interests including governments continuously campaign and confuse people. Forget about the whole world and focus first on your own *manas*, understand its weaknesses and overcome them with practice, know its strengths and strengthen them further, keep your mind clean and clear, master your own mind and then you can easily avoid falling into the trap of these vested interests. Never go by what others say, listen to the silent voices from deep within. Overcome the temptations of your *manas*, use your *buddhi* for this, detach yourself from the body and mind, locate

yourself at the self. Then you will not need science or technology or gadgets or research or industries of shops or any such thing. Take to simple living, shake away all the unnecessary lint and frills. Give up city life. This is good for you, this is good for everybody, God will be pleased with you.

In order to clean the surroundings of all the fallen leaves and other garbage, we first sweep and pile up all the wastes in heaps and then dispose them off as appropriate. Likewise, God wants to dispose off all evil people and he has swept and piled up all these wicked people who are destroying nature in heaps called cities. The next step is to dispose them off, by setting fire, by carrying them off and dumping them in the ocean, by burying them, whatever. Earthquakes, tsunami, fire accidents, nuclear radiation - these are all the weapons in His hands to clean the world He has created of all evil creatures. The destruction of the world has already begun. City life is wasteful, harmful, destructive, sinful. All city linked human activities are sinful activities. City dwellers are sinners. They will be punished, one day or the other. Perhaps very soon. All city dwellers must realize this and give up city life before it is too late.

3.97 Money

The human society today believes that money is the basis of life. Money is taken to be the very foundation of human existence. Nothing happens in the world today without money. We need money for everything - to eat and to drink, to walk and to talk, to sleep and to attend the calls of nature. If you live in a forest or in a small village, you can spend the night and attend the calls of nature in the most natural way without any worry and without spend-

ing a pie but in a modern city, you will have to shell out huge sums of money just to find a safe place to sleep over night and go through the morning ablutions. That is why money-minded people want you to abandon village life and come and live in a big city. Today development has come to be viewed as synonymous with economic development. The rich countries are called the developed countries. The rich man is respected, the poor man is ill-treated, as if he is a sinner. Is money really the basis of human life? Do we require money at all? People lived without money for hundreds of thousands of years, why do we need money now? No other animal or plant requires money to live even today. Why do we need? Think.

We need food and water to live. Nature directly gives us plenty of nutritious food and clean water. We need air to breathe. There is plenty of oxygen in the air. We need to take care of our health. Nature also gives us medicinal plants. There is enough for everybody's need. There is nothing that we need to do or produce or sell or buy, we only need to take care of the natural resources and fight against commercial exploitation, environmental pollution and poisoning of air, water and food. Nature gives us everything we need. God or nature did not give us money! Why? Do we need money at all? Think.

We do not need money to buy air to breathe, or water to drink or food to eat. They are all readily available in nature. At most we need to spend our time and effort in growing some food. Do we need money for education? No, not really. The best education, real knowledge, is free, absolutely free, even today. Anybody in the world who seeks knowledge, seriously and sincerely, anybody who is a worthy student, will be given knowledge without any conditions, without any fees. This is a promise. Even today, the best books are extremely cheap, if not totally

free. Real education is free, it is only fake education which costs. What about health care? Don't we need money to take care of our health? No, not really. Health care does not mean treating patients with medicines. Prevention is better than cure. You can prevent diseases, you can remain strong and healthy, without spending a pie. Health can be the rule and ill health a rare exception. Most people will not need any health care at all throughout their life. In the rare event that somebody falls sick, real health care is also available free of charge, or at a very nominal fee even today. For example, you can get treated for cancer for just one rupee a day in India today. You only need to go to the right doctors. Fake doctors would of course charge a lot but where is the need to seek such fake doctors? The Sun is free, the rivers are free, love is free, affection is free, care is free, laughter is free, joy is free, happiness is free. Money cannot buy you anything good in life. We really do not need money at all. All good things are already there with us and there is nothing more that money can buy.

This may sound a bit too philosophical. You may say all this sounds fine in theory but in practical reality, don't we need some money? As long as there are people who value money, yes, you may need some money because others demand money from you. But how much do we need? You need money for buying food and you need food daily. You need money to buy a pair of clothes and a few other such items once in an year or so. What else? Nothing much more than this. This will add up to a very small amount, perhaps a small fraction of what you are already earning. Sit down and calculate, how much money do you really need? If you earn more, you must know how to spend that excess money for the welfare of all human beings, for the good of all living creatures, for the good of the whole Universe. Otherwise, you will start misusing that excess money for doing wasteful and harmful activities. We get

busy doing all kinds of mad things, entangled and lost in the whirlpool of life. We stop thinking, where is the time to think? We become slaves of our own passions, we lose freedom, we suffer. Earning more money than required is very bad. There is enough money for all the people in the world to live happily. In fact there is more money than people need, that is why they go shopping and travelling and what not. Governments have simply too much money at their disposal and they do not know how to spend it. Poverty is not our problem today, the real problem is too many people have too much money and they do not know what to do with it.

Most of what you find in a supermarket store are not at all necessary. But the greedy businessmen who manufacture, distribute and sell these useless gizmos would like you to believe that they are very useful, if not essential. They brain wash you into believing that these gadgets simplify your life. You cannot simplify life by adding more and more into your basket of life! The simplest life you can have is when you possess nothing other than your own body and mind. Businessmen want to make your life so complicated that you do not even understand where you are losing money. Of course, all the money you lose, they take. Earlier you could have paid cash and purchased some item and the whole transaction would have been over then and there. Now you pay through your credit card, maintain accounts, remember to write cheques and send payments in time or shell out interest and penalty. The head ache continues for months. You do not have to carry cash. That is called freedom. But you carry tonnes of head ache in your brain! Is that freedom?

One wrong step leads to the other, endlessly. You buy a car so that you do not have to walk up to the bus stand, wait for the public transport bus, get into a crowded bus

and struggle to sit or stand in the midst of all kinds of people, clean or unclean, healthy or ill. Fine. You may initially think that you will use your car only as and when really necessary. But the day you buy the car, you will realize that you will have to use it quite a bit, so that the engine runs-in and becomes smooth and stable. You will also be told that you will get free service at specified points of time and you are expected to have completed so many miles by then. You will realize that you have to burn precious fuel, add to traffic on the roads, take risks and put others' lives at risk, and keep using your car, for the sake of learning driving, for the sake of getting your car registered, for the sake of refuelling, and for the sake of periodic maintenance, none of which you had in your mind when you initially wanted a car. Needless to say, you may have to use the car unnecessarily, say, to please your near and dear ones. The manufacture of the car and all its parts and components, its usage and final disposal, invariably involve exploiting and damaging natural resources, polluting the environment and affecting the life and health of Millions of living creatures. Think carefully about each item and you will yourself realize this. In life you cannot do one wrong thing and stop, each wrong move will force you to do more and even more, endlessly. By the time you realize that you have been the supporter or cause of enormous amount of wasteful and harmful activities, all of which could have been easily avoided, it is already too late. Each individual goes through the same bad experiences, we rarely learn from the experience of the elders. Money is bad simply because it forces us to do all kinds of bad things in life. The poor are the most humane people in the world, God loves the poor. Poor countries are good countries, rich countries are cruel, crooked, cunning, bad. Observe the whole world and you will find how true this is even today.

We spend all our time in earning money. During the In-

dustrial revolution, when people were working 6 to 8 hours a day, one of the arguments for automation was that it would give us more leisure, so that we can pursue higher interests in life. Now people work some 16 hours a day and still there is always so much of pressure of work. Just think of all the time and effort you spend on earning money, bank and ATM transactions, credit cards and debit cards, account keeping, insurance and so on. Some people get into stock market world and spend all their time and energy in monitoring stock market trends, investing, buying, selling, etc. Their minds are so much pre-occupied with these thoughts that they hardly find time to look at anything else in life. They are always in a grip of tension, anxiety, worry. Some may even neglect their family. Some get so much involved and obsessed all the trivial activities of life that they neglect their own health. What do we gain by all this? Does anybody have peace of mind? Can anybody claim that he or she is one hundred percent happy and satisfied? There is not a single example in the entire history of mankind where money has given us everything we need, including peace, happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment. On the contrary, we keep coming across innumerable cases of how money has destroyed people. Yet we all simply presume and take for granted without proof, that money is the most important thing for us in life. How can we call ourselves scientific in our outlook?

We do not know the boundary between necessity and luxury. We do not know how inflation, government policies and market trends affect our monetary needs in future. We play safe and we wish to err on the side of going for more rather than less. We keep on asking for more and we never know where to stop. We have exploited nature beyond repair. We are heading for a major environmental disaster. Life on Earth will no longer be possible in just a few years from now. Two more degrees of global warming

and the world would be destroyed. Already we are seeing signs of major changes in climate. All the air and water on planet Earth have already been poisoned. There will not be any normal children born in a few years from now - all will be mentally retarded and abnormal. No one is healthy. We are destroying the very foundations of life. We are killing the goose that lays golden eggs. Why cut off the very branch of the tree on which we are sitting? Is this not foolish? Life has become wretched and miserable. But the thirst for money never gets quenched. Unless and until we give up our fancy for money and stop all our economic activities, we are sure to destroy ourselves and destroy the whole world. No God can save us. Think.

Money was created so that people get a clear, direct picture of the value of things so that nobody gets cheated when they exchange things. Today, the main purpose of money is to cheat. The greed of a few is causing untold misery to Millions, there is something seriously wrong somewhere. Every rich man thinks and believes that it is all his hard earned money and he has done nothing wrong to acquire it. The day he realizes his fallacies, his entire empire crumbles and he finds himself burnt to ashes from within. There is nothing more dangerous than money in this world, it is more dangerous than fire. Do not play with money. Be satisfied with the little that you already have or you can earn without harming anybody, without poisoning the environment. It is always a zero sum game, money does not fall from the sky, if you gain, some one else has to lose it, at least nature has to lose it. Making profit is therefore a sin. All business is a sin, a crime against man and God.

Give food to a hungry man, he will eat it eagerly, until he is full. Then he is satisfied, he wants no more. In fact it will be a punishment if you force him to eat more. The very smell of food will become repulsive and he will

start showing signs of nausea. When it comes to food, we all can get full satisfaction, we can reach a stage where we say 'thanks, no more please, enough'. Do we say enough for money? A mosquito keeps sucking blood, even after it is full, even as the blood oozes out of the other end of bloated stomach. People have become like this. A successful husband is one who can earn more than what his wife can spend, and, a successful wife is one who can get such a husband! Like a gas that keeps filling all the space available, even as the available space increases, our desire for money keeps on growing without limit. Whatever we get, we will never say enough. Money can never give us full satisfaction, any amount of money will still leave us dissatisfied. Happiness implies being fully satisfied, money can never give us happiness. This is the proof. Even after seeing this proof, if you still go after money, should we not call you mad and send you to the mental hospital? Think.

We earn money so that we can build and own a house. Housing has become very costly and many people work all through their life just for this. Housing is costly in big cities, it is still relatively very cheap in small towns and villages. Why seek city life? We build big, luxurious houses. How much space do we actually need? We need some six feet by three feet space, horizontal and flat, to lie down and sleep. If we do not get even this much of space and we are forced to sit or stand all through night, we would feel miserable. If we have more than this much of space, that is useless. We cannot spread thin and occupy all of a 30 x 30 room, nor can we trade sleeping time or intensity for more space. Whatever be the space available, we get the same sleep. Why build large houses, fill it with furniture and all kinds useless items, and then worry about keeping it neat and clean? Why spend so much of time, effort and money just to clean the house? A house is not a museum, nor is it an exhibition hall nor is it a palace. Keep your

house small, free from furniture and all junk, keep it clean and hygienic, without using chemical cleaning agents etc. Cleanliness is next to Godliness and cleanliness comes automatically with simple living, without need for so much of money. Money only makes things worse.

A lot of money is required to wage a war. No money is required for peace. You cannot purchase peace with money. A lot of money is required to carry out the agenda of modern science and technology. No money is required to practice real science. A lot of money is required to discover new drugs, to find ways of mass-manufacturing them, for building super-specialty hospitals, to train doctors etc. No money is required to maintain good health. A lot of money is required to build temples, churches and mosques, to propagate and spread religion etc. No money is required to seek God. A lot of money is required to build large colleges and universities with well equipped laboratories etc. No money is required for realizing the truth. Money can only buy useless, dangerous, bad things. Think.

When money becomes the only criterion, we start doing all kinds of bad things. You will keep driving your car through the city roads arguing that that is cheaper than parking it. You fly back to your city everyday because stay in a hotel is costlier. What about wastage of fuel? What about pollution? You never even think. Enormous amount of cruelty is seen in the world today because people have come to value money and only money, nothing else. Doctors perform unnecessary surgical operations to get money. Pharmaceutical companies add toxic colouring agents to medicines to attract gullible customers. A vast majority of drugs in the market are unnecessary, most are harmful. Companies go to any length to curb simple and effective home remedies etc. Everybody is cheating everybody else. How can anybody be happy in such a world? Those who

have money, those who can afford, think that they can do whatever they want with that money. Money really does not belong to anybody. Money symbolizes wealth and all wealth belongs to mother Earth, nothing falls from the sky. All money is a common shared resource of all people, in fact of all living creatures. Nobody has a right to spend their money whichever way they want. Even governments cannot spend money as they wish.

Does money really exist? Where? We call a piece of paper as money, is it really money? Who gives it its value? The value of money lies in our minds. The dollar note has no value unless we value it. Money has no value unless we value it. If we stop valuing money, we will not need money at all. Imagine that one fine day nobody values your money. Just as you cannot exchange a lump of mud for anything else, you are unable to buy anything because nobody else values your money. What will you do? The value of your money is not in your hands, it is in the hands of others. Therefore, money is never a safe and sure guard. God can save you, not money. Think.

The English dictionary has more than a hundred thousand words. If only we can properly understand one simple word, the shortest word, namely, 'I', then all our problems will go. It is not without reason that the word 'I' is always written in capitals. 'I' is the only capital we need in life. Unlike the financial capital which is ever elusive and unsteady, this 'I' remains firmly rooted in us from birth to death, all through the ups and downs of life, and never lets us down. Forget money, forget financial capital, forget capitalism, capitalize on 'I', the true knowledge of the self and be free. The moment you detach yourself from the body and mind and re-attach yourself to the self, the very notion of money vanishes. If you want to live well and enjoy life, turn away from money, life is in the exact opposite

direction.

3.98 *dharma*

We see buildings of all kinds of shapes and sizes in our modern cities. One thing that is common to all of them is the foundation. Without a strong, solid foundation, no building is safe and secure. In fact a proper foundation is essential for anything that we may build. What about human society? Is it not necessary to have a proper, strong, lasting foundation for building this big empire called human society? What can form such a solid foundation for our society? Can it be money? No, we have seen how hollow and fragile this imaginary entity called money is. Many a thriving economy has collapsed overnight in the history of mankind. Money and economics simply cannot be the foundation on which we can build and sustain human society. What about science and technology? No, science and technology are destructive by nature, how can we build something as significant as the whole society on such a hollow and destructive foundation? What about weapons of mass destruction and military power? No, USSR, which was once a super-power, collapsed overnight, military power is too destructive in nature for constructing our society on. We have tried all these kinds of experiments in our history, and we have invariably failed miserably. The human society is now on the verge of collapse. In fact the whole world is on the verge of total destruction. Because we are living in a world without a proper foundation.

There is only one thing in this Universe which can support and sustain human life. It is *dharma* which sustains the world. *dhaarayatee iti dharmaH* - the very word *dharma* means that which sustains. Only *dharma* can form a proper, solid, strong, lasting foundation for human soci-

ety. Neither Jesus Christ nor Lord Buddha nor Mohammad nor Lord Rama nor Lord Krishna spoke of scientific progress, technological advancements or economic development. All wise men, all sages, all seers, all monks, all gurus have only spoken of *satya*, *ahiMsaa* and *dharma*, whatever be the terms they have actually used for these.

What exactly is this *dharma*? In simple terms *dharma* means *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. *satya* implies telling the truth. *satya* implies complete compatibility between what we think, what we say and what we do. We must say what we think, we must say everything that we think, only what we think, nothing but what we think. We must do what we say, only what we say, nothing but what we say, everything that we say. We must speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. No advertisement tells the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. No TV channel or radio station or newspaper does. Mixing truth with falsity, like mixing pure water with dirty water, can only be considered false, dirty. No commercial company tells everything it knows to others freely, without any hesitation. No government does. The entire notion of economics, commerce, business, industry, sales, marketing and management, are simply against the principle of *satya*, they are against the principle of *dharma*.

ahiMsaa implies being kind to all living creatures, not being unkind or cruel to any. Terrorizing, torturing, injuring, killing of animals or human beings is against the principle of *ahiMsaa*, against *dharma*. For life to go on, we must put an end to all human activities which harm animals, or other human beings. Everything we are doing today is adding deadly chemical poisons to the air, water and soil system, harming the health and life of other living creatures. We must simply stop all these activities - travelling, shopping, eating out, functions and parties and

meetings and what not. Most activities of the government must simply be stalled, immediately, unconditionally, irrevocably. There is no other way to sustain life.

dharma is universal, it is non-sectarian, it is applicable to all people in all places and at all times. It is beyond race and religion, caste and creed, age, sex, nationality, whatever. *dharma* can therefore unite all the peoples of the world, it can help us overcome all the artificial barriers we have built around ourselves, it can help us re-create a happy, peaceful, progressive, truly human society and sustain it for long. Choose *dharma*, give up money, science, technology, industry, business, weapons and all other destructive ideas.

We use our knowledge, our intelligence, technology, money, material wealth, position, power etc. to take good care of ourselves, to avoid or escape from dangers, to survive in the face of natural calamities, war, terrorist attacks and so on. When we are deep asleep, however, none of these will come to our help, neither money nor technology nor intelligence can save us, we will be completely helpless. Everyday we all go to sleep and become totally helpless. It is only our good deeds that can save us, only God can save us, not science or technology or money. If you woke up in the morning today, it is only because of the grace of God, for all you know, you might never have woken up. We should spend every moment of our waking life in protecting *dharma* and *dharma* will in turn protect us in the hour of the need. Be good to everybody, help everybody, and you will be surrounded by friends. Cheat everybody, hurt everybody, and you will find yourself surrounded by enemies. If you use all your intelligence to outsmart your competitors and cheat all your customers throughout your life, no one will give you even a glass of water when your time comes. Even God will not help sinners. Think.

If we do not wake up today, if we do not realize and change our ways and means, nature knows how to force it on us. Nature has already started showing its anger. Very soon, in just a few years, we are going to see total destruction. This is not a prediction of some stupid astrologer, this is what even the scientists are saying. The process has already begun, the signs are clearly visible, anybody with his eyes and ears open can feel it. Let us wake up today, there may not be any tomorrow otherwise. Let us bring back *dharma*. Let us bring back *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. These two are enough.

The purpose of a government is to protect *dharma*, that is, *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. A government has no other job, governments should give up all other activities. Governments collect so much of tax, they have colossal amounts of money and they do not know what to do with it. Taxation must be drastically reduced. Most ministries and departments are not required at all. There is no need to make fresh legislature. The only laws we require are *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. Violation of *satya* and *ahiMsaa* must be made punishable offenses. The only duty of a government is to enforce these two laws. Most harmful, wasteful, exploitative, human activities will automatically come down, most of the problems faced by the human society today will automatically get solved. War, crime, terrorism, exploitation, poverty, ill-health, unemployment, will all go away.

Law, judiciary, legislation, governance, taxation, development, welfare, education, research, entertainment, media, sports, arts, culture, and all other aspects of human life must be founded and practiced on the basis of *dharma*, on the basis of *satya* and *ahiMsaa* alone. Let us bring back the light of real knowledge and remove this dark shroud of ignorance, let us bring back the glory of mother Earth, let

everybody live life to the fullest, let every living creature enjoy its life to the fullest. Let us learn to live and let live.

3.99 *mamakaara*

You go to a post office for some work. You see rooms, people, furniture, etc. You may sit on a chair, you may use a table, you may use the lamps and fans while you are at work there. As soon as you finish your work, you go back. You never get a feeling that the buildings or the people or the furniture or any of the objects you saw there are yours. You never get a desire to acquire or control any of those, you never felt sad that you had to leave them all behind when you left after doing your work. Life is like that. You come to this world empty handed, naked, wearing your birthday suit, so to say, you go back empty handed. As long as you are here, you may use the available resources for carrying out your essential activities but nothing is yours. Give up *mamakaara* - the feeling that something is yours. Nothing is yours.

When you go to a different city for work or pleasure, you stay in a hotel. You are allowed to stay, eat, sleep and use the furniture and fixtures and fittings there but nothing is yours. You cannot claim anything, you cannot start controlling anything, you cannot dominate and suppress others, you cannot deny other legitimate users from using them, you cannot take away anything with you. Nothing is yours. If you damage anything, you have to pay for it. Life is like that. Air, water, soil, trees, animals, the Sun, the Moon, the rivers, mountains and forests, everything existed before you came to this world, they will continue to exist after you go, nothing is yours, you cannot damage anything. You cannot dig our petroleum or other minerals, you cannot stop the flow of rivers by building dams, you

cannot cut trees, you cannot touch any animal, you have no right. You must leave behind everything in good shape, as they were when you came, and go empty handed. Otherwise you will have to pay a heavy price. God owns this world and he has only permitted you to come and stay here for a short while, everything in the world belongs to Him, not to you. This is life.

Today we have developed a great sense of ownership and controller-ship over the entire universe. We human beings think that the whole world, all the plants and animals, all the natural resources, everything is ours. We have started exploiting, we have started damaging the natural resources. Who has given us permission to drill oil wells and take out petroleum? Who has given us permission to build dams, stop the natural flow of rivers, generate electricity? Who has given us the permission to cut trees, make cement and steel, build concrete buildings? Who has given us permission to damage the air, water and soil system? Neither nature nor God nor any other living species has given us permission to do anything with nature. We can breathe the air, we just cannot do anything else with the atmosphere. We can drink the water from a river, we can take bath or wash our clothes and vessels, but we cannot do anything else. We belong to this land, land does not belong to us. Nature is a common shared resource of all living beings, including those yet to come. We have no right to do anything that poisons, exploits or damages the environment. From brushing our teeth in the morning to going to sleep at the end of the day, practically everything that we are doing today is damaging the natural resources. This is sin. This is a punishable offence, we will be punished, by nature. No escape. Wake up now.

Nature has already started showing its anger, there is global warming, the Himalayas are melting, ground wa-

ter is depleting, soil fertility is gone, weather is becoming increasingly harsh and unpredictable, nobody is healthy, many species of life forms are going and many are gone for ever. Our end is near. Either we put an immediate and unconditional end to all human activities that damage the environment or nature will finish us off very soon. Nature has been giving us so many warnings but we have still not woken up. It is already quite late. It is high time we wake up.

We have to develop this feeling that nothing is ours. Even our body is not ours, we have been allowed to live in it, we have to take good care of it as long as we live there and then we must leave it back and go without any feeling of loss or sadness, without any hesitation. We have to live and work only with our own body, the limbs and sense organs, with our *manas* and *buddhi*, we have to give up all man-made gadgets, artifacts, instruments, equipment, machines, materials. Give up shopping, give up travelling, give up earning, money is not yours. Once you give up the feeling of ownership, your life will become simple, all your worries will go. You are safe and secure. All fear of losing something will vanish. All longing for buying or acquiring something will melt. Nothing is yours. You cannot sell anything. There is no motivation to cheat, fleece, extract, snatch away anything from anybody, there is no motivation to tell lies. Nobody will trouble you, you will always be peaceful and happy. There will be no need for money, you will start laughing at this hollow and meaningless concept of economic development. There will be no industries, no pollution, nobody will fall sick so easily, everybody will have a strong and healthy body, everybody will have a strong and healthy mind, life will just become great.

A boy put his hand into a jar containing chocolates

and grabbed so many that he could not take out his hand through the neck of the jar. He could take out his hand only after he let go the chocolates. To relieve yourself from all the problems of the world, you will have to give away all that you are holding on to. The feeling of 'mine' should go away, completely.

Take to simple living. You have come here to live, work, enjoy life, not to settle down, occupy, acquire, hoard, control, dominate, suppress, rule. Do your work without harming anybody in any way. You have a right to enjoy life. Your children also have a right to enjoy life, the future generations have an equal right over natural resources. Who are we to exploit and damage, that too what is not ours?

You are not the boss, He is the boss. Your duty is only to work, He will take care of everything, leave all worries to Him. You have to work for a full month in your office or factory and only at the end of the month you will get your salary, right? The same way, you have to work for a full life and only after that think of any rewards and fruits of your action. During your life time, you should not even think of success, name, fame or any kind of returns. Your ROI (return on Investment) will come after you die, think like this and work. Work, work with sincerity and dedication, work without harming anybody. This is life.

Most ordinary people never get a feeling that a forest or a river or a mountain or a beach or a mine is theirs. It is only the few rich, powerful and ignorant, including governments, that try to occupy, hold and control everything including natural resources. But it is the ordinary well meaning people who indirectly support all this by asking for the comforts and conveniences of technology. If we all stop or drastically reduce travelling, the demand for

petroleum will come down, prices will come down, profit margins will come down, motivation to engage in all these damaging activities will come down, many things may even become uneconomical and completely given up. We buy wooden furniture, we want to decorate our homes and offices with wood panelling, we use so much of paper, indirectly demanding that trees be cut and forests destroyed. Indirectly and unknowingly, we all keep committing sins. So we suffer in life. Take to simple living, give up your fancy for all things not directly given by God, and then see the difference.

3.100 The Crow and the Ship

Now look at the figure in section 2.34. We all have a natural tendency to attach ourselves at the wrong point. All that we have to do in life is to detach ourselves from the wrong places and re-attach ourself at our own true self. This is best done in stages. Let us recapitulate these stages.

The first step is to realize that we cannot get what we want in life by going after the external, physical, material world. The pleasures we can derive from these external objects and people is trivial, fleeting, and invariably mixed up with a lot of pain and suffering. This *viveeka* leads to *vairaagya*, we are no longer carried away by the attractions of the outside world. We give up our attachments to all that is ours, we give up *mamakaara*. Nothing in this whole world is mine. Nobody is dear to me. The next step is to realize that we are not merely bodies. We should give up our attachment to our bodies, to sense organs, to the endless dumps of data they keep throwing at us all the time to attract us, to distract us, to confuse us. We need to take good care of our body, its health and fitness and that is all. There is no need to pamper our bodies, there

is no need to worry about minor discomforts to the body. Earning money and buying gadgets for the comfort and convenience of our body will no longer be our goal in life. There is no need to shop, there is no need to buy anything other than the bare essentials. There is no need to travel, after all the whole notion of going from one place to another is based on our attachment to our bodies. The very notion of here and there is body-centric, the mind itself can go from anywhere to anywhere without need for petrol or diesel or automobiles or trains or aircraft. The third step is to give up our attachment to our *amtaHkaraNa*, or the mind, including the *manas* and *buddhi*. Once we give up this, we are no longer doers, we are no longer enjoyers or experiencers. In fact we are not even thinkers. You will simply not be able to say 'I do not think so' or 'I cannot accept this'. You are already beyond language and logic. There is no need to prove anything, there is no need to convince you of anything. You have crossed these stages. We must also give up our *ahaMkaara*, the I-ness in us. There is no longer any 'I' in us. 'I' has become one with you, he, she, it, that, everything, the whole universe. If we can really give up our hold on our *antaHkaraNa* completely, the *manas* has already become *amanas*, we have actually become one with the whole universe. All fears are gone. All worries are gone. All longing is gone. There are no more any desires, no more any wants, no more any dissatisfaction. All problems are gone once and for all, permanently, irreversibly. You have become God. The goal of life is fully met.

We have to necessarily cross the level of the mind, we have to necessarily cross the level of language, thought, logic and proof. We have to reach where words do not reach, reasoning does not reach, the eyes do not reach. The wise reader would have understood that what is shown as 'I' in this figure is not the self. You are still seeing the fig-

ure with your *manas*, using your eyes, in the light of optical light. The self is not object to anything, it cannot be known objectively. It cannot be shown. Clearly, the picture, like words, are helpful only to the extent they help us realize and get rid of our ignorance, neither words nor pictures can show us the self objectively. The self can only be realized, experienced directly. This is not at all difficult. After all you are realizing your own self, it cannot be away from you.

We can never see or show numbers but we teach the concept of numbers by showing pictures. We teach the concept of number five by showing a picture of 5 apples. Neither the student nor the teacher ever confuses apple itself for the number 5. Everything that we have given in this book, including all the examples and reasoning, should be taken in this spirit. Pierce all the layers of ignorance that shroud the light of real knowledge deep within you. Cross all the hurdles, one by one, with constant effort, and you will finally reach your own self. Nothing else remains. All problems, all pain, all suffering will have vanished automatically. You are floating in an ocean of pure bliss. There is happiness, peace, tranquility, bliss everywhere. We started this book with this promise. We have lead you all the way to this state. Now it is all up to you. Only human beings can reach this stage, no other animal can. Do not waste your life, reach the goal of your life and be free. May God bless you.

A crow flew from its nest and perched on the mast of a ship. The ship sailed away and the crow did not notice. After a while, it tried again and again but could not find its nest anywhere, there was only water all over. Each time it tried harder but failed. Finally, it summoned all its courage and flew so far away from the ship that it could locate and go back to its own abode, never to return to the ship again. You try hard to tell yourself that you are

not just a body but the mind keeps coming back. You must keep trying, harder and harder, until you discover the truth, you understand the value of realizing the truth, you understand the joy of going back to your own home, and you will never return to this false world again. May God bless you.

3.101 *aatma-hatya*

The worst thing that we can do in life is to end our life, that is, commit suicide or *aatma-hatya*. Truly speaking, our *aatma* is eternal, it has no birth or death, it is the all pervading universal truth, it is *sat*, it is *cit*. Therefore, the *aatma* can never be killed, either by you or by anybody else. This term *aatma-hatya* is a misnomer. Not knowing who exactly they are, ordinary people use all kinds of terms without understanding their meaning. When somebody dies, people say ‘let us pray for the peace of his *aatma*’. *aatma* is always at peace, during life, before and after. It is only the *manas* that loses peace and remains restless throughout life. At the time of death, the *manas*, along with all its *vaasana*-s and feelings and emotions and wants and desires, as also the *buddhi* and *ahaMkaara*, vanish like a shadow of an object that has been taken away. What remains is the *aatma*, which is totally unperturbed, unmoved. It is always at peace, it is just a witness to the whole drama of life and death. No one can actually do anything to himself or herself. The body and its parts, the *manas* and the *buddhi* can collude and work out an evil and stupid plot to kill themselves. They are all foolish, utterly foolish. We should not cry for fools who end their own life. No sane person will end his or her own life, come what may. We must boldly face all the ups and downs in life. Good things and bad things keep coming in cycles, like the spokes of a wheel. When bad things happen to us, we

must summon courage and simply wait for good times to come. When good things happen, we must not get carried away in excitement and lose our sense of direction or goal. We must remain, knowing that after good times, bad times may come any time. This is the secret of life.

You may conclude that most people who continue to live without taking extreme steps like suicide are all intelligent and wise. Wrong! Most people are actually committing suicide, in a different sense. We are not our bodies, we are not our brains, we are not our *manas* or *buddhi* or even *ahaMkaara*. We are the *sat-cit-aananda*, we are, verily, *brahma* - the all inclusive, all knowing, all powerful universe. Yet we continue to identify ourselves with our body, sense organs and mind, we keep worrying about their welfare, we feel disturbed when something happens to any of them, we spend all our life trying to please the body and the mind, forgetting our own true self, as if it is dead. We consider all pseudo things and we ignore the real thing. We consider everybody but we forget our self. Is this not a kind of suicide? Is this not utterly foolish? It is because of this that we suffer throughout our life. We can simply get rid of all of our problems in one go by simply going back to ourself. This is the secret of life.

God created us in His image but we treat ourselves as if we are mere bodies. We have to realize the God is us, we are all divine. To do this, we must kill all the shadows and seek the original thing. We must kill the body, that is, kill the body-sense in us, we must kill the 'I = My Body' equation, we must stop pampering and pleasing our bodies. We must kill the body in the sense that it no longer disturbs us. This is *aasana-siddhi*. We must kill the *praaNa*, we must stop breathing, in the sense that our breathing no longer disturbs us. This is *praaNa siddhi*. Respiration must become slow, steady, smooth, effortless, automatic,

unnoticeable. We must kill our sense organs, they must stop looking out, they must withdraw. We must see nothing, hear nothing, touch and feel nothing, taste nothing, smell nothing. This is *pratyahaara*. We must then kill our *manas*, through *manoo-nigraha*, so that all the internal enemies - *kaama*, *kroodha*, *loobha*, *mooha*, *mada*, *maatsarya* vanish. We must kill the *manas* in the sense that we are no longer disturbed by its endless desires, restlessness, foolishness, childishness. We must kill the *manas* so that we can do nothing and still feel happy, comfortable, tranquil. The urge to keep doing something or the other must go. Keeping quiet, not speaking and doing nothing should become the easiest things to do. We must kill all the *ma-makaara* in us, the feeling of possession should go, we must feel at ease to think that nothing is ours, all our fears must go. We must simplify life, give up things one by one, until nothing remains for which we have any great attachment. We must kill our *buddhi* so that all its logic and reasoning must stop confusing and worrying us. All our doubts and confusions must go away completely. Finally, we must kill our *ahaMkaara*, our ego, our pride, *kartRtva bhaava* or feeling of doer-ship, we must get rid of *karma-phala-aasakti*, we must give up all desires for the fruits of our actions. The 'I' in us should go. Now we become free, totally free, there is no one to trouble us, there is no one in this universe who can disturb our peace and tranquility. We can simply remain at peace with ourself, we can remain happy and blissful, we can enjoy our freedom in the true sense, we can enjoy life in the true sense. This is the secret of life - kill them all whom you mistakenly thought were you, until you alone remain. This is *yooga*, this is freedom, this is truth, this is life. Simply live. Live simply. Do nothing. Just enjoy life. Be happy. May God bless you.

3.102 From Theory to Practice

In life you may not get everything that you desire but you will definitely get everything you deserve. God has the capacity to give you whatever you want, he is also willing, in fact eager to give you everything. But it does not come just for the asking, you have to earn it. Nobody gives you lots of money if you simply ask for it, you need to work hard and earn it. The same way, you need to earn whatever good things you want in your life. You have to make yourself worthy of the thing you are asking for. You must prove yourself to be a deserving candidate and then there is absolutely no doubt in your getting what you asked for.

You must analyze where you stand today, you must understand where you must reach in order to become worthy of the gift of God that you are aiming for. You must analyze your body, your *manas*, and your *buddhi*. Needless to say the *manas* is the most important. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. God likes everything to be neat and clean. It is not enough if things appear to be clean, everything must actually be clean. Collecting all the garbage, dumping it somewhere and setting fire to it is not cleaning, in fact this will poison the environment with invisible chemicals. Everything must be truly clean. Not just your body, not just your home or office, not even just the environment, but also your *manas*. If the *manas* is not clean, sorry, God will not like it. You take bath everyday, you spend so much of time, effort and money taking care of your body. How much do you care about cleaning your mind? You wash your body everyday and everyday it gets dirty. This is the nature of nature. The same is true of our *manas* also. It is not enough to clean it once in a while. You must spend a substantial amount of time everyday for observing, cleaning and training your *manas*. This is the main purpose of education, this is the main profession of

mankind. All other things are secondary. There is very little other than this that you need to do in life. All the other pre-occupations are wasteful as also harmful. Give up useless things, devote your time for self improvement. All good things will automatically come your way, you do not have to run after them. Focus your attention on the Sun and light automatically shines on you. Instead if you are worried about your shadow and you run after it, the shadow never gives up and it only grows bigger and bigger.

Whatever we do we must do it well, very well. We must always aim for perfection. We will need a lot of time and patience to learn, master and practice anything properly. Naturally, there will be only a few things that we can do in life. It is better to do a few simple and useful things in life and do them all very well than to try a hundred different things, none of which we can do properly. Any work which is done incompletely or imperfectly is as good as not done, or worse than that. Today the world is trying to do too many things. We actually do not have people who have time, patience, knowledge, skill and mastery required to perform all those activities with perfection. Imperfectly performed activities can be and often are not only wasteful but also very dangerous. We must cut down on human activities. There is no need for offices, factories, research, development and what not. Most government departments are simply unnecessary, most projects are simply not required.

Today people do not have time to take bath properly, they do not have time to eat properly, to cook properly, to clean the house and surroundings, to do anything properly - they have to rush to school or office or factory. If you do all your daily chores properly, that itself will take a lot of time. Give up everything else in life, just live. Simply live. Live simply. Simplicity is a virtue, not an indication

of poverty or low status. Choose simple, natural, harmless life style, like how our forefathers and ancestors lived thousands of years ago. Forget about everything that has happened in the last few thousand years. Do not go against nature, do not do anything which damages nature. Avoid or at least drastically reduce all activities which pollute and poison the air, water and soil system. Avoid all activities that affect the life of other human beings, other animals and plants. Art of living is not to do anything.

You will surely get what you deserve, individually and collectively. Many a time we may not be doing anything bad but we become hand in glove with other wicked people. Or we abet, harbour, facilitate or indirectly promote or support negative things. Supporting crime is also crime. *raavaNa* kidnapped *siitaa* and all the people of *laMkaa* were punished - because they stood silent spectators to this evil act. We all keep complaining about pollution caused by industries but we are the people who keep the wheels of the industry running, by buying products of industry. Even simply keeping quiet when something bad is going on around us is a sin and we will be punished for that. A lot of bad things are going on all over the world and we cannot afford to sit back, ignoring all this or taking up these issues purely as academic exercises or as filler-talk over a cup of coffee. It is time we wake up, it is time we spring into action. Non-action or *akarma* is as important as action or *karma*. Understand the subtleties of *karma*, *akarma* and *vikarma*. Then, and only then, will you become deserving of all the great things you inherently deserve in life.

The root cause of all human suffering, pain, misery, fear, anxiety, worry, restlessness, void, dissatisfaction, is ignorance. Ignorance is bondage, slavery, it is painful. Seek knowledge and you can get liberated from all problems once and for all. All human problems can be solved. This is

possible right in this birth, right now and here. Many have actually liberated themselves like this, this is not just a theoretical possibility, it is real. You too can. Anybody can. Try. Try hard. Keep trying, do not give up. You will surely succeed. This is the promise.

karma gives *phala* after it is done, perhaps long after, perhaps in next birth or in another world, and only if done properly. *jnYaana* is not an action, it does not take time to complete, it is timeless, and so *phala* is immediate, now and here. Just as darkness cannot linger on the moment the Sun rises, ignorance cannot linger on the moment *jnYaana* shines. The *phala* of *jnYaana*, namely removing the ignorance, is thus immediate, now and here, unconditionally, absolutely sure. *veedic karma-s* should be done only by *veedaadhikaari-s* who can chant the *mantra-s* properly, who understand the meaning, who do the rituals properly etc. *jnYaana-maarga* is available for anybody who has a clean and clear mind. All human beings are eligible to get liberated right now and here in this birth itself, without having to perform any *karma*.

If you have difficulties following this path of *jnYaana*, try the path of *bhakti* or devotion. If that is also not suitable for you, try the path of *karma* - work selflessly, work without any sense of doership and enjoyer-ship, just work for the welfare of the whole world and surrender everything at His feet. If even this does not suit you, just seek the company of great souls, just serve them, do nothing else. Choose a path that suits you best, but do give it a sincere try. Do not waste the whole of your life doing useless and destructive activities. If not anything else, just simplify your life as much as you can, cut down on everything, just live and be happy. May God bless you. We shall now give the five guiding principles that can help you in practice to make this dream into a reality.

3.103 The Five Guiding Principles

There are five guiding principles which constitute the art of living based on the science of living as we have described in this book. The first guiding principle is **Simple Living**. Simply live. Live simply. Do nothing which is unnecessary, wasteful, exploitative, or harmful. Most activities of the modern man are wasteful and harmful. Give up all of them. Give up city life. Give up your fancy for science and technology. Give up your fancy for gadgets and gizmos. There is little need to go shopping, most items in a supermarket store are simply unnecessary. Travelling is largely unwarranted. Learn to live a simple, natural, peaceful, harmonious life. Just enjoy life. Like Jesus did, like Buddha did, like Krishna did, like all the countless Billions of human beings did over the last several hundred thousand years on planet Earth. Think of a world without electricity, without petroleum, without any industries. Such a life is possible, almost throughout the entire history of mankind, we lived like that. Such a life is not only possible, it is in fact a better life, you will actually like it. You will not feel constrained, you will not feel troubled in the least. In fact you will be able to live a totally satisfied, happy, peaceful, blissful, enjoyable life. This is not a hypothetical possibility, it is very much practicable, even today. If not by your choice, you will anyway be forced to take up such a life style very soon. Better do it with pleasure. Simple living is not a choice, nothing else is sustainable. Give up the use of all man-made materials and gadgets. Do only those things that can be done with your body and mind alone. You need to make up your mind, right from today. Take to simple living. Do not destroy the world. Enjoy life. Let your children also enjoy life.

The second guiding principle is **Self Improvement**.

The problems of the society are the problems of its people. Before you think of correcting others and reforming the society, see where you can improve yourself. Most of the problems of the society today are because of extreme specialization and compartmentalization of human knowledge. We become so narrowly focused, we lose track of the big picture. Can you act well in a play if you know only your lines and not the whole play? We must learn to think holistically. Get detached, think you are none of the stake holders, think you have nothing to gain or lose, think nobody is dearer to you than others, think of the whole universe. Think of every human being, every animal, every plant. Think of even the inanimate dead objects in this world. Think big. Think long run. Does it bring more good or more bad? Perform global optimization. Then you will know both sides of the coin. You will know the true picture. You will know the truth from the falsity. You will know the real from the unreal. You will know the good from the bad. You need to know what is good and what is bad before you can do good things and avoid bad things. Identify all the bad qualities in you, enlist all the bad activities you are engaged in, and give up one by one. Take this seriously, give it a sincere try. Conquer your internal enemies, conquer your mind. Do not compare with others, compare with yourself and measure the rate of your own progress. Self improvement is a life long process. Give it a big start today itself.

The third guiding principle is **Human Values**. The goal is to become humane to the core. It is humane to help, it is inhuman to exploit. Do not cheat others and make money, you are in fact cheating yourself. Giving is elevating, taking is demeaning. It is much more important to be a good human being than a successful scientist or researcher or doctor or engineer or businessman or whatever. Money, success, name, fame, awards, honours, posi-

tion, power, these are not the goals of life. A good *manas* is much more important than a highly intelligent *buddhi*. Put *satya* and *ahiMsaa* ahead of money and success. All else will follow. Let us all elevate ourselves from the two legged brutes that we are, to fully evolved human beings. Let us all become humane.

The fourth guiding principle is seeking **vidyaa**, seeking knowledge, real knowledge, true, complete, correct knowledge of the whole world and of our own self. Not science and technology, not engineering and medicine, not *avidyaa*. Seek *vidyaa*, the real knowledge, as has been given by our ancient sages and seers in the *veeda-s*, as you have learned from this book. Bring back holistic thinking and holistic living. Bring back the light of knowledge and kill this darkness of ignorance. Let there be light. Remove the covering of ash and smoke and discern the bright fire inside. You are not a sinner, you are a divine being. Know your own divine self. The goal of life is to understand and manifest the divinity in you. See the God in you and see the same God in others, respect them, worship them, do not harm anybody. Greet and salute others exactly as you greet and salute God, with folded palms. Do not harm any animal. Do not kill and eat animals.

A truly knowledgeable person has two paths to take - *nivRtti maarga* and *pravRtti maarga*. He can either retire from this worldly life and just revel happily in his own self, completely unconcerned with the world outside and other people there in. This is *nivRtti maarga*. Or he can stay back in this practical world of *vyavahaara* and spend his time in the service of mankind. This is *pravRtti maarga*. He has already given up his sense of doer-ship, he has no desire for any results for his actions, he is totally self-satisfied, but he continues to work selflessly for the sake of others. This last guiding principle is **Social Service**. Of all the things

you can give to the society, material things like money or food or clothes form the lowest level. These material things may satisfy an immediate requirement and that is about all. This is no permanent or lasting solution. Next comes practical knowledge, skill etc. which helps somebody to find a job and stand on their own legs. A life is made, the life of the dependents is also taken care off. The highest you can give, the noblest of all, the most useful, is to impart knowledge, knowledge of the ultimate truth, knowledge of what is life and how to live. Help others who are serious and sincere, at whatever level you can. Help the seekers of knowledge. This is what God does.

The five guiding principles are closely inter-related. Simple living gives us time to think, to read and understand, to try and practice, to experiment and learn. This naturally leads to self-improvement. You can only live your life, you can only enjoy your own life, not the lives of others. Naturally, therefore, you will feel like observing, analyzing, understanding and improving your own life along various dimensions. You would want to become a true human being, you would try to become more and more humane. Human values will naturally become your focus. In order to go through all these practices, you will surely need the guiding light of complete, proper, correct knowledge. Half knowledge, imperfect knowledge, biased and skewed knowledge will not do, you need *vidyaa*, *avidyaa* is not sufficient. Let us say you have now fully conquered yourself, you are a stable man of knowledge and wisdom, you clearly know the good from the bad, you may now think of going one step further and start working for others. Remember, people will respect you if you practice first and then preach. If ignorant people try to serve others, they will be doing things which are good in one sense but harmful in another sense. Many people engaged in social service today are actually doing harmful and negative things. Even noble professions

like teaching, growing food and medicine can have very negative and extremely harmful side effects. Please do not think of serving others until and unless you have fully conquered yourself. You must first try to improve yourself. And if you try, and if many try, if everyone tries, all the problems of the society will vanish on their own. The world will become a much better place for all of us to live.

These five principles are closely inter-related. We need to understand them individually as also holistically. We must convince ourselves first. We must then put our convictions into action. Every one of us, all human beings, all living creatures can live a glorious, fulfilling, meaningful, happy and peaceful life. This Earth can become heaven. It is all in our own hands. Let us make it happen.

Simple living alone can produce marvelous results. Even if you can practice only this one principle in your life, that would be great. If you can properly understand and practice the first three guiding principles of simple living, self-improvement and human values, you can make this Earth a great place to live. Look at the life of any great person in the history of mankind, you will clearly see how they could successfully combine simple living, self-improvement and human values to achieve all that they did in their life. The fourth principle is the summary of this whole book, even if only a few of the ideas contained here in are understood properly, that should be considered great progress. If the majority of the people in the world can scale these stages, there would be little need for social service as a major activity in itself. If everybody takes good care of their parents and other elders at home, there would be no need for old-age-homes, right?

3.104 The Dream Village

We started off this book by learning some important lessons from our dreams. Let us conclude the book with a dream. This is a dream with a difference, this is a dream that can actually be realized. Let us dream of an ideal life.

We have argued that only *dharma* can form the proper foundation for human life, not money, science, technology, weapons of mass destruction and military power. Let us now paint an ideal village based on this concept of *dharma*, with *satya* and *ahiMsaa* as its two main pillars. The concept of *dharma* is rich and deep but the basic idea is simple. We all have a right to live, to live well and enjoy life. We are free to do whatever we wish to make ourselves happy. But we do not have a right to do anything which is harmful to others in any way whatever. Even if it causes the slightest inconvenience or discomfort or embarrassment or fear or pain or suffering or unhappiness or sorrow to a single tiny creature, then we should desist from doing it. Do not harm anybody in any way whatever. Do not harm other people, do not harm animals, do not harm even the tiny creatures. We must give up all harmful things that we perform knowingly, under our control. We must give up all avoidable bad deeds. This is the essence of *dharma*.

satya is truthfulness. Truthfulness is not to be confused with the factual reality in the external world - We have defined *satya* as complete conformity of thought word and deed. What we think, that we should speak. What we say so we should behave. There should be no difference between any two of these. If people always speak the truth in this sense, then we can depend on one another, otherwise, we can never be sure. Today, we cannot trust anyone, we look at everybody with suspicion. Man is a social animal. If we have to live like one big family, total trust is

absolutely essential. Without trust, we cannot cooperate and work together for our own common good. Instead we will start competing with each other, we will start cheating others, we will tell lies, we will try to outsmart others, we will start taking success as our goal. This is what has happened today. Truthfulness as defined here must be made a law, violation must be punishable. Then everybody will have to always speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Instead of trying to cheat each other and become richer at the cost of others, people will then start cooperating with each other. A society which is based on money, economic development, business, stock market etc. in which everybody is trying to outsmart all others, can never be stable. It has to crumble one fine day or the other. A society based on *satya*, on the other hand, can remain stable, it can lead to universal good, everybody can be happy and contented.

ahiMsaa is usually translated as non-violence but giving up violence is not enough. We must give up all *hiMsaa*, that is, anything that causes injury, pain, suffering, physical or mental torture, death, psychological stress or anxiety, worry, fear, discomfort etc. Any activity which leads to environmental pollution is *hiMsaa*. Any activity which pollutes and poisons the air, water or soil, which are the common shared resources of all living creatures, is *hiMsaa*. *hiMsaa* should be made a punishable crime. All forms of crime are included within these two principles of *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. Almost all the activities of the modern man, except purely natural things such as walking, sitting, standing, eating, singing, talking, etc., harm others. We must give up all these harmful activities and learn to live in peace and harmony with everybody. A society based on *satya* and *ahiMsaa* can remain stable and we can ensure prosperity, happiness and satisfaction to one and all.

Within an ideal atomic family, people love each other, care for each other, they cooperate and work together for their own common good, they do not compete with each other. Everything works by trust and understanding. Nobody harms anybody and nobody needs to be afraid of anybody. There is a sense of belonging, the members collectively own and take responsibility for everything in the family. We normally do not find such close understanding and mutual trust and confidence outside of a family. The basic idea underlying our dream village, therefore, is to extend this family concept. This is possible only when the number of people is small and everybody knows everybody else very well. A large city or a town is too big, there are too many people, we cannot know all the others, so we always look at others with suspicion. The dream village will be bigger than the usual unitary family but much smaller than the cities and towns we have today. Typically, only a few hundred people live in such a dream village unit. They live like one big family. They live there, they work there, they learn there, they teach there, they help and serve each other. The dream village is the place to stay, the place to play, the place to learn and teach, the place to work, the place to grow food, mend cows, prepare medicines and other house-hold necessities, the place to sing, dance and entertain ourselves, the place to excel in any chosen walk of life. There will be a single kitchen, everybody need not spend so much of time and effort everyday for cooking as it happens today in the world. The dream village will be largely self-contained and largely self-sufficient and self-reliant. The primary occupation will be agriculture and keeping cows, there will be hardly any commercial activity. No industries, no commercial establishments, no shops, no banks, no loans. The society of the dream village will have *dharma* as its foundation, not money or science or technology or weapons. People live as people here, not as two legged wild brutes. Everybody will

be human and humane. Everybody is free to do anything they want provided it does not harm anybody in any way whatever. Anything which is bad for other people, anything which is harmful to animals or nature, will have to be given up. This does not come as any big constraint, in fact people can live here very comfortably and happily. People are not expected to give up all worldly attachments completely and live like monks, but they must be ready for simple living, they must be ready for a life-style that is close to nature, they must be willing to take up peaceful and harmonious life. Now let us work out some details to convince ourselves of the practicability of this concept.

India has 2.4 percent of the world's land area but 16 percent of the human population. Therefore, if we can develop a model that works for India, it could be made to work elsewhere in the world too. Let us make some quick calculations. India has a total land area of approximately 328 Million hectares. Of this, about 162 Million hectares of land area is used for agriculture at present. Given the current estimated population of 1.16 Billion, this amounts to about 0.14 hectare or 0.35 acres of arable land per person. If properly utilized, this is more or less sufficient. Consider a village spread over one square km of area, which is about 100 hectares or 247 acres. Going by the average arable land area available per person, about 700 people can live here. There could be variations in the land area and the number of people living there but the unit should not be too big. The number of people per unit should be in hundreds, not much more. This as an ideal unit size.

There will be only one or two buildings per unit. This leaves maximum open area for agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, grazing fields for cows, etc. There will be natural rain water harvesting. The buildings will be low cost, easy to construct, can be constructed from locally available

materials and local manpower, yet comfortable and convenient. They would also be energy efficient. The buildings could be a large square or rectangle, with four rectangular blocks on the four sides, with a large open space in the middle. Each basic block will be rectangular. Walls will go only up to about 2.5 feet above the floor level. There will be a multi-function platform, 2 to 3 feet wide, along the entire length of the rectangle on both the long sides, at a height of about 2.5 feet. This could be used as a cot for sleeping, as a place to sit, for reading, for keeping things etc. Below the platform will be close-able, lockable shelves. Almost all the house-hold articles such as books and clothes will fit into these shelves. Above the platform and up to the height of about 8 feet, there will be large windows on both the sides. There is no need for any grill. A mosquito mesh can be used. If it is cold and there is need to conserve heat, we can use sliding glass panes, else we can even leave it open. These large windows ensure adequate ventilation and light. There will be no need for any artificial lighting during the day. There will be a tiled roof, which will keep the house cool even in summer, as all the hot air will go away from the roof and fresh cool air will be sucked in from the windows. There will be very little need for any furniture. We can sleep either on mats spread on the floor or on the platforms on the side walls. One end of rectangular block can have a raised platform, which can function as a stage. One of these blocks can be used as a school, for studying, for discussions, for practicing yoga, as an auditorium or theatre for cultural programs and other performances such as ritualistic worship, as also for dormitory style sleeping during the night. The block on the opposite side can be used as a kitchen and dining area. It can also be used for any other purpose when it is free. The other two blocks will contain smaller rooms, for the sake of privacy etc. All the people in the village do not always need privacy. There will be enough private

rooms for all who may need. The entire village lives in one or two such buildings as a single big family, cooperating with each other and making room for others as per need. There will be a single kitchen in the whole village and no other eating joints. People will take turns to cook, clean etc., which will also result in some variety to break the monotony in food. The sides of the rectangular blocks can be extended to provide additional grilled and tiled space for all the conveniences required - such as for washing and drying clothes, washing utensils, etc. Energy efficient solar powered lights (such as LED lamps) can be used to provide lighting if and when needed. The central open space can be used for many activities which require direct Sunshine. One can also enjoy the rain here. One or more of the small rooms on the side can be built as a strong room to keep valuables if any. Otherwise, the building has an open design.

The dream village stands on the strong foundations of *dharma*, not money or material wealth. Once the greed for money and fancy for factory made gadgets of technology is reduced, we can start focussing on the real issues and concerns facing mankind today. The three most important things we need for survival are clean air, water and food. The moment we cut down on economic activities, air and water pollution will naturally go away. There will be clean air and safe drinking water all over the world. Air and water resources are already there, we need not create them afresh, we only need to stop damaging these available resources. After this, the only major occupation for mankind will be agriculture. We need to spend our time and effort for growing good food. Agriculture is the noblest of all professions.

It is foolish to add chemical poisons to the sacred soil, which gives us food. We must give up chemical fertilizers,

insecticides and pesticides. A major part of the atmosphere is nitrogen, is it not foolish to add factory made nitrogen as a fertilizer? Soil is now dead, thanks to reckless chemical farming. Once we give up these modern practices and go back to cow based, natural organic farming methods, soil will come back alive again and the microbes in the soil will absorb nitrogen and enrich the soil. Cow products including the dung and the urine form excellent fertilizers, they can also be used as effective pest repellents. Give up tractors, tractors compress the soil instead of loosening, the rubber from the worn out tyres damage the soil, why waste diesel and produce toxic gases as emissions? Bullocks can be used for tilling as also for a variety of food processing applications. Only Indian breeds will work as only these bullocks have a hump to take on the plough. There is little or no need for electricity - lifting water etc. can be done using animal power. Every animal has a natural capacity and as long as we use them within their limits, they do not feel burdened and there is no cruelty towards animals. It is perfectly OK to use animal power but we must take good care of our animals and treat them with love and affection, like our own children. We can grow a wide variety of useful plants and trees. The idea is to grow whatever we require, for food, for medicines, for worship, whatever. The idea is not to sell the products and maximize profit. Monocropping will be avoided. Bio-diversity will be encouraged. There is enough fertile soil, there is enough of water resources, we have enough man power in the world. If only we go back to our old fashioned, traditional, time tested methods, we can ensure adequate amounts of good food for everybody. No one needs to go hungry in the world.

The modern dairy industry involves enormous amount of cruelty to animals at every stage. The so called milk that we get from the dairy is not really milk, it is only white poison. A large number of modern diseases includ-

ing bad cholesterol, hypertension, heart diseases, stroke, kidney failure, even cancer owe their origins to the dairy industry. We just cannot call ourselves human beings as long as we continue these cruel practices. Scientists are trying to show how exactly dairy milk causes diseases etc. but commonsense is sufficient to convince anybody that whenever we go against *dharma* and harm others, we will surely be punished. The modern dairy is linked to city life. In cities a large number of people live but there is no space for keeping cows, let alone for the grazing fields. But here in the dream village, cows are part of the family, we live where the cows live and cows live where we live. In India cow is considered sacred. Why is the cow holy? Let us see. Cows give milk, which forms healthy, complete, balanced food. Cow milk is closest to human breast milk. Cows produce more milk than the calf needs and excess milk causes discomfort, even pain. The cows feel relieved and thankful when we extract this excess milk, after letting the calves have their share. Therefore, milking cows is not a cruel act, in fact it is a service. From milk we make curds (yogurt), butter and ghee (clarified butter). We use these in preparing a wide variety of dishes daily at home as also to make sweets. We use these items in worship and in preparing medicines. We make our shoes, drums and other articles from the leather. The cow dung forms good, natural, harmless manure. The cow dung is also used for flooring - the floor becomes smooth and prevents the growth of grass and other weeds. Dried cakes of cow dung form excellent fuel for heating water and for cooking. Cow dung can also be used to generate natural gas, a cleaner form of fuel. Ashes from the cow dung cakes are good insecticides and pesticides. Purified form of this ash in fine form is used as a nano material to keep the skin healthy and protect it from skin diseases. In India this purified ash is worn as an auspicious mark on the forehead. Even the urine of cow has cleansing and purifying properties. Medicines based on

cow urine have been shown to be effective against a wide variety of diseases, including cancer. Every part of the cow is useful. Bullocks help us in agriculture, transportation and in various food processing activities. The western system of medicine is failing all over and traditional Indian systems of medicine such as *aayurveda* invariably require cow products. Only Indian breeds of cows have the necessary medicinal properties, not the cows found elsewhere in the world, not the Jersey or Holstein-Frisian cows. Cows are mild domestic animals dependent on us for their survival - they cannot live on their own in the wild. And we find them so very useful, including in food and medicine. There is absolutely not a single reason why men and cows should not live in harmony. This is the best example of mutual inter-dependence and peaceful co-existence in nature. Cows give us so much, including food, medicines, health, wealth - things required by all human beings irrespective of religion. God is one who grants our wishes, gives us everything. The cow give us everything. Naturally, therefore, cow is considered God. We worship cows. The dream village is based on this cow-man synergy. Do not look at this as a religious idea, the ideas presented in this paper are universal, non-sectarian and applicable to all human beings in the world. Who does not want good food? Who does not want health? How can people who terrorize, torture, cut and eat cows understand its divine nature? Even to understand these concepts you must first give up killing and harming cows or any other animal.

Cows give us food, health, wealth, everything. The cow is the centre of the human society. Milk and milk products give all the necessary nutrition. Contrary to common belief in recent times, milk and milk products are not the cause of cholesterol imbalance or blood pressure or heart attack or cancer or brain damage. Dairy milk may be the cause but dairy milk is not milk, it is white poison. Indian

cows belong to a different variety, called Bos Indicus, very different from Holstein-Frisian, Jersey and all other varieties of cows in the world, which are grouped under Bos Taurus variety. The milk from the Indian cows is called A2 milk, whereas the milk from the other cows is called A1 milk. A1 milk has a different chemical composition, it has been established that A1 milk is the cause of autism and diabetes in children, and heart diseases and cancer in adults. Choose Indian cows only, avoid hybrids, avoid artificial insemination, avoid all modern human interventions. Everything that has been discovered in the last few hundred years is bad, just give them all without questioning.

If we assume that the dream village is square in shape, about one square km in area, the distance from one corner to the next corner is one km. The straight line distance from one corner to the opposite corner is less than one and a half km. Even if you walk all around the village, you will walk only four km. Thus, every place is walkable from every other place within the village. Why do we need cars and buses and two wheelers and what not? God has given us legs, not wheels. We can walk. At most a bicycle would do, it could be useful especially if you have to carry some light load. Agricultural goods etc. can be transported using bullock carts. We can keep a couple of modern vehicles, say an ambulance and a minibus or a van for emergency situations. By and large, people will not have to use any motorized vehicle for daily commuting. We neither need automobiles nor petroleum. We do not need to emit green house gases, and other chemical poisons, we do not need to cause heat and noise pollution, we do not need to consume precious oxygen from the atmosphere, we do not have to suffer in traffic jams. No road accidents. No need to spend so much on roads, bridges and other such infrastructure. No money, no corruption on these counts. The modern city is an idea promoted by the few rich and greedy, including

the automobile industry and the petroleum industry. Most problems of city life can be solved, by giving up city life.

What about travel to other villages? There will be no need to go out for a picnic. The village itself will be a like a nice resort, clean, green and comfortable. There will be no need for business trips since business is not the main occupation of people here. The village will be largely self-contained and self-reliant. Therefore, the need to go out to other places will be felt rarely. The best mode for such travel is train. The amount of energy spent and pollution caused per person mile is lowest in trains. Train journey is also quite convenient and comfortable. If train connections are not there, the next best option is a public transport bus. Air is the worst mode of transport, it is the most damaging, it is best to avoid air travel.

Since the village is small, we can easily reach out to anybody by the most direct and natural means, without need for any advanced communication technologies. For the sake of interacting with the outside world, a couple of telephones per village is all that we need. In a matter of just one decade or so, we have acquired hundreds of Millions of cell phones in India. These phones and their batteries have a very short life of just a few years. The instruments and the batteries both contain deadly chemical substances, which are extremely harmful to all forms of life. There is no known way of disposing off all these dangerous materials in an absolutely safe and harmless way. Mobile phones are weapons of mass destruction. Why give a weapon in the hands of all innocent people? Why push ourselves to the brink of disaster? The world will be much better place to live without all these modern gadgets of advanced technology. Think.

Since we work during the day and sleep during the

night, we will need very little electricity for lighting. Solar energy will do. There is no need for refrigerators, we get farm fresh food everyday on a just-in-time basis. There will be no need for electric washing machines, we can build community level washing machines running on animal power. There will be no need for fans or air conditioners in the Indian climate, the buildings will be naturally cool and comfortable even in summer. There is hardly any need for heating in tropical regions. Hot water for bathing etc. can be produced using solar power. Steam for cooking will also be produced using solar power or by using garden wastes or cow dung or gas or electricity produced from that. We do not need electricity for agriculture or dairy. We do not need electricity for any commercial activities, there will be no industries and all necessary things are produced using traditional, old-fashioned manual methods. We do not need petroleum or any of its derivatives. We can live in perfect harmony with nature, without exploiting natural resources, without damaging the environment, without harming anybody, without harming any animal, without harming ourselves.

We grow food where we live, we live where we grow. There is no need for a food processing and packaging industry, we can process food locally and in a traditional, eco-friendly manner. There is no need for packaging. We live where cows live, there is no need to process or package milk and milk products. We will not need to use plastic or other hazardous substances at all. We do not produce any waste other than purely natural wastes such as urine and stools. Nature knows how to deal with these natural wastes, we do not need to worry about waste management at all. No garbage, no burning, no smoke, no smell, no harmful chemicals in the air, water or soil.

Once people get clean fresh air to breathe, naturally

clean, safe and chlorine free water to drink, pure and fresh food to eat, health will naturally come to all. A proper life style with balanced food, work, rest, exercise, *yooga* etc. can keep everybody fit and healthy. Today we are using the term health care to mean hospitals, treatments, medicines etc. These are required when health fails. If you care for health, everybody should always be healthy as a rule, ill-health should become a rare exception. It is a shame on mankind that we talk of a thriving pharmaceutical industry and Billions of Dollars spent on the so called health-care industry. Even using the term industry in this context is a matter of shame, how can human beings think of making money out of others' illness and suffering? This is not humane at all. If we all take up the kind of life we are suggesting here, everybody would naturally be healthy and we do not need to worry so much about hospitals and medicines. In fact we can grow a wide variety of medicinal plants within the village, we can produce medicines locally, we can have basic hospital facilities to take care of most kinds of diseases. And all this will require very little money.

The modern system of education has focussed almost entirely on the external, physical, material world. The internal world is almost completely ignored. We are getting only half knowledge. Half knowledge is dangerous, it is worse than useless. Complete knowledge includes not only the knowledge of things outside of us but also about ourselves. In fact even to prove that an external world exists, we must prove that we exist, for which, we must understand the concept of existence, we must understand who exactly we are. There can be no proof without a prover and we are the provers. Knowing the self is therefore more important. Endlessly exploring the external material world takes us nowhere, the truth lies within us, not anywhere else. We must seek the truth, we must seek the self, which

is in fact the original source of all knowledge, the original source of all happiness. This is the only way to overcome all of our problems once and for all and at the same time get everything that we may ever want in life. We must seek the truth, as contained in our ancient scriptures, the *veeda-s* and the *upaniShat-s* and as explained in this book. This is real knowledge, this is *vidyaa*. *avidyaa* or the knowledge of the external world is also required, it helps us to survive but it is only the knowledge of the self which can elevate us from mere mortal two legged animals to full human beings. Also, any branch of knowledge can be properly understood in the right perspective if and only if it is based on the solid foundation of the *tattva* as given by *vidyaa*. By themselves, all branches of secular knowledge including modern science, technology, humanities, social sciences, and so on, are like uncontrolled fire - polluting, destructive, damaging, devastating in nature. These same subjects, if studied in the right perspective and on proper grounding of *vidyaa*, will become like a *yajnYa*, they will become positive energies, auspicious, useful, harmless to one and all. A *yajnYa* is also basically a fire but we hope you can see the difference. It is important, therefore, to focus on *vidyaa* right in the beginning. The first ten years or so of education including the primary and secondary levels of schooling should mainly focus on *vidyaa*, for which, a single book like this one will suffice. Language, logic and basic mathematics will be necessary and useful too. Other secular subjects can be taught in the later years but only in the backdrop of a proper and deep understanding of the *tattva*. There is very little need for writing. Education is imparted best through the oral means. Literacy is not important, there should be no reading and writing at least in the first five years of education. About ten years of education is more than enough, only those few who wish to specialize in any particular branch of knowledge will continue further studies in their chosen areas of specialization. Formal education

should start at an age of eight years or so, not too early. Till then, the informal education that the child gets by just being in the right environment is enough to mould its thinking and character. Let education not become a burden, let the children enjoy their childhood. The goal of real education is to manifest the divinity in us and to learn to live like fully developed human beings. This is possible only if the dream village is under the guidance of a truly knowledgeable, self-realized guru, who can impart this kind of real education. Only then can we have a judicious combination of sacred and secular subjects, all taught in a holistic way and in the correct perspective. We can then attain excellence in any chosen walk of life. Knowledge is power. Once we gain real knowledge and liberate ourselves from the bondage of ignorance, we regain our lost freedom, we can live like masters, ever happily. Let this be our goal.

We all want only the original currency note, nobody will accept a photocopy or a picture or a painting or a cartoon drawing of a currency note, right? Likewise, we must always seek the original, we must go to the roots. The root of all human knowledge is the *veeda-s*. Let us not stop at the *darshana-s* or the *puraaNa-s*. Let us not go by English translations or interpretations. Let us go to the very roots, let us read the original texts in the original language directly under the guidance of a guru in the traditional way. Otherwise, we will surely be getting a partial and distorted picture, a duplicate, fake or a bogus version. Do not listen to people who have themselves not studied the original texts in the proper way.

The twin concepts of *satya* and *ahiMsaa* are sufficient, there is no need to enact any other legislature. These are the universal principles, applicable to all countries, at all places, at all times. There is no need for what we call politicians. The head of the village, the guru, will be well

educated in *dharma*. He should be well read in the scriptures and *dharma-shaastra-s* - the treatises that explain the concept of *dharma* with practical applications. Justice will be based on the twin concepts of *satya* and *ahiMsaa*, no other rule book is required. The guru is the head of education system and of the legal system, he is the judge, he is the executive, he is the government. We do not need any government or elections or politics or corruption. It is important to realize that the concepts of *satya* and *ahiMsaa* apply only to individuals. We must always hold individuals responsible for adhering to *satya* and *ahiMsaa*. Then no culprit can escape. The guru is chosen by consent of one and all. Truly knowledgeable persons are very rare, they can be easily identified and nobody would have any objection to their taking a lead position. A truly knowledgeable person will invariably be self-less and humane to the core.

People spend part of the day working - in farms, in food processing, in making medicines and preparing other household utility products. We can make our own tooth powder, soap, cleaning agents, medicines, household articles etc., all out of natural products produced by completely natural and harmless methods, without polluting the air, water or soil system in any way whatever. We can grow quite a bit of food we need, we can be self sufficient in water and energy. We will have very little dependence on the external world. We grow, we make, we use - there is little need for packaging, there will be a zero-waste life style, there will be no garbage anywhere, garbage will not be burnt as in other cities, there will be no pollution. There is no need for storage, no need for insurance, no need for banking, no loans, no suicides. Everything is local and life is lived then and there. We do not need any industries or industrial products. We do not need to buy much, we hardly need any money. Whatever little we need, we can get in exchange

for the things we grow or produce. Whole life will not be spent in just earning, safe-guarding and spending money, life is better spent in other useful activities. There will be the bare minimum of any kind of economic activity. The moment money is removed from its central position of focus, all forms of cheating and corruption will automatically come down.

This village can be viewed as an institute for harmless living. Here people can engage themselves in scientific research and development to discover or rediscover alternative, better, safer, completely harmless ideas for a better life. Something is good if it is good for everybody - all human beings and all living creatures included, including those yet to come, in every possible way, both in short term and long term, with no negative side effects, known or suspected or plausible. Most of current science and technology fail miserably under this test. The aim is to discover alternatives that are good to the core in every possible way. Further, the very process of such scientific investigations and experimentation must be completely harmless and safe. It is clear that only very simple, natural, God-made ideas satisfy these requirements of *ahiMsaa*, *dharma*.

The main practices we need are in mind control. People spend a lot of time in training and cleaning the *manas* through *satsaMga*, *bhajana*, *kiirtana*, *shravaNa*, *puuja*, *japa*, *vrata*, *hooma* etc. A lot of time will be spent in reading, teaching, learning, discussion, debate etc. There will be a well equipped library. All branches of human knowledge including science, humanities and social sciences will be encouraged as long as everything is done in a completely harmless way, without violating *ahiMsaa*, without using man-made equipment, instruments and materials that poison the environment. All forms of art and culture including music, dance, painting, sculpture, literature etc. will be en-

couraged.

Most problems being faced by mankind today will be simply absent here and the mind will be free to work on more positive and useful things. We can achieve human excellence in every walk of life. We can be on the top of the world in every field, without damaging the Earth system in the least. We can all live long, we can all live in good health, we can remain happy and in peace and perfect harmony with nature. This is sustainable, self-reliant, ideal life. This is the art of living, this is the science of living, this is life style, this is the style of living.

Compare all this with modern city life. A city implies over-crowding. Too many people live in a given area of land. Land become so scarce, nothing can be grown there. You will need to process, package and transport food. There will not be any space for cows or other animals. That is why you will need a dairy industry and packed milk. As a consequence, enormous amount of hazardous solid wastes are produced everyday and waste management itself becomes a big issue. You need to adjust in some tiny hole inside a huge multi-storied apartment building, where you may not get Sunshine, there may be no space to dry your clothes, etc. You will have to travel long distances everyday, you suffer from various kinds of diseases, there is no peace, you are ever restless. Whichever way you look at it, city life is not life at all. Let us all agree at least in principle to shun city life and embrace village life such as what is described here. It is very much practicable, we can all actually live the kind of life we have been dreaming here, if only like-minded people come together and we take it seriously.

Today we are talking of globalization, we are talking of a global village, only to spread our wicked tentacles all

over the globe, to cheat people in every nook and corner of the world and to become richer and richer. If we are truly interested in a global village, it is time we think of dismantling the nations. God did not create USA or Iraq or India or Australia. All are equal in the eyes of God. Why then is one US Dollar some 50 Indian Rupees? Why this inequality? We can get rid of war, we can get rid of illegal arms, we can get rid of terrorism, we can get rid of all weapons of mass destruction, we can simply close down our defence departments, we can cut down on corruption, if only we choose to accept equality of all people on Earth and merge all nations into one. There is no need for exports or imports, no need for end-less fights between the so called developed and developing or under-developed parts of the world. Let us all live, love, care, share, and live a single global family. Let us become one, while we respect all the diversity and multiplicity of languages, culture and traditions. This would be true globalization. As a first step, and to convince people that it is possible to live well and really enjoy life to its fullest with minimal or no need for money or technology, let us build a model dream village. Let us make a beginning, today.

This book is for all human beings, irrespective of their religion, race, nationality, language, age, sex, caste, creed, whatever. It is non-sectarian and of universal appeal. As such, it is not prescriptive in nature. We cannot give a fixed prescription that applies to all people at all places and times. What we have given here is one possible idealized model. You are the best judge. Read, understand, think, adapt, apply as you wish. You are all wise enough to adopt, adapt and improvise as appropriate to the prevailing circumstances. But the essence of the whole idea is that we can and we must learn to live a simple, natural, harmless life. This way we can actually overcome all of the problems we are facing today either as individuals or

collectively as a human society. We can all live happily, healthily, peacefully. We can enjoy life to its fullest and we can also scale great heights in every walk of life. This model is practicable, if like minded people join hands and find a guru who can head and lead this village. There is nothing new in this, these are all time tested ideas, they have stood the test of time for thousands of years. This dream can be realized because it is based on a strong foundation of *satya*, *ahiMsaa*, *dharma*.

3.105 The Daily Routine

We have repeatedly pleaded for a simple and natural life. Some readers may be wondering how to spend their time if they give up or cut down on many of the activities they are currently engaged in. Let us work out a possible scenario. This book is not prescriptive, you are free to apply and adapt the ideas given here as appropriate to your place, time and prevailing circumstances. This is just to give a starting point.

It is best to sleep during the dark, silent hours of the night and wake up and work during the day, when there is a lot of natural light from the Sun. This way we can drastically cut down on artificial lighting and electricity or other sources of energy needed for that. Go to bed early and wake up early in the morning. Finish your daily chores and start *yooga*. This should include *yoogaasana-s*, *praaNaayaama*, *japa* and meditation or *dhyaana*. *yooga* is best done on an empty stomach, after you have gone to the toilet, but before you eat or drink anything. There is no need for walking, jogging, working on all kinds of fitness machines, your own body is the best instrument and *yooga* can exercise every part of your body, keep them all fit, flexible, strong and healthy without need for any gad-

gets. These exercises may take several hours.

Now it is the time for prayer, worship, etc. Then you may take breakfast and relax for a while. Change of work is rest, rest and relaxation do not necessarily mean lying down or sleeping. You may wash your clothes, clean the house, do some farming work or gardening, mend the cows etc. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, if you are not with God, better be cleaning. Clean your body, clean your mind, clean the house, clean the surroundings. Nothing can be taken out of this universe or even the Earth system. Therefore, taking out dirt from one place and dumping it elsewhere is not cleaning. Keeping the neighbour-hood clean swept and setting fire to all the garbage dumped somewhere will only release invisible but deadly chemical poisons in the air, this is not the meaning of cleanliness. Understand cleanliness properly. Cleaning means not dirtying.

Then is the time for study. You must spend some time everyday reading, thinking, writing, discussing or teaching the science of life as contained in this book. Those who have the necessary pre-requisites and qualifications may study the *veeda-s*, *upaniShat-s*, *giita* etc. in original, authoritative and original commentaries etc., taking the help of the guru. They may chant the *mantra-s*, discuss the meanings etc. Others can read carefully chosen books in other languages as per their needs. Some time must be spent by everybody every day in listening to the chantings of *vedic mantra-s*.

By now we should be approaching noon. This is time to prepare and have food. There is no need for any long and elaborate cooking, the best food is in fact simple and easy to prepare. You can relax for a brief while after food.

The afternoons must be spent in studies - literature,

music, dance and other traditional arts as per your aptitude and interest, learning Sanskrit or other languages, learning practical skills, educating children in the art and science of life, etc.

Late afternoons and evenings, when the Sun is not too hot and scorchy, should be spent out doors. This is the time to mend the cows, and engage yourself in agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, gardening etc. It is easy to grow a wide variety of useful trees and plants without too much of manual labour. Physical activity keeps our body fit and strong and the mind is relaxed at the same time.

As children we used to go out and play everyday in the evenings but the children of the current generations have given up outdoor games in favour of the TV. Elders rarely go out and play. Games are very important not only for exercising the body but also to develop team spirit, co-ordination, cooperation, spirit of healthy competition and various mental skills, alertness etc. This is also a kind of *yooga*, it is *kriiDaa-yooga*. Everybody must engage themselves in outdoor games and mind games as per their age and abilities.

When the Sun is about to set, we must come back, wash our hands, feet and face and start the evening prayers. We do not need electric lamps, the scanty light of an oil lamp is enough. Prayers, *bhajana*, *kiirtana* and *satsaMga* sessions will take the whole of the evening. Then we must get into a session of evening meditation.

By then it is time for dinner. Note that we take food thrice a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner, with a gap of about 6 hours, absolutely nothing in between. Food should be simple, easily digested, providing sufficient nutrition, healthy. It is not wrong to take tasty food, there is no

need to give up all tasty food but health comes first, taste is secondary.

After dinner we can have causal chat, story telling, playing with kids and other forms of light amusement. We then go to sleep. This is the routine, every day, all through your life, from childhood to old age.

Balance of exercise and *yooga*, physical work, rest, sleep, good food, clean air and water will keep the body fit, flexible and completely healthy. In the remote case the body falls ill, natural medicines grown or prepared locally will suffice. There is considerable amount of importance given to understanding, training and controlling our *manas* and all the mental faculties like memory, concentration, reasoning and judgement. Development of the *buddhi* is given its due share of focus and attention. There is substantial scope for the spiritual aspirants to learn and practice spirituality in a truly scientific spirit. The chariot of life runs on four wheels - *deeha*, *manas*, *buddhi* and *aatma*. Here is a lifestyle that promises complete and balanced development of all the four, so that you can reach glorious heights. What more can you ask for?

Of course all people need not follow identical daily routine. People can spend more time and effort on some of these and less on the others as per their needs and interests. People can also take turns and focus on some aspects or the other for certain periods as per the needs and interests. For example, doctors can spend more time in preparing medicines etc. and teachers can spend more time in teaching and training the younger generations. Some people will spend more time in the fields, some in the library. In any case, we are kept busy and the mind will never be idle, it will never become the devil's workshop. We are always doing something good or the other, we never do

anything bad. We follow *dharma*, we follow the five guiding principles, this is life. This is great life, this is life at its very best.

3.106 The Practical Disease

Even after reading through the whole book this far, if you still think simple living is not practicable, think again. For more than 99.99% of human history, human beings have lived on planet Earth without electricity, without petroleum, without automobiles, without computers, without the telephone, without the television. This is the actual experience of countless Billions of people for hundreds of thousands of years. There can be no better proof that simple living is very much possible. Countless Billions of people have actually and practically lived simple, natural life, devoid of all man-made gadgets and there is no evidence at all that they all suffered from the non-availability of these artifacts. Nobody even asked for these man-made artifacts. For all we know, they all lived a normal, decent, happy life.

Further, it is not difficult to understand that all natural resources are limited and we cannot go on exploiting natural resources at an ever increasing rate as we have been doing in our recent history. At this rate, we will soon finish off all critical resources on planet Earth and we will all be forced again to take up simple, technology-free life. There will be no other way. In just a few decades we have destroyed our forests, we have dug up the whole Earth and exploited all minerals, we have destroyed the whole of surface soil through our greedy chemical farming techniques, we have polluted all sources of drinking water with deadly chemicals, we have polluted the whole atmosphere with invisible chemical poisons, we have killed many forms of life for good, we have heated up the whole globe so much that

we are just about two degrees below the danger mark. We are already very close to total destruction, should we not wake up at least now? It is better to understand and accept this and start living simple and natural life voluntarily right from today than to receive the big shock suddenly one fine day. Simple living is not only practicable, it is the only practical and sustainable way of living. We will have to give up all factory-made things and live as nature intends us to live, like our ancestors lived, like other animals are living even today. God has given us a body and a mind, that is all. We must learn to live using only these two, nothing else. There is no other way. Taking to simple living voluntarily can be fun, but if it gets forced on us against our wish, it will surely be a big punishment. Think.

The goal of life is not to seek comforts or pleasures. Easy life is not better life. We have to do what is right, however difficult that may turn out to be. In the long run, this is what will save us. A wise man should unhesitatingly take the bitter pill to get rid of his disease. The goal of life is to seek the truth, come what may. Of course, this is not always easy. Lord *raama* had to give up his throne, live in a forest devoid of all comforts, face great hardships and hurdles for 14 long years, he even had to lose his wife and wage a war. And all this only for keeping a word, for the sake of truth. Lord *raama* lived like any other ordinary human being, thereby demonstrating that simple, natural, truthful, harmless life is actually possible for all ordinary human beings. His father died in the agony of having exiled his own beloved son to the forest. All his near and dear ones suffered, all for the sake of truth. The story of *harishcandra*, *bhishma* etc. are similar. Seeking the truth is not easy. The goal of life is to seek the truth, to seek what is right, to seek what is good, not what is easy or convenient or comfortable or pleasurable. Get ready for a difficult life. You actually suffer more by seeking pleasure

and avoiding difficulties. Realize this and get wiser today. In the end it is always the truth which wins.

Chose what is right, not what pleases you. By constantly seeking easy and comfortable life, by continuously striving to avoid any kind of discomfort or inconvenience to our bodies and mind, we can only accumulate and postpone all the suffering that we may have been destined to undergo in this life. It is far better to lose a dollar every day than to suddenly and unexpectedly lose a Million dollars one fine day. It is better to undergo minor discomforts and inconveniences everyday without complaining than to suddenly get a big rude shock that can throw us off the edge. Pleasures and pains are the two sides of the same coin, you cannot get one but not the other, you cannot maximize one and minimize the other at the same time. Those who seek comfortable, convenient, easy life, those who seek pleasures will surely suffer more. Observe carefully the lives of people around you. Observe carefully the lives of great people who have lived in the past. All great people chose simple living. All those who voluntarily chose simple living suffered less in life as a whole. Even today, those who choose simple living are actually happier. Open up your eyes and look around. It is wiser to willfully avoid the comforts and conveniences of modern life style and live the natural way. Think.

Lord *kRShNa* was a king but he lived a simple rustic life, playing, singing, dancing, herding cows, doing little else. His instrument, the flute, is symbolic of extreme simplicity. Can there be any other instrument simpler than that? You might argue that Lord *kRShNa* was a special, super-human being, he could perform all kinds of miracles etc. Then look at the life of Lord *raama*. He was a king too, but all through his life, he lived a simple, natural life. He used the aerial vehicle once in his life time, to come back

to his capital city in time and save the life of his brother. Neither he nor his wife who had enjoyed this pleasure ride once ever asked for it again. The lesson we have to learn from our ancient works is not what science or technology those people had. The lesson we have to learn is that we must not use science and technology, except in extraordinary and exceptionally special circumstances. If you know how to make something, do not publish it. If you already have made something, do not give it to anybody, do not use it yourself either.

Good things are always difficult and bad things are easy. So people tend to fall for the easy and comfortable, they know they are wrong and they try to cheat themselves and others by camouflaging all their negative deeds with the sugar coating of diplomacy, management, compromises etc. Truth cannot be compromised. Ultimately it is always the truth which wins, however hard you might try to prevent this. Therefore, give up your attraction for easy, comfortable, convenient life and seek what is true, right and good, even if that appears harsh on you. Give up automation, technology etc. Do not become a slave of technology, learn to live without it.

There is a common belief that human population was small in ancient times and so they could live the way they did. This is baseless. The only evidence we can have about ancient societies are the works of that age and if you go by the figures they contain, human population was often much larger than it is today. Even today, we have enough for everybody, provided we give up city life and spread out. Population is not an excuse for indiscriminate and unscrupulous use of science and technology. Modern science and technology is simply the result of the powerful combination of ignorance, foolishness and greed. Give up science and technology in your daily life. Let us use them

only in exceptionally special, life-saving circumstances.

You may initially feel that giving up all the comforts and conveniences that you are so much used to, and taking up simple living will be practically very difficult. This is not true. You got used to the mobile phone in a matter of days. You will learn to live happily without it also in a matter of days. We can all get used to simple living very easily and very quickly, without feeling any difficulty or pain. We only have to try. Start today. You can always go step by step, there is no need to renounce the whole world and become a monk overnight. Our goal is to live well and enjoy life, our goal is not to give up everything. But to enjoy life, we must get rid of all the obstacles. All man-made things are obstacles to human life. Start today. Give up one small unnecessary thing every week. Take an oath today.

Simplifying life through automation is nonsense, life is simple without any automation. Man plus machines cannot be simpler than man alone. Simplification implies less and less, not more and more. Replacing ourselves with machines we ourselves create is the most foolish thing we can do, no other animal even thinks of such a stupid idea. Let us use science and technology sparingly, only in exceptionally important situations, not in routine daily life.

By now you must have understood that all the pleasures and sorrows of life are experienced by our *manas*. We are not our *manas*, we actually do not experience any pain or pleasure. The goal of human life is to understand this, to understand our own *manas*, to train and discipline it, to become masters of our own mind. Then we are free, free from all suffering. This is the secret of life. Do not fall into the trap of easy life and comforts and conveniences for the body. If it is hot, let it be so. If it is cold, let it

be so. If your legs are aching, let that be so. Do not run after gadgets of technology. Live the way God has created you, using only your body and mind, without using any of the factory-made artifacts. Trying to avoid discomforts and constantly seeking pleasure are indications of a weak *manas*. The most important thing for us to do in life is to train, disciplines, strengthen and control our *manas*, to master our own mind, to make the *manas* listen to us, not become slaves of our own mental passions, the goal is to become free. We can live happily only when we achieve mastery over our own minds. Those who say simple living and other guiding principles we have given here are impracticable are actually saying that only slavery is practicable, not freedom! Get rid of this disease of saying that good things are not practicable.

We are not the enjoyers or sufferers. Nor do we actually do anything in life. All that is done is done by the *manas*. It is the *manas* which has the feeling of doership. Get rid of this feeling of doership, get rid of the desire for the fruits of your actions and simply live and work. You will appear to be doing things like anybody else but actually you are not doing anything at all, as long as there is no feeling of doership and there is no desire for the results of your actions. This is the secret of work. This is the meaning of doing nothing. This is the meaning of renouncing all actions. Understand this and just live and enjoy life. Do nothing. Give up travelling, shopping, meetings, parties, functions etc. These are some of the most wasteful and damaging activities. Keep all such activities to the bare minimum and see how your life gets a new meaning.

It is possible to free ourselves from all problems. You can and you must get rid of all problems, all worries, all suffering. You can and you must enjoy life to its fullest. This book has shown you how. This book has given a sure

solution to all human problems, right now and here, this is possible for all human beings. As such, this is a very practical book. You may initially think this is all fine but you are not yet ready, it is practically difficult for you at this stage. You have to know the ideal. It is important to know the absolute, ultimate, ideal, final reality so that we can know where or how far away from the ideal we are at present, how far can we go towards the ideal, how to do that etc. Otherwise, we will have no sense of any direction or goal or purpose in life and life would simply be spent, not lived. Find out how far you are from the ideal picture we have painted in this book, and summon all your determination to move towards the ideal, inch by inch. Progress can be slow, that is perfectly fine, but there must be progress, regularly, every day, towards the ideal. Otherwise, neither you enjoy life nor do you allow others to enjoy their life.

The first step is to understand all this, the second step is to accept, the third step is voluntarily cut down on all harmful activities as much as possible, the last step is for the society as a whole to wake up and bring in necessary changes in all spheres of human activity. We have very little time, we better wake up today. This is time for action. Let us all do our bit.

Give up this futile worry about practicability. Take an oath today and start off your journey for a better life. Tell yourself: "I am free to do anything for my own good, I can do anything for the sake of my own well being and happiness, but I have no right to do anything which harms, troubles, scares, or disturbs others in any way, directly or indirectly, in the immediate future or in the long run. I understand and accept this basic principle of humanity. I shall always keep this in mind, I shall continuously strive to analyze and understand my own life, I shall try to improve myself and my life style, I shall give up or at least dras-

tically cut down on all things which are harmful to other human beings or other living creatures. I shall take one small step in this direction everyday, everyday shall be a better day, for me and for the rest of the world. This is a promise, I promise myself.”

You have to give up only bad things, not good things. How can giving up bad things make your life more difficult? It can only make your life better. So do not worry. Just do it. In fact you do not have to actually give up anything, you are the whole universe, you can neither give up nor hold on to anything, there is nothing else other than you. You do not stand to lose anything, you only stand to gain. You do not have to give up family life or private property or money or pleasures, you only have to give up attachments to these. The root of all happiness lies in the self, therefore by abiding in the self alone you will not lose anything, on the contrary, you stand to gain everything you want including all the pleasures in life.

Do not take this book simply as some opinion expressed by somebody on something. This is of direct relevance to you in your own life. Do not accept or reject anything tentatively with a “how does it matter?” mood. Everything in this book is directly about your own life. Ideas that you may not understand, accept or appreciate today, you may understand and appreciate at some later point in life, after you have had more experience in life, after you have seen our predictions come true, after you see more of destruction caused by science and technology, etc. You may therefore want to come back and read this book again and again. Take it seriously. Know yourself, improve yourself. Do it in stages, but do it very religiously, with full seriousness, take an oath and never even think of the possibility of failure in living up to it. Do or die. Start today. May God bless you.

3.107 **The Top Secret**

In ancient times, knowledge used to be restricted and made available to only the few deserving. This view is not wrong, after all, if knowledge gets into the wrong hands, they will surely misuse it. Today we teach bomb making to everyone and then worry that bombs are in the wrong hands. The prime concern for restricting the availability of knowledge was, and continues to be, misuse in the hands of people who cannot understand it completely and correctly.

Our ancient scriptures and other religious schools of thought are extremely vast, extremely complex and extremely subtle. A whole life is not sufficient even for a serious seeker to read and understand all these monumental works. The language is archaic, the concepts and discussions are highly abstract and confusing, the logic and reasoning used is involved. So, a vast majority of the people living in the world today have simply no easy access to all this great storehouses of such deep and profound knowledge. The feeling that there are grapes but it is beyond its reach, was not a very good feeling for the fox. Likewise, denying the whole world of real knowledge leaves the people sour and dissatisfied, which is not good for humanity as a whole. The knowledge and principles contained in these ancient works and in this book are of universal appeal and hence it is not right to keep them secret or divulge them to only a select few. Knowledge is not anybody's property, everybody needs the right knowledge, everybody has a use for it and everybody must have access to knowledge without any kind of restrictions. Hence this book. This book is for all human beings, for the welfare and all-round well being of all human beings.

Let us live, let us all live well, let us share and care, let us all live together. It is with this view that this book

has been written. It is written in simple language, it is straight forward, it is structured and organized for easy, step-by-step understanding, it is full of everyday examples and illustrations, it is written in the language and parlance of the ordinary citizens of the world who are educated in the western, scientific system of schooling and higher education. All unnecessary debates and discussions that are purely of academic interest have been left out. The book is not polemic, we do not directly address or attack any religion or school of thought. Hope you have found this book both interesting and useful.

This book includes topics that are usually considered scientific as well as those that are usually taken to be within the domain of religion or spirituality. But care has been taken not to mess up and create a confused mixture of scientific and logical reasoning with blind faith and mystic intuition. The art and science of life, the scientific as well as religious aspects of life, have been presented as a unified, holistic, integrated theory in a truly scientific spirit. Fundamental questions concerned with all aspects of life have been raised and, hopefully, adequately and satisfactorily answered. This book is not just dry meta-physics, it is very practical and down to earth. It is hoped that the book will be well received and found useful by one and all.

Theories which are easy and straight forward are less likely to be misinterpreted and misused than theories which are large, complex and nebulous. Two plus two is four. This is the right answer. This is the only right answer. This is the truth, as simple as that. Truth is always very simple and straight forward, it cannot be complex and confusing. Saying two and two add up to seven is false. Eight is a wrong answer, fifteen is a wrong answer, hundred is also a wrong answer. 12.34567 is a wrong answer, -23 is a wrong answer, $0.0013456^{-6.77}$ is also a wrong answer. There

can be any number of wrong answers, wrong answers can be complex and confusing, but truth is always very simple, very straight forward, not at all confusing. All large, complex, contrived, involuted, confusing theories, philosophies, schools of thought, religions are likely to be wrong. Here is an honest attempt to the present the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in the simplest and most straight forward manner. Simplicity is a virtue, not a limitation. Simple theories are far less likely to be misunderstood and misused. All ordinary human beings can read and understand this book, convince themselves, internalize and actually put it to practice, thereby making this world a heaven. Truth is universal and not a matter of opinion. Let everybody know the truth. Let there be no apprehensions of misuse. It is our collective responsibility to see that truth is understood properly by all, without any confusions and distortions.

This book is a strong critic of modern science and its fall-outs such as technology, industry, business and economic development. We have tried hard to show why these are actually wrong and actually bad. Modern science and its fall-outs have pushed us all to the limits, and life on Earth may soon be impossible. Yet the whole world is completely complacent and everybody continues to think so high of science and technology. Given this, it is essential to urgently bring about awareness about the truth. The lives of seven Billion people is being affected, many life forms are gone for ever, we are already on the verge of total destruction. Hence this whole topic cannot be taken lightly or ignored. Please think with a completely open, unbiased mind and see the truth for yourself. We are not canvassing against modern science and technology with any ulterior motive, there is no hidden agenda, welfare of all human beings and of the entire world is the only motive. Hope you understand.

This book is completely self contained, there is no need to read any other book before or after, to understand the science of life properly and completely. Of course the interested readers will have a number of original and substantive works but this book is not critically dependent on any thing else for its completeness. This book is about life. We have addressed and answered fundamental questions concerning what is life, what is the goal of life, how to live and how to make the most of this great human life. Everybody can and must live well, happily, without any worries or problems. In order to put any idea into practice, a thorough and deep understanding of the underlying philosophy is essential. We have provided such a complete, thorough, scientific and philosophical foundation for life in the very first two chapters. The first chapter started off with the ideas of existence and independent existence, the importance of seeking *sat* and not *asat* or *mithyaa*, and showed that independent existence of an external world is unprovable. The second chapter showed us the way of piercing the dark barriers of ignorance so that we can reach the light of real knowledge or *jyooti* deep within us. The third chapter showed us how we can uplift ourselves from mere mortal frames living a wretched sub-brutal life to immortal heights of human glory.

Out of infinite love and affection for you all, this secret knowledge contained in the ancient Indian scriptures has been laid bare in front of you, for your own good. This book has been written with the sole purpose of helping you, it has been written for your sake alone, for your good alone, there is no other motive or agenda. Everything that has been said in this book has been said with utmost sincerity and selflessness, for your own good, for your own all round well-being. It is now up to you to take what you found interesting and useful. Just leave the rest. This is

a book to be practiced and lived, it is not merely for fun, entertainment, or academic curiosity. Do as you please, you are wise enough. But please do not misuse it. Read, understand properly, practice and be benefited. May God bless you.

The purport of the book is simple, its message is simple and straight forward. Take to simple living. Promote simple living, in every possible way, through all possible means, all over the globe. This is the task of your life. This is your calling, there is little else that you need to do in life. Live simply. Simply live. Do nothing - nothing wasteful, nothing harmful. This is the art of living. This is the bottom line. Understand the self. Live a long, healthy, happy, glorious life in the light of this pure consciousness called the self. May God bless you.

We can summarize the whole book in just three sentences: *asatoo maa sadgamaya, tamasoo maa jyootirgamaya, mRtyoormaa amRtaM gamaya*, meaning “Take me not towards *asat* but towards *sat*, take me not towards darkness but towards light, lead me not towards death but towards immortality”.

Let there be peace, let there be peace, let there be peace.

Chapter 4

Appendices

4.1 Key to Pronunciation

We have defined and used a number of technical terms in this book. We have defined the meanings of these terms precisely then and there, before using them. These are not English words, all these are Sanskrit terms, these terms have been rendered in the Roman alphabet for making them readable by all, without need to know any other script. The transliteration scheme used is explained here so that readers can pronounce these terms reasonably accurately irrespective of their language background.

English writing system is alphabetic, we need to learn, store and use spelling rules to map spoken words to written form and vice versa. These spelling rules are quite arbitrary and unscientific. English uses odd ways of writing long and short vowels (cut-caught, fit-feat, pull-pool, let-late, colour-collar, floatation-float), uses different spellings for the same sounds (meat-meet, their-there, too-two, are-or, sun-son etc.), same letters for different sounds (put-but, fat-fate, fit-fight, poll-pool, peg-page, pill-philosophy, case-chase, etc.), strange spellings (daughter, school, women, etc.), silent letters (psychology, coup, etc.). Therefore, us-

ing English spellings as a basis for Romanization would only add to confusions. We need to use a simpler, more uniform, more scientific, easy-to-learn-and-use system of transliteration.

In Sanskrit (and other modern Indian languages), the script is a more or less direct rendering of phonemes, the basic sound units in the language, unlike English which uses a set of alphabets and a fairly complex and involved system of spelling rules to map the written alphabet sequences to pronunciations. We give below the *varNa-maala* or the chart showing the traditional arrangement of phonemes. Most modern Indian languages use a *varNa-maala* similar to this one. Those who know Sanskrit or any other modern Indian language will be able to quickly get a feel for the transliteration scheme by taking a look at this chart.

a aa i ii u uu R RR e ee ai o oo au M H

k	kh	g	gh	nG
c	ch	j	jh	nY
T	Th	D	Dh	N
t	th	d	dh	n
p	ph	b	bh	m

y r l v sh Sh s h L

Here the first line lists the vowel sounds. Note the correct use of i and e. The second part consists of 25 consonants arranged in a 5 by 5 matrix. The rows indicate the place of articulation. The sounds in the first row are produced at the glottis, at the back of the mouth. Moving gradually from back to front, we reach the last row

where we have the sounds produced by closing the lips. The retroflex sounds T, Th, D, Dh, N are produced by lifting and curling up the tongue. The first column includes unvoiced unaspirated consonants, the second column has the unvoiced aspirated sounds, the third column has the voiced unaspirated sounds, the fourth column has the voiced, aspirated sounds and the last column has the nasal consonants. Aspiration, an extra puff of air, is indicated by the addition of the letter h. The last line includes the remaining consonants including the semi-vowels, the laterals and the fricatives. We give below the pronunciation guide:

VOWELS:

a	son
aa	master
i	if
ii	feel
u	full
uu	fool
R	(Between ru and ri)
RR	(Long R)
e	let
ee	late
ai	lie
o	rotate
oo	rote
au	now
M	(Pronounced as the corresponding nasal consonant depending upon the following consonant. See notes below.)
H	(Pronounced as ha/hi/hu/he depending upon the previous vowel. See notes below)

CONSONANTS:

k	cart
kh	blockhead
g	goat
gh	ghost
nG	sing
c	chain
ch	catch-him
j	jet
jh	hedgehog
nY	(French n - sounds like nya)
T	ten
Th	ant-hill
D	dog
Dh	godhood
N	under
t	(French t)
th	thumb
d	then
dh	breathe
n	not
p	pot
ph	loop-hole
b	ball
bh	abhor
m	mother
y	yard
r	run
l	luck

v	avert
sh	(German reich - sounds like Sh)
Sh	show
s	son
h	hot
L	(Retroflex l)

M is pronounced as the nasal sound corresponding to the row of the consonant that follows it in the given word. Thus Mk is pronounced as nGk, Mc is pronounced as nYc, MT is pronounced as NT, Md is pronounced as nd, Mb is pronounced as mb. For the unclassified consonants, M is pronounced as m. H is pronounced as ha when preceded by the vowel a or aa, as hi when preceded by i, ii or ai, as hu when preceded by u, uu or au, as he when preceded by e or ee.

Observe that there are more sounds than the 26 alphabets we have in the Roman script. We therefore use a combination of lower case and upper case letters. Running texts in English consist mostly of lower case letters. Upper case letters are used in acronyms, to start Proper names, and to start a new sentence. These conventions apply only to English, not to Sanskrit and other Indian languages. We shall use uppercase letters mainly to indicate what are called retroflex consonants. Also note that we have a very systematic use of short and long vowels. English is not so systematic in its spelling rules. We cannot depend on the usual spelling rules of English to render terms in Sanskrit, the English alphabet and spelling system is simply not adequate. We use here double letters systematically to indicate long forms of the corresponding short vowels. Sanskrit does not have a short 'e' or a short 'o' sound and many transliteration systems use 'e' and 'o' to indicate the long forms. This can be very confusing to people who are not familiar with Sanskrit. Many modern Indian languages have

long and short versions. Many languages of the world have long and short versions of these vowels. English has too, as in ‘get-gate’, ‘let-late’, ‘quotation-quote’, ‘floatation-float’. That is why we have used *yooga*, *veeda* instead of the more common ‘yoga’ or ‘veda’. Note that the scheme used here uses at most two characters per phoneme. Only alphabetic characters are used, no special symbols are used. Words can be formed by simply arranging these letters in a linear sequence as in English, without need for any diacritic marks which are usually marked on the top or bottom of the main characters. This scheme is therefore amenable for easy typing from the standard computer keyboard. The mapping from written words to the corresponding pronunciations will be simple and natural and fully rule governed, making it highly readable. This scheme is easy to learn, and once learned, easy to remember, easy to type-in and easy to read aloud. It can be used very effectively to render Sanskrit and modern Indian languages systematically and fairly accurately.

4.2 About the Author

Dr. Kavi Narayana Murthy, Professor at the Department of Computer and Information Sciences, as also at the Department of Sanskrit Studies, University of Hyderabad, India, obtained his bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Bangalore University in 1983, master's degree in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics from University of Hyderabad in 1989, and Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Hyderabad in the year 1996. He served Bharat Electronics (Government of India, Ministry of Defence) from March 1984 to July 1987, and CAD and Special Systems Group, Sundaram Clayton Ltd. from Feb 1989 to July 1990. He has been a member of the faculty at University of Hyderabad since July 1990. He specializes in the areas of Natural Language Engineering and Speech Technologies. He has over 50 publications including two text books in these areas. He has guided over 50 MTech and PhD students. He has handled several funded research projects. He has been on several technical and advisory committees of the Government of India and has chaired sessions in national and international conferences. He was the Indian coordinator for an Indo-French Research Network in Computational Linguistics. He has delivered a number of invited lectures in India and abroad. He had been a Senior Fellow at the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore and a visiting scientist at Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore, AU-KBC Research Centre, Chennai, Osmania University and Annamalai University. He is a visiting faculty at International School of Engineering. He has handled consultancy projects for the Government of Karnataka and C-DAC, Bangalore.

He has learned Sanskrit, Vedanta, Yoga and other aspects of ancient Indian tradition from his father right from his childhood at home, and later at school and college and

from other gurus. He has authored a book entitled AhiM-saa and an e-book entitled Brahmacharya. He has delivered lectures on various aspects of Indian Knowledge Systems in many places, particularly on Vedanta. He conducts free Yoga, Sanskrit and Vedanta classes. His other interests include Indian Classical Music and Holistic Healing Systems. He may be contacted through email at knmuh@yahoo.com