

**Lectures
on
Vedanta
AND
THE ART OF LIVING**

by

His-Holiness

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PREFACE

*“The One remains, the many change and pass,
Heaven’s light for ever shines, Earth’s shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of Eternity
Until Death tramples it into fragments.”*

—Shelley in *Adonais*

DARŚANA, the word denoting philosophy, in Saṅskṛta means vision as well as the instrument of vision. So as to live purposefully we need to have a clear vision of both the ecology and the psychology of our being. We must, at the same time, be sure of the path that leads to this vision, the negligence of which is at our own cost. A refugee from Pakistan once told me that on his arrival in India, he was in search of an architect to plan a new house for him. Everyone, including his family, ridiculed him for his audacity. But he was clear in his mind that without a clear vision of a goal, he would be lost in self-pity. Now that he has built the house after a hard struggle for a quarter of a century, he is at peace with himself. Similarly, most of us are lost in self-pity or frivolity, in the absence of a clear vision of our goal in life. Vedānta emphasises both the vision and its path. It is neither merely a philosophy nor a religion. It is a religion based on philosophy and philosophy expressed in religion. Philosophy gives us the vision, and religion the means to attain it. In the present series the means are emphasised. We have to live whether we want to or not, or whether we do it artistically or crudely. But if we develop the art of living, we will become a source of happiness to all those who come in contact with us and we ourselves will be full of infinite joy.

The present series is based upon the *Madhu Brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* a part of the *Śatapathbrāhmaṇa* of the Śukia Yajurveda. The Upaniṣads constitute the foundations of Advaita Vedānta, which in its turn stands in a harmonious relation with the totality of Hindu ethics and culture. Advaita is the centre where all the radii of doctrines converge. It is certainly true of all the sects of Hinduism, but we claim that even non-Hindu religions can be proved to be converging to the same goal. Thus Advaita Vedānta represents universal religion which branches out into different sects. Hence the art of living which we are positing is not for any particular group, but for the whole of humanity.

The art consists in developing absolute purity of motive, speech and actions based on the ideal of realising the hidden potentiality of Self. It manifests itself in acts of self-denial and sacrifice of all our sinful arid regions. Fragrant flowers of devotion in the field of social love must blossom out. It implies the immortal life lived here and now with vitality.

शान्तं शिवम् अद्वैतम् —peace, bliss and non-duality constitutes the Perfection, according to the *Mandūkya Upaniṣad*. It can be realised only when the intellect

is transfigured into radiance pouring out inspired action, practical spirituality and metaphysical devotion. At present we cling to external possessions and the ego-associated apparatus. Then we will manifest infinite love, compassion and tenderness. The path will be guided by Shiva who will continually set our faltering feet on the right path making our lonely and cheerless journey a joyous and harmonious quest of a blissful consummation.

Bharatiya Sanskriti Samaj from its inception is dedicated to present Advaita Vedānta suited to the present times and climes. May Śrī Saṅkara bless the workers of the Samaj with intense love for the Beatitude.

Mount Abu
Guru Purnima, 2042 samvat

Swami Maheshananda Giri
Mahamandalesvara

Vedanta and the Art of Living



दुर्जनः सज्जनो भूयात्,
सज्जनश्शान्तिमाप्नुयात् ।
शान्तो मुच्येत बन्धेभ्यो,
मुक्तश्चान्यान् विमोचयेत् ॥

*May the wicked become gentle,
May the gentle attain peace.
May the peaceful get rid of the bondages,
May the liberated liberate others.*

LECTURE I

Friends, last time we had discussed something about the future—twenty-first century means the future. This time the topic we are going to discuss is eternity. The art of living is an eternal problem and, therefore, it has to find an eternal solution here and now. It is a question which is confronting us at this moment. What is this art of living?

In the beginning, there was just all-pervasive silence, the infinite silence. There was no vibration. Even space did not exist. In the womb of the silence existed all that has been manifested and will be manifested in future. This infinite variety presenting itself through infinite time remains inexhaustible. It was all present in the womb of primordial silence. Out of its own fullness it had to spill out. For instance, when a thing is full, it just cannot be contained within itself, it spills over. Similarly, creation is spilling over of the unmanifest infinite. It has to be manifested. This process of spilling over has a natural sequence which is the only aspect studied by science. It is thought, discovered and analysed by a different process which can be called the scientific process.

There is a fundamental difference between science and art. According to Acharya Shankara, 'vidya'—knowledge, science—is dependent on 'v'what is'.¹ There is absolutely nothing that one can do about it. One just knows what it is. The objective reality is the important element here. Art is just the opposite of this, it is something which one does. The subject becomes the most important element in art. I am not saying that in science the subject is absent, just as I am not saying that art has no objective element in it. What I am trying to emphasise is that the two approaches are entirely different. In science, one wants to know the object as it is, whereas in art one wants to change it to create something new.

Art is basically a creation. An artist paints. He depends on the colours and on the canvas. He also depends on certain experiences of nature which he has had. On the basis of this he paints, and what he paints is his own creation. The artist is the one who is important here. He has utilised the available material but he has created something out of it. In all activities of art the subject becomes important. In science, it is just the reverse—one wants to know what the object is. In the process of knowing one may disturb the thing that one is observing. As modern physics is discovering, the very process of observation creates some change in what one is observing. No doubt, this is true, but the whole approach is to find out what is the objective that is minimising the subjective as far as possible. In art, one sees, it is not so.

What we will now discuss is the art of living and not the science of living; and what we can make out of this life which lies before us.

In the last series I had concluded by saying that the twenty-first century can be ushered in even now, if we work towards this end. Changing from one century to another depends on how we live. The question is, In what way can we bring this change? What is the method? To answer these questions we will now discuss the methodology. As I pointed out earlier, this method is important, because if we ignore it we are likely to head for a catastrophe, not merely a nuclear catastrophe, as is evident from the fact that most societies of the world are slowly heading towards destruction caused by their own style of living.

Slowly, we are forgetting the art of living. We have been emphasising solely the scientific aspect while all along we have been ignoring the existence of this art of living. Manu has repeatedly emphasised that it is the man who is supreme. The Mahabharata says that it is the king who is a conscious being and it is he who moulds society, the state and the environment and not the other way round. We witnessed a scientific revolution, the result was that we began to attach more importance to 'what is' than to what we can 'make' out of it. As a consequence, we have practically lost this art of living.

Some of the significant contributions made by contemporary thinkers have been in the fields of economics, sociology and psychology. Underlying all these discoveries was the assumption that the 'subject' cannot do anything; we have only to find out about the 'object' in the world. Freud did this in the field of psychology — we are prisoners of what we have experienced in our childhood and, later, in our adolescence which controls our reactions. Man was, therefore, more or less a puppet in the hands of Mother Nature. Marx did the same thing in terms of society — it is economics which controls both man and society, and not the individual. Darwin, in his own way, tried to put forth the same idea that the survival of the fittest is by natural selection. However, the uniqueness of man was not emphasised, only his similarities with other forms of life were emphasised. I am not trying to suggest even for a moment that we are not limited by our psychological experiences to some extent, or that we are not controlled by social and economic compulsions to some extent. This is true. But even more true is the fact that man can mould, within limits, the external as well as the internal world. Once we have lost this art, science can no longer guide us. The question is: What do we want to make out of what is available to us? The answer is that only art can show us the way and give the necessary impetus.

For the last three centuries, science has been emphasising the objective reality. Slowly, as in the Middle Ages, the objective reality was lost sight of, and human-kind mainly depends on the subjective element. Even in India, there was a period when there were no scientific discoveries. Following Brahmagupta during the eighth and ninth centuries, there was a period of intellectual inactivity in sciences in Indian history. In European history, as we all know, the Middle Ages were described as the dark ages. The same is true of Arabian and Chinese history. This lack of intellectual growth was followed by a gradual awakening and science took the lead as it should have done. Today things have entirely changed. Science still reigns supreme but we are gradually losing the art of living. This disharmony has to be

removed. The present predicament that humanity is going through has to be taken care of and science must bear the responsibility for the crisis.

Life will always go on. It has been there and it will always be there whether we develop the art of living or not. It cannot be said that if there is no art, life will not go on. Even though the animal world and the plant world go on living, only man has the power to control living and develop it into an art. In the absence of this art, the process of living is like a forest. There is, scientifically speaking, very little difference between a well kept garden and a forest. The process of growth is identical. For example, the mango tree or the ashok tree or the peepal tree in a forest grow in the same manner as those planted in a garden. There is no difference as far as the scientific aspect is concerned. But the mere knowledge of science, botany, and agriculture will not give us the power to create a garden. We must possess the potential of the art of gardening within ourselves. In the absence of this art, we can grow any number of trees but it will still not be a garden. We are living more or less like a forest. There is no planned living. We are living because we have to. Most of us do not even know the purpose of living, why we are living. This is where the human effort come in.

There is an element of social unconscious which psychologists have termed the 'participation mystique'. There are many actions which one will not do as an individual, but when one is in a group, there is a mystical power of the group and one becomes part and parcel of that group. One loses one's individual power of thinking, of discrimination, and one merely participates in the group. This is why this phenomenon is called the 'participation mystique'. Lewis Bruel was probably the first person to use this concept in the West to explain several phenomena. Through this the individual remains identified with the group and that prevents him from creating art out of life. Our aim should be to make life artistic. Art, as I said, is a creation, to create a purposeful life. I am not talking about creating children, creating life is cultivating it. In ancient India, we tried to build a society in which we could utilise this concept.

Primates, as we know, lived in groups. Primates did not live by themselves, they always lived in groups. There was a sense of belonging to the group and anyone outside the group was considered to be hostile. We have seen that in villages or even in towns, each colony has its own dogs. If any dog from another locality enters the colony, the dogs of that colony bark at him in an attempt to drive him away. Similarly, we have noticed that even snakes have their own locality. If a snake not belonging to the locality intrudes, all the snakes of that locality fight with it. This tribal attitude, this primal attitude is present in all of us and the moment we associate ourselves with a group without thinking, the unconscious takes the lead and our conscious thinking stops. That is why we try to form groups, but groups which do not come into conflict with other groups. In India, division of society into *varnas* was basically an art of living. The question arises: Why should a particular person perform only a particular task even though he may be capable of doing many other things? The idea was to make use of the basic urge in man to belong to a group without coming into conflict with other

groups. In other words, we utilise the 'participation mystique' but with a difference—harmony must not be lost as far as the rest of society was concerned. This important difference was emphasised.

In the last series, we had discussed the *Maitreyi Brahamana*, in which universal self was postulated in detail. The *Maitreyi Brahamana*, in the *Bhavadaranvaka Upaniṣad* is followed by what we will now discuss, the *Madh u Brahmaṇa* so called because it deals with the concept of madhu. Madhu means honey. Out of this experience of the all-pervasive self must come out honey. Out of this experience of the all-pervasive self must come out honey. Our life and our society, as I said earlier, should become as sweet as honey. According to this *Upaniṣad* this earth is a product, not of any individual, but all beings. Though the nectar is collected by a number of bees from numerous flowers, yet it is made into one honey. This is why for this product, instead of using any other word, an artistic word 'Madhu' or honey is used. We know that all beings are produced from the earth. The earth is produced by all of us and, in turn, we are produced by the same earth. If we remember this mutual dependence on each other, life will become as sweet as honey.²

As long as we depend on the unconscious level, what I was referring to as the 'participation mystique', we remain unconscious of ourselves. When we are in a group we forget who we are, but when we are unconscious of ourselves as conscious beings, we stop being creative. Often I tell people why is it that in India our basic dress was a loose cloth—a dhoti (*angavastrm*), an upper cloth (*tuttariya*), a saree—it is not that we did not know stitching. The reason was that in the very process of tying the cloth one has to be artistic. By observing how an individual had tied his dhoti one could get to know the personality of the individual as he had created something. On the other hand, when one wears trousers or other stitched clothes, all one gets to know is how much money has been spent. If a person has more money, he is better dressed; if he has less money, he cannot afford expensive clothes and he is not so well dressed. His clothes do not express his personality. It has been a custom in India that when a person visits a temple, or when he worships he should not wear any stitched clothes. The underlying rationale was that when a person visits God he is not going to show God how much money he has. He has to show God what he is. This emphasis on individual consciousness is very important.

We find that among the primitive tribes there is very little consciousness of their own individuality apart from the group. They completely identify with the group consciousness. They can never completely be identified as individuals, as human beings. For all practical purposes, it is the group which takes the lead and the member of the group perceives himself only as an instrument of the group rather than as having an individuality of his own. Vedanta philosophy emphasises this individual consciousness. First, we must become conscious of ourselves because unless we are conscious of ourselves, we will not be able to do anything; We will not be able to create anything. To know ourselves as conscious beings, it is necessary to analyse who we really are. At present we identify ourselves with things which belong to us but which are not our very self, our very nature. This

can be seen by the following illustration. We identify ourselves with our body most of the time. A person feels: 'I am the body'. If we were to analyse a little, we find that from childhood our body has undergone a number of changes, but 'I' have remained the same. Those who are older will agree that our bodies fail to fulfil many of our desires, but our desires have remained the same. We have not changed, we have the same desires. It is the body which is incapable of obeying us, of doing what we would like it to do. We must consciously make ourselves aware of this fact only then we will be able to act as creative individuals, but not if we perceive ourselves to be slaves of our body.

Our body has several limitations. In order to overcome these limitations we must know who we are. The method of introspection is very important to know who we really are. It is through introspection alone that we can attain self-realisation, and once we have attained self-realisation, the *Upaniṣad* tell us that this self is not at all different from the Cosmic self. But that stage is far away. At the moment, we have to first become conscious beings rather than controlled by the unconscious elements. This *Upaniṣad* says that this body-mind complex is a product of the unmanifest—the *avyakta*—nature of *prakriti*; It is created by that because that is its material cause.

The more we identify ourselves with nature, which is born of the unconscious material, the more unconscious we become. Of the store of this participation mystique, of the store of this immense unconscious energy can be channelised only by a human being, a part of it, a very small fragment of it over which we can exert some control. Most of the time, we are controlled by our unconscious, controlled by matter. With tremendous effort we can succeed in bringing about a small fragment of it under control. Most people do not want to exercise this control because the mechanism of convention operates to keep people away from seeking self-realisation, as it is less of a burden to follow the conventional path. We follow a particular custom as a ritual without bothering to exercise a conscious choice. Most of the things in our lives are controlled by certain customs, certain practices prevalent in society, in the nation, in the group that we belong to, and we automatically do it, without ever trying to analyse it with the result that the power of conscious choice is diminished.

The *Upaniṣad* says that one has to prepare this channel over which one can have control. The unconscious must be won over. But that means that we have to give up our lethargy. Most of the time, rituals, customs and the force of convention keep us away from the necessity of making up our minds. In other words, laziness does not allow us to make up our minds. We want someone else to make up our minds for us. As we all know, most of our thinking will now be done by machines. Slowly, computers are coming, robots will follow in no time. More and more thinking will be done by them in a mechanical way. We are quite happy about the prospects. I am not against either computers or robots but the question is—What are we saving in thinking and what are we going to do with it? This can be illustrated as follows. The automobile was manufactured so that we could save time in travelling. But what has happened? We built big cities and again we are spending three-fourths of a day travelling in our cars. The time that

we saved is not being utilised for anything else, instead we are still spending our time travelling. So, if the introduction of computers merely means that we are going to make still better computers and infinitum, then what is the use of having those computers. If computers free our mind and we are able to utilise the time saved to develop the art of living, for making life happier, then computers are of some use. Otherwise, we will become increasingly lazy just as children today have not learnt any significant scientific facts in lieu of mathematics. They use calculators for doing calculations which were earlier done by the method of rote, using multiplication tables, etc., but it does not mean that they have utilised the time saved to acquire other knowledge. Instead perhaps they go and watch television and video. If the time saved had been utilised for a better purpose, then such saving of time would have been understandable.

This art of living is very important in yet another way. Because we have lost the art of living our generation gap is increasingly widening. What is this generation gap? We enunciate certain moral principles. It is very easy to enunciate moral principles, to define them, to explain them by illustrations from the lives of Dhruva, Sita or any other great personality in the world. Having enunciated certain values, the next generation tries to see what we are doing with those values. They find that there is a tremendous contradiction between what we believe to be correct and what we actually practise with the result that they begin to rebel against those values. They feel that either the values are false or they are impractical and cannot be lived upto. Either way they are redundant. They raise a fundamental question—if they are false, then why should we leant about them, what is their utility? Alternately, if they are impractical even then they are useless. This is the fundamental point which produces the generation gap.

The art of living will tell us that every value, every moral value that we emphasise must have practical bearing on life, something to be lived up to. We may make a mistake as human beings are not perfect. Making a mistake is one thing, but doing something wrong deliberately is another. We violate moral values not unintentionally, but deliberately in a planned manner. This means that we are not accepting those values either as true values or as practical values. We must realise that moral values are not something imposed from outside, it is not that if we do certain actions then God in heaven will be pleased or if we do certain other actions then God will be displeased. Moral living is aesthetic living. We create something out of this situation, what we want to create is our moral values and that means the rational approach. In every situation we have to analyse rationally and examine what is wrong with our values, why are we unable to practice them. We must ask the question: Are the values real? If they are real, they must be practical as well. If they cannot be lived, then there is something basically wrong with those particular values.

Once we have developed this art of living, we will be able to live up to the moral values that we preach and talk about and the result is bound to bring about a change in the next generation. The younger generation will not rebel merely because a value is being proposed, on the other hand it will find that there is harmony between preaching and living. To achieve this we have to be first conscious of our own

self. As long as we are concerned about what Georges and Devdutt in the next building are doing, which has been discussed earlier, i.e., the participation mystique, we are not conscious of ourselves as individuals. We spend all the time worrying that if the neighbour has a television set then we must have one as well. This effort to keep up with the Joneses is clearly implied in the participation mystique. Unless we become conscious of our own individual self—that is, each one is an individual self and will not be controlled by what the neighbour does, though one has nothing against the neighbour yet one will analyse and only if one finds that what the neighbour does is worthwhile will one do the same—the conscious self will elude us.

Often people feel that the rebellion of youth can be crushed. We must remember that evil can never be eradicated by opposing it. An eminent psychologist, Carl Jung says that one becomes what one fights. If we read some of our *Puranas* we find that when a particular *deity* kills a demon, the demon is absorbed in the deity. The light, the conscious light of the demon passes and enters the feet of the Lord. This is how most of the stories end. What are they trying to say? In the very process of fighting with the divine, with the deity, he has become the deity. What one fights, that one becomes. Similarly, when we try to crush the young without giving them anything positive, we end up imbibing their misguided personalities. The result is that what we were not doing thirty years ago, we have started doing it ourselves today. All along we have been repeatedly telling our children not to do it, and one day we find ourselves doing the same thing. Why? The reason is that we have ignored the art of living. We felt that this disharmony could be maintained.

When we analyse moral values we must keep one thing in mind. In the university of wisdom no last word on a subject can be accepted. There is eternal growth. We have to grow, we cannot remain static in any field and that is why we are talking about the art of living because it is eternal creation. Artists have been painting for thousands of years, yet each artist paints the same scene in a different way because each creates something out of the available materials. We cannot say that the rising sun has been painted for the first and the last time and that it cannot be painted again. Another artist will paint the same rising sun in a different way because that is his creation.

God himself is a creator. That is why if we observe the sunrise even for a very long period of time, not even once will we find the same view of the sunrise repeated, each day it is different. God is the greatest artist. This is clearly reflected by the fact that over the last two hundred years fingerprints have been studied for identifying individuals and not once have we come across two individuals having the same fingerprints. It is ordained that each individual would have different fingerprints. This is the art in God's creation. It is the eternal creation. It is for precisely this reason why our dharma is called *Sanatan Dharma*. It is eternal, eternally created, and eternally creative.

We do not believe that the last word about the final things of universe was spoken at a particular time in history. All we have to do is to find it and live it, this will mean that the final word has been said. We say it is *Sanatana*. Each

generation has to discover and establish its own value judgements. No doubt we will benefit from all that has occurred in the past, just as an artist sees different things, observes different natural phenomena but having observed, he creates something new which may contain elements of many earlier creations. Similarly, all that has gone before us will enlighten us. We will get to know how others have created a particular thing in a particular way. Though this knowledge will enlighten us yet we must remember that the solution to a problem can never be identical with what it was at that particular point in time. We cannot live second hand.

The American President, Taylor, was formerly the Vice President of the United States of America. When the incumbent President died, Taylor took over as the President. He wanted a new presidential carriage. At that time there were no motor cars. A rich gentleman who was leaving the town for good was selling his carriage. A trading agent who was looking for a carriage for the President, informed the President about this carriage. The President remarked, "Well, the carriage looks very nice. But, is it all right for the President of the United States to travel in a second hand cart?" The agent replied, "It is all right because you are also a second hand President." But it cannot be lived second hand. One can be a second hand President, one may have a second hand cart, or book, but one's life cannot be second hand. It is always original, therefore, one has to create one's own art of living. One incorporates in it all that is best. In earlier times, we had absorbed things from Buddhism, Yoga and other traditions. Today we have different problems, diverse views have come into being. We have to analyse these views and we have to create our own art of living from these views.

The analysis of the illustration of the bee given here will help to clarify this point further. What does the bee do? The bee collects nectar from many flowers. Similarly, we have to collect many ideas from all parts of the world. But, honey is not merely a collection of nectars from different flowers. The bee has created something entirely new from the collection of nectars. Similarly, we learn different things from others, but we create something new from that knowledge, that is, we have to make our own honey. As I said earlier, it is not just one individual who makes the honey but the entire group, the collection of individuals. This is not the *collective individual* like the participation mystique but a *collection of individuals*, each individual retaining his independence and yet working towards a common goal.

This conception of the art of living has been defined by Chanakya who uses the word *Anviksiki*. He defines it as *prajna, vakya, kriya, vaisaradya*. According to Chanakya, the art of living means *prajna* – wisdom and insight. A gardener must not only know the science of agriculture and botany but should also know the art of gardening which he should use with wisdom and insight which grows out of experience. Similarly, we must know all that there is in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology and biology. But that is not enough. *Prajna*, i.e., wisdom and insight, constitute the very first principle of the art of living.

Second, is *vakya* – the linguistic clarity. The art of living can never be practised by a person who has no clarity of language because muddled language means

muddled thinking, muddled thought. Many times people say, "Though I said such and such a thing but I did not mean it." That clarity, the linguistic clarity is important to make our mind observe things as they are, analyse things as they are – that is the art of living. Speech is something which only human beings possess. Animals produce certain sounds but these are definite sounds for definite results. When an animal approaches, the birds cry in a particular way. During the mating season they cry in a different way, but it is a definite sound. Language, on the other hand, is not something which is just a sound. Linguistic clarity is an important element in the art of living.

Finally, there is the behavioural competence. To be able to behave in a given situation one must be capable of responding to it. One must have the competence. Often one knows what is right. One can even talk about it linguistically but, in practice, one is not able to do the thing. In short, the art of living is the development of these three elements – wisdom and insight, linguistic clarity and behavioural competence.

LECTURE II

WE had begun discussing the teachings of the *Brahdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* as enunciated in the *Madhu Vidya*. "The earth is a product of all beings and all beings are the product of the earth", said the *Upaniṣad*. Now the *Upaniṣad* goes a step further. This earth is not merely the physical earth but there is also a consciousness pervading this earth. It is that consciousness which makes this earth really the earth. This can be made clear by the following illustration. Someone has said that when a lover kisses his beloved, what is it that is meeting? Is it merely the earth portion of the two individuals, is it the earth which is kissing? Is it the inert matter which is kissing, or is it really life, the conscious feeling behind it which is kissing and which is being kissed? Though lips are made of a lifeless substance—clay—the joy that is experienced as a result of this act is not that of clay but of consciousness. God, by very nature is blissful. Creation, as I said earlier, is spilling over of His fullness. In this very process of creation, not only inert matter was created but consciousness was also present in and through matter. Consciousness appeared in matter in the form of bliss which is experienced by the human psyché while kissing. In other words, it is not merely the matter we are dealing with but with the consciousness present in it. The joys that we experience in the world are not merely material joys as many people would like us to believe, this joy is really the bliss that was dissolved in matter or, that bliss which was created simultaneously with matter or, that which was associated with matter. In any case it is the bliss of the Lord that we are experiencing.

According to the *Shruti*, "In this earth that supreme consciousness, that which is of the very form of Amrita, the nectar, that is present." It is because of the consciousness that we are able to make this life honey-like. According to the *Upaniṣad* the same consciousness which is present in the earth is also present in the earthly body of ours. Having discussed this aspect of the earth, the *Upaniṣad* ascribes this characteristic to all the material things.³ That which has been said about the earth is equally true of water. It is true of every element—fire, air, etc. In the human body, He is present as the life force, as the speech, etc. It is only by remembering this consciousness, thinking about it that we will be able to make our lives as well as the whole society as sweet as honey.

As I said earlier, as long as we concentrate not on that conscious element but only on the unconscious element, we are unable to enjoy the bliss in it. That is why the Maitreyi Brahamana, which we discussed earlier, is immediately by the Madhu Brahamana. Similarly now after the previous series then we are dealing with issues like how to make life honey-like, how to make society honey-like, we are following in the sure footsteps of the *Upaniṣads*.

Though we have progressed scientifically, we have regressed artistically. We have progressed in our knowledge of material things but regressed as far as the knowledge of our own self is concerned. It is a strange paradox. The only thing with which we have to live every moment of our lives is our own self. We do not even make an attempt to find out what it is. We have to develop this habit. If we want to make our life sweet, if we want to make society sweet, it is necessary to develop this habit of reflecting on our own life. First, we must find out what is our own reality and we will be surprised to know things about ourselves, the laws about ourselves. This knowledge will help us in every moment of our activity, in every moment of our lives. At present we want to know about the laws of everything besides our own self. We need to develop the habit of introspection, intro-version, I have intentionally broken the word—intro means inside, going inside, trying to find out what is our inner being—because in modern terminology, the word introversion is considered more or less an attitude of life; but it is not being used in that connotation here. It is an intense activity of searching within, going within, finding out the truth about our own self. At times we may find the truth to be different from what we thought was the truth about our own self. It may even contradict the views that we had firmly held till now. Many of our experiences may not be coordinated with what we experience in that state. In spite of this, we must face what we really are. This is much more important than what we feel we ought to be. Unless we know what we are we will not be able to even change ourselves. It is for precisely this reason that it has been emphasised that one must know the truth about one's own self.

This process of introspection should not be entirely restricted to our life, to our thought processes, emotions and actions, it should be accompanied by a sensitivity to the happenings around us in society. Society is our own extension. It is a part of our own self. We have to be equally conscious of it, we flow in society, we flow with society most of the time. But without consciously realising at every step what is the nature of society, and the laws guiding that particular society in which we find ourselves, we cannot make the right choice. We are not able to exert ourselves and find out the true perspective which is needed for a rational choice. Some of us should go a step further. Our micro society is part of a larger, macro society, the human society. We must be aware of the laws working there. The conscious laws, mind you, not merely the unconscious laws, that is, the field of science, but consciously how we are changing, what we are doing with volition. Thus, this process involves first, introspection of our own self, of the workings of our own thoughts, actions and emotions, and then going a step further, trying to understand sensitively the society which is around us.

Only through this process will it be possible to make life sweet and the world sweet; because we are part of this world. Yesterday, I had said that we make a mistake when we identify ourselves unconsciously with the world. We have to exert our will consciously to break that identification. The self has to become manifest in us. This is clearly illustrated by an example from another *Upaniṣad*. Just as we take out the thread from a reel, very cautiously, patiently, without

breaking it, similarly, we have to exert ourselves to find out what is our true self. Having discovered our true self, we have to extend this probe to discover the societal laws. Only then the search would be complete.

In order to make our life introspective, we need a living philosophy. I had earlier mentioned *prajna* as defined by Chanakya. Each one of us must develop a philosophy of life, only then can we bring about a change in ourselves as well as in society. Philosophy is not what one reads in a book, it is something which is living within each one. We have to see our life rationally, artistically, illuminating the contents of our conscious being. It is a strange phenomenon that the more we go within, the more we find that the pieces begin to fall into their place. Until we do introspection, until we go deep within ourselves, we will not be able to find out the contradictions in our thinking, in our emotions; and we will not be able to harmonise our thinking. Once we go deep within ourselves and find out the laws about our own self, all the pieces begin to fall into place and we are able to see the whole picture clearly.

Starting with our own self, we can examine the philosophies and experiences of others, but we have to study them carefully. As the ninth century writer, Abhinava Gupta says that from the heritage of past cultures something valuable, something fruitful can be gleaned. But he places a condition – this is possible only if, instead of refuting, we try to clarify these observations. In the process of clarification, we are able to see the times, climes, modes, social norms and physical conditions of those people. We are then able to see the spirit behind that philosophy rather than merely a solution that has been offered. Problems can be posed, but solutions have to be found. The technique of finding the solutions can be learnt. Each individual must find his own solution to problems because each individual is an individual in his own right and can never be identical with anyone else. Often we want to live as our fathers lived or as our grandfathers lived, but we have to live our own life. We cannot live either our fathers' life or our grandfathers' life. Times have changed, situations have changed. History can never repeat itself identically. What we can learn from our parents and grandparents is the way in which they arrived at those solutions and the technique they adopted. It is very easy to refute and say that old people held such and such views which have been proved wrong. We have refuted it, it is an easy task but we have not tried to analyse it and we have not got any insight from their experience because we have not tried to clarify it.

The last chapter ends on a very important note, a point which the Vedas repeat again and again, i.e., the whole universe is a manifestation of just one consciousness. This knowledge is enough to make life sweet. As long as we do not see this unity, as long as we do not experience this revelation, there will always be duality, and duality will continuously produce conflict. Conflicts can be resolved only if we are able to see the same spirit everywhere. It has been said in the *Madhu Vaidya* that everything is an effect, now this is a very interesting statement. As mentioned earlier, the earth is the cause of our body, water is the cause of our body, fire is the cause of our body because all these elements are in the body,

but the earth, water, fire, sun, moon that we experience have come into being because of our own actions, our own "*karma*." Acharya Shankara points out that this is the base on which the unity of the universe is being explained here.⁴ This base is mutual help. The earth has helped us come into being and we have helped the earth come into being. An awareness of this mutual help and dependence would bring about a radical change in our attitude to life. Generally, society, family or any other group is basically divided. Someone is providing and someone else is being provided with. To put in modern jargon it is the "haves and have-nots." We are continuously dividing society in this way. The important point is that each one of us is a provider and each one is also one who is being provided. For example, if one is able to attend office in time, it is because someone has prepared the breakfast in time. If one's wife is able to prepare breakfast in time it is because one has provided her with all the essentials. When we analyse in this way we find that the whole universe is not in conflict with each other but is in mutual harmony. *Kleshas*, difficulties arise when we do not see this feeling of mutual helpfulness. We should not only ask the question: What will we get from others but also ask what will we give to others. We must take help from others and we must also give help to others. This approach to life is what makes life sweet. The other person is giving because he is a conscious being, he is giving out of his free will. Similarly, we are giving him because we are free and independent. In other words, we are giving out of our love and we are receiving what he has to give out of his love.

The material substances remain unmanifest until consciousness is associated with it. A thing cannot be an 'object' unless there is a subject who has seen it. Though it may lie in front of a person, it is not an object unless it is perceived. Similarly, everything is unmanifest – *avyakta* and cannot be perceived even if it is there unless there is a conscious element which perceives it. This consciousness, as we know, has existence, bliss, knowledge and order. The universe is orderly only when a conscious mind perceives it. In the very process of observing we are not mere spectators but we become participants. The moment we know a thing we have categorised it as an object. It has become an object. We have made it desirable or undesirable for that matter. We have brought about a change in the very process and this process is continuous. But we are not doing this consciously or wilfully.

Acharya Shankara says that the art of living is like living in a tent.⁵ Of course, as we all know, Acharya Shankara was a *sannyasin*, a monk. He was continuously moving from one place to another; giving his life message to people all over the world, the then known world. As he was always moving from one place to another, he knew what it was to live in a tent. He compares the art of living to living in a tent. But what is the nature of this tent? He says that I have made my mind into a tent, *patakuti*. The meaning of this word is obvious. *Kuti* means tent, and *pata* means cloth. That is what a tent is. He says that my mind is like a tent which is shining. My mind is not merely an unconscious active substance. I have made it into an efficient observing instrument. I have made it broad and liberal. The art

of living is to be practised by making the mind more and more liberal. What do we mean by liberality? This concept implies that one should not only accept the other person's freedom but also help it in every way and enjoy in the way it grows. That is what liberality means. Today, liberalism itself is becoming a non-liberal movement. Anything that contradicts the values held by a particular group is perceived as a non-liberal attitude. The moment one calls someone else non-liberal one stops being a liberal because then the respect for another person's individuality is absent. Acharya Shankara says, "I have made my mind a free, liberal and reflecting one. Every action that I do, every thought that I think, every emotion that I feel, I see it consciously, I reflect over it and attempt to get the complete essence of that experience, the joy of that experience."

There are many people who read a lot. There is a Sanskrit saying—"A person who reads very little becomes a scholar, a person who reads a lot remains a fool." This can be seen in everyday life. Small children are seen carrying a heavy load of books, a load which even we would find difficult to carry. But if we were to ascertain the level of individual growth of these children, we are in for a surprise! They read books but they do not reflect over what they read because they are not taught how to reflect.

The art of living is to make the mind liberal and reflective. It is only through practice that we can develop it, for instance, if one has fever one may suffer from a headache and bodyache. One should ask oneself this question: Am I able to experience that particular period of time between the two throbbings of the head during which there is no throbbing? One should try this experiment and one will find that the headache will begin to recede. The same is true of any pain. It is not possible for our nervous system to continuously experience any sensation for a long period of time. A sensation is experienced for a short duration only and one will be surprised that the amount of time pain is experienced within an hour is about the same as the amount of time the pain is absent in the experience, that is, if for half an hour one has experienced pain then for half an hour one will not have experienced any pain. This can be easily explained—a wave is transmitted to the nervous system, and it is followed by the next one, between these two transmissions there is period of inactivity for a fraction of a second. Therefore, the pain is not continuous. Not having practised this, we feel that we have been suffering for more than an hour, whereas in reality we have suffered only for half an hour.

This is how the mind becomes reflective. Slowly, we have to develop this habit. Acharya Shankara says that in a tent one needs a central pole. What is this central pole? Patience is the supporting central pole. One can never develop this art of living until one realises the value of patience. In the twentieth century we are accustomed to doing everything fast. In every way life is becoming faster and faster. Fifty years ago, if we travelled from Calcutta to Delhi the journey took thirty hours and we were very happy. Today the same distance is covered in seventeen hours yet we are not happy. We feel that there should be faster trains. We want to do the same thing with our minds, this is not possible. Mind has its own speed

and by increasing the speed with which we take the body from one place to another, we strain our mind unnecessarily because the mind is not something which can be changed so easily. Hence, even in spiritual discipline, we do not have patience, we want quick results. We want to attain the highest state within a matter of, should I say, years; some people want it within minutes. The mind cannot be trained in that way. Patience is essential. When a person trains his mind and he finds that it is not being trained properly, he may feel that he is not making any progress. This can be compared to an increase in weight. When a person gains weight, he is not able to perceive this increase in weight but others around him can see that he is gaining weight. If someone sees him after six months, he may be aghast at the amount of weight he has gained. The person who has put on weight does not feel it because he did not gain this weight in one day. Body weight increases by grams. At no stage does the person feel that he is gaining weight, unless he checks his weight with the help of a weighing scale. On the other hand, other people are able to perceive this increase in weight. Similarly, when we try to observe our own mind and try to determine how it has grown, the level of maturity it has attained, we feel that we have not attained any maturity. It is here that patience plays a role because the patience in us makes us exert more and more. It is for others to observe and decide that there is a change in us, we are unable to see this change ourselves. Only if we have patience with ourselves, with our own mind can we have patience with our children. Children, as we know, grow very slowly but we do not have patience with them. We want to bring about a change in them immediately. We are not patient with our servants. We may appoint a servant today and expect him to discharge all his duties perfectly within a week. If he is unable to do this, we feel that he is not working properly. The attitude for patience plays a very important role in the art of living. According to Acharya Shankara, patience is the supporting central pole, without this art of living cannot be developed.

If one has seen a writer, a poet, a sculptor, a painter or any other artist, one finds that there will be days when he may work eighteen to twenty hours a day like a mad man. There will be times, for day together, when he may not do any work. A person who is not an artist will wonder why is he not doing any work. Art is not an activity like digging a well. It is not an act of that type because it involves working with the mind, it requires patience. A poet has to get the right idea, a writer has to get the right conception, a painter needs the right approach. It is not merely a physical activity. The art of living is a delicate art. We need to be patient with ourselves and once we have patience with ourselves, we will have patience with others as well. Here, we may ask the question: With which rope will the tent be tied? The tent is fastened with strong ropes of virtue. The mind must cultivate virtue. It must always be remembered that virtue is a delicate act of volition. For example, when there is a choice and we choose the better thing, we have not done a virtuous act. An unconscious decision, even if it is correct, is not a virtue. An act will be virtuous only when we exercise our volition, when we do it out of our free will, when there is a possibility of not doing it. A virtuous

act has to be a free choice. Unless this rope (virtue) is strong, the strong winds of unconscious will blow away the virtuous acts, and instead of exercising volition we will act, as I have mentioned earlier, according to the participation mystique, we will lose our free will at that moment. Even though we may do a correct thing, yet it will not be a virtue because we have not done it out of our free will. Will-power can be increased slowly by exerting it. Only when a person has a strong will can he be virtuous.

Will is a peculiar thing. When we study primitive societies, we find that they do not possess much of a will. Carl Jung has given an example. While he was in Africa, a letter had to be sent to the railway station which was 120 kilometres away. He asked the headman of the tribe to make arrangements to send the letter. The headman selected a person to do the work. Jung says that he told the man, "Well, this is the letter. This has to be taken to the railway station and given to the station master." The man was aghast at the idea of walking 120 kilometres. It is, indeed, a long distance to walk, it is not a daily routine. The man looked stunned. Jung thought that perhaps the man had not understood him. So, he repeated the instructions. In the meantime, the headman came along. Jung told the headman that perhaps the man had not been able to follow the instructions. The headman replied, "Sir, you are not doing it the right way. You have to excite him to do it." The headman then proceeded to talk about the many runners who were active. The amount of work they had done. Then he talked about the man's father and grandfather and their accomplishments, he added that it was not possible that the man could not run 120 kilometres and thereby bring disgrace to his family and tribe. After hearing this, the man was ready. He took the letter and ran as fast as he could, delivered the letter and came back. The primitive mind does not have the will-power, the volition. The primitive tribal has to be excited into doing something, he has to be talked into it. The self will is not present. It is only when we mature mentally that we do not need something to excite us. We experience our volition to do something. It has to be done and, therefore, we are doing it. Most of us have not matured, we have remained at that primitive level, that growth has not taken place.

There is a beautiful verse which describes how we can discard rituals slowly.⁶ When we start we need an elaborate ritual. We need an image. We need a process to worship which is a definitive process. If anything is missing in this process we feel that something terrible has happened. But as we grow, we reach a stage where all these external activities become redundant, meaningless, purposeless. The word 'japa' means repetition of a particular *mantra*, a particular *stotra*, a repetition of a number of verses. Here, it is the words which assume importance. It is enough to pray, enough to sing particular hymns. We need only that much of ritual but then even this is ritual. Eventually, the words become unimportant. After all, what are words? They bring to our mind certain ideas. If those ideas are already present in our mind, where is the necessity of pronouncing those particular words. At this stage even the words become redundant. We do not have to pray or even repeat a name. We just need to think of Him, who is within us. But even this is a ritual,

as we still need a thought. When we attain the highest state, we do not even need to know our own mind, because we know that we are not different from Shiva Himself. Even the mental thought becomes unnecessary here. Thus, virtue has to be developed slowly and steadily and, as I said, it has to be volitional. It has to be out of our own free will and not imposed by anything external or by our own unconscious. That is what gives it strength. No matter how much others try to influence us we will not change from the course of action which we have decided to follow. We will stick to our decisions because we know them to be correct. This does not mean that we will not listen to others. We will listen to others, we will pay attention, we will analyse and accept if we think that what has been suggested is proper. The supreme decision will be our own. It is only then that virtue will become strong.

Acharya Shankara says that the tent should not be pitched in one place for long duration of time. It should always be on the move. The art of living is what makes or takes away the monotony of life. Many of us at an early age in life, some psychologists believe 36 years whereas others believe 40 years, do move, we are forward looking at that age. Slowly, what is known as the settling down process sets in. The moment we stop moving forward, we settle down, i.e., we go downward. To have this attitude of continuous movement is what makes life artistic and beautiful and removes the monotony of life. What do we mean when we say that the mind is ever on the move. Does it mean that we go on thinking different thoughts? This is actually a creative absorption of all the experiences that we go through, and having absorbed them, to discard the ones which are invalid. We must absorb the valid thoughts and discard the invalid ones, both these processes are important. The art of life, the art of living refers to this act of discarding. If we are unable to discard the customs, the rituals which seem to be irrational or unintelligible, or we know we are inadequate here and now, or even inefficacious, then we have not attained maturity. Often this happens in life. We know that a thing is irrational but still finally adhere to our superstition. For example, a person sneezes. There is absolutely no connection between this act of sneezing and our going out, it immediately prevents us from going out. Even though we cannot find any logic behind it, we follow it and we are unable to discard it. In the same way there are innumerable experiences, customs and rituals which are unintelligible yet we continue to follow them.

Every individual faces problems and finds a solution to those problems. He finds a solution that is adequate, one that will fructify and bring the desired result. Ideas which have lost relevance in terms of the living world are only dead memories. For example, dead history can be recorded but it is not valid in vital life. According to Acharya Shankara, "This tent is on the move, i.e., my mind is continuously on the move. One is continuously absorbing, discarding, analysing and synthesising. One is continuously on the move, one is not what one was yesterday, one is not what one was an hour earlier. This tent, he says, is variegated, i.e., my mind is not monotonous. Unfortunately, in this age of specialisation, every one has specialised in something and, therefore, life has become monotonous. Very often

I feel that there should be some way of educating the people about the final results of all the different sciences, arts, history, geography, etc. A human being must know where humanity has reached, what it is has attained. Everyone cannot go through the whole process of how a particular result was reached but everyone must know the result because everyone is a human being and it is a human achievement. The *Puranas* contain all the possible knowledge at different periods so that people could have access to this knowledge. That makes life variegated, it is not a monotonous existence because we have varied interests.

Acharya Shankara says, "I have painted this tent with a number of lotuses." In the human body, according to the Yoga tradition, there are a number of lotuses. This meaning is also being implied here. In those different lotuses there are different consciousnesses, and different experiences take place there. The peculiarity of the lotus is that even though it sprouts from mud it is absolutely unconnected with both mud and water. Similarly, our mind should be completely involved in the world but still be unconnected, unattached to it. Only then will it be free. The mud symbolises the unconscious from which the conscious mind springs forth but the conscious mind must remain above the unconscious, only then will it be able to control it.

Acharya Shankara concludes by saying, "With this tent I am continuously moving towards the truth." We must live the truth as we know it. We must never be afraid that it may turn out to be an error. The way to truth lies through error, only by living it will we find out whether or not it is an error. We may make a mistake. We should not be afraid of making mistakes, but we must have truth as our goal. The moment we realise a thing to be wrong, we must possess the strength to discard it. It is not wrong to make a mistake, it does not take away the art of living. On the other hand, if we persistently stick to a mistake we can never be an artist of living. Acharya Shankara says "Oh Shiva! you enter into this mind, because once you enter then only it (the tent) will attain what it wanted to attain."

These are some of the fundamental concepts that we must develop—patience, volitional virtues continuous absorption and discarding of values, unattachment to the unconscious from which we spring. When we move along the path described above, we are bound to attain that spirit which will make us artist of living.

LECTURE III

WHILE discussing the topic of the art of living we emphasised that liberality must form one of the major foundations of our life, as was highlighted by the illustration of the tent. This has been one of the fundamental contributions of Hindu thought. It did not begin at any given period in history. Since Vedic times it has been emphasised that it is the individual who has to decide his religious, his philosophical art of living because it is he who has to live, therefore, the individual is the most important element.

Manu has laid down a number of rules but he does not say that one must necessarily follow them. He ends by saying, "I have said what I have known. Follow the path which suits you best, which you consider best for yourself, which you choose to follow."⁷ Thus, when we talk about 'Manu' we are not referring to an individual but to our inner rational consciousness. The inner rational consciousness is what we mean by Manu. The word Manu is derived from man which means to think rationally. The same tradition is followed in the Gita. After Vasudev Krishna has enunciated all that he knows, he does not tell Arjuna "You must obey what I have asked you to do." He says, "I have described in detail all that I know, but now it is for you to make the decision. It is your volition. You must exercise your will to make the choice because if the choice is not made by you, then the act will not be virtuous."⁸

The foundation on which this rational thinking is based is one's conscience. Consciousness is bliss and peace. Our peace is distributed not by our own consciousness but by something which is imposed on it. In the state of deep sleep the mind is not present, therefore, it does not disturb us. The senses are not present and, therefore, they do not disturb us. In that state we are at peace because there is nothing to disturb us. But our consciousness is always present. If consciousness were not of the nature of peace, then we could not be at peace in deep sleep. Therefore, deep sleep in its entirety is a blissful state. There is always joy in it. This joy does not emanate from something else as no object is present in deep sleep. This is a joyful state because when we remember, when we recall, we recall it as a joyful experience and we say that we slept very well. These two states, bliss and peace, are of the nature of consciousness and they must help us decide how we ought to live. We should develop the art of living in a way that peace and bliss are produced within us and in the society around us. These two states—peace and bliss—should form the basis of morality. A serious concern of modern education is how to introduce moral concepts in our educational system.

Most thinkers have merely enunciated certain rules. Only the *Upanisad* have clearly outlined the foundations on which these rules have to be based. We know the foundations, and we have enumerated certain rules and regulations but we never emphasise that they should be followed blindly. Hinduism does not impose uniformity. Uni means one hence uni-form means one form. We have not emphasised formal unity but have upheld intrinsic mental harmony, a unity of purpose and intention. The intention, the purpose, is to expand and to be at peace with ourselves. This is the unity of purpose, we have emphasised the unity of intention but not the unity of form. This difference is very important. Man needs a purpose to live for. Many diseases, particularly mental diseases, after the age of forty are the result of a lack of purpose in life. It has been observed time and again that as long as we have a purpose, as long as we have an intention our mind remains balanced. The moment we lose our purpose the harmony is disturbed. Bare necessities of life are not enough to live for. We must have a goal, something to achieve. This is made clear by the following example. Supposing there is a beautiful, well furnished house with well kept lawns. All comforts are available in that house. One is asked to stay there as long as one likes. After being handed over the keys of the house, one is told that the foundations of this house are very weak and it is in the region of earthquakes. But one is invited to stay as long as one likes. After hearing this, will one be able to enjoy the house, no matter how beautiful it is? The same thing is seen in our lives. All the necessities are provided, we are continuously talking about the standard of living, but what are the foundations? On what is one going to build one's life?

The *Upanisad* places this goal before us.⁹ Everything enters into this consciousness, this Atman which is in us, like the spokes which enter into the centre of the wheel. All beings, whether they are divine beings, human beings, all that exists, all that is living, are all centred in the unity of consciousness. Everything is moving towards that consciousness and that consciousness is the controller of everything. It is the only independent thing. According to Acharya Shankara, "It is independence which is being implied here by the word *adhipati* because both words are used here—*rājā* and *adhipati*"¹⁰ The king is usually the outside controller. The words are mentioned separately to indicate that he is not merely an external ruler but is also a controller from within. Consciousness controls us from within, because it is our very self. When consciousness controls we do not feel that we are being controlled. We feel that we are controlling our own lives. Human beings continually face two experiences in life. There are times when we feel that we are independent in doing a thing and we feel that it is our free will which is active. At other times we feel that we are absolutely bound. Our actions are not independent. From time immemorial, there has been a struggle between these two theories. One theory proposes that the human being is absolutely independent, while the other proposes that he has no freedom of action. Modern science, as I said earlier, has contributed and supported the latter viewpoint. Man is controlled either by biological forces or psychological forces, or by the impressions that he has had; in other words, outside forces are controlling him. On the contrary, there

have been other thinkers who have emphasised the total independence of the human will. We will not go into a discussion of the metaphysics of the problem for the time being. We will stick to our own experience. We experience both independence and dependence.

Once a mahatma was asked by someone: "How do you reconcile the independence and dependence of consciousness?" The mahatma replied, "Well, stand up and raise one foot." The man did as he was told. He said, "Now raise the other foot." The man said that he could not do it. The mahatma said, "You are able to raise any one foot at a time but you cannot raise both of them at the same time." Our independence is thus limited; once we have exercised our independence our options are limited. If one raises the right foot then one cannot raise the left foot and vice versa. The moment one exercises one's choice, one's independence, one limits oneself to certain other actions which inevitably will follow. These limitations are imposed by our body-mind complex, something which is not of the nature of consciousness. We are continuously experiencing or knowing something; we are willing to do something and are acting in a particular way. Knowledge, volition and action are imbedded in our very nature. We will always be performing an action, knowing a thing, or willing something. As far as willing is concerned, we are absolutely free. It represents the freedom of the consciousness. We can will anything we like, whereas if we want to know something or we want to act we are dependent. The supreme power, the eternal First Being is the only one who is omnipotent and omniscient. He is the only one who knows everything and can do anything He likes. We, human beings, with limited consciousness do not enjoy that independence. At this point, one may ask the question: What is the use of this willing? One can will to do a thing but if one cannot do it then willing becomes a sheer waste of effort. Once we begin to exercise our will in one particular direction, the power of action, the power of knowledge in that particular direction increases. We are not able to develop these powers because we do not use our will-power unidirectionally. When we will aimlessly, our will-power becomes fragmented. Sometimes we will in one direction and sometimes in the other. But the Lord is merciful. He lavishes His grace on us because we are His reflections, His creation. We are, so to say, His children. Though we continuously use our will in a fragmented way, yet we find that we are able to attain what we like in spite of the fact that our will is fragmented, that is, until we cognise this will within us. The omnipotent, the omniscient, and the omnipresent Shiva is there so that He can shower his grace on us. Otherwise, His omnipotence would have no meaning. He is all powerful, but if He does not help us—those who are His creatures—then that omnipotence would be meaningless and purposeless. Power should be exercised properly. We cannot talk about the omnipotence of God but still feel that His powers are limited. He has unlimited powers. Similarly, He has infinite knowledge. That infinite knowledge shines in us as we increasingly move towards Him. He shows His grace because of His love for us, and not because of any reason or logic. One of the things that He has bestowed on us is the knowledge of the supernatural. How is it that we have come to possess the *Vedas*

the *Agamas*, and all the different arts? However, it is strange that some people think that it is only through permutation and combination and by trial and error that we have attained all that we possess, it is all a human creation. If one were to calculate statistically, one would find that the number of years that man has been on this earth are not enough even to develop the most primitive society. We, therefore, come to the conclusion that all knowledge has been bestowed on us by Him. As our intellect becomes increasingly clear, and as our heart becomes increasingly pure, His knowledge, His power of action shines in us more and more. The important point is to utilise our will-power, to increase the clarity of our intellect. Very often we are unable to think clearly because we are always attached to a particular solution. For example, a student may know the answer to a problem. Therefore, he does not pay much attention while conducting the experiment in the laboratory. Similarly, we desire a thing, having desired, we want it as a solution to the problem of life and, therefore, we are unable to understand that thing as it actually is. It is itself a problem and not its solution. This is what we call raga, i.e., attachment to a particular thing which hinders our intellectual development. A scientist generally develops this clear intellectual perception. He does not keep the answer before him while conducting an experiment. He wants to find out for himself. We have to practice this with our own self. Only then will the light of wisdom shine in our hearts.

We must also strive to make our hearts pure. Purity of heart means spontaneous love for all beings without expecting anything in return for that love. The moment we desire something in return love ceases to be. On the other hand, when the roots of selfishness are destroyed, it makes our heart pure. It is this aspect of consciousness, this omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of the Lord which provides the foundations on which we can build our life-structure. Our lives should only be based on this and not on anything else.

Acharya Pushpadanta says, "When we have done an action, the action ceases."¹¹ Most actions, and I am referring to the virtuous actions, the element of virtue in these actions and not to the physical action itself, do not produce results or benefits immediately. On the contrary, there are times when we experience that virtue not only produces no results but it even harms us. That is why we lose confidence in the very efficacy of virtuous actions. We find that the act has been completed and nothing has remained. We should remember that the will that was exercised was the real virtue. It is actually a sacrifice. *Kratu* means determination, will-power, and also implies sacrifice. What is it that we sacrifice when we perform a virtuous act? We sacrifice our selfishness. By sacrificing our selfishness, we are able to perform *kratu*, a virtuous act. Every time we do even an ordinary thing selflessly we are being virtuous. As we continue to exercise our free will in virtuous acts, we may feel that Shiva is asleep, but He is not asleep. Shiva is always there in our hearts and He alone will bring the results which is not merely going to heaven or elsewhere. By repetition, virtue becomes our second nature, it becomes a habit. Initially, we may feel that we are sacrificing something—our selfishness—but as we become accustomed to sacrificing our selfishness, we will realise the joy of

being virtuous. Since consciousness, Shiva, is present there we know that the action has not been lost and we do not lose faith in virtuous action. On the firm ground of faith that the Lord is omnipotent, omniscient and the goal is worthy towards which we move, we are able to exercise our volition properly.

He is present everywhere, just as in all languages the alphabet begins with the letter 'a', whether it is 'a' 'अ', 'aliph' they all represent the same sound. It is the primary life letter particularly in the Indian script in which 'a' is taken for granted as part of any consonant. Most of us have learnt one or the other Indian script. If we have to indicate that 'a' is missing, we have to use some sign. In some script this is indicated by a dot above, in other scripts by a small line below. The presence of 'a' is taken for granted, when we read consonants we do not see the letter 'a' and yet it is present. In the same way the Lord is present in everything. If we try to see the Lord in an object, we will fail to see Him and we will feel that it is only an object. But when we see Him as all-pervasive like a thread in a necklace, then we are able to see that it is the Lord who is all-pervasive, He is everywhere. This can be clarified by the following illustration. We examine a piece of wood from every side and we do not find any fire in it. But if we were to rub the piece of wood properly fire would appear. Similarly, the match stick is neither warm nor is there anything hot in it. No fire is visible yet the moment we strike it fire is produced. In other words, fire was present but it could not be perceived. Similarly Shiva is present in every conscious experience but we are unable to perceive Him. To be able to perceive Him we have to go through certain disciplines of life, we have to develop and train our mind, intellect, emotions, heart and other functions and this is the real purpose of creation. The purpose of creation is that the Lord should bestow His infinite knowledge, His infinite power on us.

Very often people compare this world to a snare, something in which we have been trapped. We feel the stranglehold of attachment, of objects, of life itself. The purpose of creation is not to trap us. But it is the other way round—through the compassion of the Lord we are able to attain the highest state. In this process even misery is necessary. For example, when we walk on the floor a certain amount of resistance of the floor is necessary. We often read in newspapers that when a rocket is sent up in space there is no friction because there is no gravitational force and, therefore, force of gravity has to be created. A certain amount of opposition is necessary for any growth to take place. Similarly the misery that we have to endure is a necessary part of our growth. It is not there to harm us, it is an expression of His compassion, His grace. A certain amount of obscuring of knowledge is also necessary. We have often heard people complain that they have lost their memory and they do not remember things. What they fail to realise is that forgetting is more important than remembering. If they were to remember all the experiences they have had since childhood life would become very miserable. Therefore, this process of forgetting is a blessing. For instance, a young man dies. The mother finds it unbearable but after a year or so she is normal. Why does this happen? The reason is that she has forgotten that loss, that pain. She may be reminded of the pain but it is not continuous any more. After a few years, she

may not even recall the intensity of the loss that she had felt initially. Though loss of memory is considered to be a loss, it is not really a loss. This is an expression of His grace.

There are innumerable different lotuses. When the sun shines each lotus may blossom in a different way. One lotus may bloom and it may open up fully whereas another lotus may remain a bud even though the sun's rays are shining equally on it. It does not bloom. Another lotus may wither away, i.e., it is on the verge of ending life. The sun's rays are shining equally on all the three and it is helping the growth of all the flowers. The withering flower may feel that the sun is gracious on the blossoming one whereas the bud may feel that the sun has not given enough light for it to blossom. In reality, the sun is equally gracious and it is helping all of them. Even the process of withering is important because only then the cycle can go on. Similarly, there are people who feel that the Lord has been very kind to them. Whereas some people feel that the Lord has not been so kind to them as He has been to the fortunate few. They feel this way because they try to compare and one cannot be compared with the other because all individuals grow in their own way. What we consider withering away may be just the beginning of a new life. This acceptance of the sun's rays by all the three flowers is done consciously. The Lord is continuously showering His grace on us but we are unable to accept it and because of this inability to accept we feel that we are not on firm ground. He expresses Himself in our hearts and guides us.

According to the scriptures, the command is in four stages. It is expressed verbally, within us in the fourth stage. There is the *para vak* the *pashyanti vak*, the *madhyama vak* and the *vaikhari vak*. First, there is just an impulse. It is still unconscious. We are not even aware but He is guiding us. We do not know what thought is coming but it is being guided by Shiva himself to be raised in our hearts, in our minds, but we are still not aware of this. This is where the Lord directs. Gradually, this impulse becomes an idea. Though it is still not verbal yet it has been expressed. Therefore, it is called *pashyanti*. It is something that we can feel, perceive, something which we are able to see clearly but are unable to express verbally. It is, in short, an idea. The idea is expressed by way of language. The mind formulates what the idea was. After this process of formulation takes place, we are able to express it through words. This is called the *vaikhari*. The guidance of Shiva as the *para vak* is continuously rising in our hearts. It urges us to become what we really are. This is an important thing. We must become what we are and not what we are not. This urge is invincible. To be oneself is a command which must always be obeyed.

Often we are not interested in our own fate. It is strange indeed. Though people may go to an astrologer yet they are not interested in their own fate. They want to find about their business, their children, their family and about their health and even about their mind. They are interested in the fate of everything else except their own self. Shiva, on the other hand, is always interested in the fate of His children. He is constantly sending messages through the *para vak*. It is for precisely this reason that when we try to be something other than our own real self a conflict

arises. The more civilised we become the more we suffer. It is because we become deaf to Shiva's command and are unable to hear his order. When we are unable to live our own life we lose the art of living. When we are not interested in our own life, in our own living, what we want to make ourselves into, nothing but conflict arises. The desire to know our true fate must become our nature. Once this conflict arises, the unconscious takes over and instead of doing what we ought to do, we tend to do what someone else is doing or wants us to do. This leads to conflict and we lose the art of living because we are not ready to face the reality within our own self. One of the ways we can develop this habit is to feel Shiva when we go to sleep. When we go to sleep we totally abandon ourselves in the sure foundation of the faith in the Lord. There is nothing we can do for ourselves when we are asleep. This can be illustrated by the example of a man who always kept a revolver under his pillow at night because he was afraid. One night, an enemy entered the house but he was unarmed. He removed the revolver from under the pillow and shot its owner with it. The man was killed by his own revolver because he could not do anything for himself while he was asleep. Even a lion survives in spite of the fact that the whole forest is its enemy. Though a lion kills other animals yet it goes to sleep without being harmed. We should ask ourselves why can we not go to sleep without being harmed? When we go to sleep, we must abandon ourselves to Shiva's grace. We must feel His grace descending upon us and protecting us in every way. We must pray to Him to send us the message in the form of dreams.

Today psychology has attached tremendous significance to dreams; our scriptures and the *Upanisads* have discussed dreams in great detail. Dreams are symbols through which we are able to contact the unconscious. Modern psychologists agree with this explanation of dreams. What is the unconscious which we contact through dreams? That unconscious is the message of the Lord. Symbols may change but they are always sent to us. In the beginning we may not even understand what the symbol signifies. But that is not important, because in the *para vak* it is what is guiding us, taking us towards the goal that is important. One can pray to the Lord, "Oh Shiva, I do not know what message you are giving me. I think that it is this. It seems to me to be correct. Correct me if I have misunderstood you, if I am committing an error in understanding you. Forgive me and correct me. I will stick to whatever message you send me. I will not do a thing which I know to be wrong for my own self." If we have honesty of purpose, then it is none else but God himself who guides.

One of the basic prayers in Hinduism is the Gayatri. By reciting the Gayatri we ask the Lord, "You direct our intellect, you direct us through the intellect. Whatever guidance you will give, I will practice it and manifest it in my life." If we do not follow this direction of the *para vak*, which is the will of the supreme, our life will be ruined. We are repeatedly going through the cycle of birth and death because we are not able to complete the process of the attainment of the highest stage, i.e., the Supreme Being. This can be attained only in stages. Only by passing through different stages, we attain identity with Shiva. It is only slowly that the

para vak manifests in us. We should not expect to wake up one fine morning and find ourselves listening to the *para vak*. It comes gradually. The more we listen to it, the more will be the clarity of the message. Para is ineffable. It must never be betrayed. We must not utilise it for any selfish, vested interest. We must have total absolute faith in it. We must have courage to face the directions given to us by the *para vak*. Often we do not have the courage to follow these directions. We feel that if we were to follow these directions we may face a tremendous loss. Once we have faith in Shiva and we feel that He alone knows what is best for us, then the body-mind complex receives the message of Shiva to be realised by the individualised self. We must have courage to follow the directions and we must have honesty of purpose. We must not utilise it to gain some worldly advantage, we must utilise it only to realise our own self. That is why honesty of purpose has been emphasised again and again.

Apart from honesty of purpose, we need to be patient. If we are not patient we will not be able to accept the message and work in accordance with it. Sometimes the commands are like a sharp knife or like a serpent in the depths of our being because we are so accustomed to doing things which appear to be correct rather than those which are correct. The outward show is embedded in us. We are constantly looking around for appreciation from others. In Benaras one finds many pandits taking ablutions in the morning. Standing in the Ganges they repeat their prayers. When other people are around the prayers tend to become longer and when one is alone they are shorter. In short, we are conscious of what the other person will think of us. The underlying feeling is that one's action should appear to be correct even if it is not really so. It is for this reason that when we receive the commands we feel that somebody is piercing our hearts with a knife.

It is through the *para* that the command of the Lord is 'leaked' out to us. His commands are always hidden but through the *para* he leaks it out. Through this message we are able to know what our role is. Where is it that we fit in the divine economic order of things. What is the particular part that each one of us has to play. The universe is like an organism. Each organ has to make its specific contribution. We cannot change organisms. We cannot say that the heart is better than the lungs or the liver, each organ is equally important. In the same way, each of us is an actor in the whole divine drama which is being enacted. We have to find out where we really fit in. We cannot change the drama. We cannot change our role, we should try to follow what we are meant for. This implies an attitude of modesty. Very often the idea that each individual can do what he likes is drummed into us. It is very easy to say this. The biographies and autobiographies of millionaires lead us to believe that if they could rise from poverty and become millionaires, we can also do the same. But when we make an attempt, we fail miserably. The truth is that the successful man was destined to become rich while we are not, no matter how hard we try. So modesty means that we must perfectly do what we are capable of.

The other day some one said in Switzerland steel is imported at the rate of rupees sixteen per kilogram, but after a watch has been manufactured it is sold nearly

at rupees sixteen hundred per kilogram. There are no iron mines in Switzerland. But they import iron and convert it into gold. It costs almost as much as gold. They are able to do this because man is gifted with the power of reflection (*sakshi*). Man alone has the power of reflection. Other living beings can perceive but they cannot reflect on their own experience. He can make his experience the object of his study. Most of the time we study the object, but if we want to develop the art of living we must be ready to develop this power of reflection which is the speciality of the human situation. Once the *para vak* is contacted in this process the reflection increases and as the reflection increases each act that we do is able to reveal the inner command which the *paravak* was giving. Clarity of comprehension leads to clarity of expression. Our *vaikhari vak* is also purified. What we convey through words becomes important. Vaikhari is revelation of what we are within. Only by dedication to the Lord within, by paying attention to it, reflectively thinking of all that we have done, we are able to attain the power of listening to the *para vak* clearly. When we are able to see it clearly, we are able to develop ourselves by our honesty of purpose.

How to develop this in practical activity we will discuss tomorrow.

LECTURE IV

Friends, we have been discussing the art of living based on the *Madhu Vidya* of the *Barhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and we find that is based on the twin concepts of truth and love. We have already discussed the problem of will. We tried to find out from where does the will arise and we also dealt with certain disciplines which allow us to contact the lead which the paravak gives us through which we are able to contact the divine will and thereby strengthen our own will. The other two factors are knowledge and action, intellect and emotion. Truth is the fundamental conception if we want to live happily, properly, blissfully, and ethically. The intellectual search for truth is absolutely essential. This search does not mean logic chopping, and dissecting ideas. Many people feel that by adopting an approach of armchair philosophy they can discover the truth. Truth has to be searched, it has to be investigated and to do that we need to have an entirely open mind. Nature expresses itself in our mind just as it expresses itself in external life. We have to examine the complete internal world the same way we examine the external world to find out what is really there. It is not an exercise to find an excuse for a particular preconceived concept which we may have. It is not to rationalise that we investigate, not to find reasons for what we already believe but to search for that truth which exists in reality. This should be the basic approach. We must try to find out, as I pointed out earlier, what our real being is what we really are, not what we would like ourselves to be what we pretend to be, what society expects us to be, but what we really are. We must be able to see that. Similarly, the love which we are talking about here is not just an emotional froth. It is not like whipped cream which looks substantial, but the moment we try to eat it there is nothing in it, there is no substance. Most of the time our emotions are like whipped cream. At a particular moment we may feel the intensity of the emotion but as we proceed further and further this emotion just dissolves and we discover that it is contentless. Since our childhood we have been experiencing this state of emotion but this state of emotion is not what we need, what we need is love which is essential for the art of living.

A mere show of love is not love at all. Unfortunately in the English language, the word love is used both as a verb and as a noun. As a verb, love is something which we do, something which we show. That is not what is meant by the word love here. Moreover Love has to be practical, it must not merely be a romantic idea. Why is it that most of the time we suffer emotionally? The answer is because we tend to idealise our relationships whether it is between father and son or between husband and wife. We have certain notions of the ideal son in our mind.

We stick to those notions and we feel that our son is like that. We confuse what we think *should* be with what really *is*. Eventually, when we realise that our son is not so, we are disappointed. The same thing happens in the husband and wife relationship. The husband has a certain concept of the perfect wife. The wife, on her part, also has a certain concept of what a husband should be, and when they find out that the real person is not what each expects the other to be, disappointment is the result. Most of our disappointments at the emotional level, are a result of this inability to accept and love the other person as he/she really is. Instead we love the ideal picture of the person which we have in our mind. While analysing the concept of love, Patanjali divides it into four categories—*Maitrī* (friendship), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (happiness), and *upekṣhā* (overlooking). According to him, love has to be expressed in different ways. For instance, when we come in contact with a virtuous person, an ethical person, who lives life as one should, who lives his own life, is at harmony with himself and society, we must express the feeling of *maitrī*, that is, friendship towards him. It is not essential that we should be physically near him, often we may not be with him physically even then we must associate with him mentally, we must develop this feeling of friendship towards him. When we develop this attitude of friendship, it is an act of love and this love begins to change us. Whatever is on our mind constantly influences us and changes us in that particular way. This change may be slow and we may not feel a transformation within ourselves but the transformation continuously goes on. One point that has been repeatedly emphasised in the Hindu scriptures is that we must keep an ideal (*iṣṭa*) before ourselves. We may not be able to follow this ideal immediately but if we look up to it continuously we are bound to imitate it. This is the very nature of the human mind. The first expression of love, according to Patanjali, is *maitrī*, friendship towards virtuous people, with those who are in harmony with themselves.

He says that we must show *karuṇā*, compassion to those who are not in harmony with themselves but are trying to attain harmony. These people are striving to reach that stage but have not attained it yet. The love expressed in this case is not *maitrī* but it is compassion because we ourselves are in a similar position, we are also struggling to attain that goal but we fail again and again. The very idea that just as we have failed he has also failed makes us tolerant towards him. In the absence of *karuṇā* we tend to condemn others for their failings. This is perhaps the greatest harm done to modern society by newspapers and magazines. They continuously report the shortcomings, the failures but very rarely do they talk about an ideal human being. They believe that breaking the idol, as they perceive it, is a great achievement. For example, a person may have fifty virtues and he may have two shortcomings. There is no point in harping about his two weaknesses. I am not trying to suggest that a person who commits a criminal offence should not be punished. He must be punished but we must have compassion for him for having failed. We must not forget that we ourselves fail most of the time.

The third category of love is *mudita*. People who enjoy material prosperity, and other advantages in life must be shown *mudita*. We must be happy that they are enjoying what they have. Even though they may not follow the path of virtue, but at least they are doing something which makes them happy. We must be happy at their being happy and satisfied with what they have. Often when we see someone prospering more than what we think is due to him—for instance, he may get a promotion at work, or there may be a windfall in his business—we are jealous. We are very bitter about it. The concept of *mudita* implies that we should be happy when others are successful. For example, a child is playing with a toy and he is happy. He is not ready yet to enjoy either Shakespeare or Kalidas, but he is happy with the toy he has and we are happy that he is happy. Similarly, a person, who is not yet ready to follow the path of virtue, is getting something which is a source of pleasure for him. We must be happy about it and not be jealous or critical about it.

The fourth category of love, Patanjali calls *upeksha*, i.e., overlooking. Overlooking is also a form of love. We tend to be angry with people who are habitually vicious, who continuously try to harm other members of the society or even society itself. We must control this anger, we must change this attitude into one of overlooking because as I said earlier, what we fight we become, if we continuously think about these vicious people we will eventually absorb that viciousness. Thus, love has an active aspect as well as a passive aspect.

The word *ahimsa*, non-violence, represents the passive aspect of love. We should not cooperate with a vicious person, the term vicious person does not refer to a person who commits a wrong act once in a while but to a person who habitually indulges in wrong acts and thinks it to be right—for such a person we must have *upeksha*, we must overlook his faults. Love must express the unity which is within us. The unity of self, that is, when we see a person we should try to see not just his body-mind complex, we must see him as an individual, a conscious being, the self within him. Once we realise this, we are able to contact him through this feeling of unity. This point may be further clarified. What happens when I make a mistake? Either I ignore it (it does not matter if I have made a mistake) or I may go a step further and try to rationalise it, (It could not have been helped, it had to be done). But when another person makes the same mistake, we are not able to either ignore it or rationalise it. Thus, ignoring is the first step towards *upeksha*. When we go further, once we have developed this sense of unity we are able to give a rational explanation of his behaviour and thereby develop an attitude by which we can help him. This process of rationalising the other person's faults is possible only when we perceive him as part of our own being or when we can say that he is an extension of our own being. When we practice this aspect of love, an important step in our search for truth, we move towards perfection.

Shiva is the perfection of our real self. He is not standing somewhere else. He is within us as our pure being, our very being. Because we identify ourselves with the impurity, the ignorance in us, we feel that we are different and that Shiva is something external to us. But Shiva is our own real self. This perfection has to come through wisdom, culture and by being continuously on our guard and by

constantly seeing that we are moving towards truth and not compromising ourselves in this search for truth. We must always be on our guard to make sure that this feeling of love is always present in all our actions. It is this that will make us cultured. Culture is not merely an expression of certain artistic views as many people like to believe today. Culture is that which enables us to follow the path of truth. A person of lower culture means that his lower tendencies are obvious in him. Though he may not express those lower tendencies, he may not commit a sinful act, a vicious act, yet the first reaction is present. That is what indicates lack of culture or lower culture. A person of higher culture would not even think of such a thing. The idea would not surprise him to see how a human being could act in this particular way. This is what culture is; not merely what we express in our actions. This perfection of wisdom and culture through devotion to truth and love is our greatest gift to society by developing the art of living. These are the pillars on which the foundation has to be built. The righteous action, the righteous effort towards welfare has to be socially oriented. Unless we see things from a collective perspective, we will not be able to lead a life of righteousness.

The question may be asked How do I know what is righteousness? How do I know what is right? Though the scriptures have laid down a number of rules, Hinduism never imposes anything. It only proposes. It outlines a number of incidents, situations, and problems and offers a number of solutions. One is free to choose anyone of them or to discard all of them. Hinduism does not impose because imposition has no value as far as the real ethical life is concerned. What should be the thumb rule of right action? When one interacts with another individual or group, one must place oneself in the other's position and one must feel that if one was in that body-mind complex what would one have desired, what behaviour one would expect. Having done this exercise, one is free to do what one likes to that person. At that moment one becomes the giver and the other person is the taker. Now if the roles are reversed and the other person becomes the giver then what would one expect from him. This thumb rule will help us in developing love because it leads to the concept of unity of self within us. A servant breaks some crockery. That provokes us and we get angry. But if we pause to think how often we ourselves have broken things much more expensive which were emotionally a part of our existence and yet we did not punish ourselves. Then the question in the mind crystallises that why should the idea of punishing the other person come. No doubt, one may have condemned oneself and felt bad about it. That is as far as one could have gone and that is as far one should go with the servant. To place oneself in the other person's position is the easiest way to find out what is right in a given situation; and living up to this ideal is righteousness.

In the art of living means are as important as the end. Both means and end should be in harmony with truth and love. This is why opportunism and expedience have no place in the art of living. If we want to live properly, if we want to develop this art, we should avoid taking a shortcut to anything. Most of the time we live in a crisis situation. We tend to make every situation a calamity. We tend to magnify

every loss and we feel that it is the greatest loss and, therefore, we are justified in adopting a course of emergency – what the scriptures have called: *apaddharma*.

Many people often come and ask me questions which have no relevance to their own lives. For instance, they ask 'Supposing I am in the Tundras and no food is available then how is it possible to be a vegetarian in that situation?' I generally tell them that when you get your visa and you are ready for departure, then I will answer your question. They are creating a situation of calamity. They want to know what the *apaddharma* is, what the emergency powers are and they want to exercise them here and now. This is an opportunistic outlook. A person who wants to develop the art of living must do away with this opportunistic outlook. Under no circumstances should he opt for a short cut. Though these short cuts may exist but he is not in search of these short cuts. This emphasis on the total life pattern is important because it is only then that the environmental well-being can come into existence. We continuously find excuses in our environment but what we fail to see is that the environment is our own creation. Though we may talk about cleanliness yet we feel that this habit of cleanliness is not something which we have to develop. We always talk about big things. Today, every organisation no matter how small say, with a total strength of ten members, calls itself international though it may not even represent a particular city or even a small section of the city. In the same way we talk about bringing about a total change in society and humanity without even questioning ourselves whether we have changed for the better or not. I am not trying to suggest that the environment does not influence us. We are a part of the physical environment, for instance, if the sky is overcast with poisonous fumes, those fumes are bound to affect us. I am not denying that. Neither am I denying that economic conditions influence us and force us to make certain compromises. All this is true. But the question remains how is the change going to come about. The change is possible only when each individual changes himself. When this happens then there is a change in the environment. This is true in all fields, that is why love implies that we work for collective prosperity. Prosperity here does not mean merely economic prosperity but psychological, social and religious prosperity, prosperity in all the different fields. The aim should be collective prosperity and not individual growth.

At the beginning of this discourse on the *Madhu Vidya*, I had stressed the importance of what Acharya Shankara calls *parasparopakarivāt*, i.e., mutual help. If we want happiness at the cost of society, we are like the dreaded disease, cancer. Cancer is the result of certain cells not functioning for the good of the whole organism and multiplying in their own way. They function totally unconcerned about the harm being done to the organism. These cancerous cells want to prosper at the expense of the entire system. Similarly, the society is one organism. In the collective growth and in the collective prosperity lies the real prosperity. Every joy of life must be shared. Acharya Padmapada cites the example of Acharya Shankara. He says that when Acharya Shankara realised the highest truth and he was about to enjoy that eternal bliss, he saw people around him suffering in the mire of the world and he felt ashamed. Just as we would feel if there were

a hundred hungry people around us and we were given a sumptuous meal. If we are cultured, we will not be able to eat it and we would share the food with those hundred people because their hunger is more, their need for food is greater. Similarly, Acharya Shankara found that he had attained eternal bliss and joy but how could he enjoy it when the whole society was suffering. Instead of enjoying that eternal bliss he began to share it with everyone.

This idea of sharing all our joys with others will give a new dimension to our effort. The effort of each individual will be to make its members happy. We will constantly ask ourselves what is it that we should do to bring about a social change, a change not only in our own lives but a change that will bring happiness all around. Slowly, this love has to be extended. We may begin with our neighbours and gradually move towards the group to which we belong, and finally engulf all beings in this love. Love, we must remember, is not something which can be switched on or off. One of the problems of industrialisation is that it has accelerated the pace of life. Today, life has become very fast and we do not have any brakes to control its pace. All our activities are increasing and we do not know how to control them or stop them. These activities have assumed control instead of being controlled by us. They have taken hold of us. Only through repeated exercise of spiritual consciousness can we build up this power of braking, i.e., controlling the speed of life. If we analyse we will find that beneath the current of thoughts lies the absolute, calm and blissful state. To be conscious of this is very important if we want to develop the art of living. Between one thought and the next there is a point where there is no intellectual and emotional control on the *para-vak*. We tend to miss this point and hence we are unable to utilise the spiritual consciousness to control our activities. We must control the speed of our thoughts if we do not want to miss this point. The practice of meditation, the practice of *japa* enable us to learn the art of catching that spiritual consciousness between two successive thoughts.

When a candle burns the flame appears to be continuous, but it is not so. One drop of oil or wax is burnt and the next one is ignited but because the process is very rapid the flame appears to burn continuously. The same principle is seen in cinema. When we see a running film there seems to be activity. But if we examine the negative film we will not find any activity. For example, a leg will be in different positions in subsequent films but when the film moves it moves so rapidly that it creates the illusion of a sequential movement. In the same way, we feel that our thoughts are continuous because they move at a very rapid pace and we are unable to catch that spiritual consciousness. But when we slow down just as in the case of the film, say, a slow moving film, we can see the different postures. When we meditate we are slowing down our thoughts. We concentrate our attention on an object and slowly apply a brake on that continuous fast movement of the mind. This meditation can be done in two ways to suit people with varying intellectual capacity and nature. We can logically think about a problem in a very intense way. When we practice logical thinking we must watch at every step that our logical thinking is clear and does not have any faults and does follow our desired

pattern. We must intensively work out the sequence or logical consequences not become something that we desire which we are wishing but is intent on what should happen. When this logical thinking becomes intense the mind becomes one pointed. Acharya Udayana says in Kirnavalli that by continuously, logically thinking about God I am expressing my devotion. When we continuously logically think about God we are expressing our devotion.

There are other people who have emotional tendencies. They cannot continuously think logically for a long time. They get disturbed. They can think about God in an emotional way, but then this emotion must be intense. It must not move rapidly, it should not become as it does in the human relationship, an emotional prop. This happens in spiritual exercise as well. A person may be very emotional at the time of meditation but may completely forget about it an hour later when he deals with other people.

There is a story about a girl. She was taught a particular type of meditation by her teacher. She got married and had children. One day the preceptor came to meet her. He stayed with her and found that she was very regular in her meditation but was very harsh in her behaviour towards all the members of the family including the servants. The girl asked him that though she had been very regular in her meditation and did what he had asked her to do she had not had a vision of the Lord. The preceptor shocked her by his reply, "God is pure. He does not like dogs around Him." She asked him what did he mean by this statement. He replied, "The way you bark at all the people around you, at the servants, do you think that God will come to you? Are you not able to feel that all these people are also children of God? If someone gives you a nice present but also gives a thrashing to your child and goes away, will you be happy, will you be pleased? Though you are doing meditation regularly and at that time you do get emotional about it, but the moment you interact with others you completely forget about the emotion which was aroused during meditation."

Whether one goes through the path of logical thinking, or whether one experiences emotional feelings, one must remember that what one gains there, what one experiences there, should bring the power of braking, i.e., control. In other words, one should acquire the power of slowing down the current of thoughts. In real life situations, when one interacts with others one should continuously make sure that the brakes function. When the current of thoughts or the current of emotions becomes rapid, one is not able to reflect and one does not know what one is going to do. Many people after getting angry, after harming someone else for the sake of money feel that they should not have done it. Here, I am not referring to habitually vicious people who hurt others intentionally, but to those individuals who are unable to control themselves at that particular moment because their thoughts move rapidly—Angry thoughts flow very fast. Unless one develops this power of controlling the speed of thoughts, one will not be able to live according to the principles of the art of living. One must continuously ask oneself who is getting angry. Who is it that is behaving in a miserly fashion? Who is it that is getting passionate? This inquiry must be done whenever one has the

time, for instance, when one is walking, one must try to feel who is walking. Walking is an activity which is done by only a part of one's existence, 'v' the body. But the person is someone different. Walking is done for oneself, for one's good. One gives the impulse and the rest is done by the body-mind complex. Through continuous inquiry—who am I, who is it that is thinking, who is it that is emotionally feeling, we perceive ourselves to be different from this body-mind complex and we develop detachment just as a flower is detached when it is plucked.

The *Rigveda* contains a beautiful verse which goes as follows. 'Oh Lord detach me from death and not from immortality.' This detachment which is known as *asāṅgatā* has to develop if we want to lead our lives according to the art of living. This inquiry can be facilitated if we feel and inquire 'Who is it that was sleeping?' When we are asleep there are no senses, there is no feeling of body, no thoughts, no feeling of mind. The mind is not active, it does not know during sleep. We cannot say that the mind knows that we are asleep. These activities are not present there to experience deep sleep. The fact remains that the state of deep sleep has been experienced because we do recall upon waking that we slept very well. Who is it that slept very well? It is not the mind who has experienced this but it is our real self who has experienced it.

The art of living is not an art of good behaviour. I am not saying that it is an art of bad behaviour. But pure conduct does not make our nature pure. In our *Puranas* in our mythology, there are a number of incidents where demons practised the severest austerities, meditations and worship and were granted a wish thereby indicating that their practices were successful. Yet they remained demons. Their behaviour during the period of austerity was perfect and they reaped the fruit of it. Even though their behaviour was good temporarily, they were not good intrinsically. When good behaviour results from the purity of our nature, only then do we develop the art of living. The art of living must help us to change the nature of our inner being and not merely change our external behaviour. As we proceed along this path of truth and love, we find that our dedication to anything that we do grows. At present, we do something not because we are dedicated to it but because we have to do it.

We should get rid of this feeling of *have to*. It must be changed into the concept of developing our individuality to be in harmony with ourselves. We must not act because we are forced to do so. The *Gita* emphasises this concept again and again. It says that whatever we do should be done as worship. When we worship an idol or, when we worship our parents, it is the same thing, because all these are equally manifestations of God, we ought to worship with the sense of dedication, in the sense of an offering. All our acts must be done in that spirit and as we practice this our consciousness becomes more and more subtle. The result is that our actions are always perfect. By perfection, I do not mean that these acts cannot be done better but they cannot be done better with the present body-mind complex that we have.

We must have the satisfaction that at any given moment we have done the best we could. The idea must be clear in our mind. We must be satisfied with ourselves. If we are not satisfied with our own work, even if the whole universe

is satisfied with it, it is of no use. We have to live with ourselves continuously. We can live away from anybody else but we cannot live away from ourselves. If we are not happy, if we are not joyous after doing something, then even if others lavish their praise on us it has no meaning, it has no value.

We must introduce in the practice of the art of living, what I sometimes call, 'as if' living. We are not pure but we should live 'as if' we are pure. We do not feel that we are in all beings but we should live as if we are present in all beings. In this way we become attuned to Shiva who is present in us. He manifests Himself as truth and love because truth and love is His very nature. We are searching for truth and love; and in that search we are searching Shiva and we are experiencing Him through our acts of love. When we do this we begin to experience the truth and love in ourselves.

As the Lord says in the *Gita*; "With whatever tendency a person comes to me, I reciprocate." This is the fundamental thing. When we approach Him through truth and love, He manifests Himself as truth and love and it becomes our nature and a new society is born. Society is not merely a crowd. A crowd is at cross-purposes. Members of a crowd do not have a particular goal, a particular ambition. In Sanskrit, society is known as *samaj* - *aj* means to move forward. Thus *samajis* where people move forward towards a particular goal. Why is it that five hundred people in military uniform can control five lakh people? It is because those five lakhs are in a crowd whereas those five hundred move even physically towards a particular goal. When we develop the art of living it is this society which is born and not a disorderly crowd.

Everyone is in search of happiness. When others see the goals and postulations which we arrived at and they find that we have attained happiness by following them they too are bound to follow them. It is this society which can bring about a complete change, a total revolution of thought in itself. It is through the art of living that we are able to bring about a complete change in society but only if we are conscious to this social calling, to this purpose, for which we are living.

LECTURE V

FRIENDS, we are discussing the *Madhu Vidya*. The *Upaniṣad* goes on to relate a tradition how this *vidya*, this knowledge was inherited by us. This is an interesting story.¹² The particular chapter in the *Bṛahdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* follows what is known as the *pravargya vidya* where a particular sacrifice was taught by the great Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa. According to the story, this sage taught this sacrifice. The disciple wanted to know the ultimate truth, the ultimate reality. The ultimate truth cannot be taught unless the disciple is ready to receive it. There has to be a preparation, what is known as *adhikāritā* in Sanskrit, that is, the fitness to receive knowledge. Unless a person prepares himself to receive knowledge, it will not penetrate deeply into his being. It will remain a superficial knowledge. Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa told the Ashwini Kumaras, "You are not yet fit to receive the final truth, the ultimate truth. You must go through certain spiritual practices, certain meditations that will make you fit to receive this knowledge." He instructed them in the practical preliminary discipline.

The Ashwini Kumaras went away and practised meditation. In the meantime, Indra, the king of Gods, learnt that Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa possessed knowledge which could enable a person to attain the highest happiness. He asked Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa to impart this knowledge. The sage knew that Indra was not fit to receive this knowledge because he was proud of his position as the king of Gods. A proud person cannot learn the art of living. He cannot make his own life sweet nor can he make the life of others sweet. Humility is a fundamental quality which is absolutely essential if a person wants to acquire the art of living, if he wants to make his life sweet. Indra was very proud. Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa knew that if he told him so directly, Indra would be disturbed. So he conveyed the message to Indra in an indirect manner. He said, "If you really want to learn the art of living, if you want to make your life as sweet as honey, if you want to make the society around you happy, blissful, you must develop an attitude of dispassion. Dispassion towards all physical goals, because it is the physical things which bring conflict with other people. Whenever you desire something physical, there are other people who also desire it and conflict arises. But when you want to develop yourself internally, when you want to become perfect yourself there is absolutely nothing which will hinder your effort. Nobody will be against you except your own body-mind complex. Hence, there will not be any competition, any bitterness. This attitude of dispassion towards worldly objects is absolutely essential." After expounding on the nature of dispassion towards all objects, Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa added that position of the kings of Gods was no better than a dog's urine. Hearing

this, Indra was hurt because he was so proud of his position. He said, "Enough of your teachings. I do not want to hear any more. If you teach this knowledge to anybody else I will behead you." Beheading is an important concept. Recently, Heesterman has done a lot of work on the subject. There are numerous stories of beheading in the Indian tradition, both in the *Vedas* and later in the *Puranas* and *Itihasas*. Having said this, Indra went away.

In the meantime, the Ashwini Kumāras had practised meditation and had attained the level they were supposed to attain. They went to the sage, Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa and said, "We feel that we are now fit to receive the ultimate truth. If you consider us fit, please teach us." The sage found them to be ready to receive the knowledge but he told them about his meeting with Indra and the latter's curse. He said, "As soon as I start teaching you, I will be beheaded and I will not be able to completely impart knowledge to you." The Ashwini Kumāras were brilliant surgeons and physicians. They said, "We will do something unusual. We will cut off your head before you begin teaching and we will transplant it with a horse's head. When you begin teaching with the horse's head, Indra will behead you. We will put back your own head and you will be able to impart the rest of the knowledge."

It is no doubt a terrible experience to go through the ordeal of beheading and that too twice. But Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa remained true to his word even at the cost of such excruciating pain. This adherence to truth is the most important factor.¹³ In spite of the fact that he had to go through this ordeal, Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa remained true to his word. In short, in the pursuit of truth if one has to die for it, one should be ready to do so. This is how one can make life sweet. The moment one speaks an untruth, a conflict arises within oneself and one is in conflict with the person to whom one has lied, this conflict will always remain. Later, if one confesses to the other person that one had spoken an untruth, the impasse will not be resolved. Once a person's faith has been shattered, it will always remain so. Adherence to truth makes life sweet. Though one may lose material comforts by following the path of truth, one will not lose one's joy, bliss and sweetness.

This story also reveals the love of the teacher. For the sake of imparting knowledge he was prepared to be beheaded. The twin concepts of truth and love are clearly highlighted in this story. I would like to mention here that often when we read mythological stories we are unable to identify ourselves with the symbols used in these stories because we try to interpret them historically. These symbols are not meant to be interpreted in a historical way. The ideas are being conveyed allegorically and symbolically. If we study primitive societies we find that whenever they want to teach something, they demonstrate the lesson to be learnt. Small children are asked to enact, but people who watch this are told not to do all what was enacted. The same principle is emphasised when we enact the Ramlila. We also demonstrate what should not be done. When a person becomes mature, he does not need the real play, the real act. He can read the story, imagine it and comprehend the message that is being conveyed. These stories, as I said earlier, are not meant to be interpreted historically. They are symbols with which we have to live.

The above story also tells us how a disciple should act to attain wisdom. The Ashwini Kumaras performed a terrible deed—they beheaded their own teacher. It is natural for a person to love his father, his mother, his teacher, but to attain wisdom, to attain the final truth, one should be prepared to sacrifice all base feelings. It is only when we are ready to sacrifice to that extent that we can learn the art of living. There is a deeper significance of the story. The beheading of Dadhyaṅgātharvaṇa represents the beheading of our own unconscious. To begin with, we are more or less controlled by our unconscious. All our acts are controlled not by our conscious will but by the complexes that have been passed down to us through tradition, through inheritance and through learning since childhood. Now these complexes have to be beheaded and the transplantation has to be performed. It is the conscious 'I' which must assume complete control over it.

Most of the time we forget what we are striving for. Actually we hunger for peace and bliss though they are always there. Unfortunately, we do not appease this hunger, we do not quench this thirst most of the time in the name of duty, in the name of responsibility. We are not true to ourselves and that conflict makes us bitter. We desire bliss and peace as a reward for what we have done for others because we have done it with a sense of duty. We expect others to act as we would like them to act. When they do not, we suffer. But our duty to our own hunger for peace and bliss is important. To some extent it has to be done. Basic hunger can never be denied. As a matter of fact, every person has certain desires which he is not able to fulfil even at a worldly level. We see a businessman, a very successful businessman but he is not at peace with himself. We find that he has certain artistic desires which he wants to express. If he is given an opportunity to do so, he may produce a mediocre painting or music, but in that very process of expressing his inner needs, his inner desires, he becomes peaceful and blissful. This desire for peace and bliss is basic in all human beings. In religion we do something to attain it: certain mechanical rituals which help us to become peaceful. When we worship though certain rituals are mechanical but the accompanying feeling that this will bring peace and bliss is similar to the mediocre production of the businessman. The important point is that he is able to express himself. Gradually this process leads us to the love of the Lord. That love is manifested by way of a deep emotional feeling of separation. We are not peaceful, we are not blissful. We are separated from our peace and bliss. Shiva represents this peaceful and blissful state, that is the perfect state. We feel that we are separated from it and that sense of separation is the first experience of that state which is manifested in the form of love of God.

Acharya Shankara says,¹⁴ "When will I be able to see you; when will I be able to see that perfect bliss and peace." We know that peace and bliss cannot be observed as something apart from our own self. We can only experience peace and bliss. We cannot perceive happiness as something different from ourselves. When Acharya Shankara says that when will he be able to see that perfection he means "when will I be able to attain that perfection. When will I be able to hold your gracious feet with my own hands, press them with my head, eyes and chest, embrace them. feel the freshness of the lotus nectar, i.e. your feet." A

joy of this kind is not possible even if a person attains the post of Brahma. That is what Dadhyangātharvaṇa said as far as the post of Indra was concerned. The idea is the same. Even the highest attainments in the world are not able to give us that joy of perfection that is attained by the art of living and it is this love which eventually leads us to the attainment of unity with the self. At the moment we are fragmented from our own self, from society, from every other individual. We are unable to feel the thread which is passing through all of us. We are only able to see the pearls in the necklace without being able to see the thread which is holding all the pearls in the necklace together. When we attain the state of perfection, our horse head is replaced by our own head, that which belongs to our own self. To attain this state we have to be continuously alert, we cannot afford to be negligent about anything. The *Mahabharata* tells us¹⁵ "Where and how this peace and bliss is to be attained."

The first thing is *subhaga*—a person who is careful about his own appearance. Appearance does not imply the clothes one wears, it is something deeper. When we see a person we can find out whether he pays any attention to his physical appearance or whether he is neglectful. We may say anything about the body but the fact remains that all your actions are done through this body. If we neglect this body, it will be entirely at our own cost. We may neglect it after we have attained perfection but not before we have reached that stage.

Pragalha implies that a person must have a very keen mind. Just as we have to be careful about our physical appearance, we must take care that we develop a keen mind. We must observe things properly. Observation of nature is one of the important elements which make life sweet. Whenever we react with conscious beings, there is a reaction from the other side but when we react with the plant kingdom, the so-called nature, there is no reaction. We are able to give without getting anything in return. We may appreciate a flower, the flower will not tell us anything. It has led to the idea of appreciation which will develop. We are able to experience and develop that particular sense of appreciation in relation to other human beings or even in relation to animals.

Daksha instructs us to be efficient in whatever we do. No work should ever be done in a haphazard manner. We must make sure that the work is done properly. We must not be lazy. Today we talk a lot of entertainment, about leisure but it actually hinders our progress. In India holidays were not meaninglessly declared, holidays were always for a purpose. On Diwali we had to perform certain rituals, certain social acts and because of that holiday was declared. More or less the same idea underlines Sabbath—Sunday was kept apart to go to church. In other words, it was work away from work, it had to be performed. Gradually, people have forgotten the underlying reason, i.e., do no other work but concentrate on God. That was the concept of holiday, it did not mean not doing anything. This modern concept of entertainment has to be given up.

We must continuously act. Under no circumstances should we get angry. We should always consider our undertaking as devotion to the Supreme Lord. All our acts must be performed with this idea in mind—"We are not doing it for any individual, not even for our nation." One often hears people who have faced

hardships and have made sacrifices during the independence movement complain: "Nobody listens to us, nobody pays any attention to us." The question is that why should anyone pay attention? The answer is that they want the nation to give them something in return for their sacrifices, and because of this there will always be loss of peace and joy. We cannot develop the art of living if we want anything from any individual, or from the nation or humanity. When we do it only for the sake of Shiva, we are able to do a thing perfectly. The perfection of the action in itself is the reward. It is not for any other reward that we do an action. The *Mahabharata* says that if we want to attain this art of living then we must always appreciate even the smallest thing that someone does for us. If someone does something for us then we must remember it and forget what he has not done. It is only then that we can develop the art of living. Today things are just the reverse. We do not remember what someone does for us but we only remember what he has not done.

Jitendriya, i.e., to attain this we must have control over our senses. We must be full of energy. A lazy life is the result of *tamoguna*, it is the outcome of something which hinders us. We must always be full of energy. The *Mahabharata* says that those who have little energy, strength, effort and get disgusted every now and then, will never attain this art of living. Why is it that in yogic practices there is so much emphasis on the *asana*, *pranayama* etc? These are emphasised because they increase the energy of our body-mind complex. We must set a high goal for ourselves. The *Mahabharata* goes on to say that those who do not strive for a higher goal, do not attain anything worthwhile, psychologically speaking, a certain amount of ambition is necessary to attain success in any endeavour. An important question that arises in this context is—What should one aspire for? What should one's ambition be? If one aspires for something external, it will not bring perfection. It will probably lead to the acquisition of objects but they do not belong to one's own self. No matter how much one acquires in the world, ultimately one has to leave everything here. The only thing that one can take along is one's own self. If one has perfected one's own self, one has been able to realise it, it will always remain with one and that is the real gain. No matter what one has achieved in this world, no matter how much fame one has earned, it will all be left behind. These worldly attainments will not go along with oneself, only one's own perfection will go along with oneself. This perfection is what we should aspire for. By following these simple disciplines, by being conscious of them or as said earlier, by being reflective about them, we are able to attain this art of living.

The *Upaniṣad* further asserts that we should not feel whether we will succeed or not. It states that the creator himself has become the creature. In other words, the creature is none else but the creator himself. Since our basic nature is Shiva we are bound to attain this state. If this was not our natural self, then one could question whether we will attain this state or not. The *Upaniṣad* uses a single term *purusha* to describe it. The word *purusha* has often been used for the Supreme Being. What does it mean? The word can be derived in two ways.¹⁶ As long as it is living in the body the first derivation is meaningful. The body is like a city, a town, and because it is living there it is called *purusha*. It can also mean that

it fulfills everything. This derivation is meaningful in a higher view of life. He is the goal that is fulfilment. Thus, He is the teleological cause of the whole movement.

Causality is a peculiar phenomenon. We seek causes in two ways. In the first causality 'A' leads to 'B', 'B' to 'C', 'C' leads to 'D'. Science generally deals with this kind of causality. The other causality is teleological causality. This is another way of looking at it: because 'D' had to happen, 'C' came into being. Here, 'D' is the final cause, the purpose which attracts things and events that precede it. That is exactly the idea underlying the conscious cause. When a potter makes a pot, even at the start the purpose is clear in his mind, the kind of pot that he is likely to produce. Then he proceeds to obtain the particular type of clay for that kind of a pot, the particular colour of clay. After collecting all the materials he proceeds to create the pot. The scientist make an attempt to see the clay being transformed into a pot, he does not consider even for a moment the possibility that the clay is present there to become the pot. The clay is the cause, but why the does the clay exist there? Shiva is the final outcome of the evolving universe. That is the purpose; the purpose of all our actions, the purpose of everything in the universe is to attain that state of Shiva. Though it is the purpose of the whole cosmos, of the entire universe, even an individual, the tiny particle of creation, attains it and experiences sweetness. This can be further explained by an example given in the *Madhu Vidya*—*madhu*, i.e., honey. It is not that only the entire pot of honey is sweet. Every drop of it is sweet. Every crystal of sugar is equally sweet. We should not think that if the final goal of the evolving universe is realisation of the bliss, then the individuality is lost. The individual attains that state here and now just as each crystal of sugar is as sweet as sugar itself because each crystal is sugar itself. Similarly, when we attain that state, that complete *madhu* we experience the honey-like sweetness. When we come into contact with such a person we experience joy for that moment as long as we are in the presence of this person. It is as though we ourselves have attained that state.

The *Upanisad* gives the final message¹⁷; the eye sees, the ear hears, the tongue tastes, but the individual is the one who is able to experience all the sensations through the particular sense organs. Similarly, through all our minds it is that one universal self which is experiencing everything. He is experiencing through our body-mind complex as much as through any other body-mind complex. This idea is very important. If we miss it, we miss the importance which Vedanta ascribes to the social outlook. An individual does not exist apart from society. Each individual carries within himself the thread Shiva which holds together all the pearls of souls in the necklace of the universe in place. The thread which holds the pearls together is Shiva and not the individual pearls. The *Upanisad* says that this experience is really the honey of living. When we attain this state, we observe the same thing in every one that we had till now been experiencing in our own body-mind complex. In the absence of this nectar, we continuously die again and again because we have to attain this final stage. Just as in a school, if one does not pass in a particular class, one is detained in that class for the next year.

Similarly, we take birth again and again to attain this art of living. We take birth to attain this ultimate realisation and until we realise it we have to take birth again and again. In schools, of course, they have their own rules—if a student fails for three consecutive years, the student is asked to leave the school. Shiva, on the other hand, never asks us to leave. He allows us infinite chances. It is for us to decide when we want to attain this final state.

The art of living can be practised by three categories of individuals. First, those who perceive the world to be real, but have not learnt anything about the reality of the world. They have not analysed it. They have not gone deep into it. They must practice the art of living because they should realise that it is empirically useful for one's own psychological health and good for society as a whole. Though the idea of perfection is not clear to them, they should not wait to seek philosophical clarity before they begin to practice the art of living. Just as in many theories of science we do not have direct evidence; but, if a particular theory is accepted, certain results should follow, and, if they do, we accept it as a hypothesis, as something which is empirical and practical. Similarly, until we have attained that clarity of philosophical perspective, the wisdom that we have discussed earlier, we must practice it 'as if' it is the truth because we can clearly see that it is the only way we can attain peace and bliss. Any other method is likely to produce disharmony which is not good for our own mental health. Tension always leads to personality disintegration and does not lead to integration. As long as we experience this fragmentation and continue to increase this fragmentation, it is not good for society. At the beginning we assume this wisdom to be a hypothesis. Organisations which are not built on this basis will naturally be built on the idea of mutual self interest. Whether it is a state, a particular group, or any organisation they come together because of mutual self interest. What happens then? Slowly, the self interest either becomes fulfilled, or a particular person loses interest in the organisation, or he feels that his interest cannot be fulfilled through this particular organisation, and thus he loses interest in it. All organisations are born out of mutual self interest. As soon as the self interest is lost, the organisation becomes weaker and weaker. But, if we are able to use this idea of perfection, i.e., Shiva as the cement which binds the organisation, which keeps the organisation together, then we are not interacting with each other. This is not mutual self interest, it is the interest for self-attainment through mutual cooperation. Since here the ideal is to attain perfection, we will not lose interest in the organisation.

Hinduism has tried to build the whole society on this basis. Even the husband-wife relationship is built on this basis. In Sanskrit the husband is called *pati* the wife is called *patni*. There is only a difference of 'n' in *pati* and *patni*. According to Panini, this 'n' has come to indicate that the two individuals have come together to attain God. There are some other terms in Sanskrit like *bhartā* and *bhāryā*. *bhartā* is one who provides. *Bhartā* is the one who is being provided. So where the ideal is not clear, the terms *Bhāryā* and *bhartā* are used and not the words *pati* and *patni*. Only when the goal is clear, Shiva cements the relationship it is because of Shiva, the cement, that we can attain perfection. The ideal is not to get mere joy out

of each other's mutual self interest. This is precisely why both Hinduism and Catholicism do not accept the concept of divorce. The main idea is that if they have come together to fulfil their mutual self interest, then they may find that once the self interest is not being fulfilled, they separate. On the other hand, if they have come together to attain perfection, the question of separation does not arise as they merge into each other when the goal is reached. The practical idea of making Shiva the cement, so that the organisation becomes perfect and permanent, is useful for those who have not yet attained the clear perception of outlook.

There are other individuals who can logically understand. They have learnt. They have thought about it and have come to definite conclusion that the universe is really uni (uni means one). It is just one verse. In spite of this knowledge the old attachment persists. Though they know a thing to be wrong yet emotionally they are unable to act in a way in which they should be acting. They must practice this so that this habit becomes second nature. Whatever we practice again and again becomes our second nature and then it becomes difficult to get away from it.¹⁸

Agyanam is in one who does not know. *Sansayagyanam* is in one who intellectually perceives it, but is not able to be moved by it emotionally. There are individuals who are both emotionally and intellectually convinced that this consciousness is the only real thing. They attain the real honey-like nature, passing through the two stages of *agyanam* and *sansayagyanam* they attain the final stage. In that state they are honey by nature, and not because they have consciously willed it; they are honey-like in nature because it has become their second nature. They can be nothing else but sweet. They can bestow this honey-like sweetness on the whole society.

Thus we find that the art of living comprises not only those who have attained wisdom but even those who have just started on the path. However, this art of living, as I have been emphasising repeatedly, must be at all levels—social, physical, mental, emotional and intellectual. The art of living does not include merely the way one behaves externally because very often people tend to confuse the two. Social living is a part of it because we are a part of society. The social ethos is not apart from us. We must live at the social level, at the physical level, at the mental level—at all the different levels—we must live, because in natural life we are living on all these levels. One cannot reform just one aspect of living, one cannot attain perfection only in one aspect of living at the cost of others. Those who attempt to do this in a fragmented way, create another fragmentation. Some people feel that we have to live only socially. There are people who will do a lot of work for society but as far as their own lives are concerned they do not live up to it. We may talk about total non-violence where other countries are concerned, but when it comes to our own country we are ready to be quite violent. A person may talk about world peace but the way he talks to his wife and children reveals the kind of peace he has within himself. This is fragmented living. Sometimes we feel that we will become individually perfect without giving any thought to the social well-being. There are people who also say, "Let society do anything, why are you bothered? We strive to attain perfection as if society was not part and parcel of

our being. In other words, at all levels—physical, mental and emotional—the art has to be developed. It is by developing this art at all the levels that we can attain *Madhu Vidya*. Otherwise, it will elude us. The *Shruti* in this chapter, actually this is part of a chapter, a section, deals with this art of living that we have been discussing all along. We pray to Shiva to bestow on all of us this secret of living and like a drop of honey create an atmosphere of honey-like sweetness all around

APPENDIX

इयं पृथिवी सर्वेषां मधु । अस्यै पृथिव्यै सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्यां प्रथिव्यां तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, यश्चायमध्यात्मं शरीरस्तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, अयमेव स योयमात्मेदममृतमिदं बृहदेदं सर्वम् ॥१॥

इमा आपः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । आसामया सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायम् आसु अप्सु तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, यश्चायमध्यात्मं रेतसः तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, अयमेव स योयमात्मेदं अमृतमिदं बृहदेदं सर्वम् ॥२॥

अयमग्निस्सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्याग्नेः सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन्नग्ने तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं वाइमयस्तेजोमयो ॥३॥

अयं वायु सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्य वायोः सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमास्मिन् वायो तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं प्राणस्तेजोमयो ॥४॥

अयमादित्यः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्यादित्यस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन्नादित्ये तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, यश्चायमध्यात्मं चाक्षुषस्तेजोमयो ॥५॥

इमादिशः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । आसां दिशां सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमासु दिक्षुतेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं श्रोत्रः प्राति श्रुलस्तेजोमयो ॥६॥

अयं चन्द्रः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्य चन्द्रस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन् चन्द्रे तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं मानसस्तेजोमयो ॥७॥

इयं विद्युत्सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्य विद्युतः सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्यां विद्युति तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं तैजसस्तेजोमयो ॥८॥

अयं स्तनयित्तुः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्य स्तनयित्तुः सर्वाणि भूतानां मधु । याश्चायमस्मिन् स्तनयित्तु तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं शाब्दः सौवरस्तेजोमयो ॥९॥

अयमाकाशः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्या काशस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन्नाकाशे तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, यश्चायमध्यात्मं हृदाकाशस्तेजोमयो ॥१०॥

अयं धर्मः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्य धर्मस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन् धर्मे तेजोमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं धामस्तेजोमयो ॥११॥

इदं सत्यम् सर्वेषां मधु । अस्य सत्यस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन् सत्ये तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं सात्यस्तेजोमयो ॥१२॥

इदं मानुषं सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्य मानुषस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन् मानुषे तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो यश्चायमध्यात्मं मानुषस्तेजोमयो ॥१३॥

अयमात्मा सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु । अस्यात्मनस्सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु । यश्चायमस्मिन्नात्मनि तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषो, यश्चायमात्मा तेजोमयो ॥१४॥

स वा अयमात्मा सर्वेषां भूतानामधिपतिः, सर्वेषां भूतानां राजा । तद्यथा रथनाभौ च रथनेभौ च अरास्सर्वे समर्पिता एवमेवास्मिन्नात्मनि सर्वाणि भूतानि, सर्वे देवाः, सर्वे लोकाः, सर्वे प्राणाः, सर्वे एव आत्मनस्समर्पिताः ॥१५॥

इदं वै तन्मधु दध्यङ्गडाथर्वणोऽश्विभ्यामुवाच । तदेतद् ऋषिः पश्यन्नवोचत्, तदान्नरा सनये दंस
उग्रम् आविष्कृणोभि तन्यतुर्न वृष्टिम् । दध्यङ् ह यन्मुध आथर्वणो वामश्वस्य शीष्णां
प्रयदीमुवाचेति ॥१६॥

इदं वै तन्मधु दध्यङ्गडाथर्वणोऽश्विभ्यामुवाच । तदेतद् ऋषिः पश्यन्नवोचत्, “आथर्वणायाश्विने
दधीन्वेऽभ्यं शिरः प्रत्यैरयतम् । स वां मधु प्रवोचद् ऋणायन् त्वाष्ट्रं यदस्तावपि कक्ष्यं वाम्”
इति ॥१७॥

इदं वै तन्मधु दध्यङ्गडाथर्वणोऽश्विभ्यामुवाच तदेतद् ऋषिः पश्यन्नवोचत् “पुर चक्रे द्विपदः पुर चक्रे
चतुष्पदः । पुरस्स पक्षी भूत्वा पुरः पुरुष आविशद । इति । सवा अयम्पुरुषस्सर्वासु पूर्षु पुरिशयो, नैनेन
किञ्चनानाव्रतन्नैनेन किञ्चचनासंवृतम् ॥१८॥

इदन्तन्मधु दध्यङ्गडाथर्वणोऽश्विभ्यामुवाच । तदेतद् ऋषिः पश्यन्नवोचत् “रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव
एतस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय । इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरु रूप ईयते । युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयश्शता दशैति । अयं वै
हरयोयं वै दशच्च सहस्त्राणि, बहूनि, चानन्तानि च । तदेतद्ब्रह्म अपूर्वम् न परम् बाह्यम् । अयमात्मा
ब्रह्म सर्वानुभूः । इत्यनुशासनम् ॥१९॥

1. वस्त्वधीना भवेद्विद्या कर्त्रधीनो भवेद्विधिः उपदेश साहस्ती 1-13 ।
2. Br Up 2-5-1
3. Br Up 2-5-2
4. परस्परोपकार्योपकारकत्वात् तथाभूतं भवितुमर्हति । शांकरभाष्य ।
5. धृतिस्नभ्याधारां हृदगुणनिबद्धां सगमनाम्
विचित्रा पद्याद्वयां प्रतिदिवस सन्मार्गं घटिताम्
स्मरारे मञ्चेतः स्फुट पटकृटी प्राप्य विशदाम्
जयस्वामिन्शकन्या सह शिवगणैः सेवित वियो ॥ शिवानन्द लहरी 21 ।
6. प्रथमा प्रतिमा पूजा जयस्त्रोत्रादि मध्यमा
उत्तमा मानसी पूजा सोहं पूजोत्तमोत्तमा । पाद्ये ।
7. ये नेष्टं तेन गम्यताम् । मनु ।
8. य येच्छसि तथा कुरु । गीता
9. Br Up 2-5-15 अधिपतिः सर्वं भूतानां स्वतंत्र । शांकरभाष्य 2-5-15 ।
10. अत्राधिपत्येन स्वातन्त्र्य अमिधीयते । विद्यारण्य ।
11. क्रतौ सुप्ते जाग्रत्त्वमसि फलयोगे क्रंतुमतां क्व कर्म प्रदवस्तं फलति पुरुषाराधनमृते । पुष्पदन्त ।
12. Br Up 2-5-16
13. सत्यप्रतिज्ञः सगुरुः सोढ्वाप्ये तादाशी गतिम् । वातिकसार ।
14. कदा वा त्वां दृष्ट्वा गिरीश तव भव्याङ्घ्रि युगलम गृहीत्वा हस्ताभ्यां शिरसिनयनेवक्षसि बहून् ।
तमा शिलष्याप्राय स्फुटं जामण गन्धान परिभाषाम् आमय्यान् बृह्मार्च्यमुदमनु भविष्यामि हृदये ॥
(शिवानंद लहरी 26)
15. वसामि नित्यं युयरो प्रगलयेदक्षे नरे कर्माणि वर्तमाने । महाभारत अनुशासन पर्व ।
16. पुरुषेते यतस्तस्मात् पुरुषो जीव उच्यते ।
सर्वं पुरयति येषं पुरुषो ब्रह्म मन्यते ॥ वातिकसार ।
17. Br Up 2-5-7
18. अज्ञानं संशयज्ञानं मिथ्याज्ञानं इदं जगत् । वातिकसार ।