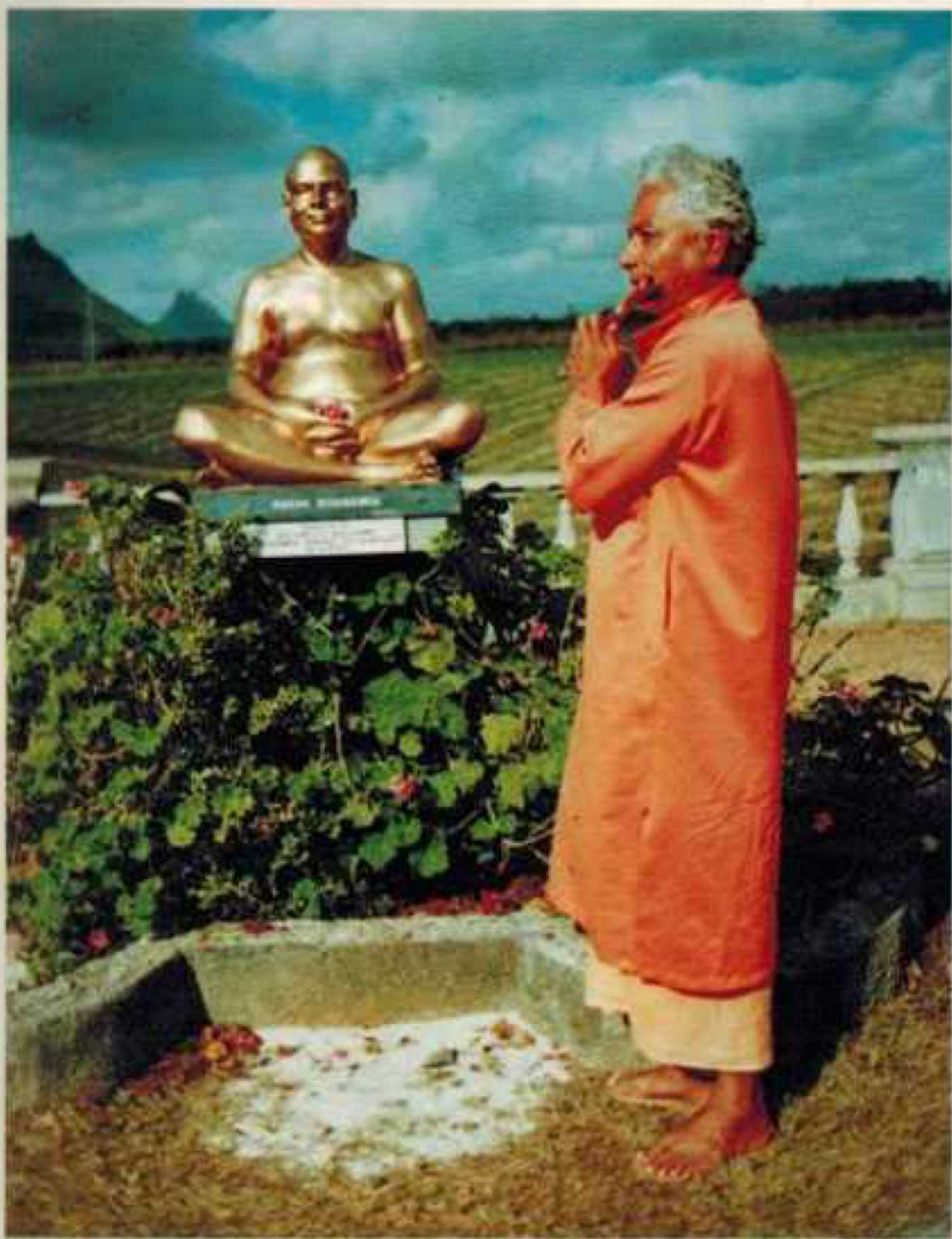


# *The Cosmic Dance*



SWAMI  
VENKATESANANDA



Om Namah Venkatesaya  
Om Namah Shivaya

# The Cosmic Dance

Swami Venkatesananda

1982

The Chiltern Yoga Trust  
Sivananda street, Rose Hill  
Mauritius

# The Cosmic Dance

talks given on the central meaning of the Devi Mahatmya verses  
at the Sivananda Yoga Ashram  
Mauritius  
1982

## Contents

1. Attachment
2. The mind, source of sorrow
3. Witness consciousness
4. Divine Grace
5. The buffalo demon
6. Turn within to the center
7. Correct understanding
8. Beyond the intellect
9. The truth revealed



## 1. Attachment

There is a beautiful word in Hindi, 'gaporah'. It means a mixture of fiction, fancy, hallucination, wishful thinking, untruth, falsehood, all these put together. This Devi Mahatmya is not a 'gaporah', but it is something which is being enacted in our homes and lives almost every day; it is intensely and intimately relevant to us.

In the Devi Mahatmya, there are two primary characters, the King and the Trader; exactly the same thing happened to both of them independently. The King was first defeated by his enemies and then thrown out of his Kingdom and his palace by his own ministers, wives and children. The Trader was also thrown out of his house by his family.

That is our fate too! In the Yoga Vasistha, there is a beautiful reminder that not only do relatives throw you out, but even this body is going to throw you out some day. Is it not an ungrateful thing, this body? I feed, clothe, shave, and groom it every day, and one day it mercilessly kicks me out!

The King and the Trader, having both been thrown out, go to the forest independently and each one is haunted by something which we would normally consider extremely noble - attachment. This is the focus of our discussion today. Is it wrong for us to think of the welfare of our friends?

Is it wrong for a king or a ruler of a country, even when he is exiled, or no longer in power, to worry himself about the condition of the people under the new rulers? Here, this King was so fond of his subjects that he treated them like his own children, and when he was thrown out of his kingdom, he was still moved at heart by the possible pathetic plight of his own people. In the same way, the Trader, convinced that his family only kicked him out in a momentary fit of passion and greed, now worries if his family and his children are all right! The Trader says that not all of his children are wicked. He has six children, and three of them threw him out, but he still says, "Must I not do something for the other three?" This is a peculiar argument that we invoke. Do not worry, other people know how to look after themselves, just get out if they no longer want you!

Swami Sivananda used to say that the best mantra to use in life is "Mind your own business". First, see what goes on within you. See that you are attached.

There is an expression in the Bhavagad Gita which describes the state of mind of a demon, of a diabolical human being:

"Isvaro'ham, I am God (XVI - 14)."

We love to play this 'god' very often, for we think that we are the protectors of humanity, and that it is our duty to protect others!

We are living in a strange age where we hate to call a spade a spade. A boy and a girl are attracted to each other physically, there is something going on within each of them. Why do you want to call it love? Call it something else, it is not love. It is a biological necessity, a sexual appetite. Once satisfied, it is finished.

We give many things in life big names. For example, we say "Oh, I do not eat meat and fish, I only eat seafood sometimes!" The moment you call it 'seafood', it becomes first class! Nonsense, call it by its proper name! There are many other examples of this type of euphemism. We do not call it a labour strike anymore. In some countries, it is now called industrial action. However, it is a strike, a labour strike. Calling it 'industrial action' makes it become very sophisticated, acceptable, and decent.

So, we do not call it 'worry' or 'attachment' when we refer to the people who threw us out, but we say that "We are so full of compassion, we are Christ-like and love even our tormentors". For heaven's sake, if you are not wanted, get out! That is the best service you can do for them. They do not want you, so get out! Tell them, bye-bye, 'hari om tat sat', and then just leave.

Attachment is non-existent, and therefore it is impossible to get rid of it. But, we think that to hang on to it is the right thing to do. We have clothed attachment with a grandiose dress, called 'dharma'. Dharma has another meaning apart from sustainer, or 'that which keeps us together'. It also means something that you wear or put on - dharaitithi dharma. You put on this thing, this show, and very often you call it dharma; but, your motivation is something very different. You are scared to face loneliness, you are scared to face yourself and your own inner beastliness, and so you call it dharma. So you think it is your dharma to protect your children, to train them, and therefore you discipline them by hitting them. Just admit it, you lost your temper when you hit them; do not clothe it in dharma.

The first thing in spiritual life is the ability, the willingness and the daring to face oneself. Do not use sophisticated arguments like Arjuna used in the Bhavagad Gita, or quote the scriptures.

Thus, the first thing we see in the Devi Mahatmya is attachment. The second thing is hinted at in the following illustration. When you have a headache, please go to a doctor or to a pharmacist. But when you 'are' a headache, it is a very different story! Nobody can reach you, no doctor, no psychiatrist, or mental institution. Nobody can help you. So, it is then that you had better go to a holy person, a religious teacher.

What can this person now do for you? Why 'are' you a headache in the first place? Perhaps because people have been telling you that you must do this, or do that; your husband, your wife, your children tell you that you must do this and do that, then you become a headache. If the swami or the religious person also tells you what you must do, you are going to tear him to pieces! Therefore, if the swami is a sensible man, he will not give you advice. In this world, the easiest

thing to do is to give advice, and the most difficult thing to do is to follow it.

So, the swami will not give you any advice, but he will tell you a story. It may be a story of demons like Sumbha, Nisumbha, Mahishasura, or a present century story of a Hitler, or a Mao Tse Tung, or a political leader anywhere in the world. These stories are told with the idea that your position is also similar. Do not think that you are unique, or the only one who is clever or who is suffering in this world. You are not the only one that is persecuted or intelligent. You are one in 400.000 billion organisms, including the mosquitoes and all living things!

All of us are suffering, and all of us have the same destiny. We were all born in the same manner out of a birth canal. We eventually will all get to the same place, whether we go up in smoke on a funeral pyre, or we get buried in a hole in the earth. It is all the same. We are all born in the same way and we will all die someday, and, in the meantime, we will live in the same way - there is no difference.

So, listen to the stories in the Ramayana, the Bhavagad Gita, the Bhagavatam, the Mahabharatam, and perhaps something will happen within you. Call it a transformation, an awakening, or whatever you like, but something happens within. Go on listening and studying these stories in the scriptures, and one day there will be a click - what the psychologist calls an 'ah-haaaaaa' experience - so, this is what the truth is! Then you become instantly free from the problems which have been haunting your lives.

## 2. The Mind, Source of Sorrow

Religious teachers in particular should never directly confront a wicked person, or a person in difficulty. The attitude towards what are known as wicked people is one of salutations from a great distance, never confrontation. Very often when it came to instructing those who are regarded as wicked, teachers used parables, anecdotes, or stories.

If you go to a teacher saying "I am confused, what should I do?", the teacher might say, "Once upon a time there was a man called Arjuna who was also confused. So, he went to Krishna for advice, and was told stories of this and that". When one contemplates the problem of parables, one discovers there is also a danger in using them. Even today some great teachers do not use parables. Also, scriptures like the Upanishads contain no parables, but use dialogue instead. Even though a parable may be invaluable in putting a message across, there is a problem inherent in the word parable itself.

In french the word 'parabole' sounds like the english 'parabola', used in geometry and mathematics. The peculiarity of a parabola is that the two arms of its graphic form never meet, but travel to infinity, getting more parallel to each other, but never touching. If you resort to parables, unless you are extremely cautious and careful, you might never understand their true meaning. The story goes in one direction, and the mind goes in another direction. Unless you are extremely careful, the meaning will never be understood.

Another method used for instruction was to sing, and sing until a state of ecstasy was achieved, and somehow the message would get through. South Indian classical music is hundred percent religious; all the classical karnatic songs are directed towards God. Whereas, in the North, it is only some of the light music and bhajans which are religiously oriented.

But in everything there is a 'but'. For example, a great composer, who was a poor man, a beggar, and a saint, was invited by a messenger to the court of a Maharajah who promised him lots of money if he would come and sing. The saint looked at this messenger only once, and then he turned and looked at Rama and said, "Rama, what shall I do with money? I only want your Grace". The messenger walked away, perhaps he became a devotee later. This same composer in another song also ridicules wealth, and claims that we need more devotion. There are great musicians who sing this song even today, but before they agree to perform, they first want to know how much money they will be paid. It is the same song, with the same words, but we do not listen to the words, only to the music.

Another beautiful song, 'Sangeet gyanamou bhakti bina', says that all men are saints; they sing their way to God, but without bhakti - faith - the 'sangeet gyanam' or knowledge of music is useless. So, whether you use stories, puranas, parables, or other methods, the problem seems to be how to get the message into

the heart.

When you pick up the Durga Saptashati and find that the whole text deals with fights, quarrels, demons, blood, and sweat, you are put off. There are inspiring verses scattered here and there, but who has the patience to read it all to find a few precious gems.

When I was very young and had not yet met Gurudev Swami Sivananda, somebody told me about the Bhagavad Gita. So, I bought a copy and took it home. The first chapter describes two armies who are getting ready to fight. But who wants to read about violence? For two years I carried this small pocket size book around, but could never read beyond the 15th or 20th verse of chapter one. We have enough quarrels amongst ourselves, do we also have need of other people's quarrels? I was determined not to read the first chapter, but to start with the second; then the book was incredibly inspiring! Later I realized that even the first chapter was extremely important, in the same way as the first 'katha' - story - in the Durga Saptashati is important.

Thus, if you want to understand your own mind, what seems to be essential is to face it. But, we will not do that; we do everything we can to avoid confronting our mind, the maker of our problems. If there is unhappiness, it is in me; for, it is the mind that experiences it and that calls it unhappiness. The first trick of the mind is to call it unhappiness, to label it. The second is to find somebody else to blame for our unhappiness.

So, these two men, the King and the Trader, both of whom had been dismissed and thrown out by their own 'kith and kin', talk with the sage. The sage cautions the King and the Trader, and surprisingly says, "Why do you not see that even parental affection towards children is selfish?" We consider it normal that love and affection between friends, master and servant, lover and beloved, is a myth. But parental affection is something which is superior! The sage says even that idea is loaded because there is always an if: "I will love you, if" or "I love you because", etc. There is no love. Let us call it something else, anything else is satisfactory.

First there is this division, this creation of unhappiness; and second, there is the tendency to find a scapegoat to blame: "Why, I am not responsible for my own unhappiness, someone else is responsible and that someone is definitely wicked, an 'asura', a 'rakshasa'."

While looking at the parallels between Yoga and Christianity, the word 'Satan' was read from the Bible during satsang. The Hebrew edition of the Bible contains some lively commentaries, and explains that the Hebrew word for 'Satan' merely means an adversary, an enemy. Since it is just one word, it is easy to add something to it, for example, enemy of God, enemy of righteous life, etc. However, the word simply means an enemy. Apparently Satan was also called Lucifer which means 'bearer of light'! Lucifer, the morning star, the angel whose



light shines in the morning and who was a dweller in heaven suddenly became too proud and his pride hurled him down as Satan. There is a similar story in the Bhagavatam, about gods who suddenly fell and became demons.

What are these 'rakshasas' and 'asuras'? Only us. We are the 'rakshasas and asuras', for when the inner eye is closed you are an 'asura', and when it is opened you are an angel. When we call someone the source of our unhappiness, automatically he/she is a wicked person. My wife and children threw me out and therefore they are wicked. Alright, accept it and just go away!

The difficulty is the little word 'my'. 'My' wife, and 'my' children are wicked because they threw me out. You are the one who is still thinking, 'my' husband, 'my' wife and 'my' children. There is a lot of mischief in that 'my'. The mind creates an involved argument. Those people are wicked because they threw me out but still my mind is so full of compassion, affection, and kindness that even in this state, I am thinking and worrying about them. If so, then you are an idiot!

There is an interesting verse in Book 10 (v. 29) of the Bhagavatam. Krsna had gone from Dwaraka to the city of Mathura leaving the gopis behind. These women were so fond of Krisna that they missed him terribly and felt the dreadful anguish of separation. However, one cannot weep for a lost lover forever. So, the gopis decided that, since Krisna can live without them, then they must learn to live without him. A marvellous idea. At least this is clever and intelligent, for one cannot moan and weep forever.

But here the King and the Trader have been driven away from their homes. They go to the forest continuing to think about their families, and they rationalize their behaviour by calling it affection for those who kicked them out. But, did not Jesus say, "Turn the other cheek"? They hit me on only one cheek, so let me go and turn to them the other cheek - nonsense! Is this a rationalization or total confusion? It is not as though they are unable to live without me, but I am unable to live without them. It is a sign of total immaturity and the worst form of gross craving when the mind longs for someth for a socalled object of enjoyment in its absence. For you love mangoes and there is a mango lying in front - is it such a sin to pick it up and eat it? No. If you could resist it, you are a hero. If you cannot, then you are a seeker. But when the mango is not there, why go on dreaming about it? That is a sign of total immaturity!

So the seeker, instead of blaming somebody or something else outside of himself, turns his attention upon the source of his own sorrow - the mind. This is one of the most important factors in the practice of yoga, especially meditation.

Normally, the mind thinks of pleasure and as it goes on thinking, it lives in a world of its own make-believe, totally disoriented and separated from reality. It is really a wonder that a mind in this state can even function. It is like being in a torture machine. The man to be tortured has his feet securely tied to the ground and his wrists are tied together above him to a spoke in a wheel. As the wheel is

turned only a few inches, all the bones creak and crack, all the tendons and joints are pulled apart.

This is precisely what we do to ourselves when we sit and think of something, an object of pleasure, a belonging of 'mine' which is not there. Our whole lives are full of these 'mines'! Generally, sea mines and land mines are used in war. It is very dangerous to contact one for it will explode and blow us up. Our lives are full of 'mines' exploding a hundred thousand times a day and it is only the Grace of God that keeps us alive and in one piece!

The problem is our definition of happiness and unhappiness, or our idea of who the devils are which cause our unhappiness. It is a tragedy when you relate your happiness and unhappiness to other people or to things in the world. You are caught both ways. If you think your unhappiness comes from another, then you hate that person and cannot stop thinking about him. If you think your happiness comes from another, then you constantly want the company of that person. In both cases, you are going to be unhappy, more and more unhappy.

Therefore, we live in unhappiness, self-created unhappiness which is illogical; but we want to make it logical, and so we say "I love my enemies". Forget it, you can never love your enemies! If you regard someone as your enemy, you have already decided to hate him. The spirit in which Jesus used the expression 'love your enemies' is quite different from what is normally understood. If you regard another person as your enemy, you cannot love him. It is possible that you can see and sense that the other person is hostile to you and does not love you, but you can still love that person, having no change in your heart; that is possible. Very good, excellent! But, you cannot feel the person is your enemy and love him, impossible! That will only make you a dreadful hypocrite.

We have decided that all those people who cause unhappiness to us are our enemies. Since we have found it impossible to take the mind away from them because they are considered 'my' people, we rationalize and make lovely excuses. Why? So we can go on day dreaming about these people, about life situations, experiences, about everything that is related to us in our lives. We think that we renounce, but actually we want to keep the seed, never being completely renewed. We renounce and avoid all those things which are considered unrighteous, unethical.

The mind that has created this problem is unable to solve it, because it has already sanctioned that situation with an exalted definition. This is what the King has done when he explains his predicament to the sage. The King says, "They are wicked, but I am so good, pure, and full of love that I cannot hate them, even though I know that they are vicious". This silly attitude has been sanctioned, and therefore it is impossible for the mind to face its own mistake, to face its own error.

If this is slightly clear, then it will be possible for us to look at our own lives, and

see that we are making this mistake all the time. We consider something evil, and our reaction to it is supposed to be very saintly, very holy; but usually it is totally confused. The sage explains to the King and the Trader what this holy reaction should be by means of the stories in the Devi Mahatmya.

### 3. Witness Consciousness

To solve this psychological problem of sorrow, of unhappiness, which is common to all thinking beings, solutions have been suggested. Unhappiness arises in thought, and it is thought which itself manufactures a cause, rationalizes, justifies, and philosophizes. A common factor in all these analyses - psychoanalysis, dream analysis, and even self-analysis - is the realization that more often than not it is a futile attempt, a useless waste of time. Why? The analyzer is the same as the analyzed - it is the mind analyzing the mind. That is when we pat ourselves on the back saying, we are all right, we are full of love, kindness, compassion, etc., and it is the other person that is wicked.

So, even when we think of God and His Grace, the thought arises that "I am right and the other fellow is wrong and must be crushed by God". So we pray for God to come and destroy all the evil in this world. Suppose He jumps in front of you and says that you are the first one to go! To pray to God to "Please come to help the good people on earth" is a very heavy responsibility. First you must make sure that you are good, then you can safely pray.

Self-analysis is like diluting water with water. You can go on doing it for a long time and no dilution will happen. You can only dilute something else with water, not water. It is a stupid game. Even though self-analysis is an excellent expression, perhaps the word introspection is better. But then, what is there in a word? Nothing. If you have not found the meaning of the word Self, then you have no idea what is meant by self-analysis.

The same thing has been called by different names. Gurudev Swami Sivananda called it 'witness consciousness'. What is this? Is it one corner of the mind called the super-ego, which bears witness and monitors the other parts of the mind? No, that description is totally inadequate. It must be repeated again and again, as long as your mind is analyzing your mind, you will always find yourself correct. Even if you are occasionally tempted to say, "Oh, you know, I am sinful, I am wicked, I am weak", you are pulling the wool over somebody's eyes, you are cheating them. So, please be careful when you are tempted to confess to others, and not to yourself, that you are a very wicked person. Please look within yourself to see what real feeling, what motivation is there.

As long as the mind analyzes the mind, it is like water diluting water and nothing will happen. We are always patting ourselves on the back, just like the King and the Trader did, because they felt that even though their families were wicked people for kicking them out, their own hearts were still full of love and compassion for them. We see this story in the Durga Saptashati, but it is not ancient history. It is modern, it is today's history and occurs in our lives as my story, your story, and his story.

No matter how many troubles we have, we always feel that we are right and the other person is wrong. But when the other person is wrong, I am still right! There

is no way out of this mess. The solution suggested is known as 'witness consciousness'. Ramana Maharishi used another expression to describe it, 'choiceless awareness'. Jesus said it in a very simple way, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Bible - Matt 7:1). Do not judge others or yourself. Can you do it? Can you look at a piece of orange cloth and understand that this is simply cloth, without saying whether it is beautiful or not, whether it is this or that, whether it is a swami or a non-swami. If you can simply look at it and see 'orange cloth', then you have found the key.

This choiceless awareness is at the same time witness consciousness. Not a witness in the sense that we go to appear in court, but that you are the witness of a game. You are not one of the fans of one side or of the other. It does not matter who beats whom, you are still going to clap! Can you remain as a witness to this inner battle that goes on when the mind is being churned with ideas of good and evil, and happiness and unhappiness? Krishnamurti calls it 'an observation without an observer'. Take these phrases home with you to ponder over, and one day their meaning will become clear.

It is not clear now, because the brain or the mind is still working. The mind cannot grasp the meaning of the expressions: witness consciousness, choiceless awareness, an observation without an observer. Immediately the mind asks, "Oh, will I then do something horrible if I have no choice?". Will the person who lives a life of 'choiceless awareness' become wicked, vicious, antisocial? No. Such a question arises because it is still the brain that tries to understand it, but the brain is incapable of understanding this.

What is known as witness consciousness, choiceless awareness or pure observation is also known as 'citta' in the yoga texts, as 'satva' or purity in the Yoga Vasistha, and as Buddha, Christ, or Allah. It is something that is beyond the mind, beyond the intellect. In the Upanishads:

*Yatovaco nivartante aprapya manasasah anandam  
brahmano vidyan nanibheda kutasana.*

When will you gain total freedom from fear and enjoy uninterrupted happiness which does not come from outside, which is totally independent of external agencies, and which is not even dependent upon the functioning of your mind? When will you enjoy that happiness?

When That is realized, it is beyond mind, thought, speech and description. This happiness is not found in what is being described, or being thought of by you, it is something else. Can we have it now, or does it have to be acquired from somebody, or is it only found in heaven? No. It is here right now, in us, between us, everywhere around us, but as if asleep.

In the first story in the Durga Saptashati, Vishnu himself is asleep. Out of this sleep, or ignorance of this witness consciousness, there also arises what is known as evil. From the ears of the sleeping Vishnu are born the first demons. Thus,



when this witness consciousness, choiceless awareness, innermost being, Atman, Self, this God within, is, as if asleep, then out of that confusion evil is born. There is evil in me and evil in you. Your evil becomes my unhappiness, and my evil becomes your unhappiness. When I am wicked, you are unhappy; when you are wicked, I am unhappy. When you are good, I am happy; when I am good, you are happy, accidentally, for this does not always happen. In order that we may enjoy more happiness, we indulge in vicious actions whose result is inevitably unhappiness. Vicious qualities are picked up by the other person and reflected back to me as unhappiness; it must! So, out of the inner ear wax of the sleeping Vishnu, the protector, two demons emerge. When this inner divinity is veiled, it is as if asleep. How can Vishnu, the creator and protector of the entire universe be asleep? When this inner intelligence is awakened, that itself becomes your protector, that itself is God.

### In the Bhagavad Gita

*Sri Krsna said: Isvarah sarvabhutanam hrddese' rjuna tisthati. (XVIII/61)*

God dwells in the hearts of all beings, or, The Kingdom of God is within you.

When this truth is not realized or understood, and when you do not turn towards this truth, there is darkness. When you turn towards this inner light, there will be no more doubt, shadows, evil, or unhappiness. When you turn away from this light, then there is a problem of darkness and shadows.

The evil that arises in God's own creation, that exists in God's own nature - it is not as if there is some other God who created evil - serves its own purpose. You are free, you can see that in life itself. Earth, air, fire, water, all these are God's creations, and can be seen from two points of view. For example, you can swim in the sea and get refreshed, or you can drown and become food for fish. It depends entirely upon what you want to do with yourself, that is up to you. Fire can be used for prayer in the 'hawan', for food to be cooked, or you can get burned. The Creator is not responsible for all of this. What is called evil is there in the world, but not as evil, for God does not regard it as evil.

Creation is not just a one-sided affair. It is a complete, a total creation - if there is a creation at all. In that creation there is 'asuri prakriti', 'daivi prakriti', day and night, and all kinds of so called pairs of opposites, but they are complementary, making a whole. You have the freedom to choose this or that; but once you have chosen, there is no further choice. Or you can realize this witness consciousness or choiceless awareness, and become completely free from all these opposites.

Now, let us come back to the story. Vishnu is still asleep, and Brahma, the Creator, has emerged from Vishnu simultaneously with the two demons who then threaten the Creator himself before creation happened. There is a lovely lesson in this story. Even though you may be an artist, a writer, a business person, or all sorts of things, there is still a tremendous creative potential in you. However, the diabolical tendencies within you, symbolically represented by the demons which

arise from the dirty ear wax fallen from Vishnu's ears, prevent the manifestation of this creative potential. What is the cause of all this? This witness consciousness, this Vishnu in you is asleep, and this gives rise to all sorts of phantasms, imaginations, and hallucinations, which prevent your creative faculty from blossoming. Can I deal with these on a superficial level? No, it is not possible.

Even Brahma looks at these demons and gets frightened. It is the creative faculty that gets frightened when looking at these evil tendencies in oneself. Can you deal with them? You cannot do so, because one evil has to be countered by another evil which cannot be destroyed without yourself becoming tainted by it. This is why we pray for help and adore the Lord, or His Shakti, the Divine Mother.

There is a beautiful expression in the prayer of Brahma, who looks at Vishnu lying asleep. Brahma says, "Even the Supreme Being Vishnu, the protector of the entire universe is asleep, so to whom shall I pray? This sleep or ignorance overpowers everybody in this universe. So, how can I pray? Do I even have the intelligence to pray?" Then Brahma addresses the Goddess of sleep, "Mother, please leave Vishnu, and if you do so, perhaps it will be possible that I can pray to Him". An incredible lesson.

If you cannot awaken this witness consciousness within yourself, and cannot cultivate choiceless awareness - the cultivated becomes chosen awareness, then what can we do apart from feeling totally helpless? There is a certain type of prayer which can help us to face the problem of psychological distress and confusion, but it is not prayer in the ordinary sense. In response to that particular prayer, the very power that makes you stupid, frees you from this stupidity. How this happens, we will examine later.

## 4. Divine Grace

We should not forget that the entire story is in response to the plight, too the life situation expressed by the King and the Trader. The original question or problem is not so much why is there attachment in the world, but why is it that we sense and we experience in our daily lives the existence in the world of good and evil?

One of the most remarkable psychological farces is, when thinking of good, you look into yourself and see only the good that is present in you. When you are forced to accept the existence of evil, it is always in the other fellow. In our present state of non-enlightenment, we are conscious and aware of the division, the distinction between good and evil. If we are honest, we shall see this distinction within ourselves. We do not have to advertise to others that we think that only good qualities are inside us. If someone else points out that there is something called hatred, jealousy, ill-will, in us, we respond, "Oh no, not in us, it is only in the other people!" If you point out even to the swami that he also has these evil qualities, he might respond, "Well, not so much. Remember it is not an evil in myself, but my actions are in response to the other persons, because I must discipline them, show righteous indignation, etc.,"

'Judge not' is an absolute teaching in the life of Jesus. In order not to judge, you have to enter into what was described earlier as witness consciousness, or choiceless awareness, or an observation without an observer. The King and the Trader pretended that they were thinking of their worthless relatives, wife and children with their hearts full of love:

*Prem pravanam chittam vigumesvara vibandhu.*

"My heart is so full of love even for these wretched relatives"

Is that love? When the mind sees good and evil, there will be no love. It will naturally 'love' those who are regarded by it as good, and will withdraw that love from those who are considered evil. You cannot love evil. It is only sophistry to say, "Hate the evil and not the evil person". How can you divide the one from the other? These are lovely cliches, beautiful to print on placards and hang on walls, but they have no relation whatsoever to our lives. In other words, you look at that person and say, "I hate all that you do, but I love you!" This kind of dichotomy is the sign of a sick mind.

If one can 'be' the observation without an observer - Krishnamurti, the witness consciousness - Sivananda, or the choiceless awareness - Ramana Maharishi, then you would know what love means. But then I doubt that very much too, for in that state of awareness, you 'are' love! That is where love 'is', the love that is God. The rest is disaster, humbug. Some people may not know what 'humbug' means. 'Ham' in Hindi means 'I', so 'humbug' means the 'ego bug' which bites you mysteriously at every turn, and which you can never get rid of. This love that boys and girls feel, the Hollywood thing and the television stuff, that is pure 'humbug'. If you yield to that kind of love, you will get bitten day and night, especially at

night!

Love is present in this witness consciousness, which is aware, totally aware, with no division between you and me, you and him, between us. When you see whatever there is, choicelessly, then there is love. I have lived with Gurudev Swami Sivananda, and I have had contact with Krishnamurti. It is there that I have seen love. Even in reading the books by Ramana Maharishi I can see that he was also full of love. These great personages are absolutely full of love, love of the kind you and I have no conception or idea about.

I am thankful that we have no idea of love, because love is not an idea, it is not of the intellect. Love is something supreme. To use that word love in our relationships seems to me to be prostituting something precious, divine. When this witness consciousness is asleep in us, then the idea of good and evil arises in our hearts and minds. These twin ideas of good and evil are demons that threaten the creative faculties that lie dormant in all of us. Please do not confuse creative faculty with the fine arts; that is only one aspect, the fringe of our real creativity.

There is something tremendously divine, important, and inexpressibly holy in every one of us that is threatened by these twin forces of good and evil. It is not as though good and evil do not exist, but these twin forces revolve around a peculiar psychological mechanism, which says that all the good is in me and all the evil is outside. This is referred to as maya - never mind the meaning that others give this word. Can this maya be overcome by you and me? No. It needs grace, the grace of maya itself, to overcome this problem.

In the Catholic tradition, one can approach Jesus through supplication and prayer to His Divine Mother Mary. The Vaishnavas of India also have the same belief, the same faith, that you cannot directly approach Vishnu; but one must go through the Mother, Lakshmi. Therefore, they say, "Purusokaram", "She is our path to the Lord". The Divine Mother is Grace. Whether or not you call it God, male or female, it does not matter.

This great cosmic consciousness, Vishnu, is himself enveloped as it were in maya, in sleep. While Vishnu is sleeping, Brahma the Creator has emerged and is being threatened by the demons. A sleeping person cannot wake himself up. He needs somebody or something else, an alarm clock or a splash of cold water. What a peculiar fate that a sleeping person cannot wake himself up, but sleep has to leave him. Sleep, that extremely intangible nothing, has such power that it can make a genius, a Nobel prize winner, appear stupid. However intelligent and powerful a man may be, he cannot wake himself up. Sleep has to decide to leave him.

Sleep is considered here as maya, as the Shakti, or one aspect of this power. Later, we will discuss the other aspects of this power, but here we are concerned with only one, that of veiling. The same power veils and the same power un-veils. This is like the game of hide-and-seek which you probably played when you were

a child. Brahma prays to the Mother as sleep and says "Please Mother, go away so that this witness consciousness may come to witness what is happening."

Hence, prayer, meditation, and contemplation become important. But the most significant of all is to surrender to the Divine. Do not surrender to a conceptual image of the Divine, but to the thing which is present before you, the very thing that seems to veil the vision of God from you. This is an extraordinary approach by those who are known as Shaktas in India. Ramakrishna was one of them.

There was also a great saint called Ramprasad who composed beautiful bhajans and songs. In one song, he ridicules the great philosophers who say, 'I am God' and 'Soham'. It is said in his biography that when he addressed the Divine Mother, she used to take human form as a young lady and tease him, be with him, suddenly appearing and then disappearing. One day, when he was mending his fence and singing, the Divine Mother came and started to assist him. In this song, he says, "Mother, they say, 'Aham Brahmasmi', there is no maya, but there is very little knowledge of what 'Aham' means".

What is meant by 'I am Brahman, I am God, Soham'? You can say "I am God", but do you know what 'I' means, what 'God' means? Otherwise all that you think of when you say that "I am God", is that the body is God. But this mosquito does not think so, nor do the vultures or the dogs. If the breathing stops, the vultures will have a meal. So, what kind of God is that? In order to understand what 'I' means, 'I, the ego' means, or what 'God' means, this maya should leave us. Maya should let go and that is done by her own grace.

In this first story, the Mother withdraws, sleep recedes, and Vishnu naturally wakes up and fights with these demons. Whereas, in the subsequent stories, it is the Mother who is all powerful and who deals with all these diabolical forces, the rakshasas and the asuras. Once this witness consciousness or cosmic consciousness, or whatever you wish to call it, is awakened, then that itself is able to deal with all the problems, and illuminate the truth that lies hidden within our own hearts.

What is the first step towards the gaining of this witness consciousness or spiritual awakening? To realise that the Divine Grace alone can bring about this spiritual awakening. It is not brought about by any other factor in this world, only by Grace alone. Is Grace some kind of irrational phenomenon? No, not quite. If there is heartfelt sincere prayer, contemplation, devotion, and the spirit of surrender, then Divine Grace is bound to come. But, you cannot say, "I have surrendered myself, please, please give me my grace". Then there is no surrender, and therefore there is no Grace.

Hence, they say, surrender yourself and God reveals Himself to you in His own sweet time. It is not as if He is partial, or that Grace is irrational, but you cannot know when your own surrender is complete. Just as you cannot know when you have really fallen asleep, or how you come to awake. Do all the rest, please do all



that you can do, and therein let Divine Grace take over.

When that Grace lifts the veil of ignorance, then and only then does this witness consciousness, or divine consciousness, or Christ or Buddha consciousness, become instantly operative. That witness consciousness, or cosmic consciousness, alone can reveal the truth to us, and only then is there love. That Love is very different, totally different from what we call love in this world. The next story we will discuss illustrates one huge obstacle that may be obstructing our path to this surrender and to this inner spiritual awakening.

## 5. The Buffalo Demon

When this choiceless awareness or witness consciousness, which is the Divine, is asleep - and that is the only problem, then one little awakening influence, for example, a life situation such as pain, suffering, sorrow, grief, or the contact with the guru, the holy and great ones or masters, should be sufficient to bring about a transformation. Then, it seems that all you have to do is to sit and pray, contemplate, meditate, surrender yourself, and you are free.

Unfortunately, that is not the only problem. To put it another way: from that unsolved problem immediately there arises another problem which gives rise to an endless series of problems. Take for instance a very simple daily occurrence. You are fed up with this world, for it is like a hell, full of sorrow, grief, fights, and quarrels. You cannot bear it any longer, so you take a pill or a drug to fall asleep. However, that is not the end of the problem either. The moment you do something to wipe out the world you are now experiencing, then another world arises which you call a dream. In retrospect, you call it a dream world, but when you are in the middle of dreaming, you do not call it a dream. So, you drop one world and come into another world and say that the former one was a dream. Strange, human ways are very strange.

If the witness consciousness, which is always choiceless awareness, remains asleep, we not only lose its reality, but we also gain something more destructive. The world that arises seems to be full of choices between good and evil, pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, success and failure, a holy life and a non-holy life, etc., etc. Caught in this whirlpool, we completely forget that fundamentally all these things are somehow related.

Again, we are reminded that good and evil, pain and pleasure, are directly related, not in the sense of cause and effect, but directly related. For example, if you are wicked, I am miserable; if I am wicked, you are miserable. My bad actions give you pain, and my good actions contribute to your welfare. It is that simple. And similarly, in your case, if you are vicious, I am miserable; if you are holy, I am delighted and so on. If I am good to this man, I promote his pleasure or happiness, naturally. That man may not do to me as much as I do to him, but he is likely to reciprocate a little bit, or at least not be so vicious towards me.

When this thing called choice arises, the maker of choice is the mind or the ego. The criterion which guides that choice is an ill-understood search for happiness, or pursuit of pleasure. When this secret is understood, then goodness becomes natural, unmotivated, and choiceless. Correct, you are merely approaching choicelessness. It is not the choiceless awareness that we were discussing the other day, because we must realize that making choices is already a sign of ignorance, indicating that something deep within you is fast asleep. That divine consciousness, cosmic consciousness, witness consciousness, whatever you wish to call it, is fast asleep.

While it sleeps, another world of your own creation, the ego's creation arises, the ego depending for its choice upon the blind pursuit of pleasure and happiness. How does the ego know what is pleasure and what is pain? To distinguish these, the ego depends entirely upon the senses, the sensory input. You are presented with an unknown substance and you have no idea if it is sweet or bitter, until you put it into your mouth and taste it. Oh, it is chocolate, it is good. Then the mind or the ego wants it, and craves for it again. The ego makes a choice based on the sensory inputs into the body.

The senses in sanskrit are called 'indriyas', and in Buddhist philosophy they are defined as the controllers. These indriyas, the eyes, ears, mouth, the senses of sight, hearing, taste etc., are similarly the controllers of the world. Krisna hinted at this in the Bhagavad Gita, but this we have long ago forgotten.

Your senses are far superior to their corresponding sense objects. For instance, if somebody asks you what is the relationship between the life breath and your body, you are going to say the body breathes, and that the life breath belongs to the body. Nonsense, it is the other way round. Life breath is embodied here in the body so that it is able to quit and go away. The body has no choice. Try to hold your breath now for several minutes, and you will find it is impossible to do it for long. However, later on it will be natural for your breath will be held at least for 25 hours before the body is cremated. The body has not acquired life breath but on the contrary, it is the life breath that has somehow become embodied.

So, in all things concerning the vital truths of our lives we have a lopsided view in which our senses are supreme. How can you know this? Imagine you are sitting in a great theatre in New York watching a beauty contest where many lovely beautiful women are walking past the judges. Suppose one of the judges was a blind man. What does this beauty mean to him? Nothing. He only hears "tuk, tuk, tuk", the sound of high heels walking across the stage, and he smells some perfume. He does not see a thing. So, this outward beauty cannot attract him or repel him; it can do nothing. Similarly, someone can switch off the hearing-aid and then you can do what you like to the person, you can give praise, glory, insults, abuses, anything. You are then the controller. In the same way, the senses are the controllers, the indriyas.

If this truth is grasped, then you can go back to the Bhagavad Gita and see that if these indriyas adore or worship the inner presence, the Divine presence within, then they will not be tempted. These indriyas might momentarily come out to experience the world, for there is enough pleasure that the world grants us without our seeking or pursuing it. Your own daily experiences contain abundant examples. While sitting on the veranda here at night, you can smell the scent of the flower the 'Queen-of-the-night', which gives off a glorious scent when it blooms. Unless you are a heavy smoker or take snuff, you cannot avoid smelling this flower. There is plenty of pleasure in the world without our having to run after it. If these indriyas are turned within towards the inner divine presence, then there will be sufficient pleasure and happiness in the world - and obviously

some pain will also be there - but all these can be enjoyed in an enlightened way.

The second story in the Devi Mahatmya concerns the asura or demon called Mahisasura, who was a buffalo who became Indra, the King of Heaven. Let us think of ourselves, our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, through which we come into contact with this world, which have arisen in our state of ignorance of that witness consciousness within. These senses are now presided over by a buffalo demon, the deity presiding over our eyes, ears, mouth, etc.

Now, why do we refer to the buffalo? If you see the water buffalo, you will appreciate that the buffalo is one animal which loves filth, mud, dirt, and which loves and enjoys being dirty. Please remember this. Then, let no one tell us that we are misled and that we do things in spite of our best intentions. This is nonsense! We love to do all those dirty things that we do. We want to pretend that we are holy and say, "Oh, no, we did not know, we were tempted by the devil".

There is no devil, except in our own eyes and ears and in our own mind. No other devil exists outside. I have travelled extensively, in the Himalayas, in cemeteries, and in all sorts of weird places, and I have never seen a devil! But, I have seen plenty of devils in mirrors. You stand in front of a mirror and you see the devil there. That is the only devil you need to be acquainted with, the only devil that you need to consider.

Here the devil is the buffalo demon that rules as Indra, the King of Heaven. The filthy mind depending upon filthy indriyas that violently seek and go out of their way to look for something filthy. I repeat, that there is plenty of pleasure in the world. Without seeking pleasures they will seek you, and if you do not hold them, they will go away, but some more, or something else will come along. However, there seems to be a perverted sense of pleasure which is referred to in the Devi Mahatmya as Mahisasura.

As long as the ego, the mind, the 'chitta', or whatever it is within which is absolutely pure, is turned towards the senses which are ruled by filthy desires, there is no hope of re-awakening that witness consciousness. In the Yoga Vasistha, the sage Vasistha says it rather bluntly, that if you are full of desires, to talk of enlightenment is rubbish. These two do not match. Swami Sivananda also used to say, that you can give brilliant lectures and charm an audience, but that does not mean a thing to your own inner enlightened state. A great sage in the Himalayas may not be able to open his mouth and say a few words cogently, but he may be an enlightened man. A criterion for enlightenment is that the person be totally desireless.

One has to clearly understand the distinction between natural urges and desires or cravings. They are very different. Another person may or may not be able to understand whether you are subject to desires or not, but you must be able to detect the arising of craving within yourself. The manner in which craving arises

depends upon your own wrong idea or wrong notion of pleasure, and upon a sense of insecurity or ignorance of the simplest truth. Pleasure and pain are both inherent in life. Thus, if you do not want to pursue pain, why do you want to, pursue pleasure? Leave them both alone. They will come and go in their own good time. So, in the text of the Yoga Vasistha, even a sage is seen to enjoy the pleasures that come unsought.

This is not for showmanship, but this is for constant inward examination. You need not live up to other people's expectations, in which case you are asking for another's testimony all the time, but you can live with yourself, with your own consciousness and conscience. All the time you can inquire about whatever is happening to you, whether you are doing something which gives you pleasure, or involved in something which gives you unhappiness or sorrow. Whether subjected to pain or pleasure your gaze can be turned inward in an effort to find the answer to these simple questions. Am I seeking pleasure, or is it just there? Am I avoiding pain, or does it come and go? If this is possible, then we are on the right track. Then the indriyas, the rulers of our body and our own little world are all facing the light of God within.

It is possible now, it is possible in 10, in 50, in 100 years time, or even in 2.000 years, that there will be an inner awakening in each of us, which will make it possible for us to discover this witness consciousness or cosmic consciousness.

Once again, is it possible for us as we are examining the direction in which the indriyas are facing in us, to see if even that perception is tainted? This is a very peculiar phenomenon. We are often told that this is the world of pain, death, sorrow, misery, and if we endure all of these and we worship God, do charity, etc., we will go to heaven and enjoy great pleasures. However, when we read texts like the Durga Saptashati or the Bhagavatam, it is sometimes puzzling, for they say that this demon, this buffalo demon, became Indra. Suppose that after struggling and struggling all our lives to be good, do good, pray, meditate, and stand on our heads every day, worship, fast and feast, etc., we eventually graduate and go to heaven, only to suddenly we find Mahisasura, the buffalo demon, is ruling there. This is a dreadful proposition! So, as we turn these indriyas inward in introspection, in looking within, is it also possible for us to remain aware that this observation itself must have no motivation? If that introspection is also motivated, we are lost.

We suffer in life because of motivations. For every little thing there is a motivation. Why am I doing this, why am I avoiding that? There is a motivation which is the desire for more pleasure, and less for non-pleasure. If, in that inward examination or introspection, we are motivated by avoidance of pain and gaining of eternal bliss, then we are caught. We are caught in the same net. We think it is a golden net; but, perhaps not - it may be golden shackles instead. It is exactly the same phenomenon as working for pleasure and profit here. We try to lift ourselves from this mud and filth, but there again is another motivation - that I want to avoid all of this and I want to go to heaven. When that happens, it is good



to remember that it is possible Mahisasura might be in heaven, so it is better to avoid going there.

We do not want to go anywhere, so why must we go to heaven? Why not go to hell and turn it into heaven? It is a better proposition, at least you can do some work there. What are you going to do in heaven? According to most of the scriptures, you go there to relax, enjoy, see dancing nymphs, etc. We do not want all that. We can go anywhere we like, earth or another solar system, or perhaps hell, and make it into a heaven. Why not? Anyhow, it may be good to remember that we may struggle to go to heaven and find that heaven is then ruled by the buffalo demon.

Thus, from the beginning, when you turn your gaze within in introspection, it is good to ensure that the observation has no motivation and is pure. That is already the beginning of choiceless awareness. You become aware of the craving, of the pursuit of pleasure, of the abhorrence of pain and sorrow. That is all, leave it there, it is enough. Let this vision continue and eventually the senses or indriyas that govern the body, and in turn the world outside, will be purified and not pursue pleasure anymore. When these indriyas are purified, the Mahisasura is killed. Purification of the indriyas is what is signified in the Devi Mahatmya as the destruction of Mahisasura.

## 6. Turn Within to the Center

Yesterday, we were discussing the story of the demon Mahisasura. If Indra, the ruler of our lives happens to be a diabolical governor or controller, then each sense organ is also presided over by 'an indra'. If these indras are polluted, vicious, poisonous and filthy, as a water buffalo is reputed to be, then there is no hope of ever reaching that center, that core of our innermost Self where wisdom, love and right action are found. We have no weapons with which to deal with this demon which is the filthy mind. When the senses are filled with filthy cravings, one does not even know that this is so. This is the tragedy of our lives.

In South India, the water buffalo wallows in the mud with much delight and bliss. When we indulge in our filthy activities, and in our senses, we do not feel for one split second that this is something filthy, and that we should not be doing this. We enjoy it, as the water buffalo enjoys its mud and filth. Therefore, there is absolutely nothing with which we can control or reverse this movement, our entire being flows out of these senses, the eyes, the ears, etc.

These senses or channels can be so thoroughly and totally polluted that we see the world as something filthy. The filth is actually within us, but we are not aware of it. So, we see the filth outside ourselves, only in others. So, what do we do? What can be done? Nothing, unless there is a reverse movement of energy, no less than introspection, which is not self-analysis in the usual sense of the word.

Self-analysis will almost always result in self-justification or rationalization. Even where there is self-condemnation, it is usually a left-handed compliment to oneself. For example, "I am so great that I am even prepared to sit here, and confess that I am not a good man". The first part of the sentence is horrible, and we think that the second part is not. So, self-analysis, in the usual normal sense of that word, is usually a waste of time.

Is there another factor that is not involved in this filthy game of the buffalo demon, Mahisasura, which can control these senses? In order to destroy this Mahisasura, the scripture says that the devas had to appeal to the known deities, the trinity. Since they did not know about the Shakti within, they prayed to Vishnu the protector.

Suddenly there is a realization that the life we are leading is filthy, not totally, but now and then we are aware of the filthiness, the foulness of our lives. This realization must arise, otherwise you would not be here or begin this spiritual life at all. At that time, if we have had satsang, the grace of the great masters, the Grace of God, then by some hook or crook a prayerful movement arises in our minds and hearts, "Lord, I recognize this but I do not know what to do".

Then, according to the scripture, the trinity became angry, all the gods became very, very angry. This is a tricky situation. We may not really get angry with ourselves; this is perhaps a faulty expression, for it is not clear whether or not we

can ever really get angry with ourselves. But, if you understand the spirit of it, you realize that at one moment you must freeze. In the sense that you are unwilling to go forward, repeating the same foul and filthy actions, thoughts, words, and deeds, and you are also unable to retrace your steps to find something which is unpolluted within yourself. At that point, you freeze, completely freeze, and that freezing itself is the best form of prayer. That freezing itself is the best form of confession and self-anger of the type described in the Devi Mahatmya. Something gets aroused in us.

It is said that when the devas got angry, the energy which shot out of them became the Divine Mother, the Shakti. The symbolism is very beautiful if we understand it correctly. Energy is leaking through every one of our senses all the time. All this energy that leaks through the senses is first of all turned within, and then it is concentrated. So, introversion is the first thing, and the second is concentration. This concentration is possible only if all the senses have one single direction - towards the center of your being - without any judgement whatsoever.

Suddenly you realize that in pain or pleasure the experiencer is the same. You realize that good and evil thoughts, words or deeds arise in the same person, in the same mind. Not that you will rationalize or justify your own evil actions, but there is a powerful recognition that they all have the same source. There is a strong movement of energy within oneself that is called 'brahmacharya'. This is not merely continence or chastity. It is where the energies of all your senses flow towards the center of your own being in one concentrated beam, in an effort to find the source of experience, the source of all action, thought, word and deed.

You do not even want to make a choice, because you and I have made millions of choices, and we have seen that all of them lead us into the same trouble. Surely, you have made some very good decisions, and found that you were in the 'soup', and you have made some very wrong decisions, and found that you were still in the same 'soup'. Whether or not you get into the soup from this side of the bowl or that side of the bowl, the soup is still the same. The direction from which you approach the bowl may be different, but soup is soup! Why is this so? Because the choicemaker has its own motives which are totally unrelated to truth or to what the creator or sustainer of the universe is.

So, without condemning ourselves, or without saying we are this or that, or without repeating every day, "Papoham papakarmaham" - forgive us our sins, why do you not leave it? Every day for about 60 years you are saying "Papoham papakarmaham", but the words have become meaningless. If you have ever received an electric shock, you then know next time how carefully you will have to approach the electric plug. So, it is possible instead to see this danger, not merely to say there is danger, but to see, to become intensely aware that this danger of meaningless repetition exists.

For example, imagine you are standing in the middle of a main road when a large lorry is hurtling towards you. Do you stand there and contemplate: "Alright,

what must I do now?" No! Zoom, you are gone! Maybe your cap will go flying off, but you just run for your life! That is action! In that action there is absolutely no non-rightness, no unrighteousness. We are normally unaware of such actions. Babies are, for they smile, cry, and they are completely and totally free. That freedom we do not enjoy, because we are so full of inhibitions, prohibitions, ambitions, and choices.

Having turned the energies within, the attention within, we allow the energies to flow in one direction towards the center, towards that point in us where the experience is experienced, where the action arises. It is possible that suddenly we discover that there was one wrong step which gave rise to this Mahisasura, this enthroned buffalo demon who is the controller of our words, thoughts and deeds. It is possible that this awareness itself purifies our mind, body, sense organs, and organs of action.

It is possible, but the Sage who gave us this scripture, the Devi Mahatmya, is over cautious in his description. When Durga was formed from the energy given out by all these gods - the gods being our own senses and faculties, she also received from all of them their power, shakti, insignia, and weapons. So, it is not only the energy of experiencing that needs to be concentrated, but also the organs of action have to be consecrated, sacrificed or made sacred, and purified at the same time.

If you glibly say that you are meditating and turning all the energies within in an attempt to find the source, the root of all evil, but your actions continue to be filthy, then there is something wrong somewhere. Either you are insincere, or you are inefficient. Both of these will leave you exactly where you are and where you were with a single addition of a bit of pride, "I practise yoga". You will have the same filthy body, mind and senses - but in addition to that you will have the filthy feeling of pride that you are practising yoga!

You must be sincere and earnest in this practice, as this is the essence of 'brahmacharya', which means that the whole being is moving towards the center which is Brahma. It does not mean only continence or chastity - these are fringe benefits. While practising this inward concentration of your attention, if you become aware that all your energies and actions are still polluted, filthy, foul, then it is good to take a closer look to see what has gone wrong in your practice. Because it is that which experiences the experience which provides the impulse and motivation for action. If the motive force is still pleasure seeking and greedy, is still arrogant, then it means that the center has not been seen or contemplated properly.

When that center is touched, as my Gurudev Sivananda very often pointed out, it is like an earthquake, which does not shake just a small portion of the earth, but shakes the whole earth. Touching that center of your being is as powerful, as full of shakti, as a giant earthquake that rocks the entire earth! There is complete, total, and instant revolution, and the Mahisasura, the buffalo demon, is

dethroned from being Indra the King. That is, the indriyas, the senses of knowledge with which you experience the world, and the senses of action with which you live in this world, are all touched and purified by the glorious power of God, by the Divine Shakti. What remains is merely the sleeping cosmic consciousness, which of course you and I cannot awaken by ourselves.

We can however purify all the indriyas. We must do this, as God will not do it for us. The Grace of God is there to aid us, but we must do our part. We must turn within, concentrate all of our energies and attentions upon our innermost being, our innermost Self - this we must do. This results in self-purification without any effort whatsoever. However, the actual awakening of the inner cosmic consciousness, or choiceless awareness, or witness consciousness, is of course entirely the work of God. We cannot cause this ourselves. It all looks so simple, but there are also other problems which we shall discuss.

## 7. Correct Understanding

We were examining what life looks like when the heaven within is ruled by Mahisasura. When the indras or governors of the world within each one of us are corrupt, they seek pleasure. Pleasure is inherent in life, and perhaps that is not even a problem; but, seeking is a problem. When one pursues or runs after pleasure, then you are not in connection with your center. You need not pursue, for both pleasure and pain come and go. These gods or ruling Indras, who have been built into your being, are flowing or looking in the wrong direction. They are looking outside as if the pleasure is only there, and therefore you have to go and get it.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna gently directs the gaze within in the third chapter:

"Indriyani parany ahur indriyebhyah param" (111-42)

"They say that the senses are superior. Superior to the senses is the mind."

So, turn within and see where all these events are happening, these events which you call pleasure, fame, attachment, and longing. Do you know why it is called longing, because as you sit here the mind somehow goes a long, long way off to catch hold of something which you think is still there, but which may no longer be.

These two fools, the King and the Trader, who had gone to the forest, and who had the blessing of meeting a great sage, were still thinking and longing for their homes, their wives, and children. While their longing goes on, it is quite possible that those women may have married again and forgotten these men. So, this longing goes on, but nothing is there. Disappointment is the natural consequence of all our longing and looking outside of ourselves. So, Krishna says, "Look within and there will be no longing because inside it is very small and no longing exists there." If you can trace all the longings, the pleasure and pain to their own source, you might arrive at a very different conclusion.

The inward turning itself is enlightenment. When the light of attention or awareness is turned within, that act itself becomes enlightenment, becomes Durga. It has tremendous energy and power. Providing of course that the entire attention is focused on this one thing, asking the questions: what is this pain? what is this pleasure? what are these things called attachment and longing?

Do not ask, why is it there! The moment you ask why, the mind turns around and starts marching away from the problem, rationalizing - oh! so and so said it is my duty, so and so said it is my pleasure, my responsibility, my dharma and all sorts of things.

What is this pain and longing that you feel even when you have been turned out of the house, turned out of so many places. This happens to us everyday. It is



because the indriyas are ruled by this Mahisasura, the buffalo, this filthy animal, this filthy Indra, that the inside becomes very unclear.

It is extremely difficult to turn the gaze inside to look within. By the Grace of God or the Guru, by satsanga, it is possible. Even the slightest attempt to turn within produces a magic, and you suddenly realize that this Mahisasura is a type of psychological factor. It is not a real entity. It is like pollution. We all cry pollution, pollution, but God's creation is unable to be polluted.

One of the most beautiful concepts or contemplations is that God's creation is completely pure, every element is pure. You pick up a dead body and bury it in the garden, and the whole thing is eventually transformed. The earth assimilates the body, absorbs and purifies it, and there is no foul smell, nothing. Two years later, first class tomatoes can be grown in that soil. A dead body can be thrown into water, left in air, or burned in fire, and it will be decomposed, or transformed into ashes.

None of these elements or things created by God can be ultimately and irreversibly polluted. What is pollution? Is there pollution of the mind? If the mind is irreversibly polluted or tainted, then there is no sense in praying; why should we pray? It is like sitting in front of milk curd and crying, "Please, please, become milk." The curd will never transform back into milk; a change has taken place, it is finished. Has the mind also undergone such an irreversible change? The mind pursues pleasure; but has that mind become irreversibly polluted and changed? If it has, then there is absolutely no sense in doing anything about it.

However, the moment the light of inquiry turns within upon the source of all these - pain, pleasure, attachment, affection, hate, etc., - suddenly there is a feeling, what the psychologists call an 'ah-hhaaaa! experience'. Thus, this purity cannot forever be sullied or tainted. But, I think my mind is impure! We only think the pure mind is impure. It is merely a superficial, artificial, psychological factor which needs a little bit of attention for its original beauty and purity to be restored.

After Mahisasura had been killed, the gods prayed to the supreme Mother, the supreme Shakti, which is within you, which is within everybody:

"Devia yaya tatam idam jagad shakthia".

"Oh, Divine Mother, You totally pervade the entire universe".

Here the Divine is called Durga. This quotation is similar to what we have been studying in the ninth chapter (IX-4) of the Bhagavad Gita:

"Maya tatam idam sarvam".

"All this world is pervaded by Me."

Here the Divine is called Krishna or God. In one scripture it is a female God, and in another it is a male God. Suddenly you realize that there is no male-female

distinction at all in God. 'Oh, Divine Mother, You are the Self of all beings, You are the Universal Self'. Universal, not only because She is infinite and therefore One, but She is the Self of all, however diverse the creation is supposed to be.

This happens in exactly the same way in your dreams. The thousands of people whom you experience in your dreams are nothing but you, you yourself. All the beings that are experienced in dreams are one person. If there is only one, why do I dream of these many? Why not? You have the privilege of enjoying the dream, and in that dream creating your own diversity. Enjoy it, but realize that it is just one Self.

If the Self is one, why do I see many here? Because, while seeing, you are able to see only outside, and therefore you imagine, you think that there are very many things. But in and through all of them there is this Atman, the Self. All of you are reflected in this mind, and then there is no 'my mind', it is the cosmic mind. All of us are reflections in that one cosmic mind. You can call it whatever you want, Devi, Krishna, God, Christ, or Love, for it has never undergone an irreversible change. One gets a glimpse of this even as one begins to turn within to look at this phenomenon called the mind. I am so-and-so, she or he is so-and-so, but all of us are conscious beings with a consciousness which is not different from That consciousness. Just as space cannot be divided: "Akashavat sarvagat vidya". This is the definition of the Atman - it is indivisible and eternal like space. Is there evil also in that space? Perhaps, and perhaps not. In that space is there diversity? Yes, why not? The diversity does not cancel the unity, and the unity does not demand the diversity to cease. The ocean is the ocean regardless of how many waves, eddies, or currents there are in it. Even so is this universe:

"Ya devi sarva bhutesu chittirupena samsthitah  
devi sarva bhutesu buddhi rupena samsthitah."

"Salutations again and again to the Divine Power who abides in all beings in the form of consciousness and intelligence".

If there is an understanding, it also comes from the same source. This correct understanding arises in the same center where pain and pleasure were before experienced. With a shock you realize that it took you the same effort to think a good thought as to think an evil one. With that realization all evil thoughts will drop away.

It takes just as much energy to let the mind flow along the right channel, do the right action, to be good, do good, etc., as it does to allow it to flow along the wrong channel. What is the difference? You thought that to be wicked was pleasure, and to be good was very painful. Who told you so! It is a cultivated habit or taste. Somebody once gave me something bad tasting and said, that a taste for it had to be cultivated. Why should I cultivate a taste for this wretched thing? A taste has to be cultivated for smoking or drinking. But why, and for what? Leave it alone! You do not have to cultivate the taste for drinking water, or milk.

In the same way, we have cultivated the taste for vicious actions and thinking,

and then feel that we cannot live otherwise. But is it all right to substitute or do a cosmetic treatment only, pretending that these things are not really there? Very often this cosmetic treatment, or pretending, ends up in greater disaster. You are full of hate, aggressiveness, violence, etc., and then somebody comes and tells you, "Oh no, do not think all these evil thoughts, only think, "Om Shanti, you are lovely, beautiful, etc." But all the while your insides are burning white hot, and this pretence will send you to the insane asylum!

So, the scripture suggests look within, turn within, and see into this thing that generates all these terrible qualities, reactions, feelings, and thoughts. Without desiring to eliminate them, choicelessly become aware that these things such as jealousy, hatred, pride and arrogance exist in me. Then, choicelessly becoming aware of all these, the inquiry proceeds, "What are they?" Have I swallowed all these qualities? What are these things called jealousy, pain, sorrow, unhappiness? Suddenly, by the Grace of God, of Guru, of Mother Durga, you realize what is taught to us in the Durga Saptashati:

"Ya devi sarva bhutesu bhranti rupena samsthitah".

"Salutations to that Divine Power who abides in all in the form of error, confusion and madness."

The same Divine power that indwells the buddhi, the mind, is the same Divine power that suddenly appears to be confusion and madness. This substance, not the form, is exactly the same. Gold is gold, whether you turn it into a bracelet or some other ornament, perhaps a golden Mahisasura. Even if it is turned into an evil or demoniacal form, it is still gold. So, what is the corresponding content of these qualities, feelings, and emotions? Suddenly you realize it is exactly the same. In the past, I cultivated a bad habit which has continued without thinking, but now by the Grace of the Divine Mother, by the Grace of God and Guru, this personality has been unmasked. 'Persona' means mask - so, when the mask is lifted from this personality, what you see within is the Divine, the Self, which is unchanged by anything that you did or did not do. It is like space. However heavily this space is polluted, in a little while it will become completely free as it ever was, as it has always been.

So, the lesson that we derive from the Devi Mahatmya is that without even trying to substitute or eliminate these vrittis - tendencies, it is possible to completely and totally destroy them. This is perhaps a paradoxical or self-contradictory statement. Without even trying to eliminate them, you find that they are suddenly gone. How is that possible? By evoking Grace through prayer, and all the methods that we discussed earlier. Also, by turning our attention within to become aware of the very source of thought, feeling and life, realizing that this source is forever Divine.

## 8. Beyond the Intellect

Perhaps you have had time to look at the pamphlet which gives the story of the Devi Mahatmya and one interpretation of it. This year, we have been examining it from another point of view. If you study the original text, it is quite possible that you will have your own revelation within yourself. It is important that the essence or the message of the scripture be grasped. It is relevant to us not merely as an entertaining story or mantra - tantric yogis consider the text a mantra. The message of this scripture must be clearly understood, because the setting of the story is actually the same as your own. The problems that faced the King and the Trader are our own problems, not strange ones which only they had to face. The same stupidity, attachment, frustration and unhappiness that we are subject to today also existed then. How do we deal with these problems?

The sage suggests through these stories that we cannot deal with unhappiness or psychological aberrations by cosmetic treatment. You can deal with them only by becoming directly and choicelessly aware without any motivation, without even the motivation of getting rid of the evil to become happy and blissful. Can you look directly into the source of this unhappiness? Can you look into the nature of the unhappiness, into that which the word unhappiness signifies, without finding a cause or explanation for it.

A very beautiful example is given in the Yoga Vasistha. All of you look into a mirror at least a few times a day. The next time you stand in front of a mirror, ask yourself what the reflection you see is made of. Glass, the substance of the mirror is the substance of the reflection. So, if you see your beautiful face in the mirror, it is also glass. If a cat jumps on your shoulders, or you see some dirt on your face, that is also glass, for there is neither beauty nor ugliness there - nothing, nothing, but glass. This is what we are talking about when you look into the mind to see what is this happiness, grief, good, evil, etc. Is it possible to become aware that all of these are made of the same substance:

*"Ya devi sarvabhutesu cittirupena samsthitah."*

"Salutations to the All-pervading Energy who takes the form of awareness, consciousness."

Whatever is, there is nothing but this consciousness, this awareness which is indivisibly one, even though it is capable of reflecting millions and billions of diverse phenomena. However, we have an enemy within each one of us which is called the intellect which introduces all sorts of 'ifs' and 'buts' and excuses to avoid the perception of truth. This is why Lord Jesus said that unless you are as little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. It is not possible for the intellect to grasp this truth, nor is it possible for most of us to surrender this intellect. So how can we go beyond the intellect and perceive this truth? The answer to this question is found in the Durga Saptashati.

In the first story, we saw that the truth was veiled by sleep. The Devi does not

even have to appear in a form. All she had to do is remove this sleep. That is one aspect of this Nidra Shakti. We then saw another aspect in the obstruction of truth is Mahisasura: the mind and senses being ruled by cravings, desires and impurities. Fortunately, this impurity does not touch the divine essence within us, the innermost essence that we are, the Self.

Therefore, it is possible by merely focusing all your attention in a concentrated beam upon this innermost Self - the source of this experience of unhappiness, and grief, that the entire mind and heart are purified. The source of your own thoughts and emotions, whether or not they are considered holy or unholy, is the same. The source is exactly the same. So, one must focus on this source, not merely listen to its effects.

If it is merely a matter of bad habits, for example, smoking, drinking, abusive language and insulting others, perhaps it is very easy to see that these are anti-social habits which produce enemies around you. People do not like you because of this; so, very soon you discover that these things have to be given up. But there are other problems and factors where the obstacle is more sophisticated, more subtle, and therefore more powerful. These factors are dealt with in the third and last story of the Devi Mahatmya.

When you begin to look within and contemplate the truth of sorrow, grief, frustration, cravings and desires, what do you see? Being an intellectual entity, you do not even attempt to see the truth for itself, but instead super-impose your own ideas upon it. It seems to be extremely difficult to look at something external, and even more so within yourself, without the brain springing into activity. When the brain becomes active, there is not just non-understanding or ignorance, but total mis-understanding.

However, since you are a very clever person who can use your intellect brilliantly, you do not even admit that you cannot understand this reality. Instead, when you try to apprehend and understand this reality, this truth with your brain, the first thing you become is a philosopher. Or, if you do not have such a brilliant intellect, then you become a swami, a priest, or a politician. Whether you are a philosopher, a priest or a politician, you create an 'ism', an ideology which takes the place of truth. From then on, it is the ideology that is true, and the search for truth is abandoned.

From this intellect barrier, there is no escape; for, it is like a prison which you love. So, what can save us here? For example, no one loves to sleep forever or loves a dirty mind for eternity; sooner or later you wake up to their anti-social elements. But, in the case of this barrier called the intellect, there is absolutely nothing that will help you to bring about an awakening. So, you call yourself a philosopher and have a few followers, more like what Swami Sivananda called 'swallowers'. Your cronies, your followers are delighted and compliment you on your wonderful philosophy which causes you completely to lose your head. The search for truth is then left far behind, and there is not the least incentive to be a



seeker.

These three - philosopher, priest and politician - they are lost, and will never find the truth, because they have allowed the intellect, the brain to interfere. But there is no suggestion that anybody thinks that being a philosopher, a priest, or a politician is a stupid or wicked thing. Everybody glorifies these three positions, and therefore we have no salvation. If there is no awakening influence, what do you do?

Now, it becomes extremely interesting. If we go back to the first story in the Devi Mahatmya, the Divine Mother was not seen at all. In the second story, the colossal, cosmic form of the Divine Mother was formed by the energies of all the other gods and goddesses. In the third story - remember, the intellect has to be conquered - the Divine Mother takes on the form of a very beautiful, charming female who sits on the bank of the River Ganges. One by one, all the demons are attracted to her and say, "Wow, what a lovely, beautiful girl". They promptly report to their chiefs, Sumbha and Nisumbha, that a beautiful girl is by the river and they must see her and take her for their own. So this demon sends a messenger to ask, "Who are you? I want to get you!" In the same way, your intellect, your brain sends a messenger to this truth, telling it that you want to get this truth whoever or whatever it is. But the truth says, "Ok, come and get me if you are equal to me in force! Come and get me if you can!" This is the only challenge that may, by God's Grace, eventuate an inner discovery, an inner humbling of these arrogant intellectuals, or saviours of the world, whether they are called philosophers, scientists, priests, swamis, or politicians.

We are confronted by this mystery called Shakti, truth, which is so tantalizing, beautiful and attractive, but unapproachable by way of our intellect. This tiny little girl who sits there and challenges us, is not a myth or story. This is what happens to us day in and day out. Our problems are not really very big or colossal at all, they are tiny, but they jump-up in front, tantalizing us, and we are unable to grasp them. Can anybody show me unhappiness, pain? No, these are unseen, tiny, small little things, like an unseen virus which can give us a sore throat, that are the real tragedies in our lives. On account of them, we find life impossible. So, here is a tiny girl who defies the colossal demons. Your intellect is colossal, for it can map outer space. But it cannot confront one little heartache.

For example, as you are sitting here, somebody whispers your name to somebody else and says, "Ah, he is an idiot!" You cannot see the word idiot floating around or anything called idiot, but it worries you so much that you cannot sleep for three days. What is it? The mind, the intellect tries to grasp it, and weaves it into some kind of philosophy, or a theory - Freudian, Jungian, Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, etc. None of these systems can hope at any time to cope with this reality. The mind cannot come face to face with the reality, even if it tries. Therefore, the problem sits in front of you and says, "Come on, get me if you are equal to me!"



There is a story in one of the Upanishads which says that after winning a battle against the demons, there were three gods which were very arrogant and proud. Two of the gods investigated the nature of a 'bhutam', a colossal nothing or apparition, and concluded they did not know what it was. Then Indra himself went to investigate this apparition, and when he approached, it vanished, and instead there was Uma, a goddess who said, "It is not you who won a victory, the glory belongs to God, you are nothing; even a small virus, a bacterium can make you ill." You cannot understand anything, literally anything with the brain; so, it must be put aside. The brain can invent its own theory but the brain cannot comprehend reality.

In Hinduism there is nothing comparable to the philosophical systems in the West where philosophers are groping with a thing called philosophy, and in doing so they suffer and make others suffer too. In the oriental tradition, there is no philosophy, but there is 'sat darshana'. Unfortunately this expression is translated as a philosophical system, but it is not correct; 'darshana' is a direct observation. Yoga is a direct observation, Sankhya and Vedanta are direct observations, not analyses or understanding through the intellect, but something which is beyond all this.

Eventually the demon intellect realizes that, even though this reality contains everything - the reality of happiness, unhappiness, the world, the air that you breathe, the body that you have, etc., it still remains incomprehensible. It is not easy to comprehend that some supreme power is hidden in every speck of space, and that the brain simply cannot understand it, so the demon intellect wants to give battle to this Durga, to Parvati herself.

As we saw in the first story, Durga did not appear at all. In the second, Durga was composed of the energies of all the gods, and was able to defeat the demon Mahisasura. When we are dealing with the intellect, the mind, the brain, it is not enough merely to say that I am meditating, entering samadhi, purifying myself, but it is essential to come out of that meditation with your eyes open and see that all these forms belong to God.

Therefore, in the third and last story, we are told that those energies released from the gods became goddesses who appeared in their own form, to assist Durga in this battle. This means that you should not try to abstract the truth or bluff yourself that your heart is pure saying, "Yes, of course I realize that God pervades all, everything." Do not fall into the trap of thinking that yours are mine, and mine is mine, because we are all one. That sort of perversion might arise if you sit and meditate, and think that you are absolutely pure in body, mind and heart.

But, it is also possible that you are bluffing yourself. So, come out of meditation and see if you are able to maintain the same attitude in life. A great swami used to say, "Close your eyes, and feel humbly that I am the infinite; then open your eyes, and see that the entire universe is also God himself." It is then that we might possibly make some progress in overcoming this barrier created by the intellect,

by the brain. Then we should be able to prevent this intellect from leading us astray, and instead get it to help us, to lead us along the path to the discovery of the Truth.

## 9. The Truth Revealed

There is an interesting episode from the Bhagavad Gita which strengthens what we have been discussing here for the past week. Krishna asked Arjuna to adore and to worship Durga and have Her blessings before the battle, because perhaps She would also save his life as She had earlier done for Him. So, a few days before the battle, Durga appears in a vision to Arjuna. However, despite the blessings of Durga, Arjuna's knees start shaking before the battle even begins. What happened to all this Shakti and these blessings? What happened was something very significant:

"Drstve 'mam suajanam Krishna"

"Seeing these, my kinsmen, O Krishna".

He received the blessings, no doubt, like the King receiving a kingdom in the Devi Mahatmya, but this silly foolish 'this is mine' idea had not disappeared.

I am not suggesting that God cannot remove this idea, perhaps only God can. But, are we at least aware that all our suffering and miseries are self-created, and are based on the extremely stupid notion that this is mine! There is a deluded, foolish, stupid idea that this is 'me', this body is me. I am body consciousness and therefore all that is related to this body is related to me. So, if he scratches my back, he is my friend, and if he threatens my life, he is my enemy.

'My' life, what is my life? The life that is expressed in this body, through this body. Once this relationship is established, even if you are kicked out as the King and the Trader were in the beginning of the story, the attachment is still there. It is extremely difficult to get rid of this attachment, because of a very strange argument or fact - it is like a non-existent pain which cannot be removed. For example, some people have lost their legs in an accident and have wooden legs, but they are suddenly afflicted by pain in the big toe, experiencing a terrible phantom pain which cannot be removed. You and I are not attached to one another; and yet the mind thinks that the attachment is there. It is only your mind which then becomes like a land mine, the kind used in wars, very destructive. Is there any way in which this problem can be solved? The whole Durga Saptashati is an answer to this.

The problem will not go away, unless we learn to look at this phenomenon called 'attachment', which produces all sorts of illusory factors like pleasure, pain, unhappiness, happiness. Therefore, I want only happiness. In support of this attachment, we use all types of psychological and emotional arguments. All those things, objects, and people, who are responsible for this happiness, are my friends, I love them. Even if they are not there, I will keep brooding over them. If they kick me out and ill treat me, I will forgive them, and I will say, "Oh, well they are all right since they are my family." And those whom I consider to be a threat to this happiness, I will hate them and do anything to destroy them. This is the most stupid kind of life. But that is the actual picture of our lives.

This is the Mahisasura, the presiding deity over the indriyas, "Indrobhu Mahisasura". The Indra that presides over the mind and the senses, the buffalo that loves filth and impurity, that is full of impure cravings. Why are they impure? Because you have never looked at them. Cravings, or bad, wrong, or sinful habits exist only because we have never looked at them. What is a habit? It is just a shirt, a covering, a priest's habit or dress. Is it really so difficult for me to take off this shirt? It is not, but you have decided it is difficult to take off this 'cloth', and therefore, the whole thing continues again and again.

Eventually we come to the conclusion that these habits can be removed and totally eradicated, only if we care to look within at them. Why is my mind so addicted to filthy and destructive thoughts? Why is my heart bent on destructive feelings, and emotions such as fear, lust, greed, jealousy, anger, hatred? Gurudev Sivananda taught us to say in the Universal Prayer, "Free us from egoism, lust, anger, greed, hatred and jealousy". But, to become free, we must at least see what is troubling us. I do not want to look at it, and I do not like to give it up, but instead you ask God to take it away. You are clinging to it psychologically, and yet you are asking for somebody to take away all your sins!

I love this story, therefore I tell it often. Someone prayed, "Lord, please take me to heaven." The Lord answered, "Right, are you prepared to come now, for you will have to die?" "Ah, no, I do not want to die just yet."

This is one of those unfortunate things: we cannot go to heaven without dying. We would like to go to heaven with the body, but that is impossible! We want God to take away all of our sins and our sinful tendencies, but we do not like to make any effort to give them up. In fact and in truth, there is no attachment. Even if we become aware that our problem is one of thinking that we are attached to something or somebody, this cannot be grasped or understood intellectually, it has to be seen. When it is only intellectually understood, then it creates all sorts of books and publications which analyze the psychological factors involved in attachment. However, the attachment itself is not there, but you are analyzing it. What a fantastic story!

Perhaps you have read a few texts on psychology of how the mind itself is theoretically divided into at least three levels of consciousness; in some systems there are even seven or fourteen levels. What do you mean by levels of consciousness? Has anybody seen these levels? You give different names to non-existent things, e.g., the ego, the super-ego. Have you or anybody seen these? You are merely looking at these things from a distance; so, perhaps your identifications are not correct. There is no problem at all if somebody does something, and someone else has a theory about it. Go ahead and study all these theories, but do not regard them as the truth.

So, if you can speak well, you become a priest or swami, and if you can write well, producing papers, essays, books, etc., you become a philosopher. If you

cannot do any of these, you become a politician. All of them are trying to grasp this truth by means other than the only means by which the truth can be understood. The philosopher and the scientist examine the external - a sick mind, somebody's behaviour, etc., but the truth concerning attachment, hate, jealousy, and craving cannot be understood analytically.

The scientist breaks a cell, an atom, or a piece of glass, trying to arrive at the truth concerning matter. Can you really arrive at any understanding at all? Recently I read that a great scientist says that every answer to a question poses seven more questions. If you contemplate that, perhaps you will remember the story of Rakthabeeja. Every drop of blood that fell from this demon became another demon. Can you answer and solve a psychological problem, a spiritual problem, a fundamental problem in your life by, merely thinking or talking about it? You will only aggravate the problem!

For example, you are worried about an exam, a change of government, or whatever problem you have. So you go to a psychologist or a psychotherapist, and the person says, "You know, as a mature person you should not worry yourself." So then you go home and carry on, "Oh, worry! Why am I worrying?" The first worry has disappeared and another worry has appeared: "Why am I worrying?" She says "I should not worry." You will go mad; so, simply break that chain of thought by saying, "Yes, I am worried and I am going to worry a little more!"

If you have learned to accept the fact that you are worried, then why should you not be able to accept the fact that you lost your job or that your exam is coming and it is quite possible that you will fail. You existed before the exam, and you will be here afterwards. Only the exam comes and goes, you are still alive. Carry on! That is it. You have found the key. Is it really possible for these psychological, emotional and spiritual problems to be solved by tackling them mentally, merely thinking about thought? That is what philosophers, including psychologists and scientists do, and therefore they do not come anywhere near the truth.

There is a wonderful story of a demon called Dhumralochana. When Durga, this very beautiful, immensely attractive and tantalizing young woman, was seated on the bank of the River Ganges, Dhumralochana goes to her and says, "Ah, come on, come to me". This is like the priests who think that they are very clever, spiritual, highly evolved and enlightened people. So, we go to them and say, "Come on", but the truth does not come easily. When this truth concerning life, mind, self, inner problems, attachment, love, hate and all that does not come to us by merely saying, "Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti", then what do we do? We do pranayama, yoga asanas, etc., in order to control the mind and senses and to become what? Nothing, nothing at all! This demon goes towards the Devi and she says "Hum", reducing him instantly to ashes. That is also the fate of these priests, swamis, and so on.

Can you command knowledge or enlightenment? Can you achieve enlightenment by doing hatha or karma yoga, or by putting order into the social

system, trying to understand human sorrow and misery in a political way? We are all trying to be good and do good. The philosopher, the scientist, the priest, the politician, and all of us, are trying to do something good. But the very expression 'trying' to do good means that we are not doing good. Otherwise, why do we try?

Look, I am trying to drop this book. Why am I trying to drop this, because I am holding it. Now I am not trying to drop the book, it is there, it is finished. So, when we say that we are trying to do good, please let us remember that therefore we are not good. We are full of problems within ourselves. How can somebody, anybody, we-body, without solving our own inner problems of ignorance, attachment, etc., help others? This problem of attachment is there in each one of us, eating our very vitals. Until this is solved, we cannot help others. By finding the root cause of the problem in oneself, we instantly help others.

If only one person - this is not an affair for mass production - attains self-realization, by following this path of carefully investigating himself, until the self-knowledge - beyond the ego, the intellect, and the mind - arises, omnipresent and within you, then the story of the Durga Saptashati has been understood. Within you, not in the sense of 'confined to you', but within you in the sense 'that it is omnipresent', and therefore it is an indwelling omnipresence.

As in the case of the Mahisasura story, the impurities will drop away merely by observing them. When the energies that are flowing in impure channels are concentrated and focused upon the self, the very source of this craving, attachment, and the thought that I want happiness and pleasure, that focusing itself is capable of dispelling the impurity. When the light is switched on, the darkness disappears. In exactly the same way, when the light of self-knowledge and concentrated attention is focused on the mind, the senses and the intellect, all these impurities that lie hidden there just disappear. Then you realize that the heart, the soul, and the Self have always been pure.

However, at this point, there is danger of an intellectualisation, which is represented by the Sumbha and Nisumbha story. In contrast to Mahisasura, who is stupid, these demons are handsome, beautiful, glorious, intelligent, learned, and charming. In their case, this Devi appears to them as a tempting lady. Even so, when you enter into this intellectualizing game, the truth appears to be tantalizingly close. The moment you think you got it, it slips away, and when you open your hands, it is not there. Therefore, they who indulge in intellectual pastimes keep moving, but they can never grasp the truth. Some are reduced to ashes by a "Hum", some are led away until they realize the multi-manifestation of Durga.

Until they realize that:

"Vidya samasta stava devi bhedah  
Striyah samasta sakala jagatsu  
Tvayaikaya puritambayat  
Ka to stutih stavyapara paroktih."



"All lores are your aspects; so are all women in the world, endowed with various attributes.

By you alone this world is filled.

What praise can there be for you when you are praise yourself?"

You have been trying to become a philosopher, a scientist, or a psychologist, and trying to understand the truth out there. All these together including 'me', and the 'inquirer' constitute the body of knowledge or Sarasvati, or Chit Shakti. When this understanding arises then Durga manifests herself within, not outside. Until then, the more we try to grasp this truth the less successful we are. Every problem solved intellectually only makes the problem worse, multiplies it.

Eventually we come back to the first story which reveals to us that we can at best endeavour to struggle hard with all our being. I am not saying all this to discourage intellectual accomplishment, but to point out that it is not enough.

"Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam  
Govindam bhaja mudamate  
Samprapte sannihite Kale  
Nahi nahi raksati dukrinya karane".

"It is quite right to worship God, for your intellectual knowledge or knowledge of grammar will not save you at the time of death."

However, please remember that Buddha himself was a great and tremendous scholar. Buddha said asceticism is not good, and one must follow the middle path; but remember that he had already passed that way. So, saying that the intellectual quest alone is not the answer, is not the same as saying that you must abandon completely the intellectual quest.

While expanding all your energy and effort in every way possible, it is good at the same time to remember that it is not enough. You have used your intellect, your emotional being - puja, japa, meditation - and even your body - asanas, pranayama, service, etc. - in this quest. That is all that can be done. The truth cannot be grasped by any of these methods. The truth has to be revealed:

"He whom God chooses, to him is the truth revealed."

Similarly, in the Bhagavad Gita Sri Krishna said:

"Dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayantite." (X-10)

"I bestow buddhi yoga on my devotee, through that means he reaches me".

So, we now come back to the first story, "Pancha varsa sahasrani". For 5.000 years, Vishnu had to fight with these demons which were born out of his own ear wax. Even after fighting all that time, he could not conquer them. Then, "Mahamaya Vimohiloh", the two demons had to be charmed with the Mahamaya again; only then Vishnu was able to conquer these demons, not by his own

valour, but with the help of the Mahamaya. We need a compounded Grace, the Grace of God, of Guru, and the Grace of Maya herself.

It is when some extraordinary understanding arises in us that there is no delusion, no unreality. There is nothing false, nothing unreal in this universe, except what the mind creates. You are you, and I am I. There is no attachment between us, nor are we friends or enemies. There is neither good nor evil in this world. It is all one supreme manifestation of Chit Shakti. This understanding arises in its own time.

We would be foolish to presume that we have acquired it ourselves, since it is not possible for us to do so. It is a gift of God. That is what happened to this King and the Trader at the end of the story. Usually we say that the King was stupid not to ask for 'moksha'; the Trader asked for 'moksha' instead. It is quite possible that it is the other way round. They both surrendered themselves completely to the Devi, who ordained that the King would be the next 'Manu', and the Trader liberated.

Divine Grace is itself liberation. It is not as if Divine Grace bestows liberation upon us; the Divine Grace itself is liberation. Divine Grace is not some kind of a free gift from a dictator. It has to be earned by our using every faculty that we possess in the right direction, the direction of self-knowledge. When this is done, enlightenment comes by itself, by God's Grace. God's Grace is enlightenment.

Om Tat Sat.