

MOMENTS WITH ONESELF SERIES : 15

Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya

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Contents

Preface	v
Key to Transliteration	vii
The meaning of the <i>Mantra</i>	1
The ‘ <i>bhaga</i> ’ of Bhagavān	5
Everything is Given, the ‘Giver’ is Bhagavān	11
The Wrong Question: Where is God?	13
The Right Question: What is God?	16
<i>Namaḥ</i> -my Surrender to the Lord	21
The infallible is Īśvara	29
Īśvara is manifest as <i>dharma</i>	41

Preface

In February 2004, I gave a series of talks to a group of students and *yoga* teachers from the US, on the *mantra* ‘Om̐ Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya.’ Sri Ramanand Patel, an outstanding teacher of *yoga* as well as a student of Vedanta, conducted the camp at our ashram in Rishikesh, on the banks of the River Gaṅgā. He was ably assisted by Pundit Sri Mukesh Desai, an exponent of Hindustani classical music and Susanne Kemmerer, a teacher of *yoga* and a trained physiotherapist.

Sri Mukesh had already taught the *mantra* to the students of the camp. Keeping my audience in view, I covered every aspect of that *mantra*. Swamini Ramananda, one my disciples, transcribed, edited and presented them without disturbing the classroom format.

Being a series of talks on one single *mantra*, repetition is inevitable. I have taken the liberty to re-edit a few portions to maintain the continuity of thought. While editing, I thought it would be a good book both for a beginner as well as for those who are dedicated to study *yoga* and Vedanta.



Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Arsha Vidya - Coimbatore

October 23 2009

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION OF

SANSKRIT LETTERS

Sanskrit is a highly phonetic language and hence accuracy in articulation of the letters is important. For those unfamiliar with the *Devanāgarī* script, the international transliteration is a guide to the proper pronunciation of Sanskrit letters.

अ	a	(but)		ट	ṭa	(true)*3
आ	ā	(father)		ठ	ṭha	(anthill)*3
इ	i	(it)		ड	ḍa	(drum)*3
ई	ī	(beat)		ढ	ḍha	(godhead)*3
उ	u	(full)		ण	ṇa	(under)*3
ऊ	ū	(pool)		त	ta	(path)*4
ऋ	ṛ	(rhythm)		थ	tha	(thunder)*4
ॠ	ṝ	(marine)		द	da	(that)*4
ऌ	ḷ	(revelry)		ध	dha	(breathe)*4
ए	e	(play)		न	na	(nut)*4
ऐ	ai	(aisle)		प	pa	(put) 5
औ	o	(go)		फ	pha	(loophole)*5
औ	au	(loud)		ब	ba	(bin) 5
क	ka	(seek) 1		भ	bha	(abhor)*5
ख	kha	(blockhead)*1		म	ma	(much) 5
ग	ga	(get) 1		य	ya	(loyal)
घ	gha	(log hut)*1		र	ra	(red)
ङ	ṅa	(sing) 1		ल	la	(luck)
च	ca	(chunk) 2		व	va	(vase)
छ	cha	(catch him)*2		श	śa	(sure)
ज	ja	(jump) 2		ष	ṣa	(shun)
झ	jha	(hedgehog)*2		स	sa	(so)
ञ	ña	(bunch) 2		ह	ha	(hum)

• ṁ anusvāra (nasalisation of preceding vowel)

˚ ḥ visarga (aspiration of preceding vowel)

* No exact English equivalents for these letters

- | | | | |
|----|----------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Guttural | – | Pronounced from throat |
| 2. | Palatal | – | Pronounced from palate |
| 3. | Lingual | – | Pronounced from cerebrum |
| 4. | Dental | – | Pronounced from teeth |
| 5. | Labial | – | Pronounced from lips |

The 5th letter of each of the above class – called nasals – are also pronounced nasally.

The meaning of the mantra

Om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya is a very popular *mantra*. A *mantra* is that which was discovered, seen by a seer, a *ṛṣi*, as a source of blessing. A *ṛṣi* is a sage who, for the good of the world, gives a *mantra* that he saw. Each *mantra* comes down to us with the *ṛṣi*'s *saṅkalpa*, his thought of blessing us. When we chant a *mantra*, the blessings of the *ṛṣi* as well as the deity is invoked and also the meaning that the *mantra* conveys.

As a *yoga* teacher, one should know the tradition concerning *mantras*. In *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*, there are four words consisting of twelve syllables including *om*—*om na mo bha ga va te vā su de vā ya*. Therefore, this *mantra* is called *dvādaśākṣarī*, twelve-syllabled one. *Om namaśśivāya* is the famous *pañcākṣarī*, five-syllabled *mantra*. *Namaśśivāya* is the *mantra* and *om* is added—*om na maś śi vā ya*. *Om namo nārāyaṇāya* is an eight-syllabled *mantra*, *aṣṭākṣarī*—*om na mo nā rā ya ṇā ya*. A six-syllabled *mantra* is *ṣaḍākṣarī*. *Gāyatrī* is the name of a metre in Sanskrit language which has twenty-four syllables. The popular *mantra* 'gāyatrī' bears the name of its metre, even though its name is *sāvitrī*.

One invokes Bhagavān, the Lord, by this twelve-syllabled *mantra*, *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*, offering

2 *Om Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*

one's *namah*, salutation, surrender. *Om* means invoking the Lord in a single syllable. In Sanskrit, prepositions are added to the words themselves. So, *bhagavate* means 'unto Bhagavān,' and *namah* means '(my) salutation.'

Greeting with namaste

Namaste or *namaskāra* is a very beautiful way of greeting each other. In every culture there is a way of greeting like 'hi'—'hi' to greet and 'bye' to take leave. And there is also a shake-hand culture in which you hold the other's hand, which is nice. 'Hi-bye' is more simple and modern. While shaking hands, camaraderie and friendship are exchanged. It also signifies 'how do you do' and warmth in cold countries. In this, as we shake hands the two become one.

We have *namaste* which is social, cultural, religious and spiritual. *Namaste* is made up of two words, *namah* and *te*. *Namah* means (my) salutation and *te* means to you. So *namaste* means my salutation to you. In *yoga* there is *sūrya-namaskāra*. *Namaskāra* means doing *namah*, offering your salutation, your *namaskāra* to Sun. In the word 'namaste,' the person is transcended, like when you say, 'touch wood' you touch the nearest wooden thing available. Here the transcending is not physical because even though the table may have a tablecloth, still you touch it, transcending the tablecloth and the table to

touch the wood. So when you say ‘touch wood,’ you do not go out to touch a log of wood. In this ‘touch wood,’ there is so much Vedanta.

You do *namaste* to the person in front of you without questioning his or her qualifications and so on. You transcend the person. Even if you know this person does not deserve your salutation, yet you offer salutation. To whom? To Bhagavān. When you say *namaste* you are offering your salutation to Bhagavān. The person to whom you offer is Bhagavān! What do you mean by Bhagavān? Is Bhagavān five feet eight inches tall? Therefore it is important to know what Bhagavān is.

Adding a suffix

Some background information is needed here in order to explain further. In Sanskrit, as in English, there are suffixes added to the word stem. For instance, various endings are added to make words from the English infinitive, ‘to speak’. In making a singular verb of present tense, you add the letter ‘s’ to the word ‘speak’. To form the word denoting the agent of the action of speaking, you add ‘er’ to ‘speak’. Thus we have words like speaks, speaker, spoken and so on.

So too in Sanskrit, there is also a special suffix that is added in the sense of possessor or owner, *mān* for male

4 *Oṃ Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*

and *matī* for female. The word, '*buddhi*' means thinking faculty. *Buddhimān* or *buddhimatī* means a good thinker. *Śrī* means wealth. *Śrīmān* or *śrīmatī* means one who has *śrī*, wealth. The suffix *mān* becomes *vān*, if the word ends in 'a' or 'ā', as in *dhanavān*, the one who has *dhana*, wealth; *balavān*, the one who has *bala*, strength. Here, in the *mantra*, there is the word *Bhagavān*, the one who has *bhaga*. It becomes *bhagavate* because the dative suffix meaning 'unto' is added to the word *Bhagavān*.

The ‘bhaga’ of Bhagavān

To understand Bhagavān one needs to know what is ‘bhaga’. The word has a profound meaning; it consists of six absolute virtues. They are *samagram aiśvaryam*, *samagrā śrīḥ*, *samagram jñānam*, *samagram vairāgyam*, *samagram yaśas* and *samagram vīryam*. Here, *samagra* means total, without a limit. Sometimes these six attributes are referred to as qualities. However a quality ceases to be one, if it is infinite, limitless. Bhagavān is viewed in this six-fold way. Now we will see the meaning of each of the six virtues.

(Samagram) Aiśvaryam

Aiśvaryam is *īśvarasya bhāvah*, meaning the status of being Īśvara. Īśvara means the Lord and *aiśvaryam* is overlordship. All of us have some experience of lordship and we can understand what lordship is. For instance, you have *aiśvarya*, lordship, over plants and small insects and other living organisms that are at your mercy. You do have *aiśvaryam* over an ant—you can bless that ant by walking around and not stepping on it or unmindfully step on it. If you see an ant in a small puddle of water struggling for its life, you can help it out because you have *aiśvaryam*. It is your experience of *aiśvaryam*, but the same ant crawled into your ear, your *aiśvaryam* is gone! Therefore your *aiśvaryam* is highly limited. Even though

you have the experience where the other is at your mercy, you can still be helpless because the individual *jīva* is very limited in *aiśvaryam*.

Your experience of *aiśvaryam* can help you stretch your imagination of an *aiśvaryam* that is not limited by anything. But then, it is not even stretching. Therefore, only the one who is not caused, who is not ruled by anyone, who is not subject to the laws of someone else, can have the *aiśvaryam* that is *samagram*. This *samagram*, total, unlimited, uninhibited *aiśvaryam* is *bhaga*.

(*Samagrā*) Śrīḥ

Śrī is wealth. Even the wealthiest person is limited. If you approach some rich person and ask for donation for a good cause, he or she may say, ‘Sorry, I have no money.’ So one’s wealth is limited. *Samagrā śrīḥ*, the wealth of Bhagavān should include everyone’s wealth, only then it is limitless śrī. Whatever you have is not yours because it is given. It is amusing that you think you possess these. Your health is wealth. Your longevity, *āyus*, is wealth, which means that time is wealth. Your skill is wealth as long as your hands work. Your *buddhi* is wealth as long as there is no haemorrhage in the brain. Suppose one has an aneurysm in one of the arteries in the brain. It is a time bomb and can burst anytime. It can be fatal. Everything

is given. If the giver and the given are the Lord, as we will see, then *samagrā*, limitless, *śrī* is *bhaga*.

(Samagram) Jñānam

Human knowledge, *jñānam*, is limited. If there are two kinds of flower on a table, here are some questions that can be asked:

“What is this?”

“A flower.” It is knowledge.

“What is the name of the flower?”

“Rose.” Knowledge.

“What is its colour?”

“Red.” Knowledge.

“Why this rose is white?”

“I do not know.” Ignorance.

“Why is this big, while the other is small?”

“I do not know.” Ignorance.

“Why is this fragrant, while the other is not?”

“I do not know.” Ignorance.

“Why this has more petals than the other?”

“I do not know.” Ignorance.

In a simple flower, the area of ‘I do not know’ is much more than ‘I know.’ Human knowledge is always up to one more question.

Bhagavān is one whose knowledge is limitless, not inhibited by ‘I do not know.’ Therefore, *samagram*, limitless, *jñānam* is *bhaga*.

(Samagram) Vairāgyam

Rāga is a longing for something and *virāga* is freedom from longing. *Virāgī* is one who is free from longing. *Virāgasya bhāvaḥ, vairāgyam*, the disposition of a person who is free from longing. It means the one who is *pūrṇa*, full, whole, limitless, for whom any desire is a *vibhūti*, a glory.

Everyone has some *vairāgyam*. We do not have any problem with a banana peel because we have *vairāgyam* with reference to banana peel. With reference to many other things there is no *vairāgyam*. *Samagram*, limitless, *vairāgyam* is *bhaga*.

(Samagram) Yaśas

Samagram yaśas means absolute fame, all fame, including your own or anyone else’s. For instance, a person endowed with the ability to sing may gain some

fame, a ray of glory, but that fame belongs to the Lord, the one who has all fame. *Vibhūti* means glory. Even a desire can be a glory. It is a special privilege of a human being. But due to certain confusion, the privilege becomes a botheration. If we do not know how to handle a privilege, it can destroy us. It can be a privilege to have some money and economic freedom. But it can also cause problems if we do not know how to handle it. Then one buys nukes. A country may have large amount of money which it has not earned by any commerce; when a well is dug, crude oil gushes out instead of water. The leaders in power buy nukes or scuds because they do not know how to handle the money. One must have a culture for utilising big money. Otherwise, what should be a privilege can become a problem. Only a human being is free to do and free enough not to do. The freedom that a human being has is just amazing. But, for Bhagavān everything is a privilege, a *vibhūti*, an unabused *vibhūti*, glory. *Samagraṁ yaśas*, limitless fame is *bhaga*.

(Samagram) Vīryam

Samagraṁ vīryam is absolute power, *śakti*. It means the capacity to create, to sustain and to resolve the whole universe. The one who has this absolute power of creation, sustenance and destruction is called Almighty. We also

10 *Oṃ Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*

have these capacities but given and limited. *Samagram*, limitless, *vīryam*, power, is *bhaga*. ‘*Bhaga*’ is six-fold. The one who has six-fold *bhaga* is Bhagavān.

Everything is given, the ‘Giver’ is Bhagavān

Everything is given and what is given is available for your understanding. It is so because the given is intelligently put together. Even if you do not understand something, you try to investigate and explore. The body is intelligently put together. Every organ is in its place and has its role to play in the whole scheme. Whether it is a simple fingernail or the finger itself, each has a role to play. Imagine how it would be to have a hand without fingers. You can then understand that it is all intelligently put together. It is because there is certain order in what is given, the scheme of things.

If everything is given, you presuppose a giver. Anything intelligently put together can be called *sṛṣṭi*. *Sṛṣṭi* means creation; it is only a provisional word used for the time being. It is not the creation that scientists fight against. I had a discussion with a person in Sacramento who said that the world was created 3000 years ago. I told him that some redwood trees in California are about 5000 years old. In fact, there is a tree called ‘shrine tree’ claimed to be 10000 years old. This shrine tree after all these years is still alive. But this person insists that the world is only 3000 years old!

I asked him about the dinosaurs that are millions of years old. He said, ‘We do not believe in carbon tests.’ I told him, ‘Carbon test is not a matter for belief; it is science.’ Then he asked me a question, ‘Swami, do you believe that God is almighty?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He clinched the argument saying, ‘If so, don’t you think that God, the almighty, could have put a few skeletons here, when he made this world 3000 years ago?’

The word creation is not used here in the sense of what these people say. Creation is what is intelligently put together presupposing knowledge. Whether it is intelligently shaped like a pot for a given purpose, or a complex thing like a computer, whether it is hardware or software, it presupposes knowledge. And knowledge rests in a conscious being because it cannot rest in an inanimate object. The conscious being must have the presupposed knowledge. We are talking of the ‘all’—all that is here and which is given. Therefore, the presupposed knowledge must be all-knowledge. The creation also presupposes *śakti*, all skill, power, and whatever is required. That conscious being with all-knowledge, all *śakti* is Bhagavān, Īśvara whom we call God.

The Wrong Question: Where Is God?

The problem begins when one asks, “Where is God?” Bertrand Russell wrote a book, ‘Why I am not a Christian,’ because of the concept of God having a location. Some theologies assert that God in heaven created this world. It is further claimed that God who is in heaven is formless. Does a formless God need a location? But the theologian still insists that God is formless and he is a male! They are very definite about this. If these are stated in their books that are looked upon as sacred, then we need to properly interpret the statements.

A location cannot be attributed to God. If location is attributed, then we will ask the question, ‘Is that location spatial or non-spatial?’ If it is spatial, then God becomes somebody who is located in a place and he will have an address. These days one also has to give an email address, God@heaven.org!

Often we ask a few cordial questions when we meet someone. We ask, ‘Where is your son?’ ‘He is in California.’ ‘Where is your daughter?’ ‘In Pennsylvania.’ ‘Your uncle?’ ‘In Australia.’ Where is God?’ ‘He is in

heaven!’ Understand now that God becomes just another guy with an address. Various problems will arise. If he is just another guy, bugs will get him.

To give a location to the all-knowledge God is not acceptable because space and time are also part of the whole creation. They do not exist independent of things that are located in time and space. It is something like a dream where you do not create time and space and then later think of a sun. When you think of sun, there is time and space; it is always together. This is what modern physics says. But we have been saying this for ages.

Some scientists do not accept evolution while some others do. Even if evolution is true, it does not bother us. We are talking of realities; we are not talking of evolution or devolution. We are talking of ‘what is.’ Time and space are also part of the whole deal. Therefore, God cannot sit in space and time and create them. God has to be outside time and space. However, there is no place outside time and space; everything is within them. The concept of outside-inside is spatial. You might say that your shoes are outside. But, they are inside the ashram. If you say that the car is outside the ashram, it is still

inside the city; everything is inside space. There is nothing outside space.

The only possible proposition is maybe we are asking a wrong question, 'Where is God?' If you ask a wrong question either you will get a wrong answer or you cannot get an answer. The only right answer for a wrong question is, 'The question is wrong.' If you take the wrong question seriously and try to answer it, you will not get a correct answer. It is like somebody telling that you are a sinner and you accept it. Then that person appoints himself as the only qualified one to solve it. Strange, but it is happening. 'What is God' is more germane than any other question.

The Right Question: What Is God?

Then, 'What is God?' God is all-knowledge, all power, *śakti*. Yet, what is the material cause for this creation? Let us call it X-material. Is this material separate from God? If the material is separate from God, then what separates the material from God? It cannot be space because space is yet to come. The person who claims, 'God created the world out of nothing,' says, 'Do you think God needs something to create this world?'

You know that out of nothing you can only create nothing! Somebody said, 'At least you create nothing out of nothing; there is some creation!' It is a wrong sentence that has no meaning. The creation has to be out of something. If there is a holy book which states that God created this world out of nothing, then you need to understand it this way: 'out of nothing else.' It is called interpretation. It means there cannot be a material other than God because the separating element, space, is yet to come. We are talking of the whole creation and space is part of it. So, God created this world out of nothing else. A holy book should be interpreted properly and then accepted. All theologies are but interpretations.

Īśvara is both the maker and the material

There cannot be a separation between the X-material and God, Īśvara. You need to understand this well. I am using the term, 'X-material' because when the created stuff, this *jagat*, is inquired into, it just disappears, for it cannot stand any inquiry, like the shirt that you wear. As long as you do not inquire into it, it seems okay. The shirt is worn by a body but the body is a bunch of particles and the shirt is also another bunch of particles. Therefore, particles are wearing particles!

Let us look at it the following way. You say that it is a shirt. I say it is not a shirt; it is cotton fabric. All that is here is fabric; there is no shirt. Shirt is fabric, but fabric is not shirt. The fabric itself is nothing but yarn. Yarn can be without fabric, but fabric is not without yarn. So fabric is merely a word for a form. When the yarn is woven in a certain form, we call it fabric, which is only a word. You cannot think of yarn without thinking of fibres. You cannot think of fibres without thinking of molecules. You cannot think of molecules without thinking of atoms. You cannot think of atoms without thinking of particles. You cannot think of particles without thinking.

You can even take it further; however, this is enough for us now. Some material is required for creation which is why I use the term X-material, meaning whatever that is required is in keeping with the reality of the creation. So the X-material required for creation of the *jagat* cannot be separate from the conscious being who is all-knowledge and all-power; the maker and the material are one and the same. If it is one and the same then the *jagat*, the world, is not only a creation but also a manifestation, as a physicist would say. The word creation is a red rag for all scientists; they know it is a manifestation. The manifestation needs to be understood as ‘intelligent manifestation’.

Everything consists of particles. The particles became the eyes, ears, kidney cells and brain cells, though they are different. This intelligent manifestation is what we call creation. The Upaniṣad says, ‘*asṛjata, abhavat*.¹’ Īśvara not only created, he became, meaning, ‘he manifested.’ It is so because the material cause is not separate from the maker.

This entire *jagat*² starting from my body-mind-sense complex is a manifestation of Īśvara. It is

¹ *Taittirīyopaniṣad* 2.6.1

² The word ‘*jagat*’ I am using because it includes my ‘body-mind-sense complex’ which the English equivalent ‘world’ does not include. (Author - Swami Dayananda Saraswati).

sustained by Īśvara. We can say the *jagat* dwells in Īśvara. Therefore the Lord is *Vāsuḥ*. He is *deva*, all-knowledge, effulgent being. Being both *vāsu* and *deva*, Bhagavān is called Vāsudeva. *Bhagavate vāsudevāya*, unto the Lord, Bhagavān Vāsudeva, who is everything and who sustains everything, my *namaḥ*, salutation. Who salutes? I salute. If I say everything is God, then who am I to salute? I have to be separate from that God to salute. True, but there is an individuality like a tree within a forest, but stands away from the forest, feeling alienated and lonely due to want of knowledge of ‘what is.’ Even though the tree is an entity by itself, there really is no alienation. We need to understand this. *Namaḥ* is the most important part of the chant. Every individual feels alienated. From childhood we are searching for this freedom from alienation through relationships, through varieties of things such as group-identity and so on. Saying *namaḥ* to the forest with understanding, the sense of alienation the tree was suffering from, goes away.

Everything is Bhagavān’s manifestation. His glory is limitless, meaning everyone’s glory is included. In the *Gītā* the tenth chapter describes Bhagavān’s glories. ‘Whichever object/being having any glory... understand, it is born of my power,

fraction of my power.’³ In India if anybody can sing well, he or she does not boast about it. The person would say, ‘It is all *guru*’s grace, Bhagavān’s grace,’ because it is all given, including the voice. Suppose you have knowledge but no voice for vocal music, then where is music? If you have no fingers how are you going to play a harp? If you have no intellect, how are you going to think? The software is given, and so is the hardware. All possibilities are given. You acknowledge everything as Bhagavān’s glory. If you can bend, it is also a glory; it is given. One person in a *yoga* camp had a tee-shirt with these words, ‘All’s well that bends well.’ *Yoga* is also a glory.

We can now understand that Bhagavān as Īśvara is invoked in this chant, *bhagavate vāsudevāya* meaning unto Bhagavān who is Vāsudeva. The words *bhagavate* and *vāsudevāya* are both in the same dative case because in Sanskrit, nouns and adjectives attract the same case ending. The word ‘unto’ is a preposition and is included in both words. *Bhagavate* means unto the Lord and *vāsudevāya* also means unto Vāsudeva. Both are the same forms—unto the Lord, Vāsudeva, my *namaskāra*, salutation.

³ *yadyadvibhūtimatsattvaṃ śrīmadūrjitameva vā tattadevāvagaccha tvam mama tejoṃśasambhavam (Bhagavad Gītā 10.41)*

Namaḥ - My Surrender to the Lord

Oṃ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya, unto the Lord, Bhagavān Vāsudeva in whom dwells this entire *jagat*; from whom it is not different; who is an effulgent being, *namaḥ*, my salutation, my surrender.

We need to know more about *namaḥ*. As a child one is totally helpless although one has to survive as a living organism. In fact, the only time a human being is secure is when he or she is not yet born, connected to the mother inside the womb. Though the child has its own body, heart and so on, which function independently, yet it is not alienated from its mother. The secure child starts an independent life from the time the umbilical cord is cut. What a start! The child does not even know how to turn and how to survive, but it is a living organism with the instinctual urge to survive. Any living organism wants to survive because the survival instinct goes along with life. This is how the arrangement is. When a calf is born it struggles and stands on its legs right away because it has to survive from the predators. But the helpless child has to grow into an adult under the care of mother and father. It is born with hundred percent helplessness and does not know how to get food. Yet it has to survive. What can it do? This hundred percent

helplessness is compensated by hundred percent trust in the person who takes care of this child; the child has no choice. Perhaps the child can recognise the voice of the mother that it picked up prenatally. Suppose the voice is different because someone else is caring for the child, it may recognise the difference in the voice, but relates in trust in the hands that tend it. This is hundred percent trust, choiceless trust. It implies the trusted person has to be infallible. Infallibility implies all *śakti*, all-knowledge and consistency. All these plus a few more are the constituents of infallibility. The child does not know what infallibility is, much less omniscience or omnipotence. But it is all implied in absolute trust. The absolute helplessness is compensated by absolute trust and the child relaxes; otherwise out of fear the child would die. As it grows, the child begins to recognise that its mother is omnipotent because she can walk, talk and do many things. To the child, the mother is omnipotent and great. One might wonder what a baby would think of its mother who is in a slum and not educated, etc. This child will also see the mother as omnipotent because she is walking, talking and so forth.

The most unfortunate thing for a child is to be born to a queen unless she does everything like any

other normal mother. A child needs a mother, not a queen and a palace. That is why the queen's child grows up without a sense of security in the absence of consistent presence and care of the mother. A palace does not provide that, but a hut can provide security if the mother is always there when the child needs her. This is security; not palaces, guards, maids, silver and chandeliers. All that the child needs is the lap of its mother—her availability and presence in its awareness, knowing that mom is there even if she is in another room. If the child loses the mother's presence in its awareness it will crawl to the other room where the mother is. Then the child is safe and secure. This is the core person of a human being. And we have core issues.

In these days of cut-throat competition or any competition, the child is pushed into LKG (lower kindergarten) or UKG (upper kindergarten) when the child does not even weigh a kg. The parents send it to LKG and they call it play school. Adults wonder how the child will learn social skills otherwise. It is wrong because social skills can be taught to anyone even after 80 years. Anybody can learn this at anytime. Pushing the child away to school is to tell the child 'I do not need you. I do not want you.' The child is going to wonder what it has done. 'Why does my mom

send me here; is something wrong with me?’ The child knows nothing is wrong, but has to construe, has to imagine, that something is wrong with it, ‘otherwise, my infallible mother would not send me here.’ This is inconsistent. And for the mother’s sake the child, coming home, puts on a show that it enjoyed the school. And the mother thinks, ‘My child enjoys the school.’ It is idiotic! The child does not enjoy school; it is putting on a show. And the child’s pain is pushed to the background. This is the unconscious. In Sanskrit, it is called *kaṣāya*. It is there as the most significant part of the core person, to inhibit, to dictate the emotional lot of the person. It becomes worse and worse when there is parental quarrel, violence, alcohol and so on.

The child discovers the fallibility of mother when it sees a cockroach and runs to her. Why? Mom will take care of the problem. But mom screams at the sight of the cockroach. Then the man, the father, comes. He is a big man and seems to be bold and courageous and so he can deal with the intruder. The child slowly shifts its admiration to dad. Dad is much more courageous, more infallible because he can take care of cockroaches.

However, the child gets confused because dad is available in the morning and he is not there the whole day. In the evening he comes home fuming because he

was at a Happy Hour (a bar) for one hour. Because of this inconsistency, the child gets confused. It is a violation of trust. One day he is okay, the next day he is screaming and on another day he is beating. The parents fight with each other. They say that they do not fight in the presence of the child; they fight in the bedroom and come out after fighting. But the child can sense that. The child learns that it is never enough merely to go by the heard words; the child starts looking for body language. Even as an adult one goes by body language. After having had a conversation with somebody, he or she will go over the same conversation. The thoughts are, 'I think I have not said the right thing; I may have been mistaken.' Again the person will go to the other and say, 'I did not mean that, I hope you understood me correctly.' Then the person will again pick up the conversation; the tape goes on endlessly.

This process occurs all because of being unsure at home as a child within the first four years. The home is dysfunctional, to use a modern term. In addition if the father is given to alcohol there are further problems at home. One has to guess what is normal. There is no normal, settled, secure home. Home should provide a sense of security. But with no sense of security, the whole person is like the gooey stuff inside those chocolates, the kind where the outside is hard and the

inside is soft and gooey. It is the core person with no self-esteem and self-respect. With this type of background, one grows into an insecure adult and then the problems become evident in relationships. In order to be in charge and in control, the insecure person always chooses a partner who needs to be taken care of. Otherwise, he or she would feel vulnerable because of this sense of insecurity. Many problems including perfectionism come out of this. There is a control issue. Love is not known; control is what is known. Love, without being able to control, is vulnerable; therefore, unless one can control, one cannot love. So love becomes control:

“I love you; okay, sit down!” “Do not look there.”
“Don’t you know I love you?” “Why are you looking there?” “Who is that you talked to on the telephone?”

The other replies, “That person is the telephone operator, the receptionist.”

“Why should she call you at home?”

“Because she had a message to give me.”

“She called you yesterday also.”

“Because yesterday also there was a message.”

The whole thing is reduced to your trust being violated. It is true even if you come from a secure home,

because no mother can be consistently available. No mother is infallible and no father is infallible. Therefore, there will be issues in your unconscious. Everybody has to deal with this shadow, the unconscious. If it is conscious, you can try to have control. However, the unconscious controls you. All emotions such as anger, sadness, depression and so on are from the unconscious, unless there is some neurological or physiological cause. It is already underneath for everybody, but it is accentuated and aggravated by some of these hormonal disturbances for women, as well as for the men in their forties. And so a person has too many accounts to settle with mother and father.

Father carries his own cross. He has his background, his own unconscious to deal with and so too the mother. It comes down from parent to child and so on. Most parents are not aware of all these. To become a telephone operator there is a training course. To be a mother or father, of course, there is nothing. In villages, people learned because their parents, uncles, grandparents and great grandparents lived jointly. There was more security and less competition then. Life was more leisurely and less stressful for parents and therefore for the child too. They knew each other because it was a community living. There was

always a lap available. In these modern days there is no empty lap. Even if there is one, there is a laptop on it. So one is not able to process childhood issues. When they are processed, they are no longer issues that are stored in the unconscious.

However, there is no way that we can escape these problems from our backgrounds. Nobody can escape this. And some of these people take to *yoga*. Then, as *yoga* teachers, you have to deal with people and deal with yourself too. *Yoga* is a starting point to discover some self-esteem, some self-love. You care for your body, yourself. This is a right step. Instead of blaming anybody, you take care of yourself. Self-love begins with love and care for your physical body. But still you have to deal with yourself because there is this unsettled account with mother and father. Therefore, what will you do? You cannot put the clock back. You can go to a therapist. But you also have to be with him or her like being with the same mother and father. The therapist will help you shift the self-blame to your mother or father. The blame may be shifted, but you cannot shift your mother and father. Since you need to relate with your mother and father, you need to be with the therapist, also. In therapy you gain clarity and relief. Yet the grief has to go.

The infallible is Īśvara

The core person's grief due to alienation can go only when he or she discovers a connection, an inseparable connection, with the infallible who again is one's parents. Īśvara is both mother and father, being the material and the efficient cause, the maker.

Īśvara is infallible. Rather, you understand that the infallible is Īśvara. This shift in emphasis is very important. In Īśvara, who is the infallible father and infallible mother, you appoint a super therapist because the local therapists are also fallible. When you go for marriage counselling to a person who has already been married three times, what trust will you have in that person? He or she often says, 'I am sorry I did not mean that.' How much trust can you have? So the therapist validating you is dependent upon your admiration and total acceptance of that person. In other words, it depends on the trust you have in that person. But how much can you trust another person, even a therapist? Your trust is edited and abridged. And everyday the trust is eroded; you discovered a new fallacy, a new problem in that person, because he or she is fallible.

The Order that is Īśvara

Without resorting to reductionism, I will reduce Īśvara to a huge cosmic order—one total order, which has within itself many orders. The physical universe is not everything, but it is an important order. We live in this physical universe. We can sit because of this physical order—gravitation. Everything is in place even though everything is in motion. It is one huge order. It is the order we study in physics, in astrophysics and nuclear physics. It is the reason why we respect any discipline of knowledge because it is knowledge that is Īśvara. All-knowledge is manifest in the form of the *jagat*. Just as your knowledge is manifest in your dream in the form of your dream world, Īśvara’s knowledge is manifest in the form of what is here. Whenever you discover, understand something, there is joy because you are in harmony with all-knowledge Īśvara, the whole. When you discover something, the ignorant person does not come into the picture. What comes into the picture is the knowledgeable person. It is the reason why we do not look upon even a subject like microbiology as secular. On the other hand, any knowledge is sacred. We call knowledge as Goddess Sarasvatī. In any knowledge there is *ānanda*, a joy. That joy is really *brahmānanda*, because we are one with Īśvara at that time. Therefore, *vidyānande brahmānandaḥ*, there is uninhibited joy in the happiness born of gaining

any knowledge. The total and individual coalesce—the difference is consumed in the flame of knowledge.

In the physical universe, there is life. Therefore, I have to understand that there is a biological order. When I study biology, I am studying the biology that is total, *samaṣṭi*. I am not studying one organism. I am studying biology in general, then afterwards the differences. What is critical is that my presence, my being stands included in the total physical order. I have physical body that is a living organism. Therefore, there is a biological order too. The body is not a mere rock, but, the material is all rock—minerals, carbon, calcium, phosphorus and so on; and there is life. It is a biological manifestation which is all Īśvara's manifestation. The total is Īśvara and the total pervades me.

More important, as a human being, is the physical order. All the disorders are within the order. If the order is not there, there is no disorder, which is why the disorder can be corrected. The physiological order can be looked at differently. In Ayurveda it is viewed in one way and in allopathy in another way. In homeopathy it is looked at in yet a different way. Even though they all look at the same thing, they are different approaches for looking at what order is and what disorder is. Sometimes one system works and sometimes, another works.

There is a time when none of these approaches works. Īśvara as the lord of time works. It is all within the same physiological order.

There is a psychological order too. Psychology is not merely human psychology; there is also a psychology of animals. That is why elephants can be made to behave, as long as they behave. It is possible because one can study the psychology of the elephant. Everything is programmed and one has to understand what it is. A human being is more complex. Being self-conscious and self-judgmental, humans have more complexes. One cannot know how the person will behave because people are given to moods; one time there is one mood and another time another mood; it is very complex. But still there is an order. Because there is a background, there is an emotional order that is Īśvara.

Here, we are going to take some help from Īśvara to resolve all our emotional problems. We assimilate the fact that everything is a manifestation of Īśvara. I use the word, Īśvara, instead of the word God, for not invoking the interference of our life-long orientation, if that is contrary to what I have been saying. Īśvara is to be understood in the form of various orders making one vast order. It is the process of assimilation of this fact—all that is here is Īśvara. We do not say that there is **one** God; instead, we

say, there is **only** God. There is one God means he needs a location somewhere and bugs will get him. If everything is a manifestation, then we can assimilate the fact in terms of order. *Yoga* can be included in the physiological order. It can even go beyond that; it includes psychological order too, to a certain extent. Exercise such as aerobics does not go beyond the physical and physiological orders. It is also likely to be psychologically beneficial because when you exercise regularly, you feel good; you sweat it out. It is also some kind of self-caring. But there is also some kind of abuse involved. In *yoga* there is gentleness, there is care, which is why it is love. When you are violent in your exercises, there is abuse. Some anger comes out. Maybe this is necessary for some people. It can be a way to express anger; otherwise, they might inflict harm on themselves. So aerobics is also better.

This psychological order is a manifestation of Īśvara. At times a whiff of emotion surfaces and you suddenly feel lonely, even when there is no reason to feel so, especially in the midst of a crowd. At night when you are alone, you look up, there are so many stars teasing you. Nobody is alone. If you say there is no one around, at least some insects and bugs are around. You can be in the midst of hundreds or thousands of people and still feel lonely.

It is an old feeling, a childhood feeling, the time-frozen child's feeling manifesting now. It seems very current, it is all a confusion. The child comes out and the adult feels lonely. Then the person tries to find a reason for loneliness. But the real reason is only from inside, because it has nothing to do with the absence of external company. When the child is accused of something for no reason, the child naturally feels not understood. Not being understood is one main reason for the feeling of loneliness, besides many others you can think of.

Any emotion has a basis. The external cause is only the triggering cause; the internal cause is real, especially when the emotion is one you do not want to have. Nobody wants to be sad, depressed, lonely, jealous and so on. You need somebody to press the button and there is always somebody around! 'Your Erroneous Zones' is a good book that shows you your areas of vulnerability.

The basic problem of alienation is within the psychological order of Īśvara. The body of knowledge called psychology studies people in terms of their backgrounds and their emotions. For example, in one particular situation, this person should be angry. At times he does get angry and other times he does not. For those who research this area of psychology, the causes are too many to be able to control all the factors to create a

situation of demonstration. However, even though the numerous variables cannot be controlled, it is still understood that there is an order. The more this is studied in psychology, the more one can see a generalised order. Therefore, psychology is a growing body of knowledge. There is an amazingly predictable relationship between one's childhood background and the current outcome.

One Western woman became a *sannyāsinī* and was wearing the saffron coloured clothes. Once she met me and told that she had taken *sannyāsa*, that she continued to have difficulty in making decisions, that she is sad. I asked her one question, "Was your mother given to alcohol?" She said, "Yes." That is the problem. When a mother is given to alcohol, it is the worst thing to happen to a child. This *sannyāsinī* had been trying to solve her problem through a variety of means. To solve an emotional problem she took to a spiritual life. She was sincere. She needs to address the problem by processing it and knowing Īśvara intimately. Modern spiritual people try to bypass Īśvara because they do not want to deal with another 'father'. I told this *sannyāsinī* to go to the group meeting of adult children of alcoholics and get to know the problem fully; learn more about Īśvara. I gave her a book on Īśvara. After attending a few meetings in her town in New York State, she came to me saying that she was feeling much better. She was already a spiritually oriented

person and it was easy for her, a walkover. She just needed this insight—insight about herself.

When this happens, you are on top of the situation. You can always be in charge of conscious problems, which can be managed. However, how are unconscious problems going to be managed? Instead, they manage you. The very fact that you are not conscious of them and do not know what they are, results in an outcome which is a mess. Therefore, you often get involved in relationships where you have to take care of the other person, rather than having a healthy and more equal relationship. This inability to relate in a more mature way is all underachieving because of an unfortunate background.

The therapist helps you shift the blame to mother and father who are responsible for it. But, you have to accept that they are responsible. You shift the blame and at the same time understand that this is a psychological order. It is a fact that you need to address your emotional life in order to take care of it. Here you are looking at this as Īśvara's order.

Validation of oneself in the order that is Īśvara

Generally, the feeling is 'I am not normal.' It is because of the childhood background. The child's feeling is that I am no good. Given the home situation, the child's feeling

is valid. When we say it is Īśvara's order, we embrace the child in us. Every trace of an emotion is within the order and this order is Īśvara. You cannot learn anything better than this to have a healthy appreciation of yourself, a healthy assessment of yourself.

It is true that I am in the order of Īśvara; therefore, whatever happens, I am in order. I surrender to Īśvara, *om bhagavate vāsudevāya namaḥ*. In the eyes of Īśvara who is my father and mother, I am in order. He is the father of my father, of my grandfather and so on. He is the father and the mother. The two are not separate. It is proper to impute both genders to Īśvara because everything is Īśvara. Īśvara is the father and mother—both he and she. And they both are very much with me. Therefore, I look at Īśvara in the form of both father and mother because all fathers and mothers are Īśvara.

The father and mother cannot be away from my awareness. The other father and mother were away from the child's awareness because no parent can ever be present all the time in the child's awareness when it was needed. It is not possible. Therefore, uniformly everybody is harmed psychologically because of the past. In any insecure situation, of course, the child needed the parents. It is Īśvara again. There is order that the child needs such parental presence. And parents

need to understand that order. To the extent they can understand this and can fulfil what the child needs, to that extent the unconscious would be less loaded. Another person such as a baby sitter can never replace mother and father.

In any situation I cannot surprise Īśvara. In fact, any emotion or reaction cannot be a surprise to Īśvara because it is all within the psychological order. For the one who is the order, there is no surprise. Therefore, I can welcome whatever emotions I experience.

Now there is complete validation. A therapist is one who validates. A therapist validates you and shifts all the blame that you have placed on yourself to the appropriate places. It is the validation that lets you understand you are okay. This validation is to be trusted by you. But, as mentioned previously, it is an eroded trust. The reason that people do not marry is because they have difficulty in trusting; they choose to live together instead. When the topic of marriage comes, then it is said, “I do not believe in a marriage certificate; what is there in that piece of paper?” To this, one may reply, “Then please give that piece of paper.” Well, it is not just a piece of paper, which is why one cannot give it. One has no capacity to trust. One cannot trust either oneself or the other. It is a fact. It is more than a piece of paper.

It is understandable that there is incapacity to trust. That is why the Indian marriage is marvellous. Because you do not know the other person, you trust. It means you trust something else; you do not trust the person. No human being can be trusted. So what kind of trust you can have? Everyday you read about accidents and you think these accidents concern others. The others also thought the same way. Therefore how to trust anybody? Then you trust something else. That is the order of Īśvara I am talking about.

Īśvara, the super therapist

I accept Īśvara because he is in the form of order. Order means infallible. I do not say Īśvara is infallible; I say the infallible is Īśvara. To say Īśvara is infallible is a judgement which can make the person angry if the prayer is not answered. 'Infallible is Īśvara' is to be discovered, assimilated. Īśvara being in the form of psychological order, I cannot surprise Īśvara. Every trace of emotion is valid and I validate myself in my awareness of Īśvara. In other words, Īśvara validates me. My understanding of Īśvara validates me. This validation is implied in *namaḥ*, which means I do not hold on to anything. In the validation implied in *namaḥ*, I cease to be vulnerable. I am normal. As long as I feel vulnerable, I cannot be open. I need to open myself. There is so much in this.

With *yoga* helping me, I can then open up by saying, “In the vision of Īśvara, who I understand is in the form of order, I am not vulnerable.” It makes me totally objective. I can welcome an emotion like fear. In so many words I need to say, ‘I welcome fear.’

In modern self-help groups there are some modern *mantras*. One of them is ‘Let go, let God.’ This is wonderful. ‘Let go, let God’ means let God be and let go of all your controls.

I validate myself and welcome all my emotions. Relaxation becomes a past word; I do not need to relax because I am always relaxed. In *śavāsana*, this is what you are told, ‘Let go, let go.’ So even in *āsanas* you can do better by letting go more.

When you do this, there is more Īśvara and less of you. In fact, there is only Īśvara. The psychological order is very critical for a human being’s own sanity. It is *namaḥ*, my surrender to Bhagavān Vāsudeva.

Īśvara is manifest as dharma

Another level that I need to recognise is the order of *dharma*. Being endowed with freewill, a human being needs to choose all the time. It is a fact that I am free, free to make choices. I am also free enough to desire. More often than not, desires release a lot of pressure because of the unconscious again. There is a need for approval, a need to prove oneself and a need to be somebody because there is so much self-loathe and self-non-approval in each person. There is self-non-approval because the self is to be discovered. In fact, the self is the whole. Unless I discover I am the whole, I am not going to rest content. I will always be seeking. Pressure is released by my various desires—desire to possess, to acquire, to own and to retain. There are other desires such as desire to experience, desire to repeat the experience, desire to achieve something and desire to have certain things happen to me that release pressure.

Desire to retain is very powerful. I want to retain my money, my health. I always want to be a young person. Therefore, the desire to retain is very big—retain money, retain job, retain friendship, retain relationship, retain colour of my hair and to retain the hair on my head!

The desire to avoid is also a powerful desire. I want to avoid a headache, avoid ulcers. I want to avoid putting on extra kilos. Invariably the extra kilos sneak in, even though I am very conscious and careful about my intake of calories. Some people say that even by just breathing, they put on weight! So there is this desire to avoid a variety of things, to get rid of a few. In short, there is the desire to acquire and retain, to avoid and get rid of. Our desires are very legitimate and the capacity to desire is a privilege that is given.

Desire also is a manifestation of Īśvara

In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa is presented by Vyāsa as Īśvara. In fact, when Kṛṣṇa is speaking, the statement is ‘*śrībhagavān uvāca.*’ Therefore, Bhagavān Vāsudeva who is Kṛṣṇa, says, ‘I manifest in the form of desire in all human beings.’ If you have ambitions and desires, you are healthy. The problem is they release tremendous amount of pressure and then they need to be fulfilled. Therefore Kṛṣṇa puts a clause there, which is ‘*dharmā-aviruddha-kāma,* desires whose fulfilment do not hurt *dharmā.*’ So *dharmā* becomes very important here.

As *yoga* teachers you need to know *dharmā* very well because you will be asked, ‘What is *dharmā*?’ At times, you will have to advise students when they have conflicts between their interests and values. As a teacher you have

to be careful because you cannot play the role of a therapist; but you can play the role of an advisor and a good friend. Whenever you teach, the students begin to trust you. Slowly transference will take place with many kinds of problems later. Therefore, it is important to draw boundaries for yourself and for others as well.

Dharma is the infrastructure which is the fabric that connects all of us as our basis for our interaction with each other and with the world in general. Because I have desires and you also have desires, they clash at times. We both may desire for the one and the same thing. Often there is one job and hundreds of applicants. Therefore, there are some ground rules when all of us compete. It is a game; we do not play it as a game. We have lost the sporting spirit even in games.

During my interaction it is possible to tread on others' toes, trample on others' pursuit of felicity; others can also trample on my pursuits and stifle them. Therefore, what controls us from inside, our sense, is common to all of us. In terms of my expectations of others' behaviour towards me, I am very clear and you are also very clear. We do not want others to hurt us in any way; this is universal.

To obtain a Ph.D someone might construct a list of questions to ask hundred different people. Then they draw some conclusions from the responses. The answers

that they would get when they ask those questions would be different or similar. However they are not different when your questions are: ‘Do you want to get hurt?’ ‘Do you want to be cheated?’ ‘Do you want to be robbed?’ ‘Do you want to be lied to?’ ‘Do you want to be taken advantage of when you are in a weak situation?’ The response would be one ‘no’ from all, whether a *paṇḍita*, scholar, in Benares,⁴ a professor in Boston or an aborigine in the outback of Australia.

So, how do you want others to behave towards you? You want everybody to be very giving, very friendly, compassionate, understanding and so on. Even mosquitoes should leave you alone and should not bite. No other bugs should touch you. And the whole world should behave properly towards you. However, the most unfortunate thing is that others also expect the same thing from you. This common sense born value structure is *dharma*. It has nothing to do with any special person like Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. They confirm this by practice and precept. We do not need a scripture either, to propound this common sense value structure.

If this sense were not there, it would be a defect in the very *sṛṣṭi*, the creation. It would be something like

⁴ Vāraṇasī, Kāśī, popularly known as Benaras is a holy city on the west bank of the River Gaṅgā in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh.

having a Ferrari without a break system and giving it to a young man who has one earring, an afro cut, unbuttoned shirt, a chain on his neck, a headband and jeans with more holes than fabric, who has a 6-pack in front of him with two of them already gone inside! And he is behind the wheel of a Ferrari with no brakes. Think of the outcome. It is very clear that he would be a danger not only to himself, but also to whoever is on the street. That would be the human being with all the freedom and no brake system. There would be nothing to stop the person, no element of empathy, sympathy, compassion, no love and caring for others. The person would be a danger to everyone including himself. It would be a terrible thing to happen. It would mean that this creation is defective. To correct the defective creation all the human beings would have to be recalled and then something would have to be put inside them before they are sent back.

However, we do not have this problem. We all commonly sense that we do not want to be hurt, nor does anyone else.

All of us sense gravitation. Every monkey senses it without being taught. The mother monkey did not teach this to the baby monkey. In my imagination the teacher-monkey would say, “All of you listen to me, carefully. Do you know who you are? Monkeys.

Your mother is a monkey. As monkeys always do, your mother is going to jump from tree to tree. Your mother is not a cat. She is not going to pick you up and put you in safe places. She will just keep jumping and you will have to hold on to her. Hold on to her like only a monkey can hold. Have a monkey-grip and never leave hold of her.” After listening to her the baby monkey would ask,

“What does ‘hold’ mean?”

“Hold like this,” she says, showing with her hands.

“If I let go what will happen?”

“You will fall down.”

“What is falling down?”

“You will come down to hit the ground.”

“Go down means what?”

“You will fall.”

“What will happen?”

“You will die.”

“What does ‘die’ mean?”

“You will not be here anymore.”

Think of how to explain all this to a baby monkey. Baby monkeys sense gravitation without ever being taught by anybody. Thank God! That is how it is.

We may not know all about gravitation, but we all sense gravitation. It is one force, which defies everybody's thinking. It is amazing and it is the thing that holds the whole universe together. Every bird and every other animal knows. Although nobody has seen gravitation, we all sense its force.

So too, nobody has seen *dharma*; but we sense *dharma* because it is there. There is such a force as gravitation; therefore we sense it. And there is *dharma*; therefore we sense it. In fact, all prophets and religious leaders should confirm this—the sense of *dharma* is common to all. Every heart senses it because *Īśvara* is manifest in the form of *dharma* in our hearts. Therefore it is universal.

For us, *dharma* is not a mandate of God; it is a manifestation of God, *Īśvara*. See the difference. Mandate means 'either or.' 'Do not or you had it'! However *dharma* being a manifestation we all sense with the common sense, which is another manifestation. We naturally pick up other's pain. Though we sense the pain of others very easily, yet there are times when we use some arguments to justify our indifference or decision to be indifferent. It is from the pressure of our needs and fears. Therefore, *dharma* is an important manifestation. If you read the *yoga-sūtras*, there is so much about *dharma*—*yama* and *niyama*, for example. *Āsana* comes later; *dharma* comes

first in the form of *yama* and *niyama*. *Yama* is restraint, not to indulge in certain things. *Niyama* is to follow certain observances. Even though my desires, *rāga* and *dveṣa*, produce pressures, I surrender, *namaḥ*, to Īśvara in the form of *dharma*.

Understand *namaḥ*. I surrender to Īśvara who is manifest in the form of *dharma*, in the form of desire unopposed to *dharma*.

In the beginning *namaḥ* would not be surrender, but rather, your salutation—salutation as an action, as a ritual. You can offer it orally, mentally or physically. You offer physically by doing *namaskāra* like what you do in *sūrya-namaskāra*. And in *yoga* you can include *sūrya-namaskāra* as a ritual prayer.

The result is what is called grace. You need to earn grace; it does not just come. It is earned by prayer and by charity; these are the two ways of earning grace. Charity is not a good word. Instead, let us say it is ‘reaching out’ to extend certain help to people who need it. Sometimes it is done by word or by lending time to somebody. Just being available to listen to others’ stories is a great help. There are many forms of help and reaching out. When you extend help, you grow. It is all *dharma*.

You grow into a complete person when you are able to conform to *dharma* without any kind of pressure or conflict. In the beginning there is conflict, like getting up every morning. You wake up first and struggle to get up later. So too, in eating if you are watching your calorie intake, you always murmur and eat, ‘I am eating now, but tomorrow I am not going to eat.’ But again it happens the next day. ‘Tomorrow I am not going to eat.’ So the struggle goes on until you become free from any conflict. However, when you stifle another’s happiness, you hurt that person. There are different ways of hurting—by word, deed and even by thought. There are shades of hurt. When you deliberately avoid any form of hurting in any manner, any kind of taking advantage of anybody, then you conform to *dharma*. It is done deliberately at first. Then there comes a time when you do not have any conflict. You become incapable of going against *dharma*. It becomes natural, spontaneous, even though initially you used a support system and prayers.

Forming a group is also necessary to have a support system consisting of people given to your own pursuit—the pursuit of *dharma*. If that is not possible you can email or phone your friend if you need to talk to one. Besides this, you pray, asking for help from *Īśvara*. Thus, your pursuit is meaningful to result in your growth into a

person with self-satisfaction. For such a person we have the teaching that ‘You are a complete being.’ Īśvara who is everything, is not and cannot be separate from you. In fact, the essence, the truth of Īśvara and the truth of you, is one and the same, like a wave and ocean. The truth of the wave and the ocean is one and the same—water. This is Vedanta. It is the final step. For this you require to be more or less a complete being, a mature human being and for whom the manifestation of Īśvara is *dharma*. My salutation unto that Lord, Vāsudeva, who is manifest in the form of *dharma*, in whom the whole *jagat* exists, *vāsu* and who is an effulgent being, *deva*. Unto that Lord, Vāsudeva, my salutation, my surrender.

The Lord is manifest in the form of psychological order and physiological order. So understand that anything you do, even for health, is an offering to the Lord; it is not personal. *Namaḥ*, you are surrendering unto the Lord who is in the form of physiological and physical order and more critically in the form of psychological order. Therefore, *yoga* becomes a prayer. Unto him my *namaskāra*, surrender. The surrender is total now.

When I say that I am in order, I can never surprise Īśvara, no matter what my feeling is. It is not a surprise because it is all in the order. When I say, ‘I am in order,’

I am discovering certain space within myself to look at my emotions and say, ‘I am in order.’ I accept every form of emotion—loneliness, anger, fear and so on—in my awareness of the presence of Īśvara.

To sum up, I want to be true to myself, with some self-respect and self-dignity. I draw boundaries to myself and to others relating to me without offending anyone. This is living.

When you have fear, like fear of death, you say this sentence aloud, ‘I welcome fear, I am not afraid of fear.’ When you say this in so many words, you can see the magic; you are the one who welcomes fear. And you are no longer under the spell of fear. It looks very simple because it is simple! Struggling against yourself is not going to help. Please note when you welcome fear of death, you only welcome fear, not death.

Surrender to Īśvara with the awareness that Īśvara is manifest in the form of one cosmic order. The more you see the presence of Īśvara all through the day, the less would be your attempt to surrender. May Īśvara bless you all.

Om̐ Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya

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