

Yoga — An Integrated Science II

Our True Nature

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*Interviewed by Christine Perre**

1. What is Time?

Could you speak about time? Yoga Sutra IV, 12 says, “the past and future are as real as the present.”¹ So, how to deal with time? And where is our freedom if the future already exists? How does it exist already? How can we change it?

What is time? Time is a particular succession made up of moments. Just as a line is nothing but points, points placed adjacent to each other. Several points make a line. So a line does not have any entity. A line is ultimately just points. Similarly, time does not have any entity. Time is nothing but the composition of moments and successive moments make a second, and then make a minute, and then make an hour. So, understand first this thing: what is a line? A line has no entity. A line is only points, adjacent to each other. If you just go on putting points, adjacent to each other, that forms a line. So, there is a line. Without points can there be a line? There can be no line without points. A point is not a line. What is a point? A point is something which has no dimension; it has no length, no width, no breadth. This is mathematics. So, a point has no dimension. Now a line is nothing but several, several points. Ultimately, therefore, a line has no dimension; therefore there is no line.

On the surface of the earth there is no such thing as a straight line; it doesn't exist. Nevertheless we speak of a straight line in geometry; we say triangle, we say square, we say rectangle. Where is the square? Where is the rectangle? Where is the triangle? There can be no triangle. Any line drawn on the surface of the earth is part of a circle. There is no straight line on the surface of the earth. Any line, or so-called line, is part of a circle. Now, do you call this a “triangle,” with arched lines? A triangle should have straight lines for you. Where is the straight line? There is no straight line but

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¹“The existence of the past and the future is as real as that of the present. As moments roll into movements which have yet to appear as the future, the quality of knowledge in one's intellect and consciousness is affected.” B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.

still we assume that there is a straight line in geometry — and we have all the technology. Realistic technology is based on something that does not exist.

Similarly, time has no entity. There are only moments; the moment is the only entity. And several moments make a millisecond, several, several moments make a second, several, several, several moments make a minute, and so forth. So, a moment is the true entity, and that is why you have heard Guruji several times talking about that “moment to moment awareness” — that you can form a chain of awareness if you are constantly aware of moments. Many philosophers say that you should be in the present, never in the past or future. What is the way to be in the present and what is the way to avoid being in past or in the future?

It’s to be aware...

Aware of what?

Of the present.

But then how do you constantly stay in the present if, from moment to moment, the changes are there. This moment you are here, the next moment you are there. Where are you in the present? You are flowing. That means you are on the line that does not exist.

What are you doing at the moment? You are not talking with me. No.

I’m listening to you.

That is not the present. What is the present? The present is that you are breath. Can you listen without breath?

Not for long!

The basic point is that the breath is the only one on account of which you are existing this moment. And therefore, advertence on the breath is to be in the present. Otherwise you are jumping. Suppose you are doing *Sirsasana* and you say, “I want presence of mind,” but you are jumping from fingers to toes, back to chest, head to ankles. Where are you in the present? You are in space.

So, if you want to be in the present, the yoga mysticism says that you must be advertent to your breathing.

When you are in the breathing, every moment is scrutinized; every moment is undergoing your vigilance if you observe your breath.

Now you are not in the present; that is why you can still be thinking even when I am talking. So, if you are listening to me, you will not be in the present. Many moments, you will be slipping because I say something and you think. I will be entering the next word but you will still be in the previous word, because you think about that word. So, if you are listening to me, don’t think you are in the present. You can’t be in the present.

Now, I made a pause for a while, and still something went on in your mind. How can you say that you are listening to me when I am silent? You are not silent, you are still thinking of what I have said. That is why the yoga mysticism says that you must be advertent of the breathing, of the breath, in order to be in the present. As long as you are observing the yogic breath you will be in the present.

We cannot do that when we have some things to do.

Well. What is yoga? If you are doing yoga, then that is what you are supposed to be doing! Yoga is to be with the breath; it is to be with your own breath. To be with your own breath is to be in the present. There is no other way to be in present. You will not get the flow. You will be interrupted; you will be deviated. While I am talking to you, it is possible that you might think, for a moment, of your lunch, or something in Paris. You can think of something like “what is happening to the child?” Some tiny moment and the deviation will be there. There is no other way to be in present than the yogic breath. That is why yoga mysticism has stressed on the breath. The philosophers have said, “forget the past and don’t think of the future.” That is rubbish! That can never happen. It will only happen if you watch your yogic breath. The more you are unified with the breath, the more you will be able to be in the present.

Can we be unified with the breath all the time?

That is what is expected. If you are a yogi it will happen. You are in the making, so if you go on doing it, that is what is expected. It will not be twenty-four hours; if you do twenty-four hours, you are in *samadhi*.

Is it like doing all our actions: we must have a certain distance in order to be with our breath and to be active at the same time. The connection should be there.

Yes, yes. That is why you have to try to compose your action with the breath itself.

2. Destiny and Emancipation

How can we escape the negative effects of past karma?

You see, if you can escape, it is no destiny. There is no way to escape destiny. If it is escapable, it is no destiny.

Why is there spiritualism, if you and me have to suffer, materialistic fellows have to suffer, unscrupulous fellows have to suffer, and saints have to suffer? What is the point in becoming a saint? This is an obvious question. If an unscrupulous materialistic fellow is going to face the fruits of his past actions, then the saint also has to face them. What is the point in taking all that, on going in spiritual path? The point is that, first of all, if it is escapable, it is not destiny. Know that. You can’t escape destiny. But the difference is that an unscrupulous materialistic fellow is going on his track of life, and the saint is also going on the track of life. Both are going on the track of life.

Now, a simple thing. Suppose you are all asked to travel from here to Bombay. There is only one road, you are all going to travel by the same road, but some of you are given bullock-carts and some of you are given Rolls Royce’s. What’s the difference in the journey? Is there no difference? The track is the same. But one traveller is travelling on a bullock-cart and experiences lots of jerks and jolts, the sun, the heat, the rains, breeze, whatever; and this fellow goes in Rolls-Royce. He has all the windows shut, air conditioning working, super suspensions; he doesn’t feel even a pothole, no rumbles are felt on the road, because he has got super suspensions. Why? It is just because of the “vehicle.”

The road is the same. Just because of the vehicle he has the difference. And will he appreciate the difference or no?

Do you say that both are on the same track and therefore both are in the same situation? Can you say that? Because they are travelling on the same track? The unscrupulous brute materialistic fellow and the spiritual *saddhaka*, the spiritually evolved person, they are all going on the track of life. So, understand the track of life as a road, as I told you, a good example is the Pune-Bombay road. But then the saint is going in a super suspension Rolls Royce, with all the facilities; they don't even feel the sun, the heat, the rain or whatever. So, they are not escaping destiny, they are also getting the potholes, they are also getting the rains, they are also getting the sun, they are also getting the wind or whatever. But then, spiritualism gives them lots of suspensions, lots of cushions.

Thereby, you do not feel the impact of destiny. A bull-cart gets every pothole; imagine his fate, he will break his spine. This Rolls Royce fellow doesn't even notice, doesn't even feel it. Why? Because he has got super-suspensions. He doesn't feel the noise outside. So in spiritualism — the path of spiritualism and the path of yoga — all these things come to you, you've lots of protecting gears, you have lots of cushions. You have super-suspensions, shock absorbers, so you don't have to bother about destiny. That is what spiritualism is, you see, what it has given to humanity. And naturally when your life becomes smoother and smoother, you can go on to higher hierarchies. If you are always getting hardship in your life, obstacles, if you are all the time getting potholes and jerks, well, then you know that you are uncomfortable in life. And you want to progress, but you can't progress, for all those several reasons. But suppose you are given a Rolls Royce; you will say, "I will travel ten times! I will enjoy it!" Pune-Bombay. Bombay-Pune. Pune-Bombay. Bombay-Pune. The other fellow will say, "Not even once, it is enough!"

You can progress in spite of all the onslaughts that are inescapable, the onslaughts which you don't escape. The escape is only possible at the highest point, because the vehicle is such that it will be altogether a different track. Until the liberation, you are going to face all those things but you will not suffer, because you will have a Rolls Royce and more than that. Imagine there is something greater than a Rolls Royce, then how is your journey? In spiritualism, you get all those things, the cushions. And ultimately, the last stage, "*tatah klesa karma nivrttih*"² is the highest stage and you don't have anything in destiny and even destiny itself is burnt out. Destiny is only destroyed at the highest point. Until then, it is not destroyed. You have to face it. So although I said that destiny is inescapable, it is in relation to all of us. It is only destroyed on the point of liberation (*kaivalya*). Until then, it is not destroyed; it has to be faced.

But apart from that, there are so many facilities in *Karma-siddhanta*. The Yoga Sutras say, "you can postpone," "sometimes, your destiny can be postponed" or "your destiny can be suppressed." And that's a great advantage. That also doesn't come to you and me. But yogis can keep the destiny suspended for some time.

Now suppose that destiny is full of sufferings. And suppose you have to eat something very, very pungent. "What to do?" you say, and there are so many sweets you will call for, so that you will not burn your tongue. And there are many sweets: *goulab jamoun*, *shrikhand*, *laddous*, *jalebis*, and so on. All the sweets are of such a nature that you will also be able to taste pickles, which are hot and pungent and you will relish them. So there is a stage in life — when there are all *jalebis* and *laddous* in your life — where you will easily swallow that trauma. You will even call for it. When you are called for a party, you don't just ask for sweets. You say, "give me some pepper, give me some chutney, give me some pickle. Why? Because you will relish it. But suppose you have whole a bowlful of pickles on your plate, a bowlful of chutney and just a salt pinch of *shrikhand*, will you appreciate that party?

So that facility is there, *adyatma*, that you can suppress your destiny, you can postpone it, keep it

²Yoga Sutra IV, 30: "Then comes the end of afflictions and of *karma*." B.K.S. Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

away for some time and invite it whenever you are in a convenient setting and finish it off. You have got to face the *karmas*. So, a yogi has an advantage, not you and me. It clearly comes in the second chapter of the Yoga Sutra, which is “*karma siddhanta*”; you can postpone, you can suppress, which is a great facility — but for you and me, we can’t do those things. But we definitely can have head gears, body gears, all sorts of sheaths, all sorts of bolsters, all sorts of suspensions and then, we can be facing destiny without suffering.

A simple example: *Sri Ramana Maharshi* had cancer but, to tell you, he did not have cancer; he had a tumour in the armpits, and *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* had throat cancer. But suppose that you get a throat cancer, you say, “I have cancer.” Now, actually, cancer is a part of the body, too. But we say, “I have cancer.” *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* did not suffer on account of his cancer, because he had the suspensions. As a matter of fact, even without cancer, you can suffer: the doctor comes and says he has diagnosed cancer in you — his diagnosis might be wrong, but still you will suffer. The doctor gives a wrong report, somebody’s report is given on your name, and he says you have got cancer. Now, even without having cancer you will suffer. So we are such people that we can suffer without a real cause of sufferance. It is our fate that we can be suffering without anything to suffer! On the other hand, *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* definitely had cancer in the throat, but he did not suffer. That you have to face your destiny is a fact; it is a reality. You can’t escape. But it doesn’t mean that you have to suffer. If you do yoga, in the authentic way, you’ll have lots of cushions, guards and suspensions. You can face destiny without any trauma, without any apprehension, without any fear, without any threat.

At the end of a class, you said, “we were birthless and deathless.” What did you really mean?

Well, we are birthless in the sense that the Soul doesn’t have birth, doesn’t have death. Also there is no question of coming to birth and then dying. As far as ontologically we are concerned, ultimately we are all “souls;” we are not “bodies.” The body is a transitory phase, the physical manifestation is a transitory phase; it comes to existence on the point of birth and goes away on the point of death. So, essentially there is no birth and no death for us. But when it comes to chronology, every moment lasts for only one moment. The next moment is not there for a second moment. Chronologically, every moment dies after the moment is over and a new moment comes every moment. So there is birth of a moment every moment, and there is death of a moment every moment. So, in that sense, we are constantly dying and constantly being born.

What is the desire of the soul?

The Soul doesn’t have any desire. Because if there is desire, there will be constant bubbling and fluctuations. And then, once the desire is there, you will do something to fulfil it, or you will not do something to fulfil it. So when you have a desire, you either do or you don’t do. And therefore you’ll be caught in the *karma*. The moment you have a desire, you’ll be caught in the *karma* (action) — which is of various forms as I said the other day. It is not only action; it is doing, non-doing, and un-doing in any way. Suppose you want peace of mind, then you not only do, you also don’t do. For peace of mind you say, “Let me not do anything.” You want to rest, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that you don’t do; you do something, you go on your bed, you sleep on your bed. You do something and you don’t do something for your rest, for your peace of mind.

So, to get desire fulfilled you either do something or you don’t do something, or you do as well as don’t do. Therefore, you are caught in the *karmas*. When you do, then the doing process is there,

and the fruit of action is also there. Again you desire, again you do, again you get the fruit, again you aspire, again you act, again you get the fruit, again you aspire; so it continues. The desire is there in the cycle that is caught in the wheel of *karmas*. The Soul doesn't have desire therefore it is not caught in the *karmas*. The Soul has no desire.

Can you talk about the karmic lesson? Why is it we are here?

The karmic lesson? See, why are you here? Just now I answered? If you have a desire you do something. If you desire, you definitely do something to get it, to enjoy it, to experience it. That's why you are here. We had some desires and the desires were to be fulfilled. To fulfil the desires, we got the manifestation, we got the birth, we got the life span and we got the conditions and therefore we try to get the fruit of first *karmas*. And when we get the fruit of it — it doesn't stop there — when you get the fruit, you say, “Oh, I should get more of this or something different than this also.” And then, again you aspire. When you aspire, again you have to work for it. If your life is not sufficient to work for it, you die and come back.

So that is how, because of the wheel of karma, we manifest and we do certain things. We are given dispositions, we are given conditions, we are inclined to do actions and reap the fruits. We are here to reap the fruits and then we are here to aspire for the fruits of the next life. But the question is, “why should we be here?” Then it becomes a spiritual path. We are here to enjoy and suffer the fruits, experience the pains and pleasures, sorrows and delights, successes and failures, fortune, misfortune.

We are here to face them all. But in the spiritual path, the question arises, “what should I be doing with the existence?” Then, it's a different answer to that question. But generally, we are here to experience our past *karmas* and to experience the karmic *siddhanta*, the karmic theories and the fruits of *karmas*. But when it comes to the spiritual path, why are we here? We are here to develop the suspensions; we are here to get a Rolls Royce for our journey in life. And when we get it we can be going on to a higher hierarchy and leading towards the spiritual *summum bonum*. So that we slowly get away from the karmic wheel. As students of yoga, you are here to get away from the cycle of *karma*. You are in the cycle itself, you are already in the wheel, but you are trying to dismount, that is why you're here. As students of yoga, you should be, for that reason, not repentant for your existence.

Others say, “I should not have existed, I should have died, I should have committed suicide or I should commit suicide, I should not exist.” That means they do not want the existence. So they're fed up with life and a spiritualist is never expected to be fed up with life, because it's an opportunity that you can get a Rolls Royce of life for you — Rolls Royce for your journey in life, so that you have a smooth journey and then with a smooth journey, you can be getting the evolution.

3. Our True Nature

What is our true nature? It seems like if we have two different natures: a deep nature, which is the Self, and a kind of nature, which is our history, personality, karmic involvements, which is there also. How to deal between the two, without creating new knots, and still go to freedom?

Well, there are no two natures. Bhagavad-Gita says in one place, “*Svabhava adyatma utchate*.”³ *Svabhava* means nature. Nature is *adyatma*, “Our nature is our spiritual entity.” The rest is all

³Bhagavad-Gita VIII, 3.

garments. Now, this is not your nature, these are your clothes. Because you can be wearing any clothes. You are wearing this today; to-morrow you can be wearing a sari, you might be wearing a pant also. But is that your nature? That's not your nature.

Maybe it is reflecting?

You can be changing the clothes, even the next moment you can keep going and change.

I always chose the same type of clothes!

Whatever, but then is that your nature? That's a garment. That is not you. Then nature is you in you. Your nature is you in you. Your nature is not this. So, apart from the Soul, everything is a garment.

But the garment is taking the whole place in the consciousness.

Correct. But therefore, those who are concerned about the dress only, how do you consider them? Somebody bothers about the elegance, the external beauty etc. etc. What do you think of them? It's all superficial, it's all extravagance. Right. So, if somebody deals with the garments as if it was his or her personality, you certainly know that that person doesn't know what he or she is. He or she goes by his or her external appearance. Your body, your mind, your intelligence, your emotions are all "your" clothes. They are not you. They are all garments, because even if you change and come with a sari, you are not going to change. You are going to remain the same. Similarly, these clothes, various sheaths, physical and mental, they are all clothes for the Soul and they are not the nature. Your mind is not your nature, because your mind will depend upon in what condition you are and in what situation you are; that's how the mind takes its form.

So the mind is conditioned by all those factors. You know, that's why I have got the concept of "psychology of mind." Nobody knows this "psychology of mind" because we identify ourselves so much with the mind that we think that we are the mind. If the mind is sad, you are sad, if mind is happy, you are happy. You never say that "my mind is sad, but I am happy!" Will you ever say that? Or, "my mind is happy, but I am sad!" You will never say it, it will never occur and happen, because we identify ourselves so much with the mind. So again, even if we identify, the two are not one.

"Psychology of mind" is a concept of which I speak very often and which is quite intriguing. Nobody will understand what "psychology of mind" is because psychology pertains to mind only. Mind itself is psychology. But we say also "mob psychology," we say "child psychology," we say "women's psychology." You know what that means? When we say "child psychology" it means that a person is behaving uncharacteristically and that the child is like a child, she behaves like a child, then you say it is "child psychology." That means she is not, anatomically, that, but she behaves that way. What does "mob psychology" mean? That individuals behave uncharacteristically to what they are: if you segregate all those from the mob, they will not be trouble mongers. But when they get in a mob, they become violent. So they behave uncharacteristically when they come into mob. "Woman's psychology" means that you as a woman behave uncharacteristically to the core of your being and therefore it is called "woman psychology." Like "mob psychology," you and me get into the mob and we behave uncharacteristically. So "woman psychology" means that you behave uncharacteristically. Not being ladies, you behave as ladies, because essentially you are not a lady. I'm essentially not a man.

Essentially nobody is a child. Nobody is man. Nobody is nobody that way. But still we behave. That's why you say "man psychology, woman psychology, child psychology, student psychology."

What does “student psychology” mean? The mob behaves uncharacteristically as students, which they are not, individually. They are not like that, but getting into the clan of students they will behave like that. So, there is also “mind psychology.” Many times you say, “Oh why did I react that way? Why did I say that way? Why did I think that way?” That means, the mind has thought in a way you did not want to think. It is the mind that has reacted uncharacteristically to you. That is why you say, “Oh, I was stupid at that time! Oh, how stupid my mind is!”

It means that you are intelligent but the mind is stupid. What does that mean? That means that you are noble, that you are magnanimous. The mind is mean. So the mind also has its psychology: it behaves depending upon situations; depending upon the conditions, it behaves differently. A simple example: when you are with your children, you move as a mother; when you are moving with your friends, you move as a friend; when you move with your teachers, you move as a student, as a disciple; and when you move with your students, you move as a teacher.

Now, tell me, are you essentially teacher, or student, or wife, or sister, or brother, or friend? You are no one. You are no one. Depending on the situation, your mind moulds and you become mother, you become sister, you become friend, you become teacher, you become student. Actually you are none of them. You behave with your children as a mother, and again you are uncharacteristically to you. Behaving as a teacher depends on conditions and again you’re uncharacteristically behaving as a teacher; you are not teacher, still you behave as a teacher.

Our mind is like mercury; our mind, like air or water, takes various forms and shapes. Water has no shape but when it is in this glass you say it has this shape, when it is in a bottle it has that shape. Water doesn’t have any shape. Fire doesn’t have any shape. But water takes the shape of the container. Similarly, our mind doesn’t have shape or form. It is no woman’s mind, no man’s mind, no child’s mind, no human mind, no animal mind. It depends upon the manifestation, which is like a container. Therefore it is not the essential nature. Now, suppose there is a balloon of the form of an elephant. I blow it up and it takes the form of elephant. Will you say that air is like an elephant? Do you mean to say that air has the shape of elephant? You won’t. Suppose the balloon is square, will you say that air is square? You won’t.

Similarly, the mind takes various forms and shapes; you don’t have shape, you don’t have form, you don’t have class, creed, gender, status, stature, so on and so forth. Essentially you don’t have anything of that. All that is because of your garments. So your mind is not your nature because you are not your mind. So there are not two natures. There is only one nature; “*Svabhavam adyatma utchate*”⁴ is the definition in the Bhagavad-Gita. *Svabhavam* means nature. And what is it: *adyatma*. Your “episoular” aspect is you.

What do you mean by “episoular?”

“Episoular” means “pertaining to the Soul,” or “the center of the Soul.” Because in English there is a wrong word for *adyatma*, it is called “spiritualism.” *Adhyatmic* is derived from Sanskrit, *adhy* is a prefix, *adhyatmic* is *adhy-atmic*, and it means “pertaining to the Soul.” All that is pertaining to the Soul is spiritual. That which pertains to the Soul is your nature. Because the Soul is neominal. So anything that pertains to the Soul is your nature. There are no mutations, you don’t change, the Soul doesn’t change. The changelessness, immutability, indestructibility are all the natures of the Soul; that is your nature. You have no class, no creed, no gender, no status, no stature; that’s what you are.

Now, understand what you are. What are you in sleep? When you are in deep sleep, are you man or woman? Are you sister or brother? Son or daughter, father or mother? Are you emperor or beggar?

⁴Bhagavad-Gita VIII, 3.

The emperor is no emperor; the beggar is no beggar in sleep. The sleep is the great levelizer. It's a great levelizer, because you cast aside all your garments in sleep and that is why you are nobody's nobody. You are nobody to anybody. You are nobody to everybody. A mother is not a mother in sleep. And a simple thing: they say the mother takes care of the child. The child is the life of the mother. They say this. But then how can the mother afford to leave the child on the side and go to sleep carelessly? The mother is absolutely careless: when the child is sleeping on the side and she goes to sleep, does she bother about the child, as to what will happen? Anything can happen.

But how does the mother go to sleep? Our *adyatma* says that there is only one mother and one father: the Divinity. So the mother knows that there is a Mother to take care of the child and that Mother will take care and just say the child goes to sleep in the lap. So the mother who goes to sleep on the bed, by the side of the child, doesn't have to bother about the child. Because, in sleep, the mother is no mother, the father is no father. There is a beautiful scripture in the *Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad*, "*Atra pita apita bhavati, mata amat*"⁵ — "In sleep, the father becomes non-father, the mother becomes non-mother, the brute becomes non-brute, the saint becomes non-saint." And therefore your nature is an entity without class, without creed, without gender, without status, without stature. That is what you are. That is your nature.

4. Mind or Soul?

It seems that certain people are more interested by the activity of the soul than the activity of the body.

Funny thing! The Soul doesn't have any activity! What do you mean by "activity of the soul?"

I mean, talking about meditation, a mental, spiritual thing.

A simple thing: are they doing meditation with their mind or anything else? That's the mind. Where is the spirit? Where is the Soul? The Soul doesn't have any activity.

It depends on what you call "Soul," because in the West we have different terms.

What?

For us, the "soul" is what makes you alive. That's all. So, the soul can have feelings, the soul can think. Plato says the thought is a silent dialog of the soul with herself.

Now what is the difference between your soul and your mind? The mind is wrongly identified as the Soul and there comes the problem.

When you say, "mind" do you imply "citta?"

Yes, yes. The mind has various layers, like an onion, you see. Starting from the body; there is mind in the body also, like the rivers' banks. The mind has the body as a bank on one side; and on the other

⁵Bhrad Aranyaka Upanishad, IV, 3, 22.

side, something beyond the mind is the bank of it. So the mind on the other bank of it is closer to the Soul. It is not the Soul. It is closer to the Soul.

You said last time that the mind was identifying itself with the Soul, like the servant with the master; when the mind is happy, he thinks that the Soul is happy...

Yes. We identify ourselves with the mind that's why we say, "my mind is happy, I am happy." We never say, "my mind is sad but I am happy" or "my mind is happy and I am sad." It never happens. We identify so much. Actually, the relationship between the mind and the Soul is that of the servant and master, as *Patanjali* puts it. *Patanjali* says the Soul is the *swami*, the master, and consciousness is the servant. In spite of such a relationship, there is a big difference between the master and the servant. There is no need to tell you what the master is and what the servant is; but although they are master and servant, there is still identification. One is sentient and the other one is inert. There is the living principle, and the non-living principle. The Soul is sentient, the consciousness is insentient. Do you follow what sentient, insentient mean? Living, non-living? So, one is inert, the other one is animate. Now there is a big difference between the two, but still there is a mix-up and there is imposition.

So when they speak about meditation, they are doing something with the mind and not with the Soul. The meditation that they consider as an activity of the Soul is not an activity of the Soul. The Soul doesn't have any activity. It is mental.

5. The Role of Nature

There was still this question about nature. In Kaivalya Pada it is said that the guna just retire when they have done their job,⁶ but sometimes, we feel them more like obstacles than like helps.

You see, the *guna* and the *prakrti* are for two sakes, two purposes. This comes in the second chapter of the eighteenth *sutra*. In the eighteenth *sutra* there is a definition of *prakrti*: "*Prakasha kriya sthiti silam bhutendriyatmakam bhogapavargartham drsyam.*"⁷ The matter is there to serve two purposes: one is giving you *apavarga* and the other one is to give you *bhoga*. One is to give you bondage (*bhoga*); the other one is to give you instruments for liberation (*apavarga*). So *prakrti* works in both ways, it depends upon how you apply it, how you use it. *Prakrti* is not wholly and solely bad or wholly and solely good. It has to serve both purposes. See, will you enjoy your life and have contentment without any experience? You would like the experience to be there in your life. At the most you might say, "I just want pleasures, desires, successes, fortune. I don't want failures, I don't want misfortune, I don't want worries and such negative things." But you want experience in some form or another. Like fire: fire is not only there to burn you, but also to warm you and cook your food. Fire is good and bad depending upon how you use it.

Similarly *prakrti* is good or bad depending upon how you apply it. If you say, "I want good," then along with good you have to accept bad. But no one, for that reason, will reject the experience totally.

⁶Yoga Sutra IV, 32: "When *dharmameghah samadhi* is attained, qualities of nature (*gunas*) come to rest. Having fulfilled their purpose, their sequence of successive mutations is at an end." B.K.S. Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

⁷Yoga Sutra II, 18: "Nature, its three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and its evolutes, the elements, mind, senses of perception and organs of action, exist eternally to serve the seer, for enjoyment or emancipation." B.K.S. Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

No human being will say, “I should not have any experience!” No one will say, “I should be blind, I should be dumb, I should be deaf, I should be numb. I should have no legs, no hands, no eyes, no ears.” Is there any human being who will aspire for such a state? So you want eyes, you want ears, you want a mouth, you want legs, you want hands; you want the body to experience.

So *prakrti* is there to give you experience and *prakrti* is also there to give you *prashantkyena*, *viveka*, discrimination, intellection, wisdom etc. You can't say that “the mind is a problem for me, I should not have a mind at all.” If you don't have the mind, you don't have peace, you don't have tranquillity. You at least definitely say, “I want peace. I want tranquillity.” Right? But then that means that you are accepting the mind; you want the mind. Without the mind, there is no question of peace. But, when you are in agony, when you have lots of troubles, you say “this mind is a problem,” or “my mind is a problem,” or “I should not have a mind at all!” But then that is not genuine aspiration; you don't really aspire for it. You only want the mind, because you want the peace, you want the tranquillity.

So nature has two roles. One is to be conducive and give you conduciveness in yoga and give you intellection, wisdom, tranquillity, sublimity, serenity, passivity, and so on. And the same *prakrti* also gives you experiences in the form of dualities. So, nature has two roles to play and that is why nature is there.

But yoga is an involution process; it is like going against nature's flow.

No. No. No. Involution is not against nature. No. Involution and evolution are both flows, roles of nature. Nature evolves and nature devolves.

Can you get away from space? Can you get away from space?

Yes, of course! (Laughing)

You wish — why do you wish? But what will happen if you are without space around you? You won't be there. Space is omnipresent, all pervasive. Nothing can escape space. Therefore, similarly, nothing can escape *prakrti* or go against *prakrti*. Everything is *prakrti*, whether you antagonize or protagonize. Whether you go with it or against it. It is all your concepts that you are going against, that you are going opposite; intelligent to some standards, some morals, you say, “this is pro, this is against.” But there is nothing like that. Everything is matter. Going against the nature itself is nature. Where are you away from the nature? Just say you cannot get away from space, you cannot get away from nature, you cannot be doing again anything, as a matter of fact, against nature, because doing against nature itself is nature. Everything is nature here. To be a saint is a nature. To be a brute is a nature. But the brute antagonizes the society, therefore the brute is not natural for us: a human being should be a human being. If a human being starts behaving like a dog, you say it is unnatural; because you expect the human being to be a human being and therefore you think it is unnatural. But a dog is not unnatural; a dog is also nature. But a human being becoming a dog, a human being behaving like a dog is unnatural.

Aging is natural but you speak of de-aging. Is that not unnatural?

That's also natural. Yogis are undergoing the aging process, it is natural, that's why it happens; otherwise, it wouldn't happen. We are going on the aging track; we are all aging, from moment to moment. And then, if there is a yogi who is defying aging — not only defying aging, but de-aging, he becomes younger and younger and younger — then this also happens because it is nature. In the

fourth chapter, in the beginning, *Patanjali* says “the *prakrti* supplies everything in abundance”⁸ but what we grab is aging and what the yogi grabs is de-aging. The *prakrti* has all the potentials. It is the source of everything. If it has all the potentials, well there is also the potential for de-aging, which is opposite nature, against nature. You think it is against nature; but it is not against nature: it is nature! It is nature for a yogi. And aging is nature for you and me.

So if a yogi is de-aging, you can't say it is unnatural. But why speak of a yogi? Even astronauts will not be aging, if the spaceships are travelling at a speed close to the speed of light. They will be becoming shorter. Now, usually we come across people who are growing, or who are not growing. But you will not see a person, unless it's a disease, unless he bends, who will. Height will not decrease for a man. He may appear so because of a disease, but if you go in space at a speed close to the speed of light, you will become shorter and shorter and you will not age.

Suppose an astronaut goes into space and stays in space for twenty-five years. When he started the voyage, he had a baby-son. When he comes back, after 25 years, he is 25 and his son also is 25. If he comes after 50 years, his son will become 50, he will be 25; the father will be 25, and the son will be 50 — if he stays in space for 50 years travelling at a speed of light. This is what physics says, they say “nothing airy-fairy.” Why may you not become yogis, in such an event, but still stay young? These are all the accounts given in astronomy that if he travels in space such a long time, the father will be younger than the son.

Nature has everything, all the potentials. Nature is limitless. It has no limits, just as your space. Space is infinite. The universe is infinite. Matter is infinite and therefore nothing is unnatural; but it becomes unnatural in the particular context of sociology, in the particular context of psychology, in the particular context of biology, in the particular context of physics. Then the things are unnatural because you are narrowing the spectrum, the perspective. You look at the biological aspect and then you say, “This is unnatural.” You look at psychological aspect and you say, “This is unnatural.” Understand this. You have to know the paradigm on which you say or postulate theories that a man should be like a man, that a man should not be a dog. It depends upon the paradigm; but you can't say that nature is limited. You go against nature if you have a psychological perspective; then you can go against nature, because you will defy the psychological rules and laws. On one hand you go against nature; on the other hand you don't go against nature, you can't go against nature. Understand these two perspectives; then there won't be any confusion. So you can't say that I'm saying that nothing is unnatural.” There are unnatural things, from a limited perspective.

When will we start the real yoga?

But you are already doing. Everything is real yoga. There are various levels and hierarchies. Why do you think that what you are doing is unreal yoga? What brings you apprehension and scepticism, what makes you think that is unreal?

⁸Yoga Sutra IV, 2: “The abundant flow of nature's energy brings about a transformation in one's birth, aiding the process of evolution.” B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.

6. Doing in a Non-Doing State is Yoga

There is a kind of idealism that we carry with us all the time; when you idealize, you also get frustrations.

I have said several times that “the success is a dual course,” when you are doing yoga; because even if you succeed, you are going to beget a un-yogic disposition. Failure also gives the same. Success gives you arrogance, pride, self-conceit, self-assertiveness. When you do the actions, there can only be either success or failure. Therefore, in *karma* yoga, your action should be done as if you were not doing. When you don't do, you don't expect; there is no question of failure and success, if you have not done at all! Suppose you don't study and you appear for the exams. If you fail, you don't feel for it, because you have not studied. So that is why the inaction, the non-action in action, is important; if you are carried away in action, if you are in the storm of action, the results are going to be there, either positive or negative.

That is why you should not be acting. Not to do is yoga. To do is not yoga.

You mean to do without acting?

Doing in a non-doing state is yoga. So the things are done as if they were not done. That should be the state. Suppose you have done something very physically, you have struggled physically, you have worked very very hard; if you get failure, your frustration is great. But if you have not worked physically, it's a mental endeavour; if you fail, the trauma is not big, because you have just worked mentally on it. So, if the physical effort is bigger, repercussions are that much stronger and more negative: when you fail in your own physical endeavours you have perspired, you have sweated, you have lost your energies, you are down after the action. You are no good for anything, you are just flat and you fail. Imagine the trauma.

But if you have done something mentally and you fail, the trauma is not so big. So particularly when something is done very physically, you must take care that if you fail your trauma is going to be very strong because you have exerted; but there is not much question of mental exertion compared to physical exertion. And therefore, try to do the things more mentally. Then, do as if you have not done, and the effects won't touch you at all.

7. Karma Yoga

That's why the *karma* yoga principles are very important in the practices of yoga. You are not supposed to aspire and do. But that doesn't mean that you should not be inspired. You should be inspired but not aspiring. Because if you aspire, you are going to face the consequences, which are going to be very strong. If you succeed, you will get pride, arrogance and self-conceit, self-assertiveness, and look down upon others. This is what happens to all successful people; they look down upon others. They think others are creatures; they are so stubborn; they are obstinate. You can't expect a man who is very successful to change his thought-pattern or anything. So the success gives you all those cancers and the failure also gives you frustration, despair and desperateness, again that's a cancer.

And therefore, if you don't aspire, there is no question of success or failure. If you aspire, those things matter; if you don't aspire, they don't matter. That's why you should be doing the actions without desire and aspiration. These are the *karma* yoga principles. It is not idealism, it is not

ideology, it is a reality; because if you do that way, then you have a steady mind, otherwise you will definitely have lots of oscillations in your mind. *Karma* yoga is not only good, but it is right. Not to aspire and work is not just good, it is not an ideology, it is right. So *karma* yoga is not an ideology at all. *Karma* yoga is a reality, because it is telling you something that is right and why it is right.

8. You Have No Rights on the Fruits of Actions

We sometimes analyse our actions and say, “I did and I got it.” But I’ve said several times, “How much do you do and how much has happened in your yoga?” If you do a proper analysis, you will come to know that you have done one penny, and you have got worth hundred dollars. So, you can’t take credit for all those hundred dollars as “your” action, you have done only worth one penny. Because how do you do in action? You use your hands, your legs, your body; you use your mind, your intelligence. Are they all under your control? You can be losing your hand today; you can be losing your mind today. If they are yours and you own them, then you will never lose them. But that’s not the case, you are tenants, these are all what you hired. You hire all these forces. Your hands are hired, your legs are hired, your mind is hired, your *prana* is hired, your intelligence is hired, everything is hired. It doesn’t belong to you and you are using something that is not your own and you are doing the action. How can you claim the result of it as your result? You don’t have ownership on any part of yourself, on any aspect of yourself. You can go lunatic tomorrow. Why tomorrow? The next moment you can go lunatic. Right?

What is yours? Nothing is yours and you are working with all that, which is not yours, and therefore you can’t take credit for the action. See, if I help you, you say “thank you.” Right? And it is perfectly right, it’s not only an etiquette, it’s right that you thank me because I have helped you. Right? But that’s not the case with your hands — do you thank your hands ever?

Sometimes, my feet only.

As you thank me, do you treat them as separate and do you thank them? You don’t do that. You might feel happy, “Oh, my hands got it, my leg got it!”

That’s why Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, “*karmani eva adhikarah*,”⁹ — “you have only right for *karma*.” Because all those things with which you do are not yours; therefore action is not yours. All those instruments with which you do, your physical, mental, volitional, pranic instruments, whatever you use, they are not you, they are not your instrument, they are hired, they are given to you, they are grace of God, they are bounty of God, they are given on lease to you. And invaluable things are given to you. Suppose I give you something on lease for one penny; I give you ten acres of land, you say “big bounty, a hundred acres of land for one *paisa* per year!” So it is something that you are getting on lease and therefore you don’t have any claim on the fruit; because, if the things are done beautifully by your hands, the fruit should go to your hands and not to you. So that’s why you don’t have the right on your fruits, on the fruits of the actions. So this is not an ideology, it is reality. You think that it might be an ideology not to expect the fruit, just work and don’t have aspiration for fruit. It is not an ideology, it is reality. You can’t claim a right on the fruits. You have no right on the fruits of actions. That’s again a big topic — *karma* yoga.

⁹Bhagavad-Gita II, 47.

So, why should we do anything at all?

You don't have to do; the things will be done. Then you go with the nature as we say.

But you have to live your life; you cannot refuse it.

Where is the question of refusing, you see, experience is for *bhoga*,¹⁰ *purushartha*.¹¹ It is for your good also. Where is the question of refusing, it is for your good, if you use the nature properly.

9. Yoga — An Integrated Science

We don't believe it is for our good in these promises. The so-called "good" doesn't feel good sometimes!

That's what I said, so many things are influencing our mind; our ethnic background, our cultural background, all this is influencing us. Therefore we have got to go to the primordial culture, to the cosmic culture. That's all man-made you see; ethnic background that we have created, this is man-made. What is "cosmos-made?" We must follow that and that will make our life smoother and smoother.

Basically what the human being requires is physical and mental wellbeing, peace of mind and wisdom. Nobody on this planet Earth, in any region, is without these aspirations. Savages and wealthy metropolitans aspire for physical-mental wellbeing, mental peace, tranquillity, wisdom and knowledge. Why only wisdom? We aspire to become omniscient. We want to know everything; this is the human desire. This is universal, whatever culture, whatever ethnic background, whatever economic standards. This is not going to change.

So we must work for these three aspects: How can we evolve? How can we get physical-mental wellbeing, peace and tranquillity and wisdom and knowledge? Once you go after them, you have to see that. That's the way yoga is one complete science; I call it "complete science of humanics." I call it "a complete science of human being," because yoga deals with all the three.

So many sciences have come for physical-mental wellbeing. There is medicine, dietetics, science of exercises, sports, games; they are all there for your physical wellbeing. But then they don't attend to other aspects. There are some sciences that are for psychological, the mental peace and tranquillity but then they neglect the body. Those who get mental peace suffer from a weak body, an antagonizing body. Those who go after wisdom; well, you know what their fate is: most brilliant people are physically disabled, physically weak. So those efforts are all lop-sided. If you go in pursuit of knowledge, you lose the other two. If you go in pursuit of physical wellbeing, you lose the other two. If you go in pursuit of mental peace, you lose the other two. So it is only through an integrated science, if you adhere to it, that you will be getting all the three.

¹⁰*bhoga*: enjoyment, pleasure, experience of sensual joys

¹¹*purushartha*: four objects or aims of life: *dharma* (discharge of duty), *artha* (acquisition of wealth), *kama* (gratification of desires) and *moksa* (final emancipation).