

And Now, And Here

Talks given from 28/10/69 to 31/10/69

Original in Hindi

CHAPTER 1

No Bigger Lie Than Death

28 October 1969 pm in Meditation Camp at Dwarka, Gurujat, India

CHAPTER 2

Seeing Life as a Dream

29 October 1969 am in Meditation Camp at Dwarka, Gujarat, India

CHAPTER 3

The Whole Universe is a Temple

29 October 1969 pm in Meditation Camp at Dwarka, Gujarat, India

CHAPTER 4

Returning to the Source

30 October 1969 am in Meditation Camp at Dwarka, Gurujat, India

CHAPTER 5

Find Your Own Way

30 October 1969 pm in Meditation Camp at Dwarka, Gujarat, India

CHAPTER 6

Love is Dangerous

31 October 1969 am in Meditation Camp at Dwarka, Gujarat, India

CHAPTER 7

I Teach Death

31 October 1969 pm in Mediation Camp at Dwarka, Gujarat, India

CHAPTER 8

Ignorance of Life is Death

4 November 1969 pm in Bhulabhai Auditorium, Bombay, India

CHAPTER 9

The Ultimate Freedom

5 November 1969 am in Opera House, Bombay, India

CHAPTER 10

Religion is a Search for Meditation

1 August 1970 pm in CCI Chambers, Bombay, India

CHAPTER 11

The Choice is Always Yours

2 August 1970 pm in Bombay, India

CHAPTER 12

The Distance Makes the Difference

3 August 1970 pm in Bombay, India

CHAPTER 13

Science of the Esoteric

4 August 1970 pm in Bomnay, India

CHAPTER 14

I am Ready, If You Are

5 August 1970 pm in Bombay, India

CHAPTER 15

Discipline of Suchness

6 August 1970 pm in Bombay, India

Question 1

OSHO, YOU HAVE SAID BEFORE THAT IF A SEEKER IN HIS EXPERIMENT SHOULD MAKE AN INTENSE RESOLVE THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DIE, THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO HIS OWN CENTER, IN A FEW DAYS HIS LIFE ENERGY WILL BEGIN TO CONTRACT FROM WITHIN AND THE SEEKER WILL BE ABLE TO SEE HIS BODY AS DEAD – FIRST FROM WITHIN, AND THEN FROM WITHOUT. CONSEQUENTLY, HIS FEAR OF DEATH WILL DISAPPEAR FOREVER. SO THE QUESTION IS: IN THIS CONDITION, DOES ONE NEED TO MAKE ANY SPECIAL PREPARATION OR TAKE ANY EXTRA PRECAUTION SO THAT THE SUBTLE BODY MAY RETURN SAFELY TO THE PHYSICAL BODY? OR, DOES THE RETURN OF THE SUBTLE BODY HAPPEN ON ITS OWN? PLEASE EXPLAIN.

In many ways, man lives essentially through the mind. Even when we perceive something as a physical occurrence, deep down it turns out to be a psychological phenomenon. All bodily manifestations have their roots in the mind. Let me explain a few things in this regard, then it will be easy to follow the question.

Until fifty years ago, all human illnesses were treated as illnesses of the body. In the last fifty years, the more we have learned about illnesses, the more the proportion of physical illnesses has decreased while that of the psychological illnesses has increased. Even the greatest of physiologists is ready to admit today that more than fifty percent of all human ailments are psychological. Sickesses which are otherwise considered as physical, more than half of them are caused by the mind. Mind is the very substratum of man's being, his existence. It is the source of our life, it is

the source of our illness, and it is the very source of our death. That's why so much importance is given to the will.

If you have ever witnessed an experiment in hypnosis, there are a few things about it worth keeping in mind. A hypnotized person is simply one whose conscious mind is asleep and whose unconscious mind is awake. When the conscious mind goes to sleep, the person stops doubting, because all doubts and misgivings are limited to the conscious mind.

If we divide the human mind into ten parts, it will appear that one part of it is conscious while the remaining nine are unconscious. Nine parts are in the dark unconscious; only a small portion – one tenth of the mind – is awake. It is this conscious mind that doubts, thinks, ponders. If this conscious mind were to sleep, then the remaining nine parts below would stay totally receptive. There, no questions are asked, no doubts are raised.

In the state of hypnosis, the doubting mind is put to sleep and the undoubting, receptive mind comes into effect. In that state, if you were to place a small piece of rock on the hand of the hypnotized person and tell him it is a hot coal, he will cry out in pain as if his hand had been burned. He will at once throw the rock away – just as he would if a real hot coal had been placed on his hand.

Up to this point one may assume that just an idea in his mind must have caused this to happen. But the astonishing thing is that blisters appear on his hand – the same as it would have if a hot coal had been placed there. So apparently, although you had placed an ordinary piece of rock, the person's mind totally accepted your word that it was a hot coal. And the body has no means of denying the mind, so it acts accordingly. Remember well, if the mind accepts totally, the body will have to follow it.

There is a reverse of this experiment too, which is even more astonishing. You can place an ember in the hypnotized person's hand and tell him it is just a cold pebble. The man will keep on holding the ember and yet no blisters will appear on his hand. Without the mind's permission, the body is helpless to do anything.

That is why fakirs are able to dance barefoot on fire – there is no miracle in it. It's just a little experiment in the science of mind. There are ten fakirs dancing on the fire, they openly invite anyone to join them, so there is no question of any fraud. You are welcome to dance with them. But that will be possible only when watching those ten people you become fully convinced the fire is not affecting them. Once you are convinced – that if they are not having burns, you won't either – you reach the same state a hypnotized person does. In that state, the one part of your mind is not doubting, and the nine parts are believing – now you can jump into the fire, your feet won't burn. One who has any doubts will not jump, but the one who has none will jump in. What this means is that even fire cannot burn you if the mind is not open to it, and even coldness can cause burns if the mind is ready for it.

Experiments in hypnosis reveal very profound truths about the mind. For example, I was once conducting experiments in hypnosis on a girl. I was a guest in her house. We were sitting in a room. Altogether we were ten people: the girl, myself, and eight other people including her mother, who was seated right across from her.

When I placed the girl under hypnosis, I told her that her mother had left the room. Then I asked her to open her eyes and count the number of people present in the room. She counted nine because for her, the mother who was sitting across on the sofa did not exist. I asked her several times who was sitting on the sofa and her answer was, "The sofa is empty." Her mother called out to her. She looked all around the room – except at the sofa where her mother was sitting – to see where her voice came from. As far as she was concerned, the mother was not seated on the sofa.

Once again I asked her to close her eyes and told her that her father, who was not in the room, had come and was sitting across from her on the sofa. Then I asked her to open her eyes and count the number of people in the room. She counted ten. I asked, "You had said earlier the sofa across from you was empty; why are you counting it now?" She said, "The sofa is not empty, father is sitting on it." Her mother, who was actually sitting on the sofa, did not exist for her. But her father who was not even in the room – she counted him. Her mind had totally accepted my word.

A resolute mind holds wonderful possibilities. For those who face many defeats in their lives, the readiness of their mind to accept defeat is far more responsible than the circumstances. The world as such has very little to do with the failures met by people – ninety percent of the responsibility lies with the people themselves. When one is ninety percent ready to encounter failure, it would be a little too much if the world didn't cooperate even ten percent with it – the world makes a ten percent contribution.

The same principle applies to those who go on attaining success as it does to those who meet with failures. Those who are healthy and those who remain mostly sick, those who are peaceful and those who are continuously restless – all are subject to the same principle. Deep down, whatsoever you want to be that's what you become. Thoughts become objects, thoughts become happenings, thoughts create your personality. Essentially, we alone are responsible for the way we live, and the level at which we live. We alone lay the foundation of the life we live. Once this truth is understood, what I am explaining to you will become clear.

I have already mentioned to you that as long as one has not entered death voluntarily, he cannot be free from the fear of death. Someday death will come, of course, but then you won't be entering into it voluntarily – you will be compelled to face it. It wouldn't be surprising if you closed your eyes and became unconscious when forced to go somewhere. You can't be forced into something if you are fully conscious. But there is no need for one to be under such compulsion. Dying voluntarily, one can see death even while being alive. Watching such a death is a fascinating experience – far more fascinating than the experience of ordinary death, because this death is seen of your own free will. You may ask, however, "How can one die voluntarily and see death?"

This also needs to be understood. Two kinds of mechanisms are working in your life, in your body – one is voluntary, the other is involuntary. There are some parts in your body which move only with your willingness. For example, my hand moves only when I want it to; it won't move if I don't want it to move. But the blood inside this hand does not flow according to my desire; it won't stop flowing if I don't want it to. So the working of the blood is involuntary. The same is the case with the throbbing of my heart, the beating of my pulse, the food digesting in my stomach – none of these functions follow my command, they are involuntary.

So our biological organism consists of two parts: one that works according to our desire, and the other which works independent of our desire. However, if one were to increase his willpower, what

is outside the realm of desire now would become part of it. Similarly, if one's willpower were to decrease, what is now within the reach of his desire would be no longer. The paralytic condition is a case in point.

More than seventy percent of all cases of paralysis are psychological in nature. Actually it is not that a man is struck with paralysis; only his legs, for instance, go beyond the control of his willpower. Even this is not right to say. How can legs manage to get out of one's control? Truly speaking, the range, or the scope of his willpower becomes narrow. What it means is the will of such a person has shrunk. It is as though as one's feet are sticking out from underneath a shrunken blanket. The feet remain beyond the reach of the blanket. Similarly, the willpower of a paralytic person shrinks, and loses its control over the limbs.

It has occurred many times; for example, once a house caught fire at night and the people inside came running out. But they suddenly remembered that the old man who had been paralyzed and sick for years had been left behind. Before they could figure out how to rescue the man, they saw him come running out of the house. They were shocked and frightened. They forgot all about the fire and asked him, "How did you come out? How did you manage to walk?" The moment they asked how he managed to walk, the man said, "Are you joking? How can I walk?" And he fell down.

In the stress and fear caused by the fire, the circumference of the man's willpower grew larger – the feet came within reach of the blanket – and the man walked out. Having come out, he suddenly realized: how could he really have walked out? And the scope of his willpower once again became narrow, the feet once again were out from under the blanket!

The pulse rate can be brought under voluntary control. This is not a feat that only yogis can perform – you can too. It's a very small experiment. Check your pulse rate for a minute. Then close your eyes and simply feel that your pulse is beating faster. Open your eyes after ten minutes and check. You'll rarely come across a man whose pulse rate will not increase if he does this experiment. That's why when the doctor checks your pulse, it is never the same. The moment he touches you, you become a bit anxious, and that causes the pulse rate to increase. This is even more true if you are being checked by a lady doctor!

The heartbeat can be controlled too – almost to the point of stopping it. Scientific experiments have been carried out to this effect and the fact has been accepted. About forty years ago, a man by the name of Brahmayogi astounded doctors at the Bombay Medical College by stopping his heartbeat completely. He repeated the same act at Oxford, and later at Calcutta University.

This man could do three things. Firstly, he could stop the blood circulation completely – not only could he stop it, but he could control its flow as well. He could let it run or withhold its movement at will. When he would stop the circulation, not a drop of blood would come out even when the vein was cut. The third thing he could do was to take in any kind of poison and retain it in his stomach for half an hour, after which he would throw it out of his system. However, this experiment finally caused his death later on.

Many X-rays were taken while the poison was still inside his stomach. No gastric juices, no blood released and mixed with the poison. They remained separate until he allowed them to mix. The man died in Rangoon. After having performed the act of taking poison at the Rangoon University, he

was driven home in a car. The car got into an accident, and by the time he reached home forty-five minutes had passed since he took the poison. He could withhold the mixing of the poison for not more than thirty minutes. So he reached home unconscious. He could just manage to keep the poison out during the thirty-minute range of his willpower – his practice was limited to thirty minutes only. He crossed that limit. For the next fifteen minutes the poison was able to penetrate the limits of his will and mix into his internal system.

There is no part in our body which cannot be brought within the power of our will, and there is no part which cannot go outside this power either. Both things can happen. Entering death voluntarily is a deeper experiment. It's an experiment where one contracts his life energy at will. What needs to be kept in mind is: if the will is applied totally, the energy is bound to shrink within. It can't be otherwise.

Actually, the way our life energy has spread out is a result of our will too. For example, we think we are able to see because we have eyes. According to the scientists, the reverse is the case: because we want to see through this part of our body, the eyes have appeared there. Otherwise, there is basically no difference between the skin of our eyes and that of our hands. The eye is formed of skin as well, except that it has become transparent. The same skin is in the nose, only it has become specialized in picking up smells. The same principle that made the skin of the eyes transparent made the skin of the nose sensitive to smell. Similar is the case with regard to our ears, except they have become capable of picking up sound.

All this has happened as an effect of our will – the collective will asserted over millions upon millions of years. It has not come about as a consequence of an individual's will; the same will was exercised generation after generation, and it showed the result.

There is a woman in Russia who can read with her fingers – not Braille, the language for the blind – she reads any ordinary book, with closed eyes, just by placing her fingers on the printed letters. As a result of the lifelong practice, her fingers have become so sensitive that they can detect the infinitesimal difference between the print and the blank paper. Our fingers won't be able to do this to such an extent.

When we look at a tree, we only see the color green, while a painter's eyes see a thousand kinds of green trees having shades of green blended in a thousand ways. So whereas green is just one color for an ordinary person, in the eyes of a painter the color green is not one but many colors of the same kind. To him, the difference between one green and another is as obvious as it is between green and yellow, or between green and red. However, one needs a certain kind of sensitivity in order to see such fine shades. Obviously, people ordinarily don't possess such sensitivity.

A musician is able to catch subtle nuances in music which we cannot. Not only is he able to catch the nuances, he even begins to experience the gap, the emptiness between the two notes. The real music is not born of sound, rather it springs from the moments of silence existing between the sounds. The notes on either side merely do the job of projecting that silence, that's all. But people have no idea of this silence; for them music is no more than noise.

For a master musician, the words, or the notes have no direct bearing upon the music. To him the musical notes merely serve the purpose of emphasizing the state of no-sound that exists in between.

So whatever we practice continuously, whatever we resolve persistently, begins to manifest, show results.

The way human beings, birds, animals, plants live, is determined by their will. Whatever we resolve deeply is what we become. There is a significant account in the life of Ramakrishna. In his life Ramakrishna had practiced six or seven spiritual disciplines of different religions. He felt that if all religions lead to the same place, why not follow their methods and verify this truth? So he underwent the disciplines of the Christians, the Sufis, the Vaishnavas, the Shaivites, the Tantrikas, and so on. Whatever method he could lay his hands on, he tried.

However, no one knew what he was doing, because these disciplines were practiced on the inner plane. Outwardly, no one could know what was going on with Ramakrishna. For instance, how could one figure out from the outside what was happening inside him when he followed the discipline of the Sufis? And he himself never mentioned a word about what he was involved in. Nevertheless, in the course of these practices he went through a certain discipline which produced such incredible results that even people from outside could not miss what was happening to him.

There is a sect in Bengal called the sakhi-sampradaya. In this sect, the seeker looks upon himself as Krishna's beloved or wife. He begins to live like Krishna's girlfriend. Whether the seeker is a male or a female doesn't matter. To the followers of this sect, Krishna is the only man; the seeker becomes his beloved, his Radha, his girlfriend.

For six months Ramakrishna practiced the discipline of this sect, and strangely enough, the tone of his voice became feminine. No one could distinguish his voice from a distance. His gait became feminine. Actually, men and women cannot walk alike; their biological structure is basically different. Since the woman carries a child, she has a special place in her abdomen for that purpose – which is not the case with men. Hence both walk differently. No matter how carefully a woman may take her steps, she can never walk like a man. She can never run like a man does – there is no way; their physical make-up is different.

But Ramakrishna began running like a woman, he began walking like a woman; his gestures, his voice, took on a feminine quality. One could explain away all these changes by assuming that any man with some effort can walk or talk like a woman. The astonishing thing, however, was that his breasts developed and became womanlike. Even this too, one can rationalize by pointing out that many men grow breasts in their old age. But the most incredible thing was that Ramakrishna began to have a regular menstrual period in much the same way as a woman does. For medical science, this phenomenon caused great interest and concern.

After having practiced the discipline for six months, it took a year and a half for Ramakrishna to recover from its impact and come back to his normal state. Just by exercising his will power Ramakrishna assumed he was the girlfriend of Krishna, and his personality changed accordingly.

In Europe, stigmata appear on the hands of many Christian monks. Stigmata are... When Jesus was crucified, nails were driven into his palms and the blood came out. So there are many Christian monks who, following the morning of Good Friday, the day Jesus was crucified, identify themselves with Jesus. They become one with Jesus. As the hour of crucifixion approaches, thousands of people gather to watch them. The monks stand with their arms outspread as if they are tied to the

cross. And, as if nails have been driven into their hands, holes appear in their palms and blood begins to flow. With such resolve do they become identified with Jesus that, as it were, they go through an actual crucifixion. Without any means being used, a hole being made, a nail being driven, the blood begins to flow from their hands.

We are not aware of the immense possibilities in which willpower can be effective. Entering death voluntarily is the most profound of all experiments in exercising one's will. Ordinarily it is not difficult to make a resolve in favor of life – we indeed want to live. But it is very difficult to make use of will for the sake of experiencing death.

Those who really want to know the full meaning of life should have an experience of death at least once. Without having seen what death is like, they can never really know what life is worth. That's the only way to realize that they have something of immense value – the elixir of life – which they can know only by passing through the experience of death. One who cannot go through this experience remains sadly deprived, because if he could see once on his own what death is like, the fear of death would no longer exist for him; then there is no death at all.

Simply using your total willpower you can draw your consciousness inside from all parts of your body. You close your eyes and feel that the consciousness is shrinking inward. You feel the energy moving away from your hands and feet towards the inside. You see the energy moving down from your head. The energy begins to converge upon the center from where it originated – the rays begin to withdraw from all points.

If this experiment is carried on with an intense feeling, in an instant the whole body becomes dead; only one point remains inside, alive. The entire body becomes lifeless, while the inner core remains alive like a flame. This living center can now be experienced very well as something separate from the body. It is as though rays of light were spread out in pitch darkness and it was impossible to differentiate between the light and the darkness, and then all the rays were to withdraw and come back in at one point – the contrast between the darkness and light would become clearly apparent.

So when the vital energy inside us withdraws and becomes condensed at a certain point, one begins to feel the entire body separate from that point. Now all you need is a little willpower and it will be out of the body. Then just think of going out of the body, and you will be out of your body. Now you can see the body from outside, lying like a corpse. A thin silver cord will still keep you connected with the navel of your body, however. This is the very passage for going in and out of the body.

You will be amazed to see that as soon as this substance, this condensed energy comes out of the body, it assumes a new form of its own – that it enlarges and becomes a new body. This is the subtle body. It is an exact duplicate of the physical body, except that it's like a fuzzy film, transparent. If anyone were to touch this body, his hand would pass through without affecting it.

So the first principle in the discipline of operating the will is to pull all the life energy inward at one point. The moment this energy becomes condensed at the inner core, it jumps out of the body. Just a desire to come out of the body, and the phenomenon occurs. And again, just a desire to get back into the body, and it is back in. This does not involve any doing on your part. The only thing that requires any action is that of simply drawing all the energy inside at a certain point. Once that happens, your subtle body can easily get out of the physical body and get back in.

If the seeker goes through this experience once, his entire life is transformed instantly. Then what he had known as life until that moment, he will no longer be able to call it the same. Similarly, he will not look upon death the way he did until then. He will find it a little difficult to run after the things he chased in the past. It will be hard for him to fight for things as he used to. He will no longer be able to ignore things he ignored previously.

The life is bound to change, because it is the kind of experience which can never leave the life just the way it was. Therefore, every seeker of meditation must at some time or other go through the out-of-the-body experience. It's an essential step, which once having been taken brings about incredible consequences for his future.

It's not difficult, only a firm resolve is required. Making a firm resolve is hard, not the technique itself. Hence it's a little difficult to jump directly into this experiment. One needs first to begin experimenting with smaller resolutions. As one succeeds in these, his willpower goes on increasing.

Actually, the various religious practices in the world are not religious practices really. They are, in fact, preparatory to building one's resolve. For example, a man fasts for three days – this is simply a discipline for strengthening one's willpower. Fasting in itself is of little advantage; the real gain lies in the fact that he completed his vow, that he maintained his resolve. Another man declares solemnly that he would stand in one place for twelve hours. Now his standing for twelve hours is of no use; the actual benefit comes from his making that resolve and the completion of it.

By and by, people forgot the basic idea that these techniques were meant for strengthening one's determination. The man thinks standing in itself is enough, so he continues to stand. He loses sight of the fact that simply standing there is purposeless. The basic idea is to exercise the inner firmness which decides to stand, and then sticking to that decision.

Any means can be used in order to fulfill one's determination. Even small resolves can do – no need to make big resolutions. For example, a man may stand in this balcony and resolve not to look below for six hours; even this much will do. The question is not that the man will gain something by not looking downward. The question is that he determined something and went on to fulfill it.

When one determines to do something and does it, his energy within becomes stronger; he becomes more and more centered. He no longer feels like a leaf drifting in the air. A sort of crystallization begins to take place within him. For the first time, some foundations are laid in his life.

So one should begin experimenting with smaller resolves, and this way collect the energy within. We come across lots of opportunities to do so. For example, while driving along the road simply make a resolve that you will not read the billboards. Your doing so is obviously not going to harm anyone, but it's an opportunity to exercise your will. And no one needs to know about it – it's your own inner process.

You will find that with this resolve, sitting in the car even for half an hour did not prove to be worthless. You will come out with the feeling that you have gained something, that you are richer than you were a half hour ago. So the question is not where you experiment, or what means are used for that purpose. I just gave you an example. The point is, you may follow any experiment that will help you strengthen your will-power. It would be good if you carried on with the small ones.

If a man is asked to go in meditation for forty minutes by simply closing his eyes, he can't do it; he opens his eyes frequently and looks around. Now this man is without a will, he is not centered. There are great advantages in closing the eyes, it causes no harm. But this man can't even hold to his resolve by keeping his eyes closed for forty minutes; not much else can be expected of him.

When the same man is asked to breathe deeply and vigorously for ten minutes, within two minutes he slows down his breathing. When you remind him to take deep breaths, he makes one or two feeble attempts and again goes back to slow breathing. This man is not centered at all. Breathing ten minutes deeply is not a very difficult thing to do. And actually the question is not what will be gained or lost by breathing deeply for ten minutes. What is certain, however, is that by resolving to breathe deeply for ten minutes, this man will become centered. Something inside him will become crystallized. He will overcome something, he will succeed in breaking some kind of resistance working inside him. And his vagrant mind will be weakened, because it will come to realize there is no way to push the man around: the only way to get along with him is to obey.

You drive by every day. Maybe you don't read the billboards along the road. But the day you will decide not to read them, your mind will do its utmost to force you to read the advertisements. The power of mind lies in your being irresolute. As your determination grows, the mind goes dead. The stronger the will, the more dead is the mind. The stronger the mind, the weaker becomes the will.

The mind did not press you to look at the billboards in the past because you had not challenged it. Today you posed the challenge. The mind will find a thousand and one excuses for you to look outside. It will contrive a thousand ways to force you to break your resolve and read the signs. It will use all its cunning. This is how things are.

We only live by the mind. A seeker begins to live by his will. One who lives by the mind is not a seeker at all. Only one who lives by his resolve is a true seeker indeed. A seeker means one whose mind is being transformed into will.

So pick very small situations – you can choose for yourself – and then experiment a few times during the day. No one needs to know about it, but there is no need to go into isolation either. Just do the experiment quietly and move along. For example, make a small resolve that "When someone becomes angry at me, I will laugh it off." When carried out a number of times, each experiment will yield such rich dividends that you will thank the person who became angry at you.

So make this tiny resolve: "Whenever anyone gets angry at me, I'll simply laugh, no matter what." Within fifteen days you'll find you have become a different person. The whole quality of your being has changed – you are no longer the same man who lived fifteen days ago. Make very small decisions and try to live up to them. In the process of living the decisions, when you become confident of making bigger decisions, then go ahead and make a little higher resolutions.

The final resolution a seeker should find worth making is that of meeting death voluntarily. The day you feel you can, go ahead and do it. Having determined, the day you see your body lying like a corpse, you will know all that there is to know. Then no scripture in the world, no guru will have anything new to add to it.

Question 2

ONE WHO COMMITS SUICIDE ALSO TRIES TO KILL HIMSELF VOLUNTARILY. AND UNTIL HE IS DEAD COMPLETELY, HE REMAINS AWARE OF THE PROCESS OF DYING TOO: THAT THE BODY IS BECOMING COLD, OR THE LIFE ENERGY IS SHRINKING, AND SO ON. BUT HE CANNOT COME BACK IN THE BODY AFTER HAVING REACHED THE FINAL STATE. ISN'T SUICIDE SIMILAR TO THE EXPERIMENT IN VOLUNTARY DEATH?

Suicide can be used as an experiment in willpower, but normally people who commit suicide don't do it for that reason. Ordinarily, the man who commits suicide does not do it feeling himself responsible for it. Mostly he feels people are driving him to commit suicide; certain circumstances, certain events are compelling him to end his life. If the circumstances were not such, he would not have attempted the suicide.

This man, for instance, was in love with someone, but his love was not returned. Now he wants to end his life. Had his love been reciprocated, there would have been no need for him to embrace death. In fact, this man who is contemplating suicide is not doing so with any readiness to die really. He is willing to live only on one condition. Since the condition has not been fulfilled, hence the denial of life. The man is not interested in dying actually; the truth is, he has lost interest in living.

So basically this kind of suicide is a forced one. Therefore, if a person who is about to end his life can be stopped even for two seconds, perhaps he will not attempt it the second time. Just the delay of a couple of moments can be enough, because in those moments his mental resolve will fall apart – it was put together forcibly.

A man committing suicide is not making a resolve. The fact is he is running away from making the resolve. Ordinarily, a man who has killed himself is not a brave man; he is a coward. Actually, life was asking him to exercise his will; it was telling him, "The woman you loved before... now make a resolve and forget her." But the man didn't have the capacity. Life was pointing out to him: "Forget the person you loved before, love someone else." But the man didn't have the guts.

Life tells someone, "You were rich until yesterday, today you are bankrupt. Nevertheless, live!" He doesn't have the courage. He is not able to make a determination and live. He sees only one way out: self-destruction. He does this in order to avoid making firm resolves. Meeting death like this is not a demonstration of his positive will; rather, it is a show of his negative will. A negative will is of no use.

Such a man will be born with an even weaker soul in his next life – with a much more impotent soul than the one he had in this life, because he escaped from a situation that had offered him an opportunity to arouse his will. It is as if a child runs away from his class as the examination hour approaches. In a way, he has shown his determination too. Thirty students were taking the exam, but this fellow decided to run away. This indicates a negative will. The will to appear for the exam was a positive one; it meant willingness to put up a struggle. But the boy escaped from the struggle.

An escapist shows his determination too. When a man confronted by a lion runs and climbs up a tree, in a way he also uses his will. But that won't necessarily make him a man of will, because after all, he is running away, he is escaping. A suicidal tendency is essentially an escapist tendency. There is no resolve in it. Death can be used, of course, for the purpose of exercising willpower – but that's a different matter.

For example, in the Jaina tradition death has also been used to strengthen willpower. Mahavira is the only person in the world who allowed if any seeker wished to use death for this purpose. No one else has given such permission. Only Mahavira has said one can use death as a spiritual discipline – but not the kind of instantaneous death which occurs by taking poison. One can't build his willpower in one instant; it requires a long span of time. Mahavira says, "Go on a fast, and die of hunger."

It takes ninety days for a normal, healthy man to die of hunger. If he is weak in his resolve – even a little bit – the desire for food will return the very next day. By the third day he will begin cursing at having created such a nuisance for himself, and will start finding ways to get out of it.

It is very difficult to maintain the desire to stay hungry for ninety days. When Mahavira said, "Stay hungry and die," there was no room for anyone to create any deception, because in ninety days... anyone who has even the slightest lack of will would escape much earlier in the process. So there is no way to deceive.

If Mahavira had given the permission to die by taking poison, drowning in a river, jumping off a mountain, it would have been a matter of instant death. Of course, we all manage to make a resolve good enough for one moment. But a warrior good for showing only a moment's bravery is of no use on the battlefield, because he will become a coward the next moment. He will turn out to be a coward with as much resolve as he was brave a moment ago.

So Mahavira has given permission to commit santhara, causing death to oneself as a spiritual discipline. If anyone wished to put himself through a final test, even if it meant meeting death voluntarily, Mahavira had given permission for it. This is truly very significant and worth giving a thought. Mahavira is the first person on this earth who has authorized that a seeker can follow this discipline. There are a couple of reasons for it.

For one thing, Mahavira was fully assured that no one dies really. Hence he felt there was no need to worry so much about death, and he found no harm in a seeker pursuing this discipline.

Secondly, besides being experienced himself, Mahavira was also confident that if a man were to seek death unwaveringly for fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, or a hundred days, the very greatness of that event is bound to transform him.

We all experience a moment or two when the thought of death crosses our mind. There is hardly a person in the world who has not wished to die at least a few times during his life. Of course, that he didn't die is a different matter. The fact is, such moments do come when a man wishes to die. But then he takes a cup of tea and forgets the whole thing. The wife gets fed up with her husband and contemplates hanging herself. Then the husband comes home with tickets for the movie. That's it, the woman drops the whole idea. She finds it too boring.

Once I had an occasion to stay at a place where a Bengali professor and his wife were my next-door neighbors. The very first night of my stay I heard loud noises coming from the other side. There was a terrible fight going on between the husband and wife. I could hear everything through the wall. The husband was threatening to kill himself. I was in a quandary. There was no one else around except me, and things looked rather serious. I wondered whether I should go over and help. Although it was the first night and the couple were total strangers to me, I felt it didn't matter if we

knew each other or not. I said to myself, "They are my neighbors; I'll be responsible too if the man dies." Nevertheless, I restrained myself in the hope that when the man would actually walk out to kill himself I would go and stop him.

Then for some time all was quiet. I thought the matter was settled between the two and that both had cooled down. But still I felt I should go out and see what was going on. So I came out. The door next to my room was open and the wife was sitting inside. The fellow had already gone.

I asked her, "Where did your husband go?"

She said, "Don't be worried, he has gone away like this many times before; he'll be back soon."

I said, "But he has gone to kill himself!"

She said, "You need not be worried, he is sure to come back."

And indeed, about fifteen minutes later the husband returned. I was still waiting outside. I said to him, "You have come back?" He was unaware that I knew he had gone to commit suicide.

He said, "Can't you see the clouds have gathered? Looks like it's going to rain. I had not taken an umbrella with me, so I came back." A man wanting to kill himself drops the idea if he is without an umbrella! This is how it is.

We all think of dying many times, but not for the sake of dying really. The idea comes to us because there is some problem in our life. We think of ending our lives because we lack resolution. Just a little trouble, a little difficulty, and one rushes to end it all.

One who wants to meet death because he can't face the problems of life is not a man of will. However, if a man sets out to have a direct, positive experience of death, if he is on his way to know what death is with a positive attitude, if he has no conflict with life, if he is not against life, then even in death this man is searching for life. This is a totally different thing.

There is yet another significant factor involved in this matter. Ordinarily, we cannot determine our birth. Although ultimately we do influence birth, but our determination of it happens through our unconscious state. We never know why we will be born, where we will be born, and for what purpose we will be born. But death, in a way, is something which can be determined by us. Death is a very unusual event in life, it's a very decisive happening.

Nothing can be clearly determined by us as far as birth is concerned – that is, where to take birth, the purpose of taking birth, the circumstances surrounding the birth, and so on. But about death we can certainly decide how we are going to die, where we are going to die, why we are going to die. We can definitely determine the way we want to die.

So Mahavira had given permission to follow the discipline of death for this reason also, that one who will die applying this method will automatically become the determiner of his next birth as well, because one who has managed to choose his death, who has arranged to die voluntarily, for him nature provides an opportunity to choose his next birth too. This is the other side of it.

If one exits from the gate of life with dignity and grandeur, in full knowledge, then the other gates will become wide open and welcome him with high regard and honor too. So those who wish to determine their next lives should first go through death with their own willingness. This was also the reason why Mahavira gave his permission. So the point is, an ordinary man wanting to commit suicide is not a man of will.

Question 3

YOU HAVE TALKED ABOUT HOW THE SUBTLE BODY CAN BE SEPARATED FROM THE PHYSICAL BODY USING ONE'S WILLPOWER. CAN THE SUBTLE BODY OF A SEEKER WHO FOLLOWS THE DISCIPLINE OF WITNESSING, OR THAT OF A SEEKER WHO FOLLOWS THE DISCIPLINE OF TATHATA, SUCHNESS, BE SEPARATED WITHOUT EXERCISING THE WILL?

To follow the discipline of witnessing requires a great resolve. Following the discipline of tathata requires even greater resolve. It is the greatest resolution ever. When a man determines to live like a witness, that in itself is a great resolution. For example, a man decides he will not eat. He resolves to remain hungry for the day. Another man decides he will eat, but instead of watching himself eat, he will eat watchfully. This is a more difficult resolution.

It is not too difficult to give up food. The truth is, for those who have plenty to eat, it is easy to go without food for a day or two. That's why in an affluent society the cults of dieting and fasting become popular. For example, in America the idea of dieting has become very popular. People immediately become attracted to naturopathy.

When people have enough to eat, the idea of fasting once in a while appeals to them. It seems to make one feel lighter and more cheerful. In fact in a poor society, staying hungry may be a kind of use of one's willpower. But in an affluent society it's a matter of convenience. Actually, if food becomes sufficiently available throughout the world, fasting will turn out to be a necessity for everyone. People will have to remain with empty stomachs once in a while. But witnessing is a very difficult thing.

Let's understand it this way. For instance, you make a decision that you won't walk, that you will remain seated in the same chair for eight hours. Now this is not a big thing. You decided not to walk, so you are not walking. Someone else decides he will walk for eight hours – this is not a big thing either, because since he decided to walk, he is walking. But witnessing means you'll walk, and at the same time you will also know that 'you' are not walking. What does witnessing mean? It means you'll walk as well as know that it is not 'you' who is walking – that 'you' are simply witnessing the act of walking. This is a much more subtle resolution, a supreme resolution indeed.

Tathata, suchness, is the suprememost resolution; it's the ultimate resolve. There is no determination higher than this. Even the resolve to enter death voluntarily is not so great a resolve really. Tathata means accepting things as they are. In a way, even the resolve to die voluntarily has its roots somewhere in nonacceptance. That is, we want to know what death is; we want to verify whether death actually occurs or not.

Tathata means, if death appears we will die; if life remains we'll continue to live. Neither are we concerned with life, nor with death. If darkness falls we'll stay in the dark; if the light appears we'll

settle with light. If something good comes to us we'll receive it; if something bad befalls us we'll bear it. Whatsoever happens, we are willing to accept it – we deny nothing. Let me explain this to you with an example.

Diogenes was passing through a forest. He walked around naked – had a beautiful body. It seems quite possible man must have started wearing clothes in order to cover his ugliness. This seems highly possible. We are always interested in hiding the ugly parts of our body. But this man Diogenes was a very handsome man. He lived naked.

So as he was passing through the forest, four men engaged in the business of capturing and selling slaves, saw him. They figured if they could capture this man – good looking, strong, powerful – they may receive a good price for him. But they felt very apprehensive and couldn't find any way to capture him without risking their lives.

Somehow, they tried and managed to surround him. Diogenes stood in the middle, calm and unperturbed. He asked, "What do you want to do?" The men were very surprised. They took out chains. Diogenes stretched out his hands. Full of fear and with trembling hands, the captors began to chain him.

Diogenes said, "No need to tremble. Come, let me tie the chains for you." He helped them put on the chains. The men were simply flabbergasted.

After having chained him firmly, they said, "What sort of a man are you? We are putting you in chains and you are helping us! We were afraid this might lead to some fighting and trouble."

Diogenes said, "You are having fun chaining me, I am having fun in being chained. Where is the need for any trouble? It's great! Now tell me, where do we go from here?"

The men said, "We feel very embarrassed in telling you that we are in the business of slavery. We'll now take you to the marketplace and put you up for sale."

Diogenes said, "Good, let's go." He took off with great excitement and began walking even faster than the captors.

They said, "Please slow down a little. What's the hurry?"

Diogenes said, "Now that we are going to the marketplace, why not reach in time?"

So finally they reached the marketplace. It was very crowded. Those who had come to buy slaves turned their eyes toward Diogenes. They had rarely seen a slave of this quality, because he looked more like an emperor. A huge crowd gathered around him.

He was made to stand on the platform where the slaves were auctioned. Raising his voice, the auctioneer said, "Here is a slave for sale. Come forward and name your price."

Diogenes said, "Shut up, you fool! Ask these men, did I walk in front, or did they? Did they tie the chains on me or did I let them tie the chains on me?"

His captors said, "The man is right. Left to ourselves, we don't believe we could have captured him. And indeed he walked ahead of us so fast that we could not keep pace with him – we had to practically run behind him. So it is not correct to say we have brought him to the marketplace. The truth is, we have followed him to this place. And it is not right to say we have made him a slave. The fact is, this man agreed to become a slave, we didn't make him."

Diogenes said, "Stop talking nonsense you fools, and let me do my own auctioneering! Besides, this man's voice is not loud enough, no one will be able to hear him in this large crowd."

So Diogenes raised his voice and said, "A master has come here for sale. Anyone interested in buying him should come forward."

Someone from the crowd asked, "You call yourself a master?"

Diogenes said, "Yes, I call myself a master. I tied the chains on my own. I have come here on my own, willingly. I stand here for sale of my own free will. And I shall leave whenever I choose to leave. Nothing can happen against my will, because whatsoever happens I make that my will."

Diogenes is saying, "Whatsoever happens, I make that my will." This man has indeed attained to tathata, suchness. What it means is: whatever goes on, he is ready for it. He resists nothing at all. In no way can you defeat him, because he will already be a defeated man; you cannot beat him because he will readily allow you to hurt him; you cannot subjugate him because he will readily submit. You can't do anything to such a man, because no matter what you do, he will not resist. This is indeed a demonstration of a truly supreme resolve.

So tathata is the ultimate will. One who has attained tathata has attained God. Therefore, the question is not whether a seeker who follows the discipline of witnessing, or one who follows the discipline of tathata would attain the same as a seeker who attains by following the discipline of will. It is already attained by him without any problem.

The discipline of will is the most elementary. The discipline of witnessing is of the intermediary kind, and tathata is the ultimate sadhana, the ultimate discipline. So start with the practice of will, take a voyage through witnessing, and reach ultimately to tathata, suchness. There is no conflict among the three.

Question 4

PLEASE EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WITNESSING AND TATHATA.

In witnessing, the duality is present. The witness finds himself separate from that which he experiences. If a thorn pricks his foot, the witnessing man says, "The thorn has not pricked me, it has pricked my body – I am only the knower of it. The piercing has occurred at one place, while the awareness of it is present somewhere else."

So in the mind of a witness there exists a duality, a separation between the experiencing of an event and the actual occurrence of it. Therefore, he cannot rise up to the state of advaita, nonduality. And this is why the seeker who stops at the level of being a witness, a watcher, remains confined to a

kind of dualism. He ultimately divides the existence into conscious and unconscious. Conscious means the one who knows, and the unconscious means that which is known. So eventually he is bound to end up dividing existence into purusha and prakriti.

Both of these words, purusha and prakriti, are highly significant. Perhaps the true meaning of prakriti may not have occurred to you, Prakriti doesn't mean 'nature'; in fact, there is no word for prakriti In English. Prakriti means that which was in existence before everything came to be – pra-kriti. Prakriti does not mean srishti or nature, because srishti means that which exists after creation. The word prakriti means that which was before creation.

The word purusha is also very meaningful. The equivalents of such words are extremely difficult to find in any other language of the world, because all these words are born out of very special experiences. You know what pur means; pur means the city. For example, Kanpur, Nagpur. So pur indicates the city, and the one who resides in the city is the purusha. The human body is like a town, a city, and there is someone who resides in it – he is the purusha. Prakriti, therefore, is the pur, and the one who lives in it – separate, unattached – is the purusha.

So the witness comes as far as the separation of purusha and prakriti. He will set them apart as two entities – the conscious and the unconscious, and a distance will be created between the knower and the known.

Tathata is even more remarkable – the ultimate. Tathata means, there is no duality. There is neither a knower nor is there anything to be known. Or, in other words, the knower is the known. Now it is not that the thorn is hurting me and I am aware of it; or that the thorn and I are separate from each other. It is not even that it would have been better if the thorn had not pierced me, or that it would be good if the thorn came out – no, there is nothing of this sort. Now, everything is accepted: the presence of the thorn, the pricking of it, the awareness of being pricked by it, the experience of pain – everything. And they are different parts of the same thing. Therefore, I am the thorn. I am the very occurrence of pricking. I am the awareness of this occurrence. I myself am the very realization of this all – I am all of this.

That's why there is no going beyond this 'I', my very being. I cannot think, "It would have been better if the thorn had not pricked me" – how can I? For I am the very thorn, the pricking of it, and the knowing of being pricked as well. Nor can I think, "It would be good if the thorn didn't prick me," because that would be tantamount to tearing myself apart from my very own being.

Tathata is the ultimate state there is. In that state, whatsoever is, is. It's a state of the ultimate acceptance of that-which-is. It contains no distinctions. But one cannot reach tathata without having been first a witness. However, one can stop at the level of witnessing, if he so desires, and choose not to arrive at tathata. Similarly, without the use of will, one cannot attain the state of witnessing. Although, having gained willpower, one may wish to stay there and not come to the point of witnessing.

One who stops with attaining firmness of resolve would of course become very powerful, but he won't be able to attain wisdom. And therefore, the ability to make a resolve can be misused, because wisdom is not required to attain it. One will surely gain a lot of power, but that is precisely why he can abuse it. The entire black magic is a product of willpower. One who practices it gains a lot of power, but he lacks wisdom totally. He can end up using that power without any discrimination.

A man of will becomes filled with power. It is difficult to predict right away what use he will make of it. He can obviously put it to bad use. Power in itself is neutral. Nevertheless, it is necessary – whether one intends to use it for good or for evil. And as I see it, rather than remaining a weakling, it is better if one uses his power for evil purposes – for the simple reason that one who commits an evil act now may someday use the same power for a good cause. One who cannot do evil can never do good either. That's why I say it's better to be powerful than to be impotent and a wimp.

So a man of power can set out on the path of good as well as evil. It is better to follow the course of goodness, because if followed rightly, it will bring you to the state of witnessing. You won't end up as a witness if you follow the course of evil; rather, you will simply wander around within the confines of your willpower. Then you will get into mesmerism and hypnotism, tantras and mantras, witchcraft and voodooism. All kinds of things will crop up, but they won't lead you on a journey toward the soul.

This is becoming lost. The power will indeed be there, but gone astray. If the power is put on the course of goodness, it is sure to give rise to the witness within you, and ultimately that power can be used to know and attain oneself. This is what I call the course of goodness. By the course of evil I mean controlling, possessing, enslaving the other. This is what black magic is. Making use of the power for the purpose of attaining oneself, knowing who am I, what am I, and living authentically, is moving in goodness. And it will indeed lead one toward becoming a witness.

If the urge to attain the state of witnessing is satisfied with the knowing of oneself, the seeker reaches up to the fifth body and stops there. However, if the urge is further intensified, one discovers that he is not alone, he contains everything; that the sun and the moon and the stars, the rocks, the soil, the flowers are all part of him; that his very being, his existence incorporates all the rest. If the seeker proceeds with such an intense feeling, he reaches tathata.

Tathata, suchness, is the ultimate flowering of religion, it is the supreme achievement. It is total acceptance. Whatsoever happens, one is open and agreeable to it. Only such an individual can become totally silent, because even a little bit of resentment can prolong the restlessness. One's restlessness and tension will continue to remain if he carries even a small degree of complaint. Even the slightest idea, "It didn't happen the way it should have," and the tension will continue to persist.

The experience of supreme silence, the experience of the greatest freedom from tension, and that of the ultimate liberation is possible only in the state of tathata. However, only a man of will can eventually attain the state of witnessing, and only his going deeper into witnessing can bring him to the state of tathata. One who has not yet known what being a witness means can never know what total acceptance is.

One who hasn't realized that he is separate from the thorn which is pricking him is not yet ready to know that the thorn is a part of him. In fact, one who comes to experience the separateness of the thorn can take the next step of feeling one with the thorn as well.

So tathata is the fundamental principle. Among all the spiritual disciplines discovered all over the world, tathata is the greatest. That's why one of Buddha's names is Tathagat. It would be good to have some understanding of what this word tathagat means. It will be useful in comprehending the meaning of tathata.

Buddha has used the word Tathagat for himself. He would say, for instance, "Tathagat said...." Tathagat means, thus came, thus gone. Just as a breeze comes and goes away without any purpose, without any meaning. Just as a breath of air enters your room and goes out – without any reason. So the one whose coming and going away is as unmotivated, as desireless as the breeze, such a being is called Tathagat. But who would come and go like a breeze?

He alone can pass like a breeze who has attained to tathata. Only he to whom the coming and the going makes no difference can move like a breeze. If he needs to come, he comes; if he needs to go, he goes – the same as Diogenes did. It made no difference to him whether people put him in chains or did not put him in chains. Diogenes said later on, "Only one who is prone to be a slave can be nervous about becoming a slave. Since no one can make me a slave, why should I be afraid I might be taken as a slave? One who carries even the slightest anxiety that he may be turned into a slave, he alone will remain in fear of it. And one who has such a fear is indeed a slave. Since I happen to be the lord and master myself, you can never enslave me. Even in chains, I am the master, and will remain so in your prison as well. It makes no difference where you throw me; I still remain the lord and master. My mastership is total and complete."

So the journey consists of this: from will to witness, and from witness to tathata.

Question 5

YOU MENTIONED THAT THERE IS NO COMPARABLE WORD FOR PRAKRITI IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. ISN'T THE WORD CONSTITUTION SIMILAR IN MEANING TO PRAKRITI?

No, it's not the same meaning. Constitution in that sense means an individual's makeup, his psycho-physical structure. Constitution in this sense means one's system, one's physical and psychological makeup as such. Prakriti is something very different. Normally we use prakriti in the sense that "That man's constitution is such...." But this kind of usage is not correct. Prakriti means that which was before creation – precreated. And pralaya means: post-creation – that which follows the creation, the end of creation. So prakriti means that which was even before the creation came to be, that which didn't need to be created – which has always been, beginningless. That which already is. Srishti means the created – that which came to be.

There is no word in European languages which stands for prakriti, because these languages are influenced by Christianity. In Europe there are words such as the 'creation', and the 'creator'. In the Indian languages exists the word prakriti, although not everyone uses it in the sense the Sankhyaites, the Vaisheshikas, the Jainas use it. This word belongs to them. In their view, that which has been eternally present, which has never been created, is prakriti. It is already there even before your creating anything.

For example, when you build a house, the design, the structure of it is its constitution. But the material that goes into the making of it – the soil, the air, the heat – is all prakriti. That which arises out of it is simply its structure. However, that which was present even before the making of the structure – which you did not create, which no one created, which is uncreated, which always was – that something is called prakriti. There is no word equivalent to prakriti in any of the European languages.

Question 6

IS TATHATA THE SAME AS BEING JUST AWARE?

Actually, there is a slight difference between tathata and what you call "just awareness." Witnessing is also slightly different from it. You can say that being "just aware" makes up the link between witnessing and tathata. As you move from witnessing to tathata, you pass through the state of "just awareness."

In the state of witnessing, there exists a firm feeling of "I am" and "you are." In the state where there is just awareness, only the feeling of "I am-ness" remains, the feeling of 'you' disappears. There is just the feeling of am-ness. In tathata, besides the feeling of am-ness, there is the feeling that my am-ness, my existence and your you-ness, your existence, constitute only one is-ness, one existence; that they are one and the same. As long as there exists just the awareness, just the feeling of am-ness, there will remain a world outside my state of am-ness – a world which I am not, a world that exists beyond the limits of my am-ness, separate.

Tathata is limitless, it is simply being. So if you mean tathata, then it is not just awareness; it means just being. That's the right expression; being has a much wider connotation. The moment you say "just awareness," you obviously leave something out. The word 'just' is indicative of omission. When you say "just consciousness," you exclude something that does not fall within the parameters set by using the word 'just'; otherwise, why would you have added 'just' before consciousness?

Question 7

CAN WE SAY: ONLY AWARENESS?

Yes, saying "only awareness" will do, but again, there is no need to add 'only' before it. 'Awareness' is enough – then there is no problem.

Question 8

YOU HAVE SAID THAT BY RESOLVING CONSCIOUSLY TO WITHDRAW INSIDE, OR AT THE TIME OF DEATH, THE ENTIRE LIFE ENERGY SHRINKS AND RETURNS TO THE CENTER FOR THE PURPOSE OF TURNING INTO A SEED ONCE AGAIN. AT WHICH CENTER DOES THE ENERGY SHRINK? DOES IT CONCENTRATE AT THE AGYA CHAKRA, AT THE NAVEL, OR AT SOME OTHER POINT? WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAKRA, AND WHY?

This requires a little consideration. The whole energy will of course shrink before death occurs. Before one embarks on a new journey, the energy which is otherwise dispersed all over the body will return to a point. This is the same as when one moves from a house – he collects all his important belongings. When he lived there, all kinds of things were spread out in every part of the house, from the bathroom to the living room. So at the time of moving, he sorts out his possessions. He throws away the junk, packs up the important stuff, and sets out on a new journey.

Just as we abandon one life, one body, and commence the journey of another life, another body – similarly the consciousness which was spread out withdraws and once again becomes the seed. Up to now it functioned as an actuality; now it will once again become a potentiality, because now, like a seed, it will enter a new body.

Just as a tree leaves seeds behind before dying, similarly the body too leaves behind seeds before it meets death. What we call sperm or ova are the seeds left by the body at the time of death. These are the seeds released prior to death, in anticipation of death. The sperm contains the entire built-in program of your body, it contains the exact replica of your body. As the body gets ready to depart, it leaves behind the tiny seed. This phenomenon occurs at one level – the physical. Similarly, consciousness, on a different level, gathers itself and becomes a seed in order to enter the seed present in some other body.

All journeys begin with the seed and end with the seed. Remember, that which is the beginning is also the end. The journey's cycle ends where it started. We begin from a seed, we end up again as a seed. So the question is: at the moment of death, at which center would the consciousness gather to shrink and become a seed? It would, of course, gather at the very center you have lived through all your life. It would concentrate at the center which was most valuable to you in your life, because that was your most active center; one should say, that was the very point from where your whole vital energy functioned.

For example, if a man lived his whole life obsessed with sex, if he knew nothing beyond sex, if sex was all he lived for – he earned wealth to enjoy sex, he went after a high position in the pursuit of sex, he wanted to have good health so that he could indulge more into sex – if sex was the most predominant center functioning in his life, then that is where the entire energy will converge at the moment of death. Then his new journey will begin from the sex center. Why? – because his next birth will be an ongoing journey of the same sex-obsessed center. This man's consciousness will gather at the sex center in the dying moments, and that is the point where his life will come to an end. His life energy will leave through his genitalia. Had this man lived through a different center, the energy would have concentrated and left from that center.

The center around which one's life has revolved is the center from where he will depart. The place where he dwelt the whole life will be the place from where he will depart. Therefore, a yogi can leave from the agya chakra, and a lover from his heart chakra. The life energy of an enlightened man would leave from the sahasrar, the seventh chakra – his skull will break open as he departs from there.

The point from where one makes an exit is the conclusive proof of how one has lived his life. Such techniques were discovered in the past that by looking at a dead body one could say through which chakra, through which door the consciousness left the body. All the chakras are doors for entrance as well as for exit. The soul will use the same door for entering another body which it used for exiting the dying body. The soul will enter the new cell in a mother's womb through the same door from which it came out at the previous death – that's the only door it knows.

Therefore, the mental condition of the father and the mother, as well as their state of consciousness at the time of intercourse, determine what kind of soul will enter the womb, because only that type of consciousness, that kind of soul will be attracted to seek that womb which fits with the center closest to the minds of the father and mother during the intercourse. If two individuals who have gone deep into meditation make love not with the desire for sexual pleasure, but as an experiment in giving birth to a soul – they can make use of the highest possible chakras for that purpose.

This is the reason why the higher souls have to wait for a long time – because they need a womb of a higher quality, which is very difficult to find. Hence, many good souls cannot take birth again

for hundreds of years. The same is the case with many of the evil souls. The ordinary souls are born right away. They take birth instantly, without any difficulty, because many suitable wombs are available to them every day. About one hundred and eighty thousand births take place every day, excluding the number of people dying. Every day about two hundred thousand souls can enter as many wombs – but this applies only to the ordinary souls.

Many souls, who after great difficulty were born on this earth, have been forced to take birth on other planets. The earth became incapable of giving them birth again. This is the same as if a scientist born in India were to find a suitable job in America. He would be born on our soil, we would provide him with food and water, care and nourishment, but not a single living opportunity befitting his background and training. Obviously, he is forced to seek a position in America.

Today, most of the scientists from all different parts of the world have settled down in America. This is bound to be so. In the same manner, although we help souls evolve on this earth we do not make available a suitable womb for their next birth. Naturally, they are forced to seek opportunities for birth on other planets.

Question 9

IF WE DO INDEED POSSESS THE TALENT FOR CREATING SCIENTISTS, WHY AREN'T WE ALSO ENDOWED WITH THE ABILITY TO MAKE THE RIGHT KIND OF EMPLOYMENT AVAILABLE TO THEM?

No, there isn't any necessary correlation between the two. The problem is, creating a scientist depends on one set of requirements while providing him with a suitable employment depends on some other set of factors. Giving birth to a scientist depends on how his soul has lived through its previous lives. If the moment of lovemaking between a couple is such that a soul can have an access through the door of intellect, it will have found the suitable womb, and it will be born.

Providing work for a scientist, however, depends on how the entire society is set up, how it functions. Our scientist may earn ten thousand rupees in America, but a thousand rupees in India. Moreover, he can have laboratory and research facilities in America which in India he may have to await for a thousand years. In America, his discoveries will not be lost in the bureaucratic maze or rot in the stacks of files – they will earn him a Nobel prize. Here in India, his superior will put a lid on it and will never allow it to see the light of day. And some day, if his work does ever become known to the public, the chances are that either the politician or his superior officer may claim the credit for it – he may never earn the credit for his own achievements. So all of this depends on a thousand and one things.

Many individuals who take birth and attain higher consciousness on this earth, have to seek birth on other planets. Actually, people who brought information from other planets to this earth were basically from the other planets. It's only now that the scientists have come to recognize there may be life on some fifty thousand planets. Yogis have known this since ancient times. In the past, however, they didn't have any means to verify it. But when the souls who belonged to other planets took birth on earth and brought the news, their hypothesis was confirmed. Similarly, those who have carried the news of this planet to other planets are also different kinds of souls – the ones which could not be conceived on the earth.

At the moment of death, the consciousness of man comes together totally. In that crystallized form it draws in all his conditionings, propensities, desires – the total essence, we may call it the perfume or the stench of his entire life – and moves on to its next journey. Mostly, this journey will be automatic – there won't be any element of choice in it. It will be as if you pour water and it moves into small hollows in the earth. Similarly, in the normal course, a womb works like a hollow into which a nearby available consciousness enters.

Therefore, in most ordinary cases a man is born again and again in the same society, in the same country. Very rarely does this change. The variation occurs only when a suitable womb is not available. That's why it is so amazing that in the last two hundred years many great souls, which otherwise were born in India, had to take birth in Europe. Annie Besant, Madame Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Colonel Olcott – these are all souls from India who were forced to take birth in Europe. Lobsang Rampa, for example, is a Tibetan soul born in Europe. The reason for all this was that a womb was not available to them in the country of their birth, hence they had to look for it somewhere else.

An ordinary man is born immediately. This is like if you were to move from your house, you would obviously make a search for another house in the same neighborhood. If you fail to locate a house here, only then would you go looking for it somewhere else, in another neighborhood. If you don't find it in Bombay proper, you may hunt for it in the suburbs: if you don't succeed there, you may move ahead and look somewhere else. But once you have found the house, the matter is over. This phenomenon was put to a wonderful use. It would be good to consider a couple of things in order to see how this principle was used. It is necessary that we take a look at it now, because it carries a special significance in the context of the present times.

The most amazing application of it was made in India, through the caste system. The application was of great value. The Indians divided the entire society into four castes. The idea was that if a brahmin died, his soul should be reborn as a brahmin. If a kshatriya died, his soul should be reborn as a kshatriya.

It is obvious that if a society is divided into fixed divisions, then there is a great possibility that when a kshatriya dies, his soul would seek its next abode in the same neighborhood. It will enter into the womb of a kshatriya woman. And if a person's soul continues to be born as a kshatriya for a few times, it will become kshatriya-like. You won't be able to produce such a kshatriya, such a fighter, even by giving someone a regular military training. Similarly, if a soul were to be reborn as a brahmin ten or twenty times, the kind of pure brahminic quality that will unfold because of it can never be created by putting one into a gurukul – a residential school run by a brahmin teacher – or by educating him.

The amazing thing is, we have devised educational means good for only one lifetime. Some people in the past had worked out a system of education that would last for an infinite number of lives. It was indeed a remarkable experiment, but it met with decay. It became corrupt and putrefied – not because the idea and its application were wrong, but because its fundamental sutras, its main principles were lost. And those who claim themselves to be the custodians of the system do not have a single sutra to vouch for. No brahmin, no shankaracharya holds any sutra, any understanding on which they can lay their claim or authority. They only quote their scriptures which state that a brahmin is a brahmin, and a sudra is a sudra. But scriptures are of no use; only the scientific principles work.

So the most incredible experiment this country did was that of planning the birth of a soul for endless lives. That means they not only prepared the man for his future lives, they also made a controlled and systematic effort to redirect and channelize his consciousness for the lives ahead. ... Because it is possible that a brahmin may take birth in a sudra family and, lacking an appropriate environment, he may not be able to carry the gains of his past lives into his next lives. This can cause great difficulty. It is also conceivable that what he could have achieved in ten days by being born in a brahmin's home, he may not achieve in ten years in a sudra's home.

So such an advanced concept and farreaching vision of human evolution was at the base of this clear fourfold division of the Indian society. The people had worked out the idea of taking birth in the same neighborhood so that one may keep finding wombs of the same quality for lives together.