

PRACTICAL SADHANA

A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

SWAMI SIVANANDA

PART - I

What is divine living? What are yoga and vedanta? Yoga and vedanta are the concern of Divine Life. Divine Life is a life based upon yoga, and pervaded by the spirit of vedanta. It is made up of selflessness, service, spiritual practices, and Self-realisation. Yoga and vedanta form the very fabric of Divine Life. The more we know about it and the more we are reminded about its important aspects, the better equipped we will be to tread our chosen path, because the most important thing about Divine Life is in the living of it, not so much in the knowing of it. But the importance of knowing it lies in the plain fact that if you have to live it you must know something of it, so that with a comprehensive knowledge you will be able to live it more effectively.

So, knowledge of Divine Life is important, since in living a life of yoga, of practical vedanta, we come across several hurdles, and we are faced many times with situations which we have to manage with intelligence, with knowledge, and therefore, discussion of these matters and getting to know more about the intricacies, the inner subtleties of these things will put us in a very good position so as to be able to deal with these situations effectively.

WHERE YOGA IS TO BE SOUGHT

What are the things we have to understand? Plainly, we have to understand about yoga, we have to understand about vedanta, because these are the ways through which you have to lead your Divine Life, and approach Divinity and attain bliss. What are yoga and vedanta? Are they only in the books or are they in particular places in the Himalayas, or Banaras, or Mecca, or anywhere else? If they are there, are they only there? Are they nowhere else, or what is more important, is it necessary for us to find their location elsewhere also?

They are in the books in one aspect and in some aspect they are in place like Rishikesh, Mecca, and so on. There is a meaning in going to such sacred places, because the people who had lived there lived their lives practically, and they have left the stamp of their life in the very ether of those places. The whole atmosphere is pervaded by the spirit of the yoga and vedanta, and, therefore, when you live there, it evokes in you the similar spirit. But the most important place where Divine Life, or yoga, or vedanta is to be sought and practised, one has to know. Where is that place where you have to work out your practical life? It is Dharmakshetra. Dharmakshetra is the place where all yoga and vedanta are practised. It is the mind and the heart of man. Yoga and vedanta have to be achieved here; and if they have not been found here, they will not come out

of anywhere else. Everything proceeds from within oneself. Vedanta and yoga have to come from the heart and mind.

UNDERSTANDING OF ONESELF

How are you to demonstrate your jnana, bhakti, selfless service and yoga? You have to manifest them through the thoughts that you think, through the words that you utter and through the actions that you do. If there is bhakti in the Narada Bhakti Sutras, it will not affect you, but if Bhakti comes to you, it is through kirtan, prayer, meditation and service of saints. Bhakti manifests once it has started generating in the heart. All the scriptures of the world will be of no avail unless you have started to create it here. Sadhana, vedanta, yoga—all have to be lived in the heart. To do so, one must understand oneself. One must first of all understand this mysterious Dharmakshetra, the heart or mind of man, where all these things have to be worked out.

Why is it very important? Whatever you are, you cannot run away from yourself. If you think that family bondage is a great obstacle for living a life of nivritti, you can shake off family. You can run away from your home or city. All right. If you think some things with which you are associated stand in the way, you can become an avadhoot. Take off pants and coat, and wear only a kaupen. If you think that the company of some people is not congenial, you can renounce their company. All right; you go away from your family, from your belongings and from the company of people, but the peculiar thing is that you cannot run away from yourself. And what does it mean? You have to take your stomach, you have to take all the senses with you, and together with your senses, you have to take the habits to which the senses are addicted. You have to take the body with you, with its habits and idiosyncrasies. . . and your mind with its raga-dwesa, love and hatred, egoism, and frustration.

DISCIPLINE OF MIND

There is a fine story Gurudev once told¹. There were two avadhoots. They were maha viraktas (great ascetics). They used to wear only kaupen. In winter, they used to put straw mattress on the ground and sleep, and both of them had straw mattresses. It is difficult to get sunlight in Uttarkashi, and whenever the sun came out, they took the grass beds and put them in the sun so that they may get a little warm. One avadhoot was drying his grass bed one day and the other avadhoot, who was returning from the kshetra,² happened to tread upon that grass bed inadvertently. Immediately the first avadhoot got wild and shouted, “Can you not see my straw mat put out for drying?” What is the harm if the straw mat is trodden upon by another person. He called it as “my straw mat.” The ‘mineness’ was there. They began to abuse each other. It is

¹ Swami Sivananda asked his closest disciples to cull all his writings on Sadhana and the book is a compilation of his own writings. The compilers included this incident as it gives wonderful insight to this subtle topic.

² Alms house

not a mere piece of imagination, kalpana, but it is an actual incident which took place in Uttarkashi. That is why you have to shave the vasanas, not merely the head. The avadhoot had taken his own mind and vasanas. He had the sense of 'mineness'. This feeling itself is the jugglery of the mind.

Hinduism says: *sarvam khalvidam brahma*—everything is Brahman Himself. There is no separate devil. In all other religions, there is God and there is devil. Satan is there in Christianity, Ahriman is there in Zoroastrianism, but in Hinduism, everything is Brahman. Then where is the devil? It is in the mind only. Therefore, whether you live in Uttarkashi or in Bombay, always you have to take along with you your senses and the mind; and as long as you do not know how to deal with them, how to manage them, they will try to manage you and deal with you in a summary manner. And what will happen? Your virakti (dispassion) and all spirituality will go away. Unless one delves within and tries to understand the inner machinery, one cannot practise sadhana successfully. The inner machinery will follow you everywhere you go.

The mind is a blessing of God—because without the mind you cannot think of God, without it you cannot concentrate and meditate. Without mind and emotions, thoughts, and feelings, you cannot have bhava and bhakti. Therefore, the mind is a necessary instrument, and at the same time if it is not properly understood and managed, it becomes your own undoer. Therefore, it is a necessary evil, which has to be turned into an aid. To turn the impure mind into pure mind is no less a part of yoga than kirtan, japa and the like. Every aspirant has to use his intelligence and manage the important task of ruling the senses and the mind. You can manage an unruly thing only if you understand it. Unless he who drives the horse knows its habits, he cannot manage it. Therefore, this is a very important part of sadhana.

WHAT IS MIND?

The vast number of people know only that the mind is thought or it is something with which we think. It is not so simple as that. Even if you do not want to think, the mind will simply think. It thinks of objects. The mind thinks its own thoughts every minute. As long as the mind is producing thoughts, the mind cannot concentrate. You cannot canalize it and divert it to God easily. You have to divert it to God. But how to do it? Why does the mind wander about? All these an aspirant has to understand. A karma yogi has to understand it, a jnana yogi has to understand it, a bhakti yogi has to understand it.

You have to understand your mind whether you are in seclusion or amidst people. On the other hand, when you are alone, the mind gets an opportunity to have its full play. What is this mysterious thing which is such a problem for the sadhaka, and yet without which he cannot do sadhana, but which if not managed properly pulls him down? How does the mind work? If we have a basic knowledge of its nature, some method can be devised in order to get some control over it.

A BED OF IMPRESSIONS

The mind works in various mysterious ways, and we will analyse some important broad aspects of this mind process. What is the mind of a person? What is it made up of? First of all, let us take two analogies. You see a gramophone plate. What is it made up of? Ordinarily, you see a plate and you see it is made up of grooves, full of lines. For an ordinary, illiterate person it will mean nothing other than this. A little more intelligent and educated person will say that it contains minutely wavy lines and these lines are sound impressions in silent form. A still more intelligent person will say something more. It is in the nature of an effect. This sound is identical with the sound that caused it. A more intelligent man will say that under what particular circumstances, it will produce sound.

Another analogy. Take a seed. A child will say it is a very tiny thing, but a more thinking mind, a poet, will say "In your hands lies a towering oak which can shelter thousand people." And a still more discerning person will say, "This seed can produce an oak, and produce the same type of oak out of which it came; and not only that, if that tree can produce further seeds, it means it has got in it the capacity to restart and fully manifest once again the whole process, which was at the back of it, and therefore, it is a living thing: it contains in itself the whole cycle."

Similarly, the mind of each person at a given time contains within it words within words. It is identical to the grooves on a gramophone plate, or the seed. What is this seed? What are these grooves that are in the mind? The mind is a product of experience, previous experience. Just in exactly what way is it a product of experience? We shall take one instance, and we can multiply it *ad infinitum*. There is an experience. The experience may be in the form of a perception. You smell something, touch something, taste something or experience something—a combination of so many things may happen, and immediately—just as a groove is created out of a sound in a gramophone plate—immediately an impression is made in the mind. This impression is called *samskara*, an impression got out of a perceptual experience in the mind.

WORKING OF THE MIND

What is the nature of *samskara*? Is it like a furrow made on the ground or the grooves in the gramophone record? No. It is dynamic, and a number of such experiences making grooves upon the human mind make that impression a vital impression. It becomes active, it begins to be a dynamic factor in the man's life, i.e., it becomes a dynamic tendency in the person's character, and when it comes to this stage—the repeated taking in of a particular impression makes it take the form of a vital or living force in the person's character. It becomes a *vasana*, and the sum-total of *vasanas* always keeps the mind in a state of agitation, and they always go on starting ripples in the mind-lake, and these constant ripples create *vrittis*.

In the ordinary mind, so many *vrittis* are rising and sinking, When the *vrittis* arise in the mind, the individual starts a series of *kalpanas* or imaginations. If the *kalpana* is not there, *vrittis* do not

trouble the man. When the vrittis are supported by creating imagination, it makes the vritti take the form of a desire, icha. And what is the nature of this desire, which formed through the force of imagination or kalpana? It is of the same variety as the experience that formed the samskara which is formed the cause for the rise of the vritti. Even at this stage of desire, icha, there is not great harm. But when the play of ego, the 'I' in each one of us, identifies itself with that desire, there starts all the trouble. Instead of 'want', it is "I want." Now the individual is in the grip of the mind.

INNER BATTLE

Whether you reside in a cave or in a city, when 'I' and kalpana join together, you feel "I want to have a cigarette," or this or that. You may be doing meditation, but when you get icha for a particular object, then meditation becomes secondary. But, then, the mind has got two aspects. When desire comes, it thinks: "Should I fulfil this desire? Or should I continue my meditation? Should I go and take idli and waste time?" Now, then, there is vichar. If the shuddha manas (pure mind) gets the upper hand, or says "No," it pushes off the desire and continues meditation. If, on the other hand, the mind gives way to ashuddha manas (impure mind), the desire gets the upper hand. Then the icha becomes a trishna, a strong impelling urge. The person immediately strives to fulfil the desire, and he falls from yoga.

Yoga is not only in nirvikalpa samadhi. It should function every moment. If an impure thought comes, and if you are not able to put it down, you have failed in yoga. In every thought, in every action, you have to assert your mastery over your vritti. Then yoga is fulfilled; Divine Life is lived. And what is the time taken for this process? Within a split second a decision is made and the long process of the samskara which crystallised the impulse is subdued—the higher mind achieving over the lower mind a resounding victory!

From experience you get samskara, from samskara you get vasana, from vasana you get vritti. Then imagination makes the vritti into a desire. Then ego attaches itself to the desire and it becomes then an urge, a trishna. Then you are forced to do cheshta or to fulfil the desire. This process of the mind is going on.

The scientists are trying to find a perpetual motion machinery, a machinery that never stops, but is always in motion. If you have to find a perpetual motion machinery, now, it is in you, the mind. You have to deal with the mind. All the vasanas, samskaras, which you have formed are already there; you cannot help it. But you can at least do one thing. You can prevent the formation of new samskaras, and stop past samskaras getting further strengthened by fresh ones. How is it possible?

PREVENTION OF NEW SAMSKARAS

Daily you get new experiences; daily you perceive so many things with your five organs of senses. Then how can you prevent these experiences making impressions upon the mind? Is there any

technique? How did these objects get into the mind and form into samskaras? Take an object. You perceive it through any one of your senses. First, there is contact between the sense and the object. That is the first thing. So far only the outer fringe of man's personality has become touched. Supposing you are very deeply absorbed in some task, and your brother or sister comes and lays his or her hands on you, you are not aware, because though the object has contacted the sense, the sense has not conveyed it to the mind—the sense of 'I' being not associated with the touch-sense.

So, if the ego is not there, the object does not go deep into the mind. If the ego is engaged in some other thought, a particular impression brought by the senses will not produce any effect. But if the 'I' is there, the object goes and impinges upon your awareness; and if this 'I' is in a state of heedlessness, is not vigilant, is in a state of aviveka or in a state of worldliness or rajas, it will easily take these perceptions and create in you a desire for the objects.

FIRE OF ASPIRATION

There is only one fire to burn all desires. Nachiketas had that fire. So many attractive and alluring things were offered to him by Yama: he was offered money, beauty, strength, power, kingdoms, all vidyas, and alluring objects for the senses, but Nachiketas reduced all such impressions into ashes, because he had that one fire, and that was mumukshutwa—spiritual aspiration. Aspiration is a positive fire in which all desires, cravings, are reduced to ashes. This is the fire that should characterise all sadhakas, yogins, vedantins—those who lead the Divine Life. The disciple should have a furnace of aspiration. Only then is he a real disciple.

If you want to lead the Divine Life, your inner heart should be a place of aspiration; a fire of yoga should burn in you always. This blaze should be maintained. You cannot completely change the outward mode of life, but inwardly there should be aspiration. This fire should burn day and night—when you are awake, when you are sleeping, when you are alone, when you are among men, when you are meditating, when you are engaged in work. This fire should not be put out. This aspiration should always form an integral part of your being. Then you are living the Divine Life. If this fire is there, you need not worry what work you are doing, in which place you are living—because you will be leading the Divine Life. Then you cannot be a victim of sense-pleasures. But you must at any time know if, in spite of your vigilance, the impression of sense-object goes to the inner consciousness, how to burn it through aspiration. If before it enters the outer threshold you have to burn it, what are the techniques?

WITHDRAWAL AND INDIFFERENCE

There are two techniques. They have several aspects according to the sadhana you do. One technique is, always keep the mind indrawn. Never allow the mind to be completely extrovert—so that even apparently when you are moving amidst objects, the senses are not outgoing, the senses are turned inward. This is a very difficult technique, but this has to be practised. This

pratyahara is very essential. The ideal of the aspirant should always be to acquire this important qualification, pratyahara.

The other technique is to be indifferent. What does it mean to you? If a non-vegetarian goes into the bazaar where they sell meat dishes, his mouth may water, but supposing one is a pure vegetarian and sees these things, they will not mean anything at all, because there is the absence of interest. Even so, we will have to create an attitude within ourselves by constant reflection. . . constant swadhyaya of scriptures which show the vanity of the world, the worthlessness of earthly objects, and the perishable nature of the entire creation. By constantly imbibing such thoughts, an attitude of mind is created when all things cease to have any attraction for you, and then, even when these things come, there is no response from within, and this state is called udaseenata. You are simply not interested, and when there is a thing which you do not like, you are not interested in it.

This is the experience of the people in respect of the things they do not like. When they see a thing they do not like, they are not interested in it. But this feeling should become universalised in respect of sense-objects and other worldly values. An aspirant should hold an attitude of indifference when he is in the midst of objects. This has to be cultivated. This is not a technical thing like pratyahara, but this attitude of mind can gradually be cultivated and the degree of its intensity can also be increased.

Thus, in this way by pratyahara and udaseenata, we can effectively burn away the impressions of the objects at their initial stage. If you have to live amidst distracting objects, you can cut away contact with them by these two processes. But if, in spite of that, the sense perception goes right into your inner chambers, then reject it, burn it, through the fire of aspiration. This way the sadhaka will have to move in the world. You should have this equipment.

DIVINE REMEMBRANCE

There is also a positive way. You have to live in the world. You cannot get away from it wherever you go. A saint has said, that if you want to go through a forest full of thorns, you cannot cover the forest with a carpet so that you can walk. Instead of that, a wise man will wear a pair of slippers or shoes. It is as effective as covering the entire forest with a carpet, because wherever he goes, this protection will be there. Similarly, we can protect ourselves in such a way that we are not affected by the contact with the sense-objects.

If you have to go through a place which emits a foul smell, you cannot sprinkle the whole place with some fragrant element. But if you keep a bit of musk near your nose, you will always experience the smell of the musk and you will not feel the bad smell. Similarly, one could always do mental repetition of God's name and be engaged in constant remembrance of Him, or of some great ideal. Vedantins will think all is Brahman, Satchidananda. Bhaktas will think all is Ram or all is Krishna. Along with this, there should be constant repetition of Mahavakyas or Ishta Mantra.

These things form a positive hold to which the mind may cling. Thus, the tendency of the mind to move towards other objects is lessened, because it is given a centre which it can catch hold of.

CONTROL OF DESIRE

These are the common-sense methods which a man who wants to live a life of yoga and vedanta should have as his equipment. As I told you, we cannot run away from our senses and mind, we have therefore to understand the working of the mind. When a vritti arises, do not think about it; divert your attention, let it sink back. Do not spin your imagination. It is imagination that strengthens the vritti. Do not identify yourself with the desire; and if the worse comes to the worst, if the desire is strong, be stubborn—do not submit to it; divert your attention. I have always said, “Try always to nip the desire in the bud.” When a desire comes in the form of a ripple, try to liquidate it then and there itself. But if due to lack of your vigilance it takes the form of an impulse, see that it is not fulfilled.

Do not make cheshta outwardly. If a desire comes, “I should go and gossip,” say “No. I will not allow the body to move.” If the body does not move, the mind cannot fulfil its desire, and ultimately the reverse process will happen, and the desire will sink back into the mind, and there will be calmness.

In the beginning of sadhana, more and more desires will have to be controlled at the physical level, but as we go on acquiring mastery over ourselves, even when a vritti comes, it is liquidated by vichar and viveka, which are a great help to the sadhaka. As soon as a vritti comes, it is put back, and ultimately all these have to be completely destroyed by repeating the Lord’s Name, by satsang, swadhyaya, meditation, prayer, performance of puruscharana, etc. All these are powerful, positive methods to deal with the vrittis and samskaras which are countless and deep-rooted—but which have an end.

The more we understand the machinery of the mind, the more will we be able to deal with it, with all its subtle tricks and undercurrents, and we will be able to make use of the mind as an effective instrument of sadhana instead of being a constant obstacle. All the most ideal conditions may be given to a sadhaka. He may have ideal surroundings, ideal company, all sacred books, and yet if he does not do this important task of trying to understand the mysterious nature of the workings of the mind and try to lessen his vasanas and strengthen his will, he cannot make use of anything. He cannot make use of his Guru. He cannot make use of seclusion, because they have to be made use of only through the mind; and if the mind is not controlled, cultivated, he cannot make use of any of these. But once that is done, he can make use of all that God has given. Even a sentence from a scripture is enough to raise a flood of spiritual consciousness within him. But until that is done, yoga will be useless.

Therefore, understand the mind, study the mind and know this machinery well, and know also how to manage it. This is an important part of yoga and important part of vedanta. . . an

important part of sadhana, or Divine Life. In the beginning of one's practice, all these are important. When one has practised all these, God-realisation is easy. They say that God-realisation is so easy that it can be attained "within the time taken to squeeze a flower", once you are completely rid of all impurities. For that you have to patiently keep on striving; and the more we devote our time with humility, sincerity and earnestness to a study of our own being and especially of this machinery, which is inside us, and try to make the best use of it—as an instrument of yoga—the more will we be able to succeed in the path of yoga and vedanta or in leading the Divine Life.

PART - II

We have examined that how the whole of the living of the Divine Life, the whole of the process of yoga and practical vedanta, takes place primarily within the mind. Outwardly, these processes that take place inside, have their expression; they manifest themselves in the form of certain behaviour of the person and his reactions to external influences, in the form of certain actions that he indulges in, but primarily they take place in the inner Kurukshetra—the mind.

An eternal tussle is going on in the mind between the lower instinctive urges and the higher spiritual aspirations, between that part of the mind which is drawing the senses outward, which is filled with rajas and tamas, and the satwic portion of the mind, the vivekayukta buddhi, the vicharayukta manas, or that part of the mind where discrimination has begun to manifest, where the selective power of the human intelligence has begun to function. It begins to select which is proper, which is improper, which ought to be done, which ought not to be done, which is conducive to one's progress, which is detrimental to one's evolution.

When this discriminative faculty begins to operate, man begins to think of the why and the wherefore of things. This discrimination arises due to Satsang, or due to hard experiences, knocks and blows of life, or flowering of purva samskaras, or any of the innumerable factors that go to awaken the discriminative mind. The instinctive mind, filled with desires for objects, tries to pull one down, whereas the higher mind pulls one up. Ultimately it is the spiritual part of man that establishes its own supremacy over the lower instinctive self sensual part of his being, and fully establishes him in Atmic Consciousness, which is the ultimate stage of yoga.

FULFILMENT STRENGTHENS DESIRE

In this process, we have discussed before how the mind works, how it tries again and again to catch the individual in its vicious circle of experience: samskara, vasana, kalpana, ahankara, icha, kamana and cheshta. When you do cheshta, you again repeat the experience and a samskara is formed; from samskara, vasana originates; vasana becomes a vritti, which, taking the help of imagination, becomes an icha; icha takes help of egoism and becomes a kamana; kamana, intensified, becomes trishna or strong desire; and cheshta, or actual fulfilment of the desire,

follows trishna, and enjoyment again strengthens the samskara. Thus, the whole process is repeated again and again.

Therefore, if a desire comes and if you fulfil it, that samskara which caused that desire gets more strengthened. The implication is that by fulfilling a desire, the desire never ends. You can never put an end to desires by fulfilling them. Just as the hungry flames will not subside by any amount of ghee poured into it, similarly the desire gets strengthened by fulfilment.

Non-co-operate with the mind. Do not fulfil desires when they arise in the mind. It is the nature of the mind to desire. Mind and desire are synonymous. Non-fulfilment of desire is the only way of attaining mastery over the mind. Countless desires may arise—be silent. Do not say, “Come along, I will fulfil it.” It is only when you make the mistake of saying, “I am the mind,” “I am desiring,” you commit a blunder.

MASTERY OVER MIND

Only when the mind is purified, it becomes your guide. Till then, non-cooperate with it. Then the mind will cease to be the mover of man, and man will become the mover of the mind. You should be the independent mover of the mind. Then you become manojit or indriyajit. That is what an aspirant has to become. The law is, desires never perish by fulfilling them.

The desires that come on the surface of the mind have their roots in the subconscious, and in as much as the roots are hidden, you will have to do daily the digging of the mind and delving to the root of these desires. Set apart a time when there is no external distraction; sit in a secluded place and feel that you are the witness of the mind. Just allow the mind to wander far awhile and see how it behaves, and try to delve within.

All our time we are engaged in drawing the mind outward. Now make the mind inward and try to see within yourself what is going on. It requires regular practice, or else we will be thinking we are looking into the mind, but in the process, we would be drifting with the mind. You should delve inward and introspect. You must do a twofold process. One is diverting the mind’s rays inward; and when you go inward, focus keenly on certain part of your mind and analyse it, dissect it.

STUDY OF MIND

If you cannot see an object which is in darkness, you direct the beam of a flash-light upon it. Similarly, focus the rays of the mind inward and examine its characteristics. Supposing a thing is very minute; you are not able to see it. You squint through a microscope. Similarly, you should analyse the part of the mind which is not visible, more minutely; you should analyse it in detail, separately, like looking through a microscope. Then you will come to know more of your mind, what kind of vrittis are there, whether they are satwic, or rajasic, or tamasic.

You have to analyse intelligently. Here, we require a little bit of viveka. We have to be careful of two things. One is that we should not go inward with partiality. If you are studying the mind, be impartial, because this introspection is done with the purpose of ejecting out all that is undesirable and supplying all that is required. Therefore, you should humbly go about this work.

If after studying the mind, you are full of self-satisfaction, if you are satisfied with whatever is there in the mind, such introspection and self-analysis will serve no purpose. You should have a critical attitude. Just as you find out the defects of other persons, with the same critical mind, you should find out your own defects. Otherwise, the benefit of introspection and self-analysis will be lost.

ERADICATION OF DEFECTS

If as a result of your introspection, you find in your mind certain traits which are not desirable, you should find out the means of removing those defects. Self-justification, self-appraisal, are not what is meant by introspection. Once you find out your defects, be practical. Have some effective device to remove the defects.

You should find out how to make the best capital out of what you have discovered in your moments of self-introspection and sadhana. This is the practical aspect of Kriya Yoga. Thorough purification can only come if there is detailed, impartial introspection, followed by practical measures to remove the defects. This introspection should be done daily. Daily you should throw out some rubbish from within the mind. This is the process of purification.

IMPORTANCE OF DETAILS

There are two more important steps that one has to take in living the Divine Life. Each sadhaka should bear in mind that Divine Life is to be lived in small details. If you are divine in small details, you can be divine in big things. You cannot afford to be undivine in small actions and expect to be divine fundamentally. If your yoga becomes practical in little things, then great achievements will come as a matter of course.

Some sadhakas think that the details do not matter much. They think that it does not matter if they use harsh words occasionally. The sadhaka thinks, "There is no harm in uttering a harsh word. I am quite calm inwardly. God wants only the heart." But a calm heart cannot come unless every word of yours is full of love and compassion. The heart is made up of only the sum total of all little actions and words. It is not possible to have a wonderful heart inside, and indulge in every type of actions and words.

Every action goes to form one's character, even as every drop goes to form the ocean. Day-to-day movements of man constitute the very essence of divine living, the very essence of yoga and vedanta. One should not commit the mistake of being content with the idea that by merely having a great idealism, it will manifest itself as perfect goodness in one's actions, words and

thoughts. Unless you are careful in your day-to-day life and mould your life in accordance with your idealism, it cannot bear fruit. If you are careful that the broad principles of divine living are observed, the edifice will come by itself.

SELF-RESTRAINT

What are those broad principles? Truthfulness, compassion, purity—these have to cover your entire life down to the minutest details. Your whole life, at least in the beginning, should be characterised by restraint. You should restrain your tongue. Do not think that you can eat anything and say anything and meditate well. If you think so, you are deceiving yourself. Yoga is not a toy which you can easily take and play with. It is like an iron-fort, lodging well-equipped soldiers.

Every action should be done with proper examination. The quality of food that you take, its quantity, and the time you take food, all are important. A little immoderate food, or improper time of taking food, may affect your system and render meditation difficult. So, too, with the thoughts you entertain and actions you are engaged in. The whole body and mind should be restrained. You should live a life of moderation.

When I sing the song of “Eat a little, drink a little,” you have to understand it in its proper sense. There are two parts of this song. “Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little.” When I say these things, I mean moderation. These things should not be indulged in. The instinctive life of eating, drinking, talking, etc., should be kept to the minimum requirement. The other portion of the song, wherein it is said, “Do japa a little, do asan a little, do kirtan a little,” also indicates that every one of these items is essential, that all these items should find a place in your daily programme.

CONCLUSION

All gross things that merely pertain to the body should be kept to the minimum and all the higher aspects of sadhana should be given proper place in your daily programme. This is the broad, general outline of Divine Life. Control the mind. Do not fulfil desires when they arise. Nip the vritti in the bud. Daily have self-introspection and self-analysis, and in doing that be unsparing to yourself. Do not justify what you discover in the mind and give a reason for it, but rather, try to devise suitable methods for overcoming what you find undesirable. Lead a life of self-restraint, and back up the whole process by positive sadhana like meditation, japa, asana, pranayama.

The underlying secret of overcoming the vikshep of the mind is vairagya. Raga is at the root of vikshep. Raga comes through avichar. You imagine that the objects of the world will give you happiness. This is avichar. You should do vichar, discrimination, you should find out the defects of worldly pleasures and develop vairagya for all kinds of earthly pleasures. So, there should be vichar, and vairagya; and combined with these, if you practise the things already mentioned, you will be able to progress on the path of yoga and vedanta, on the path of divine living.