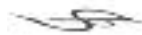


A
LITTLE LOOK
AT
YOGA
POSTURE PRACTICE



APPARENTLY BY GODFRIDEV



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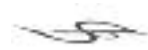
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part one

STABILITY AND COMFORT



I'd like to contextualize the practice of yoga postures within the concept of Form. Of the five pragmatic elements of yoga practice, form is the earth aspect: coming to stillness in the shapes. So what we're trying to find out, in action, in the body, is the significance of form to doing yoga. Then through that clarify the significance of form to the whole of existence itself.

Obviously each yoga posture has its own shape, its own form. Even though some of the postures have similar forms. Nevertheless, for them to be the different postures that they are, they have to have different forms, different shapes. The shape making aspect of yoga practice is important. It is very powerful: but its importance and power rest to a great extent on the integrity of that form. It's not enough to vaguely make a rough approximation of the shape. You may get a bit of exercise, you may stretch this muscle, you may strengthen that muscle, you may get intensity here and work there: but this is not yoga. You may feel like you've had a bit of a workout but this is still not yoga.

The pragmatic purpose of yoga, according to Patanjali, is to release tension (YSii.47) and establish sthiram sukham (ii.46:) or tranquil stability. Tranquil stability, or joyful steadiness, obviously means no tension. So, in order to arrive at sthiram sukham the body must be free from tension relative to that shape. Relative to that form. Each one of those hundreds of yogaposture forms, each one of those shapes, addresses itself to the potentiality of tension in the body in a unique and different way. So each one of those forms is a unique opportunity to release tension from the bodimind.

Most of these forms are to one degree or another abnormal. This does not mean impossible or unnatural. They are not outside the capacity of the human body. They are just not usual: not used by most people in their lives. Gymnasts, athletes, dancers, acrobats may know some of them. Even so, there's a huge range of forms or shapes amongst the yoga postures that bear very little relationship to the way that you normally use the body. Therefore they can be a

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direct and successful invitation for tension to enter the body if they're not approached with care, integrity and understanding.

Take Warrior pose for example where you turn the trunk forward, bend the front leg, stretch the arms up and look upwards. If this is not done with care and understanding it will develop tension in the inter-vertebral spaces in the lower back, and neck, and tension in the shoulders. Then rather than the yoga posture being good for you it becomes bad for you. Even if it's developing your stamina. Even if it's developing your concentration. Even if it's developing your determination. It's still being bad for your back, bad for your neck, bad for your shoulders.

So precision in the articulation of the body into the shapes becomes your fundamental way of securing not only the safety of the yoga postures, but also their effectiveness. This is precision in the expression of form. You could look at the body in a posture and consider relationships between planes, lines and angles as if the body were a geometrical arrangement of form. But this is not the case. We are not geometrical objects, but living organisms subject to many more stresses than gravity and structural forces. Every person's body has a unique pattern of tension resulting from their life. This pattern is a built-in limitation. A limitation that constitutes a unique pattern of potential or capability. Even though each posture has its inherent lines, those lines exist only for a body free from tension. A freedom from tension relative to that shape. If your body is not free from tension then the inherent line is not available. Then trying to impose that line or the idealised shape on your body is an invitation to tension.

This means that looking for the line, or establishing the form of a posture, has to be an enquiry. It has to be a self enquiry, svadhyaya. It has to be an investigation of your potentiality: what your capability is right now. Without regard to what your capability was yesterday. Without regard to what you would like your capability to be. So this means that, to a certain extent, everybody lines themselves up slightly differently. But in order for it to be that posture the basic shape must still be there.

In Virabhadrasana nobody should be bending the back leg, even if that means you can only bend the front leg one degree. The bending of the front leg is not the point of Virabhadrasana. The point of Virabhadrasana is what's happening in the whole body. If the back

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leg is bending the lower back is being compromised and weakened or damaged. The damage doesn't become obvious until a few years later perhaps. But then it's obvious that it wasn't from Virabhadrasana: it was because somebody pushed you over or you fell off your bicycle or whatever. This is not necessarily the case. Perhaps you fell over because you damaged your back in Virabhadrasana and the integrity of the spinal muscles had been lost.

So even though the description of the movements taken to enter a posture refers to a shape, or a geometrical pattern, exactly where you go, exactly how you express that, exactly how you accommodate your limitations to that, depends on you. Patanjali has given you a compass to guide you in this which is not geometrical. That compass is *sthiram sukham*. That compass is steadiness, stability, groundedness: facilitating comfort, ease, release. That steadiness and ease applies to the body as a whole, to the shape as a whole, to the form as a whole, as well as to every single part of it. So if one part is not stable, the whole cannot be comfortable. If one part is not comfortable, the whole cannot be stable. So *sthiram sukham* has to be applied throughout your awareness of the whole of the body, within the form of that posture. Even though the postures are many the form of the body, in the form of each one of the postures, is always exactly the same. You always have two legs, you always have two arms, hands, et cetera. This doesn't change no matter what the shape is. Within diversity of form, is unity of the parts making that particular expression of form. The form is unique, but within that there is a universal dynamic.

This dynamic is always exactly the same. It is one in which each and every joint is as stable and free as all of the others. This requires that all the supporting muscles are participating equally and together: not one is overworking, not one is underworking. This is not defined by any abstract quantification, but by the actual capacity of each body in the moment. A capacity in each muscles, each joint that determines the exact form and geometry of the posture in that moment. This dynamic which activates muscles and articulates joints to the best of their ability depends on awareness. Awareness must extend equally into each part of the body. The balanced integration of action depends entirely on this.

So you're looking for a similar internal activation and awareness in each externally different posture: within diversity, unity. So, how

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far apart should your feet be in Virabhadrasana? This is not determined by any geometrical criteria. This is determined in your own practice by the presence or absence of *sthira sukham*. Which is itself determined not by geometry but muscular availability. An availability that is given to stability to invite comfort. This always depends entirely on the manner in which you're grounding your foundation. Any builder will tell you this is obvious. There is no point in bothering yourself with the roof if the foundations have not been correctly laid: then the roof will be off. There is no way out. This is the same in a yoga posture.

However the laying of the foundation of the yoga posture happens breath by breath, second by second, moment by moment. It is not like building a house where once you've laid the foundation you can forget about it. You have to lay the foundation breath by breath, moment by moment. That means you ground whichever parts of the body are supposed to be in contact with the floor as fully, evenly and actively as possible: and as consistently. Recognising that this contact, this grounding is by necessity constantly fluctuating. All you're trying to do is to minimise and stabilise that fluctuation. So it's not about being aggressive. It's not about imposing stillness or forcing stability. It's, again, an enquiry. Is it possible to keep my front foot and my back foot as grounded as possible? As the answer starts to become, "no", then the question has to be asked, "have I not gone far enough?" or, "have I gone too far?" and if the answer is yes, then you change.

So what that means for many people in Virabhadrasana, is that the bending of the front leg which is the most obvious thing, and the forward movement of your body and your attention, which is the most obvious and natural result, must rest upon and come from the grounding of your back foot. The keeping of your attention, your awareness to the back.

The grounding of the back foot, especially of the heel and the inner edge of the foot depends upon the activity of the leg, as always. The grounding of the foot depends always on what the leg is doing. If the back leg is not doing fully, then the back leg is going to bend. Even if the back heel does not come off the floor, it loses full contact with the floor, and then the spine is no longer being fully supported. Then going deeper into the bending of the front leg is punishing the spine. You can't feel it because you are thinking about how difficult it is. How difficult it is is a distraction. Bending

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the leg doesn't require any thought about how hard or easy it is. Thought isn't really necessary. Feeling is enough. Feeling is what tells you if your foot is grounded enough. Not thought. Thought might ask the question, but thought cannot answer the question, though it can recognise the answer.

If the back foot becomes ungrounded, stability is compromised and lost. Sthiram is not present and therefore sukham cannot be present. No matter how easy you are taking it. No matter how much you are giving yourself a break from effort. Effort is not the point. Ease does not mean no effort. Ease means no tension. There is a significant difference. Sukham refers to that. It doesn't refer to doing the posture in the way of least resistance. This is not yoga. This is stretching to relax without regard to damage being done to the body. So your effort is directed primarily to sthiram. To stability: to stabilising, grounding, securing your foundation. Then action is going on elsewhere to create freedom and ease. But the effectiveness of this depends upon the effectiveness of generating stability through your foundation.

So in all the double plane postures, postures in which you turn the pelvis along with the front foot, the challenges are the same. How much you turn the back foot depends on the capacity of your body. Or how much you have to turn your back foot depends on the restrictions in your pelvis. Likewise, whether or not you move the front foot to its side or not. If you move the front foot a lot to the side to become more stable, you may go too far and become unable to release: you become stagnant, you drop downwards and there is no lift. But if you don't move your front foot enough you can't turn, you can't release either.

So the foot is moved not according to a geometrical measurement. The foot is moved according to sthiram sukham, to give you sthiram sukham. And this is always the case, with every adjustment in every posture. You thereby refine the shape of the posture into its true form. The true form of the posture is that wherein your body is being most deeply released by the posture, on the basis of an effortless stability. So you establish that true form, which is always individual and always changing, with the compass of sthiram sukham.

So I don't take you into the classical postures because you are not yet ready. You don't have the body awareness, you don't have

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the training in the muscles to safely do the classical postures. And if you do do them as you now can, you will be hurting yourself. As you actually already are in your yoga practice. But if you go step by step you will know when you are ready for any action and in the preparedness for the taking of any action it's being taken can only be beneficial. The taking of an action when you are not ready is bound to be harmful, especially in the weird strangeness of a yoga posture. No matter how much it may develop your strength, your pride. It is still nevertheless going to be harmful if you're not ready for it. So little by little, step by step, yoga unfolds like that. Life also.



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FREEING THE BODY FROM TENSION



Patanjali's definition of asana begins: "joyful steadiness free from tension". Joyful steadiness free from tension: in the body, and thereby in the mind: in the bodimind. Sthiram is steadiness, stability, security, effort, stillness. Sukham is ease, comfort, openness, effortlessness, joy. So this is what you're looking for. Not flexibility, not strength, not stamina. You're looking to release the bodimind from tension on the basis of establishing it in sthiram sukham.

Yoga practice is not physical exercise. Yoga is not a form of athleticism. Yoga practice is an invitation to an awareness of that which is actually happening. Then you can live your life as it is, instead of pretending to be something or someone that you're not. That your life is something that it isn't. Despite the popular belief otherwise, you only live once. Then when you're dead, you're dead. The genetic code which gives you your unique existence will never, ever exist again. So you only have one chance to live your life and it's now. It's not tomorrow. It's right now. And yoga is simply an invitation to that. To honour the life that you've been given. And by living it according to the capacity that it has. Not trying to make your body be like John Scott or Richard Freeman. This is an invitation to despair and dissatisfaction. Subtle perhaps, unadmitted maybe. But dissatisfaction nevertheless.

The form of the yoga posture is fundamentally a lense. A lense through which you can find out what is actually happening in your body. The body that is the basis of your life. Patanjali has given us another lense, through which to most effectively clarify that which is actually happening. A lense that has ten facets: the lense of yama and niyama. So within the form of the postures you are being invited to recognise the presence or absence of sensitivity, honesty, openness, presence, generosity, integrity, trust, passion, self awareness and spontaneity.

When your body is more challenged by the shape, when your body has less capacity to make that shape, those factors will be compromised more than when your body has the capacity to do the shape of that posture. The amount those factors are compromised is an indication of how you are doing.

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The application of the principle compass of sthiram sukham is within the context of yamanyama. Within the context of sensitivity, openness, honesty, presence, generosity, integrity, trust, passion, self awareness and spontaneity. These twelve factors: sthiram sukham, ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, aparigraha, sauca, samtosa, tapas, svadhyaya and isvarapranidhana are the lenses through which you are invited to become aware of what is actually happening. To become aware of what is actually possible.

In other words they are the tools of your enquiry. You are not an engineer. Life is your engineer. Life has determined what you can do. All you can do is see is how you are doing it. Your physical capacity in the moment, right now, any moment, is pre-determined. It is what it is. And the purpose of yoga is to just find out what it is. To use it as it is. To let the shape of the posture, the form of the posture be an invitation to your capacity to express itself as freely and fully as possible.

So the form, or the appearance, of what you are doing is not the point. The point is what's happening inside. Sthiram or not. Sukham or not. Ahimsa or not. Satya or not. Et cetera. Are you actually awakening to your capacity? Are you actually alive to your life? Or are you trying to pretend to be something else, to be someone else? No matter if there are two identical twins, they would still not be two identical bodies, not two identical forms. Each one is unique. Each one of the postures is unique and each one of our bodies is unique.

Nevertheless each posture and each body is guided and articulated in the same way. By the application of these twelve principles: sthiram sukham and yamanyama. But just bear in mind when you're practicing that you are never likely to be as stable, as relaxed as you would like, and that's ok. Just enquire into how stable and how relaxed you can be. As that becomes ok, you will relax more. As you relax more you will be able to become more stable: if you are able to honour your restrictions, if you are able to accept your limitations, if you are able to honour your capacity as it is. Then your capacity will increase naturally just by using it honestly and fully.

All kinds of things have been said about yoga since Patanjali, most of which lead only to a dead end if they're pursued. A dead end meaning you may well develop superhuman strength, you may

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well develop the ability to hold your breath for five minutes, you may well develop the ability to read people's minds, but these things tend to make you less relaxed for all kinds of reasons. Anxiety about losing them, pride about having them. A huge psychosomatic alchemy has been imposed on yoga by the hatha yogis of the middle ages. Of course if you're interested in magical alchemy, then fair enough. But if you're interested in living in harmony with your self, with others, with the world and with life itself, then beware of all of these temptations that are presented in yoga books about power, about shakti, about siddhis: about your ability to control your life and other people's. It can be done. You can exert control over your life, up to a point; and you can maybe control other people's but not at the same time as being truly relaxed. Not at the same time as being at peace with yourself. And not with any understanding of what control really means. What power really is, and where power really comes from.

This pragmatic goal to which, according to Patanjali, the yoga method is directed, is simply to free the body from tension. What it feels like when the body is free from tension is what the word asana means. Asana is not a shape, asana is what is being invited to happen within the shape. Pascimottan means to intensely stretch the back of the body, that's the shape. Asana may come. May not come. It's present according to Patanjali when the body is manifesting the infinite beyond its structural dualities. He defines asana completely as "joyful steadiness free from tension manifesting the infinite beyond duality". But because Patanjali is talking pragmatically about the body being free from tension, the duality that he is talking about is the dualities that occur within the body. Which of course are many: but most directly, most immediately, their structural dualities are front back, left right, top bottom, inside outside, centre and periphery.

The significance of the words "manifesting the infinite beyond duality" is quite simply that you don't feel your body any more. You don't label sensations that would be telling you that you have a left side of something. You don't recognise sensations that would be telling you that you have a front of the body or a front of the knee or a front of the arm or a front of the head. You don't label sensations arising: you're not perceiving any specific thing. What's happening relative to left right, front back, top bottom, inside outside, centre periphery in the nervous system, is not happening in your conscious mind. You are not conscious of the structural dualities of

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the body's form. You are aware of the being presence of your life in a totally different way. An awareness that is satisfying to the point of being able to release you completely from identification with the body.

Now you all know what I am talking about. You all know that, you are not really relating to your body as an object in the postures, except when I am annoying you by telling you what to do. You're just in the flow of action in the body, in the flow of awareness. This is what Patanjali means by manifesting the infinite beyond duality. He doesn't mean anything weird, esoteric or beyond your capability.

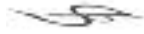
When you lie down in a hammock in the shade or the sun, for a moment, you may experience that state. Your backache won't bother you. Your left hip being tight won't talk to you. The lack of mobility in your right shoulder will not be impinging itself on your consciousness. So asana is this state of freedom from the body as an object while within the body and conscious of the difference.

In yoga posture the possibility of this is highly developed. They allow that transformation to happen in the midst of action. In the midst of complicated action. Using each part of the body in a specific way but no longer feeling those parts of the body as separate entities. No longer feeling those actions as separated actions. This is what the articulation of the body in space, or form in yoga, is for. To free you from objectifying the body. To release you from making your body into an object. Not meaning that it never happens again, but just to show you that there is another possibility. To show you that within that possibility there is an incredible spaciousness, lightness, ease and satisfaction.

If you are doing something inactive that interests you a lot, like watching the sunset or listening to Mozart, or whatever it is, you are only likely to perceive your body if there is something wrong with it. If you've got a stomach ache or a backache or a toothache you will notice it. Otherwise you will not. Your body is not there as an object of your perception. Of course it's there as an object in space: but not as an object in your perception. Even the parts of it that you are using, your ears are not there as objects of perception when you are hearing Mozart. Of course, this is not yet asana. It is the everyday ground, with which we are all very familiar.

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Nevertheless almost all yoga practitioners know what asana is. We are familiar with it without necessarily recognising it. Without recognising it as being anything special. It is not anything special. Not in the sense of hard to get. It's special-ness becomes apparent when you recognise it's happening. When you become conscious of a transformation in your sense of your body and your self. This happens a lot in practice. In fact it is one of the most potent motivating forces that brings us back to the mat: it is such a delight to no longer feel restricted to finite dimensionality yet still be very alert, clear and present.



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THE DUALITIES OF THE BODY



In this way the structural dualities of the body are transcended in yoga postures. Most effectively this is coming from the bandhas because the body has an infinite potentiality for objectness. You can make an object out of any aspect of the body. And the more refined your perception, the more objects you can make. Mr Iyengar has made objects in the body that he didn't even know in advance existed. He has felt actions that have been occurring in your body but that you could never feel. This can go on forever. You can carry on making objects and making actions forever as you refine your perception. Just like the scientist, you never get to the fundamental particle. You never get to the fundamental part of the body because perception can go on and on refining itself

The beauty of the bandhas is you don't have to go in that direction. You can do what yoga implies; you can unify instead of fragment. You can allow the bandhas to move out of the core of your body equally into the left upper, right lower, front centre and back periphery all at the same time. Going equally and instantaneously into the left arm left hand, right leg right foot, etcetera.

In order to express the bandhas freely in the right arm, the right arm has to be free of tension. You don't have to address yourself to the particularities of tension. You don't have to say, "is there tension in my shoulder?". You just try and express the bandhas. You let the left hand expression of the bandhas speak to the right; the left foot to the left leg, etcetera. They speak to each other all the time, and encourage each other in their doing. By being sensitive to the flow of sensation we can support and enhance that intrinsic process of communication. We do this by feeling, not by geometry. By balancing sensations, feelings, qualities. This natural feedback between the body parts guides you into more fully expressing it. When you express it everywhere you are expressing the same quality of openness, lightness, infiniteness everywhere.

This comes from grounding what needs to be grounded while making space wherever possible. This process naturally organises itself into spiralic lines of force throughout the whole body. The integration of broadening what can be broadened, and lengthening what

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can be lengthened takes place naturally: through the inherent integrity of the body. An integrity that expresses itself, that functions through the agency of the pain-pleasure mechanism. The more fully expresses itself the more the body loses its objectness, and manifests its infiniteness.

So that eventually the actions that could be analysed into separate actions by an anatomist, just generate each other. You don't think about them, you just think I'm going to open. That's all, I'm going to open. I'm going to open and release. I'm going to open and relax. In order to open and relax which is sukham, I must stabilise. The process that I'm using is the bandhas. Mulabandha gives you sthiram: stability and Uddiyanabandha gives you sukham: opening. So when you activate the internal feet spirals in Uttanasana, forward bend feet apart, then you can feel that releasing the pelvic floor, the buttock bones coming apart. But if you carry on that too much you start to fall forwards. So if you then use the external feet spirals that action grounds you. It limits the opening of the buttock bones and compresses inwards from the hip bones. That compression inwards combined with the opening pushes the spine out like toothpaste from a tube and the spine goes down from that stability effortlessly.

So the essential, unifying mechanism for freeing the body from tension so that it manifests the infinite beyond duality, is the bandhas. Which of course are not esoteric sacraments, but intrinsic muscular responses to gravity. So that the bandhas are creating an equivalent freedom, left right, front back, top bottom. Rather than just focussing your freedom where your intent goes; hamstrings, lumbar, shoulders or whatever. When you do that you may get a relative freedom but usually it comes at the price of restriction somewhere else. Not always, but very often. But if you prioritise with the bandhas that can't happen. If you're radiating the bandhas from the passive core of your body to the periphery then this radiation will equalise, left right, front back, top bottom, inside outside.

So when this is happening, when the bandhas are coming out to the hands and the left hand is more free, more open, it begins speaking to the right arm. Then more opening starts coming through that communication because that means that the left side of the brain controlling these muscles can tell the right side of the brain controlling those muscles something. This is not anything to do with

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your thinking process. It is just how the body learns, transmitting information through the neurons according to your intent to balance.



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FROM SEPARATENESS TO NONSEPARATENESS



As you are doing this, as you activate the feet spirals for example, you feel very clearly what's happening in the pelvis. Perhaps not so clearly, you can also feel what's happening in the lungs. And when you combine the impact of the feet spirals, what's happening from there in the lungs with what's happening in the lungs because of the arms, then you are deeply in a process that you don't need to conceptualise. Though conceptualising of it while it still hasn't matured can be helpful. You are no longer operating as if each part of the body was separate. You are no longer operating as if each action was separate. You can feel that exactly what you do to the ball of the big toe can be felt in the lungs.

So what this shows you is that the distinction between the different parts of the body are just a function of the mind. They are not intrinsic to the body. If you say to yourself, "extend the little finger" you can feel it in the lung. So you have actually done something to the lung, to the shoulder, to the arm, to the elbow, to the forearm, to the wrist, to the hand by applying intent to your finger. So the separate parts of the body turn out to be connected. But they turn out to be connected in a very specific way: which is that they are absolutely and totally interconnected. So you can take any part of your body and if you are sensitive enough you can move any other part of the body and feel it there. Any part.

All the parts of the body are totally interconnected. You can become somatically, functionally comfortable with the interconnectivity of the apparently separable parts of the body. That phrase was said very specifically, very deliberately. When you start to realise that the apparently separable parts of the body are not actually and inherently separate then the significance of the word yoga is being manifest in your experience. You haven't unified lung and finger. You have discovered that lung and finger are not separate. So yoga is not something that you do to make union happen. Union is here. Unity is here. Non separateness is here. That non separateness can be recognised in any moment. It can be any time, you don't have to have done yoga to do it, really. Yoga is not about making things happen. The process of yoga is about seeing what happens by itself.

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So that you can, by that recognition, become free from your false assumptions about yourself and about life.

When that interconnectivity becomes non separateness that's when the infinite is manifest. That's when the body as a whole is no longer an object: because the body as a whole is manifest by its apparent parts. When the apparent parts are not saying "me" then there is a total silence in the body. Then the body disappears as an object of perception.

This the bandhas invite irresistibly. It doesn't matter how strong you are. It doesn't matter how flexible you are. It doesn't even matter if you've got tension in the body because the bandhas are inviting you to drop below that level of perception. In that dropping of your perception to a deeper level a relaxation in the body happens. This happens because to a great extent tension in the body is maintained by the habit of objectness in the mind. If I anaesthetise you it goes away: gone because the mind has gone. The habit of objectifying your body has been stopped. Then I can do whatever I like with your body because your mind has gone. So your body has gone soft. Your body no longer has parts, no longer has restrictions

So it's the mind that's creating the tension. When the bandhas internalise your attention, perception deepens and tension drops. As you tune in to more subtle levels of the inherently unified field we call the body, the objectness of the body, and its tensions start to dissolve. It doesn't mean that it won't come immediately back. Momentarily it can be suspended. So ultimately this is the significance of form. The significance of form is that it is a function of perception. You can see this quite easily in people's physical self image.

I read an article the other day about this. It took ten women and had five photographs of each, four of which were re-touched. One of which was original. They were re-touched to make various parts look bigger or smaller. The women could not identify themselves. They always thought they were bigger than they were. The boyfriends tended to get it right. Now this is true of all of us to one degree or another. We can't see ourselves clearly because of our preferences, because of what we would like or don't like. It doesn't haven't to be physical. It can be psychological. I know people who are incredibly intelligent who would never ever dare to admit it, because they haven't read any books or something. As they are not

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well educated, they think that therefore they are not intelligent. Therefore they often defer to the judgement of better educated, less intelligent people. And wonder why things keep going wrong when they had seen it better themselves. Simply because they have got this image of themselves as not being intelligent.



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OBJECTNESS



The form of which I am now speaking is actually just perception. Perception makes form. This is what the gift of the bandhas is. It takes you out of form by changing your perception. By unifying your perception. The bandhas involve the things most close to you, which are the parts of the body. They take the things most close to you which are usually separated, and show you that these things are not separate. Simultaneously they show you that they are simply a function of your perception. You don't have to conceptualise this for the impact to happen. The bandhas are freeing you from objectness.

Objectness in your daily life for example means saying: "she is a bitch". "She is really sweet". "I know she is a bitch because she said something bad about me behind my back." "I know that she is sweet because she said something good about me". That's how we make objects. That's how we objectify people. We define, we fix an object on the basis of a few actions. Normally that we have heard third or second hand. Rumour.

This is where we get caught. Nice person, not nice person. Good person, bad person. Right, wrong. This is where blame comes in. We have made objects where there are not necessarily any actual objects as such. Sometimes of course we need to make objects. If you want to make dinner you have to make an object of the knife or you might cut your finger. You have to make an object of the finger. But you don't have to make an object of the cook if you don't like the meal. You can just say I didn't like the meal. That's the only thing you can really truly say. I didn't like the meal. You can't truly and honestly say it's a bad cook just because you didn't like it.

Objectness is where we are all caught. At the root of objectness is what is at the heart of the teaching of the Buddha. Now, he was perhaps the most lucid spiritual teacher that there has ever been. The essence of his teaching is that that special object, the self, does not exist. That doesn't mean that there is nothing there. That I am saying that the finger doesn't exist as something separate from the lung, doesn't mean there is nothing there. Of course there is something there. If you think I mean there is nothing there then come and try to take it off with the knife and see what I do. There is

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something there but it is not the object we take it to be. It is not what we think.

I would just like to go back to your thing about the cook. Surely what a good cook is is someone who cooks food which I like. And if I say someone is a good cook then that's what I mean.

Fair enough. But if you say to somebody don't go and have that meal, he is a bad cook, which is how it sometimes becomes when you are not thinking about it, then that's not true because you don't know what that person's preference would be. So you might say, "oh you should go to Godfrey, he's a really good yoga teacher", and someone else could say "bollocks, he's crap". It's preference.

Yes, but when I say something's good, I'm just revealing a preference.

Yeah, but how often does it go beyond that? How often do we go beyond that and turn our preference into a definition: he's a good person, he's a bad person. Then judgement is made and conflict and isolation arise from that dishonest objectification. That happens. Without us meaning to. So the honest statement is not, "he's a good cook", but, "every time I've eaten his food I've enjoyed it".

So then you're putting yourself into the action rather than into the object. Life does actually take place in action. What good is an object without an action. That's why Patanjali says investigate the nature of action, the source of action. We are in the yoga postures investigating the nature of objects too, by way of investigating actions. Because the two are not separate. An object is what does a certain kind of action. That's how you define an object. So they are not separate.

But if you can come away from the objectness and more to the actionness then what happens to the actions? They become more free. Or they become no longer associated directly with a specifically defined object. So Tom O'Reilly has in his life done many, many things. I imagine many of which pleased people, some of which did not. Probably there are some people whose experience of Tom O'Reilly is focussed mainly around the ones that did not and they don't really like you. I mean, they're dead stupid, I agree. Nevertheless that's likely to happen. So that's all I'm talking about. Nothing weird: but happening all the time. We make a mistake in

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thinking a person is fixed by the characteristics of the actions which we've experienced them by.

The bandhas can be a key, an invitation, to really get to grips with the nature of objectness. It doesn't mean that objectness in itself disappears. It just means that you see what objectness is. It's a function of action and a function of perception. A function of the perceptions required of action. You need to make an object. But when you're lying on a beach really relaxed and there's nobody there, you don't need to make an object out of anything. You just relax. That is what all of your hard earned money is for. It is! That's what all of everybody's money is for! To relax! Feel safe. Let go. But it doesn't work. Or it just works for a moment, or when you're pissed. Then you sober up. Objects and actions come back.

When you can see that that all of these objects are functions of perception arising from anxiety and intention, when there's nothing you can do about them you just leave them alone. But if there is something that you want to and can do about them, then you create the appropriate objects to act on and you act accordingly. Fine. But not while you're lying on the beach. While you're lying on the beach you relax. But we don't. We have this habit. You're lying on the beach and you go, "person over there, person over there talking, person over there talking about football!". This can happen very easily in Ibiza. You think it's a dead cool spiritual place and you go to the beach and they're talking about football or tit size or something. Then you get really pissed off. But you don't have to. Honestly all that can go on right there, without you even noticing it, if you are relaxed.

There's a debate going on, amongst the students about whether we should have so many people in the dome. Because it's a little bit crowded and I say good, let's crowd it out. And let the people who don't like it fuck off. That's my response. That they are so fucking selfish that they want their little space, their little physical space so that somebody else can't be here. Well that person can fuck off. That's what I say. Off you go Tom! If you can't cope with people here then how are you going to cope with them anywhere else?



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BEING CONSCIOUS



Right now everybody is awake. Because you are awake perceiving is going on, though specific perceptions are not necessarily being made about everything in your perceptual field. There is awareness of the crickets but you are not necessarily always recognising the sound of the crickets as such. In the dome at this time of year perceiving cricketsong is going on all the time, even if you are asleep. So there is a difference between perceiving and perception. So if I say there is no perception it doesn't mean no perceiving. If I say no perception it doesn't mean unconscious. It can actually mean highly conscious: but of nothing in particular. It means reabsorbed into the field of awareness without talking about it to yourself.

There is a kind of very common delusion about spiritual practice, about yoga, about meditation, that they make you more conscious. Which is a statement that is only true if it is understood. It does not make you more conscious-of. If you became more conscious-of you would become overloaded. Which is what happens when you take LSD. You become overloaded. The filter is opened and all of a sudden you become conscious of so much more that some people freak out. Being conscious-of is a tiring thing. Imagine if you were conscious of everybody's thoughts right now. How exhausting that would be.

Now there are a lot of people who do yoga trying to get that. Then they judge themselves by the fact that it's not happening. Though sometimes it does. When you do yoga you do sometimes become conscious of somebody's thoughts, but only because it's pertinent to action. So you feel something coming and you turn around and you go, "gotcha". It happens. Because it's pertinent to action. But not because you're just picking up this, that and the other at random. When you're meditating we pick things up off each other. But only through resonance, not at random. When it's pertinent to your own thought process. There's a resonance.

So Lilly can ask me a question and she can be speaking for five people, none of whom are herself. This happens. Especially with people who have been here a long time. They know the answer to the question. They're not interested in the question. But they are

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hearing this question not being asked by people who are more shy. So it comes out of their mouth. Because we are not separate. But this resonant process is not actually happening consciously. She does not recognise your thoughts. They just come out of her mouth. Because they don't actually belong to anyone anyway.

This is what the bandhas teach us. That that which is separable in perception is not inherently separate. That means this body is not inherently separate from that body. How can you say it is if I can hear you? There is something making a connection. If I can see you we are connected. However you want to look at it. You can see the stars. This is not an act of separation, this is an act of union when you see a star. It's an expression of union.

In Zen there is a saying: this very body, which means not just mine but each one, is the entire universe. And it means just that. The entire universe. This very body is the entire universe if you penetrate it. If you experience it in its fullness you must experience the entire universe. This is a Tantric Zen saying but it's also stated very clearly by a quantum physicist, David Bohm, in his book, Wholeness and the Implicate Order. In order to understand any object you must investigate it thoroughly. In order to investigate any object whatsoever and define it exhaustively you must explain the whole universe. Because separateness is a function of perception.

It's also a function of action and we live in that realm of action and perception. And there is separateness there. But that separateness is like the cloud that passes through the blue sky. It doesn't undermine the underlying non-separateness. So of course my little left finger is separate from my little right finger. So nobody but me is going to feel in my finger what you can only see. Separateness (for you) and nonseparateness (for me) are operating together. Just like left and right are operating together, just like sky and clouds are operating together. Front and back are operating together.

However we tend to function only in objectness, separateness. We forget the nonseparateness when we have to become conscious-of in our functioning. So the purpose of yoga, the bandhas in particular, is not to make the nonseparateness happen but to show us the ground within which separateness arises. In which objectness arises. So that we stop forgetting, ignoring the ground. That's all. You don't always have to pay attention to the ground in the living of your life. It depends what you do of course. Nevertheless objectness is

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required a lot of the time. Then the ground is overlooked. But it doesn't have to be an ongoing habit no longer pertinent to action.



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ILLUSION OF PERSONAL POWER



Objectness it is not required when you are meditating. The whole purpose of meditation is to let go of objectness and relax. If you are trying to control your mind, you are in objectness. There are two objects there, you and it: the controller and the activity of the mind. So then you are just where you are normally, manipulating objects. So it may well be that doing that develops your concentration, develops your power to control but it doesn't help you to relax. But if you experience the holding of the mind still on an object of perception, whatever it might be, as an expression of your power, your skill, then you become a slave to anxiety and fear. Your power is making you a slave to fear. You become a slave to anxiety.

Why?

Because if you enjoy what that power does, what happens if you lose it? What happens if you can't apply it where you want to? To your girlfriend or your boss? Or whatever. So anxiety comes with the sense of power. So look at Hitler. Perfect example. Stalin.

The purpose of my asking you to recognise the inherent oscillation of your attention is to realise that you are not in control of your mind. You can influence it sometimes, of course. You can focus it, apply it. But if you really examine it, it turns out that you are not really controlling it. You are not in control of mind. So, obviously then, you are not in control of your life.

I set out to go to Ibiza and open a yoga centre. This is me in control of my life. But that's not really true. How did I get here? What did I have to do with that? I didn't do absolutely anything directly towards that, except run away from London. But I never once set my intent to sitting around with forty people from all over the world inviting them to see that they are not in control of their lives. I did want a yoga retreat centre.

So the way I understand this is that sometimes you have a feeling of what's coming and the picture arises in your mind and you say, "oh I want that", and so you are just drawn there. And it looks like you're making it happen which you could say you are, from a

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certain point of view. But from another point of view, it was just going to happen. It was going to happen as a result of the pressure of events coagulating into that spacetime location. It had to happen and perhaps part of the happening meant that you had to see it coming, and perhaps part of the seeing it coming was you had to say, "well I'm going to make it happen". Fair enough.

But if you have anything in your life that you think is really incredible, and is an expression of how capable you are, then look at it. Really look at it and see how many hundred million things are supporting it that you had nothing to do with. That you could have had nothing to do with. But just happened to be in place. To coincide with the few little things that you did that made it happen. Yet we select those actions that we can perceive based on those objects that we can perceive and say, "They did it. We did it. I did it. Aren't I cool?" or, "I couldn't do it. Aren't I shit"? Same difference.

You know, you look at a self made millionaire, and you think wow that guy must have his shit together. You know the average bankruptcies of an American millionaire is two. So they were failures two times at least before they made it. Now they could have stopped after one or two and said, "I'm a failure. That's me, I've failed". But they go on. Not making an object out of yourself.

But isn't that part of controlling will power when they go on? It's will power. It's control.

It is what we call will power. But what is will power? We call it will power. What is it really? Where does it come from? It comes from the fact that you want something. So will power is just the application of intense desire towards an object. So it's wanting. Who determines what they want? Have you ever kept on wanting a woman that you couldn't have? You wouldn't do that by choice would you! So your will power is coming from your desires and your desire is coming from god knows where. That means your life is coming from god knows where because your life is coming from desires and they are coming from god knows fucking where. Nowhere, anywhere, but not you. You wouldn't be so fucking stupid would you? No, none of us would. We would desire what we could get. And we would get what we could desire. But life's not like that. Ramesh likes to say if there was such a thing as personal volition there would be no stupid actions. Because nobody would make a

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stupid action if you were really in control. If you had the power: but you don't.

Some people look stupid to other people and the same people look not stupid to another bunch of people. Sometimes actions seem one way from one direction and different from another. And it seems like actions being done by this one are different from those being done by that one. But really, fundamentally my actions are not inherently different from yours: good ones not different from bad ones. They are each and all what must happen in that location as a result of the whole of history.

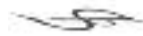
We are all right now involved in a game. The game is that I know something that you don't. But it's just a game. I know why I play the game, because it's fun and I guess it's fun for you too. But sometimes I play the game that you are playing. I ask somebody who sometimes plays the game that you're playing with me, to play the game that I'm playing with you! It's just a game. And you know what's really funny: you give me my knowledge. You do. You give it to me in the moment. You come to me and you say I've got a problem and I'm totally relaxed and I'm hearing what the problem is from your body and I say "do this then". But that's not coming from prior knowledge. I know nothing about your leg, though I do know a bit about yoga. So you're telling me. You're teaching me. But I'm articulating it back to you and that's why you have to pay me. Because you can't hear your own body. Or you refuse to listen. Or you haven't got the key yet or something, who knows. But I'm not sitting here full of knowledge about the body. I don't have any real idea how the body works. If you say, "why do people get pain in the knees?", I don't know. But if you bring a painful knee towards me I can probably help it because there is not actually a separation. And if I can remove that apparent separation then something can come out of my mouth that will be useful.

I think that human beings like their information delivered relationally. If I have information about my body that accessible to me but that I choose to not see for whatever reason part of it is that it feels better to have you give it to me. And so that the matrix gets coloured with all of these personal perceptions and colourations in order to have this human game.

Yes, which is delightful. Wouldn't it be boring if you didn't need that? It's delightful. But, let's be fair, it's not delightful to every-

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body. A lot of people do suffer a lot, but the capacity for delight is inherent in the fact that we are all playing a game with each other and the problem is only when we forget that it's a game. And the word that Nancy used, coloured by personal perceptions, that's really the key. Coloured by personal perceptions: that is what Patanjali is talking about. Vritti. Personal perception. Taking you away from the truth or whatever, but in order to play a game. So that's not the problem. Afterwards he says the problem is identifying with it. The problem is thinking that you are the role that you are playing.



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SENSE OF SELF



It sounds to me as if it's about finding out who we are. You know in relation to someone else making someone else an object or exploring it through our perceptions of ourselves and what you're saying is that there is no self yet you feel your self.

Well what there is is this sense of self. When you're exploring yourself that's what you're exploring: an impression. You're exploring feelings and memories, and this sense of self arises inevitably within that. This is coming from the identification of actions with objects, as if they belong to one another. Which is how it seems, from within our self-obsession. But not how it is when we take a broader view. When self obsessed we find ourselves everywhere. When openly exploring in order to find what's really going on, we can't find ourselves anywhere. Each action and object reverts to the totality of all objects and actions.

It is the separateness of one body from another that gives a sense of self. The self being a function of the separateness of the organism. But when you start to openly examine the nature of the organism, or the nature of the object and its actions, then the separateness starts to be seen as just a perception. It's a functional perception. It has a functional value, but if that functional value is over rated it can become a tyranny. Within which you can't relax and you're trying to protect something which is really just a mask, and in doing that you overlook the possibility of going deeper.

Going deeper doesn't negate the mask. Actually going deeper fulfils the function of the mask. When you go to a masked ball, if you and I go wearing the same mask, it doesn't matter. It's about what goes on behind the mask that makes it interesting, not the mask. So somebody can get confused between you and me in the beginning because of the mask until they realise that there's totally different behaviours coming. Then the confusion isn't there any more.

So the invitation to go deeper is not an invitation to deny the surface. That which generates the sense of self must remain: the body must remain, the mind must remain, perceptions must remain, actions must remain. But if you don't say in your heart they are 'my'

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actions, but in your interaction you treat them that way, as you must, then they are both there. Then the sense of self is operating but not in a selfish way: meaning not so that at all costs I must secure for the sense of self whatever it wants. There is a tragically mistaken attitude on the spiritual path that you must get rid of the ego, you must kill the self: that the body is bad, the mind is bad; but that is where the fun is. That's the game, that's the beauty but it becomes ugly if it is not seen to be a game.

So in my opinion, you don't really need the Ramana Maharshi question "who am I?". The chances are that's going to twist your knickers up real good for a long time. Because you start off on the wrong foot and stay there: obsessing with your so called self. "Who the fuck am I?" You don't know how to take it off the intellectual plane. All you need to do is investigate your actions: to see if there really is a local controller of your actions. Within that the significance of the self, whatever it may be, just diminishes and then you relax a little bit and things get much more spacious and light and effortless and easy.



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BEING HONEST



Godfrey, you just said control your actions. What do you mean when you just said control your actions.

No. I said look to see if there is a controller of actions. Investigate your actions: investigate how possible it really is to control them. By trying. Try to control them, even, but in the honest light of open awareness.

Consciously?

Yeah: see how much you succeed. See as honestly as you can how much you succeed and how much you fail. Then when you are being really honest about the difference between success and failure relative to actions that you are trying to control, take the ones you succeeded with and examine how come success happened. Then take the ones that you failed with and examine how come failure happened. Then the distinction between their process starts to dissolve.

You find that moment by moment your capacity is just as it is: fixed. Though of course within the flow of time it is changing. It becomes indisputably clear that the capacity you have inherent in your body via DNA, and the capacity you have derived from past experience, are there as a result of things that are way beyond your control. Your DNA, which different people there are in the room, which words I chose to use to articulate a particular action, etc.

Now, honestly, do you really have control over your ability to interpret my words effectively? You don't. If you did you would, of course, understand exactly what I mean every time I open my mouth. Even I can't do that. To my own words. This can only be seen in the light of honest and open enquiry. So when that enquiry does happen the sense of being in control begins to dissolve. Actions just happen according to the configuration of circumstance; a lot of which is the conditioning, the potentiality and the capability in you. Some of which is your, conditioned, selection process, choicemaking, decision taking. But none of that is actually under your control.

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You can try to express that capability; but very often we can't. That also is not at our beck and call. What I am saying is we can relax about it when we can't. And we can relax about it when we can. So we don't become proud and anxious about needing to be able to do it again. And the issue of whether we are in control or not is a non issue. The issue is relaxing. Can you relax? Can you relax so much that you can be authentic, genuine, honest, and never feel that life or somebody is impinging on you and making you be dishonest in order for you to survive. So that you never have to make weapons of your feelings and go to war with the world, or even a little part of it.

Does that mean our attitude to success and failure should be the same?

No. Your attitude to anything is the way it is: moment from moment. If you're taking from me the assumption that I'm saying you should be different from the way you are, I'm not. I'm actually saying you should be just the way you are. You are just the way you are: and there is nothing you can do about it. But, at the same time everything that happens to you is conditioning you moment by moment. There is no saying what the impact of what I'm saying and what you are doing on the mat, is going to have on you. My fantasy is that it will make you free. That you will become totally relaxed. And totally honest. It is a fantasy I know. But you know, fantasies are comforting. Especially when you know you have no sway over reality.

Godfrey, what you're doing, can have the conditioning.

That's what I just said, yeah. And for some people it may be an adverse conditioning effect. You know, in some people it is. But what to do? Should I stop because someone might get confused? I couldn't even if I wanted. And believe me I've wanted that a lot, but here I am. Right or wrong, for good or evil, a puppet on an unseen string.

Godfrey, I have another question. A practical question. In daily life in daily practice if I only have an hour a day then what do I let out or cut down?

What do you do?

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Yes, you show us four hours of practice here

You must do four hours, and you must do it exactly as I tell you. If you don't do exactly as I tell you, all the time for the rest of your life, you're going to be fucked. Right? Wrong!!! You just do whatever you feel like. And I really mean that. Just do what you feel like and if you just let yourself do what you feel like in the event of sometimes doing the wrong thing it will become apparent very obviously, very quickly. And it will adjust itself and you will end up doing the right thing. Or I can tell you what to do all the time and you try to do it, which means that it will take much longer to find out what really you should do. Just do what you feel like. You don't ever have to do anything you've ever done in here again, ever. Just do what you feel like on the basis of what you have been exposed to here, there and everywhere.

That's a good answer.

I'm not actually intending to give you a practice format. I'm using these postures in this way to clarify the impact of the bandhas, the true nature of action and the illusory nature of volition, and that's it. That's all I'm doing. That's all I'm intending to do. I know it gives the impression that you should practice this way and there is no reason why you shouldn't practice this way. But that's not what I'm trying to do. I'm not trying to determine how you practice externally. I'm just trying to give you an option for an internal aspect to your practice. I think it would be great if nobody practiced. If yoga just happened because you wanted to do it. And then you would just do what you wanted to do. Instead of making a constant battle over it.

I went to the beach yesterday to do yoga and I watched this dialogue in my mind. "Ok, so last time I did that so this time I'll do this" and then this voice said "why don't you just go to the fucking beach and listen and let your body tell you what to do". And it's very hard to let go of that. Thinking that you have some knowledge about what best to do. What best to be done can be clearly heard moment by moment, not just relative to yoga. Relative to anything.



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MAKING CHOICES



Actually that, you answered a question about this in the first day last week, having to do with one of the students saying that sometimes she would rather dance in the morning than do yoga so what should she do and you said she should dance. The problem for me with that is that just as one needs to explore resistances shall I say in the body in order to be able to have more relaxation and be released, it seems the mind also has similar habituated psychic muscular turns that keeps it from going on. So I think it's complicated to distinguish between the, yeah sure you should go dance because that's what you feel like and also the other part of it which is, what is this resistance about? Should I take a look at this more deeply. So that to me is a complicated issue in practicing.

Yeah, it is always a complicated issue when you think you are having to make a choice. Especially when you are making a choice about something that you know is good for you but you have a feeling that you are not going to enjoy. But the point in my response is that you will, willy nilly, do what you feel like and what you feel like doesn't mean what you most like. So if at that moment you have most active a drive to challenge your limitations and to overcome: then you will do that because that's what you'll feel like. So that's all I mean.

In a way I'm not saying anything when I say do what you feel like. You could say it's a cop out answer because everybody is always doing what they feel like. But what I'm really saying is don't worry about it: not before, not afterwards. Whatever you've decided to do is fine. So if you decide to dance then don't say, "I should've done my yoga". Or if you decide to do your yoga then don't say, "but I really want to dance". Or if you decide to do your yoga or your dance and end up doing the other, whether out of delight or guilt: never mind. That's the way it is. So just commit yourself to whatever you feel. Then whatever you are able to do at the moment is the best thing to do. It is the only thing to do. Because it is the thing that you do.

Do what you feel like is one way of saying it, and another way of saying it is do what you think that you should. So then it's coming

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from the mind. And there is actually always an interaction. You feel like dancing but you think you'd benefit from yoga so you do yoga. And that's fine but to the extent that you are not sure that you should be doing yoga, it's not going to be as beneficial as it would be as if you just commit yourself and right now forget the dance and just do yoga. So that's the dynamic that's going on all of the time. I'm not meaning to say that you should always take the easy way out. You don't and you won't. Some people often do and for those people, as you have pointed out, life doesn't really turn out to be that easy. Because they have to always take the line of least resistance so they are always getting pushed around. So that's a dilemma. But what I'm saying is it doesn't have to be a dilemma after the fact.

Leonard Cohen says "I don't trust my inner feelings, inner feelings come and go". To which I would like to add that you can trust your actions: once they have happened. After they've happened it's a fait accompli! No need to worry about it then. It doesn't help before though. It doesn't help when you're wondering what to do. Then you've only got your thoughts and feelings and they all come and go you know. But when you do trust your actions after they've happened that means you're relaxed. You are not going to give yourself, or anyone else, a hard time. You're not going to bomb someone or exploit someone.

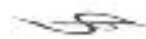
It might be that from the point of view of social harmony, or personal preference it would have been better if you hadn't done some things. But from a broader point of view, you've always done the right thing. The right thing happened. However you want to say it. When you're personalising everything then that goes. What was the right thing to do becomes the thing you should not have done, or they should not have done. The one is guilt, the other blame.

I often find myself doing things that I just cannot understand. I can't. It seems wrong. It must be wrong. Very often later it turns out I can understand why but in the moment not. So, if I'm not willing to trust action, if I'm not willing to trust the flow of life's unfolding, then I'm just going to try to block those things. Which of course can't be helped and then that also has to happen. I no longer do that. If there's a strong impulse to do something and it's not meeting any external resistance then I'll just go. Even if it seems crazy. You should watch me eat chocolate. I mean sometimes it's definitely crazy.

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So what I'm really saying is the bandhas are an invitation to enjoy your life by accepting what's happened. Accepting not knowing what's going to happen as fun not fearful. Not knowing what is going to happen in the next scene of our life can be as fun as not knowing what's going to happen in the next scene of a movie.

The beautiful thing is that each one of us are in a different movie. They touch on each other but you are the star of your own movie. The chances are that tragedy and comedy are going to oscillate. It's bound to: and if you're holding on for the comedy, that's a tragedy. Personally I'd rather watch Romeo and Juliet than The Life of Brian. Life of Brian once, ok, but Romeo and Juliet you can watch over and over. Tragedy is great entertainment. Unless it's our own. Then we don't like it. But that's where the juiciest tragedy is. When it's our own. So hire a tragedy from me any time you like.



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part two

SAMADHI



When we are making shapes with the body we are articulating the body in form. On the basis of the application of the bandhas, our understanding of the nature of that form changes. The nature of the form itself doesn't change: but our understanding of the nature of the form changes. We begin to realise that the little finger doesn't end here. We begin to realise the interconnectivity, we begin to realise non-separateness. We begin to realise that that which is perceived is exactly that. We begin to realise that that which is perceived is that which is perceived. That that which is perceived is a perception taking place in our perceptual mechanism. In other words, form is an appearance in the mind.

Samadhi is a technical term that has become a part of the everyday language of yoga practitioners. Samadhi is a technical term that relates to an aspect of consciousness. You could say that 'quark' is a technical term that relates to an aspect of matter. It's a technicality that is quite difficult for us non-physicists to get. It's not that easy to understand what the hell a quark is, and how come there can never be one quark by itself. We don't understand these things because we are not physicists: we don't have the training. So the term samadhi is bandied about without any understanding of what it means. It's treated as if it were a prize for the victor ludorum at the end of the race; as if he who gets furthest fastest gets samadhi. That's the implicit assumption.

Some of you may know my friend, Kisen, who wrote a book, *Yoga Pure and Simple*; I highly recommend it. When he went to Mysore to study yoga with Pattabhi Jois, he decided after the first day not to. Nevertheless he hung out with the Ashtanga elite to see what was going on. You know the guys I mean.

Now Kisen wasn't christened Kisen. He got that name from our Zen Master. He grew up in the bars of Liverpool with a regularly broken face. You can imagine that he brings a certain amount of scepticism to all the bullshit of the yoga world. He wanted to know why everybody was putting themselves through this very extreme prac-

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tice. They all told him that it was to get samadhi. So he asked, "well when does that come?". The answer was always, "six series, master it. It's coming then".

Rumour. Nobody's actually done the sixth series. Nobody but Sharat is allowed to do the sixth series. You'll have to figure out why for yourselves, in case they've got lawyers listening. So samadhi becomes a rumour. The prize that you get when you have totally pummelled and pretzelled your body.

However, Patanjali makes a very clear statement about what samadhi is. He doesn't relate it to physical flexibility. He relates it to something everyday. Something so absolutely and utterly everyday that we overlook it. When we hear that word we think it is pointing to something with which we have no familiarity. Therefore we must try to find it. So we set off on a journey to find it. This word samadhi can be replaced with the word enlightenment, liberation, freedom. People set off looking for something which actually isn't anywhere but where they are. And isn't anything, but what they most deeply are.

Patanjali's very concise definition of samadhi is "apparent form radiating the singular significance of emptiness". This is one of the most packed statements ever uttered. You could write a book on that. You could write an encyclopaedia on what that says. Apparent form radiating the singular significance of emptiness. Every single word is loaded with experience of the way things work.

That's all. With experience of the way things are. Nothing special. Not like Einstein's, $e=mc^2$ statement. That is a statement loaded with knowledge that we have no access to. That we have no possibility of understanding without a lot of deep and difficult study. But apparent form radiating the singular significance of emptiness points to what we deeply know already. To deeply to recognise perhaps, but this is not unknown or unknowable to us.

Yoga postures are a fantastic invitation to clarify that knowing, to uncover that knowing. To demonstrate, to prove to ourselves, that we don't need an interpreter. That we don't need to rely on any authority other than our own experience. We may need a guide to help us to get there but we don't need an interpreter to tell us what it is. Perhaps we do need a little help: but the help that we need is just to point out where the door is.

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The door already is. You don't have to make the door. The door is the body. If you look closely at any system, at any freedom system that works, you find the body is the key. There is no way you can leave the body and become free. There is no way you can leave the body and enjoy your life. So the body is the doorway through which you can find what Patanjali means when he says apparent form radiating the singular significance of emptiness.

What Patanjali means by apparent form is that what we perceive is an appearance. But that that appearance is real on its own terms. It exists just like Neo in the Matrix exists: but only on celluloid and in our imaginations. The Matrix exists on celluloid, and in our imaginations. Something exists.

Form exists as an appearance. An appearance of what?. Form is an appearance of what? Well Patanjali tells us what. But we don't need Patanjali to tell us what. And if we don't have any experience of what Patanjali is speaking about his words can only be gobbledygook. Meaninglessness. The purpose of the bandhas is to realise that which is at the very heart of Patanjali's and the Buddha's teaching: emptiness. Emptiness is what form is the appearance of.

Now emptiness is not nothingness in the sense of everything has been taken away. Emptiness signifies that there are actually no things as such. That when all partial perspectives are relinquished we are not left with a special kind of thing. We are left with no 'thingness' at all: emptiness.

Emptiness is what non-separateness implies and signifies. Emptiness is the implication of what non-separateness is. While non-separateness is the significance of what interconnectivity is. Interconnectivity is the deeper significance of connectivity. Emptiness then is the deepest significance of objects. Emptiness is the significance of doing yoga postures. Emptiness is the significance of establishing relationships between different parts of the body, then clarifying those relationships in such a way that the perceptibly separable parts of the body no longer impinge themselves on awareness as separate: and then non-separateness is happening. This non-separateness is the overt face of emptiness.



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THE REALISATION OF EMPTINESS



That means the finger becomes empty of its separate identity. The heel becomes empty of its separate identity. The lung becomes empty of its separate identity. From the point of view of going deep into your body on the bandhas there is no little finger, there is no lung. Now, you could put part of the body that you have objectified into that sentence, and just say that there is none. That doesn't mean that one can't be seen if somebody's looking. If you look, yeah, finger can be seen. If somebody else looks, a head can be seen. But we're talking about your own internal experience.

So this is what Patanjali means by emptiness. Patanjali is not a nihilist. The Buddha was not a nihilist. Emptiness is not some horrible terrifying vacuum. It is an absence of things and thingness. Samadhi is apparent form radiating the singular significance of emptiness. For us in our practice that is the bandhas; radiating the singular significance of the bandhas. If you are able to radiate the bandhas, to allow the left right, top bottom, front back, inside outside, hand leg, foot arm be all doing the same thing: that thing will reveal itself to be emptiness. Then your body as an objectified thing will disappear. Your mind will disappear. Your intent will disappear. Your self will disappear: to you. Although everything is still there as an appearance to be perceived by whomsoever is looking in that way and in that direction.

In other words nothing has ontologically changed. Nothing that actually existed has actually been removed or transformed. While that which existed only as an appearance is revealed to be exactly that: an appearance. Emptiness has not been brought about. Apparent form is not radiating the singular significance of emptiness because you have been brilliant in your practice. You have just noticed that apparent form is a radiation of emptiness, by its very nature. This noticing is samadhi. Samadhi does not make form radiate emptiness or vice versa.

Familiarity with that noticing means you can stop being hung up about form. You can stop being hung up about objects. It doesn't mean that form doesn't exist. It doesn't mean objects don't exist. It doesn't mean that you don't still have to navigate them. It simply

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means that the more you realise that they are a form, an appearance of emptiness, the more relaxed you are about the navigation. Which you sometimes call your life. But you don't usually.

You don't normally talk to yourself about your life. There is just living, breathing, eating, walking, feeling, hearing. Unless you're upset or relating your excitement. It's not only when you are upset that you claim things. Also when you're over excited you claim things. "Ah! My life is really good!" Or "my life sucks". But what's more honest is if you say my life is sucking right now. Or my life is flying right now. But nobody here has a life that sucks all the time. Some people maybe, but not us.

So the deep purpose of these shapes, these forms, these postures, is not to give you physical freedom of movement. It is not to give you flexibility or strength, or any of those superficial physical powers or siddhis. Nor is it to give mental siddhis either: concentration, focus, perception, telepathy. Ok, these things may happen. The physical siddhis, the mental siddhis happen. They happen because you relax.

Or they can be made to happen, sometimes, because you work really hard. But the making them happen by working really hard is deeply exhausting. And then things tend to spin out of control. Not just because you're exhausted by the effort that you are making, but because you're taking it personally. You're proud of your achievements. Alistair Crowley is a fine example. Somebody who span out of control. But if you read his book, Magic and Theory in Practice, the first part is about Ashtanga yoga and draws on Patanjali and says don't go to magic without going to yoga first. Don't try magic without yoga because you will be fucked: and he got fucked.



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EVERYDAY SAMADHI



Godfrey, just to see if I understand it right. When you say samadhi is a way of, the way you sense everyday, it's not a goal in itself? It's more a way that you sense, a way that you feel everyday?

You can make it a goal if you like. Nevertheless this relationship between form and emptiness is there all the time. This relationship between doing things as if you were taking specific actions relative to specific objects which you are considering, and things just happening in a flow, is there all the time. Samadhi is simply being it, enjoying it.

Everybody knows what going with the flow means: in life and in yoga. It's when you're not really thinking about things. But everything is happening just fine. So it's about the relationship between those two things. And to realise that the two are not separate and that the concern with form that most people get locked into is in itself not inherently interfering with or preventing anything more subtle or profound. It is just that the focus of attention has become so narrow that something is not noticed. The background is not noticed. So form is what you pull into the foreground and emptiness is the background. Now the background includes everything that you can potentially pull into the foreground. So you could say that the background is totally full. The emptiness is totally full. The form that you pull out is a narrowing down, is very exclusive. It is about making boundaries which you sometimes need to do in order to function.

So samadhi is the seeing of that. So it's not meaning that you go into emptiness as if it were better than form. That does happen anyway: when you sleep, you go into emptiness everyday. There is no form in deep sleep, only emptiness. So you don't need to do that. That's being done. So the purpose of yoga, samadhi, is to see the nature of the relationship between these two things. The relationship between form and emptiness; between acting deliberately on specific objects and going with the flow. And then to see that relationship functioning in your own practice, your own actions, your own

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life. So then you start to notice that coming back to the objectness of your body is not a return from sleep: that you were totally awake and actually totally present. But you were not present to a sum of objects, you were just present as an effortless, impersonal awareness.

When you become more used to that, you start to see that there is an oscillation going on. You notice your attention keeps moving away from your body, and then comes back without you having to force it. What you eventually begin to realise is, that this is happening all the time. This is not just yoga that is making this happen. But normally in life the oscillation is so fast that you never notice the quietness at one end. So in effect there is no quietness. But the point is the quietness is there. You don't need anybody to give it to you. You don't need any special skills to get it. It is already there. All that need happen is that you relax enough to see it and benefit from it. And then as you relax, this oscillation itself slows down.

Whether it slows down chronologically or not is not the point. You feel begin to be able to feel the movement into emptiness and the movement out. So within that oscillation you become less hung up about form. You realise form is only one pole of the oscillation. But many people make the mistake that thinking that yoga and spiritual life is about getting rid of one pole and going permanently into emptiness or samadhi: and samadhi is being misunderstood. Samadhi is simply the recognition of the existing situation. The situation is that right now form is manifesting emptiness: that emptiness takes its existence as form.

Would you say that form is the same as concept and labelling? Samadhi is staying out of labelling?

Yeah. Samadhi and form are just words that may be a bit obscure. They just point to two natural recognitions that do not have to be labelled as emptiness and form. They are more pertinently just going with the flow and talking to yourself, with labels. It's that recognition that is important. One doesn't need to have the word samadhi in one's vocabulary and even if one does one doesn't need to know its meaning.

There is nobody to say, at that state of mind, there is nobody to tell me there is samadhi going on here. That is labelling. So you don't know that you are in samadhi do you?

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That's right. The labelling gives the sense of the labeller. Without the labelling where is the labeller? When labelling returns the labeller, the self, puts in a momentary appearance. What I'm saying is that that oscillation is there and within that the restfulness is there. All the time. There is a door there all the time. It's not later. Once you've built your house or whatever. It's not later, it's now.

But the experience that we have is as if it were not there. As if stress is all that there is. As if getting it together is all that there is: making it work, getting it right. Whereas actually this getting it together, making it right, making it work is happening as an expression of something which itself is already perfect. And totally nourishing.

When Patanjali says singular significance, that's one of these phrases that's got many meanings. It basically means it's the only thing of any significance. The significance of emptiness. But it also means that emptiness is the only thing that's ever being expressed in however many different forms. And the bandhas are really a way that you can very easily feel it in exactly the terms that he puts it. The bandhas are a radiation out of the emptiness of your core into the whole of your body.

While that radiation is being invited, you're still a little bit in objectness. Once the invitation has been fully accepted there is no difference between form and emptiness. And this you know. You do know what I am talking about. You are familiar with it. And that's all it is. The feeling that people have of not being at peace is what brings people to yoga. But the feeling of not being at peace becomes attributed to form. It becomes attributed to thinking. It becomes attributed to labelling.

So then the assumption is we must stop labelling, we must stop thinking, we must kill form, we must bring form to an end. This is hell. This is total delusion and this is where so much of the suffering that comes with the spiritual path originates. The left hand trying to kill the right. And what is it that's saying that? It's the thinking mind. Thinking is saying kill thinking. Form is saying kill form. It's not going to kill itself. Try! Form can't bring form to an end. But form can see that it is nothing other than the radiation of emptiness. So then the conflict is not there between thinking and being relaxed. You can think and act and be relaxed. So long as you

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don't think that it's actions and thinking that's making you not relaxed. Which it is if you are thinking that about them.

No matter how strong the feeling is that you're not at peace, it is not there all the time. It comes and goes, it comes and goes. You just overlook the times that it's not there. As if they don't count and you hold onto the times that they are there and you say, "I've got to get my shit together. I've got to learn to concentrate my mind for four hours or do a handstand on one finger". So from that which is in itself ignorance, which is in itself ignoring the true nature of the situation, we act to try to make things become better.

However the true nature of the situation is that you oscillate constantly between feeling ok and feeling not ok. Everybody all the time oscillating between ok and not ok. Of course the poles of ok and not ok are different from person to person, day to day. Sometimes it's a big oscillation, sometimes it's a little one. Sometimes one person is oscillating within what another person would call the bad end. Sometimes another person is oscillating within what the first person would call the good end. But it's still a swing between ok and not ok. There are always moments of relief, of totally ok, but they are very often not noticed. The moments of pressure, however, get remembered. Then we tell ourselves that they are our life.



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EVERYDAY OSCILLATION



So in yoga you are being invited to recognise the inherent oscillation between emptiness and form. Or between action and effortlessness. Or between self and selflessness. And to see that self and selflessness are not separate. They are just concepts, that point to what is. What is actually contains neither distinction nor oscillation, but our relationship to it does. No matter how many concepts you use and no matter how confusing the concepts are that you use, life goes on. And the left foot still follows the movement of the right foot every time. You never get confused unless you are really drunk. Even when you're drunk, you don't usually move the right foot and then try to move it again to take the next step. It doesn't happen. The confusion is in the mind. Left foot is in no way against the right foot. Left foot needs right foot needs left foot.

Likewise happiness desperately needs sadness: so if you're sad be happy. The source of your happiness is the source of your sadness. The more deeply the one carves into you, the more powerfully the other one comes out. Actually it's the sadness that does the carving. But we are always looking to be happy all the time, to be ok all the time. To be relaxed all the time. Maybe you can be. But there's no point in assuming, there's no point in getting your knickers in a twist because you've heard the somebody was always totally relaxed, therefore I must be able to become totally relaxed. Not necessarily possible for you. Maybe you can relax into the oscillation though. You can relax into the inherent relationship between form and emptiness. Then when you have to be uptight just be uptight. Let go of thinking, "I am an uptight person and this fuck is going to go on for ever and what the hell is going on and why is this happening to me?".

I'm not really swearing a lot. I sometimes do swear a lot. A few weeks back I used to swear all the time. It's something to do with the people present. Next time they'll say I didn't swear at all. I am saying something universal here, not about myself. The words that come out of this mouth, day after day after day are never chosen. And nor are the words that come out of yours. Even though it might look like it. Even though it may feel like it.

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The words that come out of my mouth when I'm teaching you are the words that have to come out on the basis of the interaction, the relationship between my understanding, my available energy and what I see and feel in front of me. They have to come out just the way they come out. Some people think that I'm angry sometimes. I'm not usually angry, especially not in here. With my computer yes, with organisational inefficiency yes, but teaching yoga, no. If there are people spacing out so much they require a psychic slap to bring them to the present, then it comes out like that.

This is not special to me. This is happening everywhere, all of the time. What comes out of your mouth, what your hands do is an expression of the situation. Now the situation is the situation. It can not, it could not, it might not have been otherwise. That's mind stuff. That's pure mind stuff, invention, and in that invention your knickers get twisted and twisted, and twisted. "I could have done it better". "She shouldn't have done that". "He could have made it easier". "He could have given me more". "She should have been more clear". This is all a monumental mindfuck that has nothing to do with anything but suffering. You know, ok, we might suffer if somebody says, "fuck off" but then it's gone right? But then it doesn't go if you say, "why has she said that? She shouldn't have said that. Why has she said that? She said that because of her mother or father or mine." You go on and on like this, suffering in the mind.

This is what dukkha means. You get stuck in what is no longer actually happening. That is literally what the word means. The axle is stuck. What stops an axle from turning. It can just be a tiny pebble if its lodged in the right place. All you need to do to become free, to release dukkha, is take the pebble out. So easy. So unbelievably easy. Yet you would rather change the wheel, or the chassis. But the axle still gonna be stuck.

Being free from dukkha, being free from suffering, doesn't mean that if somebody tells you to fuck off you're not going to give a damn. If you love that person who tells you to fuck off you are going to give a damn. But so what? Then you take action instead of making a story in your mind about the bastard. Take action. Whatever that action may be. It may heal the wound, or it may make the wound irrelevant if you take action.

When you're enquiring into the possibility of releasing the breath from pushing and pulling, this is what you're doing. You're

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trying to free your soul from the past. "I've got to have another one like that." It could be anything: ice-cream, spiritual experience, kundalini rising, orgasm, car, job, house. "Gotta have another one like that. I don't want to have another one like that." But have you managed to pull it off? It doesn't happen does it? And if it does, believe me, it's pure fluke. Because if it weren't pure fluke you'd make it happen again and again and again.



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SO WHO'S IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE?



So somehow, perhaps inevitably, we've gone from samadhi to we're obviously not in control of our lives. We are not in control of our lives if we can't make what we want to happen happen every time we want it to happen. Is there actually anybody who's in control of their life here? Is anybody being shy? Are you in control of your life? Are you in control of a part of your life?

Sometimes you think you do things. For a moment.

Sometimes you think you are. Most of the time, even when you don't consciously think it, you operate out of the assumption that you are. And sometimes you better think you are, or you would be in trouble. If you're in a car, yeah? Because otherwise you are in trouble. But even if you are driving a car and you are really good at driving the car and you are watching everything, you cannot control what might distract you. A thought or a feeling or a passenger saying something. So in that sense you are not in control. The appearance of control is participating in the situation and you need to act on that appearance, so this is honouring form. But honouring emptiness is realising that if you do crash the car and the passengers are all killed you don't need to walk around for the rest of your life feeling guilty. You might of course

Tell yourself it's not true that you are not in control of your life. Tell yourself it's a load of fucking bollocks and test it. Check it. Examine it from every angle. Find out if it is true or false. Really check it out, moment by moment, day by day, action by action, thing that happens by thing that happens. Don't let it be just another assumption. Don't let it be just another place to hide.

If there is in you anywhere even a tendency to a thought that somebody could have done it better, that somebody shouldn't have done that, that it didn't have to be like that, that the holocaust did not have to happen: then you still believe that we have control over our lives. So keep looking and prove that you're right. Prove that the holocaust should not have happened, could not have happened. Otherwise why listen? If you're not prepared to take what you're hearing and challenge it? And I don't just mean listening to me, I

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mean listening to what's happening in your body. When you're in the body and objectness disappears, challenge that. Find out what's really happening, why is it happening? Is it because you are spacing out? Is it because you are deluded? Is it because you've got some unconscious concept that's imposing itself on you? Is it because I told you so? Challenge it!

It's very difficult not to honour form when the way we were all trained, when the way it seems to be is to honour form.

Well it's to become subservient to form that's the problem. Form needs to be honoured. It's quite difficult though. It's quite easy to go the other way and become subservient to emptiness. That's what junkies do. What's difficult is to marry them: to honour both form and emptiness without becoming subservient to either. It's not so easy to let form be what it is, a radiation of the singular significance of emptiness. It's quite hard to let emptiness be what it is: that which is radiating form. Can we live not hiding in either? Not lost in either?

Twelve years ago I set off on a journey around the world teaching yoga workshops and retreats. A little bit of the motivation was that I was sick of form. I didn't want telephone bills, I didn't want tax bills, I didn't want these things anymore. I was heading for formlessness. I was just going to go wherever I'm invited and see what happens. The second place I got to there was a girl looked right at me and said "you just turned formlessness into a form". It was so true! The bitch wasn't even 20 years old and I was meant to be her teacher: but she just up and turned that game on its wobbly head. She had never heard about any of this stuff. She was just listening to what I was saying and challenging, "I don't know if I believe any of this, I'm gonna listen and see what's going on here".

So that's what does happen very easily on the spiritual path, you turn formlessness in to a form when you go looking for it. As if it were an object that is somehow separate from form. Which would just make it another object or another form. If you're looking for a way out of form, there is only one way out and that's in. And it's the same way with the body. If your body is disturbing you then there's only one way to become free from that and that's to go into your body. Really there's no way you can run away from your body and it would be ok, or your mind.

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We seem to have a psychological, a psychic need, to work against sitting comfortably in formlessness. We have a drive to organise, to label. How would you describe that need, which is what's between us and realising we don't have control?

I would just say the impulse to control is inherent to life. It's a natural impulse of life. When that impulse becomes one sided it becomes a problem. When form becomes one sided. When the impulse to do, which requires labelling and control and action, becomes the only thing that we're concerned about. In other words we become hung up about it, then it becomes a problem.

You meet many people on the spiritual path who have the opposite problem. They are only concerned or interested in formlessness. And that's just as big a problem. In many ways it's a bigger problem, because who's going to pay your bills? At least if you're involved in form you're going to try and pay your own bills. So you are not dumping it on somebody else. But when you get hooked on formlessness you tend to, without realising it, dump it on somebody. In Tibet thousands of years ago, approximately half the population were monks and the other half were taking care of them. So being a monk doesn't cost nothing. It may cost nothing to you but it costs something to somebody else. So I think that that impulse is part of life. It's natural: it's just when it gets out of whack that that impulse becomes a problem and that life becomes a problem.

You know if you have an impulse to control, then there it is. It's not that you shouldn't have. There it is. But it doesn't mean that you have to assume that because it has always seemed to be there that it should always be there, it must always be there or it will always be there. Hopefully some kind of mirroring will happen in your life, whether it's yoga or something else. Anything can do it wherein you start to go, "why am I doing this?" You know it happens to most people who have got the time, eventually, people spend their whole lives amassing fortunes and then all of a sudden they go, "wait a minute, what am I doing?". So it comes or not in the end, or not.



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WHO KNOWS WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?



And then what? That feeling of reaching something and saying what the fuck am I doing? You know, that question I've had it, staring into a computer. What the fuck am I doing with my life? And this is the result, but I still, you know seven years later, I still don't know what the fuck I'm doing.

You never will. If you want to really explain it and define it satisfactorily, you never will be able to. Because the more you are able to say about it, the more you are going to realise that something is left unsaid. So eventually you just don't need to say anything about what you're doing. Life is just something that's happening. And it's happening. Your life doesn't stop just because you can't explain it. It's not going to stop, no matter how well or how badly you explain it. Eventually you are going to get sick of trying to explain it. Trying to justify it in terms of its explanation is getting hung up about form. Getting hung up about what you can say about your life to the extent that you are no longer enjoying your life. Nor enjoying those parts of your life which are enjoyable. You know, however much you might be negative about your life in London, at least it's allowed you to come here. So it's a pretty good life. Not many people can disappear for three months and hang out with a bunch of people who are basically ok.

Yeah. I completely realise that.... It wasn't that my life was bad, it was like I was missing the fucking point. I put so much energy into something and that was just, it's kind of hard to explain that feeling.

It doesn't need to be explained. I think everybody knows what you are talking about. And this can come and go. Life is not a mountain that you reach the peak and that's it. You find out there's another peak, but to get to the other peak you have to go down.

Can I ask you something? Just before Adam said, his question was what the fuck am I doing. You were saying everybody gets to the point where they say why? Like, for example, we were talking about control, why do I need to be in control? The other week, last week, you were saying it's not about asking why, it's how. And you

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know, for me, I do look at the why's. I try not to get hung up on it. But I find it useful.

What's it given you. OK, let me ask you a question. A why question. Why were you born?

Because my mum and dad had a shag above a Chinese restaurant.

That's not why, that's the cause, that's how.

OK, because, they wanted to make a baby

That's also how. You keep going and the why is going to disappear. Or it's going to turn out that it's how. You are really asking how. Even though you're putting why. It's like a three year old. They say why all the time. They don't know what why means. They mean how. How is it like that? How come? How did it come to be like that? They say why when they want to know howcome: how did it come to be like that? Why is not a real question. But it is a question that people ask, and it drives them mad. Or onto the spiritual path: because it can't be answered.

So its just another way of saying how.

Yeah it's just a way of misunderstanding that you're saying how. But people look for a why. Like what's the ultimate reason behind life. If you start questioning the meaning of your life, you have to reach that. You have to come to what is the ultimate meaning of life as a whole? How on earth could you ever reach that? Because you are just a tiny little part of life. How could a tiny little part ever understand the why, let alone the how, of the whole? So why drives you mad if it stays with you as a why for too long.

I'll just repeat again this thing that happened between me and Anita a few weeks ago. I did something that was really not very friendly to her. She one day wanted to know why because she knows that I am her friend. She just didn't understand why I could do such an unfriendly thing in the context of such a deep and obvious friendship. So she said to me why did you do that? So I looked at her, and I must admit I was slightly laughing, and I said, "well do you want me to be really honest? Really and truly honest?" And she said "yes, I know you can be". And so I said "I don't know". And she

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laughed and said "of course you don't." I could have given her how a little bit, but it would not have given her what she wanted. But she got what she wanted when she remembered that I am not in control of my life. And nor is she. She just forgot that for a little because what was done seemed to be a big thing for her. So why we do something can only ever be honestly answered, "I don't know". It just happened. Yeah, I did it. You don't have to pretend you didn't. You know. I didn't say "look Anita, get it: there is no personal doership". I didn't give her that bullshit. I just said I don't know. I don't know why I did it.

Does that mean you are not supposed to take responsibility for your actions, afterwards, you just say it just happened?

Responsibility is a social concept. One that is fundamental to human society. One which if it is ignored leads to deep chaos and manipulation. But it is only a concept, like the self, or volition. In their own arena they are the necessary tools to navigate life. But they have a limited remit. Don't let them overstep their boundaries. When they do that they cause blame, guilt, terrorism, war. So even when you can see the impersonal and conditioned nature of all actions, if being responsible is one of your conditioned characteristics, you will willingly take responsibility to others in your relationships to them. Of course, if being irresponsible is one of your conditioned characteristics, you will willingly turn any concept you can to justifying your bullshit.

Also there is no supposed to in what I am saying. "Supposed to be" is a figment of the mind that assumes some kind of external personalised force or director that's saying this person should go over here and that act should happen over there. This is called anthropomorphism: projecting human qualities onto the universe as a whole

I don't get it really.

Well anthropomorphism is that because you don't like death, you assume that death is wrong. That life doesn't like death. Well of course life loves death. Without death there is no life. Or anthropomorphism is the man in the moon. That's anthropomorphism. Saying that there is a man up there. You know you say to children, look there's his chin. It's childish. Fun maybe, but it doesn't help to think that you are supposed to do something. You do things as a

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result of the thrust of time. There is an inevitability, there is an inexorability but this doesn't require, doesn't imply that you are supposed to: that it has been laid down by someone that you must do something. This is god-bollocks

So if I accept what you are saying and I do something like you might have done last week or two weeks ago, and somebody approaches me and says that I have to be responsible for my action.

Well I was, and you can. I mean you do. You apparently have a choice. If you want to remain in a relationship with that person, you accept the responsibility. Responsibility is the oil that keeps the wheels of society turning. It is a necessary social convention, a code we depend on when we gather in large groups so the weak can be protected. But if you don't give a shit you say fuck off. Take your world view somewhere else and I'll live mine. Because that's all it is at the end of the day. It's just your world view. And there's no point in compromising your deepest beliefs just to get on with somebody. Because then you are not getting on with yourself. Just because they've got enough money. Or a nice body. It's stupid.

I'll pretend not to believe what I believe in order that you will give me temporarily what I want in the moment. Which is fine, we all do it. But after a while it hurts. And we have to stop. And then if you really really stop then you become open and then you don't know what's going to happen, you don't know what's happening, you don't know why it happened and you don't need to. You just do what you do and you allow to be done without resistance that which must be done. But if something is being done which you don't like you try and stop it. But that may not work.

Yeah, I see right now that that is part of the game.

So I'm not talking about being complacent. If you don't like what George Bush does you protest, you talk to your senator. It doesn't mean you go, "oh well, he's got the power, he can do and I cannot". Because the power is given to him by us. So we can do something. Whether we will be able to get the result that we want is another matter. If we then blame ourselves for the war because we didn't get the result, that's nuts but we might well do. "I should have protested harder." "I should have made my brother join in."

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But we have a certain amount of choice over what we are going to do. Say for example I could leave the dome and I could go and have breakfast or I could go down to, I don't know, I could go down to Ibiza and rob a few banks. I have an actual choice over what I decide to do.

OK, I've got your point entirely. You have an apparent choice is what I would say. Because the only thing that you can honestly say is that that you are lying here in the dome talking to me. So where's that choice that you could be eating your breakfast, you could be robbing a bank? It is purely in your imagination, and speculative. And you, I imagine, would never rob a bank. So why speculate so foolishly. The conditions required for robbing a bank are not present in you: never have been so far.

Right now, Tom just left. Maybe he's left to have his breakfast. This means conditions operating right now in him are to go and have his breakfast. He had no choice but to get up and leave, even if he thinks he did. Even if he thought about it in a way that made it sound as though he was choosing between two options. But in fact he just went from the one that he was doing to the one that he is doing. That he could now be still in the dome, or could have before been eating his breakfast is nonsense. He is doing only what he is doing, and anything else is only hypothetically possible and has nothing to do with what is actually happening.

You have no choice, he had no choice, there is no choice. Yet we are all making choices all the time. Yet choice is just an appearance. Form is just an appearance. Volition is an appearance. The self is an appearance. They all have a lot of social credibility, even necessity: but they are still only appearances. Not enough to get hung up about if you ask me. But, then again, some people are rather obsessed with appearances. That obsession plays havoc with their lives: yours too.



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part three

THE SECRET FACE OF FORM



I'd just like to speak a little now about the secret face of form in the practice of yoga. The secret face of form becomes especially available through the dynamic of the bandhas in the whole of the body. This secret face is revealed in the transformation from the experience of separateness through connectedness via interconnect- edness to non separateness. The body parts that are separable per- ceptibly, conceptually, functionally; you can move the little left finger without moving the big right toe; but inherently they are not sepa- rate. Apparently, they are separate. Inherently they are not. The appearance is a true appearance but an appearance is always an appearance, an impression.

We live in the realm of appearance which is known in Vedanta as Maya. But life does not take place in the realm of appearance. When life is living itself, appearance is not really of any significance. Only when you live your life does appearance or form becomes sig- nificant. Which means trying to control life with the mind. But we don't actually spend that much time living our lives like that. Most of the time life is just living itself: through and in our actions; through and in our feelings; through and in our thoughts; through and in our perceptions. Even when we are living our life, even when we are hung up about form, this is still life living itself. Our living of our life is also but an appearance.

Sometimes the word illusion is used for appearance. The trouble with the word illusion is that it tends to suggest that it isn't really there. But of course an illusion exists as an illusion or as an appear- ance. Its existence is as an appearance: what is being represented is not really there, but the appearance is really there. So even though a photograph is not the person, the photograph is really there. So in the interpenetration of form: which is the transforma- tion from separateness to connectedness to interconnectivity to non separateness: in this interpenetration of form, as a transformation of or in awareness, separateness as a phenomenon is still there. You have to still be able to say that the finger and the heel, as the fin- ger and the heel, are separate. So actually separateness is still

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there in non separateness. But there is just a recognition that the front of the hand can not be separated from the back of the hand, even if you cut the hand in half. Then you just have two fronts and two backs.

When this deep penetration into form matures itself, then you reach the secret face of form: which is emptiness. The secret face of form, or emptiness, is not something separate from form. It's not something standing outside of form. Even though the word emptiness can be confusing it is really the only valid word. The apparent face of form can be deeply interpenetrated from whatsoever angle: the form of the body, the hand, the foot, it can be from wherever you like. But it could be any form, it could be a sensation, a perception, a box, a tree, a person, a life, a galaxy, a universe. When this penetration of form is being made, it begins at the level of separation. Soon it encompasses the levels of connectivity and then interconnectivity.

Interconnectivity means that each apparently separate part is connected to each other, to every single other part. So in the body this is not so hard to feel. Of course you can argue that there is indirect connection between the heel and the jaw, that in between there are all the other parts. But where does one begin and where does one end? The end and the beginning is totally arbitrary. So within the body, when you are experiencing this transformation directly on the dynamic of the bandhas, the identity of the little finger merges into the identity of the right forearm. This is nonseparateness.

In their non separateness they become indistinguishable which means that their separate identity is no longer significant in experience. Which means that each apparently perceptible aspect of form is empty of any separate identity. Or to put it in Buddhist terminology, is empty of any self nature. Any separateness. So this is what emptiness means. Actually the significance of the word emptiness is fullness. It means that every single part of the body is full of all the other parts. Which also means that every single part of the web of life, every aspect, whether it be an ant, a stone, a person, a city, a culture, is full of all of the rest.

So when the Buddhists say form is emptiness and emptiness is form, this doesn't mean that emptiness doesn't really exist or form doesn't really exist. It doesn't mean that it's all an illusion, that there is nothing really there, all is empty, void, negative, blank. It means

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everything is full of everything else. The emptiness is of separate identity within the separate appearance.



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EMPTINESS IN DAILY LIFE



Within the body, doing yoga postures, this is significant: but outside the body or yoga postures what's the big deal? The significance of emptiness being experienced day after day, hour after hour, posture after practice on the mat, then filters into your life. Into the realisation that any aspect of your life is full of all of the other aspects. Any action that's been taken is a transient face of all other actions that have ever been taken.

The secret face of any action that's ever been taken, is every other action that has ever happened. This is recognisable through the interconnectivity of all the apparently separable parts of the whole of your life. Into that recognition comes a very deep relaxation of the need to make things happen the way you think they should. Within that release of trying to make things happen the way you would like them to, the so called self is undermined. Because the self asserts itself by saying, "I want and I will get".

So the secret face of form being emptiness is not a void. It's the fullness of life as a whole. Within which your life takes place. Within that taking place of your life within life as a whole, sometimes you feel like you're living it. Sometimes you feel like it's your life, it belongs to you. Then it's very precious, and it must turn out the way you want it. But it doesn't necessarily, nor even usually. It just turns out the way it turns out. Which to one extent or another, will or won't coincide with what you wanted. And if your attachment to what you wanted is stronger than your appreciation of what happens, then you're fucked. Then you're miserable. Then you're suffering: dukkha. Then you don't notice the amazing things that are happening all around you because they are not what you had pre-determined; they are not what you wanted; they are not what you planned; they are not what you intended.

Intention is the crux of the matter. Very often people are under the impression that desire is the crux of the matter. That desire is a problem: but desire is the mechanism of life. Life living itself. Intent is the mechanism of you living your life. The separation between desire and intent is obviously not total because of this understanding of the secret face of form. Intent being obviously a

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focussing of desire. A focussing of desire through what? Through the belief that you are in control of your life. Through the belief that you can step aside from the flow of life and change it. And if you could step aside from the flow of life you perhaps could change it. But you can't ever step aside from the flow of life.



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EMPTINESS IN MEDITATION



It could be that you are so relaxed sitting at the end of practice that you are not saying anything to yourself about what you are seeing. You are not naming the objects around you, nor the people within your visual field. You are not naming the parts of the body; you are not labelling the parts of the body; you are not labelling the colours of the mat. Then all of a sudden somebody moves and you think: "Gavin moved, the bastard. That disturbed me."

What's happening is your attention is being pulled into form. But if you just go, "Gavin moved" and you don't go, "the bastard disturbed me" which means if you absolutely don't mind, then attention just swings deeper back into silence, into emptiness. It has to if you don't mind. If you don't mind being pulled into labelling, into form, you just swing straight back into emptiness. In other words so-called disturbance deepens your relaxation. If you are open to so-called disturbance then it's no longer disturbance.

So it doesn't matter what's going on when you meditate. Actually the more that goes on the deeper you are driven into your silence provided you don't mind. Provided you don't have the concept that everybody should sit still; that there should be no noise. The crickets should go fuck off to another planet. Crickets are not such a problem because they are so constant it becomes background and not noticeable. But then all of a sudden they stop, and you go, "crickets have stopped". And if you don't mind going, "crickets have stopped" that swing out will swing you deeper in. Because that's the nature of oscillation.

You don't have to take yourself deep. Deepening happens by itself. Provided you don't have any intent. To the extent that you have intent you will stay on the surface, you will stay in your intent. "Must keep the mind still. Must go deep now. Must not pay any attention to Gavin." So there you are in form, oblivious to the presence of emptiness. You are in your thinking mind and you stay there as long as you have intent. Intent to do anything. Anything at all. No matter how cherished, revered, idealised, spiritual it may be. And in meditation you can very soon realise the tyranny of intent. It's not hard to realise the tyranny of intent. If you can be remind-

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ed of the tyranny of intent daily, how ever often you sit still, it begins to dawn on you that even in your life intent is not so important. Intent is not so necessary. All that is necessary is the recognition of that which is actually happening, and that which it requires to be done by you in the moment. This is not dependent upon intent. This is just dependent upon a sensitive, honest, open, focussed and generous awareness of that which is actually happening.

If you are sitting and something disturbs you, you were not really meditating. Maybe you were learning. Maybe you were pretending. So it doesn't matter that you were disturbed. If you are sitting and you are meditating you will not be disturbed by anything. Unless it happens actually to pose a definite and real danger: and then you will just respond. If you hear the roof beams crack, you will get up and leave the room. But if you hear a door slamming downstairs you won't pay any attention to it. Your brain knows the difference. Anything that needs to be acted upon will be more effectively acted upon the more relaxed you are. The less you are looking to protect yourself from possibilities. The more relaxed you are the more effectively you will act. This applies not just in meditation but in life.

You all know this. Life works very well when you're really relaxed. When you're really trying to make it work well, you fuck up. Ok, this is not because when you are trying to make it work well, there was a little bit of skill missing. No, it's because you were trying to make it work well. You know some people are very skilful and when they are trying to make it work well it works pretty well. Then they can tell themselves it worked as well as they wanted, because they made it so. But this is just coincidence of intent and eventuality. If it were other than coincidence, these skilful people would always get what they want. And we don't, not all the time.

But when you totally relax actions just happen, without requiring permission from your intent. Actions become more spontaneous, more appropriate. You could use the term skilful, but it's a dangerous one because it implies something that you can accumulate or you can have. Something you can have more or less off; skill. But what it means by skilful action is really the natural, obvious and inevitable action: totally spontaneous expression of the moment. The skill is in not resisting it on the one hand and not personalising it on the other. Not saying, "this is my action and it was dead cool, it was perfect".

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Every action is dead cool and perfect. Simply because it happened. Any alternative is only useless speculation. Because what did happen did happen. And in that sense every action is dead cool and perfect. Therein is the emptiness of perfection regarding all actions. Therein also is the emptiness of imperfection regarding all action. They are all equally perfect. They are all equally imperfect. Or they are all equally valuable. They are all equally valueless.

It matters not how you put it but they are all equal. They are all pointing to the same thing, they are all coming from the same thing. They are all a transient, unique expression of the same thing. The same thing as a thing is the total matrix of existence, and the same thing as a not-thing is the source from which the matrix comes. Which if you are a theist, is called God, and if you're an atheist can be called the void. Because it is devoid of all distinguishing attributes. It is devoid of all limiting conditions. It cannot in any way be defined or described or limited by words, by concepts. Nor even experienced by anything. This is the significance of the word God. The secret face of God is emptiness and the revealed face of God is form. That which can be seen, whatever it is, is God. That by which that which can be seen can be seen, whatever it is, is emptiness. Or that which can be seen, whatever it is, is the face of the void. God, emptiness, the void revealed as form, without which God cannot be revealed.

When you are sitting still and are relaxed enough, the oscillation between emptiness and form, between awareness-of and unconditioned awareness, turns out to be an oscillation not between two separate things at all. It turns out actually not even really to be an oscillation. The oscillation is in your mind: in the way your mind is functioning. Time is a function of the mind: therefore movement is a function of the mind: therefore oscillation is a function of the mind. A function of your perceptual perspective.

This is why some people say it has all already happened. That the future has already happened. However this is not really a very accurate way of saying it because it's using terminology that applies to time to point to the fact that time is an illusion. And you all know time is an illusion. You all know it's nothing other than a conceptualised function of perception.

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You've been taught that the linear character of time is real. Because you doubt yourself you believe that what you've been taught, the reality of time, is more true than what you know, that time is an illusion. And you know that time is an illusion. Because your two hour practice sometimes seems like five hours and sometimes it seems like five minutes. And you know this. What happens to time when you have sex with someone you love? Time is totally arbitrary. Time is totally a function of perception. And this is the secret face of form. The secret face of time is eternity. Not something separate from time. Time is the revealed face of eternity. Form is the revealed face of emptiness. Life is the body of God.

Life in every aspect. This lizard no less than the pope, the Dalai Lama. This lizard is no less God than they. That includes you. That not only includes you but includes every action you ever took. It includes every thought you ever had. It includes every feeling you've ever had. They are no less God than the most poetic description of God coming out of the most profound spiritual teacher that ever lived.

It's one of the deep paradoxes which you can experience: that if anything exists at all then everything must be perfect. That there actually is no other option. Existence is the proof of perfection. Existence is the proof of God. That the human mind can not understand the nature of that proof, does not in anyway negate the existence of God. It just indicates the ineptitude of the human brain and mind. A scientist so proudly spending his whole life proving that God doesn't exist, is just proving how fucking stupid he is. How blinkered he is, how prejudiced he is, how desperate he is to earn some acclaim by proving that God is dead not knowing that God is doing that.

So the secret face of form is emptiness. The secret face of who you think you are is God. Which means every action that is ever taken is taken by God. Everything that is ever done is done by God, to God, for God, on behalf of God, within God, as God. So I'm obviously not talking about Allah, I'm not talking about Yahweh or Jehovah. These are little Gods. Little Gods made in the minds of men. So that they can relate to something bigger than themselves when they are not able to relate to the void. When they are not able to relate to totality. When they are not able to accept what they can't understand.

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Sometimes people get carried away with the notion that they are the revealed form of God and forget that everything and everyone else is also. So there is absolutely no prestige, in the fact that you are God. No advantage. You can't use that to bully people into submission unless they are foolish. "You must do what I say because I am God." Now people don't normally say that but they operate like that. Those who set themselves up as authorities. Who tell you that you shouldn't eat meat. You shouldn't wear leather. You shouldn't wear high heels. What have they got against those things? Well that's their problem: whatever they've got against those things it's still God. And so is there something against them.

You can see this through a very neat analogy that Ramesh enjoys using. That life is a movie. Your life is a movie of which you happen to be the star. But that's all. You didn't write the script. You are not the director, you are not the producer. God is the director, God is the script writer, God is the producer, God is the audience and God, actually, is also the star. And because this is how movies are, before it can be seen, the movie is already in the can. Before it can be viewed, the ending is already there. The turning of the projector is the turning of the wheel of time: Kalachakra. But the movie is in the can.

So you don't have to worry about the future; it's coming willy nilly. And, do you mind if the world explodes in the end of a movie and everybody on earth dies? No you don't mind at all! You are highly entertained! So what's the big deal about your own life? You can hear stories about people with this understanding who really are entertained by the tragedy of their demise at the end of their lives. Such as, Lama Yeshe, who wrote *An Introduction to Tantra*. He died of cancer and spent the last few years of his life hanging out on the beaches of California dying and laughing his head off. To the amazement of his students who knew that he knew that he was dying in very great physical pain. He found it really funny to watch that movie.

If every single thing is God, if every single thing is empty of self nature, that means everybody is empty of self nature. We have no fixed identity. That means for two years we may be a total charlatan then all of a sudden, not. And for three weeks, days, hours or minutes we are being honest and for two weeks, days, hours or minutes: lying. So all the arguing about was Osho enlightened or not is totally irrelevant. If he was enlightening for you, he was enlightened

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for you. If he was not enlightening for you, then he was not enlightened for you. Better off the fool who found him enlightening really. Because the nature of the relationship between form and appearance is that form is just an appearance. Osho, as he said on his tomb stone, was never born, never died. It's just an appearance, a smoke ring, blown by time through Pune. Anybody have any questions?

When Patanjali talks about surrender to the lord, who is the lord?

If you can relate to sanskrit and you read the yoga sutras you can see that he is not offering a belief system at all. He is offering a technical map. So when he uses a word isvara, it may not be that he means it to have the significance that it got according to the commentators, which is the lord. He may mean it to mean exactly what it says. That the choices have already been made. So he is not in my opinion saying surrender to the lord. He is saying find out the source of action and that inevitably brings about surrender of the personal, of the self. This is surrender to the secret face of form: which you could say is surrender to the lord: if you want to say that God or the void is the lord. Which you can if you're not being anthropomorphic and suggesting there is some personal, powerful entity out there wanting to have its feet kissed. Like Krishna, Yahweh, Allah or whoever. That's nursery talk.

I understood a more physical thing if you think about yoga. I didn't think that he was thinking about God.

But people do. Some people think he says you have to find your chosen, personal god. Because he says svadhyaya leads to ishta devata. And ishta devata is translated as ishta chosen, same as ishvara choicemaker, and devata derived from shining is taken to mean god. According to Patanjali ishta devata is the result of self enquiry. Now we have found out that self enquiry leads to awareness of the illusory nature of the self. There is no self to be found if we subject it's impression to profound enquiry. It turns out to be only an impression. It's just a local mask on one (sur)face of totality. The unmasking of totality reveals that all actions and objects are totally conditioned. They are each conditioned by the totality of all actions and objects. They are all caused by totality.

So, in my opinion, ishta devata means the illumination of the fact that all choices have already been made. Not by an omnipotent per-

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sonal entity, but by the impersonal thrust of the matrix, which we perceive in terms of linear time. But that linearity is merely a function of our perceptual mechanism. Self enquiry brings a radiant awareness of personal choicelessness. To the realisation that you actually have no choice even though it appears very often that you do. Now this awareness is by nature radiant and deeply illuminating. And this realisation shines out from the recognition of the conditioned nature of all phenomena. That you have no choice. This brings about total relaxation, total surrender. It reveals the secret face of form, it uncovers the face of God.

Godfrey, could you talk a little bit about the perceiver, the seer, are they different in all of us or is that the same?

Well you don't have to worry about it. Purusa is just a principle to explain how the perceiver comes about. How Sorren comes about. So a principle is a principle and it's always what it is, but it's operating differently in the different locations of the human bodiminds, giving this sense of self here and another one there. You could say the invitation that yoga is asking you to accept is to let perceiving take place without the perceiver. Life without the live-er: let the living, the perceiving, the seeing, the feeling, the thinking, the acting happen from the understanding of its inevitability, its impersonal nature: that it is an inherent expression of the whole, or an expression of God. As Krishna says to Arjuna, give the fruits of your actions back to me because your actions are mine. So therefore their fruits are mine and not yours. And in particular he means don't concern yourself with what might happen as a result of you going forth in your chariot and pulling your bow string. You are a fine warrior, people will die, but don't concern yourself with that. That's my business. Your business is to pull the bow string. So the Bhagavad-Gita is a beautiful story about how human beings are merely instruments of God's will. We are unique action potential configurations. Just that. We are action potential configurations. Unique action potential configurations waiting for the potentiality within us to be triggered to whatever action other people will identify us by, including probably ourselves. I am the one who does a perfect Trikonasana. I am the one. And that's the problem. Perfect Trikonasana happening here becomes 'I' did it, it is 'mine'.

But is it the same symbolic that you see in the seven samurais and sit and sit until they are needed to act?

A LITTLE LOOK AT YOGA POSTURE PRACTICE

Yeah, you could see it like that. And then their action is perfect. Off comes the head with a single blow. It's not even a blow. It's just a flick of the wrist.

And then they sit down again and wait.

And then they sit down again. Chilled out. No concern for the blow. That's somebody else's job. Not just to clean it up but to be concerned. Somebody else's job to mourn. Somebody else's job to attribute blame and if they have to have their head cut off for it then they have to have their head cut off. Head down. Off head. So this is coming from Zen. This is coming from Buddhism: an atheistic or a non theistic world view. But it's basically the same. A recognition that everything is God. And that you all have your place. And this is what the word dharma can mean. Dharma can mean a number of things, but in the Bhagavad-Gita the word dharma means you have your place in the matrix of life and that place is defined by the actions that you take, and those actions are inevitable and that is your dharma, you cannot escape it. And if your dharma is to try to resist your dharma you cannot escape that. You still cannot escape your dharma.

What is life? What is death? But a fluctuation in the appearance of the void. And that which is witnessing those actions that take place here, there and everywhere; that which is witnessing the actions that bear the label of your name; that which is witnessing the actions whereby you as an object are defined as a separate entity; that which is witnessing them from within is what Osho pointed to when he says "never born never died". Pure consciousness behind purusa. The manifestation of pure consciousness through the principle of I am. Which is what purusa is, the principle of I am. And then it becomes I am Sorren. When it is identifying with the instrument through which it is operating in that particular spacetime location. But the principle of I, pure consciousness, that's what you are. You are the "I", you are not the "I am", even less are you the "I am Sorren". And that "I" is never born, never dies, and that's there for you to abide in when all effort to control and manipulate your perceptions and actions ceases. And the more you abide in that, the less concern you have with that which can be perceived. And with that which apparently can be controlled. And it's that that gives the validity to the statement you are God.

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That which animates you: that which witnesses your actions is that from which all actions spring. All actions. From the beginning of time to the end, from one point in space to another. But the awareness of that is localised in a body and that localisation recognises other bodies and within the recognition of that apparent separateness, the consciousness is attributed separateness also. But that's an attribution resulting from the appearance. But that itself which is witnessing is without attribute. It is without limitations and this you can know, this you can feel. When you relax, you can feel that. You feel cradled in infinite eternity. Of course that's just a metaphor because when you are in infinite eternity there is no you to be cradled. But as you get close you can feel the drawing of the arms around you.

