The Service of Man

It is well known that Raja Yoga is the method followed by this system of Sri Ramchandra, but it is a Raja Yoga that has been taken away from the hands of monkery, I mean from monks, and other people who have renounced the world and are thought to make yoga their special way of attainment of the Ultimate. I think that this system radically tries to snatch away the initiative that has been taken on this subject, and on this method, by the monks (those ascetic world-renouncers) and has sought to restore it to its proper place in the life of the ordinary man, the householder. That is not a small thing, for, for nearly two thousand years, the monks have specialised in certain odd techniques called, apparently, yoga, but which had hardly related man or his soul with the Divine being who is the maker of all things in this universe.

The renunciation of life and its values might have sounded very necessary to people accustomed and habituated to that way of thinking, but it has been discovered by some of the finest minds of the Vedic period and of late that the way of life, taught by the monks or the world-renouncers, is thoroughly wrong. Firstly because it denies that the Divine has any sense in creating the world. It denies that the Divine being, or God, or the original Reality is fully and perfectly aware

of what it is doing. It condemns God to be the creator of a world illusion. It says that life is fraught with all sorts of miseries and, therefore, life itself has to be renounced. Having been accustomed to this way of life we have always sought to run away from life in order to realise God. Well, you know what the results have been. Yoga has always been looked down upon not only by the householders but also by the house-wives, and every man who had some feeling for practising yoga was looked upon suspiciously by his family, and by society also.

During the last one-century we have had some people denouncing the whole practice of vedanta which centred on the twin principles of vairagya and dhyana, whatever they mean. The correction that was sought to be made by the Indian reformers during the past one and a half centuries was directed towards an attack on the vedanta which counselled renunciation of life and its values. Undoubtedly there has been a strong movement which sought to defend vedanta and the way of renunciation. We have, therefore, had quite a number of institutions, philosophical treatises, eloquent and powerful speeches trying to defend an absolutely unconvincing Vedantic way of life. I mean that vedanta which tried to promulgate that doctrine of world-illusion, and sought to attain moksha or freedom by the renunciation of all world values.

Now if this was the condition, and we found ourselves defeated politically, and defeated morally in our lives by the promulgation of these doctrines of the vedanta of the particular brand which I mentioned, it became clear to many of us that we want a world-affirming philosophy rather than a world-denying one. And we wanted a philosophy which will connect us with God in the aspect of his creative joy rather than his uncreative misery and illusions. Now if we study the tendencies in the several movements, on the one side we have Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Tagore, & Sri Aurobindo where you will find the world affirmation more importan t, rather than the world-denying Ramakrishna-Vivekananda school on the other.

Today in a world where our world-values have to be sublimated and divinised, it becomes clear to us that we must try a way, which will put us into direct contact with the ultimate Reality. I can mention, in this context, the studied efforts of many of these reformers, whether of the rightist or the leftist variety, the illusionist and world-denying philosophy, or the realistic world-affirming philosophy-the fact that they thought that man was more important, and that the service of mankind is higher than the service and knowing of God. Well, we know what this can lead to. We have many people who think that it is enough if you serve mankind in order to attain the Divine. The specious reason is that once you try to see

God in every human being it would be enough to cultivate the habit of seeing God in everybody, and serve the God in everybody. Theoretically it sounds well enough. Practically, you do not know what service you can offer to the soul of each individual. I do not know what justification there can be for the type of service we are trying to render to mankind; and whether these several schools or systems, or these eloquent versions of the vedanta have uplifted man to a higher degree of consciousness and concentration of universal values. One idea has at least been missed -man is NOT perfect, is NOT the embodiment of God as he is at present; he has yet to become the embodiment of God, has yet to become the temple of God. A stone taken off the street has got within itself the potentiality of God - and therefore the worship of every stone in the street, prostrating before it if you can! Would it be an argument? If ever you have any fancy for worshipping idols in the temples-well I think there is a process of consecration or deification of a stone. And so also unless you can deify man you cannot worship him. And what is the process of deification of man? I consider we have missed our whole purpose in the religions when we have taken man at his worst and thought that he was God himself. We have yet to develop man as the embodiment of God. **We must make it possible for every human individual to be divinised, to become an abode of**

God. And how this is possible by the service of man in the hospitals, the service of animals in the goshalas or in any of the pinjrapoles, or any other leper-asylums I do not know. Whom are we trying to sell, let me know. But that doesn't mean that I am harsh. I don't want you to be harsh, I want you to be kind.

Everybody must be taken on the higher way, and the force that can be given to every person or every bit of the universe is, to make it Divine. Have you achieved it by your process of serving, by your process of useless love, which keeps men as they are and perhaps degrades them by the humiliations that you inflict on them by serving them? I don't know how you would relish this phrase-the humiliation that you inflict on every individual by serving him, by keeping him down to the state to which he belongs rather than lifting his vision to the state to which he should aspire.

Now if you can take it in that way and in that measure, yoga is not for the weakling. Yoga is for divinisation of man; to make him more and more worthy of his great heritage and possibility, namely that he is, in fact, in the process of evolving into, of unfolding himself into, the Divine. And what is that process? What is that alchemical touch, which can transform man from the beast, he is, a man infirm in every sense of the term, impotent, against himself, and raise him to the level of a divine, peaceful, harmonious, integrated Mahatma. Not

everybody becomes a mahatma by having one virtue. One must have all the virtues to be really called a mahatma. And that doesn't mean that I have a criticism to make against the series of names that are being given to all and sundry. We have yet to develop the full possibility of the human nature. And I believe it was fully recognized by the great work of one of our most illustrious men that all life IS yoga, and you must practise yoga for life, for infinity and the Divine. This was a voice, which was spoken by Sri Aurobindo, and I have no hesitation in saying that it was a profound truth he told us rather very early at the beginning of this century.

But I am afraid that the great promise that his philosophy gave to us, and his yoga gave to us, has not been as successful as it should have been. Why? Firstly the reason is that he somehow thought that a penultimate reality is more important than the ultimate Reality, and that the ultimate Reality will abolish our whole being if it came to participate in the life of every one of us. And the penultimate reality which he had before him, what he called the supermind he thought would do more work, and also show gradualness in the evolution of the divine man. I am not sure whether his optimism was justified. I have every reason to think that it has yet to be justified.

In the meanwhile the great founder of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission who is seated by my side has shown

that really the ultimate Reality is the only force that can lead us to the Ultimate reality of our being. Any penultimate reality will give only a penultimate result-an imperfection which would have scored us out of reality. And it could not have transformed us, as we would have wished it to; as the great Vedic seers wished it to. Despite the appeals to Veda, I have my hunch that the ultimate truth of that reality was not fully grasped by that great seer. And so my search, I should now add my personal note, led me to the feet of this great personality who promised that we shall start with yoga, but with a yoga that is more dynamic in its nature, more perfect in its possibility, more simple in its practice, and certainly more profoundly elevating than any other. And that is why he asked, what is the index of a consciousness that has met the Divine? And I can honestly tell you the first index is the calm that settles on you, the silent mind. The silent mind is said to be the most difficult thing to attain. Well it was felt in the experience of most of us; even the first initiate on the first day might feel that the first is the silent mind. And then a deepening, a widening, and a certainly more illuminating mind begins to operate. It is no longer with the human mind, with all its dialectical contradictions, that we are dealing. In fact, the first sutra of the Yoga - "Yogascittavritti nirodaha"-happens at the very first, and it is the very first sutra of Patanjali! Which shows that the very first thing, if you have had yoga, is

to get this silent and calm mind. And it is not an unconscious mind, please note that. Nor is it a purely conscious mind. It is neither. It is something which hovers a little above the unconscious and the conscious minds. A different mind begins to operate in our consciousness. In one sense if I were to be adulatory about the achievements of some of us, I should have said our mind is something very different from the minds of other people, and we are quite a different species already. But I wouldn't harbour that peculiar claim. I would rather say that we have started on the real journey with the yoga which the Divine has initiated in us by the specific principle which He has brought into being, namely the principle of Transmission of the Divine thought which would become our Divine mind, and grow in that light and by that force.

Now, here, the service of mankind becomes very different. You find that the moment this mind is introduced into the consciousness of any one of the persons who is suffering (it is mental torture more than the physical, or as Nietzsche would say, it is better to suffer physically than mentally), if you can give relief to the mind, remove it from its fearful concentration on itself, and try to develop a fearless life, then you find the starting point of a real spiritual revolution. The spiritual revolution is started by the introduction of this new consciousness. It is not radically different because it is

the primal consciousness, the Divine consciousness which, somehow, by a series of degradations or entropies has tended to become what it is; materialistic, mechanistic, and certainly a consciousness that is in holy fear of itself. Why does a man become unconscious? Have you asked that question? Why is he afraid of remaining conscious? No wonder a large number of people have dopes, night-pills and so on just to become unconscious because they are afraid of their consciousness. Have you ever seen this as the type of man whom these people want to cultivate in this world as the perpetual humanity, which we shall have to serve? That is not the humanity that we would like to have. I have a greater ideal of humanity. I feel that man is something that is essentially capable of becoming Divine. I really hold that everybody can become a temple of God. I would not say 'temple', because I hate the mechanistic concept of life. I would say he becomes the body of God, living and moving and having his breath and being in God. A temple is too mechanistic a conception for me, even just like an icon or idol. I would like it to be something more dynamic, more creative of happiness everywhere, harmony everywhere. I would like to feel life everywhere. And if necessary I would like to see even the stones dance with life of a higher order, which they can and do in the hands of a real artist.

By what force can that be done, except by the Divine

force. And they have stated that to bring down the Divine force all the Bhagirathas' prayatna must be necessary. All of you have heard that story, I am sure, of Bhagiratha getting the heavenly Ganges after a large number of years of tapas and penance and all that. In Kali they said that the very name of God is enough to make you realize freedom. I think there is some truth in the second statement. But what is the word of God, which you would like to hear? What is the breath of God, which will make you eternal in life? And which is easily available? Which man has presented this particular thing as the easiest thing you can have, the simplest thing that you can possess, receiving which it never leaves you, nor you leave it?

I consider that it is to the merit and the supreme glory of Shri Ram Chandraji that he has been able to give to us in a simple, direct, unostentatious manner, something of that light, of that light or lightness which goes with Divinity. And in the hearts of every one there comes a new joy, a new delight. This I have experienced, and I have shared with some of the many very good people who are sincere about it, and they know that this is not merely a claim I make but a reality which they can also feel, if they wish it. Now this simplicity with which the Divine comes to us shows that ultimately the Reality is simple - philosophers make it a muddle. 'Ekam Sat Viprah bahuda vadanti' - the Vipras, you know, are

philosophers! Very learned people whose dictionaries are full of multiple names for the same thing. So much so that translations are egregiously mistaken. So this is how people have been very pompously learned, without the simplicity that comes from the heart and flows into Reality. Who is the greatest illusion maker in this world except a man who dabbles with words?

Now we are in touch with Reality. Even this evening one of my friends petitioned my Master to give a speech. He said, 'well, I have given it to the philosopher who is seated by my side!' I think I will just take a little liberty to decry myself. Now here, I say, Reality is so simple that it is beyond words, an act of Love or self-giving, which is the meaning of love. Giving of oneself and one's whole life breath for the resuscitation of man into God. If that can happen, what more miracle do you want? What is there that you want greater than this service which he is rendering to us. Shri Ram Chandraji always makes it very clear 'Can I be of service to you?'- That is the way he speaks, and to that which is the real 'you', which can grow, which can get the peace which is necessary for our very sustenance and existence. And a continuous process of self-giving of himself to every one of us, not only to one man. It cannot be said that I am the only chosen man of my Master; everyone is chosen in this world who has chosen Him. There is no partiality, there is no hierarchy except one, namely, as is the

intensity of your aspiration, so is the amount or the quantum of his help given to you. If this can be understood, anybody can test him at any time. Here is life, which is Yoga. It is a connection with you, which he establishes. It is difficult for you to establish a connection with the Infinite, but it is easy for the Infinite to establish a connection with you, the finite. That is why he says, Yoga begins not with you but with God. Who loves you? Not you, but He who loves you. 'Anbe Sivam' they said! Well, I don't know what they meant, but this is what I mean. That love that purifies you, that sanctifies you, that divinises you, that looks after you morning, noon and night, as the breath of your breath, as the life of your life, this is what I feel to be the real Yoga, real union. A permanent realization of His presence in you, about you, around you, sustaining your very life. I feel that this is the most important contribution that this great personality has made to us, and is doing to us. I have no doubt that He has been so simple. No one can say that he cannot be met. He is not cloistered in any room. He does not want to speak much because he wants to do all. Men who speak much hardly do anything at all! And I don't know why he practises it to perfection. But anyway if you meet him, not at a public meeting but privately, you will find him quite as loquacious as anybody else.

So the service of humanity with which I started embraces the largest amount of help that we can render to man to

get out of his misery, the present misery of his mental conflicts and complexes, and the future misery of a bad destiny. You know, in this country, we all believe that rebirth is one of the worst things that can happen to us, not because it is bad, but because we do not know what will come next. And that is the reason why we are afraid of rebirth. But there are many people amongst us who are so cocksure about their next life, that they do all wrong things now, hoping for the best. I do not want you to take either course. I believe we have a future. I won't say future birth! And if there is a rebirth it need not be in this particular condition again. It may be possible for us to go beyond, and not come back to this earth consciousness, and move towards the Divinity as He is in Himself, for, all that we get in the yoga today is the Divinity as He is for us here. And that should give us a large amount of aspiration to find out what He is in Himself. That curiosity should come to us. Yes, He has come to us. He is so kind, so gracious, so much of everything. He gives us peace of mind. He has put us into contact with the universal consciousness or universal unconsciousness, it doesn't matter which.

But what is He in Himself? Has any one asked this simple question, what God is in Himself? All of us speak of God as He is for us and what He ought to be for us. Have we ever asked ourselves what He is in Himself and for Himself? Now that is the way of a higher evolution.

When you leave this body, or even when you are in this body, if this curiosity or an aspiration to know God as He is in Himself comes to us, we find that we are led up to the higher and higher consciousness till finally we reach the Ultimate - the Divine as He is in Himself, and not as He is for the last term in evolution, namely ourselves.

Now, at that point, as Shri Ram Chandraji puts it very clearly, you need not come back to this earth once you have taken the human life and gone beyond. There are many speculations whether man will be born as an animal when he dies, or can be born as an animal and it all depends upon the aspirations and love that man has for animals or others. If a man loved his animal, then he may be born as an animal, and the story is of Jadabharata in our own scriptures. So we are asked not to have too many pets about us, and to devote our whole time for the upbreeding of those things. They are very good, no doubt, some of them. They may be some of the human beings who have taken that birth, and be domesticated with us; but that is not an ideal which you should have before you. Now if you drop that point and you seek man in his higher evolution, as one who is conscious of his higher destiny, and that he should not return to the human level, then his consciousness is taken up by the Master. Not only in this life, but it goes along with you till the last point of the Divine is reached. It may be

asked whether it can be realised within this lifetime. That is, can you know God as He is in Himself even in this body?

According to Shri Ram Chandraji it is possible to have the Ultimate experience of God within this body. Because if the Yoga is to be perfect, and is perfect, and if the force that is introduced into you as the Divine thought in transmission is really to fulfil its final and perfect purpose, then it MUST lead you to that Ultimate point. The ultimate truth must meet the ultimate Reality. This is possible, and one of his endeavours has been to show how that is possible in the lives of some of us. I hold, with all humility, that to a large extent he has made it possible for my humble self to experience that point. And of course I am no exceptional man. Every one of us is exceptional to God, provided we can dedicate ourselves to that discovery and attainment. As he put it, 'I am always waiting to serve people in the higher reaches provided they give me the opportunity'. They are written in his works, and I know that he means it. Again and again he is looking out for men who will give him the opportunity to take them to the Ultimate point-The Divinity. Well, here is a challenge to the human consciousness. All that I can say is, he puts it so humbly but so firmly that have no doubt that he means it. If one could offer oneself to him with all the love that he is capable of, which may be just very much less than what

he has of his love for you, then the transformation of the human nature into Divine nature, even whilst we are in this body, is possible. Yoga, then, would be complete in a double way; a union which you have started with him by acceptance of Him, and a dedicated endeavour on his part to lift you up to the highest levels - the two things can be side by side and operating simultaneously, and would bring about the final supreme result. Here there is no need for metaphysics, not much of it at any rate. The assurances are, firstly your goal must be there. You must be definite that you want to reach the Divine nature and the Divine state, which is a possibility within your hands. Secondly you must accept, for what it is worth in the beginning, the guidance of the personality who can put you in touch with that consciousness and guide you on. Who is watching over you, whether you are before him or not before him. Who practically demonstrates his omnipervasive capacity. Distance or time or condition do not seem to impose any limits on his capacity for transmission. This is my own humble experience about him. And in my work I haven't found any restrictions on this consciousness. Thirdly, you must know that this guide is God Himself who has condescended to take you up. And that is why he can take you to God. The God alone is capable of leading one to God. But don't impose any strain upon your consciousness, at the beginning at any rate. There is no question of your immediately being

told 'well your guide is a God, and you must worship him as a God'. Please, your guide is a guide he may be a God, but use him as a guide. Now if you can take that practical attitude without a metaphysical fear'complex about God, His sovereignty, omnipotence, creatorship and so on, you have a friendliness that comes with God, an associateship with him, a fellowship with God, and that makes it easy for you. There is no imposition of any doctrine on you, or dogma. There is only one demand, do you desire the Ultimate? Do you wish to get rid of your tensions? Would you like to evolve into a greater and a higher life? Are you willing for the adventure and experience into infinity? If you can answer them in the affirmative it is more easy for you to attain the Ultimate.

Here there is no need for us to criticise others, for all of them are, in one sense, included within us. But there are obviously features in our practical life, or in our traditions, or our habits and modes of thinking that prevent us from accepting simplicity. We think the simple cannot be true. We think that which is had cheaply cannot be worthwhile. My Master is anxious that he should be both simple and cheap, in this sense that anybody can come to him, no demands are made on him; in fact I have known that he has been anxious to help others and say 'well these things do not prevent me from helping you'. So he has offered his own services many times, he has been free with his money and with his time,

trying to go and help people who are in need of him. That shows not merely a natural generosity but an intention to show that God, as in Tagore's poetry, can work anywhere. It is only the proud scholar that is afraid of moving anywhere. And since he holds that he is no scholar but a practical man, he is available to one and all. That makes it difficult for many people to accept him as really a person capable of leading us to the Ultimate. But since we are discerning people, and God has trained us in the ways of simplicity, to a certain extent, we in India are able to see that the most simple person is likely to give us the truth, rather than the most complicated man.

My own experience of my Master has been that he is more simple than I ever thought simplicity could be. And that is why he has endeared me more than I could myself understand. And sometimes I was really afraid whether his love was a bondage to me. Well the word 'Bandhu' is one who ties you up - a relation. Now I was thinking whether my Master is a 'bandhu' in the sense that he is binding me up. But one thing that I realized was that there are bondages which limit us, there are bondages which free us. And all bondages do not fall into the same class. Here is a personality that was out to liberate me at every step, and if I felt bondage, he was able to remove the bondage at once, just as he removed my tension. But this is a superior, Divine bondage to a man who felt that it is through freedom that we realize freedom, and not

through bondage. The means and ends must be of the same order. Liberation alone, freedom alone can lead to freedom. Yoga of freedom, as I may describe this particular process, reveals to me that God is absolute freedom, and that is why if I want liberation, I have it the moment I touch God. In fact my liberation started the moment he began to touch me. I have never had after that any bondage, bondage to idols or bondage to ideas. There is only one thing that I had - freedom! And I feel that this supreme simplicity of freedom is necessary for every man in this world so that he can make the world free, and a place where human individuals can grow to their fullest Divine stature.

We need this message of a peaceful, integral transformation of human nature in terms of freedom; at first realised in one" self, afterwards in the life of the community itself, for which we lay, at the very beginning, the foundation in the quality of our Satsangh, where we train people, and we train them in freedom. So the subtle way which is practiced in this system really gives meaning to many of the rites which you have locked with you, which have become mechanical. And then we find naturalness developing in us, a divine naturalness! It is true that the highest of man may resemble the Divine, but we do not merely say that the highest of man will resemble the Divine, he CAN become Divine. The transition to Divinity is something

natural to us. And we consider that it is a naturalness that comes from above rather than enforced from below. That is why I feel this marga which is called 'Natural Path' appears to me divinely natural, so natural that it is imperceptible, also, by us. And here there are no impositions from without, and sometimes not even impositions from the Master. There are, of course, in this system some 'don'ts', or 'do's' called the Ten Commandments, but if you look at them carefully they are merely a statement of what naturally we do when we accept this Divine way of life. It is not necessary for you to have the commandments before you. It happens naturally and gradually in your life.

The acceptance of God in everything that you do becomes so natural because the consciousness that has been introduced into you begins to work naturally in you, in the very blood of your being. For it is introduced into the heart. So you will see that this methodology which has been given to us is, firstly, simple; secondly, natural; thirdly, transforming; finally, Divine. All this we owe to this perfection of the technique of yoga which has been made by the founder of this Mission, Shri Ram Chandraji under the Divine guidance of his own Master Shri Ram Chandraji of Fatehgarh called, otherwise, Lalaji. So we ought to be grateful to these two personalities for their continued guidance of the yoga which has been so helpful to so many of us who have

had terrible mental and vital shocks. It is there that we find the pathological approach of this system efficient, and almost instantaneous. Even as a mere medical therapy for the mind diseased, it has been profoundly transforming and calming in its effect. So from the actualities or the practice of this system I can firmly and confidently say that it has a Divine future in the lives of men, and the service of man is better done when this service is done for the upliftment of the human soul to the Divine nature. Any other type of service may be good. It was well recognised that the highest service that we can do to man is to make him conscious of his divinity, or Divine possibility. But since it was conceded to be very difficult to convey this particular doctrine to others, they thought it is much better to feed the body and then, through the body, get to the soul. Well, sometimes it happens that it is putting the cart before the horse. I don't say in all cases, but sometimes it happens. To avoid that negative possibility, we take the first stand that we shall serve with the aspiration to serve man, atleast those that have been given the capacity to serve, by means of the practice of this transmission. These people must make every endeavour that they can to make for the transformation of man into his Divine nature. This is a suggestion, of course, to the Preceptors of this system. Let them not lose sight of the fundamental work before them, and on the part of the abhyasis, my earnest

wish is that they should co-operate with the Preceptors in aspiring for the Ultimate service they can get from their Preceptors. Well that would help us in producing a real 'renaissance'-I won't call it revolution, for it has got its own peculiar meanings in the present context. I would say renaissance, or the rehabilitation, or the enthronement of God in the heart of every man and woman, and child, I should add.

This is a great destiny, and I feel profoundly proud that I am associated with it, with its work, which I shall continue to do for my Master.