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We are Here and Now

Rice Lake, Wisconsin — September 12, 2014

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zI8e7eDvvgQ>

Welcome, friends to this meditation workshop. As the name implies, we have gathered here for some intensive meditation, so I will not talk much. In this three-day session we will do more meditation, less talking. Are you all ready for it? Those who have come for meditation, not for listening too much, please raise your hand. I am very happy, because we have talked enough. I have personally talked so much that Mark tells me there are more than 160 of my talks on YouTube itself, and over 300 on audio tapes. So, one doesn't have to talk more, one has to practice more. And therefore, this being the path of experience, a path not of discussion, not of trying to understand intellectually but of actually experiencing something within ourselves. Therefore, unless we practice what we talk about, there is no value in following this path.

There are so many forums, so many fori for discussion of spiritual and metaphysical subjects, but we want to practice something and see if we can validate some of those things that we read about and we talk about. Validation only comes by personal experience, and these experiences are such that most of them, especially at the higher level, cannot even be described, cannot even be written down. Those are experiences which defy all the laws under which our mind operates. They are not comprehensible by the mind because they deal with things which are beyond time and space. Our mind has a very big limitation. It cannot visualize, cannot think, cannot contemplate, cannot conceptualize anything outside of time and space.

The other day a friend of mine in India had a little meditation experience in which he could see the entire universe that has been created in total emptiness, in total nothingness. There is no way that you can describe this in any intellectual terms. It makes no sense. That is why the truth and the reality is beyond the mind, and cannot be comprehended by the mind, which makes it very difficult for some of us to try to convince intellectuals who have questions based on their mental understanding of these subjects. This is not a mental subject at all. If you want to study things within the realm of the mind, there is a huge lot of subjects that you can discuss. But

what I come to share with you is how to get your own experiences beyond the mind, above the mind. Mind is merely a tool given to us. The mind is not our self. The mind is given to the self to use. It is a very useful device. It's a very useful accessory to the mind, to the consciousness which is our own self, our own soul. Our soul is nothing but pure consciousness, the ability to be conscious, the ability to be aware, the ability to experience, the ability to experience anything that we want is our soul, is our consciousness.

In order to experience different kind of things we have other adjuncts to the soul, other things added on to the soul for generating different types of experiences. One of those essential things, which makes certain types of experience possible, is the mind. The human mind is attached to the soul so that we can experience phenomena, experience creation in time and space. It's very great. Not only does the mind help us to create and experience time and space and all the events that can be placed in time and space, all the events that can be connected to each other through cause and effect, and thereby creating a law of karma, it helps us to also rationalize things, helps us to put logic into place, it helps us to assimilate logic in a certain particular way that appeals to itself, the mind. So this does not mean that just because the mind is limited, we are limited. Our own potential goes way beyond the mind, and there are experiences available to us which are beyond the mind. True spirituality deals with the spirit, not with the mind. Mental activity and spiritual activity are different things. Spiritual activity is where the mind ends, and the spirit alone remains, and we still have those higher experiences. So when you want to say I am desirous of a spiritual experience, it is understood that you want to go beyond the mind.

Not only is the mind a very useful addition to our soul to have experience, we have other additions also. The mind then generates its own additional components, and the most important ones for our purposes in this physical world are the five senses of perception—the ability to see, smell, touch, taste, hear. These abilities which are now created by the mind help us to have a varied experience in this universe. And they are very useful. We are able to have such great experiences because of these sense perceptions. It does not mean that these sense perceptions become us, or that the soul is sense perceptions. It only means that the soul, which is a power of consciousness, which has the power to experience anything it likes, is using the mind and through the mind, in space and time, using these five senses to have a larger experience. It's only a beautiful way to have a greater experience of creation.

With creation has been made into so many stages, and one of the stages is where we can have a sensory experience of perception through sense organs which are embedded in our self, attached to our self. But that is not all. We have another addition to that, a bigger one, a more important one from our point of view. While sitting in this physical body, in this physical universe, we also have this physical self, a physical body which embeds within itself the sense perceptions, embeds within itself the mind and also empowers all the systems through our soul, our consciousness. What a great package. How can you create a better package than this

to have all types of experiences? They are possible outside in a created universe, and they are possible inside in an unmanifest universe.

Everything we see outside is being generated from inside. If there was nothing inside our consciousness, nothing would happen outside. The truth is that the inside and outside are the same thing. Outside is a very small part of what is inside. Inside is much larger and it can expand into other forms of experiences. Other worlds can be opened up just by going inside and opening up that world. Right now, we are opening up only ourselves to a physical world, this physical world that is created outside. By putting attention only on the outside created world we forget where it is coming from, what is its origin, what is the truth about it, what exactly is the beginning of the universe, what exactly is going to be the end, is this universe like a dream, or is it the universe that exists independent of us and we are merely short-term visitors here? These are questions which cannot be answered unless you are able to have the ability to trace the origin of this and find out.

When you go to sleep at night and have a dream, in the dream it looks like reality. It looks like real things are happening, although the laws applying to a dream are totally different from the laws that apply to physical wakefulness. In the dream you can jump from one city to another. Looks normal. In the dream you can fall from a house and not get hurt, which is normal. In the physical world you can't do that, and yet while you are dreaming, they look like normal activities to you, because the rules that are being applied by consciousness in a dream state are different. And that is why we take the dream to be real.

Supposing while dreaming we want to check out if the dream is a reality or a dream, there is no way we can find out because it looks real. Even if we have a feeling, a discovery in our own self that this looks like a dream, what do we do in a dream where we find out it's a dream? We tell everybody else there. We say, "No, it's a dream." You're telling people it's a dream, and when you wake up those people don't even exist. They were only part of the dream. That means a knowledge of the truth in a dream, a knowledge of the truth that it is in a dream, is being shared with the people who are not there, which means knowledge was only academic, only intellectual. Because how could you share that? When you wake up you don't share with anybody.

Awakening is the only way in which you can know it was a dream. After awakening you know exactly how the dream originated within yourself. There was no outside world to create a dream. The dream was all part of yourself. In your own consciousness it created, and when it ended you are back to another form of your own life, your physical form, and the dream became a dream. In the same way this current experience we are having is dream-like but the only way we can find out if this is dream-like is when we awaken from this state to a higher state of wakefulness. A higher state of wakefulness is that in which this particular experience of a physical/material body disappears. When we don't think we have a heavy body, a physical body made of matter, but we have a body which has sense perceptions but no matter. When we

awaken to that level we automatically find out that the physical world was no more than a dream, but it looked absolutely real.

We can awaken further too. We can awaken from the body of sense perceptions, which we call the astral body, or ethereal body, or sensory body, whatever name you want to give it. In fact it is not a body. It is the ability to have perceptions/senses the same way like this body has. And since they operate the same way in a material body it looks like we have a body with no weight, a body with no material form. Yet it is like a body, and we can move around. We can do everything with that which we can do with this body and much more. Since it has no gravity, no weight, we can fly with it, we can go where we like.

The rules and the laws of that awakened state are different from the laws of this physical state, just like the laws of this physical state are totally different from the laws of the dream state. You can take that as an example because most of us do recall having dreams, so that it why it is analogy. It is not a total analogy because there are many other differences. For example, in a dream state you lose your power of using your will to do things. In the wakeful state you will retain and regain your power to use your free will and make decisions. In the dream your decision making capacity is reduced considerably. When you wake up the decision making power comes back in full force, and you feel that here you can make a choice, do what you like. Dream you are dragged away by events of the dream and very little choice is given to you what to do with it. You must have noticed this difference. When you awaken to the ethereal self, when you awaken to your higher self... We call it higher because in a way it is a more awakened sense, it's a more awakened self than the physical self, so we are calling it higher. Otherwise, there is no higher or lower.

In the course of our stay here, I will explain to you there is no such thing as high and low. It's all a question of uncovering your outer self and discovering what is more inside you. It is a discovery of your self, stage by stage. But once we say it is a higher state because we have a more awakened feeling, then we find that the world we were looking at was created by our self. And that sensory system can also lead to the feeling that is the ultimate reality. We worship gods, we worship the creator, and we find they are all in that state.

We have been worshipping somebody that created this universe, and those gods and those creators are actually alive there. We hear of hells and heavens and those are actually entities that exist there. We can go and see that they actually exist. It is not somebody else telling us to believe. It is something that we can experience, that in a higher awakened state those things exist which we read in our religious literature, which we speak of in our churches and temples, and that those things exist at a certain higher level of wakefulness. But that is all part of this creation. It's still a part of the mind operating through sense perceptions that we can have all those experiences. But if we were to awaken further, which it does not look likely on our own. It looks like we have reached the end of the creative power, we have reached the Creator, when we reach the astral or ethereal plane. Because everything that has been created here has come from there. We will not find anything that exists here which was not there and has not

been created from there. In fact, all inspiration we get—people write about stories of heavens and so on—all inspirations are coming from there. That is our reality compared to this physical world, which if we take it as mythia or take it as illusion, in reality is the astral plane.

Not many people in this world have gone beyond the astral plane. When we read all the old stories of peoples' discoveries of heavens and how they are sitting there, what they are doing there, it's all a description of the astral plane. The astral plane contains the gods we worship. But there is something higher. Who created them? The question often comes: If God is sitting there and running this universe, who created God? Isn't there something higher than that? When we read deeply into scriptures and read deeply into spiritual teachings of the founders of religions, we find that they refer to another power that creates even God. And therefore we can still awaken further from that level.

If we practice the same type of meditation that we can practice now in order to reach the astral stage, we can go higher than that with the guidance of somebody who has already had that experience and has been able to go beyond the astral plane.

Up to the astral plane people have tried to reach by themselves also. They have. Many people have been able to achieve that success by just studying the methods and following it and having those interesting experiences in their life. But they think that is the end of their journey, and therefore they cannot go any further without the help of somebody who has gone further. That is why we need somebody now after the astral plane who can take us to something higher.

The system of meditation that enables us to go from one stage to another is the same. It is to withdraw our attention from what is looking as the reality outside, withdraw our attention from there, within ourselves, within the self, in the direction of the true self. The more we put our attention in the direction of our true self, the higher we can go. When we go beyond the astral plane, we find the astral plane is merely a created universe, just like the physical universe, and although it has many elements of greater reality, it's not actually real.

It's also created the same process by which the physical universe or dream universes are created. By going to that level we come to the ultimate level of the mind, from where the mind originates. We discover that we all share one mind. That there is a universal mind which we are all sharing. And we think we all have our own minds. It operates like that when we go into the illusions of lower worlds, but there we discover that we all have a universal mind we are sharing that. And therefore our universality in thinking, in rationalizing, in intellectualizing all comes to an end and we discover this was our ultimate home.

And those who do not see any distinction between their soul and their mind find that as the ultimate end, because that is where the mind ends, that is where the mind originates from. There is no mind after that. So therefore they feel they have reached the end of the tunnel, they have come to the ultimate light, and this is it. But that is not it. Because the mind is not the self. The mind is attached to the self.

This discovery that the mind is attached to the self is not the same thing. It's a very big discovery. Even here we start thinking and always believe the self is thinking. We want to say something to somebody we think and we believe it is our self that is thinking and talking from thoughts. We don't realize that we are using a computer-like device called the mind and using that device to think, that we are using a device to think and speak and do other things in this world.

The mind is not the self. What is the self? The self is that power which empowers the mind, which gives life to the mind and through the mind it gives life to the astral sensory system. Through that power it gives life to the physical body so that it makes all awareness alive. That is the self. The self is consciousness. Self is not the thinking machine we call the mind. And this discovery that the mind is not the end of it is only known to very few people in this world.

When I talk in my talks about a Perfect Living Master, I am referring to that perfection which goes beyond the imperfection of the mind. That means a person, a human being like ourselves just born and dies like us, but his consciousness, his awareness has reached the level of awakening to that level beyond the mind and has been able to see that consciousness or soul is separate from the mind and is the real powerhouse that makes the mind work, that makes the mind alive.

The thinking mind is a working machine through which we are generating all other experiences of the physical body, of the astral body, of the sensory systems. It's a great machine. But we are not the machine. We are using the machine. So, to discover that we are not the machine, we are not the mind, we are the soul beyond the mind, we are the power that gives the mind its life, we need really a Perfect Living Master who has been able to go beyond the mind. Such people are extremely rare. They are rare because the seekers of that truth are very rare. Most of us don't seek that. Most of us are seeking heavens, most of them are seeking a better place, most of us are seeking some solutions of our problems in the physical world, most of us are just trying to escape from the troubles of the problems of this world, and the next step is good enough for us. We don't seek the truth beyond the mind.

Since there are very few seekers who say, "We want to find the ultimate truth," for those seekers such people do appear in their life. They appear in the physical world in their life, and we call them Perfect Living Masters, or Sant Satguru, or different names have been given to them—*Murshid e Kamil*—these people who come in every country anywhere in the world where there is a seeker of that. A seeker who seeks that ultimate truth will be able to find a master of that level. The requirement is not that you go around the world looking for a master. The requirement is you should be seeking that highest truth within yourself. If you are seeking that in your own heart, in your own mind, in your own thoughts, in your own daily contemplation you're seeking that which is beyond the mind, you will find a master who will take you beyond the mind. It's as simple as that.

If the master knows the whole functioning of the mind, he's above the universal mind, and cannot even read your own seeking, he is not a master at all. A master is one who can see through everything. He can see through our aspirations, he can see through our seekings and discover at what time in our experiences in this physical world we are ready to go back home, to go back to our true self, to go back to the level from which the whole thing was generated.

Now to be able to go beyond the mind we need a different kind of practice altogether, because now thinking does not exist, language does not exist, space does not exist, time does not exist. What do we use then? Do you know what exists beyond these things? Imagine (of course, it's very difficult to image, but I say for a moment imagine) that we have to now practice something to go beyond the mind, where none of the mental abilities can be used. You cannot think, you cannot speak, you cannot repeat words, no mantras are effective, no books are effective. Nothing is effective because all these are within the realm of the mind.

Now what can take us beyond the mind? What exists in pure soul, in pure consciousness that does not require any of these things? If you think about it deeply, you will find there are some things that are happening to us even now in the physical body which are not actually being generated by the mind, or by the senses, or by the physical matter around us. Some of those things can be listed. One of them is true love. True love does not come from the mind, does not come by thinking, does not come by any physical experience. True love is originating from the soul itself. That's a great thing to know that true love, and if one practices love and devotion, one can go beyond the mind. All systems will fail. There is no mantra in the world that has ever taken anybody above the mind. That's a mental thing. It's a repetition of words. No kind of mantra has taken people beyond that because it cannot. It's confined to language. It's confined to repetition. But love and devotion can take one beyond.

Then another factor is intuition. What is intuitive knowledge? It's not rational knowledge. It does not exist in time. It does not come by thinking about it. It does not come by any of the mental, physical or astral sensory uses. It's comes automatically from their soul, from consciousness itself. Intuitive knowledge comes directly from the soul. Similarly, appreciation of beauty, appreciation of joy and bliss. Where does that come from? Not from the mind, not from the senses, not from the body.

Here are at least three things we can see straight away, which we are experiencing right down to this physical plane. It's love and devotion, intuitive knowledge, and the ability to experience bliss and joy, and beauty. These are existing directly from our soul. So, we have actually divided the functions that are being performed by us in our physical body into many sectors, and each part of us, including our soul, is performing certain functions. So that is why when we want to go beyond the mind, the only thing that comes is intuitive knowledge, the ability to appreciate and enjoy bliss and joy, and the practice of something that does not involve thinking. The practice of something that will take us away from thinking into intuitive self. That means an ability to ignore the mind that is functioning in our body.

Now of course one can die in this physical body and have experience of the astral self. One can die in the astral body which has a longer life. It's also a body. It's different in that it doesn't have matter, doesn't have weight. It's still a body. It was born and it dies like this one. It has an average age in physical time of 1,000 to 3,000 years. This one is hardly 100 years. That is 1,000 to 3,000 years. The mind itself is like a body, it's like a causal body. We call it a causal body. It also is born and dies. Of course it has life of several million years.

These are just things which in one mind you can have several astral bodies. You can be reborn again and again in astral bodies. In one astral body you can have several physical bodies and keep on reincarnating within the same system of sensory perceptions. Can recall all sensory experiences in the next body and so on. The mind carries all the weight of cause and effect of karma and goes on till the same mind is with us forever, and we keep on carrying forever. The karma goes on forever. These are things which are confined to time and space and they have a certain limit of how much long they can last. A soul has no such thing. It goes beyond time and space and is neither born nor dies. Our self has never been born and never dies. That is why, when we want to reach that state, we have to use something that exists in permanence in infinity in that kind of situation where we can't contemplate with our mind. But these things like love and devotion we practice here also, we feel it here also. Nothing is shut off. Our intuitive knowledge, intuition tells us, the mind says, "No, don't believe it." Gut feeling says, "Yes, I know." You ask: 'How do you know?' "I don't know how, but I know it." What is that feeling? How do you explain something when a person says I know something, but I don't know how? True intuition is a knowing of things in knowledge intrinsic in that knowing which does not depend on reason, does not depend on logic. Sometimes what you know is irrational. The mind doesn't think it is rational what you know. Inwardly you say you know.

One of those things which one can know and is not reasoned out is seeking itself. I know I've been seeking for something, I know I am missing something, I don't know what. It's an intuitive feeling. The seekers themselves are seeking because of their intuitive feeling. And these feelings cannot be reasoned out but they are all functioning right here in the physical body. You are having experiences of all these different functions that have put together in the most beautiful package that was ever created. I cannot with all my knowledge collected over my entire life figure out something more wonderful than this package of a human being in which all this has been packed up, including the ability to reach the highest level of awareness. The ability to discover something beyond the mind. The ability to find out all the truth of all creation, to find the creators and the creator of the creators, to be able to find all this in a human body. What greater thing can you see around you?

Look at the whole world, look at all the scientific advances made. Nothing equals the human body in which this capacity to know, realize, and become exists so much. You can discover the ultimate creative power. The ultimate creative power is not a God. It's a power that creates God. It's a power that creates everything. It's a power out of which nothing else exists. That

power includes, is all inclusive. There is no word that can describe that power. No word has ever existed to describe that power.

For want of any word, we have been using the word "Word." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, the Word was God," John's gospel says. And the Rigveda says, In the beginning was the Nad, the sound. The sound was the creator of God." Same thing. It's all been said that there is something, some power which we cannot describe. We could have used the letter X. We could have said the power is called X. Why did we say sound, why did we say Nad, why did we say Word? There is a reason for that. The reason is that the ultimate power, the creative power that created God and created all the universes and created all experiences. That power continues to exist at all levels, it cannot disappear, it's all inclusive. That power exists right at this moment in all of us. Without that we would all be finished, disappear. That great power that exists within us, that power that created everything including God and is enabling us to be who we are today, that power exists in a form in the physical self which can be heard. That's why we call it sound or we call it Word or we call it something audible, because at this level it can be heard.

Where can it be heard? As close to the self as possible. So really our task at meditation is to find where the self is and approach it. Now this looks like very funny thing to say, that we are the self and we are searching for the self. How could you be searching for something who you are? You are who you are, and you are where you are. Now the question is, where are you? I think the answer is very clear. Everybody knows. We are here. H-E-R-E. Here. We are nowhere else. We never were anywhere else. We are always here. When were you here? Now. N-O-W. Now. Remember these two words. We have always been here and now, and we will always be here and now. We never were anywhere else.

Therefore, what are we trying to discover then? We are trying to discover here and now. Why do we have to discover that? Because having been given such a wonderful mind, we run all over, there and then and then and never here and now. It's a [audio not clear] old problem. We have created a problem by constantly thinking of things that are neither here nor now. We are constantly thinking of the past and the future. We never think of now. We think of past things that have happened. "Oh, I should not have done that. I could have done differently. My life would have been different." All living in the past. Or, "In the future I am going to millionaire, I know what I have to do. Why, I am making these investments?" What are we doing? We are just talking of past and future and we are in neither place. We are neither in the past nor in the future, we are in the now. And then we are saying, "Then I will go there, then I will travel to that place." There is no such place as except here. When we are there, it becomes here.

Buddha said... He said a lot of good things, some of it made up, some he actually said. But it doesn't matter, so long as they're good. He says, "It is here because there is no there." That's very simple. Simple statement. "It is here because there is no there." Somebody sent me a nice poem, a nice song sung by a Pakistani girl on Coke Studio. It says, "*Ith nahin, te kith nahin*" in Multani language. It said that, "If it is not here it's nowhere." Everything is here and nowhere

else. So, all we have to do to find the truth, ultimate truth, is to be here and now, something that we don't know how to do. It's very strange that we don't know how to be here and now when we are automatically here and now.

Which means we have to be in our automatic state where we are and forget about the things that cluttering us which are taking us away from here and now. And what are those things clattering us? Thoughts, mostly it's our thoughts, our thinking. So, when we try to close our eyes and try to figure out, if I am in my body, physical body, where do I operate from, where am I alive from, where am I conscious from? If we examine our body, we discover that the point where we think, point where we feel, point from where we contemplate, from where we ask these questions, is somewhere in the head. Not in our hands and legs and feet and other rest of the body. They are attached to us. That if we were not the physical body, but living in the physical body, if that were our state, where would we be living most of the time? Most of the time we would be living in our head, because most of the time we are awake. Even when we close our eyes we still feel we are in the head. Eyes are located in front of the head so when we look out it looks like we are looking from that part of the body where we are seated.

If you contemplated you will find that we are able to discover that if we are a point of consciousness, and not the whole body, and we are residing in this body, making use of this body, where would we be? And automatically the answer will come to you. You are somewhere in the head.

If you go further, where exactly in the head are we sitting and operating this machine called the mind, senses and body? Where are we operating it from? It will not take you very long to know you are operating from the center of the head, right in the center, between the ears, behind the eyes, at a point where we seem to be sitting very comfortably driving this whole machine of the senses, body and the mind. They are running all this machinery from there. If we can know this much that that is where the self, the power of consciousness is sitting and operating the systems, then all we have to do is to use a great gift given to us by the creator called human attention. Put your attention there.

When we say we are living in the past, what is making us live in the past? Our thoughts and attention. What's making us live in the future? Our thoughts and attention. What is making us live there and not here? Our thoughts and our attention. We're thinking of those other places, we're thinking of other times, and that is why we are not here and now. So therefore, if we want to discover who we are, the point where we have put our attention is clearly demarcated. And there is no doubt about it, and we all have it at the same place in the physical body, behind the eyes and in the center.

It has been called the third eye, it has been called the *nukta*, the point, the point of consciousness, it has been called the center of consciousness, it has been called the center of the self. So many words have been used to describe it. In totally physiological terms, it has been described as the point between the pineal gland and pituitary body, hang in the medulla

oblongata if you want to know medical terminology where exactly it is. It's all well demarcated, well known point, from where consciousness operates and runs these systems. All that we want to do in meditation for which we are assembled here is to put our attention there.

If you can withdraw your attention which is scattered now in all these thoughts about here, outside, here, outside into there, then, now, outside, in the past, present, future, all this scattered attention, all around the world that we have scattered it. If we can gather it and not think of those things but think of what is happening in the head, specifically what is happening in the center where we are sitting, assume or imagine that you are sitting there and practice being there, you will open up all the doors inside to the highest level of, highest level of awareness.

This system is so simple. The difficulty is only because we have scattered ourselves, we have scattered our thought processes, scattered our mind, so wide that it becomes difficult to pull all the attention back. But for that the system is very simple. Meditation is the art of withdrawing your attention to where you are already.

In fact, you don't even have to search for the spot, because you are there. You have to withdraw your attention to where you actually are as consciousness. That means all you have to do is to pull your attention back to the center.

Now all I am going to share with you from my own experiences is how you can do it as easily as possible, considering that we have so many distractions in life. That's the main purpose, and if you are able to do it successfully, stage by stage, we will get all the experiences that we have been reading about, that we say exist beyond death, that there is an after-life where we go. The after-life is right here. One can die while living and have all the experiences of after-life right here. Why wait for death and then see what is there? Big advantage of knowing beforehand will be that you can lose our fear of death, because we are all afraid of death because it's an unknown thing. We don't know what's going to happen. And there is no great fear than the fear of the unknown. Most of our fears arise from the fear of the unknown. And therefore, if we are able to see what happens when we die, where do we go, is there a world existing, what do we see there, who is there, if we can get all this information and knowledge while we are here, it's a great benefit because the life here changes immediately.

To become fearless is a very great thing to happen in this life while we are still here. Half our life is covered by fears and insecurities. If we are able to see that, and if we are able to see that what we thought was life here leading and making decisions everyday was made earlier and planted in us and that we are going through a preprogrammed, predetermined pattern of life, and all those things that are happening what was preplanned and you can see that, it becomes like a nice ride in an amusement park.

When you go to an amusement park and say take a ride on a car, on one of those Ferris wheels, you get on the Ferris wheel, you can't get out from there, but you enjoy the ride. You can't do anything, but you still enjoy. It's the same thing here. If you are able to know that the whole

series of events which are taking place here are predetermined and placed on a timeline and you are travelling on that timeline and you are having this life that you are leading now, it becomes an enjoyable ride, instead of being a matter of discussing every day, "What am I going to do tomorrow?" Tomorrow is already decided for you. But you don't know it. Therefore, you take on so much extra burden.

And we take on so much extra burden of karma. What is karma? Karma is an arrangement of cause and effect by which events are placed on the timeline of creation of the physical world. The physical world has all events preplanned and placed in an order in which each one can be explained by a cause of a previous event. And when we say this is the cause, this is the effect, it's called karma. Karma is anything happening in our life as a cause, and if we think it's happening in our consciousness with our effort then we say it's our responsibility why that happened. So we are taking on karma upon ourselves just to have a ride in life.

It is not that karma is our own self. Soul has no karma, never had any karma. It doesn't belong to the area of karma. Karma is only mental. It's only created by the mind, placed in our life by the mind, and born by the mind, and so long as we feel that the self and the mind are the same, we suffer.

Supposing you realized that you are not the mind, but you are using a mind for experience. It would be like watching a movie. When things happen in the movie, so many things happen and people get affected. I see people crying in the movies, laughing in the movies. They get so participating in the movie, but they don't leave their chairs and run to stop the thing. They don't run to the screen to tear it up. They know it is just a movie. The whole life can become a movie which you watch not from the physical body, which is also a character in the movie, but from sitting inside at the right place in the audience. This can happen if you are able to see these things while you are still in the body and are able to raise your attention to the point where all this truth is revealed to you, how this whole makeup, how this world is all made up. That is what you have to see, and it is possible.

A method? Simple. Put your attention and concentrate it. These are two factors: Use of attention, which is a great gift, and everything we get in life is because of attention. We read books with attention, we get knowledge by attention, we travel by attention, we put attention on anything it becomes our reality, other things become only ancillaries to the attention. Use this very attention to place on your own self, from where your whole process of living, the whole process of knowing things, whole process of experiencing, is taking place, from the head. Place your attention in the center of the head. And how do you keep it there? Second gift: Concentration of attention. You can concentrate your attention on what you like. If you concentrate your attention on one thing, other things go out of your notice, disappear. That is why if you concentrate your attention behind the eyes you are able to discover that that reality is opening up a door inside, others will close up, for the time being. And that's the method of meditation by which you can discover anything you want within yourself.

I want to demystify this whole thing of meditation “Oh, it is something to do with special mantras, special things have to be done this way, that way, special rituals have to be performed.” That is religion. We have deviated from spirituality into religion, made it a set of rituals and ceremonies rather than the discovery of the self. Spiritually is about discovering the spirit, discovering your soul, finding out who you really are. From that we have gone into something so totally different, and although the main objective still remains the same, we are involved only in rituals and ceremonies outside, and we think that is going to give us something.

“Well, fasting is necessary.” Of course fasting is good, but not fasting from food. Fasting from thoughts of there and then. Fasting from other things besides here and now. That is the fasting that is required for true meditation, so that is why so many rituals we have taken up without getting any benefit. And we are hoping for something to happen in the next life. “Let’s do a lot of charity, let’s do good deeds, next life will be better.” Nobody has seen the next life. Nobody knows that the next life has already been set and will be the same whether you like it or not. All these events have been placed in advance. How can we know all this unless we go to the source of knowledge? The source of all knowledge is within ourselves and is right behind our eyes sitting in there.

So the idea of my sharing these things with you is, let’s get on to the real thing. We have done plenty of other things. The time has come where let’s get on to true meditation, that we discovery of the self within our self. And we will go through these proceedings, we will do some practice of these things, and you have questions, you can ask questions. You can meditate more during the time we are here. Meditate all the time if you like. Take full advantage of the three days we are together. This is a meditation workshop, it’s supposed to be mostly for practicing what we’ve been talking about, what we’ve been hearing about. And any difficulties you have, from my own experiences, if I can help you, I’ll certainly give you all the help you need.

I have worked on this all my life. In a couple of months I’ll be 88 years old, so that means—and I was initiated more than 78 years ago—so I have some experience in this business. And from whatever I could get I could share some things and help with that. I have no other qualifications. This is a strange subject of spirituality where you don’t need any other qualifications except experience. Because all other qualifications can mislead you.

If you read too many books, the problem arises in books is that there are contradictions in books, too many contradictions. In the same book you have contradictions. In the same book it says that you must put your best effort, do this, do this, and in the next chapter it says nothing can happen without the grace of God, without the grace of the Master, without the grace. Which one is true? Should you put in effort or wait for grace to come? So, there are obvious contradictions like these, and those contradictions are removed when you actually practice and find that grace and effort are the same things, that unless there is grace you never put in effort. The effort itself arises out of grace, those things only you discover as you actually practice this things. So instead of debating about these things, we should start getting to do practice some of these things.

Also, they have set aside some time for personal interviews. We have the past several years discovered that there is not enough time always for everybody to have the few minutes that they want for a personal question or something, entirely personal. So we have set apart a little more time and one full day at the end of our program, for those who are able to stay on until then. That day can get more time and probably have a longer interview. And any resolution they want to make in their own spiritual efforts, we can discuss that at that time. Otherwise, you can ask questions. We'll have a system by which you can write out the questions, and give them, and I'll try to answer them, which are of common interest, I'll try to answer them in this meeting.

There is also some breaks we have. There is a food break, lunch break, because we can't be fasting all the time. I wish we could do one day to three day continuous meditation and no talk, and no food, nothing. That would be great. Once I was with a group that we did that. And all the time that we were meditating we were thinking of food. Well, that's what happens. I am telling you, I went into the mountains to meditate. I met many other *sadhus* also meditating there. All they were thinking is what they were missing in the town. You can't run away and meditate. There is no way to run away and say, "I'm going to meditate in seclusion somewhere".

What needs seclusion is your mind. If the mind is still looking at those things, still thinking of those things, it's no use running away anywhere. Don't run anywhere. If you want to run, run inside yourself. Run with your attention inside and see what you can see inside. Everything outside is outside. It's not going to give you any knowledge of the self. The self is inside. All experiences of true nature will come inside. When you get inside experiences, there will also be outside. Because as I said in the beginning, inside and outside are the same, and inner experiences have also a counterpart outside.

People say some things happen—they call it miracles. Miraculous things happen, and they look miraculous to us because they defy the laws of probability. They happen in such ways outside that we say there is some other hand working in this, wouldn't have happened otherwise. Those events that happen outside, they are happening all the time. We begin to notice a lot more, and a lot more coincidences start happening because of the progress made inside. It does not mean that they are independent of each other. They both work together.

Intuitive knowledge, which I spoke about little while ago. Intuitive knowledge is also accompanied by outside coincidences. One has a thought inside to know something and you go driving in the car and a billboard, having no relation with the subject, but few words are answering that question which you have. Opening a book at random you're getting an answer to a question you were asking inside. So there is a great correlation between the inside and the outside, and the more you practice inside the more you will see those miraculous things happening outside.

So, this is a combination of the experiences inside and outside, and sometimes people are concerned that “I am not seeing much inside, I am seeing a lot outside.” That’s all right because they have a lot of karmic obligation outside at that time, and for that reason they are seeing a lot more things outside. And when they are free from that they see more things inside and less things outside, but there is a combination between these two.

I’ll talk about it more later on. We’ll take a little break now. Enjoy the lunch. Enjoy some meditation. I will talk more about it.