To speak of the spiritual life is almost a paradox in its own self because, can one talk about the spirit? At the same time the intellect can point us in the right direction; just as we read a map, we study the map: then we know where we have to go. And then when we are discussing the spiritual life we also have to discuss virtue because virtue and spirit are essentially the same. This I think is a point that is lost to modern man. Since time immemorial religions and mystics have try to access the realm beyond senses. Almost every culture has valued virtue as part and parcel of that attempt to access the immaterial world. Even the primitive cultures have their own virtues, their own values to live by, guiding and curbing behaviour. I suppose virtue basically is the curbing of the animal instinct. Everything does seem to boil down to this evolutionary process where we are creatures trying to evolve from the lower to the higher: protozoa trying to evolve into the multi-celled creature, the multi-celled creature trying to evolve into the fish and from the fish to the reptile to the animal and the animal to man. And this incredible evolutionary unfolding goes on until we come to the point where we become human, then we are capable of thinking. We have consciousness. It is at that point that virtue becomes important.

When we are still in the animal body, virtue has no meaning. The only virtue for the lower life forms is survival. There is no higher virtue than survival. So the values that are associated with virtue in an animal will be very, very different from the values associated with virtue in a human. The highest virtue for a lion is to survive, there is no other virtue for a lion. So, what are the virtues for survival? For the lion it is sharp claws, ferocity, strength, endurance, youth, courage, the will to fight, the stronger the survival urge the more powerful the battle. Skill strength, capacity to endure. So the virtues associated with survival in the animal world are of a certain type. One could even say that courage (and today we wanted to speak about courage and its relationship to virtue) we could say that courage is an animal virtue in that sense because some animals seem to be physically courageous and some are not, even in the same species. So we can see this quite clearly in dogs, because we live with dogs and we can see that some dogs are very courageous and will fight anything and some dogs have no courage whatsoever, they all run away from anything. Yet they're dogs! They belong to the species of dogs. So this idea
of courage differs from creature to creature even within the same species. At
least it appears that way. Not all snakes will react to a threat in the same way.
Some snakes will be more ferocious than others even within the same species. So
its not a species specific virtue but a virtue that manifests itself in some animals
of the same species but does not manifest itself in others. We can see this in
horses also. Anyone who has reared horses, or has lived around horses knows that
some horses are tremendously courageous. They will do anything, they will attempt
anything, they have this incredible courage, the will to do, not just the will but the
power to do. So courage, the will to do, the power to do, the skill to do, the ability
to do, and not to run away. Courage implies facing a difficult situation and not
running away. Of course, when one faces a threat whether one is an animal or a
human the natural physiological response is either to flee or fight. One would
normally say that courage is that which enables us to fight, not to run away. So you
can see the value of courage even in the animal kingdom where the highest virtue is
actually survival. What makes a dog turn and fight and not run away, what makes
an animal fight, and not flee? Courage seems to be the difference. And we can see
this even in animals.

Now when we reach the human stage in evolution and we are at that twilight zone
where we are half animal and half human (as Alexander Pope wrote so beautifully,
'created half to rise and half to fall,' ) Where we are half human and half animal,
virtue starts to take on a different context. Courage also takes on a different
context. Then we have to look at this idea, it is a very interesting idea that as we
evolve our ideas of virtue evolve. And as we evolve our ideas of courage also evolve.
What is courageous for a lion may not be courageous for a human being and what is
courageous for a human being may not be courageous for a yogi, or a mystic, or a
master. So the virtue evolves as the being evolves. And if we are going to see
courage as a virtue then we have to understand that the courage also evolves.
What is courage to the animal becomes a different thing for the human. What is
courage to the human becomes a different thing for the noble man, for the
awakened being. And what is courage for the awakened being is something very
different from the realised being. We could also look at it in the Hindu yogic
text of the Triguna. What is courage for the Tamasic, the bestial type of
courage that one sees in soldiers in an army where they are indoctrinated to fight
and just to go straight and not to turn back is one type of courage, but it is a very
low level type of courage, the Tamasic type of courage. Then we have a Rajasic
type of courage, where there is a power there is a conscious thinking where one
chooses to confront to battle. Then perhaps there is the Sattvic type of courage
that that discretion is the better part of valour. We have to see courage as an
evolving virtue according to the level of being which we occupy at that moment. Virtue is very much related to courage. Yet you can say virtue is something beyond all that, perhaps an outgrowth of courage.

In Sanskrit heroism, courage is *virya*, a hero. A heroic person is a *virya*, someone who is capable of fighting the good fight. The English word *virtue* has probably come from the Sanskrit *virya*. So in order to be *virtuous* one must be *heroic*, one must have that quality of *courage*. Now the Tamasic level courage means one thing, and the animal courage means another thing. The half man half beast level is the Tamasic level. Someone who is half man half beast is engaged in the constant struggle between his two natures. At the Rajasic level courage takes on another type, virtue takes on another clothing, and at a Sattvic level virtue becomes something totally different. We have to see virtue, courage, heroism as an evolving quality. It evolves and what is true and is a virtue at one level is not virtue at another level. At the low level of the animal life the only virtue is to survive, which means survival by any means. In the Tamasic level survival is also a virtue, to triumph, to dominate. But when we come to Rajasic and Sattvic states, when you become more human than animal, when you become more divine than devilish, survival is not such an urgent necessity in fact other things become more important than survival. So we have to see this whole idea in that context. In the Tamasic man courage is fighting the outer world, making oneself do something one would not normally do out of some outer compunction. If one is in the army one may as well go and fight the enemy because otherwise the commanding officer will probably shoot us anyway. If one is on a ship, if you're in the navy or on a ship, it doesn't take courage to do what your officer tells you to, because if you don't do it you'll be thrown overboard. So can we call that courage? When someone does what looks to be a very heroic act but they do because if they don't do they're going to suffer anyway so they may as well do as they are asked is that a virtue? This looks like courage and in fact, in some ways it is. There was story in the newspaper today of a pilot in the United States, with 185 passengers on a jet, when he took off, his jet hit a flock of geese and both engines burst, but that pilot never lost his cool. He was a former American air force pilot, with 40 years experience. He kept his cool. There was no petrol, no time to return to the airport. He had to land and he landed that jet safely on the Hudson river in New York. That was unbelievable. He barely crossed over one of the New York bridges, only 900 feet above the bridge, landed the jet safely on the water, got all the passengers off, got them perched on the wing of the plane which kept afloat long enough for the ferries to come and take the people away and not a single person was harmed. Now, that is courage! There courage implies many, many things: it implies a cool mind, it implies grace.
under pressure, it implies self sacrifice because he did not leave the plane, he walked the length of the plane twice even though it was sinking to make sure not a single person was left on the plane. He had the skill to land the plane, the intelligence to see the situation properly and be able to find the place where he could land. He had the experience, he had the personal integrity to put the safety of his passengers before his own safety. Now this struck me deeply because it was a wonderful act of courage. But one has to realise his action implied many, many qualities. So we can’t assign the quality of courage or *virya* just to one quality. It is many, many things. Courage is not stupidity: fools rush in where angels fear to tread. People who have no brains, you just have to point them in the right direction with a spear and say go there and stab whoever in front of you. And they may face a hundred people, with one spear. But that is not courage that is stupidity. So the virtue of courage is a very marvelous, intricate virtue interwoven with so many other virtues: intelligence, has to be there. In the Sattvic sense. I would say the pilot exhibited a Sattvic courage because so many virtues are there. At the Rajasic level, maybe he would have landed the plane, but he made sure he got out of the plane himself. Now Rajasic is able to do something to an extent but in the end he is not likely to sacrifice himself for somebody else. The Sattwic man is likely to take his responsibilities as a pilot serious enough to go back into the plane three times and walk the whole length. That’s the secret, to see there is nobody else left. The Rajasic courage would not do that. And the Tamasic courage would not have been able to land the plane, because there wouldn’t be the skill or the intelligence or the experience or the foresight. So I think this idea of seeing courage at these different levels is important. The level of the evolution of the being. The courage in a lion is different than the courage in a Tamasic man, that the courage of a little wild cat protecting its babies is a different kind of courage than the courage of a mother who is protecting her children. And the courage of a father who is protecting his family. These are different types of courage and many of these types of courage spring out of genetics. Can we call them courage - its almost instinctive for an animal to protect her young. Its almost instinctive for a father to protect his family, but is it instinctive for a pilot to protect his passengers? So you see, he’s risen above that instinct... so some of these qualities we see as courage perhaps they are courage but at even a lower level, even a lower level, more instinctive, more unconscious, more sub conscious, more linked to survival. The mother protects her children because her genes are in her children. And if her children died her whole genetic line will die. So that still is part of the animal nature. And people who perform acts of courage out of fear, well, we could say, perhaps the fear the pilot felt was the fear to die, but apparently according
to the passengers he was cool and collected the whole time because he was able to control the fear or master the fear. Or perhaps he acted out of the survival urge also, but even if there was some motivation there, still the overall picture is a marvellous study in courage. Modern courage.

We never really know how courageous we are till we get into a crisis. Because we can talk about courage we can talk about virtue, we can philosophise about virtue, we can write papers on virtue, we can have seminars on virtue. On the relationship between virtue and courage and the value of courage and society and so many values. But the test of the pudding is in the eating. So can we exhibit virtue when we live in solitude. Now this is a question that the ancients of India often contemplated. Is there such a thing as virtue when one is living alone in the mountains. Is virtue and virya only relevant in a social setting or is there such a thing as a personal virtue, a personal courage. And when one thinks about these things one would say one has to think about that aspect also. We can see virtue as Tamasic, Rajasic, Sattvic. We can also see virya, courage as personal and as a cultural phenomena. Then we have to ask what value, what relevance does it have? Especially in modern times. Now in the old days every day one had to exhibit courage. When one was fighting for survival. So many acts of courage have to be there. We can use the example of the way people used to fight wars and the way they fight wars now. In the Mahabharata times one had to be a tremendous hero. One had to adhere to virtue also because there were rules of warfare. There was the virtue associated with the warrior. The warrior was not free to go off and kill people any way he wanted. He had to follow rules. The same way that one plays a chess game. One has to follow rules. And this is very clear from a study of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the various scriptures that have come down to us in the Puranas from ancient times of India. There were rules of warfare. Those were the virtues of the warrior. And without those virtues there was no heroism. One could not be heroic simply by going out and killing somebody while fighting the war. The war had to be conducted according to certain rules and those rules were the virtues of the warrior. For example when two men were fighting, a man on an elephant could only fight another man on an elephant. He could not fight a foot soldier. He could not kill a foot soldier. An archer had to fight an archer. A king had to fight a king. He could not go out and fight the foot soldiers. The kings engaged each other. They did not go out and fight the lower levels. There was a very very strong code of conduct. Now code of conduct is another word for virtue. So the warrior had a strong code of conduct he had to follow. And within that code of conduct we associate courage with warriors, associate virya with heroics. Virya means heroic. So the word hero implied that one also followed that code of
conduct. If one did not follow that code one was not a hero. Just the ability to jump out into the middle of battle meant nothing, or just the skill in archery meant nothing. So skill meant nothing. Experience meant nothing. Age meant nothing. Status meant nothing. When it came to true heroism. A true hero was one who had all of that plus followed a code of conduct. And he who did not follow the code of conduct was not considered heroic. So this is why in Hindu warfare one could never kill an opponent by stabbing him in the back or poisoning him or a hundred people ganging up on one person. It had to be man to man and it was a real test of skill. Who was the better swordsman, who was the better wielder of the mace, who was the better wrestler, who was the superior in skill, strength and endurance and experience, and intelligence. So there were qualities that were inherent, embedded in the whole idea of virya. We have so many examples of people that ran away from battle and one of the great interesting things in the *Mahabharata* was that it was won by trickery. Krishna won the war not by straightforwardness, not by following the rules, but by circumventing the rules. And this was why it is said that the world degenerated from Dwapara Yuga to Kali Yuga after the death of Krishna because in Kali Yuga the code of conduct of warfare went one way and the virtues went the other. So heroes were no longer necessarily ones who followed the rules of warfare. Or who won according to the rules or who played the game according to the rules. That battle was said to have taken place about five thousand years ago. It is interesting to see it in a historical context because this is why many people cannot revere Krishna even today, because they say he did not play fair. He did not go by the rules, therefore he was not a hero. He was not a virya. He won through trickery. So courage implies following the rules as well. Not going against norms. Things become very complex, don’t they? But the ancient warfare was like that. Now we come to modern warfare. We’ll skip past all the intervening bits so we come to modern age where the men who piloted the aircraft that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima ended World War II. They were thousands of feet up in the air, they never saw the opponents and all they had to do was push a button. We find most modern warfare like that. We just have to pull the trigger. There has to be some skill, especially for the combat soldiers. There has to be some sense of sacrifice in one’s life. There has to some of that especially like in Iraq and some of the men who’ve gone into these areas of guerrilla warfare and so forth. But so much depends on whether you can pull the trigger, whether you are able to kill another human and you do not even have to stab them. Usually you don’t have to kill in full contact. You just have to pull the trigger from a distance throw a grenade, detonate a bomb. There is no human contact. So all the qualities and all the skills, and the expertise the intelligence, associated with virtue and heroism are split
now. We read in the paper people holding an AK assault rifle go in to MacDonald’s and mow down 50 people. This is madness, this is demonic the power is there, but there is no virtue to restrain. So virtue basically means restraint. We have to associate virtue with virya. We have to also understand a truly heroic personality is one which is capable of restraint. And courage implies restraint by association. Courage implies restraint of the primordial emotions such as fear. Because as soon as fear rises, then we are either going to fight or flee. Sometimes courage is simply not doing either, its just standing and watching the situation as it unfolds; having the intelligence to do the right thing at the precise moment; rather than blindly reaching out and fighting, or blindly escaping. So virya, virtue, in our modern day context is almost divorced of its inherent essential meaning. Courage and Virtue are essentially one and the same thing. But now we find that people; ok he’s a hero on the athletic field, but he may be a real bummer off the field. Or he’s a hero, he’s a heroic soldier, but he may be a real bummer you know to his family or maybe he is very good at fighting in the context of the war zone, but when it comes to day to day life he’s a zero. The hero becomes a zero and the zero becomes a hero. Now that’s what happens when there is no virtue. When there is no restraint. When that idea of heroism gets divorced from the daily life, from the restraint that is necessary to live daily life in a dignified way.

(PART-2)

We have spoken of virtue as being associated with Virya since time immemorial and how virtue changes, courage changes according to the level of the Being. So now we want to talk about virtue and courage in Sadhana, personal Sadhana, and what kind of courage is necessary to integrate that into actions in a society so we can say interpersonal virtue (courage) and intrapersonal virtue and courage. That is, the courage within ourselves and the virtue or courage that must be exhibited between ourselves and other beings whether they are humans or animals or plants or even the earth itself - the living earth as a person.

Swadhyaya is a very key Niyama. A very key aspect of Ashtanga yoga of self-evolution or conscious evolution. Unfoldment of spirit. Swadhyaya, meaning study of the self by the self. Now one might think this is very easy; many people will say, well, I know myself. It’s a common phrase: I know myself, I know what I will do I know what I feel. But do people really know themselves? Now Swadhyaya implies that we know ourselves from top to bottom and inside out. Not superficially. Not through an image that has been thrown back to us by our parents, an image or reflection that has been thrown back to us by society, or an image that has been
thrown back to us from outside. But knowing ourselves deeply from inside. Which means going right back to our primordial slime. We have to go right back to our link with the amoeba, literally, which in our bodies is represented by the cell. We have to go right back to a cellular level and know ourselves at a cellular level. We have to know ourselves from that subconscious primordial slime, dirty murky stuff, biting, kicking, gorging, eaten, eating. You have to know all that and then come up into the higher levels, of our animal, subhuman existence. Then we have to know ourselves from the present incarnation, our social conditioning, our family conditioning, our educational conditioning, our national conditioning, - and then we have to try to cultivate an understand of who we really are. Now this Swadhyaya thus becomes a very deep study. How are we going to get into the subconscious? Subconscious implies that we are not consciousness, it is below conscious of it. If we are not conscious of something how are we going to become conscious of it. Isn't that the crux. If we are not aware of something how can we become aware if we are not even aware of it. That is the old Zen paradox - how can a mouth eat itself. If we are not conscious that we are a coward how can we know we are a coward. We might think we're brave because maybe we were very good at sports and everybody used to say, 'you're so brave'. Or maybe we dropped out of aero planes with parachutes or did bungee jumping. We think we're very courageous and maybe we're not really so brave at the heart of it all. So how are we going to uncover that unconscious layer? When we talk about Swadhyaya we have to talk about Guru, the idea of Guru. Because the Guru implies light. Light that is shone on the dark aspects of our nature. It doesn't have to be a person. Guru, can be a situation, Guru can be the environment, Guru can be a book, Guru can be ones enemy, Guru can be anything that shows light on a subconscious aspect of our nature. This is the Guru Spirit. Now to see the gunk and the murk and the garbage in our nature, requires tremendous courage. None of us would like to go and forage in a garbage dump. What if someone told us that in that huge stinky garbage dump filled with rotting bodies and rotten food and rotten plastic and human excreta and everything else, there is a diamond. How many of us would have the courage to go digging for that. This is what we have to do when we want to discover our true nature. We have to go through layers and layers of slime. We have to call upon tremendous courage to go through all the millions of incarnations we’ve had. And that has to be brought to light. Now sometimes we are fortunate enough to meet a person in our life, who is more conscious than we are. Their field of consciousness is larger than ours. So therefore they can expand our field. We call such a person our Guru in the Yoga tradition. But these types of people have existed in all cultures. There have been many cultural giants. We have many philosophical giants in the Western world and
other cultures who had somehow expanded their consciousness and who were able (we can equate consciousness with light) to shine that light on the sub-consciousness of others and enable others to expand their consciousness and see into the dark side. Now in every culture almost everybody will say he has a dark side - its talked about everywhere the shadow side, the dark side, the devil in us. The Christian theology talks about the devil in man. What is the devil? Swami Gitananda used to tell us the devil was simply the word lived spelled backwards. The devil is our past of which we are not aware, of which we are unconscious. Now Swadhyaya is the key term that pinpoints the need to know, to shine light on the dark murky aspects of our past. And come to grips with that, Now the past does not mean just in this lifetime , but all life times, all incarnations. To do that requires courage, because that past has a life of its own. In Sanskrit we give these past impressions a name - we call them Samskaras. The habit holes, the conditionings that we've developed through life-times. They want to live, they have their own power, they want to survive. Just because we say, my god, I'm selfish! Don't think that that selfishness is going to disappear. That selfishness wants to exist as though it is an entity in its own right. It has its own power. That anger has its own power. That greed has its own power, that envy has its own power, that sexual lust has its own power - all of these things have their own power. They want to prevail. So just because we see them doesn't mean that we are going to be able to rise above them or vanquish them. They are going to fight for survival. So that is why after we see them then we have to have that skill that is the key in this battle. We have to have the will to fight, we have to have the persistence to fight, we have to have the skill to fight, we have to have the intelligence to see the enemy, we have to know when to strike, when not to strike. How to go about it. Whether to directly confront or whether to come at them in indirect ways. Now that's where we need courage to fight that inner battle and vanquish our own past, to rise above it, to see it and lift ourselves out of it. To defeat those old primordial urges.

Anger had its survival value when we were animals, greed had its survival value. What is now a vice to us was actually a virtue for the animal. Anger propelled the animal. Anger allowed the animal to fight to survive. Greed enabled the animal to get enough to eat. Lust enabled the animal to propagate. Those urges that are now our enemies were actually allies in the fight for survival at the animal level. But when we come to the level of consciousness where we want to lift our awareness then we have to let go of those old things. But they don't want to let go of us. Because they've been around millions of years. That is where this idea of courage comes in. The will to fight the will to balance, the will to persist, the will to act.
Now we have to restrain them. Simply restraining them is not enough now. We have to rise above them we have to cultivate another level of existence. This takes terrific skill. It takes terrific strength, takes terrific ability because we are going to get knocked down time and time again and we have to get up again and we are going to get knocked down again. As the Chinese say, ‘You get knocked down 99 times, you get up a hundred times’.

So all this idea of Swadhyaya, facing all these old tendencies, Samskaras, Vasanas, and realizing, yes, they are a part of my nature which are covered with social niceties. We say Namaskar to each other, we bow to one another, we say please go through the door before me, you please have this first. But if we were ever put into a crisis situation, when we were trying to escape a sinking airplane, (to go back to the first metaphor I started off with) wouldn’t we be the first to elbow our way through the door? Or would we hold back and let others go first? That is the thing we have to know through Swadhyaya. How far have we been able to understand those survival urges that will sacrifice others just so that we can exist, or so that we can obtain what we want. Now in the modern world, of course, no body cares. Survival is also on so many levels now! I’m the richest, I’m the best, I beat the world record. I’ve got the biggest house. My wife is the most beautiful. My kid is in the best boarding school. It even comes into the spiritual world. I am calmer than anybody else, I have more peace than anybody else, I have attained higher states of evolution than anybody else. We see this survival urge, the ego’s necessity to survive, not only to survive but to dominate. This can become very, very subtle. And so we have become more subtle in our need to survive.

Understanding – that’s where it takes courage, to think I’m very spiritual I’m living in an ashram. I’m wearing orange, I have no survival urge left, if I died tomorrow if I died this instant I would go happily. Would we, would we? We can test it in daily actions. How do we react when someone steps on our ego. Even in a small way when they push themselves in front of us in a queue. What is our reaction? When someone says something unkind to us what is our reaction? What kind of violence is there? What kind of fight is there? Now this takes courage to see and the more subtle we become, the more subtle our vices become. So then we have to have the courage to face those subtle vices. This is why we find even in places like ashrams and monasteries where people should be perfect beings, we find the same old power struggles, we find the same old vices, we find gluttony, we find the secret vices, we find the attachments, we find the aversions, because that courage to face, oneself is not there, The will to face oneself, the skill. Now this is where the Guru is quite important, because the guru has to be watching, to say look, you have to see this. Whereas the person will say I can’t see that, I’m not like that I’m not
like that. He's like that. I am like this because of this. This is wrong in the structure, therefore I'm doing this but I would not do this if the structure were not like this. There are too many mosquitos in the ashram that is why I cannot sit quietly. All the excuses that are thrown up constantly. Now in order to face that, its like one has to be even more courageous because courage becomes very subtle, one has to become even more virtuous because the virtue becomes even more subtle. To face that its like when we come to the end because everything has got to disappear, because everything becomes very small. But to face that tiny little infinitesimal thing that is making us stick to lower levels and not allowing us to fly spiritually takes tremendous courage because that thing is very difficult to root out. So this Swadhyaya, this commitment to Swadhyaya, this openness, yes, I might be like that I have got to open my mind, that takes a terrific amount of courage. Especially when you are in situations where you see everybody around you is watching you and everybody around you knows this and that is why Swadhyaya can be practised only in an controlled spiritual environment in a monastery on in an ashram. Or in a family which is a spiritual family. Where the father and the mother realise the Swadhyaya process and they realise that each of them is like a Guru to the other, throwing light on the hidden character flaws. The children realise their parents are not there to put them down, to destroy them, but to love them and help them grow by showing them the light, throwing light on their faults, putting light on their feelings. So in a family structure, Swadhyaya is possible also. But this last step can only be taken in relationship with others who also are imbued with this idea of Swadhyaya. This commitment to knowing oneself down to the last drop of blood must be passionate.

To drink the cup of poison down to the last drop. The cup of poison meaning that thing that will destroy the ego for once and for all. Now that is heroic, that is virya, that is courage. We may find people who can climb mountains, but who cannot face the fact that they do not put the cap on the toothpaste. Or that they don't flush the toilet. When the wife points it out to them they fly into a rage. Yet they are able to climb a mountain. We may find people who can fast for months but they are not able to restrain their tongue if somebody attacks them. One really has to go into the entire character. I begin to wonder and my views may change as I grow older, but I think at least for some period until one totally roots out that poisonous root of egoism with all its implications one has to be in a relationship and better in an enlightened relationship where everybody is involved in the same process of Swadhyaya so they don't get angry with each other when their fault is pointed out or a correction is made and best of all when it is in relationship with someone who is more evolved than oneself who has the capacity to see one's faults
more clearly and with a greater subtlety. For instance, I would say in my own case, I was so privileged to live with Swamiji because what I would not consider a fault at all he would make me realise was actually a flaw of character that had to be uprooted, but it was very painful, because I would not consider that to be a fault. I'd say, O no, that is the way it is, the circumstances that made me do it and I've got to do. I can remember an instance when I came to Satsangha late by about a half hour. I'd gone to town on work. I had a flat tyre on my bicycle. Swamiji got very angry with me and he said you're late. I said what could I do, Swamiji, I had a flat tyre and Swamiji said, No, you created that flat tyre, because you didn't want to come to Satsangha. It was not important for you to be on time. You created circumstances. You could have made it. And I thought, this is madness, but as I grow older I see the truth because he forced me to get into this frame of mind where I realised I create circumstances with my mind. So I have to be very, very deeply aware of what is in my mind. My own hidden aversions, my own hidden attractions, my own hidden ego, my own hidden uncovered ignorance. My own clinging to life whether it be clinging to my body or clinging to my name or clinging to my accomplishments. And that awareness somehow is painful. Now, why should it be painful. This is a question I've asked myself. A hero is known by his capacity to endure pain, to suffer for an ideal, to suffer for something higher. Why should there be pain in seeing these things? It's an interesting idea and I think its back to nature because nature is telling if you can't go through this pain you don't deserve to go to anything higher. Because nature is protecting itself, because the Divine is protecting itself. And unless we have that capacity to endure pain, which is also a quality of courage, it is also a virtue, unless we have that capacity we will not be fit to walk into that higher place. So the pain is a way to weed out those who are not fit to proceed on the path. If we are not able to bear the pain of Swadhyaya, of this uncovering, then we are not heroic enough to enter into those higher states of consciousness. So this is the link between courage and Swadhyaya. Now, I'm linking that to a social structure because I really feel that Swadhyaya is almost impossible in isolation. Maybe if someone is very highly awakened, and say, living in the jungle, and was constantly self aware, he would find in relation to the environment and in relationship to the animals around him and to the challenges of the environment storms earthquakes, lack of food, he would be able to see his reactions that way so the environment, nature itself becomes a reflection. But I think for most people who are in the ordinary Sadhana that we really need personal interaction. But at some point that personal relationship has to be in a spiritual framework because in a worldly framework unless we are very highly evolved we are going to find ourselves attacked by ignorant people who see our virtue as a
vice. Or our virtue as a weakness. And that is a great problem many Sadhakas have. They're very kind, they are very loving, they are very aware but they are interacting with people who are dull in spirit, violent, fierce, and so when Sadhak shows this loving kindness the law of might interprets it as a weakness. As an animal will attack when it finds weakness, the lower mind will attack that person because it is interpreting that kindness as fear or else as weakness.