

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

(Satya Ki Khoj Mein)

RESPONSES TO A SEEKER'S QUESTIONS

BY

Anant Shri Swami Akhandanandji Saraswati

English Translation by:
Smt. Purnima L. Toolsidass

Original Hindi Transcription by:
Smt. Kunti D. Jalan

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BLESSINGS

The Bhulwaka family has, for generations, been enriched with श्रद्धा *shraddha* (faith), and devotion for *Sants* (realized souls). Like last year, a question-answer session was organized this year, as well. The recorded talks were transcribed by Shrimati Kunti Dharmachand Jalan, and are now presented as this book, for the benefit of the public.

The affection and zest of all the members of the Bhulwaka family is praiseworthy. May their *Shraddha*, good deeds, commitment to *Satya*, and love for the Almighty grow steadily.

Akhandanand Saraswati
November 1985.

INTRODUCTION

By

Smt. Sheela Bhuwalka.

A rare opportunity has once again come, today, for us to obtain the answers to our questions and fallacies. Maharajji used to give discourses till recently. It is his grace that he has now adopted the method of answering questions, to satisfy our thirst for knowledge and clarify our doubts. In my opinion, this will be very beneficial for us.

Regarding the question about the questions to be placed, the thought came to me, that we don't really need any questions to enable us to surrender to the the Guru or the Lord. It is enough to have a strong devotion, to enable us to say, "Come. Come into my heart. Open the gates of my heart. Stay, as the life of my life, as the feeling of my feelings. You are an artist; mould me!" It would be sufficient to say this, but since questions are to be placed, and the responsibility of placing the questions is placed on me, I searched the recesses of my mind and thoughts, and will place the questions I found.

Today, we have a rare opportunity. Yesterday, the book, 'Vivek Chudamani' came to my hand. In it, I read –

मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुष-संश्रयः ।

Manushyatvam mumukshutvam mahaapurusha-samshrayah.

There is no doubt that we are all 'manushya' (human beings). Moreover, न मानुषात् श्रेष्ठतरं हि किञ्चित् it is also said that no other species is more evolved than us. There is a book by Maharajji, 'Aap Sab Se Shreshtha Hain' (You are the most superior). Even though we are not conscious of it, this is a fact, and we must realize it. This is why it seems necessary to place questions. A desire for freedom exists in the heart of every individual. All of us want to experience total liberty and total contentment. We all want that no sorrow, regret, and elusion should ever come into our lives; and yet they come. We never know what we lose, as we go on life's journey; or when someone robs us of something which is precious. Our wealth is spent, and we are impoverished. We become unhappy. It is essential to take refuge with such a Mahapurush, to get rid of these sorrows and delusions.

Some days back, I was reading a book of Maharajji, called ‘Sadhana Aur Brahmanubhuti’ (Endeavor for spiritual progress and the experience of the Brahman). A question is raised therein – have all our desires been fulfilled, in the lives we have lived up to now? Then, why is a person born again and again? Maharajji has replied by saying that we have not yet obtained that fulfillment, which leads to total contentment. A person continues to be reborn, even though many ordinary desires are fulfilled.

Then I thought to myself, “Look! You have taken on so many forms in past births! You experienced so many different situations! You had so many relatives and friends and acquaintances! You left them all, one by one. The only one who remained with you is the Parabrahma Paramatma, whose essence is in us. He is the only one to walk with us.” So, we go out of tune in our external and internal lives. This lack of rhythm and harmony seeps into us.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa used to say, “Mother! My love for You is more than one hundred per cent, and that is why You do not allow me to become बेताल *be`taalaa* (betala means out of tune, and also a ghou). It is an achievement of mine. It is because of my total love for You, that You did not let me get out of tune with You.”

So, our human status does not contain only questions; it contains the principle of loving the Lord wholly. When we begin to love our Guru, the Ishwara, the Ishta (chosen deity) wholly, then He will continue to protect us, the way He protects us every minute of the day.

महापुरुष-संश्रयः *Mahaapurusha-samshrayah* – in the Gita, the Lord said that it is easy to obtain Him, but a Mahatma is exceedingly rare – तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ *tasyaam sulabhah paartha*. “I am found easily, but it is very hard to find a Mahatma.” Maharajji’s grace, however, is such that he comes here each year. We get with ease, that, which the Lord Shri Krishna calls दुर्लभः *‘durlabha’* (extremely rare). Maharajji descends from his own level to ours – this is his motherly love. When a mother bird teaches her young ones how to fly, she does not sit on a high branch and say, “Fly up to me, then I will take you along.” She comes down to them, and supports them with her wings, and teaches them how to fly. So, disciples like us have always received the support of Maharajji’s wings, and thus we embark upon the task of placing our queries and receiving answers.

I bow down again to Maharajji. It is vital for us to face our doubts and obtain answers, especially in present times. Unless we open up our hearts and minds, the explanations given by Maharajji will not permeate our अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* to the depths necessary for our lives to be changed. We always listen to him, but the changes are not as quick as is desirable. The reason for this is that we do not open ourselves fully. So, we need to develop an inclination for prayer. We need to be more aware of the need to pray, and that we become better able to absorb this grace. I will start today's questions with a prayer.

Gandhiji has said, "Prayer is the center of my life. I can miss a meal, but I can't give up praying." When I read this, I thought to myself: When prayer had such a great importance in the life of this great soul, that he considered his life to be molded by prayer, then we should know what prayer actually is. What is the way to pray? What chemistry does prayer contain which causes such developments in our lives, and unknowingly changes common clay into an idol? The person who prays does not even know when he changes, and how he develops inwardly. So, I submit this question about prayer at the fete of Maharajji, and pray for his guidance.

- Dharamsheela Bhuwalka.

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: 1 :

7. 11. 1984

Question: What is the meaning of prayer? Please explain the essence, and the effect of prayer.

Answer: प्रार्थना *Prarthanaa* (prayer) means प्रकृष्ट की अर्चना *prakrishtha ki archanaa* – to adore the highest. Prarthana is the effort you make, to obtain the highest and the best within your knowledge and understanding. It is to obtain that, which you long for with all your heart. It is an expression of your intense desire for what you crave, and giving it a shape in your mind. It is your earnest desire, expressed verbally, mentally, and physically, for that which you consider to be the highest truth, the loftiest Gnan (Knowledge), and the greatest bliss, to manifest in your life.

A prayer should contain four factors. The first factor is a conscious humility. You should have the realization that not all your intelligence, spirit and cleverness is capable of getting you that, which you consider to be the highest and the best. Prayer undertaken with this awareness makes a person feel humble before God, and then the power of the Lord – to whom you pray – enters into your prayer. As long as you depend upon your own ability and wisdom, the Gnan and shakti (power) of the Lord do not get a scope to be felt. This means that our vanities, and our depending on others, are obstacles in the Lord's essence manifesting in our lives. The Lord's essence is अविनाशी *avinaashee* (indestructible), स्वयंप्रकाश *svayamprakaasha* (self-illuminating), and supremely blissful. So, we should be conscious of our own inadequacy, because our ability and wisdom are insufficient for us to reach the Lord.

Secondly, we should know about the qualities of the object of our worship. We should be conscious of His pristine essence, and have faith in His dispassionate nature, gentleness, and virtues. We should have full faith that He is all-knowing; He knows what is in our heart. He is all-powerful, and can do anything and everything. He is compassionate; His heart is so tender that He cannot prevent Himself from fulfilling the desires He knows we have. Full faith in the Lord being omniscient, all-powerful, and completely benevolent, is necessary.

The third requisite in prayer is that we get immersed in the one to whom we pray. As we pray, we should gradually forget ourselves and remember the Lord only. Ultimately, not only our voice, but even our mind should become silent, rendering us unable to say anything at all. Our mental inclinations should be completely filled with the Lord.

Fourthly, we should be so totally engrossed in the Lord that no other thought or desire enters our mind. Nor should we feel that we are separate from the one to whom we pray. Thus, these four factors are essential in a prayer – an awareness of our inadequacy, a consciousness of the Lord’s power, total engrossment in our contemplation, and an absence of other thoughts like desire, satisfaction, philosophy, other impressions, etc.

The Vedas have many mantras of prayer. In fact, the Vedas are filled with prayers –

भद्रं नो अपि वातय मनः।

(ऋग्वेद १०.२०.१)

Bhadram no api vaatayah manah.

(Rig Veda 10.20.1)

“My Lord, fill my mind with all that is auspicious. I am trapped in the असत् *asat* (unreal). Please grant me the experience of Sat (the ultimate reality). My Lord, I am blundering in the darkness of ignorance; show me the light of Gnan. My Lord, I am filled with sorrows; please let me have a taste of elixir. My Lord, I am unable to see You; please grant that I see Your essence, which is Sat. Please manifest before me!”

Thus, when the fountain of prayer begins to flow in the heart, then a divine chemical is created. The words of the prayer push the fiber of our being, the flow of our blood, our spirit, and our strength, and awaken our actions. They contain immense power. When the inclination for prayer begins to flow, it washes away the murkiness in our heart, and throws it out, purifying our

mind. It brings forth our innate hidden purity. In other words, prayer reveals the purity within us, and turns us towards the Almighty, and helps us to meet Him.

Prarthana has immense power. So much so that it can even bring out the unsullied pristine thought – which is the ultimate achievement of the ultimate reality. So, those who fail to understand the power of prayer, and deprive themselves of it, only harm themselves. The extent of the power of prayer is such that the Satya (ultimate reality), Gnan, and Anand – which is your essence – can manifest through prayer. So can the wholeness and indivisibility of your essence. Prayer is one of the main causes of expansion and elevation in your life, of the spurt of power in your life, and the joyous gushing forth of wisdom in your life. This is why the presence of prayer in our life is eminently desirable.

Question: I have another question in the same context. The Vedas contain many auspicious prayers, like अग्ने नय सुपथा राये (ईशोप० १८) ‘*Agne`naya supathaa raaye`*’ (Isha Upanishad 18); तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् (ऋग्वेद ३.६२.२०) ‘*Tamaso maa jyotirgamaya; dhiyo yonah prachodayaat*’ (Rig Veda 3. 62. 20); या तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु (ईशोप० १५) ‘*Yaa tattvam pooshannapaavrinu*’ (Isha Upanishad 15). Is there any difference between these Vedic prayers and the bhakti dominated prayers to the essence (the Brahman), which is free of Gunas (the tendencies of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), or desire? Please clarify this for us.

Answer: The word ‘agni’ in Sanskrit means the Paramatma. अग्ने नयति ‘*Agne`nayati`*’ – that, which takes us forward, is agni. The first word of the first mantra of the Rig Veda is ‘agni’. Shayan Acharya has analyzed the word agni, and given eight or ten interpretations – उत्तिष्ठध्वं जागृध्वम्। अग्नि इच्छध्वं भारताः *uttishthadhvam jaagridhvam. Agni ichchadhvam bhaaratatah`* – O intelligent people! Get up! Awaken, and invite agni into your lives, so that you can progress step by step.

अग्निमीले पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम्।

होतारं रत्नधातमम्॥

(ऋग्वेद १.१.१)

Agnimeele` purohitam yagnasya de`vamritvajam,

Hotaaram ratnadhaatamam.

(Rig Veda 1. 1. 1)

Agni is established in the first portion of the Yagya Shala (where the ritual of fire worship is undertaken). Brightness is invoked into our lives, to dispel darkness, and the quality of burning is awoken, so that our sins are burnt to ashes. We should progress steadily towards expansion.

तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये।

(ईशोप० १५)

Tattvam pooshanna paavrinu satyadharmaya drishtaye`.

(Isha Upanishad 15)

“O Surya Devta, who nourishes us, please shatter the coverings and veils (of ignorance and darkness) in our lives. Please remove them, so that we can attain the ability to experience the सत्य वस्तु *Satya vastu* (the ultimate reality).”

These prayers can be considered a component of bhakti (devotion with reverence) because bhakti contains a heartfelt thirst; as long as there is a prayer. However, when the thirst is quenched, then there are no words left to utter, and all urges cease. Bhakti is रसात्मक *rasaatmak* (filled with pleasurable emotion). It contains the expression of happiness, an inner contentment, and a taste of the Ishtadev (the chosen form of worship) to an extent where the person forgets himself and is immersed in the depths of emotion. So, do not limit bhakti to prayer. Bhakti is a Godly inclination. The Lord is the essence of रस *rasa* (sweetness), and -

सा परानुरिक्तः ईश्वरे।

(शाण्डिल्यभक्ति सूत्र १.१.२)

Saa paraanurakti eeshvare`.

(Shandilya Bhakti Sutra 1. 1. 2)

Bhakti means the highest level of pure love for the Paramatma. Two options are placed before your mind. One is the inanimate toys and games, and the other is the Sachidananda Paramatma (the ultimate Reality, Consciousness and Bliss which is the Almighty). Bhakti carries you away from the inanimate toys, and helps you to reach the Lord. Bhakti is the link which attaches the Jeeva (soul connected to a body) to the Ishwara. Just as a person sits on a swing and is carried backwards and forward, high and low, Bhakti carries a person up to the Lord – वज्रनाथ झुलाओ सारी रैन ‘*vrajanaatha jhulaao saaree rain.*’ At times, bhakti carries us up to Him, and then carries us down again, away from Him. At times it gives the sweet joy of uniting with Him,

and at times it gives the sweet pain of being parted from Him. This sweet joy and sweet pain of unity and separation continue to expand and grow, and there is no more need to pray.

It is observed that as far as the obtaining of the experience of the Paramatma is concerned, bhakti is the best method.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

(गीता १८.५५)

*Bhaktyaa maamabhijaanaati yaavaanyashchaasmi tatvatah,
Tato maam tattvato gnaatvaa vishate` tadanantaram.*

(Gita 18, 55)

Bhakti enables us to know how great the Lord is, and what He is. When we come to know His essence, then the Atma no longer remains separate from the Paramatma. Bhakti has many facets, and prarthna is one of them.

Question: Prem (pure love), shraddha (faith), and bhakti normally come under the same basic kind of feeling. How can this basic feeling be elevated to परा-भक्ति *paraa-bhakti* (supreme devotion)? Please throw some light on this.

Answer: Shraddha is directed towards someone who is important, and greater than ourselves. विश्वास *Vishvaasa* (trust) is a basic factor in our interaction. One has to trust the servant, the barber, the cook, the driver, and the doctor. That means, trust is a practical and inevitable part of interaction. Shraddha, however, can only be for someone who is greater, someone we consider to be important, and someone whose experience, knowledge, state, unchanging equanimity, and impartiality we can depend upon. श्रद्धिति सत्यनाम (निरुक्त ९.३१ दुर्गा टीका) ‘*Shraditi satyanaama*’ (*Nirukta 9. 31, Durga’s commentary*). The word shraddha has been analyzed by Nirukta, as the word ‘shrat’ having its origin in ‘satya’. Our Acharyas (Masters) say – श्रद्धिति आस्तिकतायाः अभिधानम् *shraditi aastikataayaah abhidhaanam* – ‘shrat’ means ‘aastiktaa’ – a belief in God. Faith in the Almighty is called ‘shrat’, and its presence in our lives is called ‘shraddha’.

Raga (attachment) has many facets. I will describe preeti (affection) first. ‘Where is your preeti?’ means, ‘where is your tripti (satisfaction)?’ Which is the object that causes your heart to dance, as soon as you see it? The peacock dances at the sight of the rain clouds. Is there anything which fills

your heart with joy as soon as you see, or think of it? Is there something which causes your very being to thrill with happiness at its very sight or memory? If there is, then you are in love with that object; it is that, which you love.

Now, observe the changes this brings into your life. What developments does it cause in your life? When you have shraddha and affection for someone, it is bound to change your life in some way. It is like the chemical changes which take place in our body when we take some medicine and are cured of our disease, and become healthy once more. However, it is one thing to be cured of a disease, and another thing to enjoy good health! Similarly, when love for the Ishwara enters our heart, it causes certain changes in our life. A rasa is created in the sensitive fibers of our body. A special factor enters our blood, and our feelings undergo some changes. All these cause us to develop.

स्नेह *Sne`ha* (tender affection mixed with attachment) comes next. Sneha is a भाव *bhaava* (strong emotion), and is formless. It is formless in itself, but it gives a form to the object of your sneha. So much so, that it induces the Lord to come to us. The formless Brahman – who is inseparable from space, time, or matter – is reflected in our sneha, and manifests before us. It is like the reflection of a mountain in a mirror! The great Paramatma is reflected in our emotion, and we begin to get a darshan (glimpse of someone we revere) of Him. When love for the Lord develops in our hearts, by the stages of preeti, pranay, and sneha, then it removes our tendency to see faults. A gentleman met me yesterday. His साधुता *saadhutaa* (saintliness) was that he saw faults in people, and told people what faults they had! His focus was on others, not on his own sadhuta. He would always think about what others should be like, how selfish someone was, and how self-centered someone else was. Now, is this a saintly tendency?

Preeti never loses its quality of affection. It does not reduce when faults are seen, or increase at the sight of good qualities. It neither waxes nor wanes when the loved one is far away; or when there is delay in meeting the Beloved. It does not reduce even if the loved one shows a preference for someone else. Preeti never reduces; the strength of affection does not reduce. Preeti bestows fearlessness, not fear. And, when preeti becomes total and unbroken, then our life also becomes whole. A total and complete love is necessary for bringing a complete godliness into our lives. A whole hearted

love (for the Lord) is essential to make our lives godly. Through shraddha, preeti, pranay, sneha, bhava, vibhava (a physical or mental condition), raga or anuraga (passion), our love reaches a level of completeness. So, preeti should not be considered to be the ordinary (worldly) affection. Just as there is only the awareness of the सत्ता *sattaa* (ultimate reality) in Samadhi, and only pure consciousness in तत्त्वज्ञान *tattvagan* (knowledge of the essence of the Brahman), there is only bliss in preeti. And from the angle of Anand, this completeness is the ultimate level of preeti and bhakti.

Question: This mantra from the Katha Upanishad –
नायम् आत्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न अहुना श्रुतेन।

(१.२.२३)

*Naayam aatmaa pravachane`na labhyo na me`dhayaa na bahunaa
shrute`na.*

(1.2. 23)

states that the experience of the Atma – or our essence – can be achieved only by Grace.

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तत्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तन्नू स्वाम्।

(कठो० वही)

*Yame`vaisha vrinute` te`na labhyastatyaisha aatmaa vivrinute` tanoom
svaam.*

(Katha Upanishad
Bahi.)

This gives the indication that it is not possible to experience our essence without the Grace of the Lord. I ask Shri Maharajji to tell us what effort there should be on our part, to obtain this Grace.

Answer: The first point is that there is some difference of opinion between Acharyas regarding this mantra. Shri Shankaracharya says –

एष साधकः यमेव स्वात्मानं वृणुते,
तेन आत्मना वरित्रा स्वयमात्मा लभ्यः।
तस्य एष आत्मा विवृणुते स्वां तनूम्॥

*E`sha saadhakah yame`va svaatmaanam vrinute`,
Te`na aatmanaa varittraa svayamaatmaa labhyah,
Tasya e`sha aatmaa vivrinute` svaam tanoom.*

When a sadhaka (seeker of God) chooses the Lord, with an intense desire, and is fully drawn to Him, and is desperate to attain Him, then it is a total acceptance of the Lord (as his goal). This enables a spiritual seeker to attain the Lord. The Lord is the sadhak's Atma. The curtain of ignorance (which hides this fact) is removed – तस्य एष आत्मा विवृणुते तन्नू स्वाम् *tasya e`sha aatmaa vivrinute` tanoom svaam*. The Lord reveals His essence to the sadhaka. Actually, the belief of the sadhak – that he was राधेय *raadhye`ya* (son of Radha) was his own false impression. The fact is that he was कौन्तेय *kaunte`ya* (son of Kunti) all along. Once the false belief of being Radheya was dispelled, he did not have to do anything to become Kaunteya. So, the fact is that the Paramatma is not concealed in any way. When we put in an effort to obtain Him, it seems as though He is hidden. When we no longer have the feeling of 'doing' or 'getting', we find that He is already before us. 'Vivrit' means exposure. The Paramatma seen plainly, without any covering or curtain.

Shri Ramanujacharya gives the following interpretation of this mantra –

एष परमात्मा यमेव चेतनम् साधकं वृणुते तेन लभ्यः ।

E`sha paramaatmaa yame`va che`tanam saadhakam vrinute` te`na labhyah.

'He, who is chosen by the Paramatma, is the one who attains Him.' That means, that when the Paramatma likes some Jeeva, then He thinks to Himself, 'Let this person attain Me.' Then the Paramatma comes to that person. The mantra which follows is as it is.

A third method is given by the Acharyas of the people. They explain the mantra thus –

एष आचार्यः यमेव शिष्यं वृणुते तेन शिष्येन लभ्यः ।

E`sha aachaaryah yame`va shishyam vrinute` te`na shishye`na labhyah.

'The disciple accepted by the Acharya (Guru) attains the Paramatma.' The Guru has this blessing, this gift, from the Lord, that any disciple accepted by him will attain the Lord. Thus, three kinds of explanations for this mantra are accepted generally.

The basic point is that if the Paramatma is attained by the Lord's Grace, then this Grace should be bestowed on everybody, because we all belong to the Lord; we are all made from His essence; we are all a part of Him. Now, when everything is a whimsical reflection of the Lord, then how can He make an unbiased selection about who He should meet? Who should He shower Grace upon, and who should be left without being Graced? The

Paramatma has no enemies who He would deprive of His Grace. Nor does He show partiality for anyone.

To resolve this, our Shastras (scriptures) have made an arrangement to establish that the Paramatma does not favor anybody; He is not cruel; and He is not hard hearted towards anyone. The person who longs for the Lord with all his heart, is inclined towards Him, and has a lifestyle which will please Him, is able to understand and accept His Grace. On the other hand, when a person turns the pot of his heart upside down, the drops of Grace will certainly be showered, but cannot be accepted, just as raindrops cannot enter an upturned pot, even if it is soaked in the rain. Grace does not help a person who is turned away from the Paramatma. Those who are turned towards the Lord understand, and receive the Grace; but those who are turned away from Him neither understand, nor accept His Grace. So, अनुकूल-प्रतिकूलाभ्याम् व्यवस्था '*anukoola-pratikoolaabhyaam vyavasthaa* – ensures that the Lord's Grace manifests for the person whose life contains the good qualities of the Lord, and has a universal benevolent outlook like His. People who are turned away from Him do not even recognize the Grace when it comes into their lives. You know that the owl does not know when the sun rises, comes overhead, and sets. He can see only at night.

The world is the same, but the अज्ञानी *agnani* (ignorant) sees it as the world, while the Gnani sees it as the essence of the Parabrahma Paramatma. There is no difference in the world seen by both; it is the same world. या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी (गीता० २.६९) '*Yaa nishaa sarvabhootaanaam tasyaam jaagarti sanyamee*' (Gita 2. 69). So, although Grace is showered upon all, the ones who realize its presence are those whose lifestyles are in keeping with the Lord's strictures, pray to Him, and long for Him. Those who are turned away from Him and are adverse to Him, are unable to see the Grace as Grace! You will notice that if a person you are fond of shakes his fist at you, you will consider it to be a sign of affection. Yet, if your enemy does that, you will take it as an insult.

So, it depends upon our mental state, whether we see an incident as a Grace, or as lack of Grace.

The fact is that the Lord is merciful. His form is filled with Grace. All that comes from Him, is done by Him, viewed by Him, and known by Him, is nothing but Grace. This Jeeva is deprived of Satsang (association with Sat),

and turned away from the Ishwara. Yet he wants the Lord to arrange matters to his liking. He wants the Ishwara to be a slave who fulfills his desires. He fails to see the Lord's Grace whenever the Lord decides to what He wants!

We knew a Mahatma who used to say, "When things happen the way I want, I have some doubt whether it happened because the Ishwara wanted it, or because I wanted it. However, one thing is certain. When something happens which is not what I wanted, then I know for sure that it happened because the Ishwara wanted it. So, the fulfillment of my Beloved's wishes must be a cause of greater happiness than the fulfillment of my own wishes. We should think, 'So what if my desire was not fulfilled? The desire of my dearest one is fulfilled!' Thus, it is an experience of Grace, to feel glad that our Beloved's desire has been fulfilled even though our desire wasn't. The important thing is to recognize the presence of Grace in our lives."

Question: Our scriptures give many different references regarding *satya* (truth). For example, नाभावो विद्यते सतः (गीता २.१६) '*Naabhaavo vidyate` satah`*' (*Gita 2. 16*), सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते (गीता १७.२६) '*sadbhaave` saadhubhaave` cha saditye`tatprayujyate`*' (*Gita 17. 26*), सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं (तै० उप० २.१.१.) '*satyam gnaanam anantam`*' (*Taittiriya Upanishad 2. 1. 1*). Do these throw light on different aspects of *satya*? Kindly explain.

Answer: Different people have given different meanings to 'satya', according to their respective Sects. A person feels thirsty, drinks water, and the thirst is quenched. Now, the water that quenches the thirst is *satya*. That is called अर्थ-क्रिया-कारित्व '*artha-kriyaa-kaaritva`* – *satya* is that, by which our purpose is achieved, our need is met. However, the Mahatmas do not accept this definition, because a person's purpose is, at times, achieved through असत्य *asatya* (falsehood).

There is another way in which *satya* is defined. *Satya* is that, which exists in both the cause and the effect; it exists before the creation of the world, and also after its dissolution. *Satya* is that, which is unaffected by the cause and destruction of the world.

The Vedantis have given a very short definition of *satya* – अबाधित्व *abaadhitva* – that, which can't be proved as false or unreal; which is not established as false in any action, speech, emotion, or condition, is *satya*.

Which means that satya is that, which no circumstances can disprove or negate – अबाधितत्वं सत्यत्वं ‘*abaadhitatvam satyatvam*’. Some people call it त्रिकालाबाधितत्वं ‘*trikaalaabaadhitatvam*’, and some call it अबाधितत्वं ‘*abaadhitatvam*’. The purport is – that, which is beyond the range of experience, and cannot be negated, is called ‘satya’.

Is it possible for you to experience an absence of your existence? Can you have the experience that you are a stone? Can you experience abhorrence for yourself? You cannot! The person who experiences, ‘I do not exist’, exists. The person who experiences, ‘I am a stone’, is the essence of Gnan, since he knows that he is a stone. He knows, means he has the knowledge. A person is separate from unhappiness, when he thinks, ‘I am unhappy’. You can never consider yourself as not being dear to yourself.

Thus, we see that our सत्ता *sattaa* (reality, existence, authority) cannot be negated. Our Gnan cannot be negated. And, our love for our Self cannot be destroyed. Our Atma is the essence of Sacchidananda (sat=reality; Chid=knowledge; Anand=bliss). You can say, “It does not exist”, or you can say, “this does not exist”. However, you can never say, “I do not exist.” So, the authentic satya is that which can never be negated, which can never be established as false or unreal, and which cannot give up its own established essence. Hence, bring the stability of satya into your interaction. If a person shifts his stand ten times a day, which statement of his will people believe? All of them will be dismissed as falsehoods. Won’t he be called a liar, if he makes ten commitments and breaks them all?

Satya neither comes from somewhere, nor does it go anywhere. Satya is unchanging. It does not increase. It has no beginning. The satya which is free from change, expansion, or beginning, always remains unchanged. And, when the person who experiences satya and is separated from it, then it is clear that the satya he experienced was not the authentic satya. When the real satya is experienced, then the person who has the experience no longer remains separate from the satya he has experienced. Because, the only cause of their separation was the darkness of ignorance. So, the quality of totality and wholeness is called ‘satya’.

Question: Does the सङ्ग ‘*sang*’ (association) in ‘Satsang’ (association with sat) denote attachment, or is it indicative of detachment? If attachment is indicated, then can Satsang bestow a condition which is बीतराग *veetaraaga*

(beyond attachment and aversion)? Similarly, does the word रत 'rata' (involved) in सर्वभूतहिते रताः (गीता ५.२५) 'sarvabhootahite` rataah' (Gita 5. 25) - involved in the good of all beings – indicate प्रवृत्ति pravritti (activity), or does it indicate निवृत्ति nivritti (withdrawal from activities)? Please throw some light on these two words.

Answer: In Hindi, the word 'sang' means company or togetherness; and Satsang means being attached to a Sant (realized soul). आसक्ति 'Aasakti' (attachment) means प्रीति preeti (love). The Gita has a number of definitions of the word 'sat' – I don't know if it gives so many definitions of any other word – but it is a veritable dictionary of the word 'sat'.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।
 प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छन्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥
 यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
 कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥

(गीता १७.२६-२७)

*Sadbhaave` saadhubhaave` cha saditye`tatprayujyate` ,
 Prashaste` karmani tathaa sachchandah paartha yujyate` .
 Yagne` tapasi daane` cha sthithi saditi chochyate` ,
 Karma chaiva tadartheeyam saditye`vaabhidheeyate` .
 (Gita 17. 26,27)*

See how many meanings of 'sat' are given here – सद्भाव *sadbhaava* (goodwill), साधुभाव *saadhubhaava* (benevolence), प्रशस्त *prashasta* (auspicious), कर्म *karma* (action), यज्ञ *yajya* (sacrificial offering), दान *daana* (giving alms), तप *tapa* (asceticism); and even the effort for any of these, is called 'sat'. Perhaps there is no other word in the Gita, for which so many meanings are given.

One meaning of Satsang is to be fully established in the Atma – which is the essence of sat. Another meaning is the goodwill or benevolence for others, in our heart; to be established in the desire to do good. Keep the company of good people, and continue to do yajya, daana, and tapa. Make an effort for doing these. They are called sat; and then the association of those who can help you to attain these is called Satsang.

So, सतां सङ्गो हि भेषजम् ‘*sataam sango hi bhe`shajam*’ – one man told someone to have treacle. Then he said, “No, don’t have treacle. Have a medicated capsule which contains treacle.” Another man said, “To have treacle is eating; so is having a capsule of treacle. Take whichever you prefer.” A third person said, “No. Treacle can cause diabetes, but the capsule can cure diabetes.”

So, there is one kind of company which increases your worldly attachments, and traps you; whereas Satsang is the association of Godly people who help you to become detached.

सतां सङ्गो हि भेषजम् सर्वसङ्गापहो हि माम्

(भागवत ११.१२.२)

Sataam sango hi bhe`shajam sarvasangaapaho hi maam.

(*Bhagwat 11. 12. 2*)

Satsang is the best medicine for destroying all worldly attachments. Satsang also means भगवत्-सङ्ग *bhagawatsang* (being with Bhagwan), and भगवदासक्ति *bhagvadaasakti* (attachment for Bhagwan), and attachment for the saints who can bestow attachment for the Lord. It also means attachment for the activities and scriptures which lead us towards the Lord. All these are included in Satsang.

It is a great Grace of the Lord, for us to be given a human body. We humans are the only creatures who form relationships, and endure hardships to maintain them. All the other species of animals and birds have no lasting relationships, even with their parents. They leave their parents as soon as they grow into adults. Even a cow has no relationship with her calf, once it is a year old. The parents and the offspring don’t even recognize each other later on. Even though it is believed that cows have a deep love for their offspring, so do dogs and birds. Still, it is only the human beings who maintain the relationships they form.

The question is, how can we add Satsang to our lives, in order to develop मुमुक्षा *mumukshaa* (a desire to be free of the cycle of rebirth)? Mumuksha does not mean only liberation; it means a strong wish to be free of all the worldly activities and considerations, and to obtain the Lord simultaneously. And, the factor which provides this, is taking refuge with the Mahapurusha (great souls) – Satsang! It is said that Vritrasura went to the extent of saying, “Lord, no matter how many times the world is destroyed and created, and no matter how many births I need to take, let me always have the association of

the good souls who are filled with goodwill, and have had great spiritual experiences.”

This means that we should keep the company of good people. Our society should consist of godly people. We should save ourselves from destroying our ability for right thinking, by not mixing with worldly or lowly people and coming under their influence. We should never partake anything which destroys our discrimination. We should never get caught in the wrong kind of activities. Our heart should never become barren. It is the treasure of all treasures, and we should always guard it well.

The Vedantis say that सर्वभूतहिते रताः ‘*sarvabhootahite` ratah`*’ means love for the ‘hita’ – that is, the Paramatma – who is निहित *nihita* (placed in the heart of all). This interpretation relates to the worship of the indivisible Brahman. Then, what is the meaning of रत ‘*rata`*’?

The satisfaction – which ordinary people get by eating a good meal, obtaining wealth, or copulation – should be obtained only from the Paramatma.

However, even if we put this interpretation aside, the रति ‘*rati`*’ here, is in the good of all beings – सर्वभूतहिता *sarvabhoota hita`*. What is the good of all beings? It is to inspire them to move from the false to the true; from darkness towards light; and from death towards immortality. This is not an attachment. This is a powerful motivation to obtain the Paramatma, who is the essence of all that is felicitious. Hence, सर्वभूतहिते रताः *sarvabhootahite` ratah`* is not an attachment. It is the nature of a Mahatma. It is his selfless compassion for all.

A person gets bound when he gets attached to only one person. However, the worldly attachments formed by people are cut away, when they develop goodwill for all, and attachment for the Paramatma who abides in all. If a glassful of water is sprinkled over a desert, it will vanish without a trace. So, also, a person’s attachment and affection (limited to one or a few) will vanish when he showers it on all. He will no longer be attached. He will become detached.

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8. 11. 1984

Question: Arjuna says, about the mind, चंचलं हि मनः कृष्ण (गीता ६.३४) 'Chanchalam hi manah krishna' (Gita 6. 34). The Rishis (sages) say, तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु (यजुर्वेद ३३.१) 'Tanme` manah shivasankalpamastu' (Yajur Veda 33. 1) (O my mind, decide that you are Shiva). मनके हारे हार है, मनके जीते जीत 'Man ke` hare` haara hai, man ke` jeete` jeeta', (defeat is when the mind loses heart, and victory is when the mind is victorious) is also a well-known adage. The mind is known to be the cause of bondage or liberation. I request Maharajji to please tell us what the mind is, and what s the way to control it, so that the mind loses interest in worldly matters.

Answer: In itself, the mind is a formless factor. It has no shape, no appearance, no length or breadth. It has neither age nor weight. It takes on the appearance of whatever it gets attached to. There are some sanskaras (subtle subconscious impressions) from the past, and some imagined impressions of the past, suture, and others. We also have some inclination to hold on to the present. Our mind gains power over us because of the importance we give to it. The fact is that no organ called the (emotional) mind has been proved by science or by any instrument, so far. Nor has anyone found this mind through तत्त्वज्ञान *tattvagnan* (knowledge of the essence of the Brahman). This mind is neither red, nor yellow, nor black, nor blue. Nor is it solid matter which can be weighed. The मन *mana* (mind) is another name for Gnan (knowledge).

It is essential to know that although the mind has no form of its own, it takes on the form of the object it imagines. If we wish to see the mind with form, we can see it in our dreams. The experience of the current state of our mind is glimpsed in the dreams we have. With regard to the mind, we must first use our बुद्धि *buddhi* (intellect) to decide what is सत्य *satya* (the true reality), and what is मिथ्या *mithyaa* (a relative truth); what is appropriate and what is improper; what should be inducted into our lives, and what should be given up; what our duty is, and what is contrary to our duty.

Secondly, we should observe our actions, and pay attention to what we do. If we are resolute about opting for the highest, and refuse to allow our mind to

control our actions, then the mind becomes such a paltry thing that it has no capacity to push or draw us into any worldly whirlpool. The mind is an instrument. Just as we tell our hand, 'Come, sit on my chest', and the hand rests upon the chest until we decide to move it, in the same way our mind should be obedient to our command. It should stay wherever we send it. So, this मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः (ब्रह्मविन्दु. २) '*mana e`va manushyaanaam kaaranam bandhamokshayo*' (*Brahmabindu 2*) mind is the cause of the bondage or the liberation of people. When we attach ourselves to our mind, then we are compelled to get attached to whichever object the mind is attached to. However, if we refuse to attach ourselves to our mind, then the mind is unable to attach itself to anything, either.

So, the mind is not an object of fear. Just as our Atma is dear, the mind is also dear. If you use the mind to imagine the पूर्ण तत्त्व *poorna tattva* (the essence of totality), then the mind will be the पूर्ण तत्त्व *poorna tattva*. And, if you use it to imagine the मुरलीमनोहर, श्यामसुन्दर पीताम्बरधारी '*murlimanohara shyamsundara peetaambaradhaari*' (the One who steals our hearts, holds a flute, is beautiful and blue-hued, and wears a golden yellow garment), then your mind will become Shyam Sundar (Shri Krishna). But – if you use your mind to imagine a damsel, or your friend and foe, or poverty and wealth – then your mind will appear as the object of your imagination. Look, you become a Nana (mother's father) when you see your dohitra (daughter's son). Is it not your mind which makes you feel that you are a Nana, at that moment? You see your pautra (son's son), and become a Dada (father's father). You become a father when you see your son, and a husband when you see your wife. Who makes you all these? Is it not you mind?

It is just like the changing forms in your dreams, when you see something, and then see something else, and the images shift constantly. Actually, the dreams reveal the truth about your mind. To tell the truth, a Yagya (fire worship_ done in a dream gives no पुण्य *punya* (spiritual merit). Nor do you incur पाप *paapa* (sin) if you slaughter a cow in your dream, because there is no कर्तृत्व *kartritva* (feeling of being the doer) while you dream. When it is in the dream state, the mind plays with the sanskaras and vasanas (conscious and unconscious desires). This is a play of the mind.

In the same way, give no importance to what comes into your mind, or goes out of it when you are awake. Pay attention to your physical actions, and bear in mind the decision your intellect has taken. If your intellect has taken

the right decision, and if it is firm and attached to the truth, and if your actions are in keeping with this decision – refusing to submit to the whims of your mind – then your mind is utterly worthless. It will not be able to take you to Hell or Heaven. Neither can your mind make anyone your enemy, nor can it make anyone your friend. Neither can your mind form an attachment to someone, nor cultivate a hatred for anyone. It is only when you act in accordance to its dictates that your intellect becomes subservient to your mind. The mind considered someone to be your enemy, and you started showing enmity to that person. This turned your life into a Hell.

And, your mind imagined someone to be your friend, and you accepted its decision, and showed friendliness. This was enough to catch you in the noose of your mind! You will begin to favor the person you are fond of, even going to the extent of doing wrong for his sake. And, you will show enmity towards the person you consider your enemy. Your heart will burn with hatred for him, thus creating a Hell of suffering for yourself.

The important thing therefore, is that we can choose and control our decisions and actions; but we can't choose or control the sankalpa (resolve) and vikalpa (doubts) which come into the mind. Since there is no kartritva in mere wishes and uncertainties, there is no अपेक्षा बुद्धि *ape`kshaa buddhi* (expectation) in it, and so it does not bear any fruit (of sin or merit). The mind cannot give its fruit if there is an absence of doer-ness and desire is not accepted as valid. The mind is restless, like a child, so let it play in its little playground. However, let your actions not go beyond the limits of decorum.

You have nothing to fear if you are resolute in the decision you have taken. It is impossible to keep track of all the thoughts that come into the mind and are forgotten. The mind changes its colors fifty times a day. It is written in the Upanishads, that there is one type of mind which is like a black sheep, another type of mind which is like the red worms which appear during the monsoon, and a third type which is like a white sheep. So, the white sheep are called 'sattvik' (lofty), the black sheep are 'tamas' (lowly), and the red worms are 'rajas' (restless and worldly). Everything is the frolic and drama of the mind. The Mahatmas detach themselves, and watch the play of their minds. No matter how thoroughly you search, the mind is not to be found anywhere.

न बाह्ये नापि हृदये सद्रूपं विद्यते मनः ।
यदर्थं प्रतिभानं तन्मन इत्यभिधीयते ।।

*Na baahye` naapi hridaye` sadroopam vidyate` manah,
Yadartham pratibhaanam tanmana ityabhidheeyate`.*

Our mind goes off to Bombay; then, it is no longer in our heart? Is there no mind in our body? The mind has not gone to Bombay; Bombay was imagined in the mind. Then – did Bombay rise from its location and come into our heart? No, Bombay is as it is. Such imaginings and bragging rise in the mind at whim. Don't bother about them. Use the methods of Satsang (association of the godly), and the teachings of the Scriptures, and ponder deeply upon them. Then, make up your mind about your goal. Act accordingly, and fulfill your duties. The mind will have no effect on you, if you remain firm in your resolve and do your duty sincerely. But if you attach yourself to your mind, then असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् (गीता ६.३५) – *asamshayam mahaabaaho mano durnigraham balam (Gita 6. 35)* – you will certainly fail to gain control over your mind. It will become restless, and you will think that you are restless. So, watch the play of your mind, but don't get entranced by it. Don't allow it to involve you. This is why the Shiva Sankalpa (mentioned in the question) is given in the Shrutis (Vedic verses).

यद् जाग्रतो दूरमुदैति दैवं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरेकं तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु ॥

(यजुर्वेद ३३.१)

*Yad jaagrato dooramudaiti daivam...jyotishaam jyotire`kam tanme` manah
shivasankalpamastu.*

(Yajur Veda 33.1)

That is all! The resolve mentioned here is to be implemented. This is satya. This should not separate from our Shiva (Atma, which is inseparable from the Paramatma). The (pristine) mind is Shiva, it is Vishnu, it is Rama, it is Krishna.

I once gave discourses at the baandha of Shri Hari Babaji. One day I spoke about the power of the imaginings of the mind, 'Come, let us see our mind in the form of Rama, let us see it in the form of Krishna.'

A gentleman who heard this discourse came to meet me later on. IN those days, I had a mat of date palm leaves to sleep upon, and a brick for a pillow. "Maharaj", he said, "My problem is solved!"

"What was your problem?" I asked.

"My problem was that I used to think that I would be able to meditate upon the Lord only when He showered that Grace on me. This impression was

removed from my mind when I heard your discourse. Now I can meditate upon the Lord whenever I want.”

Your name is ‘mind’. You can assume any form you wish. You can have a mental picture of whoever you wish to see. If you make it small, it will become your Nana-Nani (maternal grandparents; nana and nani also mean small), and if you make it big you can unite with the all pervading Paramatma. So, you should get rid of narrow minded tendencies and make your mind magnanimous.

Our mind blossoms in the forms of fruits and flowers and shrubs. It heaves like a sea of joy. Like the sun, it spreads brightness, and like the moon, it bestows delight. It is our mind which is the life giving air. Our mind is the Space in which the whole world exists, just as the world of dreams exists (in our mind). It is our mind which becomes Rama-Krishna, or Shiva-Vishnu. Our mind becomes साकार *saakaara* (with form) or निराकार *niraakaara* (formless). The निर्गुण *nirguna* (without attributes) and सगुण *saguna* (with attributes) are also nothing but our mind. If we want to, we can see any object we choose, at that very moment, because our mind becomes that for us. So, the mind is nothing to be afraid of. It is a well-loved toy we have. Stay with it. Meet it, and play with it.

Try, some day, to divide your mind into two portions, and watch them play. In it, one will die, and the other will play. It is all the mind. The mind has no solid form. You can turn it into whatever shape you have seen, smelt, heard, touched, or tasted. The mind is flexible because it has not attached itself permanently to anything. It is ready to mingle with everyone and anyone. It is like a child.

Apply your mind to whatever you understand to be good. This is enough to enable you to control your mind. You don’t need to adopt asanas (yogic postures) or do Yogic exercises. It is as simple and easy as holding a berry in the palm of your hand. However, our lifestyle has become such, that we look at the tree instead of the berry in our hand. The mind is not to be destroyed. It is not to be tied forcibly. Nor is it to be imprisoned, or hung with a rope. It should be considered a magical toy, and used as a plaything. Play with it in whichever way you like, and then it will never bind you.

Question: When the Christians convert others to Christianity, and the Muslims convert others to Islam, why shouldn't the Hindus convert others to Hinduism, to spread our religion? In this context, I recall Swami Vivekanandji's words, "I want a Hindu to be a better Hindu, and I want a Christian to be a better Christian." So, how far have we progressed mentally, in our Dharma, vis a vis the increased number of Hindus, or in the increase of Dharmic tendencies? I ask Maharajji to enlighten us on this topic.

Answer: The answer of the question is already given, my brother! The answer lies within every question, but has to be extracted. Look at it thus – Jesus Christ was born about two thousand years ago, but didn't Dharma (righteousness) exist before him? Mohammed Sahab was born thirteen or fourteen hundred years ago. Was there no Dharma before his birth? The principles of the Dharma started by an Acharya (Masters) existed before he was born. Dharma is another name for the Paramatma. The Paramatma upholds us; so does Dharma – धारणात् धर्मः *dhaaranaat dharmah*.

Now, you feel sad when a Hindu is converted to Christianity, and you feel glad when a Christian is converted to Hinduism. So, the conversion of a Hindu to Christianity and a Christian to Hinduism appears to be good or bad depending upon the kind of desires and impressions held in your mind. However, if you look at it from a practical angle, you will realize that if a competition of conversion were to be embarked upon, very few Christians would convert to Hinduism. The reason is our limited power, ability, and means. The Christians have far greater resources for converting others to Christianity. Therefore, it is better that Hindus avoid entering any such competition.

Actually, satya is in all. The Paramatma is in all, and all have the same goal. These differences appear in the eyes of the Purohits, Padres, Maulvis and Dasturs. Their religious Sects are different. Our effort should be for the principle of Hinduism in our heart – the human values upheld by our religion – to be awoken. There should be no wish to show another as being inferior, there should be no urge to compete with any, and no envy for any. All these sects are destined to fade out before long. People all over the world are losing interest in religion, so these sects will not continue very long.

One point, what do you consider Hindus to be? Which Master started Hinduism? Can you tell me the age, the year, or the place in which Hinduism was founded? The fact is that 'Hindu' is not the name of any logo

or symbol. Are the people without the choti (sacred tuft of hair) and janeu (the saved thread) not Hindu? We (monks) keep neither-do you consider us to be Hindus or not? The women do not usually wear the janeu. The mountain and forest tribes generally do not know the Vedas. They don't know Rama, and they don't know Krishna. They follow the age old customs of their forefathers. It is we who go there and create divisions.

The Christians, especially, go in large numbers. Shri Jugalkishoreji Birla was of the opinion that no matter how much it costs, Sadhus should be sent to the hills and forest, to convince the tribes to remain Hindus. A few Sadhus did go. But what did they do? Our Sadhus refused to eat food touched by the tribals. They would neither mingle with them, nor give them anything. They would only give sermons and come away. The Christians, on the other hand, would go there and build hospitals and schools. They would give medicine to those who fell ill. The local people felt that the Christians are generous and caring. That is why they are willing to become Christians.

I am not opposed to converting Christians to Hinduism, but this is possible only if you have the means and the will to put in the effort. If you are as eager to convert people to Hinduism as you if you have the requisite strength, ability and means to do so, then I give you full encouragement to go ahead. However, make sure that your converting four Christians to Hinduism does not lead to four thousand Hindus being converted to Christianity! That will be a loss for you!

So, keep your heart free of attachments and aversions. Be straightforward and true to yourself. Have faith in the अपौरुषेय ज्ञान *apaurushe`ya gnana* – the intrinsic knowledge that does not come from any God or human being, but is innate in all, which has no beginning, and is endless. It is the Gnan which even mosquitoes and bedbugs have. This Gnan is निर्विशेष *nirvishe`sha* – it is the Almighty. If you wish to obtain it and spread it, as the essence of righteousness (as being the true Dharma which is above and beyond the restrictions of any Sect) as the Hinduism of the Vedas, then do not get overpowered by petty matters. Popularize righteousness without any hesitation. Convert – not only a few Christians, Muslims or Parsees – but the whole world, into Aryas. The Vedas command, कृणुध्वं विश्वं आर्यम् *'Krinudhvam vishvam aaryam'* – an Arya is one whose thoughts, emotions and actions are all pure and noble. It is wrong to use these issues for political gain. People are told not to vote for another, but 'vote for me'.

They adopt unethical policies for political benefits. Such plans and activities will not succeed in protecting Dharma; they will only increase the extent of aversions and attachments.

The prevailing जातिवाद *jaativaada* (partiality for our caste), सम्प्रदायवाद *sampradaayavaada* (partiality for our religious Sect), and गुटबन्दी *gutabandi* (partiality for our group) is growing; in our country and elsewhere, because of political interests. Each group becomes aggressive about their ideology, and the importance of human values is reduced. This will result in increasing friction, ill-will, and destruction. So, instead of highlighting the differences, one should try to reduce them.

Question: In the second chapter of Gita, Shri Krishna says, न चाभावयतः शान्ति (श्लोक ६६) “ *na chaabhaavayatah shantih (66)* – the person who lacks feeling and wisdom does not have peace.” I request Maharajji to explain to us, which is the tendency of the antahkaran (the four-fold mind, comprising of the emotional mind, intellect, present inclination, and subtle ego) that is called भावना ‘*bhaavanaa*’ (feeling). Please also explain the difference between bhavana and bodh (knowledge with wisdom).

Answer: The Lord has explained the meaning of bhavana with great clarity:

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥
नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥

(गीता २.६४.६६)

*Raagadve`shaviyuyktaistu vishayaanindriyaishcharan,
Aatmavashyairvidhe`yaatmaa prasaadamadhigachhati.
Naasti buddhirayuktasya na chaayuktasya bhaavanaa,
Na chaabhaavayatah shaantirashaantasya kutah sukham.*

(Gita 2. 64, 66)

The Lord tells us to continue with all our routine activities, whether it is the work of a laborer, a trader, a farmer, a guard, or a learned Brahmin. If you have detachment, you can become a त्यागी *tyaagi* (one who gives up everything worldly), and if the world is important to you, you can be involved in it. Both of these are quite all right – विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ‘*vishayaanindriyaishcharn*’.

Let your sense organs indulge in the sense objects, but make sure that they are free from attachment or aversion. You will be trapped, if any attachment is allowed to seep in. I have seen people who had great renunciation, who lived in the forests, and wore only a loin cloth. They got trapped somewhere or the other as soon as they developed some attachment. I have seen people who lived in the mountains, and wore no clothes. They subsisted on wild berries and flowers; but aversion crept into their heart. The Lord says that if we wish to obtain peace, then the first step is to ensure that our senses remain absolutely free of any attachment or aversion. This is आत्मवश्यैः 'aatmavashyaih'. You should be the master of your senses, and not otherwise. The senses should be controlled by you; you should not be controlled by them. It should not be that the eyes see something attractive, and follow the object (dragging you behind them).

I saw a विरक्त *viraktas* (monk with no possessions) who appeared to be totally unattached to any worldly object. He was attached to a woman. Whenever he had to leave her, he would behave like an astronomer! He would raise his eyes to the heavens, to stop the tears from falling! So, my brother, we lose control of our sense organs, when we develop attachment or aversion for any person or thing. However, do not destroy your senses. Don't even imprison them. Just keep them under your control – आत्मवश्यैः *aatmavashyaih*. And, विधेयात्मा 'vidhe`yaatmaa' – your mind should be your obedient servant. The mind is your servant. It has to obey your command.

The result of this will be that your mind will be purified. In Sanskrit, the word प्रसाद '*prasaada*' means purity of the mind. It is not the 'laddoo-puri' (sweets and fried bread) which we distribute after offering them to the Lord! Some of the later day writings have used the word 'prasad' for this, but the Amarkosh describes it as प्रसादस्तु प्रसन्नता (अमरकोश १.३.१६) '*prasaadastu prasannataa*' (1. 3. 16) – prasad is a lucid and transparent mind. It contains no blackness of hatred, and no redness of attachment. A mind which is completely free of these – प्रसादमधिगच्छति *prasaadamadhigachchati*.

Then, when the mind continues to remain lucid, sorrow is unable to come into it. Sorrow enters when the (inner) sky is overcast, and the weather is stormy. However, when the हृदयाकाश '*hridayaakkasha*' (the sky of the heart) is lucid – free of any shadow, dust, heat or cold – then there is no sorrow. It is unsullied. All sorrows fade away.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥

(गीता - २.६५)

*Prasaade` sarvadukhaanaam haanirasyopajaayate` ,
Prasannache`taso hyaashu buddhi paryavatishthate` .
(Gita 2. 65)*

Moreover, our intellect is able to reach the right conclusion when our thinking is clear and unbiased. As long as a person's senses continue to be fickle, full of attachment and aversion, and uncontrolled, he will remain restless. And, नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य 'naasti buddhirayuktasya' – if your senses organs are not under your control, then your Gnan and your resolve will be shaky. Then, न चायुक्तस्य भावना 'na chaayuktasya bhaavanaa' – you will not even succeed in holding on to a bhavana (emotion) no matter how hard you try. There is no question of obtaining शांति shaanti (peace), if you lack bhavana; and how can you have सुख sukha (happiness with contentment) unless you have peace?

Come, let us now look at the difference between bodh and bhavana. Bodh is related to the object of your knowledge. It is bodh, to understand a stone to be a stone. It is bodh to understand the Atma to be the Atma. That means that bodh is to know an item correctly. And, look at it this way – there is a stone idol. A Muslim will consider it to be a statue. A Christian will not attach any particular importance to it. A traditional Hindu, however, will place it before him, and his heart will be filled with a feeling of reverence. So, then, what is this? This is bhavana. Bhavana has its source in the person who has the feeling, while bodh comes from the object.

वस्तुतन्त्रो भवेत् बोधः कर्तृतन्त्रम् उपासनम् ।

Vastutantro bhavet`t bodhah kartritvam upaasanam.

Bhavana is dependent upon the person who has the feeling. A person can develop the elevating feeling that Lord Vishnu is present in a round Shaligram stone. Or else, he can consider it to be a mere stone. He may throw away a round stone lying in the path, thinking someone may slip on it and get hurt. Such things happen. It is fine if he feels that way, too. That means, that when an object is dependent upon the कर्ता kartaa (the one who acts), the person is free to develop or not develop any feeling, or change – or not change – his attitude; and do – or not do – anything with that object. His goodwill can become ill-will, and his poor opinion of someone can turn into respect. Feelings are made by humans and keep changing. Some are

abandoned, and new feelings are born. The bodh of items, however, depends upon the item in question.

यद् रूपेण यन्निश्चितम् तद्रूपं न व्यभिचरति।

(तै० उप० २.१ शांकरभाष्य)

Yad rope`na yannishchitam tadroopam na vyabhicharati.
(*Taittiriya Upanishad 2. 1. Shankara's commentary*)

Once the properties of an object are established, they remain unchanged. So, bodh is the accurate knowledge about something, and bhavana is the best possible development of emotion. There is a stone before us, and we have the feeling that this is the Lord. The stone remains a stone, but heart is filled with reverence, and it takes on the form of the Lord. So – what difference do we observe, between bodh and bhavana? Bodh comes from the object. Our bodh depends on the item concerned; whereas bhavana comes from the person who develops the feeling. It depends on the individual. Feelings rise, change, leave, and are held on to. Bodh is that, which need not be held on to.

Question: हरि को भजे सो हरि का होई ‘*Hariko bhaje` so hari ka hoyi`* – the person who does Hari’s bhajan, belongs to Hari (the Lord). What is bhajan? What is the essence of bhajan in Bhakti (devotion), Gnan and Yoga (being yoked to the Lord)? I request Maharajji to enlighten us.

Answer: What is bhajan? भजनं नाम रसनम् ‘*Bhajanam naama rasanam`* – bhajan means to savor. You listen to talks about the Lord. You hear the descriptions of the white sands on the banks of the Yamuna, with peacocks dancing and birds singing. You hear how the cows come to drink water, followed by the cow-herd boys. You hear the description of Shri Krishna accompanying the cow-herd boys, playing the flute, and dancing. You hear all these described when you go to religious discourses. Then, when you go home, these memories rise up in your mind. You had heard all this at the Satsang, and it left a संस्कार *sanskaara* (subtle impression) on your heart. You recall the descriptions repeatedly, and enjoy them again and again later on.

You listen to the descriptions, and see them enacted. They are called ‘Leela’ (frolics). Bhajan is taking delight in repeatedly bringing these images to the mind. भजनं नाम रसनम्, भजनं नाम आस्वादनम् ‘*bhajanam naama rasanam. Bhajanam naama aasvaadanam.*’ Bhajan means to savor the flavor, to enjoy. People give the example of cows and oxen, who eat up the grass and

hay they get. The food goes down their throat, but they have the ability to bring it up again, and chew the cud. They masticate (it is called charvan, or paagur), and savor the flavor. To bring up, in the same way, the memories of the leelas of the Lord, and savor the joy, is to do bhajan.

The meaning of bhajan is प्रीति-पूर्वक सेवा *preeti-poorvaka se`vaa* – loving service. The preeti (love) is in the mind, and the actions of पूजा *poojaa* (ritual worship), प्रदक्षिणा *pradakshinaa* (circumbulating), chanting verses of praise, bowing down, and meditating, are all physical actions. Preeti also means tripti (satisfaction). We tend to obtain satisfaction from different sources. Instead of that, we should have preeti for only the Lord, and things connected to Him. We should have preeti for His name, places of pilgrimage, for His Leelas, for serving Him, and in His Darshan (seeing the Lord's image). The savoring of the flavor of the names of the Lord is bhajan. Shri Vallabhacharyaji Maharaj has said that भजनानन्द *bhajanaananda* (the joy of doing bhajan) is different from विषयानन्द *vishayaananda* (the sensual pleasures), उपासनानन्द *upaasanaananda* (the joy of worship), ज्ञानानन्द *gnaanaananda* (the joy due to Gnan), and ब्रह्मानन्द *Brahmaananda* (the joy of experiencing the Brahman).

The root 'bhaja' in Sanskrit is quite extraordinary. Bhajan can be for our mother, father, husband, son, country, or caste. When we voluntarily offer loving service – not as a duty, or under any compulsion – it is called bhajan. It is said that Brahmananda gives only shanti (peace); there is no pleasure in it, which can be savored. Vishayananda make us dependent, and Yogananda entails the pain of practice. This bhajanananda, however, has no shanti, no vidhi (rigid regulations), and no effort of practice.

It is bhajan even when you weep for the Lord. It is bhajan when you think about Him. It is bhajan when you are near Him, and touch Him lovingly. When He teases you, gets angry with you, bites you or beats you – even that is bhajan! And, when He shows affection and tenderness, that is bhajan as well. The person who does bhajan enjoys whatever he does. When the heart is filled with love, he will get the joy of bhajan even when giving love to a blade of grass or a lump of clay. The person he touches will be filled with the joy of bhajan; so will the person he looks at. If he smells someone, that person's breath will be filled with joy.

The speech of such a man will spread joy. The vibrations emanating from his body are filled with paramananda – supreme joy. The bhajan he does, does not affect him alone; it fills the entire creation with sweet content and joyfulness. When a person develops such bhajan in his life, he is fulfilled. No vestige of sorrow remains for him, because sorrow turns into joy! Thereafter, both joy and sorrow vanish. Only Paramananda remains. This is the greatness of bhajan.

मद्वक्तियुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति ।

(भागवत ११.१४.२४)

Badbhaktiyukto bhuvanam punaati.

(*Bhagwat 11. 14. 24*)

Question: The Lord has written His address on an envelope and handed it to us ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति (गीता १८.६१) – ‘*Ishvarah sarvabhootaanaam hridde`she`rjuna tishthati*’ (*Gita 18. 61*) – the Ishwara stays in the heart of all beings. What is it that is called the ‘hriday’ (heart)? Please explain.

Answer: Hriday is where we keep the संस्कार *sanskaras* (subtle impressions) and recollections of what we gather from the world outside. It is just like bringing money from outside and keeping it in the safe at home. ‘Hrit’ means ‘the one who steals.’

We see a horse running. It leaves an impression upon your heart. We remember it once in a while, or dream of it. So, which is the storehouse of the memory of the way the horse ran? It is the heart. Similarly, we go to the temple and see the image of the Lord. Our thoughts return to that image later on. We meet a superior or inferior man or woman. Then, we remember them.

So, the heart is a place where all the subtle impressions are stored. The hriday is where all these impressions and recollections glitter and sway, and stay. It is the main storehouse for all the super-imposed impressions you get. It is where you go, when you are fast asleep. It is where you are seated when you are in a dream state. It is the place from which you see or experience the world when you are awake. This place is called your ‘hriday’.

Now, if you want someone to take measurements, and show you where the hriday is situated in your body – how many feet and inches higher than your

big toe, and how many feet and inches lower than the tip of your head your hriday is – then, can you tell me where the blood is, in your body? Blood flows through the whole body. Al right, can you tell me where the प्राण, अपान, समान एवं उदान *praana, apaana, samaana, and udaana* (the different kinds of wind in the body) stay in your body? Can your cells and organs function if these winds did not permeate and activate every part of your body? So, when this is the state of blood, how is it possible to believe that the mind dwells in any single spot in your body? The mind is made to sleep with a single injection – does that mind sleep in one area, or does it sleep in the whole body?

The fact is that from the practical viewpoint, the mind is a middle level object. Its sensitivity extends from your big toe to the tip of your head. It gives the experience of touch. It s actually more subtle than the प्राण *praana* (life force) or space, and is all-pervading. The entire Creation has one, universal mind, common to all beings. This is how Yogis are able to know what is in another person’s mind. This enables them to implant thoughts in others, because the essence of the mind is in its subtle state.

Shall I tell you about the Vedantis? They say – the mind does not dwell in the body. The hriday does not dwell in the body; the body lives in the hriday. It is amazing! The subtle is not placed in the gross; the gross is experienced in the subtle. It is surprising to realize that it is the heart in which we obtain the experience of our body. It is in the heart that we see our body. If our hriday goes to sleep, if it loses consciousness, then we will not know anything about our body. So, if you wish to seek the Lord, don’t look in just one body. Look in all the bodies, and in every atom, every moment, in every particle, and every nook and corner. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति *‘Ishvarah sarvabhootaanaam hriddeshe`rjuna tishthati’*.

Once, I spent a few days with a good friend who lived in the Chandauli area in Benares. He worked at the Court, and did not accept any money which was not earned honestly. His income did not permit him to keep servants or a horse and carriage. A maid servant came every day to do the household chores. I would stay at his house when he went to Court every day, from ten to four. He would lock the door from outside, when he left for work, and I would spend the six hours very peacefully.

Once, during that period, a thought struck me, “If I cut off my thumb, and separate it from my body, will it have a hriday or not?”

Then, the thought came, “There is blood in my thumb. Seen through a microscope, it is obvious that there are many cells in blood. Do these cells and corpuscles have a hriday or not?”

My बुद्धि *buddhi* (intellect) told me that all live cells have a hriday, because everything which lives has sensitivity. And, since cells turn into corpuscles, it means that cells should also be having a hriday. Hence, there would be a hriday in my severed thumb, and in every cell of its skin and blood.

सर्वभूतहिते रताः ‘*Sarvabhootahite` ratah`* – then, we reflect that the Ishwara is in the heart of पृथिवी *prithivi* (earth). The Earth is also a भूत *bhoota* (created from the five elements), after all! The Ishwara is in the heart of water, fire, wind and space. And, He is in the Creation made of the five elements. So when we read the description that he Ishwara lives in the heart of all, it is obvious that His presence is not limited to the heart in the conglomeration of skin, flesh and bones. The fact is that all forms belong to the Ishwara. The Ishwara is not in the hriday; the hriday is in the Ishwara. It exists in the Ishwara’s imaginings and in His resolve. Not only the hriday, but whatever is felt in the hriday – the past and future, far and near, ‘mine’ and ‘not mine’ – is all the hriday. And, this hriday is the essence of the Paramatma.

We often feel that there is no need for us to go to such high standards. Still, the organ upon which the doctors operate – which they refer to as the heart – is not the hriday of the Sanskrit language; though the root word ‘hrit’ can be used to make the word ‘heart’ and also ‘hard’. If the hriday was indeed a part of the body, it would die when the body died, and burn when the body was cremated. However, it is not so. The hriday is actually something which animates this body.

So, offer you body to the Paramatma and you will see that nothing exists, but the Paramatma. Get rid of the thought that in this sack of skin, layers of flesh and cage of bones, there is something called the hriday and that it lives and dies with you. The hriday is the pristine essence of the Parameshwara. It is not your hriday; it is the Parameshwara. It is not the Parameshwara, it is your hriday! The Parameshwara and the hriday are not separate entities. There is no difference, like one being the आधार *aadhaara* (support) and the

other being the आधेय *aadhe`ya* (supported), like water in a dish. It is not that the Parameshwara is kept in the dish of your heart! To know the oneness of the hriday and the Parameshwara, you need to have pure thoughts and gain the experience.

9. 11. 1984

Question: A gentleman was bringing two or three watches with him, when returning from overseas. On the flight, it occurred to him that the customs may detain him, if they see that he is carrying two or three watches. So, he gave one watch to the passenger sitting next to him, asking him to carry it through the customs, and return it when they had been cleared.

When they came out from the customs, and the man asked for his watch, the other man said, “I don’t even know you! What watch are you talking about?”

This incident reminded me of our own pathetic condition. The Lord gives us a mind, life-force, senses, heart, intellect, and so many abilities, when He sends us into this world. He also whispers in our ear, मय्येव मन आधत्स्व (गीता १२.८) ‘*Maiye`va mana aadhatsva (Gita 12. 8) – place your mind in Me.*’ And, we say, “Who are You? I don’t even know who You are; how can I give You my mind and intellect? I don’t even know where You live. Do You live in a cave? You don’t send anyone to find out how I’m faring.” So, the Lord says, हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ‘*Hridde`sherjuna tishthati – I stay in your hriday.*’

Maharajji explained this subject yesterday. All those who heard the discourse liked it so much that they asked me to repeat the question. So, I ask Maharajji to clarify it further. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानाम् हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति। ‘*Ishwarah sarvabhootaanaam hridde`sherjuna tishthati.*’ Please explain what the hriday is.

Answer: The Atharva Veda contains a ‘Sammanasya Sukta’ (3. 30. .1) which says ‘Let the heart and mind of all be as beautiful as possible.’ सहृदयं सामनस्यम् अविद्वेषं कृणोमि वः ‘*Sahridayam saamanasyam avidve`sham krinomi vah – let the hearts of you all be totally united. Let everyone’s mind be filled with equanimity, lofty thoughts, and purity. Let there be no hatred for any.*’ अन्यो अन्यमभिहर्यत वत्सं जातमिवाघ्न्या (३.३०.१) ‘*Anyo anyamabhiharyata vatsam jataamivaaghnayaa (3. 30. 1) – let your love for each other be like the love a cow feels for her new-born calf.*’

The hriday holds the Sat (truth), Gnan, and Anand in our lives. It is the heart which experiences satya (truth), and has the knowledge of पूर्णता *poornataa* (the feeling of being complete); and the Paramananda (the supreme bliss which is the Lord) is also felt in the hriday. So, this hriday is a priceless treasure. One Mahatma used to say, “Protect it! Guard it well! Keep the hriday safe, because it is the treasure of all treasures. Everything will be taken care of, if your hriday is safe.”

I had told you yesterday that the hriday is that, which gathers and stores the subtle impressions of all that you see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. It is a receptacle of संस्कार *sanskaras* (subtle impressions). It sleeps, and it stays awake, and sometimes it neither sleeps nor stays awake. It shows the miracle of its extraordinary powers. The hriday is the essence of the Paramatma. When we accumulate the world, we fail to see the Paramatma. Only the worldly impressions are made. However, if we cleanse our hriday and make it pure, then the hriday develops the ability to get a दर्शन *darshan* (see with reverence) of the Paramatma.

The hriday has the remarkable ability to create thousands of hridays. When we are asleep, unaware of our physical body, and in a dream state, we don't even remember our name. (At times we remember it.) Our relatives change – न तत्र रथाः न रथयोगाः (बृहदारण्यक उप०) ‘*Na tatra rathaah na rathayagaah*’ (*Vrihadaranyaka Upanishad*) – there is no chariot, and no pathway, no horses, and no reins.’ It is the mind that creates all these. It is the mind that is called Maya. How do you feel when you are dreaming? ‘I am a human being, with hands and feet, ears, nose, and eyes, heart and head. I have enemies and I have friends. Sometimes, there are two groups who fight each other.’ So, what is all this?

They (the people in the dream) had an earlier birth; they came into this present birth, and will now go to the next birth! Have they been born according to their individual sanskaras and prarabdha (accumulated essence of past actions)? What is the prarabdha of the people there? Does their hriday exist separately in the different individuals? There is no past life or future life there. Nor are there any past sanskaras, past प्रज्ञा *pragyaa* (inherent wisdom), or any past karma.

If you say that the person who sees the dream would be having past karmas and sanskaras – well, he is not even aware of anything. He moves around as an individual in that (dream) world.

So, what is this? This is the immense power which resides in your hriday! When you are dreaming, you cannot deny that power, and when you are awake, you cannot accept it. It does not exist in your present waking state, and it cannot be negated when you are in the dream state. That is why it is अनिर्वचनीय *anirvachaniya* – beyond description. Anirvachaniya is that, which can't be negated from one viewpoint, and can't be accepted by another.

One world is created in the dream state, and even in the dream state, we begin to imagine that a man (seen in the dream) was a pious man in his previous life, since he appears to be happy in every way. Or, we dream of a man suffering, and imagine that he must have been wicked in his previous life. However, both are unreal. It is only a mental image created by the hriday. If you try to seek out what lies in-between the 'is' and 'is not', then –

‘हे’ कहो तो है नहीं ‘नहीं’ कहो तो है।

‘हे’ ‘नहीं’ के बीच में कछु है सो है।।

*Hai kaho to hai nahin, nahin kaho to hai,
Hai nahin ke` beechamein jo kachhu hai so hai.*

हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ‘*Hridde`she`rjuna tishthati*’. All that is seen in the dream is our hriday. The चिदाभास *chidaabhaasa* (illusion of the mind) which glimmers in the Paramatma without there being any Prakriti (the Lord's power of Creation), sanskaras, past or future pragra, or past or future karmas – is your hriday. There is no enemy, and no friend. No one who you feel is yours exists; nor is there anyone who is not yours.

Your hriday contains so much power that it can create land where no land exists. It can create an entire new world. All the interactions in your dreams establish the truth of this latent power. Our hriday is an excellent example of the creation of this world, its sustenance, and its destruction. We get so tied down when we are in the waking state that we never think about our dreaming and sleeping states! You will enter into a Samadhi if you think about the essence of your sleeping state. If – when awake – you think about the elevated form of your dreams, then you will begin to get the glimpse of

the lands of the Lord, in this very life! You will be able to see Vaikuntha (the land of Lord Vishnu), here, itself.

It must be observed how these scenes affect you. The best affect is the indication you get, that you are the द्रष्टा *drashtaa* (the detached witness). If you are not the दृश्य *drishya* (that, which is seen), then you are the drashta. The scene indicates the presence of one who sees. The mantras of the Vedas are also drishya, and are seen by the Rishis (sages); and if the Rishis are the drashtaa, they are our Atma ऋषयो मन्त्रद्रष्टारः – *rishyao mantradrashtaarah* – Shankar Bhagwan said that if the Vedas were not the Atma, then they would be अनित्य *anitya* (impermanent). So, all that we see, is seen in the light of the Vedas. And, the medium is the hriday; and yet you consider this five foot body to be the support of this hriday? Do you think that this body is a vessel, like a bowl or a dish or saucepan, in which any black, yellow, red or blue object is kept?

It is not so! The awareness of this body and the whole world is felt in the hriday. So, if your thinking is based on the Shrutis (Vedic verses), scriptures, and your religious Sect, then you will be able to see the Paramatma who abides in all Creation. You will be able to see your wholeness, your indivisible Atma, in your hriday. This hriday is a priceless treasure which you have got. You can see the form of the Lord in it whenever you want. You see your relatives, who are far away, in your mind, and have an imaginary conversation with them. You go on chatting with them in your mind.

In the same way, you can develop भावना *bhaavanaa* (feeling) that you are looking at the form of Rama, or Krishna, or Shiva. You can have their darshan, and talk to them. You can – if you prefer – meditate upon the formless essence of the Lord, and experience Him as धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् '*Dhiyo yo na prachodayaata*' (the one who guides your intellect towards the highest). If you wish, you can experience the Sat (reality) without form, the Chit (awareness) without inclinations, and Ananda (bliss) without sensual indulgence, in your hriday, as the Sacchidananda. You can also experience a state of being the one, whole, indivisible Parabrahma Paramatma. Create sukha (happiness with contentment) in your hriday. Experience pure bliss in your hriday. All the suffering in this world is caused by ignorance, and ignorance is due to identification with the body.

The hriday you have is so powerful that if you cease to identify with your body, and rest in the essence of your chit, it will not take even a minute for you to feel happy and peaceful, and experience supreme bliss! However, मानि - मानि बन्धन मे आयो 'maani maani bandhan mei aayo' – when you imagine yourself to be bound, you are bound. When you believe yourself to be ignorant, you become ignorant. When you imagine yourself to be sad you become sad. Your imagination of mortality and rebirth makes you subject to death and rebirth. This hriday of yours is the Parameshwara which is नित्य *nitya* (permanent)- शुद्ध *shuddha* (pure)- बुद्ध *buddha* (liberated); and your hriday is the Maya which creates the world and induces you to think that you are mortal, unreal, and full of suffering. Your hriday is something which can create for you the kind of world you want, and allow you to have the experience of the Paramatma whenever you want.

It is not that only humans have a hriday. Bedbugs and lice also have a hriday – see how they run if anyone tries to touch them! So much so, that even the particles which seem inanimate or without awareness, actually have the same consciousness that is in us. So, don't constrict your hriday – expand it. Everybody's hriday is your hriday. You are present in all hridays, in an indivisible form. The hridays are many, but you are one. There are many people in your dream – each with different feelings and thoughts. However, this diversity is filled with one factor, and that is you. Actually, hriday means the Paramatma. हरति संस्कारन् इति हृद् तस्मिन् अयते इति हृदयं ब्रह्म, दर्हरं पुण्डरीकं वेशम *Harati pundareekam ve`shma*, is how it is described in the Chandogya Upanishad (18. 1. 1).

Question: I had read somewhere, that if you knock at a door with an offer of love, the door may or may not open. However, if you knock at a door with an offer to serve, the door will surely open. Is the desire to serve more noble an emotion than love? Please grace us by telling us about सेवा *se`vaa* (loving service).

Answer: Seva is the manifestation of प्रेम *pre`ma* (pure love). If prem is निराकार *niraakaara* (without form), then seva is its साकार *saakaara* (with form) version. We serve the one we love. The desire to give comfort and pleasure to a loved one is always present, prompting us to work for the loved one's happiness. The tangible form of love is service; and the unseen form of service is love. The two are not different; it is basically the same thing,

because love can never be inactive, and seva can never be real unless there is love. It will be false. We should be alert in our seva. As soon as any desire creeps into service – that is, as soon as we begin to expect any return – it becomes impure.

Another thing we should be watchful about is the feeling that we have rendered a great service. You can take it for a fact that compared to the great need of the world, your service is very small. So, never indulge in the vanity, ‘My service is great.’ Don’t even allow yourself to feel that you are rendering a service. Don’t think, ‘I am doing so many things as a service, and I will do this, that, and the other in future.’ As soon as the subtle ego of ‘doing’ comes into your mind, the service turns into a business transaction. Seva becomes adulterated as soon as any thought of a return seeps in. So, these three points should be kept in mind when you offer seva. 1) Never have the vanity of being the one who serves. 2) No feeling of rendering a great service should enter your heart. 3) Never have any desire for a reward for your seva.

Seva is the tangible form of prem. You can say that seva comes as the concentrated essence of prem. You can also say that prem is the seed of seva. Prem means तृप्ति *tripti* (deep satisfaction). Prem means प्यासा *pyaasa* (thirst or craving). There can be no effort, unless there is satisfaction. Nobody will want to obtain anything that does not bring satisfaction. And, love will not increase unless it contains a thirst. So, the thirst for love should increase, and the satisfaction (you get by offering loving service) should also increase. Prem is such an extra-ordinary factor that in it, thirst contains satisfaction, and satisfaction contains a thirst (for more love). And, this thirst mixed with satisfaction finds fulfillment only when we serve the one we love. And, except for the Parameshwara – who is complete – there is no one else worth loving. This tendency we have, of flinging our heart into petty objects, and trying to capture the hearts of others, is absolutely false. It is a fraud. It is only an illusion. Neither can you give your heart to anyone, nor will anyone give their heart to you. So, serve (the Lord) and increase, thereby, your desire to serve. Allow the pleasure of service to come into your life. The thirst and the satisfaction should both increase simultaneously.

Seva is not only a साधना *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress), it is also the fruit. You will feel a contentment if you give someone a glass of water. You will feel a deep satisfaction if you give clothes to someone who has none, or medicine to someone who is sick. This happiness is the fruit of your

seva. It is the fruit of all fruits, but it cannot be obtained if you serve with the hope of some return. Isn't offering service the best possible fruit in itself? This point should be kept in mind when you serve anyone. It is important to remember the mutual relationship between service and love. Love grows as you serve, and thus, both love and seva obtain fulfillment.

Question: Acharya Shankar says, जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः '*Jeevo brahmaiva naaparah*'. If the Jeeva (Atma connected to a body) is the Brahman, then what is the Avatar (the Lord's descending in different forms)? If every individual is the Brahman, then how can the principal of the Lord's coming in different Avatars be explained? And then, why are people who call themselves 'Bhagwan' these days, be called humbugs?

Answer: I uphold the principle that everything is the Brahman. If you obtain this experience, then what you say is correct. There is no Jeeva and there is no jagat (interactive world). If there is no jagat, there is no Jeeva; and if there is no Jeeva, then there is no jagat. Then, there is no sorrow, no demon, and no Devta (demi-god). Then, for one who has experienced the Brahman, there is no need for any Avatar. However, when a person has not had the experience of the Brahman, and considers himself to be a Jeeva, he is trapped in the world and bound by demonic tendencies. He needs the Lord to descend as an Avatar, and destroy the demonic tendencies, whether he lives in the Treta, Dvapar, Satya or Kali Yuga (ages).

The straightforward meaning of the Lord's Avatar is for the Lord's पूर्णता *poornataa* (completeness) to come into our lives. The Lord is that, which is complete, whole, full, and absolute. The Lord is that, in which there are no Geographical divisions. In Him, there is no India and no Pakistan. The Lord is that, in which time cannot be broken up into past and future. The dissolution of Creation is imagined in Him, and vanishes in Him. So, when the Lord takes an Avatar in our heart, we will experience a feeling of being whole.

When that happens, we will no longer reject Gnan in a mistaken loyalty for a language, or disregard humane values because of our partiality for our caste. We will not sacrifice the benefit of the world for the benefit of our country; nor will we sacrifice our country for our State. We will cease to despoil politics for the sake of an advantage for any political Party, and we will not abuse true Dharma (righteousness) because of our commitment to any religious Sect.

So, the Lord descends into the Universal heart – into the heart of all – just as He descends into our heart. Unless a जिज्ञासु *jigyasaasu* (spiritual seeker) has the desire to find the Brahman – unless he has the ब्रह्मप्रभा *brahmaprabhaa* (the luster of the Brahman) in him – he will never be able to get free of अविद्या *avidyaa* (nescience); he cannot obtain ब्रह्मज्ञान *Brahmagnana* (the knowledge of the Brahman). So, the Lord descends in the form of परमा *pramaa* (an enlightened intellect) to destroy our false impressions and illusions, and He takes on various forms to destroy the sorrows of the world.

You, however, are fulfilled because you have experienced the Brahman! Now – for you – there is no Jeeva and no jagat; and nor do you have any need for an Avatar. When you don't need any Avatar, why should any Avatar come to bother you? He will come when you need an Avatar.

Our Lord is so wonderful that He comes as a fish in the water. He comes as a turtle who can live in the water and on land; and He is not averse to dirt. He takes on the form of a lion, and lives in the forest. He becomes a horse, and the Vedas are created by His neighs. Our Lord has no urge to retain any particular form, shape or species. He manifests in every form, everywhere. If you recognize the Brahman then those for whom He took an Avatar – and also the Avatar He took – will both become your own Self. They will become the Brahman for you.

However, you will see the jagat, and the Jeeva, and you will have अज्ञान *agnan* (lack of Gnan) so long as you don't know your Self. There will also be the Kapil Avatar, and other Avatars, for dispelling your ignorance. Rama Avatar is for the purpose of destroying अधर्म *adharma* (that, which is contrary to Dharma), and removing sorrow. As Shri Krishna, the Lord sings, plays musical instruments, dances, and play-acts. It is as though the Gandharva Veda has manifested as an Avatar. That is why one of the names of Radharani in our scriptures, is Gandharvi. The entire Sama Veda is manifested by the life of Shri Krishna. The Lord Shri Krishna sings, plays the flute, dances, play-acts, and displays pure bliss. He displays रस *rasa* (deep emotion) by doing रास *raasa* (dancing with the Gopis).

If you have a need to remove sorrow and ignorance, and be free of death, then let the Brahman take an Avatar. And, if you don't need any of these, and you are the Brahman, then He, too, won't take the trouble to descend.

Question: What is the विद्या *vidyaa* (knowledge) which is mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Gita -

तं विद्याददुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम्। (६.२३)

Tam vidyaaddukhasamyogaviyogam yogasangnitam (6. 23)

which enables us to detach ourselves from getting connected to, or being affected by, sorrow? I request Maharajji to grace us by explaining how we can bring this into our lives while leading a family life.

Answer: The Gita describes three kinds of sukha (happiness with deep content). The sukha which is attained through sleep, lethargy, and forgetfulness is called ‘tamas’. The sukha derived through sensual pleasures is called ‘rajas’ and the sukha obtained through the practice of Dharma and Yoga, etc – which enables the mind to dwell steadily on the object of worship – is called ‘sattvik sukha.’

सुखं त्विदानो त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति॥
यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम्।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम्॥
विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम्।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम्॥
यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्॥

(१८.३६-३९)

*Sukham tvidaaneem trividham shrunu me` bharatarshabha,
Abhyaasaadramate` yatra dukhaantam cha nigachchati.
Yattadagre` vishamiva parinaame`mritopamam,
Tatsukham saatvikam proktamaatmabuddhiprasaadajam.
Vishaye`ndriyasamyogaadyattadagre`mritopamam,
Parinaame` vishamiva tatsukham raajasam smritam.
Yadagre` chaanubandhe` cha sukham mohanamaatmanah,
Nidraalasyapramaadotham tattaamasamudaahritam.*

(18. 36 – 39)

Apart from these three, there is one more kind of sukha – Brahm sukha. It is described in several places in the Gita. अक्षयम् सुखम् अश्नुते (५.११) ‘*Akshayam*

sukham ashnute` (5. 11)'; सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते (६.२८) 'sukhe`na brahmasamsparshamatyantam sukhamaashnute` (6. 28)'

What, then, is the essence of true happiness?

सुखमात्यन्तिकं चतद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः॥
यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिं ततः।
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते।
तं विद्याददुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम्।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा॥

(६.२१-२३)

*Sukhamaatyantikam yattadbuddhigraahyamateendriyam,
Ve`tti yatra na chaivaayam sthitashchalati tattvatah.
Yam labdhvaa chaaparam laabham manyate` nadhikam tatah,
Yasmin sthito na dukhe`na gurunaapi vichaalyate`.
Tam vidyaad dukhasamyogaviyogam yogasagnitam,
Sa nishchaye`na yoktavyo yogonirvinnache`tasaa.*

(6. 21 – 23)

This is totally different and separate from the other three sukhas. You see, this is absorbed through the intellect. There is one sukha which does not come through sleep, lethargy, or forgetfulness; our intellect twinkles brightly in it. That means, the intellect is bright and alert, while sukha is experienced. The sukha of sleep, lethargy and forgetfulness is the sukha of darkness. The sukha of lethargy is the sukha of a corpse, and the sukha of forgetfulness is the sukha of intoxication. So, these are all filled with tamo guna, whereas the Brahm sukha is derived through the intellect. It is a sukha which stays with the intellect, so it is not a tamo guni sukha (the comfort of indolence). All of you know which are the items that people eat, drink, see, or keep the company of, which result in the destruction of intelligence. And, what is left, without intelligence? Real sukha is not possible if the power to think and discriminate is lost. So, we should be happy, and retain our intellectual ability – not lose it!

The second thing mentioned is about the sukha obtained through the senses – like eating, drinking, and indulging in sensual pleasures. All these are the rajoguni sukhas (worldly pleasures). They seem, at first, to be very desirable, but later on, they become as harmful as poison परिणामे विषम् – *parinaame` visham*. The rajoguni sukhas make us dependent; they enslave us. 'I will be

happy when I have accumulated this amount of wealth.’ Why does vanity give sukha? Would it give you happiness, if you made a bundle of money, gold, silver, diamonds and pearls, and placed it on your head? It is only the vanity of possession. The sukha will be derived through vanity. You may obtain a little sukha through sensual pleasures, but will it be lasting?

You place sour, sweet, spicy, bitter, pungent or salty items on your tongue, and feel that you have enjoyed so many flavors. However, are the flavors retained once the items are swallowed? All the pleasure exists at the tip of your tongue. Moreover, some of the items may cause diabetes or blood pressure. These rajoguni sukhas are short lived. They are not permanent.

Now, the third sukha is a sattvik sukha. The word अतीन्द्रिय ‘ateendriya’ (beyond the senses) is used to indicate that this is not a rajoguni sukha. The word बुद्धिग्राह्य ‘buddhigraahya’ (absorbed through the intellect) has been used to establish that this is not a tamoguni sukha. सुखमात्यन्तिकं ‘Sukhamaatyantikam’ – supreme sukha – indicates that this is not even the pleasure which is derived from अभ्यास *abhyaasa* (habit). What is the pleasure derived from habit? I have seen a man who did two thousand push-ups every day. He was so strong that he would overpower anyone who fought with him. He was a great wrestler, and consumed huge quantities of food. His diet included a kilo of almonds and nine liters of milk, apart from other rich items like halwa-puri! When he grew old, he was unable to get all these, and lost a lot of weight. His limbs would ache. He would lie down on the ground, and call out, अरे बचवा “*Are` bachvaa!* (O my child), look, hold this staff (for balancing) and walk all over my body. My limbs are aching badly. Tread heavily on them to ease the pain.”

So, the two thousand push-ups, the kilo of almonds, nine liters of milk and all the rich food – which had built up his strength – all left him when he could no longer continue his habitual exercises. He used to tell us how even the famous Gama would fear to wrestle with him. Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj kept him for many days, at his Ashram, and gave him all the food he desired. He left Baba’s Ashram deeply satisfied and giving heartfelt blessings to all.

So, it is when people are unable to carry out their habitual activities, that they realize how enslaved they are to those habits. The day a person is unable to do his regular Yogic exercises – like sheershasana (standing on the

head) or Surya Namaskara (salute to the Sun), they understand what has happened. The अभ्यास-जन्य सुख *abhyaasajanya sukha* (the pleasure of habit) is a sattvik sukha. However, what we want is a sukha which is not dependent on any habit. It should be the sukha of our natural Atma, and it should be आत्यन्तिक *aatyantika*. Atyantik means an enduring sukha; not one which is present today and gone tomorrow. A sukha which is endless and eternal. The sukha which cannot be fragmented is called 'atyantik', and we should experience this sukha without its having any connection to any item, wherever we may be. We want a sukha which is unaffected by place, time or object; a sukha which does not separate us from the essence –

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

Yam labdhvaa chaaparam laabham manyate` naadhikam tatah.

A sukha which is more precious than anything else, or any other gain.

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ।

Yasminsthito na dukhe`na gurunaapi vichaalyate`.

The sorrow, which is considered to be the greatest sorrow in this world, may come. The rumble of dissolution may be heard. We may be surrounded by hungry lions. Death may be dancing naked before us, but nothing will affect our sukha. यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते *Yasmin stitho na dukhe`na gurunaapi vichaalyate`* - dukha (sorrow) cannot agitate us in any way. Even if our Guru were to come and say, "My child, you have not yet attained पूर्णता *poornataa* (wholeness)," we would be in a position to say, "No, Guruji, I have now attained the same poornataa which you have. It is true that you are my Guru. I bow down to you. However, I have not the slightest doubt regarding my own wholeness."

गुरुणापि न विचाल्यते '*Gurunaapi na vichaalyate`* and गुरुणा बृहस्पतिनापि न विचाल्यते '*gurunaa vrihaspatinaapi na vichaalyate`.*' Even if Vrihaspati – the Guru of the demi-gods – were to come and say, "You have not yet attained poorna (complete) sukha," we need not agree. गुरुणापि न विचाल्यते '*Gurunaapi na vichaalyate`.*' The worst tragedy can occur, but we remain unmoved. There is no shaking us. Our natural condition is called the अच्युत स्थिति '*achyut sthiti`*' (the unshakable position). We become achyut (unshakeable; Achyut is also a name of the Lord). Then –

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम्।
Tam vidyaaddukhasamyogaviyogam yogasangitam.

Does this mean that we will not have hot weather? Will there be no floods?
Will hail never fall?

All this will happen. Causes of sorrow will be present, but we will be disconnected with them. We will be separated from their connection with us. Please note the way the words are used. दुःखवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् 'Dukhaviyogam yogasangnitam'. It would have sufficed to say that we become separated from sorrow, we never experience sorrow. However, the Lord says that we become separated from the connection with sorrow. That means, sorrow remains in the world, but does not attach itself to us. You people live in a city; perhaps you are not familiar with the talk of village people. At our home in the village, we have paddy fields. In the rainy season, the water becomes very muddy. So, when we have to carry the seedlings through this murky water, we rub mustard seed oil all over our body very thoroughly, and then enter the water. We use the support of the plants, and the flow of the water. When we come out of the water, we give ourselves a good shake, and all the water drops off in a moment. Not a single drop sticks to the body. It is as though we have not gone into the water at all. This is because of the oil smeared all over our body.

In the same way, when a person is aware of the unattached form of the Atma, then he is no longer attached to anything. That means, nothing really attaches itself to us, and no object can succeed in getting into us because we are totally filled with the experience of our Atma.

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते।
तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम्॥

(गीता ६.२२.२३)

*Yasminsthito na dukhe`na gurnaapi vichaalyate`
Tam vidyaaddukhasamyogaviyogam yogasangnitam.*

(Gita 6. 22, 23)

This is called Yoga. Yoga is not limited to closing the eyes and subduing thoughts.

Shri Krishna prefers the Yoga which is not restricted to a cave, or done only in a Samadhi, or with eyes closed. The Yoga He favors is –

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगो परमो मतः ॥

*Aatmaupamyē`na sarvatra samam pashyati yorjuna,
Sukham vaa yadi vaa dukham sa yogee paramo matah.*

Other people experience joy and sorrow just as we do. So, we should try to save others from sorrow just as we try to save ourselves.

The Yogi who sits in a cave is an 'apara' (second category) Yogi. The Yogi who has to keep his eyes shut and sit in deep meditation is also an apara Yogi. The real Yogi is the one who retains his equanimity under all circumstances, whether he walks on the road, sits in a shop, converses with people, passes through pestilence, heavy rain, bright sunshine, or even if he burns in the flames of fire. स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो 'Sa nishchaye`na yoktavyo' - how can this Yoga be accomplished? It is to be undertaken with great patience. We should not get fed up, or give up our efforts. अनिर्विण्णचेतसा 'Anirvinnache`tasaa' - we should not lose hope, or get disgusted. Secondly, निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो 'nishchaye`na yoktavyo' - our resolve should be firm. Yoga means a firm resolve. On the strength of the resolution depends the level of a person's being established in Yoga. A resolute person will be established in Yoga as he walks around, sits and gets up, eats and drinks. Give up the thought that Yoga is something which is removed from society and worldly interaction; that it is done in the mountains, forests, caves and in closed rooms. This Yoga is a muscle-man who will not leave us even when we are in the worst possible condition.

The causes of sorrow are external. Lightning may strike, and people say that the sorrow came from some दैविक निमित्त 'daivik nimitta' (divine cause). Someone hits us with a rod, and we say it is a भौतिक निमित्त 'bhautik nimitta' (material cause) of our suffering. And, when we consider people to be our enemies and friends, it is said that they are the आध्यात्मिक निमित्त 'adhyaatmik nimitta' (psychological cause). When people hear the word 'adhyatma', they think that it is a factor which has come from some seventh heaven. However, the direct meaning of this word is the internal machinery of the body. Just as there is a machine in the car, there is a machine in our body, too. Adhyatma is to understand the power, and the way it is connected, which enables the eyes to see and the ears to hear. Adhyatma does not mean the Brahman. It does not mean the Atma. Adhyatma is the way our mind and inclinations work.

Shri Shankaracharyaji Maharaj has said, न हि अध्यात्मविद् वेदान् ज्ञातुं शक्नोति तत्त्वतः 'Na hi adhyaatmavid ve`daan gnaatum shaknoti tattvatah.' Manuji has said, न हि अध्यात्म यद् कश्चिद् क्रियाफलं उपाश्नुते 'Na hi adhyatma yad kashchit kriyaafalam upaashnute'.' Just as it not possible to drive a car perfectly without knowing its machinery, we cannot get the desired results of our actions unless we know adhyatma – the working of the mind. Nor can we understand the meaning of the Vedas, unless we have knowledge about our psychological tendencies. So, the word 'adhyatma' means understanding the factors which disturb our mind, and how we can obtain inner peace.

We see the अध्यात्मिक सुख-दुःख *adhyaatmik sukha-dukha* (mental joy and sorrow), imagining people to be friends and foes, lightning striking, being hit by a rod, or being abused by someone. Three kinds of joys and sorrows come into our lives. In one kind, the निमित्त *nimitta* (cause) is totally external. It is दैविक 'daivik' (sent by the gods), and we know nothing about it so far. In the अध्यात्मिक सुख-दुःख 'adhyaatmik nimitta' (mental causes) our state of mind becomes sorrowful. If you focus on the Lord, your mind will no longer be filled with sorrow. Instead of wanting to shed tears for wealth, or for your wife, or relative, if you weep for the Lord, saying, 'O Lord, So many days have passed, but I have not succeeded in getting Your Darshan (see with reverence)', your sorrow will recede. Later on, you will experience a great Grace.

So, the causes of sorrow are external, the mental tendency of sorrow is internal, and the subtle ego of being unhappy is caused by foolishness. It is also called a भ्रम 'bhram' – an illusion, or a नासमझी *naasamajhee* – lack of proper understanding. 'I am unhappy', is a feeling which arises because we do not know our true essence. It comes because of our ignorance.

Bhakti turns the sorrowful state of mind, inclining it towards the form of the Lord. The sorrow vanishes. Vedanta removes the subtle ego which identifies with sorrow. In fact, you can say that the feeling, 'I am unhappy', does not occur at all.

However, we should not bother about worldly or natural causes of sorrow. So, if you have never noticed the words, स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा 'Sa nishchaye`na yoktavayo yogonirvinnache`tasaa', pay attention to them now. Firstly, never allow yourself to feel gloomy. Never feel helpless. Never say, "I have been trying for so long; if I've not succeeded till now, I will never

succeed.” Secondly, be firm in the resolve you make. This is a Yoga which is successful when the resolve is firm.

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ‘*Santushtah satatam yogee yataatmaa dridhanishchaya*’ – the ‘dri’ (in dridha – which means firmness) is Yoga. So, what you asked – तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् *tam vidyaaddukhasamyogaviyogam yogasangitam* – should not be considered to be light reading. You should do deep into the heart of the words and discover their full purport.

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10.11.1984

Question: This question arose in my mind because of a little story. The story is that Radharani's friends once asked her, "What is the real reason Shri Krishna steals butter?"

Radharani said, "I have never seen Him stealing. If I catch Him stealing, I will tell you why He steals."

A plan was made to catch Shri Krishna red handed. As per the plan, pots of butter were placed on छोकों *ccheekaas* (pot holders made of rope, hung from the ceiling), with bells attached to them. The bells would tinkle when Shri Krishna touched them, and He would be caught.

As per His habit, Shri Krishna came to steal butter. He noticed the bells, because He is too clever to be fooled by anyone. Shri Krishna commanded the bells to remain silent. The bells said, "Very well, since You command us to remain silent, we will not make any sound."

Shri Krishna came into the room, touching the bells as He entered, climbed onto the cheeka, and put His hand into the pot. He took a handful of butter and climbed down again. The bells remained silent. Then Shri Krishna started to eat the butter, and all the bells began to chime. At the sound of the bells, the Gopis rushed in, and Shri Krishna was caught red handed.

Later, Shri Krishna asked the bells, "Oh, bells, I had commanded you to keep quiet. Why did you chime?"

The bells said, "Look, Krishna, we remained silent when You brushed past us and entered the room. We were quiet when You climbed up to the cheeka. We made no sound even when You put Your hand into the pot, and took a handful of butter. However, we were helpless when You began to eat, because the primary command of the Shastras (scriptures) is that bells must ring when the Lord eats. So, how could we ignore the primary command?"

When I read this story, it seemed to me that in our lives, we are also given primary and ultimate commands. When I began to ponder on what the

ultimate command is, I was jolted by the memory of a sentence by Swami Vivekananda. ‘Every individual is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divinity within by controlling nature, internal and external.’

So, I place the question at Shri Maharajji’s feet, that he explains to us, the schooling of the inner and outer factors with which we should start, for creating a foundation on which our divine nature can be manifested, and we attain our totality.

Answer: This question is so beautiful that I don’t feel like answering it! This is a Tamil fable which carries a message. I think Vasanti Iyengar has written it for the Chintamani magazine.

विकार *Vikaaras* (distortions) arise in our simple lives. The असुर *asuras* (demons) enter first, and despoil the natural lifestyle. These vikaras have to be destroyed though संस्कार *sanskaras* (subtle impressions cultivated through meaningful practices). For example, a newborn baby is covered with membrane and bound by the placenta. He has to be cleaned. Just as people have to groom and trim unwanted or ungainly hair, or bathe to wash off the perspiration, in the same way, the Lord has given us a natural life, but we need to remove the factors which spoil it.

That means, divinity is natural, distortions are the covering, and sanskaras are undertaken to remove the distortions.

What do sanskaras achieve? They don’t bring anything new into our lives. They remove the veils which have covered the natural divinity within, so that our thoughts, actions, speech, and indulgences are not indiscriminate. Our natural life is the essence of the Paramatma. It is the Paramatma. And, sanskaras are brought in to remove the vikaras which have come into it.

So, which are the निरीक्षण *nireekshana* (inspections) and समीक्षा *sameekshana* (confrontations) needed to ensure that we are not enslaved by the vikaras? The Brahma sutras mention a Teacher, Acharya Audulomi, who says, ‘Go beyond the vikaras in which you are entangled. Rise above them. Then, you will see that your life is actually divine.’ Acharya Kashakritsna says that when you go beyond vikaras, you do not have a change of place, like going to Heaven or Vaikuntha (the Land of Lord Vishnu). You don’t have to anticipate a time, thinking, ‘If I practice, I will go beyond the distortions

which have come into my life,' Nor is there any need to make any external changes by becoming something else.

अवस्थितेरितिकाशकृत्स्नः (ब्रह्मसूत्र १.४.२२) 'Avasthite`ritikaashakritsnah' (*Brahmasutra 1. 4. 22*) – search out the truth about your natural life. The kind of simple life you had in your mother's womb, or on the day you were born – totally free of deceit, secretiveness, desire or demand – if your life becomes equally simple even one moment before your death, then that is the supreme quality of life. And if, by some chance, you can lead a life as uncomplicated and free, it is the highest kind of life. Our lives are filled with Maya. Maya means the mind; Maya and the mind are synonymous. Just as the world is created by Maya, our world is created by our mind – it is pushed into our mind. If we free ourselves from all these superimposed factors, then we will be liberated in this very life, and we will be in our natural state.

The important point is, what do we have to wait for, examine, and confront? What we have to do is to get rid of the feeling that we lack anything. 'You don't have this, and this, or that. You don't have long to live,' are thoughts which are pushed into your mind. In the parlance of Vedanta, they are called अध्यारोप 'adhyaropa'. That means, these feelings have been superimposed upon your mind, and have settled into your psyche`. They have colored your thoughts.

We should not allow these superimpositions, these false impressions, to attach themselves to our Self, even when we observe their presence. We should understand intellectually, that these impressions and vacuums do not exist in our real Self. 'These things are superimposed by place, time, and objects, but I am not attached to them.' This is your Kaivalya (indivisible, supreme Self) manifested; and it is the greatest thing you can achieve. This is not साध्य *saadhya* (obtained through effort); it is सिद्ध *siddha* (already achieved). This is not created, it exists. And, it is necessary to remove the false understanding about its existence. If we obtain the natural, pristine knowledge about our life, then all these false impressions and superimposed factors fall off on their own. None of them attach themselves to us.

So, use the sanskaras to remove the vikaras which have been thrust upon your mind by external factors, and then let the sanskaras go, as well, if you want to obtain a divine life. It is not as though you apply soap to wash the dirt off, but don't wash the soap off later. All the sanskaras are done for the purpose of removing vikaras, and they have to be given up when the vikaras

are removed. They are not to be held on to. So, the manifestation of divinity is that when the bells start ringing, you will be liberated from both the sanskaras and he vikaras.

Question: I read a sentence in Swami Sharananandji's book – 'We should use our विवेक *vive`ka* (discrimination) on ourselves, and have विश्वास *vishvaasa* (trust) for others.' Kindly enlighten us by explaining how this helps, in the development of the individual.

Answer: Swami Sharananandji Maharaj's way of thinking was unique. Devki Bahen now organizes his works. Only he can know exactly what he meant to say. When we comment upon the meaning of a poet's work, we are not aware of exactly what his thought were. We tend to impose our own opinions, feelings and beliefs into their words.

Now, we will discuss vivek and vishvas. The essence of discrimination is to separate two things which have got mixed. We should also use discrimination regarding our own actions, to make sure that they are beneficial for ourselves and for others. The vivek of karma is that what we do should not cause harm to us or to anyone else. The vivek of bhog (indulgence) is that we should have the right to use the things we use. We should not use or enjoy anything beyond what is right for us, and rightfully ours to use. The vivek of भाव *bhaava* (emotions) is that, as far as possible, we should not be unduly suspicious about people. Being suspicious harms us more than the people we feel suspicious about. संशयात्मा विनश्यति (गीता ४.४०) 'Samshayaatmaa vinashyati' (Gita 4. 40). Lord Krishna says –

नायं लोकऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः।

(गीता ४.४०)

Naayam lokosti na paro na sukham sanshayaatmanah.

(Gita 4. 40)

The person whose heart is filled with suspicion cannot be happy; neither in this world, nor in the next. There is no sukha (happiness with content) in his life whatsoever. He is walking on the road to destruction. It is a sin to instill suspicion into someone else's mind. Our behavior should be like an open book, so that there is no scope for anyone to be suspicious about us. Furthermore, we should not be suspicious about others. पापी सर्वत्र पापमाशङ्कते 'Paapi sarvatra paapamaashankate`' – a sinner's mind is always filled with

पाप *paapa* (sinful tendencies), suspecting everyone to be sinful. We should be trustworthy, and encourage others to be trusting. Our actions, indulgences, speech, and emotions should contain discrimination.

Just as good health is desirable for the body, purity is desirable for the character, and self control is desirable for the sense organs, to stop them from going beyond the limits of what is right. We should refrain from saying anything which ought not to be said. We should abstain from improper action or wrong indulgences. This means, that a healthy body and pure character are needed. A control over our senses is needed, and it is important that our mind is filled with a general benevolence. There should be no ill will for anyone.

Jajali Rishi went to the Dharma Vyadha (the righteous butcher) to ask what the essence of Dharma was. Jajali Rishi had acquired spiritual powers through asceticism. He looked angrily at a bird that had shed droppings on his head, and the bird turned into ashes. However, his angry look had no effect on a pious lady who was a devoted wife. At her suggestion, he went to the Dharma Vyadha to ask what the essence of Dharma was. The Dharma Vyadha said that the essence of Dharma is –

यदा न कुरुते भावं सर्वभूतेषु पाकम्।
कर्मणा मनसा वाचा ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा।।

शांतिपर्व २६२.१६

Yadaa na kurute` bhaavam sarvabhooteshu paapakam,

Karmana manasaa vaachaa brahma sampadyate` tadaa.

(Mahabharata, Shanti Parva 262. 16)

When a person does not consider anybody to be a sinner – यदा न कुरुते भावं सर्वभूतेषु पापकम् *yadaa na kurute` bhaavam sarvabhooteshu paapakam.* It is not a sin for a snake to bite someone, or a scorpion to sting someone. It is not a punya (spiritual merit) for a cow to give milk. All creatures behave according to their nature; animals as well as humans. Nobody has the right to consider another person to be a paapi (sinner). Don't consider anyone to be a paapi because of their actions, thoughts, or talk. Whether a person is a sinner or not, is his responsibility. However, when you begin to look at someone with the thought that he is a paapi, then the paapi enters your heart,

and your heart takes on a reflected sinfulness. You begin to think that some other sinner is seen in your mind. No other sinner is present in your mind; it is your mind that has assumed the form of the sinner you see. So, another person seems to be a sinner when the consciousness in you mingles with the awareness of sin. So what you have to be watchful for is that you should not have any ill will for anyone. To implant this attitude firmly in the psyche, you should strengthen the tendency to trust people, and have good will for all. Purity in action, control over the senses, benevolence in the mind, and discrimination in the intellect. If your thinking contains discrimination, then your real Dharma – which is your essence – will be safe.

The intellect has two parts – one is to have discrimination and the other is to be egoistic. When a vanity about our learning, wisdom, or condition enters into our thinking, it results in a narrow minded attitude, and we consider ourselves to be inferior or superior. This leads to our showing disrespect to others. The achievement of humility has its roots in discrimination. Unless there is humility in our discrimination, the discrimination is impure, and likely to lead to injustice. True humility comes when we view everything with the same attitude as the Lord. The Paramatma sees all beings as the Atma, and nothing else. So, when our opinion differs with His, in the way we see the world, we will never be fully happy. ‘It is I, who am seen in the form of the world. I am the entire Creation,’ is how the Paramatma sees the world. And our viewpoint is, ‘This one is a creature from hell; that one will go to Heaven. This one is a paapi, but that one is a पुण्यात्मा *punyaatmaa* (having spiritual merit).’ How can we be happy, if we see things differently? It is a servant’s duty to have the same attitude as the Master. How can a servant insult a person to whom his master gives respectful service? That is not the right behavior for a servant. When we begin to look at things the way the Lord sees them, then our vanity dissolves and disappears.

So, absence of vanity, discrimination, benevolence, self control, and purity of character are qualities which are vital for our lives. You should win the trust of others, and trust others, too. Let your life be filled with vivek, and make sure that you remain free of vanity. Vanity sets in when humility and discrimination are absent, so save your vivek from vanity. Keep a sharp watch on yourself, so that no fault comes into you. If you see faults in others, you should pardon them, thinking that circumstances were responsible.

If anyone went to Bhaiji – Shri Hanuman Prasadji Poddar – and complained about someone, he would say, “My brother, you don’t know him well. That is why you have this mistaken impression about him. Actually, he is a good man.” However, when the man (who was complained against) came to him, Bhaiji would say, “My brother, I know that you are filled with good will, but you should avoid doing anything which can create ill will in anyone else’s mind. When anyone’s heart is sullied because of you, you are also harmed to some extent. Not only should your behavior be good, it should be such that people believe that you are good.”

If anyone criticized somebody to Shri Haribabaji, he would say, “Please leave. Your mind is sullied, and you have come to sully my mind! Please go away. I know that person to be a good man.”

And, when anyone came to Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj with a complaint against someone, Baba would say, “Why do you understand the language of mosquitoes?” and he would continue to smile as though nothing had happened.

So, you should keep the nature of a Mahatma in mind, and be worthy of people’s trust. You should trust others. And, you should give importance to using discrimination in your actions, indulgences, speech, and emotions. I think that Swami Sharanandaji’s ideas would have been along these lines.

Question: श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम् (गीता ४.३९) ‘*Shraddhaavaana labhate` gnaanam`*’ (Gita 4. 39) - is this Gnan the Atmagnan (knowledge of the Atma)? If so, what is the spiritual level of the Gnani, once he has obtained Atmagnan? Please explain.

Answer: श्रद्धा *Shraddhaa* (faith with respect) is felt only for those we consider to be great. That means, something is seen externally, and we have faith that it actually has some great qualities. विश्वास *Vishvaasa* (trust) needs to be had for all, but shraddha can be held only for someone we consider to be great.

It is true that shraddha gives Gnan, but what kind of Gnan (knowledge) do you wish to acquire? If you want to use shraddha to obtain Gnan about Science, it will give you that Gnan. If you want to use shraddha to learn the art of making money, or do some research, shraddha will give you these skills. Shraddha is not necessarily only for obtaining tattvagnan (knowledge

of the essence). In fact, it is the secret of life, it enriches our life. A life which has no shraddha is arid, like a piece of dry wood. Yes, when people wish to obtain tattvagnan, shraddha will definitely be very helpful, because –

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।

(गीता ४.३४)

Tadviddhi pranipaate`na parprashne`na se`vayaa.

(Gita 4. 34)

‘You should prostrate yourself at the Guru’s feet with humility, serve him respectfully, and place your questions to them.’

All this is done externally and internally. For example, you may prostrate yourself at someone’s feet physically, but who knows what is in your mind? People ask many questions to show how knowledgeable they are. They want people to call them learned, but they lack the capacity to absorb the knowledge given to them. If the shraddha needed for obtaining tattvagnan is missing, then the questions and answers will remain at a superficial level. So, तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ‘*tadviddhi pranipaate`na pariprashne`na se`vayaa*’ – the seva (loving service) will also be nothing more than an external movement. Hence, tattvagnan is not obtained simply by प्रणिपात *praanipaata* (prostrations) or परिप्रश्न *pariprashne`na* (asking questions). The Mahatmas will, when asked, give a sermon, but the knowledge will not be absorbed. Shraddha is the quality which gives the capacity to absorb knowledge – श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः (गीता ४.३९) *shraddhaavaan labhabte` gnaanam tatparah samyate`ndriyah.* (Gita 4. 39).

There are three points. If a person has shraddha, but does no साधन *saadhan* (effort for spiritual progress), if he is not vigilant about carrying out his prescribed duties, and nor does he ask any questions – then shraddha will remain unfulfilled. It is just like a wife being unable to have a baby without a husband. Shraddha cannot bear fruit if there is no effort for spiritual progress.

If a person has shraddha, and is also alert about carrying out his duties, but lacks control over his sense organs – it will be like a couple getting married, trusting each other, and wanting to get an excellent son, but they have wasted their potential before their marriage. They lack the power of earlier

celibacy, and the density of the semen is ruined before the marriage, so it is difficult for them to have children. Similarly, when the sense organs are uncontrolled, the alertness (father) and the shraddha (mother) will not succeed in producing the Gnan (son). So, even though the seeker's prostrations will ensure that a sermon is given, and his question answered, no knowledge will be gained.

When all three are present – shraddha, alertness, and self control, then we will obtain that knowledge, which is called tattvagnan.

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ।

(गीता ४.३९)

Gnaanam labhdhvaa paraam shaantimachire`naadhigacchati.

(Gita 4. 39)

The fruit (son) will come when all three are combined, and it will bring instant peace. Even without seeing his new-born son, a man feels supremely happy when he hears that his wife (with her parents in another city) has given birth to a boy! So, if all three factors are adequate – wife (shraddha), husband (alertness) and sperm (power of self control) – then the birth of a son (Gnan) is a certainty; and a deep peace will accompany the Gnan. However, it is not as though shraddha alone is enough to obtain Gnan. We need to have a strong desire for Gnan, which prompts us to place our questions. We also need to be extremely vigilant about not wasting our energies on the wrong kind of activities. Shraddha does its work when जिज्ञासा *jigyaasaa* (the desire for knowledge) is acute and intense. Shraddha comes from the seeker, and Gnan comes from the Guru, and when the two come together, then the paripoorna (complete) Ishwara is manifested.

Question: Last year, you had told us, “All पूजा *poojaa* (worship) is done for our अहंकार *ahamkaara* (ego).” The mind has become accustomed to this (enhancement of the ego) over many past lives. Then, how can we worship the Lord properly? Please explain.

Answer: When we try to establish – through our puja of the Lord – that we are great devotees, then even the puja becomes an object used for self-gratification; the puja of the ‘aham’ (I). In the twelfth chapter of the Manusmriti there is a shloka which describes the puja of the Lord –

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
समं पश्यन्नात्मयाजी स्वाराज्यमधिगच्छति ॥

(मनुस्मृति १२.९१)

Sarvabhooteshu chaatmaanam sarvabhootaani chaatmani,

Samam pashyannaatmayajee svaaraajyamadhigacchati.

(Manusmriti 12. 91)

You should always bear in mind the fact that the Paramatma is in the hearts of all, and all are in the Paramatma. If your puja shows respect for one, and disrespect for another – or is done to insult one and honor another – then that is not true worship. Real puja is when you see the Lord in all. कटुक वचन मत बोल रे, तोहे पीउ मिलेंगे, घूँघट का पट खोल रे तोहे पीउ मिलेंगे *Katuka vachana mata bola re` tohe` piyu mile`nge`, ghooonghata kaa pata khola re` tohe` piyu mile`nge`.* Lift up the veil that covers your vision, and have the darshan (see with reverence) of the Paramatma who is in all hearts. The pot is made of clay, so are the cup and tiles on the roofs of huts. Keep your eyes on the clay, instead of the different names and forms. After that, the puja is –

समं पश्यन्नात्मयाजी स्वाराज्यमधिगच्छति ।

Samam pashyannaatmayajee svaraajyamadhigacchati.

One has to sacrifice one's ego, to do puja. This is called आत्म-यजन *Atma-yajan* (offering up the subtle ego of individuality). A person who is unable to sacrifice his little self sees the presence of the Paramatma in himself very strongly. However, he can hardly – if at all – see the Lord's presence in others! So, it is imperative to give the बलि *bali* (sacrifice) of our aham (subtle ego). You can understand it thus. The Emperor Bali surrendered all his worldly possessions, and also the fruits of his meritorious deeds, and yet his offering was incomplete. The Lord said, “Your pledge to give Me three foot-spans of land remains unfulfilled.”

Bali understood what the Lord meant. He said, “Something remains unoffered, Maharaj.”

“What do you have left, to give, Bali?” asked the Lord. “You have nothing, either in this world or the next.”

“Something is left, Maharaj,” said Bali.

“What?”

“The giver is not given yet. He has surrendered his possessions to You, but he has not surrendered his self to You. So, please place Your foot on this ‘I’ of mine – which I have not yet offered up to You. Please measure it as the third foot-span I pledged.”

पदं तृतीयं कुरु शीर्ष्णि मे निजम्।

(भागवत ८.२२.२)

Padam triteeya kuru me` nijam.

(Bhagwat 8. 22. 2)

So, whatever we give and take, we continue to consider ourselves to be the giver or the taker. We become a पुजारी *pujaari* (one who worships) when we do puja. We become a donor when we give something. We become a कर्ता *kartaa* (doer) when we do a good deed. However, puja is complete only when our ego – our sense of being an individual – is given up. This ego is the Bhaumasura – the demon in the form of a buffalo. The puja is incomplete till this is sacrificed at the feet of the Lord. And, the method of sacrifice is that all the letters of the alphabet, all the words made by the letters, all the sentences made by the words, and all that is understood from these sentences is offered up to the Lord.

Long ago, I read a song written by someone. Perhaps it was by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan. ‘O Lord, please consider this पुजारिनि *pujaarin* (female worshipper) to be the puja, and the objects offered in the puja.’ So, until the one who worships is not offered up, as well, the worship remains incomplete. If you want your worship to be complete, surrender your self to the Lord.

Question: ‘The seeds of Karma are burnt completely, and rebirth does not occur, the Atma merges into the Paramatma.’ Does the Atma retain its independent status after it merges into the Paramatma? If not, how can the experience of bliss be possible, once the Atma has dissolved into the Paramatma? Please explain.

Answer: This Atma-Paramatma is बोध-स्वरूप *bodha-svaroopā* (it is essentially knowledge itself); it is not अज्ञान-स्वरूप *agnaana-svaroopā* (the essence of ignorance). Since it is bodh-svaroopā, anand (bliss) and bodh (knowledge) are not separate factors. Knowledge, which is separate from anand, is not desirable; and if anand is separate from knowledge, it will be inanimate. Knowledge is desirable only if it is in anand, and anand can exist only when there is an awareness of its existence. So, knowledge (or consciousness) and bliss are not considered to be separate emotions; they are never separated.

The fallacy is that we have come to believe our anand to be placed in treacle, or in sweets made of treacle or dates. We think that our anand lies in the safe, or in diamonds and pearls. The fallacy is that we are responsible for separating our anand from our essence and our awareness.

In actual fact, anand is not obtained. The obtaining is anand. Don't you experience joy, as soon as you come to know of something remarkable? Don't you feel overjoyed when you hear that your wife has given birth to a healthy son? Anand can never be separated from knowledge. If it was, it would be lying somewhere in a safe, or in a bank. It cannot be called anand, if it is something separated from knowledge. Which means, only the anand which is bodh-svaroopā is actually anand. The Atma has Gnan, but it has become fragmented in the subtle ego of individuals. The Paramatma has anand, but it has become remote because we cannot see the Paramatma. It becomes other than us, and it seems that we will have to wait a long time to obtain it.

When the Atma and Paramatma become one, however, then the पूर्णता *poornataa* (totality) of the Paramatma comes into the Atma; and the awareness of the Atma goes into the Paramatma. Therefore, as long as you feel that the Paramatma is another entity, you have to cultivate a feeling about His bliss through constant reminders, but your love is for yourself. And, if you love yourself, but consider anand to be in another (the Paramatma), then the प्रेम *pre`ma* (love) will pull you towards itself, and anand will pull you towards itself as well. This will result in so much tension that neither will you be able to sit peacefully, nor will you be able to live happily. Then? When the Atma and Paramatma are known to be one, the fallacy of anand being anywhere else, or in any other period in time, or anand being separate from us, will end. Once this false impression is

broken, then we realize that our essence – which is consciousness – is Paramananda (supreme bliss; the Lord).

Anand does not mean getting some item, or reaching some place. Anand does not mean living in any particular period in time. Anand is the name of our Gnan. Anand cannot be separate from Gnan. Anand is inanimate, unless it is combined with Gnan, but Gnan is not desired without anand. Gnan and anand are united; it is called the oneness of the Atma and Paramatma. It can also be said that the Atma-Paramatma being one is called Gnan and anand.

Had anand been separate, then it would not have been experienced along with the obtaining of Gnan. However, unless the person also has वैराग्य *vairagya* (detachment) it is difficult for him to grasp this. The anand of a person who lacks detachment will be spread over any number of objects. He will find happiness in different people, objects and places. He will wander around in search of happiness. However, the person whose Gnan is coupled with anand is not dependent on any item place, or time. As soon as he experiences the आवरण भंग *aavarana-bhanga* (the shattering of the veil of illusion) he will experience Paramananda.

So if you are under the impression that anand is something to be indulged in – then, my brother – get married! You will get enjoyment if you get married. The anand of the Paramatma, the सत्ता *sattaa* (reality) of the Paramatma is not for forming any image. The चित्त *chit* (consciousness) of the Paramatma is not for the rising and subduing of urges and tendencies, or making changes; and the anand of the Paramatma is not for indulgences. The formless satta, the tendency-free Gnan, and the anand without indulgence is the anand which is our essence. And, apart from its own experience, it contains no other indulgence. This point is understood easily by those who are dispassionate. People who are trapped in attachments and aversions do not understand it very easily.

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Question: Please elaborate upon Maharshi Patanjali's aphorism, श्रद्धा 'Shraddha (faith with respect), वीर्य veerya (virility), स्मृति smriti (memory), समाधि samaadhi (deep meditation), प्रज्ञा pragnyaa (prudence), पूर्वकम् poorvakam (previous), इतरेषाम् (१.२०) itare`shaam (1.20). Please tell us about smriti and Samadhi in detail. We always hear about shraddha, but what does Maharshi mean by smriti and Samadhi? Please grace us by explaining this.

Answer: Shraddha, veerya, smriti, and Samadhi. Shraddha is the first to enter the heart. Shraddha means the faith and reverence we have for our scriptures, Sadguru (true Guru), and सत् सम्प्रदाय sat sampradaaya (the religious sect which advocates true righteousness). Apart from being a great support in our lives, shraddha is a great strength to possess. A weak person is incapable of having faith. The shraddha of a weak minded man will break as soon as he sees anything that goes against his inclinations, beliefs, or understanding, and he blunders through life. He has faith on someone, then on something else. The people and objects of his faith keep changing. All these are indications of weakness.

Shraddha is a factor which shelters the heart that houses it, and removes the mental fickleness of the person who has shraddha. Its main task is not to make the person meet anyone else; the main task of shraddha is to manifest the object of shraddha. It is not as though any Tom, Dick or Harry can definitely have faith on someone. The Rig Veda contains a Shraddha-Sukta. It is a prayer to Shraddha, like any prayer to the Almighty.

श्रद्धां प्रातर्हवामहे श्रद्धां मध्यन्दिनं परि।

(ऋग्वेद १०.१५१.५)

Shraddhaam praatarhavaamahe` shraddhaam madhyandinam pari.

(Rig Veda 10. 151. 5)

'We invoke shraddha at dawn, we invoke shraddha at noon, and we invoke shraddha at dusk.'

श्रद्धया सत्यमाप्यते (२१.३२) 'Shraddhayaa satyamaapyate`' (Yajur Veda 21. 32). It is only through shraddha that we can obtain Satya (the ultimate reality).

Your mind is fickle and restless, when your wishes are thwarted. Then your intellect becomes the slave of your mind. There is no steadiness in it. So, when we set a daily routine for ourselves, like आसन *asana* (Yogic postures) or प्राणायाम *praanayaama* (breath control exercises), प्रत्याहार *pratyahaara* (restraining the senses), we should do them with full faith. निष्ठा *Nishthaa* – unshakeable faith – rises from shraddha. Unless we have shraddha we will be unable to achieve anything in our lives. The Sama Veda has a set of four mantras, each connected to the next. It says that we should use shraddha to conquer अश्रद्धा *ashraddhaa* (lack of shraddha) – ashraddha for the Ishwara, for the Vedas, for the Guru, and for the Mahatmas. We tend to reject anything which does not appeal to our fixed ideas. श्रद्धया सत्यमाप्यते (यजुर्वेद २१.३२) ‘*Shraddhayaa satyamaapyate*` (Yajur Veda 31. 33), and श्रद्धया अश्रद्धाम् (साम वेद) ‘*Shraddhayaa asraddhaam*’ (Sama Veda) tell us to use satya (truth) to conquer असत्य *asatya* (falsehood), to use दान *daana* (giving alms) to conquer greed, to use shraddha to conquer ashaddha, and use अक्रोध *akrodha* (lack of anger) to conquer क्रोध *krodha* (anger). These four mantras are given together in the Sama Veda.

A person who lacks shraddha is more lowly than a crow. (A crow never trusts anyone; its eyes look at two objects simultaneously. It is said that it never sees the same object with both eyes.) The doors of success, concentration, and power in our hearts are opened when shraddha rises. The Atma contains everything – it has the power to create the world, destroy the world, derive pleasure from the world, and it has the Gnan which reveals that nothing exists but the Paramatma.

It is said, about the Smritis, that as our shraddha increases, the stream of Gnan in the heart begins to show up clearly, without any restraint. You can, if you want, remember your past lives, or see into the future. You can know whatever you want about the present, and also what is in other people’s minds. However, the Yogis consider Siddhis to be an obstacle on the spiritual path. Smriti means Atma-Smriti (the recollection of the Atma).

Now comes वीर्य *veerya*. Veerya means the capacity to sacrifice; to give up something. It is cowardly to think that we cannot give up some item, person, situation, etc. What did we bring with us, and what will we take with us? People say, “I can’t live without this; I can’t stay without that; the work cannot continue without a particular object. I will die if I don’t have such and such.” This is all a lack of valor. क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ (गीता २.३) ‘*Klaibyam*

maa sma gamah paartha’ (Gita 2. 3). Other critics have said that it ought to be मा स्म क्लैब्यं गमः पार्थः ‘*Maa sma klaibyam gamah paarthah*’ (Don’t behave like a eunuch, Arjuna). Smriti means remembering our स्वरूप *svarooopa* (the essence of our being); which means, forgetting the interactive world around us, and the rising of the recollection of our essence. And, veerya means the capacity to give up bad habits, undesirable traits, and ill-will.

Samadhi means a single pointed focus. What kind of एकाग्रता *e`kaagrataa* (single mindedness)? It does not mean becoming like an inanimate object. A single pointed focus means a Samadhi; to focus only on the object of meditation. Just as a corpse is buried in a grave, our thoughts and tendencies are all buried into a Samadhi. When this सम्प्रज्ञात समाधि *sampragnaata samaadhi* (a deep meditation where the awareness of the ‘I’ is retained) comes, then this ध्यान धारणा *dhyaana-dhaaranaa* (meditation and full concentration) comes, and then the person becomes capable of entering into an असम्प्रज्ञात समाधि *asmaragnaata samaadhi* (where the awareness of individuality disappears, and only the absolute Brahman is experienced). Thus, we see that shraddha, smriti, veerya, and Samadhi are needed for blocking all mental tendencies. It is not difficult to be established in our essence if these qualities and capacities are obtained. Of these, shraddha is the most important. It is the primary quality; and a single pointed, unwavering state of mind is the ultimate form of sadhan (effort for spiritual progress).

I will tell you one thing more. Are you ready to carry on with your sadhan for the rest of your life? If you ask, “How much longer will I have to do this sadhan? When will I go beyond it?” it is an indication that you do not have full faith in the sadhan. You wish to change the method. Sadhan is that, which is accepted for the whole of our lives.

‘I will do japa (the rosary).’

For how many days will you do japa?

‘I will do japa as long as I live.’

‘I will meditate upon the Lord.’

‘Till when?’

‘Till the day I die.’

So, the one who thinks of giving up one sadhan and going beyond it, is insulting the sadhan.

The second point about sadhan is that no sadhan is great or small. Whatever kind of sadhan you desire, whatever kind of life you wish to lead – take a

resolve today, this very minute; decide that you have become that. At that very moment you will be established firmly in that unshakeable faith.

Don't say, 'When should I begin to do japa – tomorrow, or the day after?' That is an indication that you are not convinced about the need to do japa. Do you want to start doing japa? Then why don't you start at once? And the japa started 'Rama, Rama, Ramatill when should I continue?'

Continue as long as you have breath. And if you are reborn, continue in your next life as well. Your sadhan will never come alive unless you consider it to be the most superior, and believe it to be a form of the Paramatma, and wish to dissolve yourself into it. So, decide which you prefer – श्रद्धा-चैतन्य *shraddha-chaitanya* (the consciousness of shraddha), स्मृति-चैतन्य *smriti-chaitanya* (the consciousness of memory), वीर्य-चैतन्य *veerya-chaitanya* (the consciousness of valor), or समाधि-चैतन्य *samaadhi-chaitanya* (the consciousness of deep meditation). And, don't wait for tomorrow – start today! And, don't wait for the afternoon – start now! And start – not for giving up later on – but to continue all your life. Sadhan is not to be started and stopped. It is to be continued as long as you live. Establish your goal firmly in your mind through your shraddha, smriti, veerya and Samadhi.

Question: What habits should we cultivate, if we want a life which is free of desires and grievances, where the शरणागति *sharanaagati* (surrender) to the Ishwara is total, and we have a deep love for His feet? Please explain.

Answer: I would say that you should decide at once that no desire ever enters your mind. As long as you have the wish to be free of desires, no other desire will enter your mind. See that whatever is happening, happens in full view of the Lord. It happens because of His wish, is inspired by Him, and done with His power. And, in the workings of the Lord, there is no scope for complaints. When you realize these factors, you will have no grievance left to make.

Listen – a gentleman went to meet a Mahatma, with a cloth tied round his head.

“Why, Sir, what is the matter – why do you have the cloth round your head?” asked the Mahatma.

“I have a headache,” replied the man.

“How old are you?”

”I am thirty three.”

“And, in thirty three years, how many times have you had a headache?”

“Today is the first time.”

“So, the first time you get a headache, you wear this flag to announce that the Paramatma has given you a headache! Did you ever wear a flag to show that you had no headache for thirty three years?”

So, my brother, realize that the Lord is aware of all that happens. It is He who inspires it. Everything happens with His power, and there is no scope or cause for complaining.

And, as you mentioned, there should be no desire, no grievance, only total surrender. What will you do? Sharanagati? Sharanagati is not done through any action. What is there in the world which does not belong to the Lord, or is not under His control?

I had told the Baba of Mokulpur, “Baba, make me sharanagata to the Lord.” He scolded me, and then said, “Very well, tell me, what is not offered up to the Lord? The earth, water, fire, wind and space are all controlled by Him. It is He who upholds the earth, gives water the ability to flow, and gives brightness to fire. He gives movement to the wind, and space to the sky. Your body is made of the elements He has created. So, what is there in your life, which is not already surrendered to the Lord? Everyone exists because He sustains them. They move and live at His will. It is His consciousness that animates all creatures. Bliss is His. My brother, शरणागति *sharanaagati* is not an action to be accomplished – it is a condition that exists right from the beginning! All that happens happens before Him, by His power.”

भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया।

(गीता १८.६१)

Bhraamayana sarvabhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayayaa.

(Gita 18. 61)

We sit in a boat, and the boatman sails the boat in such a way that it seems to be flying, without touching the water. The skillful boatmen have the ability to make a boat move in such a way that it seems as though the boat is still and the water is moving.

Swami Swaroopanandji Maharaj – who is the Shankaracharya these days – had once asked me, “What is sharanagati?” (In those days, I was at Jabalpur.

He would have been about twenty three or twenty four. He was tall, wore saffron robes, and was very good looking.) I had explained that sharanagati is not an action, it is not a promise, and it is not even a feeling. Sharanagati is a knowledge, an awareness. When we know, as a certainty, that we are all surrendered to the Ishwara, and are utterly in His power, that is sharanagati. Sharanagati is a Paramartha (the highest experience of the absence of 'I'). It is a fact. Swami Swaroopanandji was elated to hear this, and a strong bond of friendship developed between us. So, sharanagati is not done; it is realized.

भीषाऽस्माद् वातः पवते भीषोदेति सूर्यः ।
भीषाऽस्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च मृत्युर्धावति पंचमः ॥

(तै० उप० २.८.१)

*Bheeshaasmaad vaatah pavate` bheeshode`ti sooryah,
Bheeshaasmaadagnishe`ndrashcha mrityurdhaavati panchamah.
(Taittiriya Upanishad 2. 8. 1)*

The wind blows because of Him; the movements of the sun and moon are regulated by Him. It is because of Him that the earth supports us. So, the realization of sharanagati is the actual sharanagati. There should be no desire, no grievance, and the sharanagati should be there. All sharanagati is, is the feeling, 'Whether I have love for the Lord or not, I will stay as He keeps me.'

प्रेम *Pre`ma* (pure love) comes from the Jeeva (soul attached to a body). It is dependent on the strength of the individual; while sharanagati is dependent on the strength of the Ishwara. Prem is given greater importance in the sect of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, but sharanagati is considered more important in the sect of Shri Vallabhacharyaji Maharaj. In sharanagati, it is the power of the शरण्य *sharanya* (the one to whom we surrender). In love, it is the power of the one who loves, which works. It is the lover's commitment which works.

So, do not say, 'I have no desire, I have no grievance, I have taken refuge in the Ishwara, and I wallow in the sea of His love.' The ocean of love heaves, the Ganga of love flows, love showers down gently like a drizzle. There is only रस *rasa* (deep enjoyment) in everything, and bliss all around, and the Paramananda (total bliss, the Lord) is परिपूर्ण *paripoorna* (absolute) at this very time and place.

It is not that such a state will be achieved through practice. This state is present. What wish have you ever had, which is still with you? What grievance have you had, that remained with you for twelve months? What devil is it – apart from the Ishwara – who prevents us from remaining established in the realization of sharanagati? It is only because we keep thinking that we lack this, that, and the other. We feel restless, wanting to do something, the something else, then something more. However, there is no need for all that. Immerse yourself straightaway, here and now, whatever state you may be in, in love for the Ishwara.

Question: Mahatma Gandhi said that purity of the साधना *saadhana* (method for achieving a lofty objective) is vital for the attainment of the साध्य *saadhya* (lofty goal). However, Shri Krishna’s message in the Gita does not seem to hold the same opinion. Please explain how any auspicious goal can be obtained by improper methods.

Answer: I do not see any improper methods condoned or advocated anywhere in the Gita. It is the Kshatriyas (warrior)’s duty to do battle.

धर्म्याद् युद्धात् रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते।

(गीता २.३१)

Dharmyaad yuyddhaat shre`yonyat kshatriyasya na vidyate`.

(Gita 2. 31)

Didn’t Mahatma Gandhi give his consent to sending the Army to Kashmir? When a battle is undertaken for a few days, for the purpose of protecting peace and non-violence, it is not an अशुद्ध साधन *ashuddha sadhana* (impure method). A method which is prescribed by the Shastras (scriptures), is suitable for the वर्णाश्रम *varnaashrama* (status in life), and undertaken to protect people, cannot be considered an impure method. These are messages given within the framework of righteousness (Dharma). They are permitted and advocated by the Mahapurushas (great souls). There is nothing impure about such methods. The Gita contains no description of any अशुद्ध साधन *ashuddha saadhana* (impure method). Only शुद्ध साधन *shuddha saadhana* (pure methods) are given in the Gita. For Mahatma Gandhi, the Gita was a book dearer than life itself. He used to say, “Whenever I face any dilemma, I

open the Gita and get the answer at once.” So, those who believe that the Gita advocated wrong methods are absolutely mistaken.

It is not an impure method when a soldier is commanded to shoot a thief at sight. If our soldiers kill the enemy who attack, it is not wrong. It is a pure method (of doing one’s duty). And this is used so well at times that it cannot be praised sufficiently. If you feel that everybody should pass their lives drinking herbal juices, and that nobody should carry a gun, that there should be no watchmen, traders, clerks, or learned people – and that is the only method for spiritual progress – it will result in an increase of social impurities.

Question: It is generally said that people’s actions are prompted by their संस्कार *samskaaras*. What are sanskaras? How do they come into our lives? How many kinds of sanskaras are there? Please enlighten us upon these sanskaras related points.

Answer: In the Charak Samhita of the Ayur Veda, it is written, गर्भे संस्कार संक्रमण विचारः ‘*Garbhe` sanskaara samkramanavichaaraah.*’ It discusses the order of sanskaras (subtle impressions) which are made on the mind of the baby in the womb. Some sanskaras come from the mother’s parents, some from the father’s parents, and some from parents. Sanskaras are also formed just before the conception, and at the moment of conception, and also from the mental state of the parents during the mother’s pregnancy. There are some sanskaras from past lives. Thus, we see that there are many ways by which sanskaras come into our lives.

There is a story in the Bhagwat. Raja Anga was born in the lineage of Dhruva. He was a very righteous person. However, he was married to Sunitha, the daughter of Death. The result was that they had a son, called Bena, who did not believe in the Ishwara, or in Dharma, or in the Vedas and other scriptures. That means, Bena got most of his sanskaras from his maternal grandparents. Similarly, sanskaras come from parents, or paternal grandparents. The surprising thing is that at times, certain sanskaras do not manifest for ten or twenty generations and then suddenly appear in a child born several generations later.

There is a family in Kanpur – many people present would be acquainted with them – which has one generation of blind children, and one generation

with normal vision. This phenomenon has been observed in the past five or seven generations, that if the father's vision is normal, the child is blind, or the reverse happens. They have just one uncle – Devdharji would be knowing him – who is very learned. His intellect is extraordinary. He comes to me at Vrindavan, and also comes to Haridwar when I go there.

We see that sanskaras have a great impact upon our lives. That is why our scriptures start listing the sanskaras from गर्भाधान *garbhaadhaana* (the fertilization of the seed in the womb). Actually, the marriage ceremony is also a sanskaras. In our culture, the purpose of marriage is to restrict the physical attraction between man and woman, to one partner, instead of allowing promiscuity. It is an armor which protects their chastity. The purpose of marriage is not भोग *bhoga* (indulgence); it is to save people from indulging in multiple temptations, and that is why it is a sanskara. Several other factors are linked to it as well. The newly wedded couple should spend the first four nights sleeping on the ground, maintaining celibacy, and abstain from sour or salty foods.

त्रिरात्रम् अक्षीराक्षारलवणभोजनम्।

(गौतम धर्मसूत्र १.२६.३)

Triraatram aksheeraakshaaralavanabhojanam.

(*Gautam Dharmashootra 1. 26. 3*)

This sanskaras lasts for four days. Garbhaadhana is also a sanskaras, because the seed of the man has some faults and so has the womb of the woman. So

—

बैजिकं गार्भिकं चैनोः द्विजानामपमृज्यते।

(मनुस्मृति २.२७)

Baijikam gaarbhikam chainoh dvijaanaamapamrijyate`.

(*Manusmriti 2. 27*)

That means, the faults of the sperm and womb are removed by sanskaras. The copulation of a man and woman is not a sensual indulgence; it is a Dharma sanskara. It is a Yagya. I can speak about it publicly, even though the Gita Press refrained from translating these descriptions in their publications. They felt it is not proper for people to read. However, I am telling you that if the conjugation is undertaken with the proper rituals, it is a Yagya (ritualistic fire worship).

What is the कुण्ड *kunda* (the pit which holds the fire)? Which is the अग्नि *agni* (fire)? What is the सुवा *sroovaa* (the ladle with which oblations are poured into the fire)? Which is the आहुति *aahooti* (the ablution)? Which is the

appropriate mantra? And, what should be done, to have a tall, fair complexioned son? All this information can be obtained – not in some book on the Kamashastra (the science of passion) – but in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and Chandogya Upanishad, which are meant to be read by Vedantis. So, garbhaadhana (conception) is a sanskara, जातकर्म *jaatakarma* (when the baby is born) is a sanskara, नामकर्म *naamakaran* (the naming ceremony) is a sanskara, अन्नप्राशन *annapraashana* (the baby's first cereal meal) is a sanskara, and मुण्डन *mundane* (shaving the head) is also a sanskara. And in our culture, the अन्त्येष्टि क्रिया *anye`shti kriyaa* (last rites) are a sanskara and an action of Dharma. Well, nowadays sanskaras are gradually fading out.

Sanskaras are used to remove the faults which have entered our lives, and to implant good qualities which are lacking. Sanskaras are of three types – दोषापनयन *doshaapanayana* (removal of faults), गुणाधान *gunaadhaana* (implanting good qualities) and हीनाङ्गपूर्ति *heenaangapoorti* (artificial replacement of physical defects). They make people better, they beautify the ugly, they turn the wicked into good people, malevolence to benevolence, and mental distortions to good tendencies. For example, if your hair is tangled and odd looking, you have to trim it and give a shape to it. And if you are bald, you have to get hair implant done. Similarly, we see that sanskaras are a basic essence of our Vedic culture.

I had a friend in Benares, who was a jeweler. His name was Rameshwar Javeri. He was an excellent jeweler. He once told me how a farmer brought him an uncut diamond he'd found in the field. It was covered with mud, but it was a real diamond. The jeweler bought it for twenty rupees. The farmer was very happy to get twenty rupees. The jeweler cleaned the stone, and it began to shine. This brought its value to twenty thousand rupees. Then he had it cut and polished, and it was sold for two lakhs.

Babies are also filled with faults when they are born, but their faults can be mitigated by sanskaras. They can be given the Gnan they lack. Doshapanayan means removing defects. Gunadhana means inculcating good qualities. However, when something is missing completely, how can that be tied round their neck? A gold or silk string is placed round their neck like a necklace. The methods for improving our lives are called sanskaras.

Sanskaras come from before, but can also be undertaken later in life. This is not unknown; nor is it anything new. I have seen people do it. I have also seen children born with good sanskaras, and seen them grow up. Sanskaras are a method for beautifying our lives. To some extent, they are also आध्यात्मिक *aadhyaatmika* (pertaining to the soul), आधिदैविक *aadhidaivika* (sent by fate) and आधिभौतिक *aadhibhautika* (physical). They help our lives to be fulfilled, remove the तमोगुण *tamoguna* (lethargy), quiet the रजोगुण *rajoguni* (restlessness), and increase the सत्त्वगुण *sattvaguna* (peace and right thinking). Sanskaras have considerable impact. A person can become an elevated human being if he develops his – or his children’s – life (through proper sanskaras). What can be better than a man being humane and manly?

Question: Please explain this shloka, which comes in the third chapter of the Gita –

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः॥

(गीता ३.३०)

*Mayi sarvaani karmaani sanyasyaadhyaatmache`tasaa,
Nirasheernirmamo bhootvaa yudhyasva vigatajvarah.*

(Gita 3. 30)

and please give an elaborate explanation of what the Lord means, by the word ‘mayi’.

Answer: The Lord says ‘mayi’ so often –

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।

(गीता १२.८)

Mayie`va mana aadhtsya mayi buddhim nive`shaya.

(Gita 12. 8)

that in the Gita, there are over a thousand words like ‘asmaat’, which are connected to ‘I’. अहं, मम, माम्, मया, मह्यम, मयि *Aham, mama, maam, mayaa, mahyam, mayi*, and many others are repeated incessantly. In some of the shlokas, they come four or five times. For instance –

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे॥

(गीता १८.६५)

Manmanaa bhava madbhakto madyaajee maam namaskuru,

Maame`vaishyasi satyam te` pratijaane` priyosi me`.
(Gita 18. 65)

and

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः॥

(गीता १२.८)

Maiye`va mana aadhatsva mayi buddhim nive`shaya,
Nivashishyasi maiye`va ata oordhvam na sanshayah.
(Gita 12. 8)

So, you should search out where the 'I' is placed, to find what it indicates. Those who read the Gita without the guidance of someone knowledgeable get entangled in the different connotations. Some say, 'I' refers to नन्दनन्दन श्यामसुन्दर मुरलीमनोहर पीताम्बरधारी *nandanandan shyaamsundar peetaambardhaari* (the blue-hued son of Nanda, who wears a golden colored garment). Some say it means Radhavallabh (the beloved of Radha), or Rukminivallabh (the beloved of Queen Rukmini), some say it refers to Virat (the Lord's all-encompassing form). Some feel it means the भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया *bhraamayana sarvabhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayayaa* (the Lord using His Maya to make the world dance like mechanical dolls), and some say it refers to यो मां पश्यति सर्वन्त सर्वं च मयि पश्यति *yo maam pashyati sarvatra sarva cha mayi pashyati* (the one who sees Me in all, is always in My sight). So, my brother, there is no need for further elaboration. Take it to be the point from which you catch the 'I' of the Lord. Let any form of the Lord fill your heart. It may be साकार *saakaara* (with form), निराकार *niraakaara* (without form), सगुण *saguna* (with attributes), or निर्गुण *nirguna* (without attributes). It may be व्यक्त *vyakta* (manifest) or it may be अव्यक्त *avakta* (unseen). Hold whichever form appeals to you, and offer up all your action to that form –

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा।
निराशीर्निमो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः॥

(गीता ३.३०)

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते।।
तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम्॥

(गीता १२.६-७)

Mayi sarvaani karmaani sanyasyaadhyaatmache`tasaa,

Niraasheernirmamo bhootvaa yudhyasva vigatajvarah.

(Gita 3. 30)

Ye` tu sarvaani karmaani mayi sanysaya matparah,

Ananye`naiva yoge`na maam dhyaayanta upaasate`.

Te`shaamaham samuddhartaa mrityusansaarasaagaraat,

Bhavaami nachiraatpaartha mayyave`shitache`tasaam.

(Gita 12. 6-

7)

Now, please note that ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि *Ye` tu sarvaani karmaani* is related to bhakti (devotion), and the Dharma and Karma are related to it by being offered up to the Lord.

Sanyas (monk-hood) means to keep what is ours with someone else – to make a Trust. Our learning, intelligence, wealth, actions, emotions – everything we have, is kept in a Trust. Make the Lord the owner. Who owns everything we consider ‘ours’? The Lord. All the worldly people who go around carrying their great ‘I’ are not even equal to a single microbe in the Lord. And, the value of those who go around stuffed with self-importance because of their worldly possessions, aren’t even worth tuppence before the Lord. So, whatever we plan to do, we should first cast an eye to check who we are doing it for.

Who inspires our work? It is Rama, or it is kama (desire)? Are our actions ethical and legal, or are the prompted by base desire? Observe the source of inspiration, and – while working – see by whose power you work. And, when the work is completed, observe whether you draw the fruit towards yourself, or direct it towards the Lord. मयि संन्यस्य कर्माणि *Mayi sanyasya karmaani* – how can this be offered up to the Lord? Should we offer it up before starting, while doing the work, or when the work is finished – how should it be offered? अध्यात्मचेतसा *Adhyaatma che`tasaa* – don’t throw your Gnan outwards, keep it within. When knowledge has an external source, and is prompted by external factors, for the purpose of obtaining external objectives, there can be n question of अध्यात्मचेतसा *adhyaatmache`tasaa*. The inspiration of such work is worldly, too. ‘Adhyatma’ means that everything is within us, inside the body; and चेतस् *che`tas* means Gnan. So, just peep inside, and see who it is, that ignites the battery.

You people would be knowing that such batteries have been invented, which are activated by a person’s touch, or a sound. There is no battery inside the

human body, nor any electricity which can light a bulb. On my last visit to Pilani, I saw a big bulb, which was not connected to any battery. It lit up as soon as a man touched it. So, there is such electricity in our body. Just see the Gnan you have! So – for whom do you do the work? Is it for yourself? It is for your wife, family, community, religious sect, State, or Nation? My friends, expand it. Work for the whole world. Work for the all-encompassing Almighty Virat. Be careful that your actions do not harm anyone. Do what benefits all. My dear, don't look at everybody; see the Paramatma seated in all hearts. See whether He will like what you do.

I am reminded of my days with the Kalyan Parivar. Whenever I wrote, or dictated (I generally spoke, while someone else wrote) any article, I would wonder whether Bhaiji (Shri Hanumanji Poddar) would like it. Would he be pleased when he read it, or not? Once, I wrote an article, and told Bhaiji, "I have written this for you to read, not for the publication. Please read it once, and see its worth." In my heart I had the hope that when he read it, he would like it so much that he would surely have it published. I am just telling you of a desire I had.

The gist of all this is that whenever you do anything, keep in mind that the Lord sees all you do. Will your work please Him, or not? You are wrong, if you believe that you can do anything secretly, locking yourself behind seven layers and using technology to destroy even the microbes inside. Whatever you do is within the Lord's range of vision. There is a saying, which means that the Lord hears even the tinkle of anklets on the ants' feet! So, work for the Lord, living in His Creation, and by His power – निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा *niraasheernirmamo bhootvaa* – have no expectation for yourself, no personal desires, and remain unattached.

Look, a Brahmachari (celibate ascetic) used to stay with me. If I told him that I was thirsty, and asked him to fetch a glass of water for me, he would say, "Maharaj, let me finish sweeping the floor. Then I will wash my hands and get water for you." This showed that his priority was to do the work, not to serve. We should be quick to serve, even if some urgent work comes up.

A man told his servant, "If someone comes with a message, send in a chit first, and then bring the man when I call him." Now, what happened was that the man's house caught fire, and his servant came to call him. As per the system, he had to send in a chit first. The man saw that it was only his servant, who could wait a bit. He called the servant in after ten minutes. The servant said, "The house is on fire!" By then, everything was burnt. So, this is not the way to work.

Stop your work as soon as you get the Master's order. Stop, if the command is to stop, and go, if the command is to go. Don't think, 'This is mine, it is as per my belief, and will be done as I wish.' Leave everything to the Lord – निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा *niraasheernimamo bhootvaa*. And, will I lose, or will I win? I am doing my duty, I am working for my Master. It is fine, if I die in the attempt, and it is fine if I live to continue serving Him. युध्यस्व *Yudhyasva* means to continue to carry on doing your duty. Don't bother about the discomfort – the jvara (fever) – as you carry on doing your duty. You only have to fill in the time. We merely continue doing the work set for us by the Lord. If Dilip can't achieve the goal (of bringing the Ganga to the earth), Bhagirath will. If Anshuman can't complete it, Dilip will. We don't need to see whether the task is accomplished; we need to see only whether we are doing our duty well, or not.

So, my brother, keep your focus on the Lord, on the Virat, on the Hiranyagarbha (the golden egg of Creation), on the Turiya tattva (the sublime, indescribable essence). Desire nothing for yourself. Do not show off, saying 'I am doing this work', and ignore the discomforts you face while doing your duty. Continue to do your allotted task. This is the युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः *yudhyasva vigatajvarah* way to work.

Shri Lokmanya Tilak and Shri Mahatma Gandhi's commentaries on the Gita – called Anasakti Yoga – tell us the attitude we should work with. Shri Tilak's commentary is a large volume, but Shri Mahatma Gandhi's commentary is like a small diary. In it, he has given an excellent explanation of the right attitude to work. You can read it if you wish.

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12. 11. 1984.

Question: What is meant by ‘Maya’? What is the difference between गुणमयी माया *gunamayee maayaa* (the Lord’s power of illusion which contains the three gunas of sattva, raja and tama) and योग माया *yoga maayaa* (the Maya which help us reach the Lord)? Please explain also, the difference between these Mayas and the Maya in the Shankara school of thought.

Answer: All our Acharyas (Masters) believe that there are two kinds of creation. One is the ईश्वर-सृष्टि *Ishwara srishti* (the creation of the Ishwara), and the other is the जीव-सृष्टि *Jeeva srishti* (the creation of the Jeeva – the soul connected to a body). You can call it srishti, or you can call it Virat (the Lord in the form of the Universe). The things which are created by a combination of the earth, water, fire, wind and space come within the Ishwara srishti. They are not causes of sorrow; they give only happiness. The Jeeva creates ‘me’ and ‘mine’, and his creation always causes sorrow. This earth is made by the Ishwara, but you say, “This plot (of earth) is mine, and that is yours.” When you attach ‘mine’ and ‘yours’ to the earth, it becomes a cause of sorrow. It will give sorrow to one, and happiness to another. Ultimately, it will give sorrow to both, because we all have to leave, one day.

The creatures of the Ishwara’s creation – humans, Devtas (demigods), demons, animals and birds – do not become causes for sorrow for anyone. It is only when a Jeeva attaches his creation to the Lord’s creation, saying, “This is mine, and that is yours,” that objects become causes of sorrow. The creation of relationships is in the form of the ‘I’ connected to the body, and ‘mine’ connected to people. It is created by the Jeeva, and this ‘mine’ and ‘yours’ become causes of sorrow. This is called a चक्र *chakra* (wheel). First, we fail to realize that this world is the Ishwara’s creation. This is our अज्ञान *agnana* (lack of Gnan). Then, we want the world to be the way we want it to be. This is the वासना *vaasanaa* (desire) which enters; and then the karmas (actions) come in, for making the desired changes. Karmas give rise to fresh desires, which in turn, give rise to more karmas. This becomes a cycle which goes round and round, leading to अविद्या *avidyaa* (ignorance). That means,

agnan (that, which is contrary to Gnan) watches the fun, and we get trapped in this cycle of foolishness and desires, and work for their fulfillment. Isn't this a rotating wheel? It is not the Ishwara who has trapped us; it is our own agnan – our own folly – which made us trap ourselves. The Ishwara is full of bliss. He does not give sorrow to anybody. The Jeeva creates sorrow by his own foolishness, and suffers. The Acharyas, Sadgurus (true Gurus), Sants, and Mahatmas try to remove these follies.

Now – see, the Lord has a Yogamaya. It is also called विद्याशक्ति - योगाय भगवद्-योगाय भगवद्मिलनाय या माया- सा योगमाया *vidyaashakti – yogaayaa bhagavad-yogaaya bhagavadmilanaaya yaa maayaa – saa yogamaayaa*. The Maya which helps us to reach the Lord is called Yogamaya. It is like this – if you feel that a prostitute is yours, she will become a cause of sorrow for you. However, if you feel that a Sant-Mahatma is yours, it will be a cause of happiness. One will be the Maya which traps, and the other will be a Maya which helps you to reach the Lord. This also contains the feeling of 'mine', but the Maya towards the Guru, Sant, Dharma, Pilgrimage, etc. frees us from the world and help us meet the Lord. It is the Yogamaya. And the Maya which entangles us and binds us to the world, is Maya.

There are many kinds of Maya – Maya, Mahamaya, and Yogamaya. The people of Vrindavan believe that there are three kinds of Maya. One is the विमुखजनमोहिनी माया *Vimukhajanamohini Maya* which makes people turn away from the Lord. These are people who never look at Him. To them –

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

(गीता ७.१४)

Daivee hye`shaa gunamayee mam maayaa duratyayaa.

(Gita 7. 14)

Maya plays her games. दैवी *Daivee* means the glittering Maya, and ह्येषां *hye`shaam* means the façade. This is the Maya which deludes people with her glitter, so that they are unable to look at the Ishwara.

Another Maya is – नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य (गीता ७.२५) *Naaham prakaashah sarvasya* (Gita 7. 25) – 'I am not seen'. Why? योगमाया-समावृतः। मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् *Yogamaayaa samaavritah. 'Moodhoyam naabhijaanaati loko maamajamavyayam'*. Maya has covered their intellect, so that even when the

light shines evenly and brightly for all, these people are unable to see the Lord. मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् 'Moodhoyam naabhijaanaati loko maamajamavyayam'.

Once, a conference was organized at Calcutta. At that time, Ishwari Prasad Sharma was the Editor of the 'Hindu Panch.' He invited Shri Mohan Mahato Viyogiji for the conference. Viyogiji's poems were published frequently in the Hindu Panch, because of their excellence. Ishwari Prasadji had never met Viyogiji, but they had developed a friendship through correspondence. This is why Ishwari Prasadji had asked Viyogiji to attend the conference.

Ishwari Prasadji went to the guest house to meet Viyogiji. Although Viyogiji was there, he pretended to be someone else, and said, "Viyogiji has just gone out, please come later."

Ishwari Prasadji went back disappointed. He came again, the following day, and the same thing happened. This was also repeated on the third day.

The day of the conference arrived, and the meeting began. Bajpaiji, who was the President of the conference, called out, 'Now, I ask Viyogiji to come on the stage and recite one of his beautiful poems.' Viyogiji stood up, and went to the stage. Seeing him, Ishwari Prasadji also got up from his seat in the audience, and went up to the stage. He embraced Viyogiji, saying "This is such a fraud, that he has been harassing me for the past three days! I go to meet him, and he tells me, 'Viyogiji has gone out!'"

So, my brother, this leela (frolic) of the Lord is just like that. He appears before us in hundreds of forms. We see Him in thousands of forms, and we know Him in a hundred thousand ways. He appears as our relative in ten or twenty forms, but there is such a covering over our intellect, that we fail to recognize Him. This is called the विमुखजनमोहनी माया 'vimukhajanamohini maayaa.'

The other one is स्वजनमोहनी माया Svajanamohini maayaa. When Shri Krishna wanted to go from Mathura to Gokul, all the people in Mathura fell asleep. Their faces were turned away from Him. The people of Gokul also fell asleep, with their doors left open. The Lord entered the home, and lay down on the bed. They never even knew what was happening. This is called the स्वजनमोहनी माया 'svajanamohini maayaa.'

The third is स्वमोहनी माया *Svamohini maayaa*. The Lord vanished, at the time of the महारास *Mahaaraasa* (the frolic of dancing with the Gopis). The Gopis and Radharani all said, “Where will He go? Let us surround the wood.” Thousands of Gopis spread out in a circle, closing in gradually. Just one small arbor was left. To avoid getting caught, Krishna assumed His four-armed form, holding a conch shell, discus, mace, and lotus in His hands. The Gopi was frightened when she saw the four-armed figure, and ran to Radharani.

“A four-armed Devta (demigod) is sitting inside,” she said.

“What business does a four-armed Devta have in Vrindavan?” asked Radharani. “Come, I will take a look.” She entered the arbor. As soon as Shri Krishna saw her enter, He forgot Himself. All the items held in His hands fell down. He reverted to His two-armed form, with the flute in His hand, and was caught. So, my brother, this is what is called the स्वमोहनी माया *svamohini maayaa*. Shri Krishna is bemused by His own Maya, and is helpless before those who love Him.

The fact is that the Maya which helps us to meet the Lord is kept with the Sants, while the Maya which detached us from Him is kept with worldly people. Now you can make your choice – येनेष्टं तेनं गम्यताम् *ye`ne`shtam te`na gamyataam*. Please proceed in whichever direction you want to take.

Question: Some poet has written –

कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता मतिः क्रीयतां यदि कुतोऽपि लभ्यते।

Krishnabhaktirasabhaavita matih kreeyatam yadi labhyate`.

What is कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता भक्ति ‘*Krishnabhaktirasabhavita bhakti*’? How can we get it? Please explain.

Answer:

कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता मतिः,
क्रीयतां यदि कुतोऽपि लभ्यते।
तत्र मूल्यमपि लौल्यमेकलम्,
जन्मकोटि - सुकृतैर्न लभ्यते।।

Krishnabhaktirasabhaavitaa matih

kreeyataam yadi kutopi labhyate` ,

Tatra moolymapi lulyame`kalam

janmakoti-sukritairna labhyate` .

This is well-known in the Ayur Veda. It is a matter of giving भावना *bhaavanaa* (feeling). For example, when harad (an herb) is being prepared, it is soaked in cow urine for three days, then left to dry for three days. This process is repeated thrice. So, what does it mean, to soak harad thrice, for three days at a time? It is the bhavana of गोमूत्र *gomootra* (cow urine) being given to the harad. Similarly, herbs are soaked in the juice of olives, lime, buttermilk, milk, ghee (rarified butter), and honey, for giving bhavana. This causes some chemical changes, and enhances the medicinal properties of the herb.

In the same way, our intellect is dry or poisonous (wanting to harm others). Some people's intellect is absolutely dry. Bhavana has to be given. There is a substance called 'kuchal' which is so poisonous that the eyes and nose of a person who eats it, get badly inflamed. However, it becomes a medicine when it is given the bhavana of cow dung, cow urine, milk, and ghee. Similarly we need to give bhavana to our intellect.

What bhavana? कृष्णभक्तिरस - भाविता मति: '*Krishnabhaktirasa-bhaavanaa matih*'. That means, give your mind the bhavana of the juice of bhakti (devotion) for Shri Krishna. Let our dry intellect be soaked in the रस *rasa* (juice, or deep emotion) of bhakti for the Lord.

Bhakti means प्रीति *preeti* (pure love). We should have faith that the Lord is our Atma, and immerse that form of His, which is before us, in the same deep love that we feel for ourselves. We should feel that the Lord is our Master, and we should serve Him so faithfully that He is satisfied with our sincerity. We should feel that He is our friend, and fill Him with our whole hearted friendship. He should be soaked in our sincere friendship. We should consider Him to be our child. We should pour our maternal love over Him, the way a mother fills her child with her love. We should consider the Lord

to be our husband – the supreme husband – and offer Him our deepest love. We should cover the Lord with the शांत-भाव *shaanta-bhaava* (tranquil love), or मैत्री-भाव *maitri-bhaava* (the affection of a staunch friend), or वात्सल्य-भाव *vatsalya-bhaava* (motherly love), or मधुर-भाव *madhura-bhava* (romantic love). We should reach a stage where our mind and intellect are filled with delight, by the experience of hearing the Lord’s flute, seeing and tasting Him, inhaling His fragrance, and making Him one with us. Then, that is called – कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता मतिः *krishnabhaktirasabhaavita matih*.

Where is this to be found? Do we have to buy it? Is it to be paid for? People keep asking for Grace. “Grace me! Grace me!” Then they say, “Bless me, Maharaj!” It is as though Grace and blessings were distributed free of charge. It is not so! You have to pay the price for the things you want – it may be tomorrow, if not today; or the day after, if not tomorrow.

So, my brother, where will we get bhakti? Where do we buy it from? कुतोऽपि लभ्यते क्रीयतां क्रीयतां *Kutopi labhyate` kreeyataam kreeyataam* – buy it, wherever it is available! There is one word, क्रियताम् *‘kriyataam’*, which means ‘do it’. क्रीयताम् *‘Kreeyataam’* is another word, which means ‘buy it.’ So – क्रीयताम् *kreeyataam* – buy it from whichever shop you can. Don’t bother about who the shop belongs to – whether the owner is a Hindu or a Muslim; or whether it is a tiny shop or a large store. Just buy it, wherever it is available, because it is something very rare. Sometimes, we get a rare book at a shop for second hand books. I had once bought a rare book for one and a half rupees, which cannot be procured for even hundreds of rupees! So, क्रीयतां यदि कुतोऽपि लभ्यते *‘kreeyaam yadi kutopi labhyate`’* - take कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता मतिः *‘krishnabhaktirasabhaavita matih’* from wherever you can.

All right, my brother, I am ready to buy it from any place; but tell me what the price is. What will I have to pay, to get it? तत्र मूल्यमपि लौल्यमेकलम् *‘Tatra moolyamapi laulyame`kalam’* – there is just one price for it. The price does not vary, nor do you have to bargain. Just become desperate to get this bhakti. Be restless; get agitated in your desire for such loving devotion. The price for this bhakti is yearning for it. Just as children become unreasonable, and throw a tantrum to eat butter! We village children also threw tantrums for butter when we were young. The children here would now be demanding sandesh or chamcham. You should also demand bhakti like that, to get it. Doesn’t your mouth start watering when you see the sour and sweet pickles? Your mouth should begin to water like that, to get a taste of the Lord. Your

eyes should water, and your skin get goose pimples, when you long for Him. This is the price – तन्मूल्यमपि लौल्यमेकलम् *tanmoolyamapi laulyame`kalam*.

How will you get the ability to pay this price? That, my brother, is the problem. If you indeed feel desperate to reach the Lord, then take it that you have got the fruits of your good deeds of thousands of past lives.

कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता मतिः क्रीयतां यदि कुतोऽपि लभ्यते।

Krishnabhaktirasabhaavita matih kreeyataam yadi kutopi labhyate`.

When we light lamps at Dewali, we light one lamp first. (Nowadays, people use electrical lighting, but lamps were lit in earlier times.) We would place a little cow dung on the tiles on the roof, and place unlit lamps on them. We would then use the first lamp to light up all the other lamps, to decorate our homes. So, just as one lamp which is lit can light up thousands of unlit lamps, one buddhi (intellect) which is filled with the रस *rasa* of bhakti for Krishna, can fill thousands of hearts with bhakti. Gather together the lamp of the heart, the oil of affection, the wick of inclination, the glow of longing, and the flame of love. Then you can light – not one – but a thousand lamps.

So, where will you obtain this eagerness, this anxiety, this desperate longing? How will you become impatient and restless for the Lord? It will happen when you get the association of a Sant, and a feeling rises in you, and your desire will be for –

कृष्णभक्तिरसाभाविता मतिः।

Krishnabhaktirasabhaavita matih.

Question: In your book, ‘Sadhana Aur Brahmanubhuti’, there is a question about karma. In the answer you have given, there is a sentence, ‘The purpose of work done as a साधना *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress) is not the completion of the work. The purpose is to achieve a completeness in life. Understand that it is a Grace.’

Answer: Look, when you wake up in the morning, make a list of all you wish to do by the evening. Do not mix up one task with another. Give full importance to the task in hand. This is the best thing to do. And what is the purpose? Pleasing the Ishwara. Think, ‘I keep this shop to please the Ishwara’, and fill your work with love, finding pleasure in what you do.

There is no need to remember what you did yesterday, nor do you have to remember what you will do next. Put your entire mind – मनोयोग *manoyoga* – into the work. Neither do we have any control over the success of the work, nor do we have control over its fruit. Only one task can be done at a time, so put your full mind, body, and speech into the moment and task in hand. Pour out your best effort into the work, and savor it – then it will become ‘Brahm-karma’.

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ।

(गीता ४.२४)

Brahmaiva te`na gantavyam brahmakarma samaadhinaa.

(Gita 4. 24)

When we do some work, but think about something else which has to be done, then the work we do feels insulted. Listen to an incident which took place at Gondal. I was doing a fifteen day Bhagwat at the house of Chudasama. As soon as I finished my talk and got up, a gentleman took me to his house. A seat, decorated with flowers was placed for me. The gentleman asked me to be seated, and then went out onto the road. Now, I had just given a three hour discourse. I needed to go to the toilet, drink some water, and eat something. The gentleman went out without bothering to ask if there was anything I needed. I asked someone what the problem was. They said that the Maharaja was to come, and my host was waiting on the road to receive him. So, my host kept standing on the road, and I sat in his house looking like a fool! I did not appreciate his behavior.

It is the same when we do some work, but think about some other work. When we talk to someone while looking at someone else, then we insult the person we are talking to. The importance of what we are doing is reduced, when our mind wanders elsewhere. So, firstly our purpose should be to do what pleases the Lord. When the Lord is pleased, it means that the whole world is pleased. Our actions should not be harmful to anyone; our work should bring happiness to all. That means, our goal should be pure. Secondly, we should derive deep enjoyment in the work we are doing. The Lord appears before us, in form of the work.

Keep pouring happiness and continue to please the Lord. Continue to please the Lord, and continue to take pleasure in your work. Every grain and every moment of yours will be filled with Paramananda (supreme bliss, which is the Lord). The proper method of working is not our completing it, or getting its fruit. The method of working is that we are making our lives fulfilled – पूर्णात् पूर्णम् उदच्यते *poornaat poornam udachyate`* - (fullness comes from that which is full). Thus, pass the days in pleasing the Ishwara, and taking pleasure in the work, fulfilling your own life.

Question: I had read a sentence somewhere, which said that a निष्ठा *nishthaa* (staunch faith) in Dharma has the power to change the temperament, develop the personality, and dispel our identification with the body. Please explain what Dharma is. What is indicated by ‘nishthaa’, and what chemical reactions are caused by Dharma-nishthaa, which makes these three changes possible?

Answer: Dharma is the power which stops our strength from getting scattered. When our eyes wander here and there, our tongue is unrestrained in speech and food, our ears hear baseless gossip, our feet carry us to wrong places, and our hands do what they want, it results in our strength being scattered. We are drained. Such scattering of our senses render them ineffective. For example, when boys and girls of twenty five or thirty years get married, they have mostly lost their self control much earlier, and their virility is reduced. They may – or may not – be able to have children. They will have more daughters than sons. That means that when people lead disciplined lives, their full potential will be concentrated, strengthened, and effective. In Sanskrit, the word वीर्यं ‘*veerya*’ (virility or manliness) is used – वीरस्य भावः वीर्यम् *veeryasya bhaavah veeryam* – the fearlessness of a warrior is the ‘*veera-bhava*’.

Is there any beauty, which has the power to draw our eyes towards it? Does any touch have the power to draw us towards it? Is there any power which can arouse our desire, anger, or greed? So, Dharma is the power to restrain ourselves. When will your intellect be dependable? When will it be stable? When you have the ability to restrain yourself. So, this power of self-control, when we have full command over our sense organs and inclinations, is called Dharma.

Now, what we have to see is how firm we are.

‘My brother, it looks like this cannot be achieved ethically; let us achieve our goal through अधर्म *adharma* (that, which is contrary to Dharma). We want to achieve our goal. We will use falsehood, if truth doesn’t work. We will be dishonest, if we can’t do it honestly. We will use violence, if peaceful methods don’t succeed.’

That means, you are not ‘Dharma-nishtha’. Your nishthaa is not placed on Dharma; and you depend more on adharma than on Dharma.

Nishthaa itself protects Dharma. The more a person depends on Dharma, the more protection he gets from it. So, the meaning of Dharma is to be disciplined, and to fulfill our duties. That means, we are to control our senses and do our allotted task. Sometimes, it can even mean giving up some of the prescribed routines. Even though the conjugation of a husband and wife is permitted by their गृहस्थाश्रम *grihastaashrama* (the householder stage in life), their inner strength will increase in proportion to their abstinence. Which means that practicing restraint even in permitted indulgences, is called ‘nishthaa’. Your nishthaa, your adherence to the truth, will protect you. Your अहिंसा *ahimsaa* (non-violence) will protect you. Your ब्रह्मचर्य *brahmacharya* (celibacy) will protect you. So, Dharma must be understood. The entire form of Dharma is that we do not permit our desires to be inclined towards anything improper. We should fulfill our wishes within the framework of our own Dharma-nishthaa. This is something which makes our lives *poorna* (fulfilled, whole, complete). And, धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः *dharmo rakshati rakshitah* - protect Dharma, and Dharma will protect you. People take four steps and get frightened.

चोरी करे निहाय की, करे सूई का दान।
ऊपर चढ़कर देखते कित्ती दूर विमान।।

Choree kare` nihaaya kee, kare` sooyi ko daan,

Oopara chadhakara de`khate` kittee doora vimaan.

(People steal big things, and give a donation of a sewing needle, then go up on the roof to see whether the plane – to take them to Heaven – is approaching!)

So, this is not called nishthaa! Nishthaa is when you take a resolve, and refuse to budge from your Dharma, as long as you have breath.

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ।

(गीता १८.४६)

Svakarmanaa tamabhyarchya siddhim vindati maanavah.

(Gita 18. 46)

(Offer up your work to the Lord, as your worship, and achieve success.)

We worship the Lord through our actions, and through them we attain the Lord. That means, the Lord inspires us to be Dharma-nishtha. He enables us to stick to the path of Dharma, and He helps us to reach our goal. The Lord is present at the start, in the middle, and at the conclusion of our having full faith in our Dharma. To bring the Lord into our lives is to be निष्ठावान् *nishthaavaana* (being full of faith), because it is impossible to depend upon anyone who is fickle and fleeting. One can only have faith in what is stable and dependable, and nothing is more stable and dependable than the Lord. So, when the Lord comes into our nishthaa, it becomes full and total.

Question: This shloka has come twice in the Gita:

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

(गीता ३.३५ एवं १८.४७)

Shre`yaansvadharma vigunah paradharmaatsvanushthitaat,

Svadharme`nidhanam shre`yah paradharmo bhayaavahah.

(Gita 3. 35 & 18. 47)

It seems to be of great importance, which is why the Lord said it again. It is the Grace of the Lord to give a second wake-up call, to someone who did not wake up at the first call. In this context, I place this question at Maharajji's feet – what is the meaning of स्वधर्म 'svadharma' (our own Dharma)? Does the decision depend upon the जन्म *janma* (birth), karma, or स्वभाव *svabhaava* (temperament)? Please explain.

Answer: By repeating the same point, the Lord tells us, 'This is absolutely correct'. He said, स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः (गीता ३.३५) "Svadharme`nidhanam shre`yah' (Gita 3. 35), which was very good. Then, He said, श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः (गीता

१८.४७) “*Shre`yaansvadharne` vigunh`* (Gita 18. 47), which was also very good. Similarly,

मन्मनाभव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।

Manmanaabhava madbhakto madyaajee maam namaskuru.

is also repeated, (Gita 9.34 & 18. 65) because the Lord has this apprehension that people may get confused. Leave alone the people, the Lord, Himself, gets confused. He is not a Rishi (sage) or a Mahatma, who stick to what they say. The Lord has been a cowherd, and has lived amongst politicians. Politicians indulge in double talk. What is the double talk here? Ultimately, the Lord will say –

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।

(गीता १८.६६)

Sarvadharmaan parityajya maame`kam sharanam vraja.

(Gita 18. 66)

(Give up all religion, and take refuge in Me.)

So, the Lord explains things thoroughly to ensure that Arjuna is not misled by the ultimate comment.

सवधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः।

Svadharme` nidhanam shre`yah paradharmo bhayaavah.

And

मन्मनाभव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे॥

(गीता १८.६५)

Manamanaabhava madbhakto madyaajee maan namaskuru,

Maame`vaushyasi satyam te` pratijaane` priyosi me`.

(Gita 18.
65)

Now – see, what is the meaning of ‘svadharma’ in the third chapter? The context here is that following the Dharma of a Kshtriya (warrior caste) and fighting for righteousness is svadharma for Arjuna.

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते।

(गीता २.३१)

Dharmyaadh yuddhaachshre`yonytkshtriyasya na vidyate`.

(Gita 2. 31)

For a Kshatriya, there is nothing more beneficial than fighting a righteous war. We should adhere to our Dharma as long as we live. We shouldn’t give up our Dharma even if we have to die for it. The present state of affairs is that people no longer have any feeling about their वर्ण *varna* (caste), their Nation, traditional apparel, or their svadharma. Shri Udiya Babaji used to quote one shloka –

स्ववेशे, स्वदेशे स्वधर्मे स्वजातौ जनानां प्ररूढोऽनुरागः।

*Svave`she`, svade`she` svadharme` svajaatau janaanaam
praroodhonuraagah.*

This feeling could not be developed, that within your Dharma you must ensure that you remain a human, and don’t become an animal. So, the power which enables us to be different from animals and birds, is to be humane, and this is the Dharma for all human beings. When we rise above the limited strictures of the Dharma for the Brahmins (priest caste), Kshatriyas (warrior caste), Vaishyas (traders caste), and Shudras (labor caste), then we become भगवदंश *bhagavadansha* – a part of the Lord. And, then our Dharma will be the भागवत-धर्म *bhagavat-dharma* (the Dharma of the Lord’s devotees).

Our lives should be in keeping with our origins. Even a drop of water is water. Even a spark is fire. A waft of air is also a wind. So, since we are an अंश *ansha* (part) of the Lord, the qualities of the Lord should be manifested in our lives, too.

All right, put the matter of being an ansha aside. We are the द्रष्टा *drashtaa* (the observer), the साक्षी *saakshee* (witness). Then, a false impression of being a कर्ता *kartaa* (the doer) or भोक्ता *bhoktaa* (the one who experiences) should never creep into our mind. A witness remains a witness. The svadharm of a witness – साक्षी *saakshee* – is साक्षीत्व *saaksheetva* (retaining the status of a witness). He should never get the false pride of thinking, ‘I did this’. He should never allow himself to believe mistakenly, ‘I experienced’. In none of the three states of waking, dreaming or sleeping, should he feel that it is he who is in that state. And, when a person obtains the knowledge that his essence is the Brahman, then अद्वितीयता *advaitteeyataa* (non-dualism) becomes his dharma.

But – how does a person decide what his Dharma is? Patent medicines are sold these days, recommended for all kinds of problems. No thought is given to how weak the patient is, or what was the cause of the illness, when prescribing the patented medicines. At times, this does great harm. Medicines should be given after examining the condition of the individual, and the cause of his malady. Similarly Dharma is decided according to what is appropriate for the individual, and what he is eligible for. Just as the physical condition of the patient is taken into consideration before the medicine is prescribed, the decision of what the Dharma of the individual is, is taken after considering his situation and aptitude.

One man went into the medical store of a Vaidya (Ayurvedic practitioner) and said, “Vaidji, please give me the most expensive medicine you have.”

“My brother,” replied Vaidji, “I have many excellent medicines and many expensive medicines. However, I can’t give you any medicine until you tell me what illness you have. For you, the medicine which cures you is the best medicine, and the most valuable. That is the medicine you should buy.”

These days the nishthaa of people is on the quality of the object. Whether it is the influence of science or materialism, people tend to see only the object (and not the subject). They say, “This item is good. This पूजा *poojaa* (ritual worship) is good. This पाठ *paatha* (reciting a scriptural passage) is good. This mantra is very good.”

Now, if someone says, “Very good; excellent,” and eats some medicine, it can do more harm than good. Even snake venom is used as a medicine, but it is given only for specific problems. औषध *‘Aushadha’* (medicine) is that,

which cures our illness, removes our disease, and enhances good health. It is wrong to read a newspaper advertisement and send for the medicine. I have heard that coffee traders pay doctors to write articles about the harmful effects of drinking tea, and the tea traders do the same for coffee.

These people praise or criticize things with their eye on their business. Their eye is not on our health. Then how can a proper decision be made on our Dharma? That depends on what we identify with. What do we consider ourselves to be? What do we think we are? What is our impression about ourselves?

When our Dharma is in accordance with our feeling (about ourselves) then it will be beneficial for us. This is called 'svadharma'! The Vedantis have defined svadharma as आत्मधर्म *aatmadharma* (the Dharma of the Atma)! Svadharma is the Atma's quality of being detached, and being unaffected by space and time, and being one with the Brahman. Remain established in your svadharma, even if your body perishes. Never allow this resolve to be shaken. This is what it means.

This is सर्वोत्तम *sarvottama* – the best – and, at times, it gives us great sorrow. Once, the thought came to the mind of a Raja, that he should accept the most superior Dharma. Daily assemblies were held at his court, to determine which Dharma is best.

Some Maulvi, or Padre, or Pundit would come each day, extolling the virtues of his religious convictions. Each would say that his was the most superior religious. Scriptural and theosophical arguments would be held. Years passed without any conclusive decision being reached. Then, one day, a Mahatma came to the King, and said, "Raja, I live in your Kingdom. You have been searching for the most superior religion since many days. I think you should stop getting entangled in the dialectic discussions of the different scriptures. Come with me, and I will show you the best Dharma."

"Very well, Maharaj," said the King. "Let us go."

The Mahatma took the King to the riverside, and told him to send for the best boat. A boat was brought. The Mahatma saw it, and said, "The wood of this boat is not good. Send for another boat."

Another boat was brought. “There are black spots on this boat,” said the Mahatma. Another boat was sent for, and rejected by the Mahatma. The Mahatma went on rejecting boat after boat, on some pretext.

The King said, “Maharaj, we just have to cross one small river. We can cross over on any boat, or even on a raft. Why do you find fault with everything?”

The Mahatma said, “This is what I wished to explain to you. Dharma is useful for covering a very short road. You can use any Dharma, and pass your life successfully. Just as any boat which carries you across the river is the best boat, in the same way, whichever religion helps you to rise above your body, and carries you beyond the limits of birth and death; which purifies your antahkaran (fourfold mind); which frees you from desires, attachments and aversions; grants you the knowledge of being a Jeeva (soul attached to a body), and makes you one with the indivisible Brahman, is the best religion.”

So, my brother, the decision of what our svadharma is depends on what we are suited for. This decision cannot be taken by reading books or seeing what others do, and imitating them. Nor can it be taken by hearsay. Dharma rises from the eligibility and potential of the individual; it does not arise from any action. And, depending on individual adequacy:

स्वे-स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः।

(गीता १८.४५)

Sve`-sve` karmanyabhiratah samsiddhim labhate` narah.

(Gita 18. 45)

Samsiddhi (ultimate achievement) is obtained by carrying out our own Dharma – that, which is right for us. And you? You must decide what your Dharma is, after examining your eligibility. That is the greatest Dharma for you.

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Question: You had once told me, at Vrindavan, that शरणागति *sharanagati* (total surrender) reaches its पूर्णता *poornataa* (fullness) in the वात्सल्य-भाव *vatsalya-bhaava* (the feeling of motherly love). Please enlighten us on this.

Answer: शरण्य *Sharanya* is the person whose refuge we take; to whom we surrender. The more we know about the sharanya's nature, about His लीला *leelas* (frolics), the closer we will our शरणागति *sharanagati* be, to being total. One does not take refuge in an unknown person, or just anyone. Nor does one take refuge repeatedly. Keikeyi took refuge with Manthara. She achieved just the opposite of what she wanted. Keikeyi is the शरण्य *sharanya* of Dashratha. He also fails to achieve his objective. He gets the reverse of what he desires.

So, it is vital to get to know the शरण्य *sharanya* before we surrender to them. Then, we should be favorably inclined towards the one to whom we surrender. We should like what he likes, and cultivate the same outlook. That means, we should make a resolve to be inclined towards His every preference. No contrary feeling should enter our mind. We should have full conviction that the Lord will protect us, and sustain our शरणागति *sharanagati* (taking refuge in Him). We should never think that we have any other support. We should keep our feelings for the Lord a secret. We should fall at His feet, and understand how inadequate we are. These are the six भाव *bhaavas* (feelings) of sharanagati. Whatever the Lord does, it is for our own good.

The sharanya should have two special attributes. One is आश्रयण-सौकर्यापादन *aashrayana-saukaryapaadana*, which means that the one to whom we surrender should make the path easy for us. The other is आश्रित कार्य-निर्वाह *aashrita kaarya-nirvaaha*, which means that He looks after those who have taken refuge in Him. Shri Yamuna Acharya Maharaj has described the kind of nishthaa (conviction) we should have, in sharanagati. The purport of his shloka is, 'You may reject me, chastise me, brush me off. You may even lift me physically and throw me out, but I shall never, even in my imagination,

think of ever leaving You, or taking refuge anywhere else. I should dissolve at Your feet. Just as when a mother gets angry, and pushes her child off her lap, the child hides himself in her clothes, clinging to her – in the same way, I should never – no matter what the circumstances may be – give up my conviction about taking refuge in You.’

The special factor about sharanagati is that the flaw of the one who takes refuge is not taken into consideration. When a small child picks up something dirty and puts it in his mouth, the first reaction of the mother is to put her hand in his mouth and take out the item. If he dirties himself, she cleans him up. Sometimes, the child urinates and passes a stool in her lap, but she does not see this as his fault. Similarly, the sharanya does not see the faults of the sharanagati. In the Valmiki Ramayana, Shri Rama says –

दोषो यद्यपि तस्य स्यात् सतामेतदगर्हितम् ।
(युद्धकाण्ड १८.३)

Dosho yadayapi tasya syaat sataame`tadagarhitam.

(Yuddhakanda 18. 3)

Even if the one who seeks refuge is full of the worst kinds of faults, the sharanya does not view him as a culprit. He accepts the one who surrenders, and protects him.

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥

(युद्धकाण्ड १८.३३)

Sakride`va prapannaaya tavaasmeeti chayaachate`,

Abhayam sarvabhootebhyo dadaamyetad vratam mama.

(Yuddhakanda 18, 33)

The Lord, Shri Ramachandra says, “It is My pledge, the unshakeable vow My life, that if anyone says, just once, that he seeks My protection, and takes refuge in Me; if he catches My feet, saying he belongs to Me, I grant him protection from all creatures. No matter who the person may be, once he

takes refuge in Me, I grant him safety from all, and make him free of fear. This is My oath.”

The Lord says, सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज “*Sarvadharmaan parityajya maame`kam sharanam vraja* – don’t take refuge in Dharma, or in your वर्ण *varna* (caste), or in your ashram (stage in life), or in your doing your duty. If you wish to be safe, take refuge in the one Prabhu (Almighty Lord) who is seated in all hearts.” In the eleventh canto of the Shrimad Bhagwat (Chapter 12), सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य ‘*sarvadharmaan parityajya*’ is elaborated upon.

तस्तात्त्वमुद्धवोत्सृज्य चोदानां प्रतिचोदनाम्
प्रवृत्तं च निवृत्तं च श्रोतव्यं रुतमेव च ॥
मामेकमेव शरणमात्मानं सर्वदेहिनाम्।
याहि सर्वात्मभावेन मया स्याह्यकुतोभयः ॥

(भागवत् ११.१२.१४.१५)

Tasmaattvamuddhavotsrija chodanaam pratichodanaam,

Pravrittam cha nivrittam cha shrotavyam shrutame`va cha.

Maame`kame`va sharanamaatmaanam sarvade`hinaam,

Yaahi sarvaatmabhaave`na mayaa syaabhyakutobhayah.

(*Bhagwat 11. 12. 14, 15*)

Take refuge in the Lord, with full faith, earnest prayers, and sincere devotion.

When I was eighteen or twenty years old, I had the opportunity to see, and associate with a Mahatma. I had prayed to him, “Maharaj, please place me in the refuge of the Lord. Let me be in the Lord’s sharan. I truly wish to surrender to the Lord.”

“Pundit”, said the Mahatma, “Give this deep thought, and tell me, what is not in the Lord’s sharan. What is not protected by Him? The earth is ruled by Him, and water is ruled by Him. The sun, moon, and fire – which are the essence of brightness – are all ruled by Him. He controls the mind, space, the subtle forms of the five elements, the subtle ego, the universal ego, and Nature.

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम्।

(गीता ९.१०)

Mayaadhyakshe`na prakritih sooyate` sacharaacharam.

(Gita 9. 10)

So, what do you have, which is not surrendered to Him?”

Then, the Mahatma told me, “Take as much time as you want. Take three or four hours, all of today, and tomorrow, or the day after. Then, come to me, and bring whatever you feel is not protected by the Lord. I will place it under His protection.”

I sat, and pondered deeply, but could think of nothing that was not in the Lord’s sharan. When I went to the Mahatma again, he asked whether I had found anything that was independent of the Lord. I told I hadn’t.

“Look,” explained the Mahatma, “Sharanagati is not an action. Nor is it a feeling. Sharanagati is a knowledge. To understand that every grain in the universe, every moment in time, every corner of the world, every nerve of the body, and every part of our mind, body, and speech are controlled by the Lord, is sharanagati. So, if you feel that you are not surrendered to Him, it is a false impression. We are not to become sharanaagata (surrendered); we are to remove the fallacy that we are not in His refuge.”

Listening to him, I felt that Mahatmaji had picked up the whole world, and placed it in the lap of the Lord; and that the Lord’s benevolence was pouring down evenly upon the whole world. It is the Lord who heaves as the ocean. He is the air we inhale and exhale. He is the clay our body is made of. He is the water, and the warmth, and the life spirit. He is the space, He is our mind, and our intellect, and He is our Atma.

When we understand fully how the Lord gives refuge to everything in Creation, it feels as though the world is in our lap, and even the Lord, Himself, comes and sits on our lap! Affection, benevolence, and compassion well up in our heart, along with a desire for the good of all. Then, the अहिंसा *ahimsa* (non-violence) of Mahavir, and the compassion of Buddha come effortlessly into our lives. The wish for the good of all, propounded in the Vedas, fills our heart. We attain the same goodwill as the Lord has; the same desire for the good of the whole world; the same feeling of affection and

motherly love. Because, a Mahatma's viewpoint can never be different from the Lord's. Just as the Paramatma sees the world as His own essence, the Mahatma holds the same viewpoint, and sees everything as his own essence, too.

The epitome of sharanagati is compassion, friendship, non-violence, a wish for the good of all, a feeling that everybody's Atma is my Atma, and the knowledge that nothing exists but my Atma.

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि सर्वपापेभ्यः अविद्यातत्कार्येभ्यः

*Aham tvaa sarvapaape`bhyao mookshayishyaami sarvapaape`bhyah
avidyaatatkaarye`bhyah.*

The Lord liberates us from अज्ञान *agnan* (that, which is contrary to Gnan), and all that results from agnan. We are totally freed from regrets and delusions – this is the essence of the Lord. Sharanagati means that our अहम 'aham' (I) and मम 'mama' (mine) disappear; only the Lord remains. The abandoning of the 'me' and 'mine', and the retaining of the Lord, is sharanagati. And, to see how the Lord's motherly love and affection shower upon the whole world, is the ultimate stage of sharanagati.

Question: A sister sang a bhajan yesterday, which said that Rama's name is greater than Shri Rama. In the Gita's Vibhuti Yoga (Chapter X), the Lord said, यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि 'Yagyaanaam japayagyosmi'. Are Japa Yagya (where the repeated chanting of a name or mantra becomes a Yagya) and Japa Yoga (where repeated chanting of a name or mantra yokes us to the Lord) the same thing? Please explain this for us.

Answer: Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj would say –

जपात् सिद्धिर्जपात् सिद्धिर्जपात् सिद्धिर्न संशयः।

Japaat siddhirjapaat siddhirjapaat siddhirna sanshayah.

Do japa (chant a word or mantra repeatedly, with or without a rosary), do japa, do japa! Harbor no doubts. Doubting is a tendency which carries us towards destruction and wrong doing. Do japa. As soon as you do japa, your antahkaran (fourfold mind) gets purified, your wishes are fulfilled, love for

the Lord is increased, a desire to know the Lord arises, and you get Gnan. Japa is at the root of all these. 'J' means जन्म *janma* (birth) as well as मृत्यु *mrityu* (death) – जात् जन्मनः मृत्योश्च पाति इति जपः *jaat janmanah mrityoshcha paati iti japah*'. Japa is that, which releases us from the noose of birth and death.

Now, give your attention to japa. Those who are eligible for the प्रणव *pranava* – Aum – are detached from the world. The 'a' carries them from the waking state to the dream state. The 'u' lifts them from the dream state, and places them in the deep sleep state – the 'm' state. And, the silent अमात्र *amaatraa* (which is the gap between one Aum and the next) unites them with the parabrahm Paramatma – the Almighty Atma of all. However, this japa is only meant for those who are detached from the world, and desire परमार्थ *paramaatha* (the ultimate achievement – the Brahman). Because, the 'a' dissolves into the 'u', and the 'u' into the 'm' sound, and all three are negated by the silent amatra. That being so, it should not be used by just anyone, simply because 'it is a superior mantra'. Those who desire the benefits of worldly pleasures, work, siddhi (supernatural powers) and success, should not do the japa of just the pranava. For them, the pranava should be attached to some mantra.

The second point is about the Gayatri Mantra. गायन्तं-श्रायते 'Gaayantam traayante'' (It saves those who chant it.) Next come the mantras from the Vedas. The Shukla Yajur Veda alone has many mantras of Shankarji. मननात् त्रायते इति मन्त्रः 'Mananaat traayate` iti mantrah'. A mantra is that, which protects through मनन *manan* (deep contemplation of the meaning). I have seen such Mahatmas, whose every nerve emitted the name of the Lord. I have seen Mahatmas that – when they uttered the name of the Lord once – one hair on their body stood up. Now, I will tell you something more about japa.

Who is the प्रतिपाद्य *pratipaadya* (object) of the japa you do? Is He निराकार-साकार *niraakaara-saakaara* (without form or with form), सगुण-निर्गुण *saguna-nirguna* (with attributes or without attributes)? The object of your worship must be revered by you. The nirakara-sakara, saguna-nirguna form of your Lord should be sincerely and deeply revered. You should have the faith that the name you chant is His name. Then, utter His name with your tongue. 'This is the name of my Ishtadev', is the श्रद्धा *shraddha* (faith) in you. And, when the tongue starts to take the name ...'Rama, Rama, Rama.....' then the action

is started. Action is not limited to the hands and feet. The tongue undertakes the action of speaking. It is also a कर्मेन्द्रिय *karme`ndriya* (organ of action). And, just as work done by the hands gives fruits, the speech of the tongue gives fruits, too. If you use bad words, you will get पाप *paapa* (sin), and if you use cultured language, your पुण्य *punya* (spiritual merit) will be increased.

This point is presented with great clarity in the Sanskrit books of grammar. The tongue moves when it chants the Name, which means that the प्राण *praana* (life force) moves the tongue. The action is connected to the prana, and – because of the shraddha behind it – is also connected to the mind. Moreover, since the intellect has considered the Name to be important, the action is also connected with the intellect.

You now chant the Name continuously, with faith, aware of its importance, with the power of your prana. It does not matter if your mind wanders; it will return to the chanting. You should continue with the japa, and pay attention to it. Japa is not the Dharma (duty) of the mind; it is the Dharma of the tongue. If your tongue – the organ of action used for speaking – does its duty and chants the Name, then the wide net of words will be folded up into just one word. You will progress towards Samadhi (deep meditation). The prana takes us to the destination we desire, it takes us where we wish to reach.

मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणम् अहं प्रपद्ये

(श्वेताश्व० उप० ६.१८)

Mumukshurvai sharanam aham prapadye`.

(Shve`tashvara Upanishad 6. 18)

Japa is very useful, if you want to be a ‘mumukshu’, and be liberated from all worldly bonds. It is useful if you wish to obtain both luxuries as well as freedom. It is more than useful; it is essential. Whichever path you may take, japa is indispensable for you, because the world is nothing else, but the Name. You can create a new world, if you take refuge in the Name. You can remove the world you have. You can be free of removing or holding on to any world, and you can be established in your own essence. You can be one with the Paramatma.

So, do not consider this word-filled creation to be an ordinary creation. Every letter, every word, is filled with such power, that it can bring warmth if your body is cold; and make the inner powers rise. However, those who merely think about these things from a distance, remain far away (from spiritual progress). Japa has to be undertaken by doing japa. Just try to undertake doing the japa of the Lord's Name with full faith, and see!

There is a question, for those who say that japa is beneficial only if the अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* (fourfold mind) is pure – how does the antahkaran become pure? If you wait till your antahkaran is purified, before you start doing japa, then you will never be able to do japa. You will be deprived of japa for ever. So, let your antahkaran be as it is, and take refuge in the Lord, and start doing japa. In the Chandogya Upanishad, the Sanatkumars told Naradji, नाम उपास्य (७.१.४) '*naama upaasaya*' (7. 1. 4) – allow your intellect to accept the fact that the Name is the Brahman, and worship it. The रूप *roopa* (form) is not seen. So, worship the Lord with the feeling that His name is the Brahman.

You can do japa of the Name all the time, so it is free of the division of time. You can do japa wherever you are, so it is free of the division of space. And, since it need not be just one name, the नाम *naama* (Name) is free of the divisions of words or objects. The Lord's name is अद्वितीय *adviteeya* (indivisible); His name is the parabrahm Paramatma. The Name is saguna and nirguna; it is sakara and nirakara. Which means, the Name of the Lord is everything. Do japa with this conviction.

The form has an impression of material grossness – it may be real, and it may be imagined. The Name, however, does not cast any such veil on anyone's mind, because it can be united with the formless. So, when a person takes refuge in the Name, by the Grace of his Sadguru (true Guru), in keeping with his eligibility, with full faith in the Name, and the blessings of his Guru it yields great results. With this background, he does the japa of the mantra which is right for him, then the mantra at once obtains such a power, that the Ishta, Guru, and mantra no longer retain their different identities, because the mantra becomes चैतन्य *chaitanya* (conscious); it is awoken.

So, if mantra-japa is undertaken with the right method, in keeping with the individual's eligibility, then it brings the greatest benefits. This is why even our ancient scriptures have given great importance to japa, and this is

absolutely true. I tell you this by my own experience. I assure you that you will be able to see the greatness of japa for yourself, if you truly want to.

Question: For a person who worships the Lord in the form of Shri Rama, which of these – Shri Ayodhya, Chitrakut, or Shri Vrindavan dhaam – is the most beneficial, and why? Please explain this to us.

Answer: If you worship Shri Rama in His वनवासी *vanavaasi* (hermit) form, then Chitrakut will be best for you. Ayodhya will be better, if you worship His Maharajadhiraj (Emperor) form. At Vrindavan, Shri Krishna, Himself, brings the Lord Shri Rama, and establishes Him as the King, while He (Shri Krishna) lives as one of the public. So, the Lord Shri Rama is the Emperor of the whole world, and Vrindavan is a part of His realm. These days, we see so much importance being given to Rama leela (the life of Shri Rama depicted by dance and drama), and Rama-kathaa (discourses on the Ramayana) at Vrindavan, that it is difficult to see the difference between Ayodhya and Vrindavan.

My brother, the Lord is one. The Lord in your heart is also in Vrindavan, and in Ayodhya, and in Chitrakut. He is also in Badrinath and Kedarnath. The Lord's abode is the place where your heart ripples and overflows with love for Him. Stay in that place, and worship the Lord. Don't ask me which is greater and which is not so beneficial – को बड़-छोट कहत अपराधू '*ko bada-chota kahata aparaadho*'. It is an offence to call any one greater and any one less important. The Lord's dhaama (land) is the Brahman, whether you name it Vrindavan, or Ayodhya, or Chitrakut, or Kashi, or Shakti-peetha! Because, it is in the dhaama that His name and form manifest, and His leelas take place, and then the Brahman is called the 'dhaama'! In fact, when the अधिष्ठानता *adhishtanataa* (the basic quality of supporting) and स्वप्रकाशता *svaprakaashataa* (the basic quality of self-effulgence) of the Brahman manifests in the dhaama, then the experience of the dhaama being the very same self-illuminating sub-stratum of Creation is achieved. Then, the person sees thousands of forms of Rama-Krishna, thousands of forms of Shakti-Shiva-Ganesha, doing their leelas. The glitter of the dhaama is the self-illuminating power. It is the सत्ता *satta* (the basic reality). It is the अधिष्ठान *adhishtana* (sub-stratum of the illusionary world). It is the actual essence of the Paramatma, in whose सत्-चित् *sat-chit* (reality and consciousness) the whole world is seen. And, this is the dhaama of the Lord.

Question: The Lord Shri Krishna said, न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन (गीता ६.२) *Na hyasannyastasankalpo yogee bhavati kashchanah* (Gita 6.2). The अन्तिम सिद्धि *antim siddhi* (ultimate achievement) is impossible unless a person has निःसंकल्पता *nisankalpataa* (total lack of any resolve or desire). Then, can a शुभ-संकल्प *shubha sankalpa* (auspicious resolve) to become निःसंकल्प *nisankalpa* (without resolve) carry us to निःसंकल्पता *nisankalpataa*? Please explain.

Answer: Yes, Madam. The fact is that it is only when there are शुभ-संकल्प *shubha-sankalpas*, that दुःसंकल्प *dusankalpas* (wrong resolves) are given up, and a person starts searching for the शुभ *shubha* (auspicious). Which is the shubha for which we should make a sankalpa? तन्मे मनः शिव-संकल्पमस्तु *'Tanme manah shiva-sankalpa shivamastu'*, means that when we wish to make our sankalpa शिवमय *shivamaya* (auspicious like Shiva), then we will try to find what the essence of Shiva is. शिवं मंगलं कल्याणम् *'Shivam mangalam kalyaanam'* – Shiva means the ultimate good. In the Mandukya Upanishad, the word Shiva has been used to indicate the तुरीय आत्मा *tureeya atmaa* (the Atma in the pristine, indescribable fourth stage of existence). When we make a Shiva-sankalpa we understand the essence of Shiva. Then, the essence of Shiva comes (into our lives), where the sankalpa first goes to sleep. It loses its conscious identity, and then it loses its essence, and is no longer something separate from the essence of the Paramatma. So, सत्संकल्प *satsankalpa* (a resolve in keeping with the ultimate Reality, which is the Sat) सत्संकल्पत्वे निःसंकल्पत्वम् – *satsankalpatve` nisankalpatvam* – a person obtains *nisankalpataa*, when he takes such a sankalpa. All sankalpas are destroyed. There is no yearning, no craving, and no upheavals in the sanskaras (subtle impressions). The person's (inner) condition becomes like a rock, which neither sleeps, nor awakens. He is unaware of sense objects, the way a person who is awake is conscious of them. Nor does he experience the darkness of deep sleep. This state is called the स्वरूप-स्थिति *'svaroopasthiti'* (the state of being seated in our own essence). Leave the unanimated state. Let the mind be like the mind of a stone – absolutely stoic and unflinching. The consciousness should be self-illuminating, revealing the world around you. It should be independent of your thoughts, but there should be no resolve whatsoever. This is what is called the स्वरूप-स्थिति *svaroopasthiti* in life.

Question: Please tell us about प्रारब्ध *prarabdha* (fate), पुरुषार्थ *purushaartha* (human endeavor or achievement), and ईश्वर-कृपा *Ishwara-kripaa* (the Grace of the Lord). Please also explain how these seemingly contradictory factors are combined in our lives.

Answer: When you undertake पौरुष *paurush* (effort) voluntarily, there is some possibility of vanity coming into your mind. “This was achieved by my efforts”. So, we should meditate on that, which stays in the human heart in the form of paurush, पौरुषं नृषु (गीता ७.८) ‘*paurusham nrishu*’ (Gita 7. 8). What will happen when you meditate on the Paramatma? By meditating on the Paramatma, you will obtain the direct experience of His Grace, power, and inspiration. You will realize, “This is not my power – it is the power of the indivisible Paramatma.” It is like a person who thinks, “This is the strength of my प्राण *praana* (life force)”, but it is not really the strength of our life force; it is the power of the wind in our body. We feel that our eyes have the power to see, but it is actually the sun which enables us to see; and it is not even the sun – it is the Savita Devta, the presiding Deity of brightness, which is evenly present in thousands of suns.

So this vanity about our prarabdha pulls down the human being – the जीव *Jeeva* (soul connected to a body). And, this vanity is shattered only when we get a darshan (see with reverence) of the Lord’s Grace.

What is prarabdha? So long as the जीव-भाव *Jeeva-bhaava* (the feeling that you are a Jeeva) is present, the actions of the past are called ‘prarabdha’. The quantity of prarabdha is enormous; it is incalculable. The संचित *sanchit* (total sum of accumulated karmas) is अनादि *anaadi* (timeless). Out of this sanchit, the portion which is used for the development of the present life is called prarabdha. For example, if you wish to make a machine – let us say you wish to make a wheel of a car – then, you first have to think about the design and size. After that, you have to see its strength and durability, decide how many revolutions it will make, and the degrees of heat and cold it will be able to endure!

Your life is developed in the same way. The sum of sanchit and prarabdha will formulate its design, form, appearance, species, and gender. This is the design. And, it will decide the strength of the internal bellows, and the number of inhalations and exhalations they will be able to do. This becomes the longevity. And the amount of heat and cold – the joys and sorrows – it

will be able to bear, will become the भोग *bhoga* (experiences). So, three things are given by the prarabdha. One is the form, or species; the second is the span of life; and the third is the total sum of experiences.

Sometimes, the actions of the present life are joined to the prarabdha. That is true, but prarabdha continues to do its work until तत्त्वज्ञान *tattvagnan* (knowledge of the essence) is achieved. Prarabdha is weakened when tattvagnan is obtained. An अज्ञानी *agnani* (one who lacks Gnan) indulges in activities, and creates fresh karmas for himself, getting entangled in them. The Gnani also has the experiences given by prarabdha, but does not feel that he has any connection with them. His actions do not create a fresh prarabdha (since he has no feeling of being the doer).

अज्ञानजन-बोधार्थं प्रारब्धं वदति श्रुतिः

'Agnaanajana-bodhaartham praarabdam vadati shrutih'

– the word prarabdha is given only to explain things to those who don't have Gnan. People ask me, “Maharaj, how is it that you got this illness?” Now, if I were to tell them that I do not have any illness, they would feel baffled, because they do not know my essence. They ask about the body they see. They have no knowledge about my experience of my essence. Then, I explain things in the terminology they understand, and say, “My brother, just as you experience happiness and sorrow according to your prarabdha, this illness is the prarabdha of my body. It is my experience.” Thus, we see that the fresh actions we undertake, hoping for the desired results – thinking that they are done by our paurush, and that we are helpless in getting the results, and we give this (fate) the name of prarabdha.

And कृपा *kripaa!* The fact is that the Lord's Grace is such, that it showers evenly and continuously upon all – in sickness, in grief, in delusion, in birth, in death, and in the factors which bring joy and sorrow. प्रभु-मूर्ति कृपामयी है *'Prabhu moorati kripaamayee hai'* – the very form of the Lord is Grace itself. Those who recognize it are conscious of it, even amid riots and fighting. They experience Grace in birth and in death. The Grace comes from the Lord, and the karmas come from the Jeeva, and prarabdha is the sum of our experiences caused by past actions. However, we can be free of all three, if we worship the Lord.

Question: The last chapter of the Gita is called the ‘Moksha-Sanyas Yoga’. What is the meaning of Moksha-Sanyas? Is it the highest level of bhakti (adoring devotion)? Please explain.

Answer: नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति। (गीता १८.४९) ‘*Naishkarmyasiddhim paramaam sannyasaenaadhigacchati*’ (Gita 18. 49). Those who believe that the Gita advocates only karma, have, perhaps, not paid attention to this half of this shloka.

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ‘*Naishkarmya siddhim paramaam sannyasaenaadhi gachchati*’. नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं *Naishkarmyasiddhi* (the achievement of being liberated from the bonds of karma) is obtained only through संन्यास *sannyasa* (taking the vows of renunciation). The fact is that people have lost their वर्ण-संस्कार *varna-sanskaara* (varna means caste, and sanskaras mean subtle impressions) and their ashram (stage in life) sanskaras. People have begun to live as per their whims. They have no interest in the ancient tradition of giving meaning to words. You read, कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते (गीता ५.७) ‘*kurvannapi na lipyate*’ (Gita 5. 7). What does this sentence mean? It means that he (the Yogi) is not affected by his work, even while he works. The word ‘even’ indicates that since he feels uninvolved even while working, there is no question of his feeling involved when he is not working. Similarly –

‘नायं हन्ति न हन्यते’ ‘न करोति न लिप्यते’

(गीता १३.३१)

हत्वापि स इमांल्लोकात्र हन्ति न निबध्यते।

(गीता १८.१७)

Naayam hanti na hanyate, ‘*Na karoti na lipyate*’.

(Gita 13.31)

‘*Hatvaapi sa imaanllokaanna hanti na nibadhyate*’.

(Gita 18. 17)

So, why do you consider this Moksha-Sanyas Yoga (the Yoga of liberation and renunciation) to be bhakti? Call it the Lord, instead! Mukti (liberation from the cycle of rebirth) is the essence of our Atma. Somebody once asked Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj, “Maharaj, which is greater – bhakti or Gnan?”

Baba said, “My brother, actually bhakti is greater.”

“Then, what about Gnan, Maharaj?”

“In Gnan, there is no difference about greater and lesser.”

Then, he asked, “Tell me, Baba, is there anything which is greater than bhakti?”

“Yes, there is,” replied Baba.

“What is it?”

“It is the one for whom you have bhakti – the Lord! The Lord is worshipped by bhakti, and He also gives refuge to bhakti.”

Bhakti is a sweet emotion of a bhakta (devotee)’s heart. It is the inclination to offer love, a dancing tendency filled with sweetness. It stays in the heart of a bhakta, and keeps prancing with love, at the sound of the Lord’s name. The dancing of a bhakta’s heart is the soul of bhakti.

But, what should bhakti be like? The one for whom we have bhakti, is called भगवान् ‘*bhagavaan*’- the Lord; and the purpose of bhakti is to please the Lord. It also reveals the secret रस *rasa* (deep emotion) for the Lord, and makes the bhakta appealing for the Lord.

Bhakti is सौभाग्यवती *saubhaagyavati* (having good fortune) and सधवा *sadhavaa* (having a husband) when the Lord is with her. Bhakti has no essence without the Lord. The Lord is the one who gives her authority and life. He is the one who makes her supremely joyful, filled with pleasure and sweetness. It is He who makes her dance. Bhakti is successful only when we have the Lord in our hearts.

So, the one who promotes bhakti, is adored by her, and known by her, is the Almighty Paramatma. Bhakti loses herself in the Paramatma who is superior to everything else. This is the meaning of ‘Moksha-Sanyasa.’

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य ‘*Sarvadharmaan parityajya*’ is the Artha (worldly wealth), Dharma, Kama (fulfillment of desires), and Moksha. The sanyas (giving up) of all these four purusharthas (manly achievements), and मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ‘*maame`kam sharanam vraja*’ (‘take refuge in Me, alone’), is the knowledge

that the Atma and the indivisible Paramatma are one. That is the शरणागति *sharanagati* (total surrender to the Lord). Then, the person is liberated from the actions caused by विद्या *vidyaa* and अविद्या *avidyaa* (knowledge and nescience), and all the sorrows and delusions come to an end. This is the highest point propounded in the Gita.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्ण यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

(गीता १८.७८)

Yatra yoge`shvarah Krishna yatra paartho dhanurdharah,

Tatra shreervijayo bhootirdhruvaa neetirmatirmama.

(Gita 18. 78)
