August 26, 1979 Satsaṅga with Baba Hari Dass

Edit notes: The following was typed from notes handwritten at the time of the darśana. Q denotes a question. B indicates what Babaji wrote on his chalkboard, as read by the reader, and then as heard and noted by someone present. R is comments likely of the chalkboard reader. Comments in square brackets are generally those of the typist. Comments in parentheses are likely that of the reader. There was editing for format and IAST transliteration of Sanskrit terms.

Q: What is discrimination?
B: To find out the real from the unreal, as the book said [reading from Śaṅkarācārya's Crest Jewel of Discrimination]. It discerns what is māyā (illusion) and what is Brahman (God).

Q: If a mantra being said internally starts to be heard internally, should the sādhaka stop saying it and just listen?
B: There are three stages in mantra. The first is chanting.
R: Which can be out loud, or just moving lips, or mentally.
B: The second is hearing the mantra. The third is seeing the mantra, which is called mantra caitanya, or the awakening of mantra. In the third stage, the mantric power appears.
Q: Should the sādhaka stop chanting and just listen?
B: Listening is higher.

Q: After several years of regular sādhana, I find it harder to feel a firm aim in the mind. Why? What can be done to improve it?
B: At first we start sādhana thinking all our problems will be solved. The more we do it, the more we see how far our real goal is. Some people get disheartened and some remain striving. Those who don't stop attain its fruit.

Q: Is there any quick and easy way to liberation?
B: Ego, non-attachment, dispassion, contentment: get perfection in any one.
Q: Ego?
R: As in non-ego. Effacing the ego.
Q: How about expanding the ego?
R: You become all of creation, become God.
B: It is also a method, but equally difficult.

Q: Is it possible to know Brahman, or God, through the senses, or must the senses be transcended?
B: We start through the senses, and when the mind and senses stop their function in meditation, a higher consciousness comes. Through that higher consciousness, Brahman or God is attained.

Q: Is the idea of infinity possible to grasp with the rational mind, or must one tune into that infinity in order to know it?

B: The Veda explain that all knowledge was included within them, and at the end they say netī netī.
R: Not this. We can't imagine it.
B: If we do, then we are putting limits on God.
R: If we think we know what infinity is.

Q: What holds the stars and planets and galaxies in space?
B: They all make a field of attraction.
R: Gravity.
Q: Is space expanding?
B: Definition of space – what's the limit?
R: By definition, what is the limit?
B: If we say that space has a limit, then we can say that space is expanding.

Q: Scientists have given up the concept of ether. How do yogin explain ether?
B: In yoga, ākāśa (ether), this word is used in a very subtle way. It holds all saṁskāra of creation.
R: All the prints of every action that has ever been.
B: It is not something hollow, with nothing. It is filled with consciousness, action, and matter.

Q: I've been pretty close to someone [husband] who committed suicide lately, and I just wonder what's going to happen to that soul?
B: Suicide is caused by anger. Anger and fear are two sides of the same coin. So after a suicide, the soul (which becomes a seed after death) takes all the saṁskāra with it. The soul reincarnates in another body with much fear or anger.

Q: Today is Gaṇeśa's birthday. Sweets are always pictured with Gaṇeśa.
B: Sesame seed candy. He likes it.
Q: Any significance in being born on Gaṇeśa's birthday?
B: It gives success.
R: Gaṇeśa is a symbol of success.

Q: So how does one eliminate anger and fear from life?
B: By understanding fear. One's fear is the root cause. Although death is part of life, we don't want to accept it. The main fear is fear of death. If we accept it honestly, then fear is eliminated. Then anger will go away.

Q: When I'm afraid, I start doing mantra and I realize everything is okay. The fear goes away. When I'm angry, it seems sacrilegious to do mantra.
B: Anger is a weapon to defend when fear comes. You can't be angry with no reason. Sometimes we can't see any reason because the fear is so subtle.
R: Sometimes we can't see there is fear causing the anger.

B: For example, a person says something good, and the mind at once thinks probably the person is taking my place.
R: Wants to usurp.
B: It is a fear, and we project anger. Then the person reacts.
Q: What should we do, instead of projecting anger?
B: We can see the cause if we don't get involved in that emotion. It's not easy. Emotions can drift away even in learned people. When war starts, everyone supports wars, even though they know it will ruin everyone. Emotion possesses the mind.

Q: So how do you not get involved with emotions?
B: By sādhana.
Q: If you see yourself getting angry with someone, and can see the cause, does Babaji suggest discussing it with the person?
B: Sometimes discussing the cause can clear it more [make it clearer?]. It can cure. Or it may increase it, if the other person doesn't want to agree.

Q: How is the violence and killing in the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata conducive to spiritual life?
B: There is always violence and killing inside our body. All these stories are symbolic. In the past, the Indian system of teaching was through stories. They took historical events and put them in story form which matched with our inner battles.
Q: The Rāmāyaṇa appeals to my violent nature and makes me want to go out and get a bow and arrow.
B: Bow and arrow is one-pointed mind.
R: And symbolically the target is liberation. There may have been a time when those things actually happened, but sages took the story and added spiritual truth to it in order to pass on the teachings. The whole system of yoga is explained in the Rāmāyaṇa.

Q: Woman friend works with dying children in a hospital, and superficially she rides the emotion but inside she is in a lot of grief. What can help this pain?
B: We are limited in our actions. We try to help as much as we can, but we can't change someone's fate. The main sādhana for everyone is to understand that birth, growth, decay, and death together make life. If we want to remove one of those four, then it's not life.

Q: Why does death occur in such young children?
B: Saṁskāras (prints of past actions), their own or inherited from their parents.

Q: In the Bible it is said that Jesus feeds the multitudes with loaves and fishes, and in another place it says he eats fish. How can this be reconciled with yogic philosophy?
B: He was born in the desert. The tribal food was lamb and fish. Eskimos in tundras – what can they eat? I'm not supporting eating meat. But the human life is superior to all other beings on the planet. So when there is nothing else, then the human can eat meat to stay alive.

Q: Would Babaji also say that it is sometimes important, in order to heal our bodies, to eat meat or fish?
B: Āyurveda recommends it.
R: In specific cases.

Q: What is the cause of feeling that someone who has died is with you at a particular time?
B: Sometimes our mind sees the past in the present. That situation triggers the emotions. For example, a woman sees a man wearing a brown hat. And she sees her dead husband.
R: Who wore the same kind of hat in the past. It brings her emotion up.
B: The mind doesn't know it, but the emotions are triggered.
R: Sometimes something totally unknown to our conscious mind will set off the emotions.

Q: If someone is in a situation such as the one just described, and sees that it is an object that has triggered the emotions, how should one relate to that object?
B: The object brought the past into the present, and you know that you can't do anything for the past.
Q: What about the case where an object creates emotions beyond control, and is not traceable to anything from the past, but every time the object is seen it creates strong emotions?
B: You have to find out if your attachment or desire is causing it.
Q: If it is not attachment or desire, what could it be?
B: You had a red car. And whenever you see a red car, you get emotional.
Q: So what do you do?
B: The red car belongs to someone else. You are not getting it.
R: So it's discrimination [that is required here].

Q: In meditation sometimes I will try to get closer to the source of experience of my own images, involuntary thoughts. I see images and thoughts, and I think: I must be thinking these. But I'm not conscious of doing it.
B: The mind is conscious only 10%. All other things happen unconsciously.
R: All other 90%.
B: You go to a store and you see the whole store, but you are conscious only of the thing you need.
Q: How can the other 90% be contacted? I feel it would be useful in sādhana.
B: We do sādhana to develop attentiveness.
R: The more sādhana is done honestly, the more attentiveness and concentration develop.

Q: Past thoughts, actions, and deeds have trapped me in this body. How can the power inside to get beyond this illusion be harnessed?
B: What's new about it? Everyone is trapped. But we are capable of breaking that trap by developing positive qualities.

Q: How can you stop projecting your thoughts if people are picking up what you are thinking?
B: Why do you want to stop it?

Q: The people who are picking up my thoughts are trying to make me kill myself.
B: It could be it's your projection.
Q: They try to make me kill myself by saying if I don't, someone will kill me in a horrible way.
B: Is it real people?
Q: They do it behind my back.
B: Do you see them doing it behind your back?
[Questioner insisted it's real, took offense.]
B: Change the place. Your mind is creating it.
Q: I need someone who can look inside my mind and tell me if it's real or not.
B: It's not real.
Q: It is real.
B: If it's real, try to get out of it. [Questioner wanted to test Babaji's ability.]
B: Change the place and go to seclusion.
Q: Could you speak into me?
B: No.

Q: About six years ago, on impulse, I asked my husband to participate, and I called on my dead grandfather to move an ashtray on the table. It moved. Who did it?
B: I can't tell.