

These are the questions and answers with Baba Hari Dass at the Hanuman Fellowship Satsang on September 20, 1981. Comments added by Shankar who read from Babaji's chalkboard are indicated by (Sh:) Copyright by Sri Rama Foundation. Transcribed by Kamla Bai. 1981

Q: In operating from the heart center, is it better to just try to remain open in the heart or try to consciously generate love?

A: Love is like a light which spreads by its own purity. A candle which is not lit cannot spread the light. So the first thing is to purify the heart which is like lighting the candle. Loving someone with an impure heart is an act of love, and not love itself. (Sh: It's an act of love, not pure love.)

Q: What would be an easy way to open a 3-year-old child to the idea of meditation?

A: Children copy. If they see someone meditating, they will copy. By forcing them to meditate, they will revolt.

Q: What is a simple way to get a 27-year-old child to meditate?

A: By explaining what is meditation. Meditation means not to give a seat to unwanted thoughts is the first step. The second step is to channel the mind to one spiritual object (or idea). The rest will happen by itself.

Q: If in meditation occasionally one experiences pleasurable feelings, is it o.k. to enjoy them or should they be completely ignored?

A: If the pleasurable feeling relates to spirituality, then it's o.k.

Q: If one works on purifying the mind, will that purify the heart automatically, or must they be worked on as two separate operations?

A: Yes. (Sh: It will, working on the mind will work on the heart.)

Q: Do we all have both the preservative and destructive energies working within us?

A: Yes.

Q: Is one better or higher than the other?

A: Without the three gunas, nothing can manifest and exist. (Sh: The three gunas are the three energies of creation which are said to permeate everything in creation with their energies in an admixture of the three. He mentioned the Gods, Vishnu being the preserver and Shiva the destroyer. There are three in the Hindu trinity. Brahma, the creator, which represents Rajas guna, the quality of action, passion. Vishnu, the preserver, who represents Sattva guna, the quality of purity and balance. Shiva, the destroyer, who represents the quality of Tamas guna, inertia or stability.)

Q: He wonders about a seeming conflict between feelings of equanimity and feelings of love. Some times when he feels this equanimity, it almost feels false to him. It feels like a coldness with no heart.

A: Equanimity is not coldness. As long as our Ahamkar exists, we don't feel equanimity in its real sense. We are still comparing things with the "I".

Q: Sometimes he feels that love upsets his equanimity. Sometimes compassion and devotion to God has a painful aspect which upsets his equilibrium.

A: For example?

Sh: Maybe feeling separated from God which makes a pain in the heart, which would make one not in equanimity?

Q: (agrees)

A: Separation from God is called viyoga. That separation is painful with devotion.

- Q: How is compassion painful, through feeling another's pain? Some of it seems to be reflected in his own being, bringing pain to him.
- A: It is due to comparison. (Sh: It's not true equanimity you are starting from, because you are comparing; you're saying that "feelings of compassion are upsetting my equanimity." He's saying the equanimity may not be real in the first place; there is comparing. To compare yourself with the other's pain, therefore feeling pain yourself.)
- Q: He's been wandering for several years. What is the best way to choose a vocation that will be helpful to his own growth and others and the right place to pursue this vocation?
- A: There is no place which can satisfy all of your needs. You have to learn to accept things; otherwise you'll go on traveling.
- Q: Is it good for a person always to express all of their feelings or are there situations where feelings should not be expressed?
- A: Who can? The mind goes through so many rapid changes. Sometimes we don't even know how we feel. So how to express confused feelings?
- Q: He has the impression that Shiva is the bad guy and Vishnu is the good guy, and compares them to the Christian ideas of God and devil.
- A: No. Vishnu and Shiva are the two sides of the same coin (Sh: or same God).
- Q: In the story of Druva, his ideal was Vishnu. How can one focus on one specific ideal of God like that? That is, he identified with Vishnu more than Shiva.
- A: Sattva or peace represents Vishnu. Druva got pain and anger, etc. (Sh: which are energies of Shiva.) He wanted to get rid of it. So the gods (Sh: Vishnu and Shiva) shouldn't be looked at as good versus bad, just like day and night can't be labeled good and bad. But we do it because of our convenience. Like a thief that might say night is good and day is bad. (Sh: according to one's proclivities.)
- Q: But Shiva isn't as good as peace.
- A: Yes (Sh: we couldn't know peace without the other.)
- Q: If at some point in our practice, we go beyond all forms of God, why is it important to begin one's practice with a form of God?
- A: Because we identify "I" with a form (Sh: that is, your own body). So we feel it's easy to identify God with a form. (Sh: We are conditioned to accept forms and to deal with forms.) One who never identified the "I" with the body can't identify God with a form. (Sh: or associate God with a form.)
- Q: How can I go about distinguishing between my needs and my abilities in choosing my vocation?
- A: By developing the intelligence. There's not one answer applicable to all situations.
- Q: Going back to the question about Vishnu and Shiva, saying that those two aren't classified as right or wrong, but are part of a whole, does it also follow that in the individual our negative tendencies are also not bad and that we might not get rid of them, but rather, to accept them?
- A: We are using our ego. It is the cause of right and wrong. If the ego is removed, then what is right and what is wrong? Killing a cow in India is wrong and here it is right. The ego is creating two things. (Sh: opposing views about the same situation.)

- Q: It seems important for us to leave out those things we find in ourselves that are negative and try to improve ourselves.  
 A: We can't start from the top.
- Q: If one is sitting in meditation, and starts feeling a lot of anxieties, should one stop and try again later or sit through it?  
 A: To get perfection, you have to fight the obstacles. Otherwise, the mind will use it as a pretext for not doing sadhana. (Sh: The mind will keep thinking up anxious things to think about so it won't have to sit there with you.)
- Q: Is that saying that once the commitment to sit for meditation is made, that nothing should deter one from that?  
 A: That's the best attitude. One day you may lose; next day you may win. (Sh: If you don't play the game each day.)
- Q: He's pointing to a coincidence of form in that Shiva, the God of destruction, carries a trident and the western depiction of Satan is with a pitchfork.  
 A: The trident is a symbol of three gunas going to nivritti (Sh: the points are always going upward. So the three gunas going back to their source is the symbol of that weapon.) Using that trident means giving liberation. (Sh: destroys forms of ignorance with trident.)
- Q: So getting liberation is bound to be a painful process because he uses a trident when he gives it?  
 A: There is always pain in getting liberation. We are attached to this reality. (Sh: The same thing that Jesus said. He said, "I come bringing a sword. I'm going to cut you off from everything you think you love." Shiva does the same thing with his trident.)
- Q: My son likes to play with toys, but doesn't like to put them away again.  
 A: Who does? When the game is over, then the toy has no meaning. (Sh: That's why some saints don't do anything.)
- Q: Since Vishnu is the preserver, when one grows up and takes on more responsibility, does one get more like Vishnu, to preserve the toys?  
 A: More Rajas when one gets older (Sh: more activity.) and more attachment. (Sh: So you want to put your toys away.)
- Q: Is sandalwood used as a medicine in India?  
 A: Yes.
- Q: Does sandalwood grow only in India?  
 A: As far as I know.
- Q: Grows in Hawaii, too.  
 A: It's possible (Sh: that it grows in other places. It could be from transplanting.)
- Q: Would you recommend a career in massage for him, and which field of massage?  
 A: If you find a patient.
- Q: Sometimes I get intense headaches (from when I used drugs) and if I put a few drops of sandalwood oil on my head, it goes away. Is that psychological?  
 A: Sandalwood is cooling (and drug misuse is heating). It worked on you, but it's not a cure.
- Q: Is there any meaning when joints pop and crack while doing asanas? Is there anything causing that?  
 A: No spiritual meaning.
- Q: Is it all right? Is it harmful to the body?  
 A: It's alright when it happens. It relaxes the joints.

- Q: What books would you recommend for westerners who want to get a foundation in spiritual things?
- A: Patanjali Yoga Darshan. And also the commentary of Shankaracharya on the Bhagavad Gita.
- Q: Why doesn't Babaji recommend the Yellow Book? Don't most spiritual teachers recommend one of their own books?
- A: I have to read it first (Sh: before he could recommend it. He couldn't recommend something he hadn't read! That book and the book Silence Speaks are compilations of gatherings just like this, edited and put in a book form.)
- Q: Are the Vedas valuable reading?
- A: Yes. But it's hard to understand unless someone explains it.
- Q: He's mentioned a teaching (Sh: I thought was from the Gita) that if one worships the body alone, one is condemned to darkness. If one worships spirit alone, one is condemned to even greater darkness.
- Sh: In what frame of reference is this? It's out of context as it is.
- Q: I can't remember.
- A: In the Upanishads, there are dialogues. (Sh: He's still trying to get a context for this.) What is jiva? Spirit. Jiva or spirit is trapped in ignorance. (Sh: the greatest manifestation of this is the thought "I am the body.") To worship that jiva (Sh: who is in ignorance) will lead to darkness. 1) Body. 2) "I am the body" (Sh: two different things.) Both will lead to darkness. (Sh: Worship of the body, or worship of the idea "I am the body.")
- Q: So is that saying one doesn't need to exchange physical relationships with a person in order to share the spirit?
- A: Physical relationship shares the ego. I am this, he is that. (Sh: I am this body, you are that body.)
- Q: Does that mean that you don't touch others?
- A: It's a habit.
- Q: Do you accept students to live with you if one feels the need to live with a spiritual teacher?
- A: It's not important to live with a teacher. The important thing is to do what the teacher says. (Sh: that is, if you've accepted a relationship of student to teacher.)
- Q: When people meditate in a group, can spirits recognize each other?
- Sh: Do you mean, can one subtle body recognize another subtle body?
- Q: Yes.
- A: If the meditation is real.
- Q: There is a story of RamaKrishna that the practice of meditation with him is to gaze upon him in order to get his Grace. That's what everyone did. One man who would sit in meditation with eyes closed and still felt he was getting grace and was considered unusual by the others: Is that an example of what you were saying, it's not necessary to live with the guru? Those that were staring at Ramakrishna were like people thinking they needed to live with the guru?
- A: It doesn't make any difference whether one gazes or thinks in the mind. The form can be visualized just as we see. It can be done either way.
- Q: Is Babaji going to move if the Santa Cruz area were sprayed by malathion?
- Sh: He doesn't live in Santa Cruz proper.
- A: Why? SO MANY ARE LIVING.

- Q: Along the same line, what about the prophecies about earthquakes, disasters, etc. for California. People have been prophesying for years.
- A: Who can tell in the next moment that one will die? Death is everywhere and at any time. A car accident for example. Who is stopping from going in a car? (Sh: Because there are car accidents doesn't stop us from getting in cars.)
- Q: When I do sadhana and when I take care of a young child, I notice that similar negative qualities seem to arise. I'm wondering now that I'm doing less sadhana and more childcare, will my spiritual progress still go on?
- Sh: Because the negativity is common in both situations?
- A: Yes.
- A: The aim is to reduce the negativity. If you reduce the negativity in childcare, that is sadhana.