

DIVINE DISCOURSES
[VOLUME - 25]



HIS HOLINESS SHRI DATTA SWAMI



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अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ ९-११ ॥
avajananti mam mudha manushim tanumashritam |
param bhavamajananto mama bhutamaheshvaram || 9-11||

**Ignorant people disregard Me when I descend in the human form.
They do not know My Supreme Nature as the Lord of all beings.**

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita IX, 11

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Chapter 1
INVITING THE SADGURU

July 13, 2019 Evening

Smt. K. Ramā Sundari asked: Swami! I have been inviting You to visit our house and have meals with us, but You have not visited us in a long time. Are you angry with us?

Who Should Go to Whom?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! You are an ardent devotee of Shri Satya Sai Baba, who appeared before Me a long time ago and asked Me to propagate true spiritual knowledge. I have narrated this incident to you several times. That day, Shri Satya Sai talked about several spiritual points with Me for about half an hour. One of those points told by Him was that the disciple should go to the preacher; the preacher should not go to the disciple. This is absolutely correct because when the disciple goes to the preacher, it means that the disciple has recognized the value of the preacher and the value of his spiritual knowledge. The disciple's going to the preacher and offering money (*guru dakṣiṇā*) to him is proof of the value that the disciple has for the preacher and his knowledge. **When the preacher preaches spiritual knowledge to such a disciple, it is like feeding a hungry person.** Going to the preacher is the sacrifice of work (*karma saṁnyāsa*) and offering *guru dakṣiṇā* to him is the sacrifice of the fruit of work (*karma phala tyāga*). Both of them are the proof of the hunger that the disciple has for the knowledge-food. When Rāma went to sage Vasiṣṭha to learn spiritual knowledge from him, the sage asked Rama to offer *guru dakṣiṇā* to him in the beginning (***Dhanamārjaya Kākutstha***—Yoga Vāsiṣṭha). Shri Shirdi Sai Baba also asked for two rupees as *guru dakṣiṇā*, which represent the disciples' attention (*śraddhā*) and patience (*śama*). **The Divine Preacher is not in need of the offering but, He asks for it only to test whether the disciple truly has the thirst and attentiveness for the knowledge.**

Whenever I come to your house, your son, Pavan, types the messages that I give. It is his sacrifice of work or *karma saṁnyāsa*. You offer Me the very tasty food cooked by you, which is your *karma phala tyāga*. Both of you also offer *guru dakṣiṇā* to Me. That is alright. But Shri Satya Sai told

Me that the disciple should come to Me for knowledge and that I should not go to the disciple. This advice is correct from the angle of testing whether the disciple is truly interested and attentive. But I took another angle, which is that since the disciple goes to his office and works everyday, he needs rest for one day on Sunday. On that day, I go to his house and give him the strain of typing My message. This strain is pardonable because every devotee must do some work for God. Doing this work is possible for your son only on Sunday. But if on this day of rest, the disciple comes to My home and also does God's work of typing the messages, the disciple is doubly strained. Hence, I preferred to go to the house of the disciple than asking him to come to My home. So far, I acted as per My angle. Now, I am acting as per the angle of My Guru, Shri Satya Sai Baba.

Equal Entertainment and Monism with God

Even if somebody scolds Me, I do not get angry at all. In fact, I enjoy the scolding like a hot dish in the meal or like a tragic scene in a movie. God has created this world filled with happiness as well as misery, just as a movie is filled with both comic and tragic scenes or as a meal is filled with sweet and hot dishes. The opposites are to be enjoyed alternately. Any one thing continuing for a long time invariably leads to boredom. The Veda says that before creation, God alone existed. In that state, there was no second item and no changes at all. So, the state was boring. Therefore, God created this world for His entertainment, to get rid of boredom. God equally enjoys both the misery and the happiness that exist in His creation. He is like the eater enjoying his meal consisting of both sweet and hot dishes or like the spectator enjoying the movie having both comic and tragic scenes. Attaining this God-like state of equally enjoying both comedy and tragedy in the world is called *yoga* (*Samatvaṃ yoga...*, *Tulya nindāstutiḥ...*, *Sukhaduḥkhe same...*—Gita).

Equal enjoyment does not mean that both comedy and tragedy are equal or that they are one and the same. The two are clearly quite different; they are opposites. The enjoyment or the entertainment obtained from both is the same. When you see a pot and a piece of cloth, the two items are different. The pot is not the cloth and the cloth is not the pot. But the process of seeing both is one and the same. If we want to achieve monism (Advaita) with God, we must at least achieve this state of equal entertainment in our lives while living in the world. As far as creation is concerned, we cannot create even a single atom, let alone creating the whole world. Neither can we control or destroy the world. In these three

aspects of creation, control and destruction of the world, we can never achieve monism with God. This important concept is clearly stated in the Brahma Sūtra (*Jagadvyāpāra varjyam...*). We can at least try to enjoy this world like God who enjoys both comedy and tragedy and obtains the same entertainment from them.

You can neither purchase the food materials nor cook the food. Your friend has purchased the food materials and even cooked the food. He has offered to let you eat the food along with him. Can you, at least, eat the food, equally enjoying both the sweet and hot dishes like your friend? If you cannot do even that much, how can you claim that you are equal to your friend? Can you not achieve oneness with him at least in the aspect of eating with equal enjoyment? When you cannot achieve equality with your friend in even a single aspect, where is the question of oneness or monism between the two of you? If you can equally enjoy both the sweet and hot dishes in the meal like your friend, you can at least claim equality or similarity with your friend in that one aspect of eating. On the basis of that one commonality, you could claim oneness in a loose sense. Similarly, if you can equally enjoy comedy and tragedy in the world like God, you could claim monism with God, in a loose sense. But remember that such loose monism is confined only to the single aspect of equally enjoying the world and not in the aspect of creating, controlling or destroying it. You can say that you have monism with your friend in the aspect of eating the food but you must also say that you have dualism with your friend in the aspects of purchasing the food materials and cooking the food. If you do not have even this one similarity in the aspect of eating the food, then you have no right to utter the word monism with your friend.

If you are unable to attain similarity with God even in this one aspect of equally enjoying the world, you are an ordinary soul. Such an ordinary soul is totally different from God. It does not have even a single similarity with Him. A realized soul, who has attained this one similarity, is called a *yogi*. Such a *yogi* alone can claim monism with God in an approximate sense, based on this single similarity. **The greatest surprise is that the Advaita philosopher claims monism with God in a strict sense, in the case of an ordinary soul!** Of course, monism with God is possible in the case of a specific soul who has been selected by God to become an Incarnation. In the Incarnation, God merges with that particular soul perfectly. But even in the case of the Incarnation, the perfect monism that exists between God and the soul is only to the extent of our imagination. Beyond the limits of our imagination, a dualism between God and that soul

remains. Owing to this extremely subtle dualism, God can even withdraw from the soul in whom He has merged, at any time! The realized soul attains partial similarity with God in the single aspect of obtaining equal entertainment from the world. This state is called partial union or partial *yoga* with God. The Incarnation has full *yoga* (union) with God, to the extent of our imagination. One must remember that even in the case of an Incarnation, God can withdraw from the Incarnation's soul. So, there is dualism between God and soul even in an Incarnation. Of course, that dualism is beyond the limits of our imagination.

Chapter 2

MONISM AND THE VEDANTIC UNIFICATIONJuly 13, 2019 Evening 2nd Message

Shri Phani asked: In Your response given to Smt. Rama Sundari, You have explained that monism between God and an ordinary soul is possible only in the highly limited sense of equal entertainment in happiness and misery. You have clearly stated that, in a strict sense, dualism alone exists between God and an ordinary soul. In that case, how can You correlate the philosophies of the three divine preachers?

Quantitative Difference Between God and Soul

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! In the previous discourse, I gave the example of a highly limited monism between you and friend. This monism is only partial. It is actually negligible and is restricted only to the aspect of equally enjoying the different types of dishes in the meal. Just because you have attained this negligible monism with your friend in this one aspect, you must not forget the dualism that exists between the two of you in the aspects of purchasing the food materials and cooking the food. A movie is playing on the screen and the producer-cum-director of the movie is enjoying the show of his movie along with his peon who is also sitting by his side. In the single aspect of enjoying both the comic and tragic scenes of the movie, the producer-director and peon are equal. But the peon should not misunderstand this negligible partial similarity to be a total monism or total equality. If the peon, under the illusion of total equality, were to put his hand around the shoulder of his boss, the producer-director, would it be proper? **The boss is always the master whereas the peon is his servant.** The partial similarity does not even bring total equality between the two, let alone bringing oneness or monism in an absolute sense.

The relationship between a realized soul and God was said to be such a partial similarity by Rāmānuja. He described the relationship as a part-whole relationship, where the soul is a part and God is the Whole. He called it the *aṃśa-Aṃśī* or *śeṣa-Śeṣī sambandha*. Note that this relationship can only be accepted in the case of a realized soul who actually enjoys the world with God-like equal-mindedness. It cannot be accepted in the case of an ordinary soul who cannot enjoy the world with equal-mindedness.

Madhva said that the relationship between God and the soul always remains the same Master-servant relationship. He did accept a trace of similarity between God and the soul in that, according to Him, both God and soul are awareness. It is important to note that God's original nature is not awareness since He is unimaginable, while awareness is imaginable. However, the three divine preachers agreed on one common point that God is awareness. This point is true in the sense that God can be said to be Unimaginable Awareness. This Unimaginable Awareness of God is fundamentally different from the awareness of the soul. The soul's awareness is imaginable since it is a product of energy passing through the physical nervous system. On the other hand, the mechanism of generation of God's awareness is unimaginable. Yet, both can be said to be awareness in the sense that both can know. Thus, in this aspect of the ability to know, there is a similarity between God and a soul. This point will be discussed in detail further.

Rāmānuja looked at the qualitative similarity between God and soul while simultaneously noting the quantitative difference between them. Therefore, He compared God to the whole body and the soul to its limb. Madhva only looked at the difference between God and the soul. Treating that difference to be the reality, He neglected the one similarity of both being awareness. Such a view had also been expressed earlier by Śaṅkara in a prayer written by Him on God Jagannātha (*Satyapi bhedāpagame...*) in which He addressed God as His master (*Nātha*). He compared Himself to a wave and God to the ocean. Śaṅkara knew that the difference between God and the soul was predominant and that the similarity between them was negligible. The similarity is that both have awareness. It is like saying that the master and the servant are similar because both are human beings. In spite of that similarity, the difference in the potencies of the master and the servant is large. In the case of God and the soul, the difference in their potencies is infinite. God is omnipotent, while the soul has very little power. The only point of similarity between the two is awareness, which simply means the ability to know. But even in the knowledge possessed by the two, there is a vast quantitative difference since God is omniscient while the soul knows very little. Over and above this quantitative difference, there is also a fundamental difference related to the awareness of the two. God is Unimaginable Awareness, whereas the soul is imaginable awareness.

Comparing an Animal, a Sage and God

An animal is also imaginable awareness since it has a very basic ability to know. But a realized sage has a lot deeper knowledge. In a loose sense, we could say that there is monism between the animal and the sage based on the qualitative similarity that they both are awareness. But huge difference in the extents of their knowledge must also be accepted as a quantitative dissimilarity. Further, between the sage and omniscient God, there is an infinite quantitative difference. Then is it not ridiculous to claim that there is a strict monism between an animal and God? How can I control My laughter at your utterly ridiculous claim? If you had at least claimed monism in a loose sense between an animal and a sage, I could have perhaps controlled My laughter. But saying that there is a strict monism between an animal and God is the most foolish and laughable statement!

In both the sage and the animal, there is a basic qualitative similarity that the knower in both is relative awareness. Relative awareness means the awareness which is a product of inert energy passing through the nervous system. So, between the animal and the sage, there is a qualitative similarity in terms of the common basic awareness, even though there is a quantitative difference between the two. The quantitative difference lies in the extents of knowledge possessed by their respective awarenesses. It means that the potencies of the awareness present in the animal and the sage are different. Thus, between the animal and the sage, there is at least a qualitative similarity in spite of a quantitative difference. But the unimaginable God and the ordinary soul are totally different from each other. The awareness of the former is unimaginable whereas the awareness of the latter is imaginable. In fact, the imaginable awareness, which itself is the soul, is a form of inert energy.

The Seer-Seeing-Seen Triad

In the process of knowing or seeing, there are three components and they are: (1) the knower or the subject, (2) the process of knowing and (3) the known or the object of the process of knowing. Thus, in the process of knowing, there is a triad of the subject-process-object or knower-knowing-known. The process of knowing is also sometimes indicated by the word seeing, in which case, the triad is said to be seer-seeing-seen. The seer (knower), who is the subject, is called the *dr̥k* or the *draṣṭā*. It is the awareness which is a work-form of the inert energy in the nervous system. The process of seeing (knowing) is called *dr̥ṣṭi*. It is also a work-form of the

inert energy. Thus, we find that the seer and the seeing are one and the same. The *dr̥k* and *dr̥ṣṭi* are the same. The seer and the process of seeing, which are work, are both basically the same dynamic energy. Energy is characterized by dynamism.

The seen object is called *dr̥ṣyam*, which is matter. Matter is characterized by its static nature and it appears to be different from energy, which is dynamic. But matter too is a form of energy since both are interconvertible as per science. So, even the static matter is the dynamic energy, after all. **The dynamism in matter is not perceived because it is subtle.** We only perceive its gross static nature. That is why matter appears static while energy appears dynamic. Matter is made of atoms. But hidden behind the static appearance of the atoms of matter is a highly condensed dynamic nature involving the revolving and spinning of the subatomic particles. Dynamism is the nature of energy. **Thus, we realize that matter is ultimately energy in a hidden way.**

Two-Level Illusion

The static nature of matter is only an illusion, while its real nature is found to be dynamic energy. In fact, the absolute truth of the entire imaginable domain is only this dynamic energy. This energy, which is the essence of creation, can also be said to be the unimaginable God in a hidden way. We say that energy is the creator of matter. But God is the Creator of energy. Note that God is the absolute phase, which is the unimaginable domain whereas creation is the relative phase or the imaginable domain. Since God is unimaginable, it might be difficult to understand how He could be the cause of the imaginable creation. Fortunately, even within the imaginable domain, absolute and relative sub-phases exist. They help us understand the relation between the absolute unimaginable domain and the relative imaginable domain. The unimaginable God is the absolute reality upon which inert energy is the superimposed illusion. This inert energy is the imaginable domain. Now, within the imaginable domain, energy is the absolute reality. Matter is an illusion superimposed upon this energy. These two illusions involve superimpositions at two different levels—energy on God and matter on energy. They are divine illusions (*māyā*) created by God for the soul and the soul can never cross them.

A person sees a rope in dim light and thinks it is a snake. The rope is real while the snake is an illusion. The snake is created by the person himself. The cause of the illusion is the ignorance of the person, which is called *avidyā*. The soul can cross the illusion created by its own ignorance

or *avidyā*. But the same soul cannot cross the illusion created by God using His power, called *māyā*. The false illusory snake produced by the soul's *avidyā*, does not appear as clear as a real snake in bright daylight. But the illusory snake produced by God's *māyā* appears very real and clear to the soul as if seeing a real snake in bright daylight. God is the rope, which is the absolute unimaginable phase, which is the reality. The soul is neither the rope itself as per the philosophy of monism nor is it a part of the rope, as per the philosophy of special monism. The soul is only a part of the false snake (imaginable creation). Hence, the false snake (creation) can never be unreal for the soul, which also is part of the snake.

The soul is neither already God nor does it ever become God by its own wish of effort. But God can become the soul when God wishes so. This happens when God merges with the soul leading to perfect monism with that particular soul. Even though there is perfect monism between God and the soul in an Incarnation from our point of view, an extremely subtle dualism between God and the soul exists. But this subtle difference is beyond the limits of our imagination. Hence, confining ourselves to our limits of imagination, we have to say that when God becomes a soul (Incarnation), there is perfect monism between God and that soul. Both these illusions of God appearing as energy and energy appearing as matter exist even for God as long as He wishes. Although they are illusions, they provide Him real entertainment. But both the illusions disappear for God whenever God wishes to perform a miracle. Hence, the state of the non-existence of matter and energy and the state of the existence of matter and energy can both exist simultaneously for God. The state of the non-existence of matter and energy can never exist for a soul.

God as Unimaginable Awareness

When we call God as unimaginable awareness, we must realize that awareness is an extremely dangerous word. In a fraction of a second, it can mislead us into thinking that God is energy. In the case of an ordinary soul, we have the triad of knower-knowing-known or seer-seeing-seen. In this triad, the knower and knowing are both the same awareness. Awareness is both the process and the subject and this awareness is basically inert energy. Extending this same concept to God, we might misunderstand that that since God is awareness, both God as well as His process of knowing must be forms of energy. This is a huge misunderstanding! **Alas, God was thinking even before He created inert energy!** Inert energy was absent before its creation by God. Hence, awareness, which is a work form of the

energy, must also be absent before the creation of energy. Then, how could God, the subject-form of awareness, have done the process of thinking, which is the work-form of awareness? So, you have to say that before creation, in the absence of inert energy and the awareness produced from the energy, both God and His thinking are unimaginable. This means that the unimaginable God need not be the subjective awareness and the working awareness in order to think. The unimaginable God can think without awareness, simply due to His unimaginable omnipotence. When I say that God thought in such and such manner, you should simply understand that that God thought in this manner. You should not bring in the concept of awareness here since awareness has no place at all before the creation of its cause, which is inert energy. **The word awareness is born only after inert energy is created and matter in the form of a material nervous system is created.**

When the first pot was not even created in the entire creation, how can you use the word ‘pot’? Hence, in the state before creation, the word ‘awareness’ does not exist at all. In that state, only one item exists and that is the unimaginable God. Hence, if you are talking about the state or condition before creation, there is only word you can say and that is ‘God’ (unimaginable God). When we say that the unimaginable God thought before creation, that thought is also the unimaginable God Himself. This is because there cannot be a second item—the thought—other than God in the unimaginable domain. Any attempt to define multiple unimaginable items ultimately ends up in the one and only unimaginable item, God. The unimaginable God thought before creation. In that case, both the subject, God (*dr̥k*) and the process of thinking (*dr̥ṣṭi*), which is commonly called awareness, are both the same unimaginable God. We can use the word ‘Awareness’ or ‘Unimaginable Awareness’ to indicate God and His process of thinking, but it ultimately means the single unimaginable God. One thing must be understood clearly and it is that from the angle of the subject or from the angle of the process (work), the unimaginable God is not the relative awareness that is found in the imaginable creation. The awareness found in the imaginable world is imaginable as it is the imaginable work-form of the imaginable inert energy functioning in the imaginable material nervous system. **One cannot even dream of equating this relative awareness or the soul with the unimaginable God, who existed alone before creation without any second item like awareness.**

Absolute and Relative Realities

This omnipotent unimaginable God can see the non-existent world as if it were real and existent in order to get full and real entertainment. **Making the non-existent appear real and existent is impossible for the soul but it is possible for God due to His unimaginable omnipotence.** Due to the same unimaginable omnipotence, He enters into His own creation and merges with a certain soul. That soul acts as His medium to become the mediated God or an Incarnation. This process of entry and merging of the unimaginable God with a medium is also beyond our logic. A false snake, which is an illusion superimposed on a rope at twilight, can never appear as clear as a real snake seen in bright daylight. **But God is seeing the non-existent world as if it were absolutely clear and existent.** He is also getting full and real entertainment watching the world. There is no way to explain this other than God's unimaginable omnipotence. **Furthermore, the real rope cannot enter into the false snake, but the real God enters into the non-existent world as an Incarnation.** Here too, the unimaginable potency of God is necessary to explain this phenomenon.

Therefore, you cannot use the word 'awareness' in the absolute phase, which is the state before creation. In the absolute phase, you can use only one term and that is 'unimaginable God'. Even when you use the term 'Unimaginable Awareness', it only means unimaginable God and nothing else. You cannot say the awareness exists as a portion in the unimaginable God because, in an unimaginable item, even internal differences (*svagata bheda*) cannot be accepted. Hence, the Unimaginable Awareness also becomes identical with the unimaginable God, which is the single unimaginable item. This makes it clear that the Unimaginable Awareness cannot mean the relative imaginable awareness, which is called soul.

Practically, you, as a soul, stand in the relative phase alone. You may speak about the absolute phase, but it does not mean that you are speaking about absolute phase standing in the absolute phase. Here, the absolute phase strictly means the unimaginable God and that too, strictly the state before creation alone. You cannot even call the unimaginable God in the present state after creation as the absolute phase. You might be tempted to say that since God is always the absolute existent reality and creation, including all souls, are non-existent with respect to Him, the unimaginable God in the present state is also the absolute phase. But the important point here is that after creating the world, God has made creation absolutely real and existent using His unimaginable omnipotence. At present, it is equally

real and existent as God Himself. This is necessary to provide Him real and complete entertainment. Creation remains real and existent to God as long as He wishes and He converts it to its unreal state only when He performs miracles. Thus, there is a difference between the condition before creation, when only the unimaginable God existed and the present condition, when apart from the unimaginable God, creation, which has been granted an equal reality also exists. Essentially, there is no difference between the two conditions but an external superficial difference exists by the will of God. So, strictly speaking, the absolute phase refers to the condition before creation and not to the condition after creation. Even though the same absolute phase exists in essence, even after creation, owing the external difference, the two conditions are treated to be different.

Let Me give an example. Light is an inert form of inert energy and awareness is a non-inert form of the same inert energy. Essentially, both light and awareness are one and the same, but they differ in the external form in that light is inert while awareness is non-inert. How did the inert energy become the non-inert awareness? How did the dynamic energy become the static matter? It is an illusion. **The non-inert nature of awareness is also an illusion just like the static nature of the matter.**

Awareness Means Control and Freedom

In reality, non-inert nature means having full control and full freedom. God has only given a little control and little freedom to the soul, which is actually inert but which appears as relative imaginable awareness, so that it can be differentiated from fully inert items. This enables God to teach souls the difference between non-inert and inert items. The soul can move its hand, but, it cannot move a paralysed hand. Involuntary process in the body such as the beating of the heart cannot be controlled by the soul in any case. This shows that the soul has only a restricted control and freedom. The unimaginable God, on the other hand, has full freedom and full control over any imaginable item, be it an inert item or a non-inert item. Hence, the soul is basically inert (*ajñā*) even though superficially, it appears to be non-inert (*alpajñā*).

A wise person would never get misled by the common word ‘awareness’ and would never even dare to compare the imaginable awareness with the Unimaginable Awareness. This is because both the subject (*dr̥k*) as well as the process (*dr̥ṣṭī*) are totally unimaginable in the case of the Unimaginable Awareness whereas in the case of the imaginable awareness, both the subject and the process are imaginable

(energy). How then can anyone even dream of equating the imaginable awareness with the Unimaginable Awareness? God is the Unimaginable Awareness as the subject and as the work (process of knowing) while the object (*dr̥ṣyam*) can be imaginable when God is seeing the world. If the object of God's seeing is also Himself, then all the three items in the triad namely the seer, the seeing and the seen are unimaginable. In the case of the imaginable awareness, i.e., in the case of a soul, even if the object (*dr̥ṣyam*) is oneself, all the three items in the triad are essentially the imaginable inert energy. When God sees the world, only the seen (object) becomes imaginable. When the soul sees the world, all the three are imaginable.

Comparing a Soul with an Incarnation

In an Incarnation, the unimaginable God has entered and merged with the soul. The soul is a part of the imaginable creation but it is non-inert and it acts as the medium God. God identifies with that particular medium, which is also called the mediated God. The mediated God or Incarnation has both an external imaginable nature and an internal unimaginable nature, which is the unimaginable God. When we approach the Incarnation, He may reveal the hidden unimaginable nature whenever there is a necessity. Otherwise, He may only express the imaginable nature of the soul, in which case, the unimaginable God who is merged into the Incarnation's soul will remain hidden. In the Incarnation, God does not use His unimaginable omnipotence to view the world because He can view the world through the soul's imaginable process of seeing. **Not using an unnecessary amount of power in any situation is the quality of a good administrator.** The finger of Krishna was as tender as the finger of any other boy. But when the occasion of lifting the Govardhana hill arose, the unimaginable nature of God entered the finger to lift the hill. God's unimaginable nature extended all over Krishna's body to withstand the weight of the hill.

If you want to compare a soul with God in the aspect of their common ability to equally enjoy both happiness and misery, you must strictly follow two conditions. The first condition is that the soul being compared must be a realised soul and not any ordinary soul. The second condition is that the comparison must be made only with the mediated God and not the original unimaginable God before creation. Following these two conditions makes the comparison valid. If your basis of comparison is the imaginable relative awareness then this relative awareness is common to all souls as well as the mediated God. Here, awareness simply means the ability to know. All souls

have this awareness. So, on the basis of this basic awareness, you can compare the omniscient mediated God, a saint having lot of knowledge, an ordinary human soul having a little knowledge and an animal having just the basic awareness. **In any case, you should never compare any type of soul with the unimaginable God before creation (Parabrahman).**

The basic quality of awareness, which is to know a little, can be treated to be almost negligible. It can be treated as absence of knowledge. Hence, the Veda says that the soul is inert (*ajñā*) and does not even know a little (*alpajñā*) whereas God being all-knowing is actually awareness (*jñā*). Awareness can truly be considered to be awareness if it has full control and full freedom (*īśa*). An inert item has neither freedom nor control over the other (*anīśa*). The soul or awareness of a human being has negligible knowledge, negligible freedom and negligible control over the body. God, on the other hand, has full knowledge, full freedom and full control over the body of any living being or non-living item in creation (*Jñā ajñāu...; Īśa anīśau*—Veda).

The negligible similarity between a soul and God in just one aspect which is the basic property of awareness, can never bring a total and strict monism between the awareness of both. Moreover, the awareness of God is unimaginable. It is not the imaginable awareness which is the work-form of inert energy functioning in nervous system. Unimaginable Awareness means that it is not the work-form of inert energy at all. It is called as awareness because God, the single unimaginable item, also knows and knowing is the basic property of awareness. But this unimaginable item (God) can do the work of thinking even though it is not the imaginable awareness. Similarly, it can also burn things without being the imaginable fire and so on. The difference between the imaginable and unimaginable awareness is total because the imaginable awareness is a work-form of the imaginable inert energy whereas the Unimaginable Awareness is totally unimaginable. **Shri Datta Swami says that the very attempt of comparing the two is meaningless because a comparison is possible only between two imaginable items.**

The Undifferentiated Unimaginable Domain

No difference whatsoever can be accepted between two unimaginable items. The types of differences between any two items are said to be *sajātīya*, *vi-jātīya* and *svagata*. *Sajātīya* differences are the differences that exist between similar items or items that belong to the same category. *Vi-jātīya* differences are the differences between two dissimilar

items or items belonging to different categories. *Svagata* differences are internal differences between the parts of the same item. None of these types of differences can be accepted between two unimaginable items. This means that you cannot have two similar or dissimilar unimaginable items. **It means that in the absolute phase, there cannot be a second God similar to the unimaginable God. There also cannot be any second item other than the unimaginable God and no internal parts of that single unimaginable God can be differentiated. The absolute phase or the unimaginable domain can only be a single undifferentiated homogenous phase.** This absolute phase itself is called the unimaginable God. The world including souls is non-existent with respect to that single existent unimaginable God. Applying our worldly logic to this absolute phase, we can say that the non-existent soul can never become the existent God and vice-versa. It is like saying that the real rope can neither become the false snake nor can the false snake become the real rope. In an absolute sense, this remains true and it is the reality of the absolute phase. **Yet the omnipotent unimaginable God, being beyond the worldly logic, becomes a specific imaginable soul by merging with it.** The soul into which the unimaginable God has merged is called the Incarnation. **In our limited language belonging to the relative phase, we could also say that that specific imaginable soul has become the unimaginable God.**

In the phase of the relative reality, the world around you is existent to you. The same world is non-existent to God in an absolute sense. But it is existent to you because, being a soul, you too are equally non-existent as the world, from God's point of view. The absolutely existent God identifies with a soul which is non-existent to Him to become the mediated God. The mediated God is very much existent to the soul in the phase of the relative reality. Śaṅkara twisted facts when He said that soul, which is non-existent from an absolute point of view, itself is the absolutely existent unimaginable God. This twisting of facts was necessary to convert atheists to theists. Actually, from an absolute point of view, anything other than God is non-existent and hence, you, the soul, also become non-existent. **If the word 'you' or 'soul' has been mentioned in the absolute phase, that 'you' or 'soul' must be God.** But it does not mean that you are God. It only means that the meaning of the word 'you' must be God alone because we have already seen that there can be nothing other than God in the phase of the absolute reality. Any item, indicated by any word in the absolute phase, must only mean God. In the absolute reality, you, the soul who is different from God are non-existent. You, with your individuality can only

be mentioned in the relative phase. You can never enter the absolute phase of reality. In contrast, the omnipotent God can enter the relative reality by identifying Himself with a relative item of the world to become the mediated God.

Different Standpoints of the Three Preachers

Śaṅkara's standpoint was the absolute phase of reality. From that standpoint, the meaning of any word becomes only God. Hence, He said "The soul is indeed God (*Jīvo Brahmaiva*)". The word 'soul' as implied by Him is God Himself. Śaṅkara's statement was justified because He was an Incarnation of God and He was speaking from His absolute point of view. But His point of view does not apply to the soul. Rāmānuja and Madhva were Incarnations of the angels Adīṣeṣa and Vāyu, who are devoted souls. In their philosophy, they only spoke about the relative reality, which pertains to the soul. God, as described in their philosophies, is not the absolute unimaginable God, but is only the mediated God. As souls, they were speaking from their point of view.

If you have already become the absolute unimaginable God through the process of Incarnation like Śaṅkara, you can follow the path of monism. If you are a created soul which is a tiny part of the relative creation, you should follow the path of Rāmānuja and Madhva. You are in the path of Śaṅkara if you are already the mediated God, which means that you are an Incarnation of the absolute God. You are in the path of Rāmānuja and Madhva if you have realized that you are a created soul and not the mediated God, who is the Creator of the universe. The philosophy of Śaṅkara is the absolute truth, which is applicable only to a specific soul, called an Incarnation. The philosophy of Rāmānuja and Madhva applies to all ordinary souls wishing for the grace of God. **The Advaita philosophers must distinguish the absolute phase of reality and the relative phase of reality in order to avoid confusing themselves and confusing others.** Rāmānuja never criticized Śaṅkara. He only criticized the followers of Śaṅkara. Had Rāmānuja criticized Śaṅkara, it would have meant that He criticized Himself since He too was an Incarnation of God, who was behaving like a devotee.

Chapter 3

SATSAṄGA WITH AN ENGINEERING STUDENT

July 14, 2019

Following is a *satsaṅga* or divine conversation between Shri Swami and Kum. Thrylokya. Thrylokya is a B.Tech., student of Dr. Nikhil at Amrita University and had visited Shri Swami in order to have *satsaṅga*.

Thrylokya: Dr. Nikhil has told me a lot about You and explained Your spiritual knowledge in detail. I know it is very very rare to attain this knowledge and that it can be attained only by fortunate souls.

Swami: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Education upto a postgraduate degree is straightforward. Only concepts which are well-established to be true are taught. But in the research work done for a Ph.D. degree, even concepts that are opposite to the well-established concepts are researched. There is an effort to investigate, again and again, whether a true concept is false and whether a false concept is true. So, a researcher has a habit of always thinking in a direction that is opposite to that of well-established concepts. Myself and Dr. Nikhil are Ph.D. degree holders and hence, both of us always think and speak the reverse of what is true. So, whatever Dr. Nikhil said about Me is not true and whatever I have said in My spiritual knowledge is also not true!

Thrylokya: (with loud laughter) No, no, Sir! You are testing my faith in You! I have a poem written by my mother for You [Thrylokya read out the poem written in Telugu and presented it to Swami].

Swami: The poem is excellent, but I differ on two points expressed in the poem. The first point is the statement in the poem which means “What can I give You when everything is Yours?”. It is true that God is the one who has ultimately given us all the wealth that we possess, even though we might not realize it. Out of the wealth that we possess, we sometimes offer a small part to God in return, out of gratitude or love. If we realize that He is the original giver, then our donation is out of gratitude. But if we do not realize that He is original giver and yet we donate to Him, it must be out of love. The sacrifice of one’s wealth to God is the proof of our real love for Him since we sacrifice our wealth only to those whom we really

love. There are also times, when we avoid donating anything to God. Although we know that God is the ultimate giver of the wealth to us, we pretend as if we are unable to grasp this concept. **God does not exhibit His donation to us. He keeps it secret.** So, we think that we have earned all our wealth by our own efforts and as a result of our good fortune.

All this is done by the divine will of God. If we clearly knew that all that we possess is given by God, we would not feel that we are sacrificing *our* money to God. Only when we sacrifice to God what belongs to us, does it prove our real and practical love for Him. If we knew that He is the original giver, we would only be sacrificing out of gratitude. **Thus, donating out of real love and donating out of gratitude are both possible. Therein lies the confusion.** If we realize that God has originally donated the wealth to us, then our donation of a part of it to Him becomes our bounden duty. We feel that it is justified to donate at least a little of our wealth to God in return as a mark of our gratitude towards Him. Such donation is only out of gratitude and not out of love. But if we feel that whatever we possess belongs to us alone and yet if we sacrifice a part of it to God, then it must be due to our real practical love for God. It is only to test our practical love for God, as separate from gratitude, that God keeps His original donation of wealth to us top secret. He makes us believe that we have earned our wealth by our own efforts. In spite of this belief, when we donate to God, our donation must be based on real love alone.

A grandfather bought a packet of biscuits for his grandson and gave the packet to the boy's mother secretly. He told her to not reveal the secret to his grandson. The mother gave a biscuit to her son and the boy felt that his mother had purchased the biscuit and had given it to him. He did not know that it had actually been purchased by his grandfather. The grandfather was the original and actual giver even though he had given the biscuits to the boy indirectly. **When somebody helps us without any reason, at least there, we must recognize the helping hand of God.** But here, the drama was perfectly executed. The boy could not see through the drama since his mother usually purchased biscuits and things and gave them to her son. If she had asked her son to share with her a piece of the biscuit he was eating, he would have immediately given her a piece. His sacrifice would be out of gratitude, irrespective of his

love for his mother. But in this case, it was the grandfather who asked for a piece of the biscuit. Since the son did not know that the grandfather was the original giver, there was no need to give out of gratitude. Yet if the grandson gave a piece of the biscuit, it must be taken as a proof of his pure love for his grandfather. If a beggar had asked for a piece of the biscuit, the boy might have given out of sympathy. But in the case of the grandfather, the only reason for his sacrifice can be his true love for his grandfather and not gratitude or sympathy. It becomes a perfect test of his true love for his grandfather.

You may theoretically say that everything belongs to God and that everything you possess has been originally given by God. But when the practical situation of donation to God comes, your mind gets covered by the divine power of illusion (*māyā*) and you inevitably think that whatever you possess belongs to you alone. Hence, this concept that everything possessed by you is given by God alone, is a purely theoretical concept. You say these words only to please God without practically giving anything to God. Every point in this concept is based on 'Applied Economics', in which you try to get the maximum benefit from God while spending minimum from your side. Some people, who are even cleverer, ask if the unimaginable God actually comes down to accept their donation, even if they decide to donate. We can say that the unimaginable God incarnates in human form as the Human Incarnation to accept and enjoy the offered donation. But they reject the very concept of Human Incarnation in order to protect their wealth, in keeping with their principle of Applied Economics.

Your mother does not belong to the category of such clever and selfish people because she has sent with you, some special food items and an offering of money as *guru dakṣiṇā* for Me. This shows that she is on the path of practical sacrifice. Her statement in the poem was not meant to cover her greediness for money, but it was based on her identification of the reality that whatever is possessed by us is actually given to us by God alone. Śaṅkara mentions the same point in the last verse of the *Saundarya Laharī* composed by Him. He says that even the prayer He had composed, was composed by Him using the words given by God (Divine Mother) alone. He said that it was just like taking a little water from the sea and offering it to same sea (*tarpanam*). We must know that the grandfather is

asking for a piece of the biscuit that his grandson is eating, not because he needs it, but only to practically test the reality in his grandson's theoretical love for him.

The second point in your mother's poem with which I differ is the line which says "Let my basic 'I' or self-identity merge with You and disappear, so that You alone remain". I disagree with this point. God created this world and souls in it for His entertainment since He was bored of being the One-without-a-second. This is said in the Veda. **As per your statement, you want God to lose His entertainment and get bored again!** You may argue that even if you disappear, other souls would still remain to continue the world-drama for His entertainment. But it is not correct since God would not have created you at all if there was no need of your presence in the world. The devotion of a soul for God is pure love, which is the sweetest part of His entertainment. Even if you are an atheist, your absence from the world-cinema is not tolerated by God because a movie without a villain is as boring as a movie without a hero! Your contribution to the entertainment of God is fully fulfilled only if you exist in the world with your full individuality. Only then will it give pleasure to God. What more do you require than giving pleasure to God? God will never fulfil your wish to make you disappear from the world which entertains Him.

Instead of you merging and disappearing into Him, He will merge with you to become an Incarnation. In the Incarnation, both of you—God and soul—will co-exist as one. You will forget yourself and God alone will function and He will carry out a divine program for the welfare of the world. In this way, your desire can be fulfilled. You will exist but you will forget yourself in the Incarnation. Such an Incarnation is a monistic Incarnation. Some other devotees want to retain their individuality intact so that they can enjoy the sweet devotion for God which can only be enjoyed through dualism. Such an Incarnation is a dualistic Incarnation in which God and the soul co-exist without merging with each other. **Even in the dualistic Incarnation, God alone functions and carries out the divine program.** Krishna was a monistic Incarnation whereas Balarāma was a dualistic Incarnation standing by the side of Krishna. You are aware that Balarāma is counted as one of the ten famous divine Incarnations of God.

Thylokya: You have said that the propagation of true spiritual knowledge by the devotee pleases God. Is it possible to change this entire world, in a real sense, by the propagation of true spiritual knowledge?

Swami: It is really possible to change the entire world if the propagated knowledge is true as given by the Satguru, who is the Human Incarnation of God. This is because the truth has the climax of power. If the knowledge is false, it will create doubts in the minds of the people hearing it. Moreover, you need not worry whether the result of your efforts will be achieved or not. Any result is always in the hands of God. **Especially, the result of God's own work is certainly in His hands.** He is not at all bothered about the result because the result can instantly appear, just by His will, even without a trace of your effort! But He delays the result only to test your firmness and patience in doing God's work. He watches if you can go on working continuously without bothering about the result. He knows that you are fully aware that God's work should always be done without worrying about its result since the result is completely in God's hands. **Neither should you aspire for the result for your own benefit nor should you aspire for the result for the benefit of the world. God's work should neither be done for the selfish benefit of oneself nor should it be done for the benefit of the world.** You are doing His work due to your love for God and not due to your love for the world. You love the world only because God loves the world just like an industrialist loves the factory established by him. If He neglects the welfare of the world in the work done through you, you should not bother about the welfare of the world. You should only continue to do the work that pleases Him alone. When God competes with the welfare of the world, you should vote for God alone.

At the end of the first-day's battle in the great war between Lord Rāma and the demon-king Rāvaṇa, the latter was defeated. Rāma told Rāvaṇa that if he returned Sītā, the wife of Rāma whom Rāvaṇa had captured, Rāma would not continue the war, the next day. He would simply withdraw from the war and spare the life of Rāvaṇa. It meant that if Rāvaṇa had returned Sītā, Rāvaṇa would have continued to live and harass the world. It was actually a test for Hanumān. Hanumān had joined the side of Rāma and was serving Him. But the question was whether Hanumān was serving Rāma

out of His love for justice in the world or His true devotion to Rāma. Killing the wicked Rāvaṇa meant establishing justice in the world. Sparing the life of Rāvaṇa meant the end of justice in the world. If Hanumān was serving Rāma for the sake of the welfare of the world, He would have left Rāma that very night! He would have thought that Rāma is so selfish that as soon as He gets His wife back, He does not care to fight the war for justice. Hanumān would have thought that as long as Rāma can get His wife back, it did not matter to Rāma even if Rāvaṇa continued to capture and seduce others' wives. Thinking in this manner, Hanumān could have left secretly so that He would not have had to hurt Rama. But Hanumān did not do so. He continued to participate in the war, the next day. He never had any doubts about Lord Rāma. He knew that Rāma was the Human Incarnation of God. He was serving Rāma because of His love for Rāma and not because of His love for the world.

A politician, in his speech, asks people to vote for him. In return, he promises several measures for the welfare of society. These measures benefit the society as well as the individual voter since the voter is also a part of society. So, for the voter, both selfish benefit and social benefit appear to be together. Of course, today, the voter only sees selfish benefit! In any case, the voter aspires for some benefit from the politician in return for his or her vote. Let us see the case of the parents of the politician who is asking for votes. The parents will blindly vote for their son or daughter without bothering about their own benefit or the benefit of society because they have true love for their issue. They do not aspire for anything in return for their love. If a person has such true love for God, the person will do God's work without aspiring for any benefit in return for oneself or for the world.

We must treat God as our adopted son. Datta means an adopted son and not an adopting father! But we cleverly treat God, not as an adopted Son, but as an adopting Father so that we can get benefits from Him, even without doing any service or sacrifice. The ethical scripture says that there are ten types of sons and *datta* or an 'adopted son' is one of the ten. Hence, we should treat God Datta as our Son and not as our Father to avoid exploiting Him under the influence of our Applied Economics!

If you do God's work and aspire for some practical fruit in return for yourself, it is business devotion (*vaiśya bhakti*). If you aspire for practical fruits from God in exchange for your theoretical devotion in the form of prayers and songs, it is prostitution devotion (*veśyā bhakti*). Compare these two lower forms of devotion with the love that we have for our children. In the case of our own children, we express our love practically. When they are young, we serve them by working for them in many ways including bathing them, feeding them and so on. It is the sacrifice of our efforts or work for them and is called *karma samnyāsa*. At the end of our lives, we sacrifice all our wealth and earnings to them by writing our will in their name. This sacrifice of our wealth to them is *karma phala tyāga*. In spite of doing this practical sacrifice of our work and the fruit of our work, we do not aspire for any fruit in return from them. This proves that our love for our issues is both true and pure. If you are able to have such true and pure for God, which is proved in practice, it is called issue-devotion (*apatya bhakti*).

In our prayers, we theoretically say that God is above all, including our issues! But practically, we do not sacrifice either our work or our wealth to Him, even to a small extent. Are our prayers not blunt lies? Are we not trying to fool the omniscient God and trap Him in the net of our clever false words? To cover up our lie and to protect our greediness, we say that God does not directly come here to enjoy whatever we sacrifice. We flatly reject the concept of the contemporary Human Incarnation of God, even though many of us accept past Human Incarnations. We feel that there is no harm in accepting past Human Incarnations since they will not come in the present time and demand any practical sacrifice from us. All this elaborate falsehood and pretence is only to avoid the practical sacrifice of our work and the fruit of our work. The people, who accept past Human Incarnations of God, make representative images and statues of the Incarnation and offer food (*naivedyam*) and money (*dakṣiṇā*) to the representative images theoretically. Later, they take back and consume the same themselves, assuming it to be 'sacred leftovers' (*prasādam*). After playing this clever trick on God, they expect to earn His grace! Of course, there is good side to the worship of statues, in that it develops our theoretical devotion. The theoretical devotion, in turn, develops practical devotion in due course of time.

Alright, even if you are very poor or very greedy and do not want to sacrifice money, you can, **at least, sacrifice your work by propagating the true spiritual knowledge in the world. By doing so, you will earn God's grace.** If you are greedy or poor and also lazy and you do not want to sacrifice either money or work, then you had better stick to the following cleverest argument. You can say that God does not come here to directly receive my service or sacrifice and that God never comes in human form. If somebody quotes the Gita to support the concept of the Human Incarnation (*Mānuṣīm tanumāśritam*), you can say that secondary scriptures such as the Gita are always polluted by some insertions as preached by Swami Dayānanda and Datta Swami! Actually, insertions are to be identified and rejected in order to reject misinterpretations of concepts. Statements from scriptures, which represent genuine concepts, are not to be rejected just because they are inconvenient to you.

Thrylokya: I observe a lot of sins everywhere. Rich girls use costly cosmetics to improve their appearance. What can poor girls do then? Moreover, I also find several girls changing their boyfriends frequently without any loyalty!

Swami: This point belongs to *pravṛtti* (worldly life) and not to *nivṛtti* (spiritual life). But I will answer it from a spiritual angle. Beauty is always natural and is always gifted by God. Cosmetics are chemicals that spoil the tenderness of the skin. External appearance fades away with age and with the passing of time. A newly married couple was walking down the road. A small stone got into the bride's *chappal* (footwear) and pricked her foot. She cried in pain. The new bridegroom was deeply moved and said "O angel of my heart! I cannot tolerate even a single tear in your eyes". A month later, the same thing happened. The wife cried out in pain as a stone hurt her foot but, this time, the same husband got angry at his wife. He scolded her and told her to walk properly. One more month passed and the same thing occurred again. This time, the husband became furious and shouted at his wife saying "Are you blind? You are an idiot! How many times do I have to tell you to walk properly?". If this is the story just after two months of getting married, while the wife is still young and beautiful, what will be the story in their old age when the wife loses all her beauty?

What pleases God is not the external beauty but the internal personality, which is made of good qualities. Hanumān was not beautiful externally, but His internal beauty was so excellent that He was named as the Beautiful (Sundara) by poet-sage Vālmīki and a whole chapter in the Rāmāyaṇa was named Sundara Kāṇḍa after Him. There is a mantra of Hanumān called the ‘Mantra of the beautiful Hanumān’ (Sundara Hanumat Mantra). The grace of God is also reflected in the external personality of a person in the form of divine radiance (*brahma tejas*). It makes even the external body extremely attractive and beautiful (*Sarvadvāreṣu dehasya, prakāśa upajāyate*—Gita). Such radiance was seen in the personality of Swami Vivekānanda when he gave his famous spiritual speech at Chicago, USA, as part of God’s mission. The audience was dumbstruck, not only by the speech of the saint, but also by his attractive personality.

This world is a playground for God but not for the soul. For the soul, this world is very serious, like an examination hall. Here, the soul is expected to behave with full discipline. When a girl does not control her mind and has affairs with several boyfriends, she will face horrible hell in this world, during her lifetime and also in the upper world, after death. She is violating *pravṛtti* which is the path of justice in worldly life. Such illegitimate behavior belongs to the lowest level of *duṣpravṛtti*. An ordinary soul cannot imitate the behavior of God Krishna, who had many girlfriends. Krishna was the Human Incarnation of God and the Gopikās, who were the girlfriends of Krishna, were the greatest sages reborn. Their relationships were not worldly romantic affairs but examples of the greatest devotion of devotees to God, which included severe tests of the devotees conducted by God. Imitating the behavior of Lord Krishna is utter foolish ignorance and it will certainly lead an ordinary soul to hell.

On the other hand, if a girl controls her mind and sticks to only one boyfriend with the clear intention of getting married to him later, she will enjoy heavenly happiness here as well as hereafter, for following the middle-path of *pravṛtti*. If she leaves both illegitimate and legitimate bonds for the sake of God, like Meera, she will be associated with the God, here as well as hereafter. This is the highest level of *nivṛtti*, which is beyond both injustice and justice. *Duṣpravṛtti* is the path of demons. *Pravṛtti* is the path of

human beings and *nivṛtti* is the path of angels. Angels and demons even exist among human beings, in terms of their nature. Of course, they also exist as separate beings in the upper worlds. The human being thinks that it is in the middle-level of *pravṛtti* by virtue of its external physical appearance. But by nature, the person might be in the lowest level of *duṣpravṛtti*. Such a human being, misled by its own external appearance, thinks that its next destination is to climb up to the level of *nivṛtti*. The reality is that, being at the level of *duṣpravṛtti* by nature, it must make efforts to first climb up to the middle-level of *pravṛtti*.

Even though God has full freedom to play in this world as He likes, upon sharp analysis, we understand that He is not playing so. Lord Krishna's stealing butter, which was the wealth preserved by the Gopikās for their children, was only a divine test. Krishna was testing whether their devotion to God-in-human-form was greater than their worldly bonds with wealth and their children. His dancing with the Gopikās was to test whether their devotion was stronger than their bond with their life partners. Jesus told His devotees that He had come to separate His devotees from their families by creating quarrels. The meaning of this is that He had come to break the worldly bonds of devotees. If we only take the superficial meaning, instead of the deeper true meaning, we will misunderstand Krishna and Jesus.

Thrylokya: The Nirvāṇa Ṣaṭkam composed Lord Śaṅkara has been set to a beautiful tune and many devotees enjoy singing it greatly. The last line of each of the six verses “*Cidānanda rūpaḥ Śivo 'ham Śivo 'ham*” especially appeals to people since it means “I am Śiva, I am Śiva, who is of the nature of Awareness and Bliss”. But Dr. Nikhil said that this last line of each of the verses can apply only in the case of a Human Incarnation of God. In the case of an ordinary soul, he has proposed a new line to replace it. The new line is “*Parabrahma Dattasya dāsaḥ sadāham*”, which means “I am ever a servant of God Datta”.

Swami: With the words “*Śivo 'ham Śivo 'ham*”, Śaṅkara meant that He was Lord Śiva incarnated in human form. But the disciples also repeated the same words thinking that each one of them was also Lord Śiva. To correct them, Śaṅkara drank molten lead and said that He alone was Lord Śiva (*Shivaḥ kevalo 'ham*). In the verses of the Nirvāṇa Ṣaṭkam, the word ‘*Śiva*’ means Lord Śiva. But in

general, the word *śiva* also means pure and auspicious. ‘*Śiva*’ has been used in this sense also by Kālidāsa in his epic, the *Śākuntalam*, where he writes, ‘May your path be pure and auspicious (*Śivāḥ te panthānaḥ*)’. So, the word *śiva*, in the sense of purity, can certainly be applied to a soul. Saying “I am *śiva*, I am *śiva*” will make you feel that you are the soul, which is pure awareness and not the impure material body. Awareness is a form of energy and energy is always pure. Taking ‘*śiva*’ in the sense of purity, there is no harm in reading or singing the verses composed by Śaṅkara, since they only mean that you are the pure soul. But you should be careful and not get misled into thinking that you are Lord Śiva.

However, the common interpretation of the word ‘*śiva*’ as God Śiva is most famous. If you want to stick to this meaning of the word, then it cannot be used to indicate an ordinary soul. In that case, it is correct to replace the last line with the line composed by Dr. Nikhil. This new line indicates the reality, which is that you are not God Śiva but are always a servant of God Śiva. God Śiva is not different from God Datta. Any form of God is Datta alone because the word ‘Datta’ simply means the unimaginable God given to the world through a medium. That medium can be energetic or material leading to Energetic or Human Incarnations of God.

Chapter 4

SARASWATI RIVER OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

July 14, 2019 Evening

1) What is the meaning of the inverted tree example in the Gita?

Shri Anil asked: In a discussion forum, a person asked what is meant by the inverted tree described in the Gita. The tree is said to have its roots above and its branches and leaves growing downward. Could You please explain its meaning?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! The inverted tree represents the creation. The branches, leaves, flowers and fruits represent the world, which is many-fold. The root of the world-tree represents the Creator-God, who is the Cause of the world. **God is greater than world and hence, the root is above and the tree grows downward from it.** If you worship God, which is like watering the root, all your worldly bonds, which are like the branches, leaves and so on, will flourish. But if you just worship the worldly bonds, it is like directly watering the branches, leaves, and flowers, which is useless and the worldly bonds will dry up and perish. Hence, if your love-water is given to God, who is the Root, all your worldly bonds will be saved and they will remain alive. But if you give your love-water to your worldly bonds, neglecting God who is the Root, it will be of no use and your worldly bonds will not be protected. **Wise people pour water at the root and fools, who do not realize how it actually works, pour water on the branches, leaves and flowers.** These fools think that the dried leaves and flowers will become green with the water that is directly poured on them. The wise man knows that the dry leaves and flowers will come alive only by pouring water at the root. If you really love your family members, stop loving them because your love is not true love. It is foolish love. If you actually love your family, stop loving it and instead, start loving God so that God will protect them. In doing so, you will be showing true love for your family. When you cannot even protect yourself, how can you protect others?

2) Is it right to pay taxes to a corrupt government?

Shri Anil asked: Some people try to avoid paying tax to the government because they feel that, by paying tax, their hard-earned money is going into the pockets of corrupt government officials and is not actually reaching the needy. Could You kindly give Your opinion on this?

Swami replied: If you find an opportunity to not pay tax or minimize paying tax, you can use that saved money for feeding beggars and the poor. But you should also note that there are some good officers in the government, who are not interested in corruption. **The best way is to pay tax to the government and also propagate true spiritual knowledge in the world. The propagation of spiritual knowledge will ultimately eradicate corruption.** In this program, God will certainly help you. The whole problem of corruption arises due to the lack of spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge preaches the existence of the unimaginable, omniscient and omnipotent God, who punishes sinners even if they escape from the law of the land using the influence of powerful people, corruption or clever tricks. If this spiritual knowledge is given importance in the education system as was done in ancient times, there will be no need of the police and courts. Citizens will develop an in-built resistance to sin. They will avoid corruption, not due to the fear of the police and courts, but due to the fear of the omniscient and omnipotent God from whom no one can ever escape. In the absence of such in-built resistance to sin among the citizens, corruption can never be eradicated using only external control in the form of the police and the courts. **The external systems of control invariably fail because they too are affected by corruption!**

3) Are only the Human Incarnation and His devotees deserving to receive our donation?

Shri Anil asked: The Veda says that the deserving recipient must satisfy two conditions: (i) He must possess true spiritual knowledge for preaching to and guiding the world in the right direction (ii) He must not have the aspiration for any fruit in return from anybody. In that case, no one in this world is eligible for our donation other than the Human Incarnation and His devotees. Is this true?

Swami replied: Whether somebody is a Human Incarnation or not; or whether the person is a devotee or not, is not the criterion for proper donation. The criteria for donation are the above two requisites recommended by the Veda. Here, the Veda is describing the recommended normal approach for donation. However, in the case of the poor and beggars, there is no need to examine these requisites. To such helpless and needy people, donation must be done without the above analysis since it is an emergency situation (*Apat Dharma*). Only if a starving person's life is first protected, can he or she follow the path of justice and then gradually enter into the spiritual path. **Emergency-needs are to be addressed first; only then can you seek and analyze a deserving receiver.** Swami

Vivekananda said that we must first give bread to the starving and only then preach philosophy to them. This is the most important step because the **death of even a single human being due to hunger is a shame on the part of humanity**. All the rich people in the world should think about this point. Only after saving the lives of starving people do we come to the point of analyzing the deservingness of recipients for our donation. If you donate to a deserving person, it is merit and it leads you to heaven. If you donate to an undeserving person, who will commit sins using your donation, you will also receive the punishment of the sins. Donation is a very dangerous double-edged knife because both donation to the undeserving and not donating to the deserving are sins. If you donate to the undeserving, it is not simply a waste of money, but it gives a negative effect in the form of punishment. So, instead of donating to the undeserving, it is better to avoid donation.

4) Why did Judas not ask Jesus for forgiveness for betraying Him, instead of committing suicide?

Shri Anil asked: Why did Judas just not ask Jesus for forgiveness for betraying Him. Apostle Peter too had made a mistake by denying Jesus. But he asked Jesus for forgiveness and he was forgiven. Could Judas not have done the same instead of hanging himself?

Swami replied: In the case of a tactful sinner such as Judas, how can you expect that he would be so poor in his logical analysis that he would underestimate the depth of his sin? Knowing the true depth of his sin, how could he ask Jesus for pardon? Some sinners are very quick in acting out of emotion but they are equally quick in analyzing their own sin too. **Judas realized his sin completely and hence, he did not have the courage to ask Jesus for pardon.** The ignorant sinner, who does not realize his sin completely and deeply enough, feels that his sin is pardonable. So, he requests God for pardon. The person without much analytical knowledge does not realize his own sins, just like an animal. The wise sinner realizes his sin very quickly and he even recognizes the real depth of his sin. Hence, in the case of such sinners, repentance is not possible. Judas was very intelligent, which we can see from his tactics in getting Jesus arrested. He acted very cleverly in order to make Jesus trust him. With the same sharpness of intelligence, he very deeply analyzed his sin and found it to be unpardonable. Had he used all that intelligence a little earlier, he would have avoided committing the gravest sin and instead, would have become

Shri Datta Swami

Sri Datta Jnana Prachara Parishat

the best messenger to propagate spiritual knowledge. He thought that he was fooling Jesus, but he realized in the end that he had fooled himself!

Chapter 5

GOD IS PLEASED BY PRACTICAL SACRIFICE

July 15, 2019

Shri PVNM Sharma asked: You have established that the sacrifice of the fruit of work (donation of money) to God is greater than the sacrifice of work (service) to Him. But renounced saints and poor people have no money to sacrifice so they can only serve God. In that case, will people not feel that God and salvation have gone into the hands of rich people who have plenty of money to sacrifice?

Donation is Better than Service

Swami: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Hanumān did the sacrifice of work or divine service to God Rāma, which is *karma samnyāsa*. The Gopikās sacrificed the fruit of their work to God Krishna, by giving Him butter, which was their hard-earned wealth. The sacrifice of the fruit of one's work is called *karma phala tyāga*. Rāma and Krishna were one and the same God Viṣṇu. Hanumān reached Brahma Loka to become future Brahmā or the Creator. Thus, He reached the same level as God. Viṣṇu Loka, the abode of God Viṣṇu and Śiva Loka, the abode of God Śiva, are both at par with Brahma Loka. But the Gopikās reached Goloka, a newly-created world located even above the Brahma Loka. Goloka is said to be above the Vaikuṅṭha Loka or Viṣṇu Loka. The reason God has created Goloka above His own abode is so that the most holy dust from the feet of the Gopikās will fall on His head. Hanumān became God by becoming the future Brahmā whereas God became the servant of the Gopikās. In fact, God Krishna had already shown a preview of the same by telling sage Nārada that His headache would disappear only if the dust of the feet of the Gopikās was brought and applied on His head. All this clearly proves that the *karma phala tyāga* done by the Gopikās is greater than the *karma samnyāsa* done by Hanumān. **God is pleased with practical sacrifice which proves the reality of a person's theoretical love. He is not pleased by the mere shaven head or the saffron cloth.** The householder doing both *karma phala tyāga* and *karma samnyāsa* is greater than the saint doing only *karma samnyāsa*. This is one angle. The other angle is that the householder prostrates to the saint because the saint could sacrifice

all worldly bonds for the sake of God's work whereas the householder could not do that practical sacrifice.

The Percentage of Sacrifice Matters

People need not feel that salvation has gone into the hands of rich people. If that were true, how could Sudāma have got the topmost salvation, which is the grace of God? Sudāmā was the poorest of the poor. Also, why did Jesus praise the beggar donating one coin as the topmost devotee even though there were several rich devotees who had donated hundreds of coins to God? God decides the value of the sacrifice not on the basis of the amount donated but on the basis of the percentage of the person's total wealth that he has donated. The sacrifice of the beggar was 100% because that one coin was all the wealth he possessed. After donating it, he had nothing left with him. The sacrifice of the rich people was not even 1% because even after donating hundreds of coins, they had plenty of wealth remaining with them. So, God does not see what you donated, but what remains with you after the donation! For your donation of just one rupee to Him, He will give you a ticket right upto His abode, if no money remains in your pocket. But even if you give Him a hundred rupees, while a few hundred rupees still remain in your pocket, He will give you a ticket only up to the next walkable station. The total surrender of everything to God is the real and ultimate sacrifice (*Sarvabhāvena Bhārata*—Gita).

Total Robbing

There is a special method of worshipping of God Venkateshwara whose famous temple is situated on the top of the seven hills at Tirupati. This method of worship is called *niluvu dopidi* in the Telugu language, which means 'total robbing'. The real meaning of this worship is that when the devotee sees God, the devotee is so filled with emotion that he will naturally sacrifice everything he possesses to God. Thus, the devotee willingly gets totally robbed by God. It represents a 100% sacrifice to God. But our clever people have conveniently twisted this mode of worship as follows: First, the devotee promises God in advance that he or she will worship God through this mode of 'total robbing' provided God grants a specific desired practical boon. The devotee does not do this total robbing in advance, due to doubts in the mind. The devotee certainly wants the practical boon from God, but is not sure

whether God actually exists or not and even if God exists, whether He will sanction the desired boon or not. The devotee thinks “What if I were to donate everything possessed by me to God, in advance, and then, for some reason, if I do not receive the desired boon from God? I cannot even complain to the temple authorities that I have been cheated by God!” So, the devotee does not take the risk of doing this total robbing worship in advance. The devotee thinks that it is better to make a deal with God in which God should first grant the practical boon and only then will the devotee visit the temple for the total robbing worship. Alright, let us suppose God sanctioned the desired practical boon to the devotee. The devotee goes to the temple to perform the total robbing worship. But here too, the devotee is very careful. He or she goes to the temple, with a very meagre amount of money and wearing very very light golden ornaments so that the loss in the total robbing worship is almost nothing!

Practical Sacrifice Alone Brings Practical Fruit

Money is the strongest of the three strong worldly bonds which include the bonds with money, one’s children and one’s life partner. These three strong bonds are called the *eṣaṇās*. God always tests whether your devotion to Him is greater than the strongest of these three bonds. If the devotee succeeds in the test of the strongest bond, the other two bonds, being relatively weaker, need not be tested. There is a saying in Hindi that God resides in money (*Paise me Paramātmā hai*). **This means that money is the strongest worldly bond and hence, God always competes with money.** But, as described above, it does not mean that the grace of God is directly proportional to the quantity of the sacrificed money. Sudāma got the topmost grace of God just by sacrificing three handfuls of parched rice to God Krishna. The grace of God Krishna, in return, was also not theoretical. It too was practical. God Krishna too made a huge practical sacrifice of the fruit of work. He blessed Sudāmā with an infinite treasure of wealth. God has said that He responds to devotees in the same way as the devotees worship Him (*Ye yathā māṃ prapadyante...—Gita*). We think a lot before sacrificing a little bit of our wealth even though we possess a lot. But Sudāmā sacrificed only a little. All he sacrificed was three handfuls of parched rice and that rice too was got on loan from a neighbor! It was the climax of the practical sacrifice of the fruit of work from Sudāmā’s side. Hence,

the fruit that Sudāmā received from God was also the climax of the sacrifice of the fruit of work, from God Krishna's side. God Krishna gave His infinite divine treasure of wealth to Sudāmā!

Even Śaktuprastha was tested for his ability to sacrifice the fruit of work alone and, that too, in an extreme condition. Śaktuprastha and his family had been starving for several days owing to a severe drought. He had somehow managed to get a small quantity of flour to feed his family. God asked Śaktuprastha to sacrifice that little food to Him. Śaktuprastha and his family, after due analysis, decided to sacrifice all the little food they possessed to God and were granted a place in Brahma Loka by God. **Thus, we see that God grants only theoretical fruit in return for a devotee's theoretical sacrifice, while God grants practical fruit in return for the devotee's practical sacrifice.**

Chapter 6

PERMANENT DETACHMENT FROM THE WORLD

August 09, 2019

Shri Phani asked: You have told us that sage Vasiṣṭha has recommended that ordinary people should avoid the association of worldly bonds since detachment from the worldly bonds is impossible while being in their association. So, I am trying to practice that. What is Your opinion about it?

Two Opposing Concepts

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Apart from sage Vasiṣṭha's recommendation mentioned by you, I have also told you that the Veda says the opposite. It says that staying far from the worldly bonds increases one's attachment to the worldly bonds, while staying in the association of the worldly bonds, the person develops negligence and detachment from them (*Parokṣapriyā iva hi...*). So, these two statements told by Me appear to be mutually contradictory. Actually, both statements are correct since each of them is applicable at different time-periods in the life of a person. **Initially, the worldly bonds attract the person due to which the person develops attachment towards them.** It means that the family members of the person such as life-partner and child attract the person, producing attachment in the person. The cause of the attachment is from the side of the worldly bonds. After some time, the person develops negligence and detachment towards the same worldly bonds. So, the cause of the detachment is from the side of the person. Both the attachment and the detachment are not from the same side. Hence, there is no mutual contradiction.

Perhaps you might argue that a person's worldly bonds (family) cannot be solely responsible for developing attachment in the mind of the person. The person's own contribution in developing the initial attachment towards the worldly bonds cannot be denied. So, you might say that it is contradictory for the same person to develop both attachment and detachment towards the worldly bonds. But the crucial point here is that the person does not simultaneously develop attachment as well as detachment towards the worldly bonds. The attachment is

developed in the early part of the person's life and the detachment is developed in the later part of life. Since the attachment and detachment towards the same family exist in two different stages of the person's life, there is no mutual contradiction. Time separates the attachment and the detachment. The person, who was initially attached to the family, after some period of close association, develops negligence and detachment from the family. It is a natural tendency of a person to develop negligence and detachment from anything or anyone with which the person is closely associated.

Based on the above discussion of these two mutually contradictory concepts, permanent detachment from worldly bonds becomes impossible. The first concept says that being associated with the worldly bonds, one can never attain detachment while the second one says that staying away from the worldly bonds increases the attraction towards the bonds. Let us say that you follow the first concept of avoiding the association of worldly bonds by going away into the forest. In that case, the second concept will attack you and you will be attracted towards the worldly bonds from whom you are separated! Then, following the second concept, if you go towards the worldly bonds, expecting that being in their association, you will develop negligence towards them, the first concept will attack you again. You will not be able to attain detachment staying in their association. It is as if you are being kicked back and forth like a football between two players! There seems to be no way out!

The Wrong Approach to Detachment

So, what is the solution? Before arriving at the solution, let us first understand the problem. The reason for your getting kicked back and forth between these two concepts is your wrong approach in trying to solve the problem. If you approach the problem correctly, this game of football will automatically disappear. What is wrong with your current approach? Your mistake is that you are trying to attain attachment to God by first achieving detachment from worldly bonds. But, permanent detachment from worldly bonds is impossible unless you are first attached to God. Even if you achieve detachment from worldly bonds but if you stop there itself, what is the use of that detachment? Do you think that God will be immensely pleased with you for your detachment from worldly bonds? No! No! No! God will say "Why should I be

pleased with your detachment from worldly bonds? In what way am I linked with your detachment from worldly bonds? If you have fasted and achieved detachment from food, why should I be pleased with you for it? In what way am I linked with your detachment from food? Perhaps, you might have fasted due to an indigestion problem. If you say that you have fasted for My sake, it would, actually, be a horrible joke! If you had given Me food, I would have been pleased with you. If you had fasted because you had offered Me all the food you had, leaving nothing for yourself, I would have been even more impressed with you. Such fasting would have proved your extraordinary love for Me. If you had fasted, even though there was enough food available, because you were totally immersed in My service, it would have impressed Me the most.

Instead, what have you done? You have eaten the entire food yourself while praising Me through poems and songs saying that I am eternal and free of hunger! Yes, indeed I am eternal and free of hunger. What you say is true. But I have come to you through the medium of a human body. This human medium feels hunger just like your human medium. You prayed for seeing Me and talking to Me. Answering your prayer, I have come to you. Is it not your responsibility to give at least a little food to Me? Could you not even give Me some of the food from last night that you have put in the refrigerator?

Now, you might say that you had prayed that I should come in My original form and not in this mediated form! You might further say that the concept of mediation of God itself is false and that the concept of human mediation is especially false. If I point out that the original form of God is unimaginable, you will say that you will worship Me only in the form of representative models like statues and images which never get hungry! If I say that those representative models cannot clarify your doubts, you will say that you have no doubts at all! Then, I will say that I have not come for your sake but have come for the sake of those, who will feed Me at least some food. They might feed Me with the food that they have stored for the future. In case they do not have enough food to store, they may, at least, feed Me with a very small part of the food that they are eating. Finally, I tell you this one way: Give Me that extra food, which you are going to throw away after you have finished eating. Do not give Me anything from the food that you are eating and do not give Me anything from the food that you have saved for the future. This

means that you can give Me *guru dakṣiṇā* from the portion of your wealth that goes waste in any case. It will serve the double purpose of obtaining wealth from waste and pleasing God! **I am trying all the possible ways to help you by guiding you in the right direction.**

You may say that I should preach to you without taking even a trace of *guru dakṣiṇā*. Fine. I have no objection to it from My side. I am not in need of your *guru dakṣiṇā* at all. I am only trying to find out whether you have even a trace of hunger for the food of true knowledge or not. If you are not prepared to even part with a little of your wasted food, it means that you do not have even a trace of hunger for knowledge. It means that you will not show even a trace of attentiveness towards Me. In that case, prostrating to your sacred lotus feet, I shall finally leave you. When it is crystal clear that you do not have even a trace of hunger, it means that I have approached the wrong person by mistake. For this mistake, I am prostrating at your feet!

Alright! Let Me even accept that you are not willing to part with even a bit of the food that you waste, because you enjoy wasting food. Why do you not serve Me instead by propagating this spiritual knowledge in the world. Parting with your food is the sacrifice of your wealth, which is *karma phala tyāga*. Service is *karma saṁnyāsa*. Offering both to God is essential for a householder. But for a saint, *karma saṁnyāsa* alone is sufficient since the saint himself begs for his own food! Both *karma phala tyāga* and *karma saṁnyāsa* constitute *karma yoga* and *karma yoga* is the inevitable practical proof of the genuineness of your theoretical knowledge and theoretical devotion. The meaning of the proof is knowing whether or not you have real hunger for what you are asking. Sage Vasiṣṭha asked Rāma to pay *guru dakṣiṇā* to him first; before even hearing spiritual knowledge from him (*Dhanamārjaya...—Yoga Vāsiṣṭham*). For the same reason, Shirdi Sai Baba used to ask everybody for *guru dakṣiṇā*.

The Right Approach to Detachment

Now, let us return to your original problem of attaining permanent detachment from worldly bonds. We have seen that trying to achieve this detachment, either by associating with the bonds or going away from them, is the wrong approach and that it inevitably leads to failure. Then what is the correct approach? **The correct approach is to develop attachment to God.** The detachment from worldly bonds is an

automatic and inevitable consequence of the attachment to God. This is the real solution. Merely trying for the detachment from worldly bonds without the attachment to God, is utter stupidity. Such meaningless detachment from worldly bonds is also an insult to God since you are rejecting this beautiful world created by Him! Have you not been insulting God in this way? Please think patiently. **The detachment from the world should happen effortlessly as a natural consequence of the attachment to God.** Such detachment from the world is not wrong because the Creator is far greater than His creation. **But if you simply reject creation without any attachment to the Creator, it is certainly an insult to the Creator.** Perhaps, you are rejecting the worldly bonds because you are feeling depressed for some worldly reason. Or perhaps, you are rejecting the worldly bonds to become a false saint so that you need not earn your living and can live on the free food donated by others! Hence, the Gita says that by mere detachment from the world, actual detachment from the world (*naiṣkarmyam*) cannot be achieved. This is because, soon after you choose this false and forced detachment from the world, you will be hit by a wave of tremendous attachment to the world (*Na karmaṇāmanārambhāt naiṣkarmyam...*). What the Gita is saying is that the actual goal is the attachment to God and that goal will never be achieved by mere detachment (*saṁnyāsa*) from the world (*Nacha saṁnyasanādeva, siddhiṁ...*). Your problem is solved effortlessly when you approach it correctly, which is by developing attachment to God. Then, you need not worry at all about detaching from the world. Once you are attached to God, you will spontaneously be detached from the world, whether you are associated with the worldly bonds or not (*Saṅgaratovā saṅgavihīnaḥ...—Śaṅkara*).

However, in the initial stage, some effort to attain a little detachment from the worldly bonds is essential. This little detachment makes some peaceful time available for you. In that time, you can make the initial effort for developing attachment to God by listening to spiritual knowledge, doing prayers and so on. The peaceful atmosphere, away from the worldly bonds, is helpful in this stage. After some time, due to the second concept described earlier, you will certainly be attracted to the worldly bonds again. You will withdraw from that peaceful divine atmosphere and return to the old worldly bonds. If you are lucky to go to the peaceful atmosphere along with the family

members with whom you are bonded, this problem can be avoided for a longer time. But the problem cannot be avoided since several other worldly bonds such as your property, career and so on also exist and they will drag you to them. When the devotee perfectly achieves the goal, which is developing a permanent attachment to God, the devotee is said to be a fulfilled devotee (*siddha*). A beginner should not imitate him in the initial stage of his or her spiritual effort (*sādhana*). Sage Gautama mentions this point in his *sūtras* (*Avaradaurbalyāt*).

Two friends were travelling to Vārānasī to worship God Śiva. On the way, one of them was attracted to a prostitute and stayed back with her. The other friend continued to Vārānasī and upon reaching started worshipping God Śiva every day. The friend, who stayed back with the prostitute, would always be thinking about his friend in Vārānasī. He felt jealous of his friend, who was worshipping God Śiva while he was trapped in worldly pleasures. Ironically, the friend in Vārānasī also felt jealous of his friend, who was enjoying with the prostitute. He could not help thinking of enjoying with the prostitute even while he was worshipping God Śiva! Both friends were facing the effect of the second concept given in the Veda, which is that a person always neglects what is readily available and yearns for what is far and unavailable. Both yearned for what they did not have. The jealousy of the first friend intensified his yearning to worship God Śiva while the jealousy of the friend in Vārānasī, intensified his yearning to enjoy with the prostitute. In both cases, their respective jealousies intensified their yearning for what they did not have, as per the concept told in the Veda. For the first friend, his jealousy drove him in the right direction, whereas for the second friend, his jealousy drove him in the wrong direction. This shows that any quality like jealousy has both good and bad sides. The surprising outcome was that, due to the intensified devotion of the friend, who stayed back with the prostitute, he was granted a place in the abode of God Śiva. The friend in Vārānasī, owing to his intensified desire for the prostitute, was sent to a terrible hell!

The concepts of both sage Vasiṣṭha and the Veda are important and true. Sage Vasiṣṭha is correct in saying that detachment from the world is not possible while remaining in the close association of the world. The Veda is also correct in saying that separation leads to yearning and attachment while close association leads to negligence. The spiritual aspirant should always take the concept that is applicable

to him or her depending on the specific situation and time. The other concept, which is not relevant in that situation and time, can be kept aside. But the aspirant must continuously keep testing oneself practically to determine which concept is relevant in that situation. The only cure for an allergy is avoiding item that causes the allergy in that specific season.

Sage Vasiṣṭha stands firm in his advice, which is applicable if you are attached to worldly bonds. Attachment to worldly bonds is unavoidable if you are born on this earth. Most people are not like sage Rṣyaśṛṅga, who lived in complete isolation in the forest and had no contact with women and worldly life. If you had been brought up like Rṣyaśṛṅga, the second concept would also have become irrelevant for you. If there was no opportunity for you to form any worldly bonds, there is no question of the attachment to the worldly bonds increasing as a result of separation. But all of us are not Rṣyaśṛṅgas. We already have worldly bonds. Permanent detachment from them is going to be impossible if we try to merely detach from the bonds. Hence, it is better to attack this complicated problem by taking the right approach, which is developing attachment to God through knowledge and devotion. I think, God Datta has answered your question in an excellent way!

Chapter 7

SARASWATI RIVER OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

August 11, 2019

1) How can I increase my devotion so that God will enter my subtle body?

Shri Dixitkumar Aboti asked: Please guide me on increasing my attraction to God so that He can enter in to my subtle body and elevate my consciousness to a high state of being.

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! I can certainly advise you on increasing your devotion in the correct direction by giving you true spiritual knowledge. Initially, you have to make some effort to withdraw yourself from your worldly bonds. This is called the stage of *pratyāhāra*. By partially withdrawing from worldly bonds in this way, you can remain in a peaceful and congenial divine atmosphere, as suggested in the Gita (*Tatraikāgram manah kṛtvā...*). In the course of time, your devotion for God will increase tremendously as you get better and better acquainted with God's divine personality through true spiritual knowledge. It will help you progress spiritually, as time proceeds and you will certainly be saved by God. **God never enters the subtle body. The subtle body is associated with the individual soul in the dream state when the individual soul enjoys the dream. The subtle body also leaves the gross body at the time of death.** The inner consciousness (individual soul) stays in gross body as well as in the subtle body and it is nothing but a store of all the strong qualities accumulated over several births. This inner consciousness has nothing to do with God. Hence, only the first part of your question regarding increasing devotion is relevant for your progress. So, My advice to you is that only true spiritual knowledge, which is to be learned in a peaceful atmosphere, will increase your devotion.

2) Will Swamiji accept my poem written for Him?

Smt. Bindiya Baugh: It is now one year since we met Swamiji and I have written the following poem for Him. I will be very grateful if He accepts it. Thank you.

*Jaya Dattātreya Swāmijī
Āpako praṇāma
Āpako namana*

Victory to Dattātreya Swamiji!
I salute to Thee!
I bow to Thee!

*Hara dina hara pala hara ghaḍī
Jaya Dattātreya Bhagawān
Tuma ho kṛpālu hara dama
Huma bhakta tumhāre
Tumhare adbhuta rūpa ko nihāre*

Each day, each moment, each instant,
Victory to Lord Dattātreya!
You are the Ever-Kind One.
We, devotees of You,
Each moment admire Your incomparable form.

*Tuma hī ho Śiva Brahmā ke avatāra
Viṣṇu bhī tuma hī ho, ho tuma aparāmpāra
Rahate kuṭira meṃ ho
Jaba kī ghara tumhāra pūrā saṃsāra*

You are the Incarnation of Śiva and Brahmā
You are Viṣṇu too; You are the boundless One.
You live in a house
But Your real house is the whole of creation.

*Āpakā śukra karatā merā mana
Merā hara aṃga
Mera kaṇa-kaṇa
Hara sāṃsa kare apko yāda
Choḍo na kabhī āpa hame,
Kare yehī faryāda.*

My mind thanks You, O Lord,

And so does my each body-part
 And every particle in the body.
 With each breath, I remember You.
 Leave us not ever
 Is my only prayer.

Swami replied:

*Tumhārā eka kadama merī tarāfa,
 Mere sau kadama hoṃge tumhārī tarāfa,
 Datta ko yāda karo hameṣā,
 Taba dekhanā badā tamāśā!*

If you take one step towards Me,
 I'll take a hundred steps towards you.
 At all times, remember Datta
 Then you will see a great drama!

3) Why is the position of Viṣṇu not given importance in the various specific death rituals?

Surya asked: Could You please clarify the significance of the rituals namely *Aharnikālu*, *Ṣoḍaśam*, *Vṛṣossarjanam*, the immersion of the *piṇḍās* and *Sapiṇḍīkraṇam*? What is the relevance of Gayāsura and the priest's statement "*Gayā śrāddha sadṛṣaḥ...*"? Why is proper importance not given to the *Viṣṇu sthāna* and how can it be rectified? The priest also says that *Nityāgnihotram* needs to be performed. What does it mean?

Swami replied: The essence of all these death rituals is just the worship of God involving prayers to protect the departed soul. If you catch the essence, which is strong devotion to God, the total purpose of the ritual is served. All the procedures involved in the various parts of any ritual are the practical expression of your devotion, which is called practical devotion. They mainly include honoring the priest, feeding him and finally offering money (*dakṣiṇā*) to him. All the other formalities are of negligible importance as long as the host performs the sacrifice of work (service) and the sacrifice of the fruit of his work (donation). All the other steps in the ritual are only theoretical, even though they appear to be practical. In the absence of the two practical steps, the theoretical steps alone are of no use. Theory without the practical steps is useless. But conversely, practical sacrifice without the proper theory is also

fruitless. This is especially true when the priest is the human form of God. Your service and donation must be the practical expression of your theoretical devotion, which in turn is caused by your theoretical knowledge.

You need not worry about the various theoretical steps in the rituals provided you have grasped the essence of the theoretical steps, which is devotion. The reality of that devotion (theory) is proved by the practical steps. The root problem is that people do not understand the meaning of the Vedic verses recited. The Veda includes the spiritual knowledge necessary to understand the Divine Personality and to develop real devotion towards Him. It also includes information about the various steps of practical devotion. Once you understand the knowledge contained in all the recited Vedic verses, you will perform the ritual by yourself, without the help of any priest. The priest is required only so that he can be worshiped as a representative of God. Today, the priest is invited to blindly recite the Veda, whereas it is the performer of the ritual himself, who is actually supposed to recite the Veda.

Chapter 8

INCARNATIONS HIDE THEIR DIVINITY

August 11, 2019

Shri Bharat Krishna asked: Namah Śivaya Swamiji! I have some questions in my mind, which I will try to explain below. I request you to kindly clarify my confusion. After reading many of your discourses, I have understood that God is totally unimaginable. There are two components in the Human Incarnation: an ordinary soul who is an extraordinary devotee of God and God Himself. You have also mentioned many times that you are such a devotee of the unimaginable God who exists in yourself. Since God is unimaginable, even you cannot see him or imagine him. But you do pray to God, right? Even you have to pray to some form, after all, and that form is again yourself. All the four associated properties of God are exhibited by you, which means you are God. You have also mentioned that you just act as God wants you to act. But how will God order you? God can order me through you, but how can God order you? With all these thoughts, I feel that you are God Himself but you are just behaving like an ordinary soul and you have also mentioned that in your discourses.

You have also mentioned that the complete truth has been revealed only now because we humans have developed an intellect which can analyze and understand that truth. But it does not mean we have overcome our ego and jealousy towards God. I feel that because of this reason, even though you are God, you are not behaving like God. Otherwise, you would not even have to mention that you are an ordinary soul, right? Swamiji, I am very sorry that I am not able to explain my question properly. You have explained that we recognize a Human Incarnation of God on the basis of the four associated properties of God exhibited by Him.

Paraśurāma was also a Human Incarnation of God, at least for sometime. During that time, he must have exhibited all those four divine qualities too. At least, I believe so. So, his devotees would have recognized him to be God. But later, he could not control his ego and hence, God left his body. But his devotees would still continue to think that he is God, right? You have very clearly mentioned in your discourses that once we recognize the Human Incarnation of God, and are totally convinced about it, we must stick to that conviction and constantly serve God. God might behave in a way that we do not like, in order to test us, but our faith should not be disturbed. This statement gives the sense that God merges with the human medium throughout his or her life. This is in contradiction with Paraśurāma's case. Did Paraśurāma also exhibit all the four associated properties

of God, especially *prajñānam*? If God is always in that selected human soul, throughout that Incarnation's life, then what is the need to differentiate between God and soul in the Incarnation? The only reason it is necessary to differentiate is that we still have ego and jealousy. Otherwise, God can freely declare himself to be God. So, according to me, you are God Himself. Kindly clarify this confusion of mine, Swami. Padābhivandanam Swamiji.

A Complicated Analysis

Swami replied: The concept of Human Incarnation is very very complicated because you are dealing with a two-component system appearing as a single phase, like an alloy of two metals. The alloy appears to be a single metal unless you observe it through a powerful microscope when you find out that there are two separate components at the atomic level. You can understand this clearly. **But when you take the Human Incarnation, only one component is imaginable and visible. The other component is invisible and unimaginable. The unimaginable God cannot be seen by any instrument. It cannot even be theoretically analyzed or imagined by the brain.** I can take a piece of a gold-copper alloy and say that it is an alloy of gold and copper. Using microscopes and instruments, I can show you the two separate components, gold and copper, at the atomic level. But if I take the Human Incarnation and say that the Human Incarnation is a homogeneous mixture of God and a soul, I cannot show you both God and the soul separately using any microscope. God is not only invisible, but He can never even be imagined. Hence, proving the existence of the God-component becomes extremely difficult. Neither can God be perceived by our senses nor can He be perceived by our intelligence. Our inability to even perceive God by our intelligence means that God is totally unimaginable.

Only inference can give us the proof of God's existence. Here too, it is only God's existence that is inferred, His nature is never inferred or known by any means. Since the nature of God is unimaginable, only the nature of the soul can be understood, in the cases of both the human being as well as the Human Incarnation. Whatever you can know about a human being is also what you will know about the Human Incarnation. The extra factor that exists in the Human Incarnation is the unimaginable nature of God exhibited by Him. But this extra factor is unimaginable. Hence, whatever is understood about the Human Incarnation is only the imaginable nature of the human being. What is

understood about Krishna and what is understood about an ordinary human being, is nothing but the imaginable knowledge about a human being. Since the extra factor exhibited by the Human Incarnation, which is God's unimaginable nature, is not understood at all, no extra knowledge is gained in the case of the Human Incarnation. It is like showing you two copper coins and saying that one coin is made of pure copper while the second is an alloy of copper and gold, in which the gold is invisible even through the most powerful microscope. The two coins are like the ordinary human being and the Human Incarnation. One is purely a human being whereas the other is a human being with whom the unimaginable God has merged. But it does not mean that there is no difference between the two.

Revealing Divinity While Preaching

The first human being does not compose the Gita whereas the second human being (Incarnation) composes the Gita. Based on the Gita composed by the second person, we have to infer that the unimaginable God must be existing in him. Paundraka Vāsudeva claimed to be an Incarnation of God without composing the excellent Gita. He was a fraud human incarnation. The existence of God cannot be inferred in him. Vāsudeva Krishna, claimed to be God while preaching the Gita orally to Arjuna. This excellent knowledge in the form of the Gita was actually composed by the unimaginable God (Parabrahman) present in Krishna. But of course, no one can even imagine that unimaginable God. Arjuna could have thought that it was only Krishna who was composing the Gita. In that case, the Gita would have been called Krishna Gita (the Song of Krishna). But it is called the Bhagavad Gita, which means the song of God. Bhagavān means the unimaginable God or more precisely, Lord Datta, who is the first Energetic Incarnation of the unimaginable God. This Datta had merged with Krishna and it was He, who was singing the Gita spontaneously through the mouth of Krishna. Since God is invisible and in fact, unimaginable, any observer might think that it is Krishna, who is composing and singing the Gita. That, of course, is not correct and hence, the Gita was named as the Bhagavad Gita and not Krishna Gita. It means that Bhagavan or God composed and sang the Gita through the mouth of Krishna.

In this context, Krishna must say that He (Krishna) is God and not a human being. This is exactly what Krishna said throughout the Gita.

He declared that He was God in human form. If Krishna had not declared that He was God, it would have meant that Krishna himself had composed and sung the Gita. Krishna's declaration of being God implies that Krishna is attributing the authorship of the Gita to God and not to himself. By claiming to be God, Krishna was saying that the Gita was told by God and this indicates the lack of ego in Krishna. Had Krishna said that He was not God, it would have indirectly meant that He was claiming to be the composer and singer of the the Gita, instead of God. It would have indicated the presence of ego in Krishna. Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva did not compose or sing the Gita. Yet, he claimed to be God, which indicates the climax of ego. Any Human Incarnation, while preaching excellent spiritual knowledge (*prajñānam*) says that He is God. It means that he, as a human being, is not preaching it, but that God is preaching it. If he preaches that excellent spiritual knowledge and says that he has composed and preached it, it means that he is attributing the authorship of that knowledge to himself instead of God, the real author due to ego.

Paraśurāma, Rāma and Krishna

Generally, the Human Incarnation hides Himself, as far as possible. Even if somebody recognizes Him as an Incarnation, He will deny it. When sages praised Rāma as God, Rāma denied it saying that He is not God, but only a man, who is the son of king Daśaratha. Even without being praised in this manner by anyone, Paraśurāma developed an ego. Since He had single-handedly killed all the wicked kings on Earth, He thought that He was God since only God can kill so many kings. As a result, Paraśurāma got insulted at the hands of Rāma. Paraśurāma lost God due to ego and remained only as a sage. Rāma had conquered His ego and hence, He denied being God even though others were praising Him as God. Paraśurāma could not maintain God in him due to ego whereas Rāma maintained God in Him throughout His life due to the lack of ego.

Opponent: Like Paraśurāma, Krishna also claimed to be God. So, can it not be said that Krishna also lost God?

Swami: Krishna never said that He was God at any point in His entire life except while preaching the excellent knowledge in the form of the Gita. In that context, it was necessary for Him to say that He was God because the actual speaker speaking that

knowledge was the unimaginable God and not the human being, Krishna. In that context, if Krishna had not said that He was God, it would have meant that he himself was preaching the Gita and not God. To confirm that the original author of the Gita was God, Krishna refused to preach the Gita once again to Arjuna at the end of the war. Arjuna wanted to hear the Gita from Him again but Krishna said he could not preach it again since he was not in the state of Yogeshvara any more. The state of Yogeshvara refers to the earlier state in which God had merged with him and preached the Gita. In that state, the Human Incarnation must say that He is God to indicate that it is God, who is preaching and not he as a human being. Krishna's declaration of being the absolute unimaginable God, Parabrahman, was inevitable since He was compelled by the situation. It should not be misunderstood to be the ego of the human being-component of the Human Incarnation.

Opponent: Rāma also preached the path of living as an ideal human being to humanity. He too was preaching to humanity but He preached through the practical example of His life. He never had to claim that he was God even though He was preaching.

Swami: Rāma is said to be an Ādarśa Mānuṣāvatāra. It means that He was an Incarnation, who was behaving like an ideal human being. He was preaching to humanity, the path of correct worldly life (*pravṛtti*), through His own example. The path of *pravṛtti* need not be preached by God Himself. It can even be preached by an ideal human being. Perfect *pravṛtti*, of course, can only be practiced by God and not by any human being. But if it had been made clear that Rāma was God, then people would have said that He is able to follow *pravṛtti* perfectly only because He is God. **They would have taken it as an excuse to say that they can never follow His example in pursuing the path of worldly justice (*pravṛtti*).** Hence, Rāma was extremely careful in not expressing His divine nature as an Incarnation of God.

Krishna was a Līlā Mānuṣāvatāra, which is a Human Incarnation of God, who is involved in divine play. He preached *nivṛtti*, which is the spiritual path of devotion to God, along with the basic *pravṛtti*, which is the worldly path of justice. *Nivṛtti* is based on

pravṛtti. While preaching *nivṛtti* along with *pravṛtti*, Krishna had to express His divine nature frequently. Through the cosmic vision (*Viśvarūpa*) given to Arjuna, He even clearly revealed that He was God Himself, who is the Creator, Controller and Destroyer of the cosmos. It is the unique characteristic of God as told by the Veda since no one other than God can create, rule or destroy the cosmos. However, this knowledge and vision was given only to Arjuna, who was deserving to receive it.

Identifying Marks of the Incarnation

Out of all identifying marks of God, knowledge is extremely important because it alone guides the devotee on the correct path. The identifying characteristics of the Human Incarnation of God also indicate the three steps that an aspirant must take on the spiritual path. The excellent spiritual knowledge given by God (*Prajñānam Brahma*) indicates the first step of knowledge, which is called *jñāna yoga*. God's love for His devotees (*Raso vai saḥ*) indicates the second step of devotion, which is called *bhakti yoga*. God's miraculous deeds (*Satyakāmaḥ...*) indicate the final step of service and sacrifice, which is called *karma yoga*. **The cosmic vision given proves the Vedic definition of God, which is that God alone creates, controls and destroys the cosmos (*Yato vā imāni...*).** Out of all these identifying characteristics, knowledge is the topmost because it alone guides the devotees on correct path, whether the devotee is pursuing *pravṛtti* or *nivṛtti*.

Every Human Incarnation makes a lot of effort to hide His divinity. If some person recognizes His divinity, the Incarnation tries to mislead the person by showing some negative qualities. But those devotees, who are fully deserving to worship and serve that God-in-human-form, will certainly recognize Him. Their aspiration to see God, to talk to Him, to touch Him and to live with Him is certainly fulfilled by God. Actually, He has come only for these few deserving devotees, who had prayed to Him with a lot of devotion. For such devotees, He need not preach any spiritual knowledge since they have already reached the third step of service. They have already crossed the second step of devotion and the first step of knowledge. **Actually, while**

preaching knowledge, the divinity of the preacher must be totally hidden. Only then will devotees will ask all types of questions with full freedom.

Impossibility of Imagining the Unimaginable

The human being-component in an Incarnation also cannot imagine the unimaginable God. This is the safest way of avoiding any further complication. When the unimaginable God merges with the imaginable selected human-being component, there is no difference between God and the merged devotee. The full status of God comes to the merged devotee too. The Human Incarnation has self-awareness or self-knowledge just as the unimaginable God has. Here, the point is not the inability of God to explain His unimaginable nature to the devotee. If He were to prove His nature as imaginable, He would not be called unimaginable any more! The point, here, is that due to the limits of the devotee's brain, his or her imagination can never touch the unimaginable God. If this point is revealed to devotees, they will pester the Human Incarnation for preaching about the unimaginable nature of the unimaginable God. But even if God were to preach a million times, the human being would never be able to understand it under any circumstances. It is not incapability of God to preach about the inherent nature of the unimaginable God. It is the incapability of the soul's imagination.

The unimaginable God is beyond space and unless you are able to understand the state of the absence of space, God can never be described to you. First, I must explain to you about the residence of God. Only then can I describe the God residing in it. The state of the absence of space is like the residence of God. You are unable to understand even that residence of God. So, He is totally unimaginable. To whom is God unimaginable? God is not unimaginable to Himself. He is only unimaginable to the human being or any soul in creation. If you want to know God's nature, you must first reach His residence. If you manage to reach His residence, I will show God to you in His residence. Unfortunately, you are unable to even reach the external compound wall of His divine residence. Then, how can I show

God to you in that residence? When space disappears, spatial dimensions also disappear. God has no volume since He is beyond space. **An item having no volume is beyond space and can never be touched by your imagination.**

Chapter 9

WORLDLY AND DIVINE ILLUSIONS

August 13, 2019

Shri Buchholz asked: Is it true that God wants this world to run peacefully? Every thing happens after God’s almighty will. Therefore, things are exactly as God wants them to be. *Mokṣa* is just liberation from the world of *māyā*—not from the will of God! In the Śāṅḍilya Upaniṣad (Chapter 3), it is said that Maheśvara, who is black and yellow, reigns with *avidyā*, *mūla prakṛti* or *Māyā*, who is red and black and who coexists with Him. So, Mahāmāyā is a higher form of Pārvatī! It solves *māyā* up.

Mahāmāyā and Māyā

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! The unimaginable God (Parabrahman) becomes the first energetic Incarnation, called Īśvara through mediation, which means, by merging with the first created energetic body. *Mahāmāyā* is the unimaginable power of the non-mediated Parabrahman. The same unimaginable power or *mahāmāyā* exists with Īśvara and is called as *māyā*. Parabrahman and Īśvara are one and the same, after all. Similarly, *mahāmāyā* and *māyā* are also one and the same. **The difference is only in the possessor of the power in the sense that the non-mediated God, Parabrahman, is unimaginable and invisible, whereas the mediated God, Īśvara, is unimaginable but visible through the medium.** Śaṅkara calls this unimaginable power of Parabrahman as *mahāmāyā* (*Mahāmāyā viśvaṃ bhrāmayasi Parabrahmamahiṣī*—Saundarya Laharī). He called the original non-mediated unimaginable God as Parabrahman. Parabrahman cannot be expressed through words since He is not even imaginable (*Maunavyākhyāprakaṣita Parabrahma tattvam*—Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram). In the Gita, we find the same unimaginable power of Parabrahman (*mahāmāyā*) mentioned as *māyā*. Īśvara or Datta is Parabrahman mediated by the first energetic body. Krishna or any Human Incarnation is the same Īśvara mediated by the material human body for the sake of human beings. The power of Krishna is the power of Datta, which is *māyā*. This *māyā* of Krishna or Datta is the same *mahāmāyā* of the Parabrahman. This means Krishna is Datta and Datta

is Parabrahman. The energy-medium of Datta is the same matter-medium of Krishna because matter can be considered to be condensed energy. Further, energy is gross, whereas space is subtle energy. Hence, space appears as energy and energy appears as matter. Space is not 'nothing' since it appears as something. The unimaginable God appears as space or subtle energy, which is an *adhyāsa* or superimposition. Who is watching these illusions? Who is seeing the space as soon as it is created? The unimaginable God Himself is the spectator. It is He, who had a desire to create the world for His entertainment. This means that God Himself appeared to Himself as space, gross energy, gross matter and so on! This illusion is called *mahāmāyā* or *māyā*.

Māyā and Avidyā

Is this *māyā* exactly the same as the illusion of a person who sees a rope as a serpent in dim light? Not at all! The reason is that the person does not have the knowledge of the rope, when he sees it as a serpent. The illusion of the person is known as *avidyā* whereas the illusion of God is known as *māyā* (*mahāmāyā*). In *māyā*, God has the knowledge of the ultimate truth, which is Himself. When the person sees the rope, the serpent disappears. But in the case of God, this rule is not applicable. God always has the knowledge of Himself and in spite of His self-knowledge, creation continues to appear real to God. You cannot compare God's situation to that of a person, who looks at a rope in dim light and imagines it to be a serpent. The person does not have the knowledge that it is a rope.

There is a huge difference between God watching creation and the person watching the illusory snake. God sees creation as real—as real as the illusory snake superimposed upon the rope and seen by the ignorant person. So, if you take the point of the reality of the world seen by God, it is also an illusion. But if you come to the point of God's self-awareness, it is not an illusion because God has no ignorance. It means that God has taken the merit of *avidyā* (individual ignorance) while avoiding its defect. The merit of *avidyā* is that, due to it, creation appears to be perfectly real, leading to perfect entertainment. The defect of *avidyā* is that there is no awareness of the reality i.e., the person is ignorant. In the case of God, He is fully aware of the truth underlying creation. He Himself is the Truth upon which the world is superimposed and God has complete self-awareness. Yet, He willfully sees the illusory

world as real. So, there is a lot of difference between the *māyā* of God and the *avidyā* of the soul. The only similarity is that a non-existent item appears to be fully existent. The non-existent subtle energy appears to be the existent space (subtle energy) to God. All of creation is space or subtle energy, in essence. When space and creation appear real to God Himself, what to speak of the soul, which is a tiny part of creation? Space is undoubtedly existent for the soul.

Even on this point, there is a vast difference between God and the soul. The essentially non-existent space appears as the existent space only for God. For the soul, space is fully existent; it is not non-existent, in essence. It is only for God that space is non-existent, in essence. For the soul, space is as existent as the soul itself since the soul is a tiny part of space. Thus, the same space is essentially non-existent for God while being essentially existent for the soul. The common point between God and the soul is that space appears to be real to both.

Difference Between God and Soul

If space appears to be real for both God and the soul, why can I not simply say that space is real? No, I cannot! Space is as real as the soul. It is on an equal plane of reality with the soul. Hence, the soul, which exists in space, cannot play with space. But God plays with space. For example, Krishna showed the universe and infinite space in His finite mouth! The soul cannot do this. God Krishna could do it because God is essentially real whereas the soul is essentially unreal. **A miracle is possible only when the doer of the miracle is real and the material of the miracle is essentially unreal.**

The soul thinks itself to be God and thinks that this world is unreal. If the world were unreal for the soul, the soul could have done a miracle very easily, just as God does (*Netaronupapatteḥ*—Brahma Sūtra). **Since it is impossible for a soul to perform a miracle, it clearly proves that it is equally impossible for a soul to be God.** Krishna was also a soul, but the unimaginable God had entered Krishna and merged with him to become a Human Incarnation. The miracle done by Krishna was actually the miracle done by the unimaginable God existing in Krishna in a merged state. **Since the merging between them was perfect, we can say that Krishna did the miracle.** There is no difference between Krishna and the unimaginable Parabrahman. Hence, we call Krishna as Krishna Parabrahman, which means that Krishna

Himself is Parabrahman. We can say, without a trace of hesitation, that the unimaginable and naturally invisible Parabrahman became the visible-imaginable Krishna.

Parabrahman, Datta and the Human Incarnation

The sages who had worshipped the Parabrahman for millions of births, became the Gopikās and worshiped Krishna as Parabrahman. They had realized that the imaginable-visible Krishna was that unimaginable-invisible Parabrahman. When Parabrahman became Datta, the Parabrahman merged with the energetic body of Datta. When Datta became Krishna, Datta (or Parabrahman) merged with the material human body. **Treating the merged energetic body as Parabrahman is the first step. The sages spent one million births to realize this truth.** Treating the human body of the Human Incarnation as Parabrahman (or Datta) took them another million births. Finally, they discovered Rāma, the Human Incarnation of Datta or Parabrahman. In their next births as the Gopikās, the sages were given the full opportunity to serve Datta or Parabrahman in the form of Krishna. They did not have the same opportunity to serve Rāma in their previous births, since Rāma had to act as an ideal human being. The reason, why the sages took so many births to reach this conclusion is that in the first step, it is very very difficult to believe that Parabrahman (unimaginable God) has become the imaginable-visible Energetic Incarnation, called Datta. In the second step, it is vastly more difficult to believe that Datta or Parabrahman has become the other Energetic Incarnations such as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. In the third step, it is infinitely difficult to believe that Datta or Parabrahman has become the different Human Incarnations such as Rāma, Krishna and others.

In the phase of *māyā*, God appears as this creation, but that illusion is limited only to God. Actually, this illusion is divine in which God has complete self-knowledge, without any trace of ignorance about either Himself or about the object seen as creation. You can compare this divine illusion with the worldly illusion in which a beggar is imagining himself to be a king. In the worldly illusion, neither has the beggar actually become the king nor has the king even appeared to the beggar wearing all his precious jewels. Both these facts are well-known to the beggar. But in the case of the divine illusion, the king appears wearing all precious jewels and God becomes that really-appearing king. Yet,

God knows fully that He alone exists and that the king is essentially non-existent. In the case of worldly illusion, the beggar did not really become the king. This point is similar to the divine illusion since God did not really become creation. Secondly, for the beggar, the king did not really appear before him. This point is different in the case of divine illusion since creation appears to God as real. Thirdly, the beggar has self-awareness just as God also has self-awareness. **It means that the only difference between the worldly and divine illusions is that the king does not really appear before the beggar whereas creation appears before God as real.**

In the example of the rope appearing to be a snake, the spectator is not the rope. Three items exist in this example, which are the rope, the snake and the spectator. In the example of the beggar and the king, only two items exist, which are the beggar and the king. In the case of the snake-rope example of a worldly illusion, the ignorance of the object (rope) exists with the spectator. In the divine illusion, no ignorance exists with God, the Spectator. Hence, there is no exact simile to compare with the divine illusion (*māyā*), in which God does not even have a trace of ignorance of the truth. All worldly illusions (*avidyā*), however, are due to ignorance.

Chapter 10

TAMING THE BLIND RITUALIST

August 14, 2019

Shri Hrushikesh asked: Dear Swami! You had given a discourse on December 18, 2018, related to Vedic recitation, in reply to some previous objections raised by Mr. Sid Pat. The same was communicated to him and he has responded with a long and critical response which is given below. I request You to kindly enlighten us with the truth.

Sid Pat's Criticism of Swami's Discourse

Sid Pat wrote: All right. So, your answer to my objections is as verbose as the article to which I objected. Not only has it not answered any question, but by going tangential to the questions and answering things that were never asked, it shows the struggling of sailors in a sinking boat that has too many holes to plug than there are hands on it. I will just take the 1st and 2nd reply to demonstrate how all the arguments given simply aim to further the anti-Brahmin narrative to sound modern and progressive. An addiction that the colonially handicapped intellectuals have left for us to deal with. If you don't have the heart to face and digest the truth as it is, then please don't read any further. You've been warned.

You say that the accents have no significance since the sound energy of these accents is inert and incapable of doing any miracle. Which Vedic ritual talked about miracles? All this miracle-business comes from Abrahamic traditions. Do you realise how far you are from the Vedic ideology? And how close you are to the Western view of the so-called God? There is no God in Sanātana Vaidika Hindu Dharma, for your information! There is no concept of one God either! Where's this coming from, hmm? You think we can't see through all this verbosity? You say that the priests have developed a false theory to defend their blind recitation that the sound itself does miracles and removes the problems of the doer of the ritual.

Oh! So they have even created a theory? Where is it? Can you show it? I have met thousands of priests and devotees and talked to them on this subject. There is no promise of miracles given. In fact, detailed explanations are given about the procedures along with the meaning of specific mantras so that the doers are fully in the know. The devotees clearly say they perform *dhārmika* rituals to honour their *dhārmika kartavyās*. If you have an iota of evidence of such a theory, come on, tell me the name of one person who has contributed in formulating that theory. And don't give some ridiculous answer like "It's in the minds of people", or some such unverifiable stuff. You claim to be a knowledgeable person. Give me

tangible and testable evidence that there is indeed such a theory. If not, show the evidence of your being ego-free by apologising unconditionally to the priest community for defaming them through your (almost colonial) fantasies.

You have said that according to the priests, knowing the meaning of the Veda is not necessary and that using this argument, priests try to convince people to support their blind recitation of the Veda without knowing its meaning. Proof for this, please! You can't get away with these kind of baseless fake-news-type stuff. I have been to hundreds and thousands of ceremonies, and I have found the priests explaining procedures and meanings wherever necessary. So, give specific proof, if you are brave enough.

You claim that the Vedas are mass printed and well-preserved now and that they are also safe from any adulteration. So, you say that in the present context, priests are wasting time by blindly reciting the Veda when there is no need to take any further efforts to preserve it. What a ridiculous statement! The culture and symbolism of the Harappans is well preserved in carvings and statuettes unearthed from the ancient Harappan sites. So, did all that physical preservation through carvings save the people or their culture to persist and stay alive? Now, read the line you have written. You might say - Oh! Oh! But there are lots of prints too! Right. There were also thousands of manuscripts of ancient Vedic sciences in hundreds of libraries across Āryavarta. What happened? Swarms after swarms of the Abrahamic invasions destroyed almost all of those scriptures. You think a printed book can never be lost? You must know books that were printed just 100 years ago and no copy remains of them today. Not one! So, what happened to preservation through printing technology, hmm? Conversely, look at the impeccable preservation of Vedic scripture achieved by the living line of the Brahmin community that you despise and defame constantly, without restraint. Yes. We lost entire *śākhās* due to the brutal invasions. Entire Gurukulas were stormed into and butchered. You know that history? Or you thought they were living in your Abrahamic heaven in those times?

It's incredibly angering that you dare compare these hopelessly outnumbered brave community members to donkeys carrying loads of gold? Such ungratefulness towards people who sacrificed billions of hours of their lives unconditionally and happily to let the knowledge reach you untampered? You call these people donkeys? Well, then at least they are carrying gold on their backs... what are people like you carrying, hmm? Answer this if you have the courage.

You say that one should study the Veda along with the supporting scriptures on grammar, logic etc., which are known as the Vedāṅgas, "*Sāṅgo Vedo adhyetavyo jñeyaśca*". Absolutely correct! So, did you study the preservation efforts by Brahmins while studying and propagating Dharma during the deadly times they were living in? Or do you consider that *vaidika* learning should be devoid of any sense of the ground reality and the forces of geo-politics and invasions? If so, how

can you claim to have studied *itihāsa*? You have to collate incidences that happened in the so-called modern times to understand the context and then analyse the reactions of the *dhārmikas* to the new world order. There is a context to what happened to *vaidika paramparās*. Have you studied that context while making snide commentary on the content? Have you? If not, what's your authority in insulting the *vipra* in those dire times and today?

You have said that the scripture also says that reciting the Veda, without knowing its meaning, is very bad (*Anarthajñah... pāṭhakādhamah*). What kind of an authority quotes half the verse? Because the other half would clearly puncture, disprove and destroy your baseless arguments about the Vedic accent itself being incapable of any effect? A *pāramparika* Guru understands the dangers of quoting parts of any verse. Much like the mistake Gandhi committed when he talked about "*Ahimsā Paramo Dharmaḥ*"—falsely equating it with *ahimsā* towards the violent—while actually, the *shloka* was about not being violent in *vaidika yagyas*. That man's folly brought (and is still bringing) such sorrow and violence to this country, right to this day; a mistake that history will never forgive. The true Guru and a *vaidika* seer knows it's important to give context by quoting the entire verse. Here is the verse from the Pāṇinīya Śikṣā Śāstra that you did not want people to see:

*gītī śīghrī śiraḥ-kampī tathā likhita-pāṭhakaḥ |
anarthajñah alpakaṅṭhaśca śadete pāṭhakādhamah.*

—Śikṣā Śāstra (Pāṇini)

In this verse, the great Maharshi Pāṇini tells us of 6 qualities of an inferior reciter of the Vedas as given below:

1. *Gītī*: the one who changes the tone, who arranges it in his own way, as if it were a *rāga*! The Veda must be recited with the required tones, and never otherwise.
2. *Śīghrī*: one who does not respect the rhythm of the recitation, for example who rushes through the anthem. To obtain the full benefit of a mantra (or extract) it is necessary to respect the durations (*mātra*) throughout the song.
3. *Śiraḥ-kampī*: the one who shakes his head while singing. It takes a bodily balance to recite the Veda. The vibration of the *nāḍī* must be able to express itself correctly during the intonation. We cannot accept other vibrations, such as those caused by the swinging of the head.
4. *Likhita-pāṭhakaḥ*: the one who sings while reading the text. The recitation of the Veda is done by heart, without written document (*likhita*).
5. *Anarthajñah*: the one who sings without knowing the meaning of what he recites.

6. Alpakaṅṭhaśca : and whoever recites with a weak voice.

Point 1 clearly shows that anybody who recites the Vedic scriptures in any other tones or tunes other than the prescribed *vaidika* accents is an *pāṭhaka-adhamaḥ*—an inferior reciter.

In one single word of one single verse from His Śikṣā Śāstra, the great Maharshi Pāṇini debunks and trashes your entire ridiculous article titled “Enemy or Friend of Hinduism”. You’re exposed and irrevocably so. If you have actually read *vaidika* scriptures, now I hope you know how Maharshi Pāṇini would have rated you. I’m afraid, hope is too slim here, though. I must thank you very much for this quote though. This is probably your biggest mistake; one that proves how conveniently you can (and probably always) manipulate such a crucial Vedāṅga as Śikṣā Śāstra. If you can bend and turn and twist such a core scripture, your own God knows what you'd do with the *darśanās*! Sad and shameful at the same time, no?

I would have gone into further detail to show how shallow (and uselessly verbose) all these wanna-be answers are. But that’ll be a waste of precious time. Because the person involved is already talking from a self-constructed high pedestal where no other thoughts can reach, no matter how true they are. Such personages don’t have guts to accept their mistakes when they are pointed out. Instead, they try to stage a moral grandstanding by saying I am a friend who talks the bitter truth. What needs to be seen is whether this person can take the bitter truth I have shown and not just apologize to the community he loves to spread hate about, but also to his own followers who he has probably been misleading for years with the feel-good lofty fantasies that are clearly based on a Western (specifically Abrahamic and colonial) point of views on *dharma*.

I would add that I have no personal anger or grudge against the person(s) involved here. I have simply asked questions that are uncomfortable and not asked by people for fear that they sound politically incorrect. However, such indulgence in feel-good silence is *adharmika*. I am very saddened that for more than half a year, nobody challenged these answers anywhere. That’s a dangerous sign. Kaliyuga? Probably. But we can’t beg for excuses in this matter. Any falsification, distortion, manipulative or convenient quoting of *vaidika* scriptures must be challenged forthright, no matter how controversial it becomes.

Do it whatever the cost. || Dharmo Rakṣati Rakṣitaḥ ||

The only reason people like these thrive is the shameless and unforgivable illiteracy of Hindus regarding their *vaidika* scriptures. Yes, learning Sanskrit might minimize the damage to about 1%. But that line of defense is clearly not powerful enough. Forget about words, one can misinterpret even the *akṣaras* of the mantras and create havoc. Every *akṣara* in Sanskrit has thousands of meanings that are dictated by the context it is used in. The only way is to learn *vaidika* scriptures from a *pāramparika* Guru, and not some new age peddlers of false

oneness of all ideologies, religions and Gods—whatever that means. I mean, I don't remember any instance in *itihāsa* where the *devas* and *asuras* became unified by some empty philosophy? Let me know if you find one. *Asuras* have to be fought with *rājasika* vigour and the cutting analysis of Sage Brihaspati. May better sense prevail henceforth.

Here is a verse that shows what the Vedas are afraid of...

itihāsapurāṇābhyāṃ vedam samupabṛṃhayet □
bibhetyalpaśrutādvedo māmayaṃ prahariṣyati □□

—Padma Purāṇam 1.2.52.

Every self-styled preacher must ask oneself: “Am I the person this verse is talking about?”. Only when the answer is a firm negative, take permission from your Guru and then alone utter a word about Vedas. If not, it's a safe and *dharmika* behaviour to simply shut up.

Miraculous Sound Energy?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! I had said that the inert sound energy cannot do any miracle because sound is an item belonging to the imaginable domain. It cannot have the unimaginable power needed for doing a miracle. Moreover, it is inert and cannot even think, in order to perform a miracle. Also, all *vaidika* rituals are done only for getting miraculous results. For example, the *Putrakāmeṣṭi* ritual (*yajña*) is done to get issues, after all the worldly efforts, including all scientific (medical) efforts, have failed. Of course, people who are spiritually evolved, perform the rituals only for the sake of worshipping God and not for obtaining some benefit from Him. But you say that Sanātana Dharma does not believe in God! Are you mad? Please get your brain checked by some brain-specialists. I am not saying this as a tit-for-tat, which is to criticize you in return for your criticism. I am saying it because your criticism lacks even basic logic, which proves the deranged condition of your brain. My suggestion to you is based on My sympathy for you and not due to a sense of revenge.

Please note that I am also born as a Brahmin and My surname is Yajñabhaṭṭāraka, which means that My ancestors were profound scholars who performed *vaidika* ritual sacrifices or *yajñas*. Even Swami Dayananda, who supported the concept that caste is determined by qualities and deeds, was born among Brahmins. But a soul, who has merely taken birth in the family of Brahmins, is called as a *Brahma*

bandhu by the Veda. It means that he is only related to the family of Brahmins but is not an actual Brahmin. Rāvaṇa is an example. A Brahmin (Brāhmaṇa) is a person who knows the meaning of the Veda and propagates the Vedic knowledge in society to bring the whole of society closer to God (***Brahma nayati iti***). According to you, these people who are blindly reciting the Veda, without even knowing its meaning themselves, are Brahmins! You are indirectly saying that the inert imaginable sound energy (accent) brings people closer to God. If you are not saying that, then it would mean that the accent does not serve any purpose—materialistic or spiritual! Can the sound of Vedic recitation even light sticks on fire? When *Putrakāmeṣṭi* was done in ancient days, Sanskrit was known to everyone and all understood the meaning of the recited Vedic prayers. The prayers improved their devotion to God. By such devotion-filled performance of the ritual, God would be pleased and would grant them their desired boons. It is true that the priests, in those days, would also simply recite the Vedic hymns as the priests of today. The recitation is common between ancient times and today. The difference is that in ancient days, all people understood the meaning of the recited Vedic hymns since Sanskrit was their mother tongue. Since those people were also good scholars, the inner spiritual knowledge of the Vedic hymns was known to them. Therefore, there was no need of any explanation of the hymns.

But today, the situation is totally different. The people hearing the Vedic hymns are neither Vedic scholars nor do they even understand the literal meaning of those hymns since Sanskrit is not their mother tongue. Yet, today's priest continues to simply recite the Vedic hymns like the priest of the ancient past. The present priest does not even know the meaning of Vedic hymns himself. This is the difference between the ancient Vedic priest and present Vedic priest. The ancient priest was like a tiger speaking to tigers. The present priest is a fox painted with black stripes. He is a false tiger speaking to other false tigers. In the present situation, either all should learn Sanskrit or, at least, the priest must be a scholar in Sanskrit. When the priest is a scholar knowing both Sanskrit and the Vedic philosophy, he can explain not only the literal meaning of the hymns, but also the inner meaning. The total fault lies with the priest and not with the people attending the ritual. The students may be faulty but not the teacher. When I am revealing the true situation about the Veda, you call Me anti-Brahmin! I say a million times that you are anti-

Brahmin since you are not supporting the very meaning of the word Brāhmaṇa!

There was one tradition called Bhaṭṭamatam, founded by Prabhākara Bhaṭṭa, who said that there is no God (*Devo na kaścit...*). He said that the *vaidika* rituals give results by themselves (*karmānurūpāṇi puraḥ phalāni*) and that the deity having the unimaginable miraculous power is the sound of the Veda itself (*Śabda mātra devatā*)! Whatever you speak, resembles the above tradition. At least, Maṇḍana Miśra and Prabhākara Bhaṭṭa, who followed the path of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and followed this line of thought, were scholars in Sanskrit. But you cannot be compared to both of them since you are not even a Sanskrit scholar. You may say that you have the support of the present-day priests, but they too are not Sanskrit scholars. Besides, even the present-day priests will not support you because they are believers in God. They are the followers of Śaṅkara, who condemned the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Maṇḍana Miśra. Since then, all priests became believers in God (Brahman). Not only that, they also believe that there is only one God, called Īśvara. Please tell Me, My dearest friend, to which spiritual philosophy or tradition do you belong? You appear to be a jack of all trades and master of none! You have acquired some knowledge by talking to some people but you have not studied the ancient scriptures.

I have already said that Bhaṭṭamatam, claims that the sound of the Veda itself is the miraculous deity, who gives the results desired by the performer of the rituals. Rituals are of two types. The first type is *kāmya karma*, which is the ritual done to get a miraculous result from the deity, which is assumed to be the sound of the Veda (*śabda*). The deity is supposed to have the miraculous power to grant the desired result, which could not be achieved through worldly efforts. The second type of ritual is *niškāma karma*, which is done without the desire for any fruit. It is done for the sake of the purification of the mind. Pūrva Mīmāṃsā does not believe in God and salvation. Hence, it is limited only to doing rituals to fulfill desires. Such rituals have been condemned in the Gita (*Kāmātmānaḥ svargaparāḥ...*).

My dearest friend! You are jumping to grab every opportunity to blame and launch verbal attack. It shows that you have very very little subject-matter knowledge and that knowledge too, is what you have heard from the public; from here and there. What is worse is that the tiny amount of subject-matter knowledge collected by you is improper

and impure due to your crooked intelligence. Instead of jumping to grab every opportunity to blame and attack, you could have discussed with Me, restricting the discussion to the subject. To satisfy your *rājasic* nature, you could have criticized Me only when your argument supersedes Mine. A pot full of water is like a scholar and an empty pot is like an ignorant person. Both do not make any noise. **The noise is the unwarranted criticism.** Only a pot with little water, which is like improperly understood knowledge, picked up from here and there, makes such violent splashing sounds.

When Maṇḍana Miśra saw Śaṅkara, even before debate, he scolded and verbally abused Śaṅkara horribly. Sages Vyāsa and Jaimini present there, condemned Maṇḍana Miśra asking him to participate in the debate on the subject. Maṇḍana Miśra was highly *rājasic* as we can observe from his abusive language used against Śaṅkara. Maṇḍana Miśra was busy performing the death rituals for his ancestors, when Śaṅkara reached his home seeking to have a debate with him. Since Maṇḍana Miśra did not open the door for Him, Śaṅkara, using His miraculous powers, entered the house passing through the bolted door. Maṇḍana Miśra was furious and the following conversation took place between them:

Maṇḍana Miśra: I am asking your way (since Śaṅkara entered through bolted doors).

Śaṅkara: You are asking My way and not Me. What did My way tell you?

Maṇḍana Miśra: You are the son of a prostitute.

Śaṅkara: You asked My way and My way replied you that you are the son of a prostitute!

These words of Maṇḍana Miśra reveal his extreme *rājasic* nature. **Śaṅkara retorted to him but without using any *rājasic* word.** You are jumping up to the sky, challenging Me to name one person, who has said that the rituals are performed for fulfilling desires, which cannot be fulfilled by human efforts. By performing the rituals, the desires get fulfilled by miraculous powers, which are called deities in Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. The cause of your high jump is your utter ignorance of even the fundamentals of the scriptures. So, while you are thinking that you are jumping high to reach the sky, you are actually diving deep down to Pātāla Loka! Do you not know that the book called Bhaṭṭaprayoga Dīpikā (Bhaṭṭīyam), followed by the present-day priests is based on the

theory of Prabhākara Bhaṭṭa, who was a follower of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. **Bhaṭṭa says that the miraculous deity giving the boons in the rituals is the eternal Vedic sound!** A debate is possible with a complete scholar. One can even discuss with or teach a fully ignorant person. But you are neither a complete scholar nor a fully ignorant person. Bhaṭṭhari says that a jack-of-all-trades-and-a-master-of-none can never be convinced by even God Brahmā! Had you put forward your points without the unnecessary blame, I would have given beautiful answers without retorting to you in this manner.

One might wonder if there was any necessity for Me to retort to you? Could I not have simply answered the points raised by you? **It is said that if a person slaps you on one cheek, you should show him the other cheek. But this approach is valid only if the opponent has even a trace of culture.** If the opponent is uncultured, you should retaliate with ten slaps! Only then will he remain silent. A cruel person can be controlled only with cruel retaliation; not by a soft response as told by Kālidāsa (*Śāmyet pratyapakārena...*). **It is also said that a person compensates the deficiency of logic in his argument by anger (*Śeṣam kopena pūrayet*).** In what you wrote to Me, the ratio of scolding-to-arguments was 90:10. So, in My response too, the scolding-to-arguments is in the same ratio. One has to fight with one's opponent using the same weapon used by the opponent! I never had any courage to fight, but you made Me courageous. Thanks for it!

You say that in most rituals, priests are giving explanations 'wherever necessary'. Firstly, the statement is not true. Most priests are not giving any explanation at all. Besides, the question of 'wherever necessary' does not arise because the people attending the ritual do not know the meaning of any word recited by the priest. Your statement would come into the picture only if the public had a basic understanding of Sanskrit and were only unable to understand some things here and there. Today, except for an extremely small number of priests, who could be counted on one's fingers, there is hardly a priest, who even knows the literal meaning of the Veda. Theory is always based on the concept followed by the 99% majority and not on what is followed by the 1% minority! As a real friend, I advise you again and again to consult a psychiatrist, as early as possible, because, in due course of time, you will have to be admitted to a mental hospital! Do not get angry with Me and retort with more pungent words because the truth is always

harsh. You might have met several priests. But I am born in the family of priests and I Myself am a priest.

Preserving the Veda

You have given an example of the preservation of the Harappan culture through stone carvings, similar to the preservation of the Veda by recitation in ancient times, when there was no writing technology. The culture was preserved by the Harappans through stone carvings, which can be seen even today. But the Veda recited by ancient scholars is not seen today like the carved stone. The recitation of the Veda ended when they died. But the carved stones did not end with the death of those ancient people. So, how can you compare recitation to carving on stone? I had thought that you would become mad in the future. No, no! You have already gone mad! After reading this remark of mine, read what you have written again. You yourself will understand whether you have already gone mad or not. The Veda is printed now and is available permanently like the stone carving. When stone carvings already exist, do people carve the same thing again on stone? No! Once the carved stones are available, there is no need of re-carving. **However, since recitation is not permanent like carving, recitation must be done again and again.** Since printing is also quite permanent, unlike recitation, repeated recitation becomes unnecessary. Once printing is done, there is no need of immediate reprinting. That way, at least for some generations, blind recitation can be avoided. The word Veda itself means knowledge. Whether you recite out of memory or read from the printed book, how does it matter as far as the knowledge contained in the words is concerned? That knowledge should be explained to everyone. First, you can take some rest for a long time and only then come back to Me for discussion. That way, you will discuss with Me with a stable and calm mind without these huge waves of emotion.

Abrahamic Invasions of India

You talk about the invasions of India by invaders following Abrahamic traditions and their attempts to destroy the Sanātana Vaidika Dharma (Hinduism). So, both of us were present at that time to see those invasions with our own eyes, right? You must have been God Krishna since you remember all those past births and those invasions even today! I must be the poor soul, Arjuna, who does not remember all those past-

life incidents and even many things that happened in My childhood in this very birth! The reality is that the only authorities that we have on these historical incidents are the books written by some people who lived in those times. But we are not sure whether they wrote those books impartially or not. We do not have audio-video cassettes in which that history has been recorded. **Why do you dig the past and spoil the present?** If My ancestor did something wrong to your ancestor, why do you want to kill Me now? There is no authority of direct perception for whatever might have happened in the past. All you have is a book written by your ancestors about the injustice done by My ancestors. But I also equally have a book written by My ancestors about how your ancestors were unjust. Now, you say that your book is right and My book is wrong. I can say the same to you too! Where is the end to this? Let us not foolishly waste our time on incidents and errors of the past. **Let us concentrate on the present time and rectify the present errors. Present errors are judged on the basis of scientific logic.** Do not say that science is modern and hence, I am modern as a scientist. Science is nothing but logical analysis, which existed even in ancient times by the name of Tarka Śāstra (*Tarkyante padārthāḥ asmin iti tarkaḥ*). All our ancient scholars were scientists. Without studying logic, one was not eligible to study philosophy (Vedānta). You must examine both *tarka* and science; the old and the new. You must not follow any one thing alone blindly. But you should pick whichever is logical and good from both the old and the new. Only a fool follows just one; either old or new. He drinks even salty water from the well dug by his ancestors (*Purāṇamityeva..., Tātasya kūpoyamiti...*).

Donkeys Carrying Gold

O Lord Sid Pat! Please read the scriptures first and then come and argue with Me. You are scolding Me for calling these priests as donkeys carrying a load of gold without knowing the value of the load they carry. My Lord! Those are not My words. Those are the words of sage Yāska for the person, who blindly recites the Veda without knowing its meaning. All your scolding goes to sage Yāska, who is the author of Niruktam, the Vedic grammar, which is respected by all the scholars of Sanātana Dharma. You do not even have basic knowledge of the Sanātana Dharma, that you are blindly supporting. You are like an

advocate coming to the court to argue the case without even reading the petition filed by the claimant!

Superficial Knowledge

My Lord Sid Pat! Our statements themselves show who has perfect scriptural knowledge and who has superficial knowledge heard from here and there (*Śruta pāṇḍityam*). You are not even an ordinary scholar of the scriptures. You are just a politician from the land of the middle-age priests who recited the Veda blindly, without knowing its meaning. You hope to be elected by them as their representative to the parliament! Since you do not know even the A-B-C of the scriptures, you are leaving the scriptures aside and turning to practical situations, which are based on wrong history. My Lord! Your honour! I am totally defeated at your hands and leave you with folded hands after prostrating at your lotus feet! If a person decides to have a boxing match with a big inert stone, will the person be able to defeat the stone? I have exhausted all My weapons (scolding). I accept My defeat and leave you!

Blatant Self-Contradiction

You say that I am correct in saying that the priest must study the Vedāṅgās (logic, grammar etc.), which was said by Sage Gautama. This means that you are agreeing that the priests must know the meaning of the Veda in depth. Then, how can you support the priests who do not know the meaning of the Veda? This is a blatant self-contradiction. Perhaps, you might have written this single point of agreement and appreciation of My words while you were in deep sleep!

Clarifying the Verse on Śikṣā

The point regarding the verse from Śikṣā mentioned by you has already been asked by Dr. Nikhil and I have answered it in detail in the discourse given on December 23, 2018. Please read it. My objections to the mutually-contradictory statements, which you have made out of blind emotion, are summarized below:

- a) You have accepted that one should not recite the Veda without knowing its meaning (*Anarthajñāh*). If you accept this, how can you support the priests, who recite the Veda blindly without knowing its meaning? Your acceptance of this point contradicts your blind support to such priests!

b) You say that, as per the verse, the Veda should not be recited except with the proper accents. But it is not what is meant by word *gītī* (singing). The verse says that the Veda should not be sung. But it does not mean that the Veda should not be sung at all since the Sāma Veda is also the Veda and it is supposed to be sung as a song. In fact, the Sāma Veda is said to be the best Veda in the Gita (*Vedānām Sāmavedo'smi*—Gita). The verse only means that the prose portion of the Veda (Yajur Veda) should not be sung as a song. The rule, of course, does not apply to the Sāma Veda which is supposed to be sung. The Sāma Veda is actually a small part of the poetry portion of the Veda (Ṛg Veda). **It means that you can sing the poetry portion of the Veda as a song but not the prose portion.** The main point, here, is that the word, *gītī* refers to the singing of the Veda. It does not refer to the accents, which also have some musicality, and, in that sense, also have to be 'sung'. The singing which is disallowed, is the free singing of the Veda and not the recitation of the Veda as per the accents. A singer can sing a line in any manner, using higher or lower notes for different words and syllables. Such free singing alone is criticized in the verse. In Vedic recitation, three accents are used and certain syllables in the hymns are to be recited with those specific accents. The three accents are:

- i. ***Udātta***: the higher accent indicated as a short vertical line above the syllable.
- ii. ***Anudātta***: the lower accent, which is marked with an underscore below the syllable and
- iii. ***Svarita***: which is recited as two accents in a certain tune and is indicated by a double *udātta* marks.

If you object to singing altogether, you are also objecting to the third accent (*svarita*). **Hence, the disallowed singing is only free singing and not singing in the specified way.** Singing in the specified way is strength of the song (*Mātrā balam*). Singing in a specified way is the Sāma Veda. Hence, *gītī* only means free singing and not singing in the specified way. If you say that *gītī* means all types of singing, the Sāma Veda is condemned. For pleasant hearing, the accents can be followed

in the specified way, whether it is prose (Yajur Veda), poetry (Ṛg Veda) or a song (Sāma Veda). I am not objecting to it. **I am not against the accents, which make the recitation pleasant to hear.** What I say is that the accents are only imaginable sound energy. Sound cannot give any results, be they worldly results or supernatural results. At least, if the sound had been ultrasonic sound energy, it could have had some significant physical effects. **Even those physical effects cannot be produced by the Vedic recitation in those accents done in human voice since the frequency of the sound energy is quite low.** Bhaṭṭa says that the sound of recitation of the Veda in the specified accents, itself is the miraculous deity providing miraculous benefits. This theory is condemned by all the preachers of Sanātana Dharma including Śaṅkara. The priests of today are again promoting this theory because it is convenient for them. With this theory, they can earn money by mere blind recitation, covering their defect of the ignorance of the Vedic knowledge. On one side, you support Sanātana Dharma and on the other side, you follow the theory of Bhaṭṭa. I am sorry to mention the name of Bhaṭṭa because you do not even know that the theory supported by you was founded by Bhaṭṭa, whose name is beyond your very basic knowledge of Sanātana Dharma.

Printing and Preserving the Veda

Once the scripture is preserved permanently by printing, it is immaterial whether you quote the scripture by recitation or by reading from the printed book. As far as the concept and its logic are concerned, this difference is meaningless. It is ridiculous to say that recitation must be continued even today to preserve the scripture, when it is quite safely preserved through printing and digital means. The technology of recitation was relevant when the technology of writing and printing was not available. If recitation is the only reliable means of preservation of knowledge, then we should give up the printing of books on science and technology and all other subjects and adopt recitation! Then, there would be no need to provide references to printed material at the end of a research paper since it would only be recited! It would be a joke of the highest order!

Moreover, there is a difference between written words (*likhita*) and printed words (*mudrita*). The verse mentions ‘written’ and not ‘printed’. ‘Written’, in those days, meant ‘written on palm leaves’, which was not as permanent as the printing on paper in present times. Printing is certainly far more permanent. In the time of Paṇini, only the technology of writing on palm leaves existed and not the present-day large-scale printing technology, which is quite permanent. In order to preserve a text, reprinting is necessary before the printed copies of the text get exhausted, which takes a long time. With writing, there is a dependence on the individual, who is writing. Making a handwritten copy is a slow process and so very few copies can be made. The reliability of the copy made by the individual is also questionable. But in large-scale printing, a very large number of books can be produced at a time and distributed widely. Hence, the present printing technology is far safer than the technology of handwritten books on palm leaves. To ensure the safe preservation of the Vedic knowledge, Pāṇini discouraged reading out from handwritten texts and favored the recitation of the Veda out of memory. As such, there is no fundamental reason why the Veda should not be read from a book.

In fact, do you know that there is a rule in Sanātana Dharma that during the death rituals (*apara karma*), the Veda must be recited only by reading out from a book? This rule is followed even by the present-day priests, whom you are supporting. The concept behind this rule is that the priest should not miss any word during these rituals. If he misses a word, the meaning is misunderstood. The situation after the death of a person is very serious. The departed soul must urgently be protected by God. The meaning of the Vedic prayers is precious spiritual knowledge. This knowledge is far far more important compared to the recitation with accents, which is basically meant for pleasant hearing. Missing a sentence or even a word, cannot be tolerated in this situation. Do you know that the present-day priests often swallow a good number of sentences while reciting the Veda during a ritual? Most people are unaware of it since they do not even follow meaning of what is being recited!

One person said to Me, pointing to a certain priest “This priest is good. He does not miss even a word while reciting the Vedic hymns”. I told him “How does it matter whether the priest is reciting the whole text or whether he is swallowing a word, a sentence or even many

sentences? You do not even understand a single word of what is being recited, in any case! It is for the sake of the valuable meaning that the Veda is recited. The word Veda itself means knowledge and not mere listening to the blind recitation with pleasant accents!” Since the Veda basically means knowledge and not mere pleasant hearing, reading from a written or printed book is not a sin. Even in the commentaries of Śaṅkara and others, the Vedic statements are quoted without their accents. We have no objection, at all, for the recitation of the Veda with the accents, which make it pleasant to hear. But the pleasant sound of recitation is an extremely minor point. You should not attribute any miraculous power to the accents by quoting the example of the hymn “*Indraśatro vardhasva*”. You should not say that Indra was able to kill the demon Vṛtra because while reciting the Vedic prayers preceding the battle, the priests had reversed the accents. The position of the higher accent (*udātta*) was reversed by the priests from the word *śatru* (enemy) to the word Indra. It is not correct to attribute Indra’s victory to this reversal of the accents. The accents have no miraculous power to grant victory to anyone. The miraculous power exists only with God. Since Indra was a good angel and Vṛtra was a bad demon, it was the will of God that Indra should kill Vṛtra and not the reverse.

The unimaginable miraculous power always exists with the unimaginable God and not with any imaginable item within this imaginable creation. The imaginable and especially inert sound energy of the recited Vedic hymns, even if it recited as per the specified accents, certainly does not possess any miraculous power. As said earlier, that sound is not even ultrasound to lead to at least some significant physical effects.

The priests of all other religions are reading their sacred prayers and verses from books during their rituals. The meaning of what they are reading is also well-understood by all since it is being read out in their mother tongue. Do you think that God is not blessing them for performing those rituals? Reading from the book and explaining its meaning to all is far far better than the blind recitation without explaining its meaning. Only Hinduism is in this unfortunate situation since its scriptures are in Sanskrit, which was people’s mother tongue in the ancient past, but today, not even the priests know Sanskrit! The primary Hindu scripture is the Veda, which means knowledge and not mere blind recitation in pleasant accents. I am not objecting to this blind

and pleasant recitation. I am only saying that the concepts of the Veda are far more important than the pleasant sounds. The knowledge of the Veda, when understood, generates devotion to God. The knowledge and the devotion are theory, which leads to practice. The practice or practical devotion is the practical performance of the ritual. God is greatly pleased with such theoretical and practical devotion and He grants the desired boons. But if the rituals are done without any desires, then God is extremely pleased and He grants salvation.

I am only opposing the placing of the sound-accent of the Veda in the position of the miraculous and omnipotent God, as per the theory of Bhaṭṭa. It is this false theory that has been exploited by the present-day priests to cover their defect of not knowing the meaning of the Veda. They justify their blind recitation based on this theory and run their business of getting money from their 'customers'. How can you support both Bhaṭṭa and the present-day priests on one side and also support Pāṇini on the other side, who condemned the recitation of the Veda without knowing its meaning. Yāska calling such priests as donkeys carrying a load of gold also stands in support of Pāṇini in this matter. The other defects while reciting the Veda are only of minor importance in comparison to the defect of not knowing the meaning of the Veda. You cannot find fault with a person reciting the Veda in a weak voice if the person knows the meaning of the Veda. Similarly, defects like reciting too fast, or free singing of the hymns, shaking one's head, reading out from a written script, are all minor in importance. Knowing and explaining the meaning of the Veda is most important since it has been stressed by several other sages like Gautama (*Jñeyaśca...*) and Yāska (*Svarṇa bhāra haraḥ*).

Just as the word Veda means knowledge, the words *adhyayana* and *paṇḍita* also mean knowledge as per Sanskrit grammar. Yet, these blind priests use all these words in the sense of blind recitation. After their blind recitation of the Veda, they say "We have completed the Veda *adhyayana*!" They call themselves Veda Paṇḍitas! Actually, they are only Veda Pāṭhakas, which means those, who blindly recite the Veda. They are not Veda Paṇḍitas, which means those who have studied the Vedic knowledge in depth!

Bhartrhari is right in saying even God Brahmā cannot convince people like you. You are a pot containing little water and making a lot of splashing sounds. You are just a tiny atom before God Brahmā, in

reality. But such are your high jumps and long jumps that you declare that even God Brahmā is defeated by you! God Brahmā accepts all types of criticism from you. Even now, God Brahmā will bless you, if you realize your blind, rigid and foolish support for blind traditions, which have split Hinduism in present times. Your foolish support for those who are Brahmins just by birth causes all the non-Brahmins to fight with even the good Brahmins. These good Brahmins are actual Brahmins by their qualities and deeds. The caste system is based on the soul's qualities and the resulting deeds alone, as told in the Gita. A person born in the family of Brahmins without the corresponding qualities and deeds is not a Brāhmaṇa. He or she is merely a *Brahma bandhu* as declared by the Veda. A *Brahma bandhu* is a person who is only related to *Brāhmaṇas*. He is not a *Brāhmaṇa*. You are going against the Veda and the Gita. A pot-maker and an excellent scholar of the Veda was made a president of a *yajña* by sages by virtue of his knowledge of the Veda. But how can you realize the value of this? You have written the word *yajña* as *yagya*! You do not even know the spelling of the word *yajña*! How would you know the actual meaning of *yajña*? You claim to be a scholar of Pāṇini and you do not even know what Yāska has said. **Pāṇini is a grammarian of the Sanskrit language whereas Yāska is a grammarian of the Vedic language!**

I am not angry with you, which means that God Datta is not angry with you. I have merely spoken to you in your language so that you will understand the subject very well. So, calm down and take rest for some time. Control your *rajas* and *tamas* and then, try to understand what God Datta is telling you through this medium. If you support the blind tradition and the birth-based caste system, you are opposing Guru Datta. If you feel that the blind tradition and the blind birth-based caste system are above Īśvara (God Datta), revolt against Me with more and more pungent words. But I will only respond with silence since certain souls are going to be condemned permanently by God (*Kṣpāmyajasramaśubhān āsurīśvevayoniṣu*—Gita). **The Veda promises that the divine knowledge always sticks to the truth (*Satyam Jñānam*). The truth cannot be changed due to one's blind attachment to the birth-based caste system. It cannot be twisted to fall in line with blind traditions, which are followed in the name of loyalty to elders. If such stupid disregard of the truth continues, the only followers of Hinduism that will remain will be a few blind fools.**

All others will simply convert to other religions! Remember that, today, other religions also exist in our country and the world. The need of the hour is to bring peace and harmony in our country and in the entire world. It is essential to unite the various sects and traditions within Hinduism and also unite Hinduism with other world religions.

Chapter 11

TWO CONFUSIONS IN HINDUISM

August 18, 2019

Shri Kishore Ram, Shri Hrushikesh and Kum. Purnima asked: There are two common confusions people have about Hinduism. The first is theoretical and the second is practical. The first is regarding Śaṅkara's theory that every soul is God. The second is about the practical behavior of Krishna, since He stole butter and danced with the Gopikās. How do we resolve these two?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! The greatest confusion arises when you combine these two confusions mentioned by you. As per Śaṅkara, the soul is God, which means that every human being is a Human Incarnation or Lord Krishna Himself. If every human being feels that he is Krishna and starts behaving like Krishna—stealing others' wealth and dancing with illegitimate partners—the confusion reaches its climax! We have to understand both these confusions independently and also when they are combined together.

Confusion Regarding Śaṅkara's Philosophy

Let us examine the theoretical confusion regarding Śaṅkara's philosophy, which is the result of the lack of correct understanding of His philosophy. When Śaṅkara came, the country was full of atheists, who did not believe in the existence of any God other than themselves. There is no other way to bring the atheist to the path of theism other than by telling him that he himself is God. The atheist accepts the existence of 'God' because he knows for sure that he exists. Hence, Śaṅkara had to say that every soul is God. Since the soul exists and the soul itself was said to be God, Śaṅkara was able to convince the atheists that God exists. But Śaṅkara carefully took all the necessary steps to prevent a person from thinking that every ordinary soul is actually God. The truth is that every ordinary soul is not God. It was the extreme condition of society in Śaṅkara's time that had forced Him to say that every ordinary soul is God. So, even though Śaṅkara initially said that every soul is God, in course of time, He slowly introduced some other concepts too. These other concepts indirectly indicate that every soul is

not God. But He took sufficient care to avoid a self-contradiction. i.e., He did not say that every soul is God and then directly contradict it by saying that every soul is not God.

If every soul is already God, the soul must become God as soon as it recognizes itself to be God. What is the identifying characteristic of God? The Veda says that God is the one who creates, controls and destroys this world. This means that as soon as the soul comes to know that it is God, it must be able to create the world, control it and destroy it. But even after knowing that it is God, the soul is unable to create even an atom of matter or even a ray of energy! It clearly proves that every soul is not God. This would have caused Śaṅkara's followers to give up His philosophy and turn back to atheism. But Śaṅkara did not allow the followers to lose their faith and turn back. To motivate them to progress further, He told them that they would become God only when they were firmly convinced that they are God. He said that by merely knowing that one is God, the practical effect of one's deep and long-standing ignorance (*ajñānavikṣepa*) does not come to an end. The soul is unable to come out of the practical influence of the long-standing ignorance. Simply knowing that the soul is God is removing the theoretical ignorance (*ajñānāvaraṇa*).

Śaṅkara gave an example to explain this point. A person saw a tiger in a dream and was shivering with fear. The person was awakened by another person. As soon as the dreaming person awoke, he knew that he had been seeing a dream and that the tiger from his dream did not actually exist. But in spite of his realization of the truth, his shivering due to fear did not stop all at once. The knowledge that the tiger is non-existent had only removed the theoretical ignorance. But the removal of the theoretical ignorance, did not end the practical ignorance (shivering out of fear). It took the person some time to come back to a stable state of mind and be fully convinced that the tiger he had seen was unreal. The practical effect (shivering due to fear) ends only once the person is fully convinced. Using this example, Śaṅkara explained to them why the practical effect of the soul's ignorance does not vanish as soon as the theoretical ignorance is removed. **The followers were pacified with this logic. They accepted that even though their theoretical ignorance had ended and they had realized that they were God, they would actually become God only after the practical ignorance ended.** To get rid of the practical ignorance, Śaṅkara said that attaining

purity and concentration of the mind was essential. For this, Śaṅkara suggested that the soul must worship God! He told them that without the grace of God, it was impossible to remove the practical ignorance. Thus, He turned them into devotees of God. In the first step, He converted atheists into theists and in the second step, He converted the theists into devotees of God. This is the twist of Śaṅkara for gradually bringing atheists to the path of devotion by these two steps. The two-step twist became necessary only because of the peculiar situation during Śaṅkara's time. If this twist is carefully understood, the theoretical confusion related to the philosophy of Śaṅkara disappears.

The main focus of Śaṅkara was only the first step even though He introduced the second step too. **So, He never left the concept that the soul is already God.** Worshipping God was only treated by Him as an intermediate step to becoming God. **The first step, as per Śaṅkara, was theoretically knowing oneself to be God. The second step was worshipping God to purify and focus the mind. The third step was the final goal of becoming God. This is what He told to His followers. But in reality, the first step was converting the atheist into a theist. The second step was converting the theist into a devotee and the third step was a total lie, if generally applied to the majority.** But the third step represented a possibility or an opportunity for a soul to become God. If an atheist first became a theist and then developed devotion and further intensified his devotion, he might be selected by God to merge with Him and become a Human Incarnation. **So, in the sense of this exceptional case of becoming a Human Incarnation of God, Śaṅkara's third step was indeed true.** Hence, Śaṅkara set this highest goal even for the atheist. Since there is every possibility of even an atheist becoming God, you cannot say that what Śaṅkara told was a total lie. But one must be very clear that the exceptional case of becoming a Human Incarnation of God cannot be generalized.

Rāmānuja followed the second step and stressed on the devotion of the soul to God. **Śaṅkara said that the knowledge that the soul is God is the main means to attaining the highest goal. Rāmānuja said that the devotion of the soul to God is the main means of attaining the highest goal.** Rāmānuja said that the soul is not God, but is a tiny part of God. His concept diverges from Śaṅkara's concept but it provides some consolation to the soul that even though it cannot become God, it will at

least become a tiny part of God. Madhva's concept was completely opposite to that of Śaṅkara since Madhva said that the soul is neither God nor a tiny part of God but is totally different from God and will remain totally different from God, forever. He said that the soul was eternally a servant to God. **Madhva said that service to God is the main means of attaining the highest goal.**

Madhva's theory was the most accurate truth. Does it then mean that what Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja said were blatant lies? Not exactly. It is possible for the soul to become God or, at least, become a tiny part of God. However, every soul is not already God nor is the soul already a tiny part of God. Basically, the soul is totally different from God. It is only by the will of God that a selected soul can either become God or a tiny part of God, in due course of time. Becoming God means becoming a Human Incarnation of God when God merges with that selected soul. In the Incarnation, the soul exists in a state of monism with God. Apart from this monistic Human Incarnation, a soul can also become a dualistic Human Incarnation. In this case, that soul is associated very closely with God as a tiny part of God. Even though God has not actually merged with the soul, it is still treated to be an Incarnation by the public. The most important point is that the soul should never desire to either become a monistic or a dualistic Incarnation of God. It should be God's desire to make that devoted soul into any of the two types of Incarnations. **As long as the desire to become God or to become a tiny part of God persists with the soul, the soul will neither become God nor even a tiny part of God.**

The Human Incarnation happens only when God desires to become a Human Incarnation for the sake of the welfare of the devoted world. Krishna was a monistic Incarnation whereas Balarāma was a dualistic Incarnation, who was counted among the ten major Incarnations of God. As per Madhva, the soul is always a servant of God and should never wish to become God or a tiny part of God. **The soul should never have an eye on becoming Human Incarnation.** Whenever God wishes, He will make a certain selected soul an Incarnation. Due to this possibility, we see that Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are not at all wrong. If this is understood deeply and patiently, the philosophy of Śaṅkara, as supported by Rāmānuja and Madhva, has no trace of confusion at all. **Even though a soul is basically different from God, there is no harm if a person thinks that he or she is God as long as the assumption of**

monism is made for a good cause. Sometimes, a person can lose confidence while doing some good work. To regain confidence, the person can think that he or she is God. Even though this assumption is not true, it can boost the person's confidence and help the person in his or her worldly as well as spiritual life. In assuming oneself to be God, one should be broad-minded and work for the benefit the world. One should not be narrow-minded and work only for the benefit of one's own family. Śāṅkara propagated His monism with a view to enabling such good worldly work and the spiritual development of the soul. But when the soul misuses this monism and commits sins, it becomes necessary to reveal the total picture of Śāṅkara's philosophy. It becomes necessary to reveal that the monism is not real, but is a twist that was meant to convert an atheist into theist.

Confusion Regarding Krishna's Behavior

Stealing Butter and Dancing with the Gopikās

Let us come to the second confusion created by Krishna's practical behavior in Bṛndāvanam. Krishna said in the Gita that greed, anger and illegitimate sex (*Kāmaḥ krodhaḥ tathā lobhaḥ*) should be avoided, since they are the main gates to hell. But what did He practice? Even though He had plenty of butter in His own house, He stole butter from others' houses, which is climax of greediness. He even killed a lady (Pūtanā), who had fed Him milk from her breast, like a mother. This shows the climax of His cruelty and anger. He danced with the married Gopikās at night, which shows the climax of His involvement in illegitimate sex. What He preached in the Gita seems to be quite opposite to His practical behavior! Assuming that He was God, He should not have done these three sinful deeds in the interest of being an example for humanity. Following His example, human beings are highly likely to imitate His behavior, leading to the rapid spread of sin in society.

This confusion regarding the practical life of Krishna can be removed by understanding the background of the Gopikās. The Gopikās were sages for several millions of births and had been searching for God. Finally, they realized that God can be found in human form itself, since He incarnates in human form in every human generation. The Human Incarnation is most convenient for interacting with humanity. The sages, in their final birth as sages, discovered that Rāma was God-

in-human-form in their generation. They were greatly attracted to the divine personality of Rāma. A devotee can worship God by loving Him as a family member or friend. Different devotees in the past have loved and worshipped God in the form of different relations. For instance, Lava and Kuśa loved God as their father. Lakṣmaṇa and Balrāma loved God as their Brother. Sītā and Rukmiṇī loved God as their Husband. Daśratha, Kausalyā, Nanda and Yaśodā loved God as their Son. The Gopikās and Meera loved Him as their illegitimate Lover. Both the Gopikās and Meera were married and had legitimate husbands and yet they loved Krishna, as their Lover. Out of all the above bonds, sage Nārada says in his Bhakti Sūtras that the bond with God as an illegitimate Lover is the strongest (*jārvatca, yathā vraja gopikānām*).

A person who has an illegitimate lover, is able to overcome the bond with the legitimate partner for the sake of the lover. It means that the bond with the illegitimate lover is stronger than all legitimate bonds. It is the strongest bond. Sage Nārada means to say that the bond of a devotee with God is the strongest when it is stronger than all the legitimate bonds. Such a devotee is able to overcome all the legitimate bonds for the sake of the bond with God, which is similar to the case of a person having an illegitimate affair. It certainly does not mean that any illegitimate bond in the world is an example of the highest devotion. The illegitimate bond is only being compared to the bond of devotion. The bond of devotion between the devotee and God is the item that is compared (*upameya*). It is compared to the illegitimate bond (*upamāna*). The similarity between the two, which is reason for comparing them, is **the strength of the bond which exceeds the strength of all legitimate bonds. All other aspects between the bond of devotion and the illegitimate bond are very different and are not to be considered.** Such a comparison is called a *nīcopamā*, which means a ‘simile with a bad example’. Another example of such a comparison is when a poet writes in praise of a king “The king’s fame is spreading in the world as fast as sin.” Sin is spreading very fast in the present Kali age. So, the statement means that the king’s fame is spreading very fast. Here, even though the comparison is bad, the common aspect of spreading fast makes the comparison perfectly suitable. Such a comparison (simile) is allowed but there is a caution: One must confine only to the common aspect in which the comparison is valid. One should not misunderstand that an exact comparison in all aspects is valid.

The behavior of Krishna involving dancing with the married Gopikās and stealing their butter can be understood on the basis of the following three points:

- (i) The Gopikās were sages in their previous births. After doing penance for millions of births, they finally found God in the form of the Rāma, the living Human Incarnation in their generation. They were highly attracted to the personality of Rāma. They wanted to become females with their miraculous powers and embrace Him as females. The sages knew that Rāma was already married. So, even if they had become females, they would have become His illegitimate lovers. In other words, the sages had wished to become Rāma's illegitimate lovers. Note that the illegitimate bond with God was chosen by the sages and not by God. Rāma told them that the purpose of His Incarnation was to preach to humanity through His own example of how an ideal human being should behave (Ādarśa Mānuṣāvātāra). Hence, it was not possible for Him to grant their wish during that Incarnation. But He told them that He would fulfill their desire in the next birth.
- (ii) Accordingly, in the next birth, Rāma incarnated in the form of Krishna and the sages were reborn as Gopikās. Krishna danced with the married Gopikās because the Gopikās, who were sages in the past births, had themselves desired for having this strongest illegitimate bond with God. Krishna did not have any such desire for illegitimate relations, which is proved by the fact that He never repeated such behavior anywhere else and with anyone else. He only had such relations with the Gopikās of Bṛndāvanam. He did not repeat it with anyone else because there were no other souls like Gopikās, who were reborn sages and had desired to be His lovers. If Krishna had been a person with a loose character, He would have returned to Bṛndāvanam to be with the Gopikas again. But He never returned. If He had been a person with a taste for having such illegitimate relations, He would have repeated the same behavior with others elsewhere, later in His life. But He never repeated such behavior. In fact, even though sixteen thousand daughters of kings loved Him, He did not choose to have illegitimate relations with them. Instead, He formally married all of them.

(iii) The three strongest worldly bonds of any soul are (a) the bond with money, (b) the bond with one's issues and (c) the bond with one's life-partner. God tests devotees by competing with these worldly bonds. If the devotee votes for God instead of these three worldly bonds, it means that the devotee's bond with God is the strongest. The above three worldly bonds are stronger than all other worldly bonds such as the bonds with relatives, friends etc. If the bond with God is stronger than the above three, there is no need to test whether it is stronger than the other worldly bonds. Butter was the hard-earned wealth of the Gopikās. When Krishna stole butter from their houses, their bond with wealth was tested. They knew that Krishna was God, since He had performed several miracles from His childhood. They had to choose between God Krishna and their wealth. Those Gopikās, who considered the bond with their wealth (butter) to be greater than their bond with God, went to Yaśodā and complained against Krishna. They failed in the test. The successful Gopikās were the few ones who were happy about His stealing. They deliberately went out of their houses leaving the doors open to allow Krishna to come in and steal their butter. The stealing of butter not only tested the Gopikās' bond with their wealth but also the bond with their children. This is because the butter stored in their houses was meant for feeding their children. Hence, the stealing of butter simultaneously tested the bonds with wealth and issues. The third strongest bond was with their life partners. It was tested by Krishna by dancing with a few of them in Bṛndāvanam secretly at night. God tested their ability to overcome these three bonds for His sake and the successful Gopikās were granted salvation. Salvation means the total liberation from all worldly bonds.

Krishna's use of violence

Shri Kishore Ram, Shri Hrushikesh and Kum. Purnima asked: Some religions, especially Jainism, criticize Krishna for using extreme violence (killing) in order to establish justice. What do You think about this?

Swami Replied: Krishna never supported unjustified violence. The case of killing Pūtanā has been mentioned above. Pūtanā was a demoness, who had been sent to kill the baby Krishna. Pretending to be a nurse, she had applied poison on her breasts and had tried to feed milk to Krishna. Of course, Krishna, being an Incarnation of God, could not

be killed by her and instead, she got killed. Krishna never favored violence. He used violence only as a last resort and that too, only against wicked and unjust people. Even to such people, He usually gave many opportunities to change and return to the path of justice. Only when they rejected all those opportunities and continued their unjust behavior, did He finally control them with violence. Such violence is not only justified but it is necessary for maintaining justice and balance in the world.

You might wonder why Krishna did not advise Pūtanā to avoid injustice as He advised Duryodhana. Pūtanā was a 100% demon and her external human form was just like an external mask hiding her true demonic nature. Demons never listen to anybody's advice due to their 100% ego. Duryodhana was also previously a demon, called Kālanemi. But he was born as a human being. Besides, in his birth as Duryodhana, he was under the training of the good teachers, Bhiṣma and Drona. So, his demonic quality was somewhat reduced. He was 75% demon and 25% human being. For such a soul, there is at least a small chance of listening to good advice, if given. Krishna personally knew that Duryodhana's inner demonic tendency (*pūrva janma saṃskāra*) was too strong and that it would not allow him to follow good advice. But if Krishna had proceeded to war without properly advising Duryodhana, the world would have blamed Krishna. People would have said that since Duryodhana was also a human being, there might have been some possibility of his listening to good advice and avoiding the war. Hence, Krishna, not only advised him personally, but He also made several sages to come and advise Duryodhana. After his death, Duryodhana did not turn to a demon like Pūtanā.

Some Jains criticize Krishna for supporting war, which is not correct. Even some Christians criticize Krishna for adopting violence to reform a soul. Krishna tried His level-best to reform Duryodhana several times through His divine advice. When the soul is not reformed inspite of hectic divine efforts to reform, even in Christianity, the condemned soul is thrown into liquid fire forever. Is that not the climax of violence? God is only one, whether the religion is Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity or any other. The actions of God are always justified because He is the best judge to decide on the specific punishment for every soul.

Thus, we see that the ignorance of the truth is the reason for our misunderstanding of Krishna's behavior. He never supported illegitimate desire, violence or greed. Instead, He always supported

justice. He was the highest embodiment of justice and He established justice in the world. When the truth is known through deep analysis, all confusions disappear and the extraordinary divine personality of Krishna is revealed.

Chapter 12

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

August 19, 2019

Shri Kishore Ram, Shri Hrushikesh and Kum. Purnima asked: Is it not necessary to introduce spiritual education in schools, at least in the present time?

Swami replied: There are two stages in spirituality, which is the subject of God: (i) *Pravṛtti* or worldly life and (ii) *Nivṛtti* or spiritual life. For worldly life (*pravṛtti*), spiritual knowledge of a basic level is sufficient. Spiritual knowledge pertaining to *pravṛtti* mainly contains the concept that the omnipotent God exists and He punishes sinners even if they succeed in escaping from the police and the courts of law. That much knowledge about God is sufficient to develop an in-built resistance towards sin in the minds of human beings. This in-built resistance to sin controls sin at its root and is far more effective than external control. External controlling agencies fail to control sin in society because the agencies are made of human beings, who themselves have become corrupt. The in-built control is based on the most fundamental concept that the omnipotent God actually exists as told in the Veda (*Astītyevopalabdhyah*).

If a female employee wants to maintain only the basic employer-employee relationship with the owner of the company, only a little knowledge about the owner and his company is sufficient. That little knowledge includes the work timings from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, the rules to be followed by employees and the fact that employees will get promoted if they follow the rules and do good work, while violators will be punished. Apart from this, knowing any personal information about the company-owner is not necessary. Similarly, every soul is an employee in this world-company and the company-owner is God. The soul-employee has no choice in choosing to join the company, because the soul is already in the world-company owned by God. Souls must follow the ethical rules and regulations given by God. Souls who follow the rules and do good deeds, will be promoted to heaven. Souls who violate the rules, will certainly be punished in hell. This much knowledge about God is enough for souls following *pravṛtti*, who form

the majority in the world. No personal knowledge about God is necessary for such souls.

But if that female employee is impressed with the company-owner and wants to marry him, the above information about the owner is not sufficient. She would want to know the complete information regarding his personality and behavior before developing a special permanent bond with the owner. Similarly, the soul who is impressed with God, wants to know the complete information about God, His divine personality and divine actions. Such a soul follows the path of *nivṛtti*, which is spiritual life. The detailed knowledge of God related to *nivṛtti* or spiritual life, is a vast subject. **Spiritual knowledge or spiritual philosophy, more properly, means this knowledge of *nivṛtti*.**

The ancient kings were very wise in promoting spiritual education in their education systems. In the early years of school, children were mainly taught basic spiritual knowledge, which formed a strong foundation for their character. As a result, the children grew up to become adults with a strong in-built self-control and a resistance to sin. The wonderful outcome was that the public would rarely commit sins and if at all they committed sins, they would not try to escape the punishment through crooked ways. The present governments of most countries have given total importance for professional education alone. There is zero place for spiritual education. Therefore, the present-day citizen is not convinced about the existence of God. He has never studied the entire logic that clearly establishes the existence of the omnipotent God. Apart from the logic which supports the existence of God, God's existence can also be known through experience. Miracles performed by God in this world can be personally experienced by people. Miracles are unimaginable events proving the existence of the unimaginable omnipotent God, who possesses unimaginable powers. It is using those unimaginable powers that He inevitably punishes sinners. So, the existence of the omnipotent God is not only declared by the scriptures like the Veda, but logic and experience also prove the same. Unfortunately, the modern citizen is unaware of the detailed analysis and experience proving the existence of God. He simply hears from others that God exists. In the absence of deep analysis and experience, it is not sufficient to make him develop a strong faith in the existence of God.

In the ancient days, due to the public's in-built resistance towards sin, there were no courts of law and no police stations. In a kingdom, there used to be only one court with four judges and the king was the executive authority of the judicial bench. Since there were no cases, the king and the judges would spend their time in the court enjoying dance performances or other exhibitions of fine arts like poetry, music and so on. Today, even though there is an uncountable number of courts and police stations, the number of cases are indeed infinite. **Many a time, the judgements of the few disposed cases are unjust. It is because crooked people use influence and corruption to tilt the judgement in their favor. The main reason is that neither the public nor the keepers of the law are afraid of committing sins. They do not fear God because they doubt whether God even exists.** Ultimately, the present governments are unable to control sin in spite of having so many different controlling agencies. The present governments think that ancient kings wasted time and money in promoting this unnecessary subject of God! But the above analysis proves that ancient kings were very wise and the present rulers do not have the slightest clue of running a country's administration smoothly by first developing in the public an in-built resistance towards sin.

In the ancient education system, in every field of education, the main subject taught was spiritual knowledge. All other subjects, including technology and other professional subjects, were ancillary subjects. **What is the use of materialistic development without ethics in society?** The lack of ethics will inevitably lead to chaos in society. Even if society reaches the climax of materialistic development, due to the social chaos, it will all be totally useless.

The minimum and maximum expectation of God from the human beings created by Him is that they should not harm and do injustice to any fellow living being. Fellow living beings include other human beings, animals, birds and even harmless insects. Plants too are living beings, but they have no awareness due to the absence of nervous system. **To be called a full-fledged living being, the being must show respiration as well as the presence of a nervous system (awareness).** Based on these two criteria, plants cannot be considered to be a full living being. Other than this minimum and maximum expectation from human beings, God has no other expectations. He never wants anybody to worship Him. All the forms of worship and the various types of

devotion were only developed by devoted human beings. God has no connection with these temples, ways of worship and devotional procedures. God is not like the politician, who spends a lot of money in getting a huge poster of himself erected and then tells the public that the poster was erected by his fans, in spite of his resistance!

Therefore, the essence God's preaching to humanity is about *pravṛtti* (worldly life) alone. The subject of *nivṛtti* developed only when devotees initiated the field of *nivṛtti* by wanting to form a special personal bond with God. It is important to remember that even if one is a climax devotee of God in *nivṛtti* (spiritual life), the person will be severely punished by God if the person fails in *pravṛtti* and commits sins. All the devoted demons like Rāvaṇa are examples of this concept. The female employee trying to marry the owner of the company should not engage in corrupt practices in the company because, when the owner comes to know about it, he will refuse her marriage proposal. The owner will doubt her character and fear that she might continue the same corruption in his house after marriage! Not only that, but the owner will also punish her by expelling her from the company. *Pravṛtti* is mandatory whereas *nivṛtti* is optional.

Chapter 13

KRISHNA'S ESSENTIAL MESSAGE

August 24, 2019 Krishnāṣṭami

Shri P.V.N.M. Sharma asked: Several preachers say that when a devotee's devotion ripens, the God who the person worshipped grants self-knowledge (*ātma jñānam*) to the devotee. This self-knowledge leads to self-realization (*ātma sākṣātkāra*) in which the devotee realizes that the soul itself is God. Can you please explain this point?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! This is a very important question. Its answer will automatically be realized once the background knowledge related to this question is clearly understood. There are some crucial points that constitute this background. The analysis of these points will reveal the essential message given by Krishna in the Gita and will also provide the answer to your question. Let us consider these points one by one.

The Essence of the Great Statements

First, you must understand the real essence of the four great statements from the Veda (*mahā vākyas*). The four statements are: "I am God (*Ahaṃ Brahmāsmi*)", "You are God (*Tat tvam asi*)", "He is God (*Ayaṃ ātmā Brahma*)" and "Excellent knowledge is God (*Prajñānam Brahma*)". The essence of the first three statements is that the God who is relevant to humanity, is the Human Incarnation of God. That Human Incarnation of God looks like me, like you and like him. The statements refer to the human body of God's Incarnation, which is similar to our own. The statements should not be mistaken to mean that a statue, which also looks like a human being, is God. So, the fourth statement clarifies this point. It eliminates the idea that an inert statue can be God. Thus, only a living human being with awareness, like me, like you and like him, can be God.

In fact, the word *prajñānam* used in the fourth statement means excellent special spiritual knowledge. It is the knowledge that gives correct guidance to the soul in *pravṛtti* (worldly life) as well as in *nivṛtti* (spiritual life). Unfortunately, this word has been misunderstood or misinterpreted to mean mere awareness. Awareness is present even in

animals and birds. But in an ordinary worldly context, do you find the word *prajñānam* used in the sense of mere awareness? Do you call an animal as the possessor of excellent spiritual knowledge (*Prajñānī ayam paśuḥ*)? The animal does not even have basic worldly knowledge. Even an ordinary human being cannot be called the possessor of excellent spiritual knowledge because we find that wise elders often refer to the human being as ignorant, foolish or similar to an animal. So, it is not correct to call every human being as the possessor of excellent spiritual knowledge. Even a scholar of spiritual knowledge is only called a *jñānī*, which means the knower of (some) spiritual knowledge. He is not called a *prajñānī*, which means the possessor of excellent spiritual knowledge.

The first three statements mean that God is like me, like you and like him, in terms of the external human form. These three statements only indicate the external similarity. This description of the external form of God as human, filters out animals and birds, and narrows down the address of God to the category of human beings. The fourth statement reveals the internal difference between God-in-human-form (Human Incarnation) and all ordinary human beings, including scholars. Just by looking at different metallic wires, you cannot distinguish between an electrified wire and all other non-electrified wires. This is because the electricity passing through the electrified wire cannot be seen by our eyes. Similarly, merely by looking at the Human Incarnation of God, we cannot identify Him to be an Incarnation of God. Thus, God-in-human-form cannot be identified using the faculty of perception. **This is because, God is unimaginable and hence, naturally invisible.** Even within creation, which is the imaginable domain, invisible items like X-rays, gamma rays and so on exist. These invisible items can still be known because they are basically imaginable. They are invisible but imaginable. So, they can be known through a combination of scientific logic and instruments. However, God is not only invisible, but also unimaginable.

When we say that a person is as brave as a lion, it is a simile (*upamā*), which indicates the similarity between the person and the lion in the aspect of braveness. If the two items compared are highly similar, we use another figure of speech called a metaphor (*rūpaka*). In a metaphor, we say that the person is a brave lion. Even though the metaphor indicates a high degree of similarity between the two items

compared, it does not mean that there is no single difference between them. Many other differences do exist between the person and the lion. The first three statements are metaphors, which indicate the high degree of similarity that exists between an ordinary person and a Human Incarnation of God. So, the statements are saying that I, you and he is God Krishna (Incarnation), in a metaphorical sense. As seen above, it does not mean that there is no difference between the ordinary human being and the Human Incarnation of God (Krishna). The metaphor is used only to indicate the extreme external similarity between God Krishna and the ordinary human being.

God's Existence is Known; Not His Nature

When you touch all metallic wires, the electrified wire alone gives a shock, by which you can infer that electricity is present in that specific wire. Similarly, you can distinguish God-in-human-form from other human forms on hearing His excellent spiritual knowledge. Since the knowledge is extraordinary, you infer that the person giving that knowledge cannot be an ordinary human being. Even though the person may appear to be like a human being externally, you infer the existence of the unimaginable God in that person. Now, you might wonder how it is possible to know God by inference, when God is unimaginable or unknowable. The answer is that we are only inferring or knowing the existence (*taṭastha lakṣaṇam*) of God. We are not getting even the slightest information about God's nature (*svarūpa lakṣhanam*), which remains completely unimaginable of God. By experiencing the shock, we infer that the wire must contain electricity. However, the shock provides absolutely no information about the nature of electricity, which is that electricity is a flow of electrons. So, 'knowing God' invariably means only knowing the existence of God. It can never mean knowing the original nature of God since God is beyond our imagination.

God is Known Through Inference and Scripture

Kālidāsa says (*Āpta vāganumānābhyām...*) that there are only two authorities for knowing the existence of God and they are inference and scripture. Let us examine both.

Inference: The second Brahma Sūtra says that the existence of the cause for this systematic and orderly universe must be inferred (*Janmādyasya yataḥ*). There is no point in seeking the cause of every

cause in an endless chain of causes, *ad infinitum*. It leads to an infinite regress (*anavasthā*), which prevents us from making any meaningful conclusion. You have to stop somewhere and identify an ultimate cause. Scientists say that inert energy itself is the cause of this world. The world has broadly three components, energy, matter and awareness. The energy itself becomes matter and awareness. So, energy is the ultimate cause of the world, as per the scientists. The only problem with the claim of the scientists is that inert energy, by itself, cannot be responsible for the systematic arrangement and functioning of the cosmos. The sophisticated and orderly structure and functioning of the cosmos clearly indicates that it must be the result of an intelligence. This means that awareness or intelligence should somehow have existed before the origin of the world. But assuming that the awareness which is found in living beings, existed before the inert energy as the ultimate cause of the world, is absurd. Awareness is a product that is produced in course of the formation of the world. Awareness is found only in living beings and it cannot exist independently in the absence of matter and energy. Awareness is produced in the nervous system, which is made of matter. It is actually a work-form of the inert energy that is derived from the food consumed by the living organism. When the inert energy enters the functioning nervous system, it gets converted to awareness. So, awareness depends on both matter and energy. Naturally, this awareness could not have existed before the origin of matter and energy. It means that it could not possibly be the cause of the world. Inert energy cannot be the cause of the world since it is unintelligent, while awareness cannot be the cause of the world since it depends on matter and energy.

This means that the awareness (intelligence) that must have existed in the beginning and which caused the energy to differentiate into the systematic and orderly world consisting of energy, matter and awareness, must be unimaginable. Being the cause of space, energy, matter and all of creation, it is impossible for any being within creation to ever imagine it. This Unimaginable Awareness Itself is known as God. This unimaginable God created the primordial energy or primordial space and then created the first form (body) out of that energy. Upon creating this first energetic form, the unimaginable God entered and permanently merged with that form to become the First Energetic Incarnation of God, called Datta (Īśvara). The unimaginable God merged with both the energetic body and the soul of Datta. The

body and soul of Datta are both imaginable. Only the God, who merged into them is unimaginable. Datta further entered into other energetic forms of certain angels in the upper world and certain material human forms on earth to become other Energetic and Human Incarnations of God. When Datta entered the human form of Krishna, the energetic body of Datta dissolved in the gross body of Krishna and the imaginable soul of Datta dissolved in the imaginable soul of Krishna. Since the unimaginable God was already present in the body and soul of Datta, the same unimaginable God also exists in the body and soul of Krishna after the entry of Datta in Him. So, we can say that the unimaginable God, through Datta, merged with Krishna both externally (body-wise) and internally (soul-wise). This concept is stated in the Veda as “*Antarbahiśca...*”. The simple conclusion is that the unimaginable God merged with the body and soul of Krishna. **The existence of the unimaginable God in Krishna is known from the inference drawn from observed unimaginable events and the extraordinary knowledge expressed by Krishna.** Unimaginable events are miracles. The biggest miracle was the cosmic vision (*Viśvarūpa*) shown by Krishna to Arjuna. Through it, Krishna proved that He was the Creator, Controller and Destroyer of the world. That miracle clearly differentiates Krishna from all other souls. No ordinary soul can perform even the smallest miracle like creating even a single atom of matter or even a ray of energy. Observing the unimaginable miracle performed by Krishna, we can infer that He is an Incarnation of the unimaginable God. Similarly, based on the excellent spiritual knowledge given by Him in the form of the Gita, we can infer that He is an Incarnation of God.

Scripture: Apart from inference, we have scripture. The experiences of numerous sages in many places and times have been expressed by them in the scripture. They experienced the existence of the unimaginable God. Their word can be taken as a supporting authority for knowing the existence of God. This is told in the third Brahma Sūtra (*Śāstra yonitvāt*).

Recognizing Excellent Spiritual Knowledge

How can we recognize that the spiritual knowledge told by Krishna alone is excellent? Your inner consciousness will identify the excellent and extraordinary knowledge and that identification will fill your mind with complete satisfaction (*Pramāṇamantaḥkaraṇa*

pravṛttayah—Kalidāsa). Your inner consciousness will express such complete satisfaction only when the spiritual knowledge heard by you is perfectly true. The Veda says that the excellent spiritual knowledge (*prajñānam*) is nothing but true knowledge (*Satyam jñānam...*). Both the excellent knowledge and the true knowledge are said to be the same God (Brahman) in the Veda. It does not mean that the knowledge itself is God. It is a figure of speech in which the possessor of the knowledge is said to be knowledge itself. When the possessor of a certain quality possesses the quality to the greatest extent, the possessor can be referred to as the quality itself. For instance, the possessor of extremely high energy (*tejasvī*) has been said to be energy (*tejah*) itself (*Tejasām hi na vayah samīksyate*). When you hear the spiritual knowledge from the Divine Preacher, who is an Incarnation of God, your inner consciousness is charged by the power of God's knowledge. It gives full satisfaction to your inner consciousness. Here, God helps you to recognize the truth. It does not mean that your inner consciousness itself is God!

How Can the Self Uplift the Self?

The Gita says that the self must uplift the self (*Uddhared Ātmānā Ātmānam*). What is meant by this statement? Is it proper to say to a drowning person that he should pull himself out of the water on his own? The drowning person is unable to save himself since he does not know how to swim. He needs the help of a swimmer to save him and pull him out of the water. Most souls are drowning in this world-ocean because they lack the knowledge of how to uplift themselves. They require the external help of somebody else to guide them in their self-upliftment. The Gita further says that the self is the friend as well as the enemy of the self (*Ātmaiva hyātmano...*). But the self is always a friend to itself because every soul wants to uplift itself; it obviously does not want to drown itself. From these seemingly contradictory statements, we conclude that the word 'self' is not only used to indicate the drowning person, but also to indicate another person, who can save the drowning person.

Why is the same word 'self' used to indicate both these persons? The same word is used because both the persons are human beings who look perfectly similar to each other, in external appearance. The only difference is that the first one cannot swim while the other one can. But

the other person's talent in swimming is invisible. There is yet another reason for using the same word 'self' to indicate both persons. The swimmer may save the drowning person and later, train him in the art of swimming. So, today's drowning person might become the swimmer of tomorrow. This is an additional similarity between the two, due to which both are called the self.

If the drowning person becomes the disciple of the swimmer, the swimmer will help the drowning person. In that case, the swimmer becomes friendly to the first person. But if the first person rejects the help of the swimmer, due to his own ego and jealousy, he will drown. In effect, the swimmer, then, helplessly becomes the first person's enemy. The drowning person's rejection of the swimmer's help is due to his ego and jealousy, which are also called the repulsion of the common medium. There is always repulsion between likes. Both the persons are externally alike because both are human beings. The human body is the common medium of both the souls. The difference between them is the swimming talent of the second person, but it is invisible. Since the difference between them cannot be perceived, the repulsion of the common medium dominates and the first person tends to reject the swimmer's help.

In this manner, only if we consider two persons—the ordinary soul and the Human Incarnation of God—does the above-mentioned verse from the Gita become meaningful. The Human Incarnation's excellent spiritual knowledge, which is capable of guiding souls in both worldly and spiritual life, is compared to the swimmer's talent in swimming. That excellent knowledge is what differentiates the Incarnation from an ordinary soul. It is an indicator of the presence of the unimaginable God in Him. In the above verse from the Gita, if we only consider one person, who is the representative of the majority of souls drowning in the world-ocean, the verse becomes meaningless. The ordinary soul simply cannot uplift himself on his own.

God, Soul and the Rest of Creation

Today is Kṛṣṇāṣṭami, which is the birthday of Krishna. On this day, who is worshipping Krishna in the best manner? The person who has understood the real essence of the Gita, is the perfect devotee and is worshipping Krishna perfectly. First, you must understand who Krishna is. Externally, Krishna looks like any other human being; like me, like

you and like him. He has all the common characteristics of human beings like birth, hunger, thirst, sleep and death. Like an ordinary person, He even died after being hit by an arrow. Then, what is special about Krishna? The specialty of Krishna is that He was that human being in whom God existed. This was told by Him in His own words in the Gita (*Mānuṣīm tanumāśritam*). He said that He is God living in a human body. Here, the word 'body' includes the awareness or the soul too. The body and soul of an individual, together constitute the medium in which God enters and merges.

As per one classification mentioned by Krishna in the Gita, there are two basic categories: (1) *Puruṣa*, which means God and (2) *prakṛti*, which means the creation created by God. A person's soul is awareness and it falls under the category of *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* or creation is subdivided into inferior creation (*aparā prakṛti*) and superior creation (*parā prakṛti*) (*Apāreyaṁitastvanyāṁ...*, *Jīvabhūtāṁ...*). Inferior creation means the entire inert creation, while superior creation is awareness or the soul. It means that awareness is not God. If you take the second way of classification given in the Gita, there are three categories (1) *prakṛti*, which means only *aparā prakṛti* or the inert creation, (2) *Puruṣa*, which means *parā prakṛti* or awareness and (3) *Puruṣottama*, which means God. Even as per this classification, the soul (awareness) is not God. As per this classification, God belongs to the third category, whereas awareness belongs to the second category. The two are clearly different.

When we say that God entered a selected body to become a Human Incarnation, the statement is based on the two-category classification of *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. God is the *Puruṣa* and the body into which He entered is *prakṛti*. The body contains inert matter and energy, which are *aparā prakṛti*. The body also contains awareness, which is *parā prakṛti*. The God, who entered the body, is unimaginable. He is neither *aparā prakṛti* nor *parā prakṛti* since both types of *prakṛti* are imaginable. **The important point to note is that awareness is treated as a part of the body itself.** We say that the Prime Minister has entered his house and he controls it. But the house does not only mean the inert building. It also includes the servants, who are non-inert. In a sense, there is no difference between the inert building and the non-inert servants because even the non-inert servants are not independent. In the absence of the Prime Minister, they do have some limited independence.

They can show their supremacy over the inert building of the house. But in the presence of the Prime Minister, they lose all their independence and have to obediently execute all his orders. Similarly, the omnipotent God enters a human being, consisting of the inert body and the non-inert awareness. When we say that God enters a human body, we actually mean that He enters a human being consisting of a body and a soul (awareness). The soul is considered to be included with the body. After God's entry, the awareness of that human being has no independence. It becomes a fully obedient servant of God, like an inert item. Therefore, it can be treated to be a part of the inert body. Before the entry of God, the same awareness was independent and it controlled the inert body.

Krishna is God

The total essence of the Gita is to understand that the Preacher of the Gita is God or Bhagavān. The Bhagavad Gita is the Divine Song of the Lord, which occurs in the great epic Mahābhāratam written by sage Vyāsa. Throughout the Mahābhāratam, Krishna is simply referred to as Krishna. But only while preaching the Gita, Krishna is not referred to as Krishna. Instead, He is referred to as Bhagavān, which means God. Vyāsa writes “*Śrī Bhagavān uvāca...*”, which means, “God said the following...”. Everywhere else in the Mahābhāratam, Vyāsa writes “*Śrī Kṛṣṇa uvāca*”, which means “Krishna said the following...”. Apart from this, we find Krishna Himself repeatedly stating in the Gita that He is God and not a human being.

So, there are three points to note in the Gita (a) Krishna's statement that He is God, who has entered a human body. (b) Krishna's repeated statements that He is God and (c) Sage Vyāsa's reference to Krishna as God throughout the Gita since he wrote “God said...”, instead of “Krishna said...”. What is the real essence of the Gita that can be understood from these three points? It is that Krishna is God. This point has been stressed repeatedly. Why is it necessary to stress upon the fact that Krishna is God? It is necessary to stress this point since it is very easy to mistake Him to be a human being. Krishna looked like an ordinary human being externally. There was a high possibility of Arjuna thinking that Krishna was an ordinary human being. Krishna was preaching the Gita to Arjuna, who represents an ordinary human being. Why is there a high possibility of mistaking the Human Incarnation (Krishna) to be just a human being? The reason is the strong repulsion

of the common medium. Both the ordinary person and the Human Incarnation possess a common human form. It leads to jealousy in the mind of the ordinary person towards the Incarnation. The jealousy is based on the person's selfish ego. Due to this strong repulsion, there is a high possibility that the ordinary person will not accept the Incarnation as God. He will treat the Incarnation as only an ordinary person and even insult Him. Even if a person realizes that the Incarnation is God for some time, the strong repulsion will cause the person to again doubt it and treat the Incarnation as an ordinary person. To avoid this from occurring, it was repeatedly emphasized in the Gita that Krishna is that ultimate, unimaginable and omnipotent God. The repulsion of the common medium masks the realization of the truth in every human being. So, the listener has been repeatedly reminded of the truth from various angles.

The single line from the Gita "*Mānuṣīṃ tanumāśritam*" is the life and the real essence of the entire Gita. Through this line Krishna says that He is God who is present in human form. This line is so important because Human Incarnation alone is the ultimate goal of all humanity. The goal is seeing, discussing with, and serving the Human Incarnation of God with full faith. If this is realized, the entire Gita is understood. Getting this realization is the best worship of Krishna today.

But if you limit this concept only to Krishna, saying that Krishna alone is God, it is not a complete understanding. Such a belief exists among the followers of ISKCON. We must recall that Krishna Himself said in the Gita that He would descend as a Human Incarnation again and again, whenever there is a need (*Yadā yadā hi... tadātmānaṃ śṛjāmyaham*). If you say that Krishna alone is God, what about the past Incarnations like Vāmana, Rāma, Buddha and others? Were they not God? Also, what about the future Incarnation, Kalki? It must be accepted that God will descend repeatedly to uplift humanity in the form of many Human Incarnations other than Krishna. One must recognize other Human Incarnations like Śrīpādavallabha, Shri Narasimha Sarasvati, Shri Māṇikyā Prabhu, Shri Akkalkot Mahāraj, Shri Sai Baba, Shri Satya Sai Baba and so on. One must also accept Human Incarnations like Jesus, Mohammad and others, who descended for the sake of uplifting human beings outside India. God created this entire earth and not merely India. So, He equally uplifts all people in all places.

Universal Spirituality

Krishna declared in the Gita that the same unimaginable God exists as the single Actor in different roles (*Avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu—Gita*). The external medium alone changes and not the God who is common to all Human Incarnations. This concept establishes Universal Spirituality. It establishes that all world religions were given by God because the entire world is created and ruled by the single unimaginable God. He is called by different names such as Parabrahman, Jehovah, Allah and so on. All religions finally lead to the same God. The religions are like rivers flowing in straight or curved paths to finally merge into the same ocean. There is no need to convert to a different religion. Imagine that all houses are arranged in a circular fashion around the city center. There is a road from each house to directly reach the center. There is no point in moving tangentially from one house to the other. Each person must move radially inwards from his or her own house towards the center. One must follow the religion in which one is born until one dies and the soul unites with the unimaginable God.

If you follow your religion without any hatred towards other religions, it is sufficient. Be assured that all religions lead to the same ultimate unimaginable God. There is absolutely no need to change your religion. You can treat the fathers of your friends to be equal to your father and respect them as you respect your father. But you need not reject your father and call the father of your friend as your father! **If you change your religion, you will adopt the external culture of the other religion too. Then, your kith and kin will revolt against that new external culture adopted by you since they are accustomed to their specific culture for a long time.** Such resistance from your kith and kin will lead to your isolation. You will then feel insecure and fearful (*Paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ—Gita*). Instead, you can follow the culture of your own religion. You can worship the same unimaginable God existing in the form accepted by your religion. Your worship can follow the external culture of your own religion. If you do this and finally die, you will get salvation (*Svadharme nidhanam śreyah—Gita*).

It is sufficient if you do not criticize the unimaginable God existing in a different form and following a different culture. You must realize that the same unimaginable God exists in the various divine forms which follow the specific cultures of different religions. If you have criticized Krishna, you have also criticized Jesus, Mohammad and

all other Incarnations, simultaneously. Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad and so on, might differ in their external physical forms and in their external way of dressing, but the unimaginable and omnipotent ultimate God present in them is one and the same. The same Divine Actor has appeared in all those different roles wearing different costumes. He has made His face appear different in each role, as if by plastic surgery. By criticizing the Incarnation belonging to another religion, you are criticizing your own God, who is acting in a different role. Universal Spirituality removes your hatred for other religions. You need not fear that by removing the hatred, your inherent love for your own religion will be affected in any way (*Pūrvaiḥ Pūrvataraiḥ kṛtam—Gita*).

Chapter 14

MAHASATSANGA ON KRISHNASTAMI – PART I

August 25, 2019

This is the first part of the two-part discourse given by Swami to several devotees who visited Him on the auspicious occasion of Krishnāṣṭami. This part (Part I) is meant for all devotees, while the Part-II is highly technical and is meant for scholars. Among the devotees who visited Swami, was Dr. J. Prasad, Professor of Sanskrit at the Central University, Hyderabad, who specializes in logic or Tarka Śāstra. Also present, were Kum. Meenakshi, Shri Kishore Ram, Shri Hrushikesh, Kum. Purnima and others. The devotees posed several questions to Swami, which He answered in detail.

1) Why are miracles shown only to certain blessed devotees and not to others?

Miracles are shown to some great blessed devotees for inspiring them for God's work. What about others, who are also willing to do God's work?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! A doctor adopts different treatment methods to cure different patients depending on the specific needs of each patient. He might give oral tablets to a patient who can digest the medicine. He might give an injection to another patient who has a weak digestive system, so that the medicine directly enters his bloodstream. The reason for second patient's poor digestion might be that he had already been given oral antibiotics, which caused hyperacidity. The first patient should not misunderstand the doctor of being partial to the second patient since the injection given to the second patient will cure his disease faster. The treatment method depends on various aspects of the patient's condition. God is also called the doctor for curing the disease of worldly fascination (*Bhavaroga Vaidya*). **The patient cannot be the judge of which treatment is to be adopted by the doctor.** The doctor alone is the best judge of which treatment should be given to which patient.

Jesus told the doubting Thomas that those who believed in God without witnessing any miracles are far more blessed than those who believe in God after witnessing the miraculous power of God. After crucifixion, Jesus reappeared before His disciples and Thomas doubted the Jesus who stood before him. Jesus showed him the wounds on His

hands caused by the nails during the crucifixion and told him the above statement.

Miracles are meant for the devotees who are in the lowest state of theism as well as for atheists. Devotees believe in God. But they feel uncomfortable in believing that a specific human being is God. Actually, the same God, in whom they believe, has come as that Human Incarnation. These devotees are in a mixed state of belief and doubt. They require the Human Incarnation of God to exhibit a miracle before believing in Him. Miraculous powers are certainly used by God to help real devotees overcome their worldly problems, if He has the hope that they will progress spiritually after getting relief from their worldly stress. But this hope should come from the side of God and not from the side of devotee. God alone knows the past, present and future of any soul (*Tānyaham veda sarvāṇi...*—Gita). But there is one objection to miracles. Even a demon can perform a miracle because he might have obtained that power from God through long and severe penance. Even certain devilish people get some miraculous powers by worshiping ghosts. Hence, performing miracles cannot be the sole identity-mark of a Human Incarnation. Moreover, miracles can lead devotees on the wrong path. The miracles increase their selfishness and fascination towards the world because many miracles are done by the Incarnation in response to devotees' ardent prayers to solve their worldly problems. Devotees, thus, use the Incarnation's miraculous powers for solving their worldly problems, which increases their selfishness and attachment to the world. **When one problem is solved, a hundred other problems flare up.** It is just like the fire, which is not quenched by pouring ghee (clarified butter) in it, but instead flares up even more. So, miracles have harmful side-effects. The unique identity-mark of the Incarnation is true and excellent spiritual knowledge (*Prajñānam Brahma*—Veda, *Jānītvātmaiva*—Gita). No one other than the Human Incarnation of God possesses it. Besides, it does not have harmful side-effects like miracles. Apart from identifying the Human Incarnation, the true and excellent spiritual knowledge has beneficial side-effects. It leads to the spiritual progress of the devotees. It gives the right direction to devotees, decreasing their selfishness and fascination for worldly bonds. It also simultaneously increases their attraction towards God.

Krishna showed the miracle of the cosmic vision to Arjuna because Arjuna was in doubt whether Krishna was actually God. Arjuna

clearly expressed his doubt to Krishna in the Gita (*Kathametat vijānīyām*—Gita). Arjuna, by himself, was highly devoted to Krishna. He was the reborn sage Nara and Krishna was the reborn sage Narāyaṇa, who was a Human Incarnation of God. But Arjuna doubted the divinity of Krishna in that birth because he was playing the role of an ordinary human devotee, who believes in God, but disbelieves in the human form of God due to the repulsion between common media. Hence, we have to say that the level of Arjuna's devotion in the Gita was very low. When the patient is in such a low state, injecting him with the medicine of the biggest miracle such as the cosmic vision becomes inevitable.

Let us take the case of Rādhā. She was in the highest state of devotion since she had sacrificed all her worldly bonds for the sake Krishna. Suppose, the same Rādhā blames Krishna by saying “You have shown such a big miracle to the great deserving Arjuna. You never showed such a miracle to me. Perhaps, I am undeserving”. How can we understand this situation? We will be forced to conclude that even though Rādhā is in the highest state of devotion, the poor Rādhā is affected by the divine *māyā* of Krishna. That is why she is speaking like this due to meaningless jealousy towards Arjuna!

The devotees who have not seen Krishna's miracle of the cosmic vision, can ask Arjuna about his experience of the miracle. They can believe that the miracle really happened because Arjuna is a truthful fellow-devotee. Gaining knowledge in this manner from close well-wishers is considered to be an authority of knowledge (*śabda pramāṇam*). **Is it necessary that you should see everything with your own eyes and only then believe?** Suppose your father has travelled to Mumbai city and he tells you all the interesting things about the city, do you not believe him? Do you say to him “I will not believe you unless I see everything with my eyes”. Do you not have even the least faith in your own father? If you cannot believe him, you are just like the mad atheist!

The true spiritual knowledge is indeed far far greater than miraculous powers. Several devotees were greatly attracted to the *satsaṅga* of Shri Paramahansa. One day, He was crossing the river Ganges by boat for which he paid just two rupees to the boatman. At the same time, a saint, who had acquired miraculous powers from God, crossed the river by walking over the water. After both had crossed the river, the saint proudly told Paramahansa that he had spent thirty years

to attain that miraculous power. Shri Paramahansa calmly replied that the value of the saint's thirty-year penance was just two rupees! In contrast with this saint, Śaṅkara, due to His excellent spiritual knowledge, became famous as the World Preacher (*Jagadguru*) in thirty-two years!

Jesus said that one should not test the omniscient and omnipotent God by asking Him to show a miracle as a proof of His divinity. The poor fellow who asks God to prove Himself through miracles, is ignorant. He is an innocent and emotional person, who does not know that miracles are not the real proof of the divinity of God because even demons and evil people who are experts at black magic, can perform miracles. **One should test the spiritual knowledge of the preacher to identify whether or not he is God.** Shirdi Sai said that you should not test the preacher by asking questions whose answers are well-known to you. Instead, you should ask your genuine doubts in the spiritual knowledge after offering your salutations to the preacher, in full surrender, and after doing some sacrificial service to the preacher.

You cannot rely only on miracles for the identification of God since they can also be experienced elsewhere from undivine persons. This is called *ativyāpti*. *Ativyāpti* is the defect or error in knowing something because the cause or the indicator (*hetu*) is also found in some other unintended result (*sādhya*). For example: Horns are taken as the cause of the identification of a cow (result). But horns are also present in a buffalo. Similarly, if miracles are taken as the cause of the identification of divinity (result), the same cause also exists in the case of a demon, which is another result. In fact, even though Rāma did not perform any miracle, the sages recognized Rāma as God. This is an example of *avyāpti*. *Avyāpti* is the error in knowing something when the stated cause or indicator is not found in the anticipated result. Miracles, which were assumed to be the cause of the identification of God, were not found in Rāma, even though He was an Incarnation of God. Another example of *avyāpti* is as follows: Saying that a white-colored skin is the identifying characteristic (cause) of a cow (result) is an *avyāpti*. This is because, we know that there are cows with red and black colours also. The white color is not necessary for the animal to be a cow.

For accurate identification or authoritative knowledge (*pramāṇam*), one must carefully analyze and ensure that the identification is free from the errors of both '*avyāpti*' and '*ativyāpti*'. In

the case of miracles as an indicator of divinity, *ativyāpti* occurs because divinity can be absent, even though miracles are exhibited. Similarly, *avyāpti* also occurs because divinity can exist, even though no miracle is exhibited. The correct indicator (cause) for identifying the Indian cow is the prominent loosely-hanging skin below the throat, called the dewlap. A prominent dewlap is found in all Indian cows without exception and so, there is no defect of *avyāpti*. Also, no other animal has such a prominent dewlap like the Indian cow. So, there is no defect of *ativyāpti*. Thus, the Indian cow (*gotvam jātiḥ*) can be faultlessly identified by the presence of a prominent dewlap.

Can we say that the unimaginable nature is the correct inherent characteristic by which we can unmistakably identify God? If you say so, the question comes as to how the visible-imaginable Krishna could exhibit God's unimaginable nature. This objection can be resolved by saying that the unimaginable God merged with Krishna and showed the unimaginable nature. Krishna, the visible-imaginable human being-component in the Incarnation, did not exhibit the unimaginable nature. If the unimaginable nature were inherent in all human beings who are visible and imaginable, all human beings would have exhibited it. But it is not so. In the case of Krishna, we say that the unimaginable God merged with Krishna with perfect homogeneity. So, there is perfect monism between the unimaginable God and Krishna. Some may argue that since the unimaginable God is capable of even separating from the selected human being, a perfect monism cannot be accepted. Our response to this argument is that whether to have perfect monism with the selected human being or not, completely depends on the will of God. In some Human Incarnations like Krishna and some Energetic Incarnations like Datta, the monism is perfect and the unimaginable God never separates from the medium in which He has merged. In other Human or Energetic Incarnations, the merging of God with the medium might have perfect monism as far as the limits of our understanding are concerned. But beyond the limits of our imagination, some dualism may exist between God and those media. Since that dualism is beyond our imagination, from our point of view, the monism between God and the medium is perfect in the case of all Incarnations. If God never separates from the medium in a certain Incarnation, there is certainly perfect monism. But even if God separates from the medium in a particular Incarnation, there is still monism from our point of view since that

dualism is beyond the limits of our imagination. This should be our conclusion about the analysis of a Human Incarnation. The Incarnation cannot even be said to be like a eutectic alloy of two metals. The eutectic alloy, after all, remains only as a homogenous mixture of two components at the molecular level. It never becomes a single item with perfect monism. Depending on the will of God, a Human Incarnation may be like a mixture (eutectic alloy) or like a single item with perfect monism.

Miracles can sometimes even bring blame to God. Krishna gave life to the son of sage Sāndipani whereas He did not give life to His own nephew, Abhimanyu, who got killed in the war. Subhadrā misunderstood her brother Krishna and blamed Him for not bringing her son, Abhimanyu, back to life, even though Krishna was capable of doing so. Krishna told her that the original unimaginable God present in Him in a merged state, was not willing to do that miracle. He said that He was only a puppet in the hands of the absolute unimaginable God. The actual hidden reason for not bringing Abhimanyu back to life was that Abhimanyu was an incarnation of a demon. So, in His mind, Krishna was actually very happy about the death of Abhimanyu. The omniscient God has a million angles to analyze in a situation, before deciding to perform a miracle or not. We can analyze any situation only from two or three angles, at the maximum. We can never understand the final decision of God and we often misunderstand Him.

2) Should devotees approach a doctor for the cure of their illnesses?

You have said that one should approach a doctor for the treatment of one's illness because medical science is also given to humanity by God alone. God alone has created all medicines. Hence, according to You, taking the medicines prescribed by a doctor is not undivine. Can You please explain this elaborately?

Swami replied: Scripture says that science is given to humanity by God alone (*Vijñānametat sarvaṃ Janārdanāt*—Viṣṇu Sahasranāma Stotram). The Veda also says that God caused medicinal plants to grow from the earth (*Pr̥thivyā oṣadhayaḥ*). What is undivine in this? I have come across some hypocritical devotees saying that they are not taking any medicine for their headache since God will cure them. By such behavior, these hypocrites want to distinguish themselves from ordinary people so that the public will treat them as someone special and respect them. This is not true devotion. It is a cheap method of drawing the innocent public's attention towards them! Scripture says that your sin

will trouble you in the form of illness and that to cure it, you should first use medicine, then worship the planets and finally worship God. (*Pūrvajanma kṛtaṃ pāpaṃ, vyādhirūpeṇa bādhatē, Tat śāntiḥ auṣadhaiḥ dānaiḥ, Japahoma surārcanaiḥ*). These three are sequential steps that one should follow to cure illnesses.

The first step is taking some medicine from a doctor. You must have faith in that doctor in order for the medicine to work properly. So, while taking the medicine, the devoted patient says that the doctor is God and that the medicine is the holy water of the Ganges (*Śarīre jarjarībhūte, vyādhigrasta kalebare, auṣadham jāhnavītoyam, Vaidyo Nārāyaṇo Hariḥ*). Such a devotee has so much real love and faith in God that God will charge that doctor so that he will give the correct medicine to the devotee. The medicine too, will work effectively by the will of God. Is all this not a part of devotion to God?

Similarly, in the second step, when you show your horoscope to an astrologer, the astrologer will be charged by God to calculate the chart correctly, make the correct prediction and suggest the correct remedies, which are capable of removing the problem. Astrological remedies involve the worship of the planets (planet-deities). The planets are only the executive powers of God and they assist God in implementing the constitution written by God in order to govern souls. The power is not different from the possessor of the power. When you worship the power, you are, in effect, worshipping its possessor of the power. If you wish to honor a poet with a garland, do you offer one garland to the poet and another separate garland for his poetic talent?

The planet is characterized by its unimaginable power, using which, it catches the sinner at correct place and at the correct time to deliver the punishment. Planets also similarly give the appropriate benefits to souls. These benefits are the good fruits of meritorious actions done by good persons. The Sanskrit word for planet is 'graha', which means, 'that which catches' (*Gṛhṇāti iti grahaḥ*). It means that the planet catches the soul, wherever it may be, at the exact time to deliver the good and bad fruits of the soul's deeds. Hence, the planet is not different from God. The unimaginable power of God itself is reflected through the planet in executing the delivery of the fruits of the soul's deeds. The planet is like the lens which refracts the light of the sun. The sun is compared to God and its light is compared to God's unimaginable power. Astrology is called Jyotiḥ Śāstra. *Jyotiḥ* means

light and it refers to the radiant planets. So, astrology or Jyotiḥ Śāstra is the science or knowledge of radiant planets. But spiritual knowledge, which is the knowledge of God, is the root Jyotiḥ Śāstra. This is because, God is called the Paraṃ Jyotiḥ or the ultimate Radiant One. It means that God is the original Light that illumines the nine lights or planets. So, if the problem is not solved by worshipping the planets, then as the last resort, one should worship God to get rid of the problem which is the punishment of one's sin. This is the third step in curing your illness or solving your problems.

If God is willing to help you, you will be cured in the first stage itself. This first stage of curing the illness through medical treatment is the arrangement made by God for the benefit of all souls including atheists. The devotee who wants to establish his separate identity, rejects this first stage of medical treatment and proceeds to the next step to prove that he is a high-level devotee. A devotee arranged the speech of a scholar in his house and invited many devotees to attend the speech. At the entrance of the house, the host placed a large bucket of water so that the devotees could wash their feet before entering the house. All the devotees used that water to wash their feet before entering. When the egotistic scholar arrived, he did not use the water that others were using, to wash his feet. He waited outside, expecting the host to bring water in a separate vessel, especially for him. He did this to distinguish himself from the other devotees! Is he not an egotistic fool? All the water, no matter in which container it is brought, belongs to the host. The entire arrangement for washing the feet of devotees was made by the same host. The case of the hypocritical devotee who rejects medicine and wants God to specially use His miraculous power to cure his headache, is similar to the above egotistic scholar!

3) What are the similarities and differences between *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*?

Swami replied: The basic similarity between the two is that both are based on the existence of the omnipotent God having unimaginable power. The difference is that *pravṛtti* is a subject developed by God, which souls must compulsorily follow, whereas *nivṛtti* is a subject developed by devotees, who want to establish a special personal bond with God. In *nivṛtti*, the worship of God must be devoid of the aspiration for any fruit in return from Him. In *pravṛtti*, the soul can aspire for beneficial fruits from God, provided the soul always votes for justice

against injustice. Even in *pravṛtti*, the aspiration for the fruit is unnecessary because, for meritorious deeds done without committing any sin, God certainly grants heaven as the fruit, both here as well as hereafter.

In *nivṛtti*, one has to vote for God—against both justice and injustice. It means, one must choose God over one's legitimate worldly bonds and certainly above illegitimate worldly bonds. Actually, there is no question of leaving one's illegitimate worldly bonds for the sake of God in *nivṛtti*. This is because, in the previous step of *pravṛtti*, the illegitimate worldly bonds have already been left for the sake of legitimate worldly bonds. *Pravṛtti* is the first step and *nivṛtti* is the second step. It means that there is no *nivṛtti* without first following the *pravṛtti*. Rāvaṇa is a very great example of *nivṛtti*, but he always violated *pravṛtti*. As a result of his demonic violation of *pravṛtti*, he was severely punished by God. Since he had not succeeded in *pravṛtti*, he was not even eligible to enter *nivṛtti*. A corrupt female employee trying to marry the employer will be rejected by the employer. Not only will he reject her marriage proposal but he will also expel her from her job.

Once you come out of your worship-room, what exists in the rest of your house and in the outside world is *pravṛtti*. The word *karma* (*karma yoga*) means the service done to God. *Karma* is confined to your worship-room and to your Satguru, who is the contemporary Human Incarnation of God. If you want Me to speak the bitter truth, your Satguru Himself is the real worship-room. If you bring the word *karma* outside, into the world full of ordinary souls, the word *karma* loses its color. Doing service without aspiring for any fruit in return, applies only in *nivṛtti*. In *pravṛtti*, you have to do service, aspiring for the fruit in return for the sake of the welfare of you and your legitimate family members. If you extend the policy of *nivṛtti* to *pravṛtti*, your clever employer will make you a scapegoat! If you refuse to take a salary for your work, and if your employer too is a follower of *pravṛtti*, he will preach the truth to you and insist that you take your salary. But in this Kali age, it is more likely that the employer will misuse the innocence of the employee. Similarly, the employee also pretends to be innocent only in order to get close to the employer and steal from the employer, ten times more money than his rightful salary!

In both *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, you should not be constantly worried about the fruit of your work. Such worry will cause mental tension

which will waste your energy. You will fail in your work and the expected fruit will not be achieved. This can be well-understood from the First Law of Thermodynamics, which states that the energy supplied to a system (Q) gets partly spent in raising the internal energy of the system (E) and only the remaining part gets converted to useful work (W). The law is expressed in the form of the following equation:

$$Q = E + W$$

Where Q is the total energy supplied to the system, E is the rise in the internal energy and W is the work done by the system.

Applying the above law to the present context, the total energy of your body-system is partly spent in worrying and mental tension, which is like the rise in internal energy and only the remaining part can be converted to useful work. The fruit obtained is proportional only to the work done. So, by avoiding the wastage of energy in unnecessary worry and tension, one can increase one's work output.

In *nivṛtti*, this problem should not exist because the devotee's attention is not on the fruit. He is not working for achieving the fruit for himself. He has already sacrificed the fruit to God. Yet, a true devotee too, experiences tension while he works to achieve the fruit for the sake of God. An example is Hanumān, who underwent a lot of tension while he was searching for Sītā for the sake of God Rāma. Even in this case of *nivṛtti*, the same law must be applied. One must avoid worry in order to maximize the work output and achieve the fruit. Achieving the fruit is very important. Unless one first achieves the fruit, how can one sacrifice it to anybody, including God? It was based on this law that Krishna said in the Gita that one should confine oneself to one's work alone and not worry about the fruit (*Karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe, mā phaleṣu kadācana*). Hence, one must have the talent of distinguishing between *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* as well as identifying commonality between the two. Krishna says that ignorant souls cannot do this (*Pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca, janāna vidurāsurāḥ*—Gita).

4) How should one save and spend money in the world?

Purely in the context of *pravṛtti*, what is the best policy that one should adopt while saving and spending one's earned money in the world?

Swami replied: There are two extreme ways regarding the expenditure of one's earned money:

- a) **Extreme misers** are persons who neither spend their money on essential needs nor on unnecessary things. Such people even misinterpret basic necessities as unnecessary things.
- b) **Extreme spendthrifts** are people who spend not only on essential needs, but also on unnecessary things. They misinterpret the unnecessary things as essential needs.

Both these above-mentioned types of people are wrong due to their extreme concepts. The golden middle path of Aristotle, lies in identifying essential needs correctly and distinguishing them from unnecessary things. People who follow this middle path spend on their essential needs and avoid spending on unnecessary things.

If extreme spendthrifts ask for your help in their old age, do not help them. If they had saved their earned money by controlling unnecessary expenditure throughout their lives, today, they would not have had to beg from others to meet their needs. Such people should be punished for their past ignorance. **Money is given to you by God so that you can spend it to meet your present essential needs and save the rest for your future needs in your old age. You are expected to control unnecessary expenditure in the present.** All this advice is confined to *pravṛtti* or worldly life.

In *nivṛtti*, the sacrifice of money for God's work is said to be the only path for salvation by the Veda (*Dhanena tyāgena ekena amṛtattvamānaṣuḥ*). The Gita says that the sacrifice of one's hard-earned money is the best way to get salvation. The sacrifice of money for the sake of any loved one is the practical proof of your theoretical love for the person; be that person your worldly relative or God. Theoretical love is also necessary since it is the theory that generates practice.

5) Is it not justified to convert to another religion if one's own religion has many defects?

People convert to another religion because they cannot tolerate the defects and blind traditions in their own religion. These defects that have existed in their religion for a very long time make it very difficult to follow the religion. So, they prefer to convert to another religion that does not have such defects.

Swami replied: You see many uneven edges and surfaces on the hill that is close to you. But the hill that is far away seems to be smooth and even. The reality is that you will see a lot of unevenness on the

surface of every hill, if you get close enough to it. In every religion, you always find three types of concepts:

- a) The original excellent concepts established by the Human Incarnations of God born in that religion.
- b) The good concepts introduced by good people in support of the above excellent concepts.
- c) The misunderstood and misinterpreted concepts introduced by bad people.

Every religion has excellent Human Incarnations of God, very good followers of the Human Incarnations and bad people who twist the original concepts. Hence, all religions are one and the same in their composition, as stated above. In this Kali age, the proportion of good and bad followers everywhere is also a constant 10:90. If you only consider the concepts of the Human Incarnations and the supporting concepts of good followers in all religions, you will find that all religions have high uniformity. After all, all religions believe in the existence of the omniscient and omnipotent God, who punishes sinners even if they manage to escape the law of the land. This much commonality in the concepts preached by different religions is sufficient to establish a peaceful society all over the world. As far as this common concept is concerned, there need not be any contradiction between world religions. This commonality is the basis for establishing Universal Spirituality and Universal Religion. Therefore, there is no need whatsoever for converting to another religion. You can follow your own religion till the end of your life to get the grace of the same unimaginable God. It is this same God who is worshipped in various specific forms in the various world religions. Let us accept the defects in our own religion with full frankness and full courage. Let us try to rectify our mistakes with all boldness. Let us not try to bury our defects and become a bad example for other religions. Let us stand as an example for every religion by openly admitting our blind traditions and making sincere efforts to rectify those blind traditions.

When we follow our religion and its ancient culture, it does not mean that we blindly support our blind traditions, even if they are proved wrong by impartial logical analysis. Previously, one religion might have been the straight path to God and another religion might have been a curved path to reach the same God. The reason for this is the specific psychologies of the different sets of people living in two

different regions. In olden days, people in each region had a uniform psychology. So, one religion was given to one set of people living in a certain region, while a different religion was given to another set of people living in another region as per their different psychologies. But today, all types of people exist in every region. Hence, every religion has both good and bad followers. God is the common goal for all religions. Different religions are placed around the same common center, God. In whichever religion the followers stand, there is one straight path to the common goal at the center (God) for the good people. Similarly, there is also a curved path to the same center for the bad people in each religion. The curved path is superimposed on the straight path. The good people of every religion travel along the straight path towards the center and the bad people of every religion travel along the superimposed curved path.

Hence, you cannot say that one religion is the short and straight path to reach God whereas other religion is a long and curved path to Him. You cannot use such logic to support conversions. In every religion, at the topmost level of God, there is not even a trace of any defect. For example, in Hinduism, God has said in the Gita that a person's caste is based on the person's qualities and deeds, and not on the family in which the person was born. God Rāma refused to grant salvation to the sages after their death, even though they too, like Rāma, belonged to the upper castes. In fact, Rāma even killed Rāvaṇa, who was born in the caste of sages due to his wicked deeds. When sages praised Rāma as God, He did not accept it. Instead, He denied it saying that He was only a human being, called Rāma, the son of Daśaratha (*Atmānaṃ mānuṣaṃ...*). The same Rāma granted salvation to the old lady, Śabarī, who belong to a scheduled caste, even while she was alive! The sages aspired for some fruit in return for their worship to Rāma, whereas, Śabarī did not aspire for any fruit in return. She lovingly served Rāma by offering Him wild fruits, which she tasted to ensure that they were sweet! Do you find any consideration of caste by God in Hinduism?

Chapter 15

MAHASATSANGA ON KRISHNASTAMI – PART II

August 26, 2019

This is the second part of the two-part discourse given by Swami to several devotees who visited Him on the auspicious occasion of Krishnāṣṭami. This part is meant for those interested in logical analysis, especially for Prof. J. Prasad, who was among the devotees, who visited Swami.

1) How can God be unimaginable when He can be known through scripture, inference and experience?

When God is known from inference and scripture, God cannot be said to be unknowable or unimaginable. It is also said that God is known by experience alone (*Anubhvaikavedyam Brahma*). Experience is possible only in the case of known or knowable items. In view of this, how can we say that God is unimaginable?

Swami replied: You have referred to ‘knowing’ God through inference, scripture or experience. But such ‘knowledge’ of God is only confined to knowing the existence of God. It does not mean knowing the nature of God. We experience the shock given by an electrified wire. With the shock, we have only experienced the existence of electricity and not the nature of electricity. Electricity is a stream of flowing electrons, which we have not experienced. From the shock that we experienced, we can infer that electricity must exist in the wire. We have not inferred the nature of the electricity. The testimony or ‘word’ of reliable persons, in the form of a written book also stands as an authority for knowing the existence of electricity. In the book, those reliable persons state that they too have inferred the existence of electricity by experiencing the shock. Again, they too have not experienced the nature of electricity. In this example, electricity stands for God and the shock is the miraculous knowledge which is experienced. Thus, scripture only expresses whatever can be known through inference. So, in the context of knowing God, there is no difference in the two authorities namely, scripture and inference.

The Veda, which is the most ancient and most well-preserved scripture, says that only the existence of God can be experienced through inference (*Astītyeva upalabdavyah*). It further says that the

one who says that he knows God, does not know anything about God while the one who says that he is unable to know anything about God except His existence, is the knower of God. The latter, at least, has that much correct information about God, that nothing other than His existence can be known (*Yasyāmatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda sah*). The Veda also says that we must remember that God is always unknown and unknowable and that we must forget the idea that God is known or knowable (*Avijñātam...*). There are several Vedic statements which say that God is beyond words, beyond the mind, beyond intelligence and beyond logic. In short, we can conclude that God is unimaginable (*Yato vāco..., Yo buddheḥ..., Naiṣā tarkeṇa..., Na medhayā..., Aśabdaṃ..., Atarkyaḥ...*). He is said to be smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest simultaneously, which means that He is beyond the concept of volume or space (*Aṅoraṇīyān...—Veda*). He is the generator of space and hence, He is beyond space since space cannot exist in its generator before its generation. Any entity which is beyond space, must be unimaginable since we cannot even imagine such an entity. All these scriptural statements make it very clear that getting any knowledge of His nature is impossible and that it is only possible to get the knowledge of His existence.

Let us consider the example of inferring the existence of the unseen fire on the mountain upon seeing smoke. Observe the following five statements:

1. There must be fire on this mountain (*Agnimānayaṃ parvataḥ*). This statement is the final inference, which depends on the following statements.
2. The reason is that I can see smoke rising from the mountain (*Dhūmatvāt*). This is the observation of smoke, which is the effect.
3. Wherever one sees smoke, there must be fire. This statement is a generalization (*Yatra yatra dhumah tatra tatra vahniḥ iti vyāptiḥ*).
4. I have observed the link between smoke and fire in the kitchen (*Yathā mahānase*). The above generalization is based on this observation. Here, both the cause (fire) and the effect (smoke) are observed together.

5. Fog looks like smoke but is not caused by fire. This is a case where the generalization given by Statement 3 fails (*Bāṣpāmbudhūme avyāptih*).

This example of inferring the existence of fire upon observing smoke is being compared to inferring God upon observing a miracle. In an inference, the unseen cause is inferred upon observing the effect (*Liṅga parāmarśo anumānam*). Here, it is important to note that, as per the fourth statement, it was possible to perceive fire, which is the cause. But in the case of God, it is impossible to perceive Him. When we perceive a miracle, which is an unimaginable event, we infer the existence of its unimaginable Cause (God). Here too, only the existence of the unimaginable Cause is known and not the nature of the Cause. If you say that the knowledge of the existence of the unimaginable nature itself is the knowledge of the nature of the unimaginable Cause, it is meaningless. Nothing of the nature of that Cause is even imagined by you since it is unimaginable. The existence of the cause of an unimaginable action can be inferred. But the nature of that Cause must also be unimaginable. An imaginable event is caused by an imaginable cause whereas an unimaginable event must be caused by an unimaginable Cause alone. Thus, analyzing the inference-authority from various angles, we conclude that only the existence of the unimaginable God can be known and not His nature.

Opponent: You mentioned above that an unimaginable source is inferred to be the cause of an unimaginable effect while an imaginable source is inferred to be the cause of an imaginable effect. The world we see around us is knowable or, at least, imaginable. Based on the above logic, the cause or creator of this imaginable world (effect) must be an imaginable item. In other words, God must be imaginable.

Swami: If your logic is to be accepted, the imaginable soul should be able to create at least an imaginable atom, if not the whole imaginable world. The imaginable pot-maker does produce the imaginable pot, but he creates it using the already-existing clay material and the rotating potter's wheel, which is a tool. God-in-human form can miraculously create the same imaginable pot without either the clay or the wheel! This is the difference between an ordinary soul and the Human Incarnation of God.

The Incarnation's creation of the pot is unimaginable and the God present in the Incarnation is also unimaginable. The imaginable human form in the Incarnation is not the creator of the pot, which is created in this unimaginable way. A human being, whether it is an ordinary human being or the human being-component in an Incarnation, can only make the imaginable pot in the usual imaginable way using pre-existing clay and the potter's wheel. But before the creation of the world, no part of the world existed. Hence, it is obvious that the world must have been created in an unimaginable way alone and not in an imaginable way. **Therefore, the Source of the unimaginable miracle as well as the Creator of this imaginable world is one and the same unimaginable God.**

The imaginable inert energy is not that unimaginable Creator who created this imaginable world in an unimaginable way. The energy is inert. It is not intelligent to be able to design and plan this wonderful world. From the angle of planning and designing, we say that the unimaginable Creator who produced this imaginable world in an unimaginable way, is Unimaginable Awareness. Unimaginable Awareness does not mean the imaginable awareness that is produced in the course of the creation of the world. The awareness produced in the course of the evolution of the world is not unimaginable. It is completely imaginable. It is produced from the imaginable food, which, in turn, comes from imaginable plants (*Oṣadhībhyo annaṃ annāt puruṣaḥ*—Veda). **This imaginable awareness is nothing but the imaginable inert energy functioning in a working nervous system. It is a work-form of the energy. The 'work', in this case, is the work of transmitting information from the senses to the brain.** The inert energy is the essential 'material' that constitutes awareness. When both the 'material' which constitutes this awareness and its work, which is the process of knowing, are known, the awareness is altogether imaginable. But the energy gets converted into awareness only in a physical nervous system and not anywhere else. So, the pre-existence of both matter and energy are essential for the production of the imaginable awareness.

Due to absence of both energy and matter before the creation of this world, we cannot have any knowledge at all about the ‘material’ which constitutes the Unimaginable Awareness. Even the process of knowing (work) is unknown in the case of Unimaginable Awareness. The only common point is that both the Unimaginable Awareness and the imaginable awareness are able to know. The final result of being able to know is qualitatively common between the two. But even in that result of being able to know, there is a lot of quantitative difference. The Unimaginable Awareness knows everything whereas the imaginable awareness knows very little. The commonality, which is the quality of knowing, is as thin as a hair, at best. The difference between the two is vast as well as fundamental. Apart from the huge quantitative difference between their abilities to know, the constituent material of one is imaginable whereas that of the other is unimaginable. This means that the imaginable and the unimaginable awarenesses are inherently or fundamentally different. The negligible hairline commonality between the two in that both are able to know, is only an associated quality and not an inherent quality. In terms of the inherent constituent materials of the two, there is not even this hairline-commonality. It is as if each of the two items has a small dust particle associated with them. Those two negligible dust particles are all that the two items have in common, while both items are inherently different. Those negligible dust particles, which they have in common, can never bring even a trace of monism between the two.

The Gita says that the original unimaginable God (Parabrahman) is neither existent (*Sat*) nor non-existent (*Asat*). This statement is not mutually contradictory (*Anādimat parambrahma, na sat tat nāsaducyate*). It means that the unimaginable God is not existent in the same way as an imaginable item such as a pot is existent. The reason for the difference is that God is unimaginable whereas the pot is imaginable. God is not existent because, in God, the relative existence does not exist. At the same time, God is also not non-existent because His existence can be inferred through the experience of His miracles and miraculous knowledge. The absolute existence of God negates the idea that God is non-existent. On one hand, the Veda says that God is existent because of

His absolute existence (*Sadeva somya...*). On the other hand, the Veda also says that God is non-existent because the relative existence does not exist in Him (*Asadvā idam...*).

2) What is meant by ‘*mantra*’?

Swami replied: *Mantra* means the repetition (*mananāt*) of a line of prose (Yajur Veda), poetry (Ṛg Veda) or song (Sāma Veda) that effortlessly attracts your mind and which you do without any aspiration for a fruit. That line should be in the praise of God and such repetition brings divine protection (*trāyate*) to you (*Mananāt trāyate iti mantrah*). The *mantra* must attract the person’s mind. In terms of the *mantra*’s ability to attract the person’s mind, if the *mantra* is prose, it is great. But if it is poetry, it is greater and if it is a song, it is the greatest. Krishna said that among the Vedas, He is the Sāma Veda. The Sāma Veda is a song. By His statement, Krishna meant that the Sāma Veda is the greatest among all the Vedas since it is able to attract the person’s mind more than any other Veda.

Such singing of a song in praise of God is the actual meaning of ‘Gāyatrī’. Gāyatrī means the song (*gāyantam*) sung in praise of God that protects (*trāyate*) the singer. A movie-song may also attract your mind, making you want to repeat it again and again. But it is not a *mantra* because it is based on some worldly subject and not on God. So, it does not bring divine protection to you. The Gāyatrī Mantra, is thus defined as the song in praise of God that protects the singer. This Gāyatrī Mantra is said to be the best *mantra* (*Na gayatryāḥ paro mantrah*).

Even scholars have misunderstood Gāyatrī to be a deity! The public, including scholars, recite the Gāyatrī Mantra, thinking that it is the actual Gāyatrī. In fact, it is clearly told that the deity being worshipped through that *mantra* is God Brahmā (*Savitā devatā*). The Gāyatrī Mantra is a genuine Vedic *mantra*, but reciting it with the Vedic accents is not the actual Gāyatrī, which is said to be the highest *mantra* and which provides divine protection. Gāyatrī also happens to be the name of a Vedic meter (*Gāyatrī chandah*) and the Gāyatrī Mantra is composed in that meter. Being the most popular *mantra* in the Gāyatrī meter, the Gāyatrī Mantra has been called the Gāyatrī Mantra even though the mere recitation of that *mantra* as prose or poetry does not provide any divine protection (*mantra*). So, this specific Vedic verse composed in the Gāyatrī meter and which is not sung, but is only recited, is not the real Gāyatrī. The mind is attracted to a song more than

prose or poetry and when we sing an attractive song, our mind gets absorbed in it. If the song is in praise of God, then by singing it with a fully-absorbed mind, without any expectations from God, we are expressing a very high level of devotion, which pleases God. When God is pleased, He grants His protection to us. Thus, people, reciting the so-called Gāyatrī mantra instead of singing it, are totally misled. The traditional people from the so-called upper castes also prohibit people from the so-called lower castes from reciting the Gāyatrī Mantra. Even among the upper castes, only men are allowed to recite it; women are prohibited from reciting it.

The real Gāyatrī is any song, even if it is composed by you, which is sung by you in praise of God. Hence, Gāyatrī is universal, irrespective of caste and gender. Some people try to make the *mantra* more attractive by introducing some extra syllables or letters called *bīja-akṣarās* like ‘*ram, hrīm*’ and so on, before the *mantra*. They claim that reciting the *mantra* along with these *bīja-akṣarās*, gives a more powerful effect in fulfilling a person’s worldly desires since the *bīja-akṣarās* have some miraculous powers. This is utter nonsense. The *bīja-akṣarās* represent certain specific items. *Ram* stands for fire, *hrīm* stands for energy and so on. These letters have no relation with any miraculous power. Only God has miraculous powers. You can please Him by singing a song in His praise, which strongly attracts your mind, making you want to sing it repeatedly. The repeated singing should not be out of any force and there should not be any aspiration in the mind for some fruit from God. Such singing, which is an expression of pure devotion, pleases God and He will certainly protect you whenever it is necessary.

3) How to recognize the human form of God and what is the proof of the existence of God’s administration in this world?

Swami replied: Any Human Incarnation results when God Datta (Īśvara), who is the first Energetic Incarnation of God, merges with a selected devotee in order to do some divine work in this world for the welfare of devotees. God Datta is the Creator (Brahmā), the Controller (Viṣṇu) and the Destroyer (Śiva) of this world. The Human Incarnation has the three inseparable characteristics, which are to be used for identifying Him. The first is that He possesses excellent spiritual knowledge for guiding devotees in the worldly path (*pravṛtti*) and the spiritual path (*nivṛtti*). This knowledge is related to God Brahmā. The second is the infinite love for deserving devotees, which is related to

God Viṣṇu. The third characteristic, related to God Śiva, is the miraculous powers, which He uses to solve the problems of deserving devotees and to help them on the spiritual path. The person in whom all these three characteristics coexist, is identified as the Human Incarnation. Even though Rāma did not perform miracles in public, He did perform the miracle of converting a stone into a lady, called Ahalyā, in the forest.

The administration of God, which protects justice and punishes injustice, is clearly seen in this world. You are clearly able to see two aspects: (1) The protection of justice by compensating the innocent victim, provided the victim remains patient and does not resort to revenge (*Paritrāṇāya...*—Gita) and (2) The punishment of sinners, even if they manage to escape the law of the land through influence or other corrupt practices (*Vināśāya...*—Gita). But you must be patient in order to notice the punishment of sinners because God gives some time to the sinful souls to realize their sins and reform. So, the punishment will not be seen immediately. There is no reason to be impatient, thinking that the innocent victim has not received justice because, if the victim is really innocent, he or she will certainly be compensated by God. Patience is the basic requirement to understand the divine administration. Even in the administration of human beings, do you find immediate punishment of criminals for their crimes? In fact, the punishment of criminals, such as the duration of the imprisonment, can be reduced if the criminals show signs of reformation by their good behavior. The punishment is only meant for reformation and not for revenge. This is especially true in the case of divine punishment.

Sometimes, a sinner may not be punished at all by God. This happens because, in their previous births, the present criminal was the victim and the present victim was the criminal. So, it is a case of a retaliatory crime in which the previous roles of the criminal and the victim are reversed in the present birth. A common example of this is the killing of an animal by a butcher. When the animal is killed by the butcher, the dying animal thinks that it should become butcher and the butcher should become the animal being killed, in the next birth (*Māṃsah...*). '*Māṃsah*' means flesh in Sanskrit. But the same word when split as follows, gives a deeper meaning, which is stated in the scripture. *Māṃ* means 'me' and *sah* means 'he'. So, the particular verse in the scripture means "Just as **he** kills **me** now, I will kill him in the

next birth”. This is the wish expressed by the dying animal facing the pain of an untimely death. The punishment for this sin cannot be given in this birth itself since the animal wished for the punishment to be given in the next birth. It is also logical since a new birth is necessary for the butcher to be born as an animal and the animal to be born as a butcher. The critical thing to be remembered in this context is that the punishment is not limited to the butcher. The eater of non-vegetarian food also equally shares the sin with the butcher as the promoter of the sin (*preraka*). It is the consumer, who demands the meat from the butcher, after all. So, both are given the full extent of the punishment in the next birth. If a crime seen in this birth is not a retaliatory crime from the previous birth, the sinner will be punished in this birth itself.

Another point to note is that the fruits of only the intense sins and merits are given to the soul, immediately in this birth. The fruits of the moderately or mildly good and bad deeds are given to the soul only after death in heaven and hell respectively. This postponement of most of the rewards and punishments to after the person’s death is done so that the person can focus on performing good deeds and getting reformed here. If the person is occupied in enjoying all the fruits of his or her deeds in the short human life, there will be no time and opportunity to concentrate on performing the good deeds and getting reformed.

Chapter 16

SWAMI ANSWERS DEVOTEES' QUESTIONS

August 27, 2019

1) When God is unimaginable, how can we say that God pervades only the awareness of the Incarnation and not the body?

Padanamaskaram Swami! I request You to please answer the following question. You have mentioned that God pervades the relative awareness of the Human Incarnation. In special cases like in Krishna, He even pervaded the whole body. God is unimaginable, while the awareness and the body of the Incarnation are imaginable. How can it then be said that God pervades only the awareness-part and not the body, in most general cases and that, in some special cases, He may even pervade the entire body? If God were a limited item, such a superimposition can have some meaning since one limited item can be superimposed on another limited item. When God is present in the Human Incarnation, why should we say that He is only pervading the awareness and not pervading in body or that He is pervading the whole body in addition to the awareness? At Your Lotus Feet, Anil.

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! When **the God who pervades the awareness or the body of the Incarnation, is unimaginable, even the mechanism of His pervasion is unimaginable.** We are only assuming a certain mechanism of pervasion as if God is a finite imaginable item. Such assumptions are made to explain deep philosophical concepts to people in a manner that is easy to understand. We are not actually sure whether God pervades the awareness (energy) or the body (matter) since we cannot directly perceive the unimaginable God. But, based on what we perceive, we are making inferences regarding the mechanism of pervasion, assuming the pervasion to be an imaginable process. When Krishna lifted the huge hill on His tender little finger, we infer that the unimaginable God must have pervaded all over His body, including His finger. Because of this pervasion, both the body and the finger become unimaginable and hence, Krishna was able to lift the hill. Otherwise, we know that the imaginable body and the imaginable finger cannot withstand the enormous weight of the hill. We are introducing the concept that God pervaded all over the body of Krishna in order to avoid confusion as

much as possible. Actually, even without the unimaginable God pervading the body, the huge hill can be lifted up by the finger and body of Krishna by the unimaginable power of the unimaginable God existing in the awareness of Krishna. We are taking the statements of scripture and we are also adding some more assumed mechanisms, if necessary, to make the subject more clearly understandable. This is done since the brains of ordinary human beings are only accustomed to understanding imaginable phenomena of items in the world.

When we say that a crane lifted a heavy load, we can say that crane must be made of a strong material, which can withstand the weight of the load. Similarly, when we say that Krishna lifted the hill, we can say that body of Krishna attained unimaginable power since it was pervaded by the unimaginable God. There is scriptural support for this concept since it is said that God pervades the medium internally as well as externally (*Antarbahiśca...—Veda*). At the same time, if we stick only to this concept, we cannot explain another event. The finger of Krishna was injured by a blade of sugarcane while He was eating it. This means that the finger was not pervaded by the unimaginable God. To correlate both these observations, we assume that God either pervades the soul alone or the soul and the body of the Incarnation, as required in each situation.

Krishna used to eat food and drink milk due to hunger and thirst. This means that God was not pervading the body at all times and that God pervaded His body only in situations when it was necessary. This concept is only our assumption. There cannot be any perceivable proof of this assumption, at any stage, since the unimaginable God cannot be perceived. **Since Krishna can give excellent spiritual knowledge at any time, we assume that God pervaded His soul at all times.** Again, this assumption is only based on inference and cannot be proved through perception. The unimaginable God who pervades the medium and the mechanism by which He pervades it, are both unimaginable. So, even the scripture cannot report any instance when God or His mechanism of pervasion were perceived. Even the scripture reports mere inferences drawn from events. The aim of the scripture too, is to bring the knowledge about God down to the level of understanding of ordinary human beings. If you remove all these inferred assumptions related to the basic unimaginable nature of God, you will simply have to keep silent. You will have to express God and His actions only through

silence—without speaking a single word. In that case, no word can even be the name of God because every word indicates only an imaginable item, whereas God is unimaginable.

Scripture says that God cannot be seen with one's eyes (*Na tatra cakṣuh...*) and that only one blessed devotee can see God with his or her eyes (*Kaścit...aikṣat*). This 'seeing' of God must be properly interpreted. God cannot be seen with one's eyes because the unimaginable God is obviously invisible. **But when the unimaginable God merges with the imaginable-visible human devotee to become a Human Incarnation, a rare blessed devotee can realize (see) that God has incarnated in the form of that Incarnation. So, seeing God means identifying or recognizing the Human Incarnation. Of course, not all devotees who have seen the Incarnation, recognize Him to be an Incarnation due to their ego and jealousy towards fellow-human beings.**

Note that we are only interpreting the scripture here and that even the scripture is only a collection of interpretations and inferences based on certain events. There is no perception of the unimaginable God at any stage and hence, the scripture too cannot describe God's unimaginable nature. Actually, inference, as it is applied to imaginable items, is based on perception at some stage. You infer the unseen fire on the mountain from seeing the visible smoke. Your inference is based on the generalization (*vyāpti*) of the link between the visible fire and the visible smoke. It is the link between the cause and the effect. You have already seen this link between the fire and smoke in the kitchen. However, in the context of inferring the unimaginable God and His unimaginable actions from visible effects and events, this step of perception of the unimaginable God (cause) is always absent.

2) When Īśvara is not all-pervading, how can He be said to possess the world as His external body?

Shri Anil asked: In the context of Śrī Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, You have said that creation is the external body of Īśvara. But You have also rejected the idea that God is all-pervading. Could You kindly resolve the seeming contradiction?

Swami replied: If you are in your house, you do not pervade all over your house. Similarly, the soul, which is main seat of awareness, exists in the body. But it does not pervade all over the body. At any given time, the sun is at one place in the sky. Only its light pervades all over the sky and earth. The lamp is located at one place in the room and

only its light pervades all over the room. **The soul, which is the main seat of awareness, lies in the body. But some general awareness pervades all over the body.** This concept was well-explained by Rāmānuja.

All the above examples are imaginable. The unimaginable God need not pervade all over the world in a physical sense. Neither does He have to make His power pervade the world. Yet, He or His power can be said to pervade the world in an effective sense. God's omniscience is unimaginable. So, in order to know everything, He or His power does not need to physically pervade the world. He is omniscient in spite of not physically pervading the world. Moreover, in the case of the imaginable domain, the possessor of the power and the power are different. So, we can say that the possessor of the power is at a certain location, while his power pervades everywhere. In the case of the unimaginable domain, the possessor and power are both unimaginable and hence, both are one and the same. Therefore, we have to say that the Possessor (God) or His power pervades the world in an effective sense and not in a physical sense.

Your doubt is solved even if we treat the unimaginable God as the central soul of the universe. But, in the philosophy of Rāmānuja, God is not unimaginable. He is imaginable and even visible to energetic beings in the upper worlds. This is because, Rāmānuja treats the first Energetic Incarnation as the ultimate God. The first Energetic Incarnation, Īśvara is the first energetic form in which the unimaginable God entered and merged. Since the energetic body of Īśvara is finite and it exists inside the universe, it can be treated to be the central soul of the universe. This mediated God, Īśvara, has His own energetic body. This body can be treated to be His internal body and the external world can be treated to be His external body, which is like a shirt that we wear over the body.

In the case of God, the external world is treated to be His gross body, just as in the case of the human being, the external physical body is taken to be the gross body. The central mediated God is taken to be the possessor of the gross world-body just as the central soul (awareness) is the possessor of the gross physical body. This shows a similarity between the macroscale world and the microscale human being. The world contains both the non-inert souls and the inert matter and energy. Similarly, the external gross body of the human being has both the non-inert general awareness and the inert matter and energy.

Both the gross bodies, at the macro- and micro-scales, possess inert matter and energy (*acit*) and non-inert awareness (*cit*). Hence, both can be treated as mixtures of non-inert and inert items (*cit-acit*). The world is huge (*sthūla cidacit*) and the physical body of human being is small (*sūkṣma cidacit*). The possessor of the world becomes *sthūla cidacit viśiṣṭa* and the possessor of the physical body is *sūkṣma cidacit viśiṣṭa*.

The similarity between the two possessors is loosely indicated by the word monism (*advaita*) in Rāmānuja's philosophy. Here, it appears that Rāmānuja is comparing Īśvara to an ordinary human being. But, I feel, the word '*advaita*' will carry its full sense if you compare the First Possessor (Īśvara or Nārāyaṇa) to a Human Incarnation like Krishna instead of an ordinary human being like Śvetaketu. There is no difference between the First Possessor (Nārāyaṇa) and Krishna since both are Incarnations of the same unimaginable God. Thus, there is not just a similarity between the two, but there is an actual monism between them. If Rāmānuja's philosophy were limited to pointing out a similarity between Nārāyaṇa and an ordinary human being like Śvetaketu, the philosophy would have been named Viśiṣṭa Sādrṣya and not Viśiṣṭa Advaita. *Sādrṣya* means similarity, while *advaita* means monism. Even though Rāmānuja spoke of the similarity between Nārāyaṇa and an ordinary human being, He named the philosophy Viśiṣṭa Advaita. It shows that, in His heart, Rāmānuja was referring to the identity or monism, which only exists between the First Energetic Incarnation, Īśvara and the Human Incarnation, like Krishna. It means that even though Nārāyaṇa and Śvetaketu were on the tongue of Rāmānuja, in his heart, were Nārāyaṇa and Krishna. The heart is more important than the tongue. So, it is obvious why He named His philosophy Viśiṣṭa Advaita and not Viśiṣṭa Sādrṣya.

3) Will the recent removal of Article 370, bring ultimate peace to Kashmir?

[A question by Shri Anil]

Swami replied: The ultimate solution, not only for the Kashmir issue, but also for all similar cases, is the propagation of Universal Religion, which is based on Universal Spirituality. The differences between religions are only based on external diversity. We must unite both Hindus and Muslims and in fact, the followers of all religions, through Universal Spirituality. The problem can be solved very easily when spiritual concepts are propagated and are well-established in the

minds of people. People should be convinced that following justice brings God's grace and following injustice brings the anger of God.

Even if the differences and the conflict in Kashmir are related to strong economic interests of the parties concerned, the matter can be easily resolved when people are thoroughly convinced about genuine spiritual concepts. When the important subject of God is well-established, nobody will dare to invite the anger of God by following injustice. Everybody knows what is justice and what is injustice, even in the issue of Kashmir. But people are following injustice and neglecting justice due to their attraction towards undue economic benefits and due to their negligence towards God. Spiritual education including Universal Spirituality is the root-solution for all problems in the world. Without going to the root-solution, all other solutions are superficial and ultimately useless. It will be like pouring water on the leaves of a tree without letting even a drop of water reach its root.

4) What is the significance of Prophet Muhammad's miracle of splitting the moon into two?

[Shri Anil asked: Given below is an excerpt from the Quran, Chapter 54, verses 1-8. The Hour has come near, and the moon has split (in two) - And if they see a sign, they turn away and say, "continued magic."- And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a time of settlement- And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence – Extensive wisdom – but warning does not avail them- So leave them, O Muhammad. The Day the Caller calls to something forbidding - Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading - Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say "This is a difficult Day."]

Swami replied: Here, moon represents the mind and the splitting of the moon means the splitting of the mind resulting in the state of doubt where there are two equally-strong and opposing concepts. A miracle can be done by both God and Satan. We cannot identify God only through a miracle. Only when a miracle is supported by excellent spiritual knowledge, does it indicate God. The atheist considers the miracle to be magic. Even though miracles are common to both God and Satan, the miraculous power of Satan is from God alone. The miracles of Satan are called 'black magic' in order to distinguish them from God's miracles. God created Satan because a villain is also needed in the divine drama.

The atheist neither believes in God nor in Satan. But the theist will not call even the miraculous power of Satan as magic. The ignorant

theist believes even ordinary magic to be a miracle. The ignorant atheist believes the miracles of both God and Satan to be ordinary magic. Both these ignorant souls are extreme. The golden middle path is the theist who recognizes the unimaginable miracles of both God and Satan, on one side and the magic performed by a magician, on the other side. A miracle is genuine and is the unimaginable power of God. Magic is a false trick and is created by the intelligence of the magician, who is only a human being. Magic appears to be a miracle but it is only an illusion. When a genuine Human Incarnation performs a miracle, it is a miracle of God. It is neither the miracle of Satan nor the magic of a magician. The fraud Human Incarnation may belong to the side of Satan or to the side of a magician. Any miracle is actually done by the unimaginable God, who is invisible. He can become visible in the form of a genuine Human Incarnation. Even the genuine miracle performed by the topmost devotee of God, belongs to the side of God. The miracles performed by Satan and his followers, are also ultimately done by the unimaginable God alone. God is the sole support for the divine drama.

Jesus was a genuine Human Incarnation of God. But He was misunderstood by the priests and the majority of the public following the priests. They thought that He was a fraud Human Incarnation performing miracles with the help of Satan. The atheists, as usual, misunderstood Jesus to be a clever human being performing magic tricks. Jesus was crucified by the priests and their followers, who believed in miracles, but they had misunderstood Jesus to be a follower of Satan doing black magic. This was a very serious misunderstanding, which led to the crucifixion of Jesus. **Black magic is a genuine miracle, but it is wrong in its purpose.** The magic performed by a clever human being is not as serious as black magic. So, if a clever person does some magic and cheats the public, he can be punished, but there is no need to sentence Him to death.

Mohammad knew very well that Jesus was a true Incarnation who did genuine miracles, which were certainly not black magic and certainly not magic tricks. His idea was that it is better to misunderstand a Human Incarnation to be an ordinary human being doing magic than to misunderstand Him to be a follower of Satan doing miraculous black magic. That way, even if the rulers and administrators arrest the Incarnation, they would only give Him some minor punishment and not sentence Him to death. With this thought, Mohammad called Jesus as a

clever person doing magic. His intention was to avoid the killing of any Human Incarnation in the future. This is the essence of the quoted paragraph, which represents the concept in a very condensed manner.

5) When Prophet Mohammed said that Allah is a Light, why is calling Allah a Light not permitted?

[Shri Anil asked: When someone asked Prophet Mohammed “Have you seen thy Lord?”, the Prophet replied, “He is a Light, how could I see Him?” There are several other references related to Allah and light in the Quran, such as “His veil is the light”; “You are the Light of the heavens and the earth (*wa man feehin*) and whoever is in them”; “So believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Noor (light) which we have sent down (i.e. the Quran). And Allah is acquainted with what you do.” But some Muslim devotees say that calling Allah a *Noor* (Light) is not permissible. It is *shirk*, which is the sin of worshiping anyone or anything besides God.]

Swami replied: Allah is the absolute and unimaginable God, called Parabrahman in Hinduism and Jehovah in Christianity. Allah cannot be any imaginable item in the imaginable creation. Mohammad was a Human Incarnation like Krishna in Hinduism and Jesus in Christianity. The ‘light’ mentioned here is the knowledge with the help of which you can see and distinguish items. Hence, the Quran is the light or divine knowledge like the Gita of Hinduism and the Bible of Christianity, with the help of which, one can distinguish right from wrong and the true from the false. **There is no difference between Allah and Mohammad because Allah had merged with the selected devotee, Mohammad, making Him a Human Incarnation of Allah.**

Allah cannot be the imaginable light or the imaginable spiritual knowledge or the imaginable Quran. Allah is the Possessor of the light or knowledge. Even Mohammad was the possessor of knowledge or light and was not directly the knowledge or light. A possessor can be addressed as the possessed item. When you call out to the apple-seller saying “O apples! Come here”, it means that you are calling the possessor of the apples and not the inanimate apples. The possessor of a lot of knowledge is addressed as knowledge itself, in the sense that the possessor is an embodiment of knowledge. Hence, it is not wrong to say that Allah is light or knowledge, even though, actually, Allah is not the light, knowledge or any other imaginable item of this creation.

Mohammad did not like to be called Allah (monism) or the Son of Allah (special monism). He preferred being called the servant of Allah (dualism) in order to avoid being attacked by the kind of egotistic and

jealous devotees, who crucified Jesus. Jesus had claimed that He was Jehovah, when He said, “I am the truth and light”. He had also said that He was the Son of Jehovah. Both these claims of the Human Incarnation, of being God Himself or the Son of God, are not tolerable to egotistic, jealous and ignorant devotees. The most they can tolerate is the Human Incarnation claiming to be the servant of God.

As far as *pravṛtti* is concerned, there is no problem if the Human Incarnation is called as a servant of God. In *pravṛtti*, only establishing the existence of the unimaginable, omniscient and omnipotent God is sufficient. The Incarnation, behaving like a mere servant of God can convey the spiritual knowledge to the devotees saying that He is only delivering the message from God. Here, the Incarnation behaves as if He were a postman delivering the letter sent by God to the public. **However, in *nivṛtti*, the Human Incarnation must be correctly identified as God.** If the receivers of the preaching are only of the level of *pravṛtti*, the Human Incarnation must only project dualism. He must say that He is a servant of God. Such a claim will not enrage the devotees because they already feel that every devotee is a servant of God. Seeing the cruel fate of Jesus, His succeeding prophet, Mohammad, minimized the risk by projecting Himself only as a divine messenger and not as God or even a Son of the God.

6) Did Allah create all beings from clay, water, or some other fluid?

[Shri Anil asked: In this context, there are different references in the Quran such as: “Allah made from water every living thing (21:30)”; “We created man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape...(15:26)”; “He began the creation of man from clay, and made his progeny from a quintessence of fluid (32:7-8)”. Which of them is correct?]

Swami replied: This is the subject of the evolution of living beings from the inert water and inert earth. The fluid is nothing but the cytoplasm or protoplasm of living cells. This subject can be better-understood by studying biology and Darwin’s theory of evolution.

7) What did Jesus mean by devotees eating His flesh and drinking His blood?

[Shri Anil asked: Given below is an excerpt from the Bible (John 6) for reference. 53 So, Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is real food, and My blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats

My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your fathers, who ate the manna and died, the one who eats this bread will live forever.”]

Swami relied: The words like flesh, blood and bread only mean the personality of the Human Incarnation. Eating and drinking means loving God-in-human-form to the climax. All these words are symbolic and they convey the concept of true love for God that is proved in practice.

8) What does Jesus mean by ‘many rooms’ in the Bible, John14.1-4?

[Shri Anil asked: Given below is an excerpt from the Bible (John 14) for reference. 1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. 2 In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going away to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.]

Swami replied: Many rooms means many levels of devotion. It means that devotion must be developed step-by-step in the case of ordinary devotees. A blessed devotee, who had attained a high level devotion in the previous birth, may be reborn in this birth and continue from the same high level of devotion in this birth and may rise to higher levels. You cannot compare the high level of devotion attained by that devotee with the ordinary levels of devotion of other devotees. You cannot say to the ordinary devotees that that particular devotee could reach such a high level of devotion in this very birth, whereas they could not reach the same height. It will discourage the ordinary devotees. The reality is that the exceptional devotee who reached that height of devotion, had already reached a very high level in the previous birth. In the present birth, he continued from that same level to progress a little further.

Jesus, the Human Incarnation, said that He will come again. Some people think that He will only come again once and not multiple times! Fantastic! If a relative visits your home for some time and while leaving says that he will come again, does it mean that he will only come again once? When Jesus says “I will come again” it means, He will come again and again in the form of different Human Incarnations, to lift up all devotees. **The Incarnation will keep coming again and again untill His work of uplifting devotees is completed.** The Gita says that

God will come in human form again and again whenever there is a necessity for Him to incarnate (*Yadā yadā hi...*). Of course, there is a merit even in the misinterpretation that He will come only once. It makes souls take their reformation more seriously. They must urgently get reformed because it is the last-but-one chance to get reformed before the final dissolution of the world. Altogether, these verses indicate that the soul on earth can reach the ultimate divine goal only through the Human Incarnation since the Human Incarnation alone is relevant for humanity.

Chapter 17

CONVINCING THE ADAMANT ATHEIST

August 28, 2019

Shri Phani asked: How can we discuss and convince atheists, who are very adamant in their views?

Hypocrisy of Theists

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Such adamant behaviour of atheists is the result of the aversion that they have held in their mind towards spirituality and spiritual people for a long time. The reason for their aversion is the hypocrisy of theists who have been secretly doing sins while pretending to be righteous externally. These atheists are able to identify such hypocrisy and they react emotionally. Unfortunately, their emotion is misguided since they blame God, holding Him responsible for the hypocrisy of the theists. **They should blame the sinful theists and not God.** The atheists think that if the concept of God itself is removed, the hypocrisy based on God will be eliminated from its root. This conclusion of the atheists is quite foolish. Firstly, by removing the concept of God, the quality of hypocrisy is not removed. Secondly, the problem of sin increases even more since the public loses all fear and starts committing all types of sin fearlessly.

I agree that theists are committing sins in the name of God. If the concept of God is eradicated, let us say that the sins done in the name of God might stop. **But, apart from the sins committed in the name of God, what about all the other types of sins committed by people in the world? Will they stop too? Not at all!** In fact, the theists of today, upon giving up their faith in God, will commit a hundred times more sins in the world. They will not even fear the various controlling agencies like the police and courts since they would have already tilted them in their own favor through corruption and influence. They would have lost all fear of punishment. Luckily, the theists of today, are greatly controlled by the concept of existence of God. Even though they commit some sins, they are afraid of committing more sins because they believe that God is omniscient and omnipotent. They know that He can punish

sinner, even if they manage to escape the law of the land through crooked ways. The omniscient and omnipotent God shows us the evidence of His punishment of sinners in this world itself. Souls are punished for the intense sins committed by them, even while they are alive. Similarly, intensely good actions also yield rewards in this world, while the person is alive.

Does Worship Cancel Sin?

There is one concept propagated by priests, which is certainly wrong. Priests claim that sin can be cancelled by worshiping God. This is not true. The reason why the priest promotes this false concept, is to make money. The theistic sinner, who is afraid of divine punishment and is eager to find a way to escape from it, gets carried away by this concept. The priest demands money from the theistic sinner in order to perform some ritual-worship. It is basically a form of fraud. We must indeed criticize such priests and eliminate such wrong concepts from society through the propagation of true spiritual knowledge. But the atheist's insistence on demolishing the very concept of God, in order to solve the problem, is very foolish. If your house is infested with rats, do you find a way to drive away the rats or do you burn down your entire house? In the present context, atheists want you to burn down your entire house in order to permanently eliminate the problem. Let us say, you have a toothache. A dentist says that he can free you of the toothache, once and for all, by removing all your teeth! Would you go to such a dentist? **Emotion always kills a person's intelligence and this is the case of the atheist.** Eliminating all the sins committed in the name of God by rejecting the very concept of God is indeed burning down your house to get rid of rats!

The Hypocrisy of Atheistic Morality

The atheist says that sin can be controlled even without the concept of God through moral education or ethics education. But tell Me, will anybody listen to you if you simply instruct people to not commit sin because sin is bad and not committing sin is good? It will simply not work! That is why moral science classes are removed from education. They are simply a waste of time! **Moral education must be combined with the spiritual knowledge of God.** Then alone can the desired goal be achieved. Atheistic moral education is bound to fail. The

people to whom you are preaching your atheistic morality will immediately point out to you that following morality will result in some materialistic loss to them. They will ask you if there is any harm in committing sin if it gives some material benefits. You will say that they must fear the punishment given by the police and the law. But, they will tell you that they already have found crooked ways involving bribery, influence and force to escape the punishment. You will say that those techniques are not good and ethical. But they will not care at all for your ethics. They will say, “How does it matter if the techniques are good or bad? If they help me in getting materialistic benefits and enjoyment in this world, without facing any punishment from the law, they are good for me!” What can you say to them?

Becoming an atheist is nothing but getting a free licence to commit any sin, whenever one gets the chance and whenever one can escape from the law. If you say that you will remain ethical and not commit any sin, even without accepting the existence of God, it is the biggest hypocrisy! If there is indeed such an atheist, God will congratulate him and declare him to be a far far better soul than the sinful theist. God’s maximum expectation from any soul in this world is for the soul to avoid sin. He never promotes devotion, asking souls to worship Him, since the path of devotion was discovered by devotees.

God Exists

Atheists need not pretend to be broadminded in allowing the concept of God just for its practical value in controlling sin, even though they do not believe it to be true. **The concept of the existence of God is absolutely true.** Hence, there is no need to create any concept merely for its practical utility in solving the problem of sin in the world. **The concept of the existence of God is a million percent true!** The atheist has to defend his position against miracles, which are practically experienced. God-in-human-form performs unimaginable events in the world, called miracles. They provide direct evidence of the existence of the unimaginable domain, which itself is God. But the atheist blindly dismisses even genuine miracles as magic tricks. Certainly, there are clever people who use magic tricks to cheat the innocent public into thinking that they are performing miracles. But the problem is that atheists consider all miracles as magic tricks. Shri Satya Sai Baba, the recent Human Incarnation, invited atheists and scientists to observe and

disprove His miracles, showing them to be magic tricks, if they could. Several atheistic scientists became His disciples, after observing His miracles for a long time. If the atheist is a true scientist, he or she will have an open mind to study and accept the truth. Atheists without a scientific attitude are incapable of such a transformation. They will always remain adamant, adamant and adamant! Science studies any phenomenon without any prejudice and, at the end of the study, it accepts whatever conclusion follows. **Atheism starts with a pre-determined adamant conclusion and using twisted logic, arrives at the same conclusion, at the end of the study!** There is nothing you can do with such adamant atheists except saluting to them, falling at their lotus feet! God allows them to exist in this world since they are useful as examiners for testing the strength of devotees' faith and devotion.

Chapter 18

SWAMI ANSWERS DEVOTEES' QUESTIONS

September 03, 2019

1) What is the relationship between *pravṛtti*, *nivṛtti* and *yoga*?

[A question by Dr. Annapurna]

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! *Pravṛtti* is worldly life, which is related to the behaviour of one soul with other souls in society. It is the social behaviour of the soul, in which the soul is expected to keep society happy, or at least, not cause unhappiness to society. *Nivṛtti* is purely a personal matter related to the spiritual upliftment of the soul. *Pravṛtti* aims at the welfare and development of society, whereas *nivṛtti* aims at the personal welfare and personal development of the soul. *Nivṛtti* is based on *pravṛtti* because if society is not happy, the individual cannot be happy and cannot work towards self-development. *Pravṛtti* is the foundation and *nivṛtti* is the castle built on it.

Yoga means meeting with someone or attaining something. For instance, *dhana yoga* means the attainment of money. *Putra yoga* means the attainment of children. **In spirituality, *yoga* specifically means the attainment of God or, at least, the attainment of God's grace.** Devotees interested in attaining God Himself, in order to serve Him personally, have to recognize the contemporary Human Incarnation of God. The devotees who are only interested in attaining some grace of God, can worship the statues and images of God, which also pleases God. But directly serving God in person, pleases Him to the greatest extent because such worship is direct worship (*sākṣāt upāsanam*). The worship of statues and images is indirect (*pratīka upāsanam*) and it does not please God as much. If somebody gives you food directly, you are greatly pleased. But if someone says that he or she offered food to your photograph, will you be pleased as much?

In fact, *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* together constitute *yoga*. There are eight stages in *yoga* namely, *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. These eight stages are called the *aṣṭāṅgas*. The first stage, *yama* itself is *pravṛtti*. *Nivṛtti* extends from the second stage of *niyama* to the eighth stage of *samādhi*. Therefore,

the first stage of *yoga* is *pravṛtti*, which is for the welfare of society. The second stage onwards, it is *nivṛtti*, which is the soul's personal development that extends upto the final eighth stage. The first stage of *yoga* (*yama*), which is *pravṛtti*, is the foundation. The other seven stages of *nivṛtti*, from *niyama* to *samādhi*, which constitute the personal development of the soul, are built on this foundation.

The first stage, *yama*, contains five sub-steps and they are: (1) *Ahṁisā*, which is non-violence, (2) *Satyam*, which is truthfulness or honesty, (3) *Asteyam*, which means non-stealing or not taking others' money or belongings without their knowledge, (4) *Brahmacaryam*, which means not having illegitimate sex and (5) *Aparigraha*, which means not forcibly taking others' money and belongings with their knowledge, as in asking for a bribe. These five sub-steps of *yama* are very clearly related to the welfare of society.

The second stage, *niyama*, also has five sub-steps and they are: (1) *Śaucam*, which means maintaining external as well as internal purity, (2) *Santuṣṭi*, which means having self-satisfaction with whatever is given by to you by God and not having any desire to rob others, (3) *Tapah*, which means having the climax of interest in God. It involves knowing the full details about God, having theoretical love for God and expressing practical devotion to God by sacrificing one's efforts and wealth to God, (4) *Svādhyāya*, which means constantly remembering the spiritual knowledge, constantly maintaining theoretical devotion in the mind and constantly engaging in practical devotion to God and (5) *Īśvara Praṇidhāna*, which means total surrender and dedication to God.

The remaining six stages of *yoga* are based on the above five sub-steps of *niyama*. The third stage of *yoga* is *āsana*, which is physical and mental stability. The fourth stage is *prāṇayāma*, which is the purification of blood by retaining the inhaled oxygen longer (*kumbhaka*). The fifth stage is *pratyāhāra*, which is the initial effort made to withdraw from worldly bonds. This partial withdrawal from worldly bonds makes some time available to hear the knowledge of God. The sixth stage is *dhāraṇa*, which is fixing one's mind on a specific form of God or Sadguru. The seventh stage is *dhyāna*, which is developing concentration on the particular form of God fixed in the mind. The eighth and final stage is *samādhi*, which is having an unshakable determination and devotion towards the form of God fixed

in the mind. Thus, we see that *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* together form the eight stages (*aṣṭāṅga*) of *yoga*.

If you displease God in *pravṛtti*, by committing sins in your worldly life, how can the same God be pleased with your devotion in *nivṛtti*? Either you have to wash your clothes gently with soap to remove its stains or else, the washerman will wash it roughly. Either you have to remove your bad qualities by yourself and get reformed gradually, through divine knowledge and devotion (*Api cet sa durācārah...*—Gita) or the servants of God Yama in hell will reform you harshly, after death!

2) Is there no use of ritual-sacrifices involving the burning of ghee in the fire?

Shri PVNM Sharma asked: These days, people perform ritual-sacrifices or *yajñas* by burning ghee in the physical fire. You have told us that there is not the slightest use of such sacrifices and that instead, they cause pollution. Could You please explain the same in greater detail?

Swami replied: There are three types of fire and they are: (1) *Laukikāgni* or *bhautikāgni*, which is the fire produced by burning sticks, (2) *Vaidyutāgni*, which is the fire produced through electricity and (3) *Devatāgni*, which is the fire of hunger in the stomach. This hunger-fire has been called *Vaiśvānara* in the Gita. In any ritual-sacrifice (*yajña*), the first two types of fire are only instrumental in cooking food and they are known as *yajña sādhanam*. The instrumental fire is only meant to cook the food and not burn it. The third type of fire, which is the hunger-fire, lies in the stomach of a deserving hungry person. The cooked food is to be fed to that person. In other words, the food is to be burnt in it. This third type of fire is known as *yajñaupāsya*.

The *hotā* is the priest, who, nowadays, pours ghee in to the physical fire, due to the misunderstanding of the true concept of *yajña*. *Havanīya* is the fire into which the ghee is poured and burnt. *Haviḥ* or *Havyam* is thought to be the ghee that is fed to the fire, which is a misunderstanding. Actually, *haviḥ* does not mean the ghee itself, but it means the cooked food, which has been fried in plenty of ghee. Thus, food cooked in plenty of ghee has been called ghee itself. It is a figure of speech (*lakṣaṇāvṛtti*), whereby the possessor of an item is addressed as the item itself. For instance, you can call out to an apple-seller as “O apples!”. In this case, the food contains ghee and is the possessor of the ghee, which is referred to as ghee itself. How funny would it be if a

doctor advises a patient to avoid oil and patient replies that he never drinks oil directly! When the doctor says that the patient should avoid oil, he means that the patient should avoid oily food or food that has been fried in a lot of oil. The doctor obviously knows that no one drinks oil directly! Thus, in the context of the ritual-sacrifice, ghee does not mean pure ghee, but food containing plenty of ghee.

Similarly, the fire in the context of the sacrifice does not mean the physical or electrical fire, which is used to cook the food. Fire means the hunger-fire that lies in the stomach of the priest or the Sadguru. So, the sacrifice is not pouring pure ghee into the physical or electrical fire, as per the common misunderstanding. The real meaning of *yajña* is to offer food containing plenty of ghee to the hungry priest, in the beginning, before we have the food ourselves. Food containing plenty of ghee is rich food or the best food, which alone should be offered to the priest. The priest is called *agni*, which means fire. *Agni* comes from the word *agri*, which means ‘the first’ or ‘the beginning’ (*Agram nayati iti agnih*). *Agni*, thus means the priest, who is given the first place (*agri* or *agni*), by offering food to him, before all others.

The first hymn of the Ṛg Veda (*Agnimīle...*) says that the priest (*ṛtvik*) is the *hotā*, who offers the ghee-containing food into the fire (*agni*), which is himself. It means, the *hotā* or the person offering the food himself is the *havanīya* or *agni*. This fire (*agni*) to which the food is offered, is called *āhavanīya*. As per the misunderstood procedure of the present-day, where the priest pours ghee into the physical fire, the *hotā* is different from the *havanīya*. **But the the first hymn of the first Veda (Ṛg Veda) says that the *hotā* and the *havanīya* are one and the same. So, it is clear that the present-day practice is wrong. Not only is this wrong practice the result of a misinterpretation of the Veda, but it is also causing pollution and stopping the rains due to global warming.** If the priest is the Sadguru, and if you offer Him the best food cooked in plenty of ghee, there will be good rains. This is because, when Sadguru, the Divine Priest, is pleased, all deities including the Rain-god are pleased. The Sadguru contains all the deities in His body as told in the Veda (*Yāvatīrvai...*).

Today morning, I was invited by the devotees of Satya Datta Sādhanālaya Sevāśram to attend a conventional sacrifice, called *Sāvitra Kāthakāgni Cayana Mahāyāga*. But I refused to attend the sacrifice, giving them the above analysis. The Veda says that food must not be

destroyed (*Annāṃ na paricakṣīta*) and ghee is the most precious food. God synthesized food from the inert five elements for the sake of souls and if souls destroy food like this, God is insulted. God Kapila has told in the Bhāgavatam, while preaching to His mother, that only a fool burns ghee in the physical fire in the name of performing a sacrifice. In the same Bhāgavatam, God Krishna asked the wives of sages in the forest, to give food to His hungry friends instead of burning it in the fire.

3) Could you please explain the three items that are part of the process of knowledge?

[A question by Shri Phani]

Swami replied: There are three items that are part of the process of knowledge and they are called the *tripuṭī* or the triad of knowledge. (1) The first is *jñātā* or the knower. It is the soul learning spiritual knowledge from the Divine Preacher or Sadguru. (2) The second is *jñānam* or the knowledge explained by the Divine Preacher. It is the subject-matter in the process of knowing and it pertains to all the three items in the triad. (3) The third is the *jñeyam*, which is the item that is to be known. It is ultimate goal and, in the context of spiritual knowledge, it is God or the Divine Preacher Himself.

The knowledge can also be classified in to four categories based on the object of the knowledge (*jñeyam*). (1) The first category is **external knowledge. It is the knowledge of the entire world, including human beings.** The world is the imaginable domain, which has visible and invisible parts. The visible part of the imaginable world includes matter and gross energy. The invisible part of the imaginable world is subtle energy, which is space. Actually, even in the gross energy, energy having higher frequencies such as X-rays, gamma rays and so on, is invisible. **In any case, this external knowledge is thus the knowledge of the imaginable-visible and the imaginable-invisible.** (2) The second category of knowledge is **internal knowledge. It is the knowledge about the individual soul along with its modes of awareness or thoughts.** As per the Gita, this individual soul is not visible to the eyes, but it can be visualized using sophisticated electronic instruments. The basic essence of the individual soul is the inert energy alone, and that inert energy too, can be visualized through powerful instruments. The individual soul is non-inert because it is a specific work-form of the inert energy working in the functioning nervous system of a human being. The basic inert energy is called *Ātman* and the

specific work form of it is called *jīva* or the individual soul, which is a just a bundle of thoughts. **This internal knowledge is thus the knowledge of the imaginable-invisible, which can be seen using instruments.** (3) The third category is the knowledge about the **first mediated form of God, along with His Energetic and Human Incarnations.** The unimaginable God has entered and perfectly merged into the first energetic form created by Him in the upper world. That energetic form is the medium through which the unimaginable God becomes imaginable and visible to souls. The First Incarnation or the first mediated form of God is called *Īśvara* or Datta. Datta further merges with other selected energetic beings in the upper world and with human beings on earth to become Energetic and Human Incarnations of God, respectively. Note that the Energetic Incarnations, including Datta, are imaginable but invisible to human beings. They are visible only to angels, who themselves are energetic beings. The Human Incarnations of God are both imaginable and visible to human beings. **This category of knowledge is also called as the central knowledge or *kendra jñānam*.** *Īśvara* (Datta) is said to be at the centre of the universe, as He rotates this entire creation with His unimaginable power (*māyā*). This is stated in the Gita as “*Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām...*”. So, **this knowledge is the knowledge of the unimaginable God present as Incarnations possessing imaginable-visible and imaginable-invisible media.** (4) The fourth category of knowledge is the **knowledge of the existence of the ultimate unimaginable God, who is unimaginable and invisible. This knowledge is also called *turīya jñānam* or *mūla brahmajñānam*.** Actually, there is no difference between this fourth category and the above-mentioned third category because there is no difference between *Īśvara* and Parabrahman. The Parabrahman is the unimaginable-invisible God, who merges perfectly with energetic or human media, allowing energetic and human souls respectively, to see God through that medium. In other words, the unimaginable God becomes visible to souls through the respective media. **Thus, this knowledge is the knowledge of the unimaginable-invisible God.**

Chapter 19

MAHASATSANGA WITH ASSORTED DEVOTEES

September 14, 2019

Several devotees from various places, ranging from illiterate to highly qualified, came to Swami, seeking the clarification of their doubts in spiritual knowledge. Some of the prominent questions, along with the clarifications given by Swami, are given below.

1) If the intellect makes decisions, why does it not decide to stop us from committing sins?

[The intellect (*buddhi*) is the faculty of logical analysis and decision-making. In that case, why does it not prevent us while committing sins, by giving a sharp decision based on logical analysis?]

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! The intellect is responsible for conducting logical analysis and then making the correct decisions based on the analysis. The intellect places these decisions before the person in the context of performing any action, including sinful action. **But the intellect is only an advising authority, like the judge in the court.** The judgment alone is given by the judge in the court, while it is executed by other departments of the government. The judge is not the implementing authority for the judgement. In fact, we hear that there are several judgments given by courts, which have not been implemented yet. If crooked people bribe the implementing authorities or use political influence on them, the judgment never gets implemented. Similarly, the intellect gives the judgment, along with the accompanying logical analysis. **But the human being, being a collective group of executing systems, comes under the influence of the mind and the senses.** The mind and the senses prepare a counter-judgment, using false logical analysis. It supercedes the judgment given by the lone intellect. It is just like the judgment given by a bench of judges of a higher court superceding the judgment given by the single judge of the lower court.

Sometimes, the single judge of the lower court understands that the unjust party is too powerful. He knows that they are fully capable of going to the higher court and getting a favourable judgment. So, to avoid his own insult of being superceded by the higher court, the judge of the

lower court gives a judgment which is already in favour of the powerful unjust party. Similarly, the intellect also sometimes gives the wrong judgment using false analysis, in order to save its face from the insult of defeat. When the intellect decides to follow the desire of the mind, it is called '*manīṣā*'. *Manīṣā*' means the intellect that follows the trend of the mind (*Manonusāriṇī buddhiḥ manīṣā*).

The intellect is the husband or the head of the family. The mind is its wife. The five senses are the five children. When the wife (mind) joins with her five children (senses) and begins to support them, the husband cannot control the family. Being one against many, he is helpless and the result is that the entire family drowns, as told in the Gita (*Indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām...*). The mind controls the five non-inert senses (*jñānendriya*), which are touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. It also controls the five inert organs of action (*karmendriya*), which are mouth, hands, legs, anus and the sex organs. The five senses are like five sons and the five organs of action are like five daughters. If the mind, which is mother, can control her five sons, it has absolutely no difficulty in controlling her daughters too. When the mother joins forces with the five non-inert senses, the mother too becomes childish. Then, she is also to be counted as a child along with the five children. This point is stated in the Gita that there are six non-inert senses (children), which are mind and the five senses (*Manah Saṣṭhānīndriyāṇi...*).

So, what is the way to control a person from committing sins? The father (intellect) should know the laws of the government and should tell them to the mother (mind) along with the punishments for violating the laws. When logic fails, the only way left is to threaten with the consequences of wrong deeds, which are the punishments from the authorities. The authorities could be the human government or the supreme authority, God. If the intellect only points out to the punishments given by the government, the mind will say that such punishment is escapable. A talented advocate, who pleads any case for money, can easily help one escape punishment from a court. The mind's sinful tendency can only be controlled when the intellect threatens the mind with the inescapable punishment from God. Before the ultimate God, there are no arguments and no escape. **In the case of the human judiciary, the mind may say that the judges are neither omniscient nor omnipotent. So, there is no guarantee that the court will give the correct judgement and that the judgment will actually be**

implemented. That is why it is important for the intellect to point to the omniscient and omnipotent God. God has the unimaginable power to know the truth and to punish sin in unimaginable ways. When the intellect is impregnated with spiritual knowledge, it is in the state of *buddhi yoga*, which is also known as *sāṅkhya yoga* or *jñāna yoga*. The Gita begins with this *yoga* because, when the intellect (father) is filled with spiritual knowledge, it can control its family consisting of the mind (mother) and the senses (children). If the mind is controlled, the senses are also naturally controlled because when both parents stand together, the children have no choice but to obey. The father can never control the family, threatening his family with his own power since the family takes advantage of him due to his lenience. Actually, the father is not even as powerful as the external government. So, the fear of the law of the land can control the mind somewhat better. But God is far far more powerful than the intellect as said in the Gita (*Yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ*). He is more powerful than any human law and is, in fact, the most powerful. The Veda says that nothing and nobody can compare with God (*Na tat samah...*). **With the help of God, anything can control any other thing; anybody can control any other body.**

The Veda also gives a beautiful example to understand the relation between the intellect and mind. It compares the human body to a chariot. The individual soul is the owner sitting in the chariot. The intellect is the charioteer (driver). The mind is the reins that control the horses. The senses are the horses running ahead (*Atmānaṃ rathinaṃ viddhi...*). The Gita says that the charioteer should drive the chariot keeping the horses in control with the help of the reins, so that the owner can travel safely (*Yastvindriyāṇi...*).

Today, the government has completely neglected spiritual knowledge in education. Whatever little spiritual knowledge remains in education today, is confined to small philosophy departments. In reality, spiritual knowledge must be an important part of every department and every branch of education. It should not be isolated to a very small branch or department. Ancient kings ensured that spiritual knowledge constituted 75% of every branch of education. As a result of it, all citizens had an inbuilt resistance towards sin. **Governing such a self-controlled and justice-loving public was very easy.** It allowed the kings and administrators a lot of leisure time to enjoy fine arts instead of struggling to control the public through ever-increasing laws,

regulations, police stations and courts. Today, the blind governments are simply running after professional education. They do not even remember the name of spiritual knowledge! Totally neglecting prevention, they are only concentrating on the cure. Spending all their efforts on ineffective controlling agencies like the courts and the police, they have developed a wonderful false sense of satisfaction that they are providing employment opportunities to the public through those agencies. Of course, their ultimate aim is not fulfilled at all! Corruption, violence and crime are rising uncontrollably in society and courts are flooded with an endless sea of pending cases. Only a fool goes on eating sugar, while simultaneously taking anti-diabetic tablets and insulin injections! PREVENTION IS FAR FAR BETTER THAN CURE!

2) Why is there no maturity even among many old people?

Swami replied: Maturity is normally expected in old people because of the physical weakness of the body, which prevents them from practically committing sins. But this idea is not completely correct. The judgment given by the judge might, sometimes, not get implemented due to the inefficiency or incapability of the executing department. But it can get implemented whenever the department becomes capable, such as by recruiting new staff. The intellect is the judge, which, forced by the mind and senses, makes the decision to commit sin. However, the old and weak physical body is not able to practically commit the sin. The main issue, which is the decision or intention to commit sin, very much exists in the old person. The person's inability to act upon it, is only secondary. Therefore, one cannot rely on this so-called maturity of old people. Based on this very imperfect idea of maturity, there is a saying that an old man and an old woman are always chaste (*Satīvrato naro vrddhaḥ, vrddhā nārī pativrata*)! In fact, such a 'mature' person is a fraud as per the Gita (*Mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate—Gita*).

Real maturity is the result of the intensity of spiritual knowledge and not mere oldage. Of course, there is a possibility that old people may get some amount of this real maturity due to their long experience in life. By old age, the soul has a long account sheet of actions done in life and their corresponding results, which the soul can recollect. By analyzing several incidents in life, the soul begins to link causes with their corresponding effects.

Usually, by observing an effect, its cause can easily be traced if one has prior perception of the cause-effect relation between the two. One has already seen the fire, the smoke and the cause-effect link between the fire and the smoke in the kitchen. Based on this prior perception, one can infer the existence of the unseen fire on the mountain, upon observing smoke rising from it. But sometimes, even without actually having observed the link between cause and effect, cause-effect relations can be identified using the principle of similarity. Seeing a lump of gold and a golden chain side-by-side, one can infer gold to be the cause of the golden chain, even without any prior perception of the cause-effect link between the two. This inductive inference is based on the similarity between the two, which is that both the lump and the chain are gold.

The soul identifies the connection between the good and bad deeds done by it and the corresponding results received later, using this principle of similarity. Let us say that a person unnecessarily hurt another person. Later, the first person was also unnecessarily hurt in a similar manner, by someone else. Analyzing both these incidents, the person is able to infer the cause-effect link between his hurtful action and the subsequent suffering he had to face. Kalidāsa has said that the causes of effects can easily be inferred by the similarity in their natures (*Phalānumeyāḥ prārambhāḥ, saṃskārāḥ prāktanā iva*).

The long experience of old people provides them with several incidents in which they can identify such cause-effect relations and repeatedly verify them until they are firmly established. The essence of these firmly-established cause-effect relations is that both good and bad deeds yield their corresponding fruits to the doer, in due course, without fail. This concept is further reinforced by the concept of the existence of the unimaginable God who is omniscient and omnipotent. It is the omnipotent God, who grants the fruits of the actions of souls. He is the intelligent implementing authority. **The action, the fruits and their cause-effect links are all inert by themselves. They cannot be the intelligent implementing authority.** Old people realize that they have inevitably received the effects of their bad deeds. They realize that they were unable to escape from these God-given results, even though they had managed to escape the law of land through crooked tricks like bribery and the use of influence. Once this concept in spiritual knowledge, which is related to *pravṛtti* or worldly life, is well-

established in the person's mind, the person has gained some real maturity.

Such old people are capable of giving good advice to youngsters in society. Thus, in general, older people generally have a better understanding of the inevitability of the results of a person's deeds. But this general rule certainly has exceptions. A youngster with a higher I.Q. could arrive at the same understanding at a much younger age, after observing just a few incidents in life. The youngster also has the advantage of the advice of old people who have already reached this understanding after long years of experience. Such youngsters can get perfect knowledge, with the combination of *anumāna pramāṇa*, which is the inference from personal experiences and *śabda pramāṇa*, which is the advice from reliable elders. On the other hand, there are several people who are unable to analyze and arrive at this conclusion even in their oldage. They spend all their time worrying about their grand children and other worldly bonds (*Vṛddhastāvat cintāmanḡḥ—Śāṅkara*). Hence, the general rule that an old person gains maturity due to knowledge, has several exceptions on both sides!

Age does have some value in providing maturity through knowledge as old people have long experience and by analyzing their lives, they can reach the right conclusion. But age only provides a person with an opportunity to gain maturity. It does not necessarily bring maturity as there can be several exceptions. **Spiritual knowledge and logical analysis is the only reason for gaining true maturity, irrespective of age.** Kālidāsa has said that one can become old even before reaching old age (*Vṛddhatvaṃ jarasā vinā*). He was referring to gaining maturity even before reaching oldage. Hence, it is said that scholars are mature due to the spiritual knowledge they have gained (*jñāna vṛddha*) and not as a result of growing old (*vayo vṛddha*). Śāṅkara, a boy of sixteen years, advised an old scholar of ninety years near the temple at Kāśi by singing "*Bhaja Govindaṃ...mūḍhamate*". In this composition, the boy Śāṅkara addressed the old man as a fool! Śāṅkara was not being egotistic to call the old man a fool. He scolded the old man because the man had not gained maturity even at that old age, which was the fag end of his life. The situation was really horrible! If a student has not opened the text book throughout the year and refuses to open it even during the preparatory holidays just before the final exam, will you not scold that student?

It is said that, among scholars, the greatness in knowledge is respected and that, among agriculturists, the years of experience in agriculture is respected. **The years of experience have no value if the old person does not do any analysis.** Even a young person can very well gain the experience of an old person by studying the scriptures written by old people. **Of course, it is said that knowledge gained through experience is always stronger than the knowledge gained from books.** But if the youngster has full faith in the scriptures written by the elders, such bookish knowledge can also be very strong, even in the absence of personal experience. In this case, faith is the main factor instead of one's personal analysis of life experiences.

3) Swami, would You kindly accept our invitation to attend the function of repeatedly reciting the name of God Datta (Nāma Saptāham)?

Swami replied: Usually, I look forward to attending any function where God is worshipped, especially when it is a function dedicated to the worship of God Datta. But I am sorry to say, I will not be able to attend this specific function. The reason is that, in this specific function, you will be repeatedly reciting the name of God Datta for seven days continuously. If I call out your name in your ear continuously for seven minutes, will you not get a headache? Will you be able to bear that headache for seven days? Not only you, but I, the Person repeating your name will also get a terrible headache! Therefore, not only you, but also, the people in the neighboring houses will get a terrible headache. You will be afraid to accept this fact because you fear that by accepting it, God might be displeased with you. Then He might not give you your desired worldly boons. After all, you are conducting this function, bearing all the strain, only to get those boons from God! Somebody has advised you that God will grant your worldly desires, if you conduct such a function. Therefore, it is the attraction for your worldly desires this is forcing you to worship God in this way! You are able to hold your patience continuously for seven days only due to your attraction for your worldly desires and not due to your attraction for God!

Hanumān always remembered the name of Rāma and Rādhā always remembered the name of Krishna because they had developed the climax of attraction towards Rāma and Krishna respectively. They did not have any worldly desires. In your case, no such attraction for God has already developed. How can you then claim that you are

repeating the name of God due to your climax of attraction for God? **Actually, when there is not even a trace of attraction for God in you, where is the place for the climax-attraction?** You are only imitating Hanumān and Rādhā externally. But internally, there is lot of difference between you and both those climax-devotees. You have the climax of attraction towards worldly bonds whereas they had the climax of attraction towards God. You are repeating the name of God due to your attraction for fulfilling your worldly desires using God. You have faith that such worship will please God and that He will grant you your desired worldly boons. But God is omniscient and He knows whether you are worshipping Him in this manner due to your real climax of attraction for Him or not. You cannot fool the omniscient God by such artificial worship. Do you really think that God will be fooled into thinking that you are worshipping Him due to your climax of attraction towards Him? Pleased with such artificial worship, will He really grant your desired worldly boons? Only a human being with limited knowledge could be fooled in this manner. But God is not a human being to only see your external pretence of worship. He very well understands your internal motive behind the worship. He is omniscient and knows all that is present in your mind. He can never be fooled! The climax of attraction for God should be free of any aspiration. When God very clearly knows your aspiration for worldly boons hidden behind the tedious pretence of worship, will He be pleased with you or will He hate you?

In order to do such continuous worship of God, the essential prerequisite is having the climax of attraction for God. The continuous repetition of His name should only be due to your unlimited love and attraction for Him. **How can one achieve this climax-attraction for God?** The only way is by knowing more and more about the divine personality of God. This beginning stage of knowledge is *jñāna yoga*. It can be attained by reading the life histories of various Incarnations of God Datta. First, you should conduct this function, in which His life histories like the *Guru Charitram*, *Satcharitram* etc., are continuously read. Such reading will develop great interest in you for God Datta, which itself is the attraction towards God. The various incidents in the lives of devotees, in which God responded to them, will develop immense attraction to God Datta in your mind. This is the climax of love for God. When you hear about the behaviour of God Datta and the

background of His behavior from a Satguru, all your doubts regarding the personality of God get clarified thoroughly. It confirms your climax-devotion. This completes *jñāna yoga*, which generates intense theoretical devotion or *bhakti yoga* in you. With the help of *jñāna yoga*, you can recognize the contemporary Human Incarnation of God Datta because God comes in the form of a Human Incarnation in every human generation to avoid being partial to only a certain generation. You will find the same spiritual knowledge in the Human Incarnation of God Datta in your time. You will identify Him and surrender to Him by serving Him and practically sacrificing to Him. This service and sacrifice is *karma yoga*. Service and sacrifice done to statues and images of God certainly helps in developing theoretical devotion in you. But such *karma yoga* done to the representative models of God, is not received and enjoyed by God directly. Only the *karma yoga* done to the contemporary Human Incarnation of God is received and enjoyed by God directly and hence, it alone is the real *karma yoga*.

These three *yogas* are sequential and their correct order was clearly established by the three divine spiritual preachers, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva. Śaṅkara, who came first, emphasized *jñāna yoga*. Rāmānuja, who came later, emphasized *bhakti yoga* and Madhva, who came last, emphasized *karma yoga*. *Karma yoga* consisting of service (*karma samnyāsa*) and sacrifice (*karma phala tyāga*), stands as the proof of your real theoretical devotion for God. The proof is not needed by the omniscient God. It is only needed for the devotee, who realizes the true extent of his devotion.

Therefore, convert such *nāma saptāha* functions into *pārāyaṇa saptāha* functions by continuously reading the life histories of Incarnations of God. That way, people living in neighboring houses, your fellow-devotees participating in the function and you yourself will not get a headache, repeating the name of God. Instead, you will develop more and more interest in God. After becoming the climax-devotee of God, you will continuously utter the name of God, in a spontaneous and natural manner, due to your love for God and not due to the force of your worldly desires. We have an impression that devotees performed penance by repeating the name of God continuously and that God appeared before them to grant them any boon they desired. Do you know that God appeared before them, not due to His love for them, but because He was unable to bear the headache caused by the

devotees' continuous repetition of His name! Also, those boons given by God destroyed those devotees, in course of time. Real penance is the real interest in God. It is the love or devotion to God, which is based on the climax-attraction towards His divine personality, without aspiring for any fruit for oneself. The only fruit desired is God's happiness. People say that *japam* means repeating God's name continuously. But it is a totally wrong interpretation. Śaṅkara gave the correct interpretation by saying that *japam* means remembering His divine personality by repeatedly speaking (or reading) His stories (*Aviśrāntaṃ patyurguṇagaṇakathāṃredanaḥjapā*—Saundarya Laharī). Sage Nārada also mentioned this as the initial stage of devotion in his book, called the Bhakti Sūtram (*Tat kathā śravaṇādiṣu...*).

4) How can I follow Your advice and be patient towards a person who harmed me?

Swami replied: There are two ways of thinking, which will develop your patience towards your enemy.

- 1) The first way of thinking is as follows: *I do not know whether this is a fresh case, in which the enemy harmed me without any fault on my side or it is a case of retaliation, in which the enemy harmed me since I had harmed him in the previous birth. God is omniscient and knows all the births of every soul and hence, He can alone decide whether this is a fresh case or a case of retaliation. If this is a fresh case and if the person does not get reformed even after the time given to the person by God to reform, then God will certainly punish the person suitably. If this is a case of retaliation for the harm caused by me in the past life to the person, the case is now closed. My debt is cleared. It is always better to clear a debt as early as possible without further compounding interest. I should thank God for clearing my debt*". This is the path of spiritual knowledge. It is the best path for you if you can develop patience through spiritual knowledge and if you have firm faith in the divine administration of God, in which there will never be an error. This path is good for you, if you can conquer your anger, hatred and attitude of revenge against your enemy with the help of spiritual knowledge.
- 2) If you are unable to conquer your anger or hatred and develop patience by the above method, follow the second method. Assume that it is a case of retaliation and think in this manner, "*I must have*

certainly harmed my present enemy in my previous birth. In this life, he is merely harming me in return. So, the case is closed without any further delay. If this case had not been closed right now, I would have to be harmed by this enemy in future births. It would have been a terrible loss for me because delaying the punishment increases the punishment as it gathers interest.”. This is the best way for anybody to avoid the idea of revenge from the very beginning. **Even if you have a doubt that perhaps, this case might be a fresh case, you need not bother to take revenge. No sinner can escape the punishment of his or her sins in the divine administration of God, if the sinner has not reformed within the stipulated time provided by God for reformaton.**

You must realize that the loss caused by your enemy to you is never compensated in any way when you take revenge against your enemy. But if you conquer the thought of revenge, God will be pleased with you. He will compensate you for your loss, even if it is a case of harm done by the other person to you in return. If you show divine patience, God will give you this divine gift of compensation! The Kauravas had badly insulted Draupadi and God Krishna had already decided to destroy the Kauravas. It was a fresh case of a crime and not a case of a crime done in return. Even if Draupadi had managed to remain silent and patient, thinking that it was a case of a crime done in return, the Kauravas would have been killed by God, in any case. Draupadi would have been additionally rewarded by Krishna, by making her five sons become kings. But Draupadi always burned with terrible anger and a desire for revenge against the Kauravas. She wanted the Kauravas to be killed. For her attitude of revenge, not only the wicked Kauravas, but even Draupadi was punished by God. Draupadi's five sons were killed by Aśvatthāmā after the war. Thus, the sons of Draupadi could not become kings. The absence of the attitude for revenge brings a gift from God and presence of the attitude of revenge brings unnecessary extra punishment from God. That is why Jesus said that one should leave the revenge to God and that one should not take revenge against one's enemy.

5) Is the non-retaliation for harm done to us, a sign of our patience or weakness?

If someone slaps us on one cheek and we show them the other cheek, is it a sign of our patience or incapability to retaliate? Also, in responding to people who

harm us, which policy should we follow? The ends-justify-means policy or means-justify-ends policy?

Swami replied: There are three stages in the spiritual development of souls. They are *nivṛtti*, which is the highest stage, *pravṛtti*, which is the middle stage and *duṣpravṛtti*, which is the lowest stage. Within each of these three stages or levels, there are two sub-levels. **Thus, there are totally six sub-levels of souls namely, the highest, higher, high, low, lower and lowest.**

- 1) ***Nivṛtti*** contains the first two sub-levels, which are the highest and the higher souls. Prahlāda is an example of a soul belonging to the highest sub-level and he represents pure *nivṛtti*. He depended only on God for both worldly matters and spiritual matters. He possessed extreme patience and not even a trace of the attitude for revenge. Below this highest level, the ‘higher’ level as indicated above, also falls within *nivṛtti*. King Janaka is a good example of this level. He was influenced by *pravṛtti* to a small extent. He had a relation with God for spiritual matters, but he depended only on the ethical scriptures of *pravṛtti* for worldly matters. For Prahlāda, God was greater than justice, whereas for King Janaka, God and justice were equal.
- 2) ***Pravṛtti*** contains the next two sub-levels of souls namely the high and the low. High souls like Yudhiṣṭhira, mainly depend on the ethical scriptures of *pravṛtti*. They maintain some relation with God but only as long as it does not mean breaking the ethical laws. Low souls like Vāli depend on the ethical scriptures to a major extent but they also sometimes commit sins as a result of misunderstanding the ethical scriptures. For Yudhiṣṭhira, justice was greater than God. For Vāli, committing a sin for the sake of his own ego was greater than both God and justice.
- 3) ***Duṣpravṛtti*** contains the lower and the lowest souls. Lower souls like Duryodhana depend on the ethical scriptures only to a minor extent. They commit many sins out of selfishness. The lowest souls like Rāvaṇa completely neglect the ethical scriptures and commit sins out of sadism, even when committing the sins does not provide any selfish benefit to them.

Prahlāda, King Janaka, Yudhiṣṭhira, Vāli, Duryodhana and Rāvaṇa each represent the six levels of souls in descending order. It is easy to convert Janaka in to Prahlāda while it is difficult to convert Yudhiṣṭhira into Prahlāda. The difficulty increases as we proceed further in the

descending order and it is almost impossible to convert Rāvaṇa in to Prahlāda.

Souls of each level have different psychologies. **While advising souls, it is important to ensure that the advice given to any soul is suitable to the level of the soul. The advice should be such that it helps the person rise one level above the present. The soul will find it easier to adopt such advice. Advice related to a much higher level should not be given to a soul.** To a soul belonging to *duṣpravṛtti*, if you give advice relevant to the highest level in *nivṛtti*, it will not be of the slightest use. It would be like trying to show the sun to a born-blind person! Similarly, you cannot make a soul belonging to the level of *nivṛtti* fall to the level of *duṣpravṛtti* by giving any sort of wrong advice either. However, souls belonging to the middle level of *pravṛtti* may rise to the level of *nivṛtti* or fall to the level of *duṣpravṛtti* based on correct or wrong advice given to them respectively. Of course, your advice must always be directed to help the soul rise higher from *duṣpravṛtti* to *pravṛtti* and finally to *nivṛtti*. But you should seek to make only gradual, step-by-step changes in the person. Drastic advice, related to a much higher level should be avoided. Careful planning is necessary before advising any person. It is important to study that specific soul from all angles. Formulating the advice to be given to a specific soul in a specific situation is, thus, a very delicate matter. This complexity in judging any situation has been mentioned in the Gita (*Gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*).

Whether you should follow the ends-justify-means policy or the means-justify-ends policy, depends on your sharp analysis of the whole situation from all angles. Krishna followed the ends-justify-means policy because He was the omniscient God. He clearly knew that the Kauravas were demons who were committing new sins and not sins in return for sins done to them in the past. But an ordinary human being should not imitate God because the soul's judgment is always biased, leaning towards selfishness. So, let us say that a person harmed you. You cannot claim that the person is necessarily bad. Following the ends-justify-means policy, you cannot stab that person in the back claiming that killing the person anyhow is fine since he is bad. The reality is that you cannot judge whether the person is good or bad. The person might not actually be bad and he might have only harmed you in return for the harm done by you to him in the past life. Rāma, hiding behind a tree, shot an arrow and killed Vāli. But Rāma was the omniscient God. He

knew that Vāli was bad. He also knew that there was no other way to kill Vāli since Vāli could not be killed by anyone facing him, owing to a boon. But you are not omniscient like Rāma or Krishna. So, you should not exploit the ends-justify-means policy.

An ordinary human being should take the help of the Sadguru to make the correct decision in such personal cases as said in the Veda (*Atha yadi te...Brāhmaṇāḥ sammārshinah...*). You should not take the law in to your own hands in your personal cases. Regarding the punishment of souls belonging to the level of *duṣpravr̥tti*, who are harming society, you can act as per your capacity. If you are not capable of punishing them, you must pray to God to punish such demons-in-human-form. With souls of the middle level of *pravr̥tti*, you should be patient. Finally, you should never misunderstand the souls of the upper level of *nivr̥tti*.

Regarding how you should react to people belonging to the middle level who harm you, you can follow one of the following two paths. (1) The first path is that if the person slaps you on one cheek, you can show him the other cheek. (2) The second path is to give him a slap in return. Which path you choose should be based on studying the nature of your opponent. If there is some element of good knowledge in the opponent, the first path will give a good result. But if your opponent is totally bad, the second path is more appropriate. Mahatma Gandhi followed the first path in the case of the British because they were Christians who followed the philosophy of Jesus. Jesus prayed to God to even excuse the cruel people crucifying Him! Due to this divine background of their culture, the British people bowed to Mahatma Gandhi and the first path adopted by him worked. Shri Subhash Chandra Bose followed the second path, which was not necessary in the case of Christians. Bose's path would have been correct only if the enemies had been cruel souls who did not have any background of true spiritual knowledge. Kālidāsa has said that a bad person can only be controlled with a counter-attack and not by any goodness shown to him in return (*Shāmyet pratyapakāreṇa, nopakāreṇa durjanah*). It basically means that a dog only understands the language of a dog!

[As Swami was dictating these two messages (September 14, 15, 2019) in Hyderabad and Shri PVNM Sharma was typing them, Shri Phani, in Vijayawada, had a shocking vision in which he saw a very bright light. He saw Swami with a golden color sitting on a golden chariot and radiating golden light. Shri Phani phoned Swami asking Him why he had received this vision. Swami told Shri Phani that He is

Shri Datta Swami

Sri Datta Jnana Prachara Parishat

forwarding these two messages to Shri Phani as a reply. Swami told him that the golden light represents the best and most supreme spiritual knowledge].

Chapter 20

GOD'S GRACE IS GREATER THAN HIS VISION

September 15, 2019

Smt. Bindiya wrote: *Shat shat praṇām* to Almighty Swamiji! I have full faith and believe that You are the true Human Incarnation of Lord Datta. There is no doubt in my mind and it is a fact for me now. I established this truth after analysing Your preaching and Your miracles which are not possible for any human being to do.

Now, I am not keen to know the ifs and buts of life and history. I am not intrigued why what happened in the past, be it in the Mahabharata age or the Ramayana age. I don't want to know what happens after life or what happened before. For me, it is just important that You have chosen to reveal Yourself to me and nothing can be bigger than that. My only desire is to have your *sākṣāt darśan* and live life on the path guided by You, where I do not commit any sin.

Please let me know if I am wrong in not having the thirst for knowing the Purāṇas or the Vedas? For me, You are everything, the ultimate truth and the divine unimaginable power and I cannot even attempt to understand You. I want to only remember You and do prayers in Your name, nothing else.

Two Divine Programs of Incarnations

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Replying to your letter becomes a very complicated matter because your belief in the Human Incarnation is the most perfect climax-concept. It is the essence of the Gita, in which Krishna repeatedly said that He is the God-in-human-form to be recognized and served. Krishna cannot be misunderstood for saying that because God came as Krishna specifically to explain the nature of God-in-human-form. That is why Krishna is called a *Līlā Mānuṣāvātāra*, which means an Incarnation that has come to reveal the nature of God. Krishna gave excellent spiritual knowledge in the form of the Gita, showed the extreme love He had for His devotees and demonstrated several miracles, whenever He felt the necessity. He did not perform miracles simply to satisfy the desire of devotees to solve their selfish worldly problems. The knowledge, love and miracles exhibited by Him are the three inherent characteristics of God Brahmā, God Viṣṇu and God Śiva respectively. They are the three basic signs of God Datta, as seen in all His Human Incarnations. It is

God Datta Himself who exists in the upper world in the form of the Divine Trinity of God Brahmā, God Viṣṇu and God Śiva. The form of God Datta with the three faces of the Divine Trinity indicates this concept. In His life, Krishna exhibited these three inherent signs of God Datta.

The unimaginable God (Parabrahman) merged with the first energetic form in the upper world to become Datta. Datta means the unimaginable God 'given' to the world of energetic beings for their clear perception. Datta is also known as Īśvara and He is omnipotent like the unimaginable God. Actually, there is not the slightest difference between Datta and the unimaginable God since Datta is the mediated God. He is the same unimaginable God who has reached out to souls through the medium of the energetic body. This God Datta further merges with a selected human being on earth to become a Human Incarnation of God. Krishna, who was also known as Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva, was such a Human Incarnation of Datta. Thus, Krishna was Īśvara and He was also Parabrahman. There is not the slightest difference between Parabrahman and God Datta and there is not the slightest difference between God Datta and Krishna. Krishna is indeed the unimaginable God, Parabrahman. Hence, we salute to Shri Krishna Parabrahman (*Shri Krishna Parabrahmaṇe namaḥ*).

The same God Datta had earlier become Rāma, another Human Incarnation. Rāma is known to be an Ādarśa Mānuṣāvātāra, which means an Incarnation of God whose aim is only to be an example of an ideal human being in worldly life (*pravṛtti*). While Krishna frequently exhibited Himself as God, Rāma mostly exhibited Himself as an ideal human being. Both Rāma and Krishna indicate the dual behaviour of the human form of God. There are two different programs adopted by God while preaching to humanity in the form of His Incarnations, based on two different aims. (1) The first program aims to confirm the faith of devotees in the existence of the unimaginable God. This is done by the Incarnation exhibiting divine behaviour like Krishna. (2) The second program is to stand as an ideal human being. In this case, the Incarnation like Rāma, preaches the basic knowledge of *pravṛtti*, which is the foundation of justice and peace in society. **Every Incarnation acts as God as well as a devoted ideal human being, even though one of the roles might be seen more frequently in a certain Incarnation.** Even Krishna, who often revealed Himself to be God, also behaved like a

devoted human being. In order to get a child through His wife Rukmiṇī, He performed penance to please God Śiva. Similarly, Rāma, who usually behaved as a devoted human being, also behaved like God on the occasion of turning a stone into the lady Ahalyā, who was the wife of Sage Gautama. But the major part of Krishna's life was meant to prove the existence of the unimaginable-omnipotent-omniscient God. His penance to please God was only a rare incident. Similarly, the major part of Rāma's life was only to exhibit the behaviour of an ideal human devotee in *pravṛtti*. The miracle performed by Him was only a rare incident. Thus, the major program of each Human Incarnation is always pre-planned. The major program of Śaṅkara was to propagate real spiritual knowledge in the world in order to convert atheists into theists. Apart from this major program of the propagation of true spiritual knowledge, He also performed some miracles, now and then. He made golden fruits to rain in the yard of a poor lady who possessed real devotion. It showed both His love for His devotee as well as His miraculous power. **Similarly, the major program of God Datta through this Datta Swami is to bring out the correct interpretations of various concepts in spiritual knowledge and to correlate all the world religions by establishing the Universal Religion for world peace.**

God-in-human-form always sticks to His main program. Rāma always tried to hide His divine personality because His main program was to act like an ideal human devotee. An ideal human devotee should aim to please God by not committing any sin and by always supporting justice in the worldly life of *pravṛtti*. When the sages in the forest praised Rāma as God, He replied that He was only an ordinary human being (*Ātmānaṃ mānuṣaṃ manye*). If He had accepted that He was God, His main program would have been disturbed. But Rāma is said to be an embodiment of truthfulness (*Satyavādī ca Rāghavaḥ*). Then, how did He lie to sages? We cannot even say that Rāma forgot that He was God because God can never forget or be ignorant. He is always omniscient (*Sa sarvajñaḥ...—Veda*). **In this case, it is proper to choose the option of saying that Rāma was omniscient, but He only told a lie to save His main program.**

Neutralizing Ego and Jealousy

There is also another point in this context. If the Human Incarnation reveals Himself to be God, in the course of time, even devotees will develop jealousy towards Him, owing to their ego. That jealousy can be neutralised by telling such a lie. The safety and spiritual progress of the devotee is more important than merely speaking the truth. The ethical scripture of *pravṛtti* also says that in order to protect the higher justice, the lower justice can be sacrificed. For instance, one can speak tell a lie in order to prevent a good person from getting harmed. Hence, any Incarnation of God Datta shows a dual nature by behaving as a devotee like Rāma or behaving as God like Krishna. The Incarnation behaving like a devotee represents the path to be followed by souls and the Incarnation behaving like God represents the Goal, who should be worshipped by all souls. For any given Incarnation, the main program might be any one of the two.

The jealousy of a human devotee towards the human form of God is quite natural. It is merely the repulsion between the two common human media of God and the devotee. Another way of neutralising the devotee's jealousy that arises out of the devotee's ego is that the Human Incarnation should express dualism. In other words, the Human Incarnation should differentiate between the human-component and the God-component within the Incarnation. He should only claim to be the human-component and say that it is the God-component alone who is giving the excellent spiritual knowledge and performing miracles to help devotees due to God's immense love for them. In fact, in the Human Incarnation of God, the God-component perfectly merges with the human being-component and there is no duality. It is this monism alone which satisfies the few climax-devotees, who had wished to directly see God and speak with Him. But, in order to neutralize the jealousy of the devotees, a lie is told that there is a duality between God and the human medium and such a lie told for a beneficial purpose is not wrong. **The Guru or the preacher always looks for their welfare of devotees and does not bother about whether it is the truth or a beneficial lie that He is preaching.** Contrary to this, a scholar is never worried about the welfare of devotees since he only cares about the truth in his preaching.

Getting the Grace of Swami

God Datta, through this medium called Datta Swami or Swami, generated faith in you by saying that He is always present with you in your house. He produced the divine scent of lotus flowers in your house, which you experienced and which stand as the proof of His presence with you. He also helped you to come out of your financial difficulties. God uses miraculous powers to help a devotee overcome worldly problems and to strengthen the devotee's faith, provided God has full confidence that the devotee will make sincere efforts for spiritual progress. God will never perform miracles just because the devotee desired for them.

When excellent spiritual knowledge (*prajñānam*) becomes your basis for recognizing God-in-human-form, you are on the most correct path towards God. The true spiritual knowledge alone gives the correct direction in worldly life (*pravṛtti*), which is the first part of the journey and in spiritual life (*nivṛtti*), which is the final part of the journey. This spiritual knowledge is the greatest gift given by God to the devotee. All other things are not necessary. Seeing the human form of God or even seeing the energetic form of God Datta existing in the Human Incarnation is of no use. Rāvaṇa saw God Śiva, whereas Rāma could not see God Śiva at any time. Yet, God Śiva blessed Rāma and not Rāvaṇa. Seeing God is not at all important, but achieving the grace of God by practically following the spiritual knowledge preached by Him is of real benefit for a devotee.

The Human Incarnation is indeed the most convenient form of God because we can see Him, talk to Him and clear our doubts and serve Him directly. This is the biggest advantage. At the same time, there is a big disadvantage. The disadvantage is that the external human medium of God is similar to our own human body and there is repulsion between the like media. We observe that the Incarnation too undergoes common natural processes related to the medium, like birth, hunger, thirst, sleep, disease and death. Yet, the Incarnation is worshipped as God, whereas we are mere souls. We cannot tolerate this difference due to our ego. It gives rise to jealousy in our mind, which is the repulsion of common media. This repulsion damages our faith in the Human Incarnation.

Without this external human medium, we lose the biggest advantage of seeing, talking and serving God. With it, we also have to

face the biggest disadvantage of the repulsion of the common medium, side by side. But this disadvantage of repulsion has a purpose. It filters away undeserving devotees, who are not able to accept the Human Incarnation due to their ego and jealousy. It also makes deserving devotees overcome their jealousy, in due course of time. Unless devotees conquer their ego-based jealousy, they cannot perfectly realize the Human Incarnation. Human beings are attracted to Energetic Incarnations due to the absence of the repulsion of the common medium. But the Energetic Incarnation is relevant only to energetic beings or angels in the upper worlds. The Human Incarnation alone is relevant to humanity. Moreover, you only be able to see and talk to an Energetic Incarnation which appears for a very short time, but you cannot serve the Energetic Incarnation directly. Energetic beings in the upper worlds also face the same disadvantage of the repulsion of the common medium. Both the energetic beings and the Energetic Incarnations have similar energetic bodies which are the source of the repulsion. So, the energetic beings wish to be born as human beings and worship the Human Incarnation! The final result is that human beings miss the Human Incarnation here and after death, when they take on energetic bodies, they miss the Energetic Incarnation there! Thus, the Incarnation of God present in a common medium simultaneously has the biggest advantage as well as the biggest disadvantage. Churing the Milk Ocean simultaneously yields both the divine nectar, *amṛtam* as well as the deadliest poison, *halāhala!*

Chapter 21

SWAMI ANSWERS DEVOTEES' QUESTIONS

September 29, 2019

1) Should God be loved as a Master or a Son?

[Padanamaskaram Swami! You have said that one should keep the Lord in place of one's child so that one's love towards the Lord becomes natural. The Gopikās showed exactly this type of love and served the Lord like a family member. On other hand, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān served the Lord like slaves, considering Him to be their Master. It means, they were always in the alert mode. These two types of love appear to be quite opposite. How can we understand this difference? Your servant, Durgaprasad]

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Parents too are slaves to their children as they serve their children. In fact, their service is greater than the service done by a slave. The mother washes the child's bottom after excretion, whereas a servant would generally hesitate to do it. The master pays a limited salary to his servants as per the quality and quantity of their service. On the other hand, children pay nothing to their parents. Instead, parents transfer their entire property to their children, in addition to serving them, even if the grown-up children do not serve them in their old age! I do not find much difference between the two types of devotion. What matters is how much and how pure is the devotion of the devotee. Perhaps it could be argued that parents serve their children and transfer their wealth to them because of their blood relationship. On the other hand, slaves have no blood relationship with their masters. So, it is better to take the example of the love of parents for an adopted child, where there is no blood relationship. Yet, the parents serve the adopted child and give all their earnings to the child. **Whether the service and sacrifice are real (unselfish) or not, is determined by whether the child is an adopted child or one's own born child.**

So, the love for an adopted child is the highest and should be kept as the goal. God should be treated as one's adopted son, which is the actual meaning of the word Datta. Datta means an adopted son. God wants to become Datta, your adopted Son. If you consider Him to be your adopted Son, you will do at least some real service and sacrifice for

Him and as a fruit of the same, He will uplift you. But, due to their terrific knowledge of economics and commerce, devotees are extremely alert in noticing the real sacrifice and service that exists in the relationship between parents and an adopted child. Cleverly, they reverse the parent-child bond, making Datta as their adopting Parent, instead of their adopted Son, so that God will serve them and give wealth to them, even if their behaviour is wrong! **However, the word Datta only means an adopted child and not adopting parents.** There are ten types of sons or children mentioned in the scriptures including *aurasa*, *kṛtrima*, *kṣetraja*, *gūḍhotpanna*, *datta* and so on. People usually have practical and aspiration-free devotion only towards their issues (children). This issue-devotion (*apatya bhakti*) is the highest type of devotion. The devotee should always try to proceed on the path of developing such devotion, especially while serving God and sacrificing one's wealth to Him. It does not matter which type of relation you may choose to have with Him. Whether you love Him as your Son, Master, Brother or any other relation, the value of the devotion depends on how much practical and aspiration-free devotion you have for Him. In other words, whatever relation you choose to have with God, you should only have issue-devotion for Him. The amount of issue-devotion in any relation that a devotee has for God, decides its value. Sugar can be molded into various shapes and forms like that of a parrot, swan or a donkey. But finally, it is only the amount of sugar in any of those molded forms that decides its price; not the form. One kilogram of the sugar-swans costs the same as one kilogram of sugar-donkeys!

2) Can Prophet Mohammed be considered to be the last Incarnation, Kalki?

Shri Durgaprasad asked: A Muslim preacher Zakir Naik claims, Prophet Mohammed was the last Prophet even as per Hinduism, because it is said in Hinduism that the Lord will come as last Incarnation, Kalki. Of course, Zakir Naik picks up quotations from the scriptures of other religions, selectively, to suit his purpose. Swami, can you please tell us, what is the significance of the Incarnation of Lord Kalki, when the Lord has also said that He will come again and again.

Swami replied: We belong to Universal Spirituality and we do not have even the slightest objection in calling Prophet Mohammed as the Human Incarnation of God. Kalki is only the name of one Human Incarnation. Even if Kalki is actually different from the Prophet, it does not make any difference, because both the future Kalki and the past

Prophet are equal in the sense that both are Human Incarnations of God. Kalki is only a name and any newborn child can be named Kalki. But there is a similarity between Kalki and the Prophet. Both use the sword to bring spiritual reformation in the world. Kalki is the last Incarnation who will destroy the world, causing its final dissolution (*mahā pralaya*). But before that, God will come again and again as different Human Incarnations, whenever there is a requirement (*Yadāyadāhi...*—Gita).

3) How can we overcome our worldly problems?

[Padanamaskaram Swamiji! Thank you Swamiji for granting this life and access to this wonderful knowledge. Swamiji, I have been reading Your discourses for the past few years, in which I have found a lot of wonderful information, different perspectives, underlying meaning and so on. I have a few questions, which I have presented below. My questions are basically related to how one can practically tackle worldly problems. My view is that we get problems because of our past deeds. So, there are two paths one can take. (1) The first is to realize that the omniscient God Dattātreya has arranged problems in our lives, which are the fruits of our past deeds, in best possible way so as to uplift us spiritually. So, if we ask Lord Dattātreya to remove those problems, it is a direct insult to God, His divine administration and the effort and interest He has shown in teaching us spiritual knowledge. The problems too are His practical teaching for us and if we ask Him to remove the problems, we are asking Him to alter His best judgement. (2) The second path is to adopt the option of temporarily removing the present difficulty through prayers. This second option is also given to us by our kindest Lord. As per this option, God will temporarily remove our present difficulty, provided we are deserving. He does so by borrowing some good fruit of our own deeds from future and bringing it into the present. The intensity of the difficulty can also be reduced by doing remedial action (*parihāram*) to the planets. This reduced intensity is also based on the person's deservingness and involves the borrowing of good fruit from the person's own future.

Inspite of knowing this wonderful knowledge described in the first path, I am still failing to tackle my problem when they get intense. It disturbs my mental peace and leads me to adopt the second path. I feel guilty whenever I use this second path. I am trying my best not to adopt the second path, but sometimes, I fail.

Swami, how can I enjoy happiness and misery equally? You have given the wonderful example of a movie, where we equally enjoy happiness and misery. How can we practically implement it in *pravṛtti*? How can we treat worldly activities as *māyā*? I have understood that if we are attached to the fruit, we will inevitably face tensions. Yet sometimes, I fail to achieve detachment, when the problems get intense. How can we detach ourselves from them practically, Swami?

Are all these questions arising in my mind because of not having proper faith in God? Is this a test by God? Am I on the correct spiritual path? I am entangled in all these thoughts and am confused. Please help me and remove my ignorance, Swami. Regards, Nava Chaitanya]

Swami replied: God has absolutely no objection for canceling the fruits of all the sins of all souls and granting only the fruits of their merits, so that all souls will always be happy. He is not bothered about the systematic arrangement of the fruits of deeds or the good reputation of His administration. In fact, God had kept all souls happy in the *kr̥ta yuga* by keeping all souls under His full control, so that no soul could commit any sin. All souls, which are His children, thus, remained constantly happy. That way, He did not even have to interfere with the divine administration by cancelling the fruits of the sins committed by souls, in order to keep them happy. There was no violation of the divine administration because, when souls never committed sins and only did righteous deeds, giving constant happiness to them is perfectly justified. So, not only had God kept all souls constantly happy during the *kr̥ta yuga*, but He also did it without getting the bad name of violating His own administration. However, the continuous happiness bored the souls and they were craving for a change. How would it be, if God only created sugar for food and not salt, chillies, tamarind and other items with different tastes? **Boredom is also a type of misery.** God, the divine Father, never wants to cause any misery to His children.

Souls wanted a change from the constant happiness they were enjoying. Wanting a change from happiness means wanting misery, which is the fruit of sin. Now, God did not create any sinful atmosphere at all, to provoke His children to commit sins. He only relaxed His strict control over His children and gave them a little freedom. That freedom granted by God became the path to misery, which was the change from the continuous happiness that the souls had desired. At the same time, God personally descended in the form of Incarnations, several times, to preach against committing sins, which would lead to unbearable misery. What more can any father do for his children? Hence, the possibility of souls committing sins was opened by God by granting them some freedom. It was done only in the interest of the welfare of the souls. It was not done for the sake of His own fame or the fame of His administration.

To support this change, God also arranged for the good and bad fruits of the deeds of souls, to be delivered to them alternately during

each life-cycle. That way, there is a frequent change from happiness to misery and back to happiness. This avoids boredom, which would be inevitable if any one of them persisted. Thus, God maximized the entertainment of all souls. But, in spite of this ideal arrangement, if some people cannot bear the misery when it comes or they want a change from it, they can worship the astrological planets (deities). This is done by distributing some food items among beggars. The food items to be distributed are made of the specific grains corresponding to specific planets. Such donation of food develops the attitude of service and sacrifice for the needy.

People have different psychologies due to their different stages of spiritual maturity and we cannot forcibly bring uniformity in the paths adopted by people who belong to different levels. A person having lower maturity uses astrological remedies to temporarily get rid of the problems. A person having a higher maturity enjoys even the miseries, by the grace of God. **The ability to enjoy both happiness and misery to equal extents is possible only for the person who has been charged by God. For this Incarnation of God, the entire world other than Him becomes non-existent, even though it is visualized as if it were real. With God's grace, such a view can even come to a devotee who is not charged by God.**

But for the ordinary soul, the rest of the world is equally true and hence, such equality in the enjoyment (*yoga*) of both happiness and misery cannot be achieved. The state can be achieved only with a combination of **human effort and God's grace**. This state is the highest stage because in it, you become equal to God in that one aspect of equally enjoying both happiness and misery in creation, just as you enjoy both comedy and tragedy in a movie. This is the only monism that the soul can attain with God. Total monism can never be attained by any devotee other than the devotee selected by God to become a Human Incarnation. No soul can have the power to create, control and dissolve the world. These three cosmic functions can only be done by God and they always remain impossible for the soul. A servant is unable to create and direct the movie, but he can sit along with his boss, the producer and director, to watch and enjoy the movie with a sense of equality towards the comedies and tragedies in it. **This simile also has its limitations because a devotee can enjoy the comedy and tragedy in this world-cinema only by the grace of God.** Your perplexity will end if you

analyze My spiritual knowledge with patience and apply the suitable portions to the proper situations in life. Each concept should be applied in the right situation and not elsewhere. **Hasty application of all the concepts, without discrimination, will create confusion.**

4) Is the so-called Gāyatrī Mantra, actually the Savitr Mantra?

[A question by Dr. Nikhil]

Swami replied: You are perfectly correct. In fact, in the traditional ritual, the young boy who is to be initiated into the study of the Veda, formally asks his father to give him the Sāvitrī Mantra (*Sāvitrīm anubrūhi*). Sāvitrī Mantra is the hymn in praise of the deity called Savitā, which means the Creator of the world. That hymn is not the actual *gāyatrī* but is merely a verse written in the *gāyatrī* meter. This Sāvitrī hymn is popularly known as Gāyatrī Mantra. This name is so popular that I hardly find anyone calling it Sāvitrī Mantra. Actually, in the Sāvitrī Mantra, *gāyatrī* is only the name of the meter. This name of the meter is used for the *mantra* only for the sake of identification (*saṃjñā*) because the meaning of the word *gāyatrī* is not applicable in the case of that *mantra*. Neither is *gāyatrī* the name of the deity worshipped through that *mantra* nor is the meaning of the word *gāyatrī* applicable in the case of that *mantra*. The deity worshipped through that *mantra* is Savitā and the actual meaning of *gāyatrī* is singing sweet praises of God for receiving His protection (*Gāyantam trāyate*).

Gāyatrī cannot even be a deity in the general sense because it only means a specific mode of worship, which is singing. The word *gāyatrī* can also mean she who protects souls (*Gayān trāyate*). In this, the means to please God is not mentioned. So, you can combine both these definitions and say that *gāyatrī* means the particular mode of worship involving the singing of the praises of God, which pleases God and brings His protection upon the soul.

Some say that the light of the sun is mentioned in the *mantra* (*Savituh...bhargah*). *Bhargah* means creation or power. So, they claim that a creation (power) is mentioned in it, which is a different deity, other than God. Creation is the only item existing other than God. God merges with a selected part of creation in order to become perceivable to devoted souls. God only merges with a part of the creation (power) and He becomes visible only through that power, which becomes His medium for expression. In fact, creation, which is the product-form of His power, is non-existent if you give a separate place to it. If you take

the power in its causal form, it is the very God Himself. God is unimaginable and His power is also unimaginable. There cannot be two unimaginable items. The unimaginable can only be one. So, the unimaginable God and His unimaginable power must be one. The power in product form is stressed here. It means the medium or body of God's Incarnation, which is the only way for us to perceive God.

The name 'Sāvitrī Mantra' really gives us good reason to say that this *mantra* is not Gāyatrī Mantra, even if you call it *gāyatrī* based on the name of its meter. If you have written a verse in praise of Krishna in the meter, called *śārdūla vikrīḍitam*, would you call the verse a prayer to Krishna or a prayer to *śārdūla vikrīḍitam*? It is also said that the three deities of morning, noon and evening are called Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī, respectively. Even in that case, you cannot call this *mantra* which is recited at these three times of the day, as Gāyatrī or Sāvitrī or even both since Sarasvatī would be missing!

5) Why would God value faith over doubt?

[A question by Shri Ngherappa]

Swami replied: Doubt is most welcome, but the discussion should remove the doubt and create faith. **Doubt is the seed, discussion is the grown tree and faith is the final fruit of the tree.** The fruit is naturally given the highest importance. Blind faith is the rotten, poisonous fruit lying by the side of the road. The person who wants to avoid the hard work of growing the tree (discussion), is fascinated by the rotten fruit fallen by the roadside. **Faith obtained after a long discussion from all angles, is certainly the healthiest fruit and it gives you the healthiest fortune.** Hence, you must start with doubt alone and not with blind faith even if the blind faith is an old tradition. Just because a blind belief was held by people for a very long time, it does not mean that it becomes correct. The length of time that a belief has been held does not, in any way, contribute to its correctness. Perhaps, a tenant occupying your rented house might be in a position to use his long duration of occupation to claim some right to the house. But the darkness residing in a closed room for even a hundred years, is forced to vanish in a fraction of the second when sunlight enters the room. The darkness cannot claim its right to continue to occupy the room! Similarly, a false concept, blindly followed by the public for several generations as a tradition, cannot be claimed to be correct based on that long duration. This example was given by Śaṅkara. If you do not make any effort to clear

your doubt through discussion, you will only be left with the seed, which will get rotten, in the course of time (*samśayātmā vinasāyī*—Gita). The Satguru or the contemporary Human Incarnation is the best to clarify all types of doubts in the most perfect way.

6) How can I become a disciple of Shri Datta Swami? Is it possible without actually meeting Him?

[A question by Anupam Kumar]

Swami replied: The best student of Guru Droṇa was Ekalavya, who never saw or learnt anything directly from Guru Droṇa. His marvelous faith in the teacher made him an excellent warrior. Even this example is too big for our case. The training in martial arts involving a bow and arrow requires the teacher to demonstrate certain things practically. But the subject being discussed by us is theoretical spiritual knowledge, in which there is no such requirement of any practical demonstration. Of course, in the beginning, some practical demonstration is required wherein the Human Incarnation performs certain miracles. The miracles develop some initial faith among the devotees to overcome the starting trouble of any Incarnation. God Datta existing in Me, demonstrated certain miracles to attract some devotees initially. Later on, He has been delivering this excellent spiritual knowledge through Me. The One who demonstrated those miracles and the One who is preaching this excellent spiritual knowledge is indeed the ultimate unimaginable God (Parabrahman) Himself. He entered Me through God Datta. God is unimaginable to the mind, not to speak of being invisible to the eyes. While performing some miracles, God Datta appeared in Me, as an Energetic Incarnation for some time. The unimaginable God or Parabrahman, who is the actual Performer of the miracles and the actual Preacher of the spiritual knowledge, exists in a perfectly merged state in God Datta.

There are a few devotees, who have developed unimaginable faith in Me, even without seeing a single miracle and their faith was based on this excellent spiritual knowledge. Jesus has said that devotees who believe without seeing any miraculous proof are far more blessed than those who believe only after seeing some miraculous proof. If you read all My spiritual knowledge with utmost care and follow it in practice, you are completely successful, even if you do not see Me. Rāvaṇa saw God Śiva but was not blessed by Him. Rāma did not see God Śiva, but was blessed by Him owing to which Rāma was able to lead a life strictly

in accordance with the spiritual knowledge. The faith of even those who believed Me after seeing the miracles exhibited by God Datta through Me, weakened upon seeing the common properties of My human medium, which is similar to other human beings.

7) Have the total number of souls changed since the beginning of creation?

Shri G Lakshman asked: Swami! Padanamaskarams to You! In one of Your earlier discourses, You had mentioned that the number of souls (quantity) is more or less the same across the different worlds. In the beginning, God was bored and for His entertainment, He created the universe consisting of different worlds, animals, humans and so on. When God initially created souls, I understand that there would have only been a few of them and later on, they might have multiplied over time. Today, perhaps, we can say that the number of souls has reached a constant value. Is this true?

Swami replied: A person asked a villager how many crows were there in his village. The villager replied that there were 400 crows in his village. The person disagreed, claiming that he had already counted the actual number of crows and the number was only 390. The villager calmly explained that 10 crows might have gone to the neighboring village! The person left and returned after some time saying that currently, there were exactly 410 crows in the village. The villager again calmly responded saying that 10 crows might have come into his village from the neighboring village! This example is similar to our question of the number of souls present in material bodies on Earth. The souls in the upper worlds exist in energetic bodies and they are invisible to us by the will of God. Souls constantly journey to and fro between the various worlds. Souls in material human bodies, after death, go to the upper worlds to become energetic beings. The souls in energetic bodies, after sometime, are born on Earth in material bodies. Some souls stay for a longer time in the upper world, while other souls stay there for a shorter time. They all enjoy the fruits of their good and bad deeds in the upper worlds. **Usually, the minimum time for a soul to be reborn on Earth after death can be a few minutes and the maximum time can be 360 years, which is three complete human generations.** The complete life-span of a human being is 120 years, which is the sum of the periods of the nine planets, as per astrology. Usually, souls cannot stay in the upper world longer than that. As part of the traditional rituals performed on the annual death anniversary of one's forefathers, a ball of rice or wheat flour called the *pinḍa* is offered to the souls of the dead forefathers, who

are in the upper world. The offering is done only for three generations because, after the third generation, it is assumed that the soul of the forefather must have already been reborn on Earth. Of course, some 'special' condemned souls stay in a horrible hell forever.

The total number of souls created by God remains constant in this world. The variations in the numbers of souls present in each world are due to the to and fro journeys of souls from one world to the other. But it does not mean that God cannot create any new soul. Once, Prajāpati, an assistant of God Brahma, kidnapped some cowherds and their cows and hid them in the upper world. God Krishna created new souls, which were exact duplicates of the kidnapped souls and they lived along with their family members for some time. **When the original souls were brought back to Earth, God Krishna, dissolved the newly-created souls.** This means that the soul is created by God and that the soul is not the Creator.

What I feel is that such enquiries are not of much use and we should always try to focus on the various ways of pleasing God in order to get His protection. The topic of the number of souls in the world is only of theoretical interest and is not related to the important practical aspect of pleasing God. Of course, we have to thoroughly understand the theoretical spiritual knowledge (*jñāna yoga*) because its practical implementation depends on thoroughly understanding it.

Chapter 22

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SHRI DATTA SWAMI ARATI

October 27, 2019

[On the auspicious occasion of Diwali, Dr. Nikhil sent to Shri Swami, a devotional Hindi song dedicated to Him. The song was named "[Shri Datta Swami Arati](#)". Given below is the conversation that occurred between Swami and Dr. Nikhil, in this context, which might be useful for devotees in the spiritual line.]

Shri Datta Swami: The song is so sweet and palatable that even Guru Datta, the embodiment of spiritual knowledge, got injected with ego!

Dr. Nikhil: Swamiji, You are testing us! It is Your way of saying that we should not develop an ego! While giving knowledge, You (Lord Datta) always give it in a straightforward manner. But while dealing with people like us, who have a contrary attitude, You use reverse psychology. When You say, You developed an ego, we should understand it as, we should be careful of not developing an ego. As such, we know very well that it is impossible for You to develop an ego. Ego is the quality of the human medium. Even though You possess a human medium like us, God Datta has merged with it through-and-through (*Antarbahiṣca*—Veda). In theory, the Human Incarnation is a two-component system consisting of the human being (medium) and the unimaginable God. But that duality is imperceptible to us devotees. From our point of view, as human devotees, there is perfect monism alone between the medium of the Incarnation and the unimaginable God. So, the human body of the Incarnation is the unimaginable God Himself. The unimaginable God is beyond all qualities and He alone expresses Himself to us as You. Qualities like ego, are only applicable to human devotees like us and not to You.

Dr. Nikhil: Actually, when Devi started composing the verses of the *ārati*, a few months ago, she would compose a few lines each day. While composing them, she would experience miracles from You. The words and the concepts that would come out,

were so surprising that she would be shocked! It was clear that You were composing the verses and not she. Sometimes, she used to get stuck at some point, not being able to proceed further. Then she would pray to You to complete the verse and suddenly, the right words with excellent meaning would come out. All the concepts are from You alone, without a doubt. Even the words are from You. Along with the right words and meaning, You would also grant the most wonderful and sweetest emotions. She would cry in joy, knowing that these experiences were being given by You. She used to tell me every day, when I would come home from office, about the new verses that came on that day.

We are not capable of serving You. If any service takes place through us, it is only due to Your grace. We can only make errors.

Dr. Nikhil: Should this *ārati* video be published on the YouTube channel now or is it better to publish it later? At present, the *ārati* has not been made available to the public. It has been privately shared with You. It can be published to the public, if You permit.

Shri Datta Swami: You can publish it on YouTube. Actually, whenever I speak divine knowledge or compose songs, My experience is also similar to that of Devi. Datta illuminates me and I illuminate Devi. It is just like the sun illuminating the lens and the lens illuminating a piece of paper that gets ignited due to the focussed sunlight.

Dr. Nikhil: It is all Your grace, Swamiji, otherwise we are nothing. It is a great privilege to serve You. Padanamaskaram to Your lotus feet, Swamiji—from the three of us (Nikhil, Devi and Arsha).

Chapter 23
DEEPAVALI MESSAGE

October 28, 2019

Avoid Needless Waste

O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! We light a lamp before God. For whom, is this lamp lit? Is it for God? Not at all! God is said to be the source of all lights and He has no need of any light (*Na tatra suryo bhāti... tasya bhāsā...—Veda*). The light is only helpful for us. With the help of the light, we can read a divine book or we can see the picture of God clearly. The light or oil lamp is useful to us only when there is darkness around. But we light the lamp even during the day, when it is not useful to us in any way. We are burning ghee or oil to produce the light which is not even needed. The oil or ghee is food-material and is created by God for the sake of human beings, so that they can live and grow strong. Thus your lighting the lamp is nothing but the burning of precious food needlessly. The Veda says that food should never be destroyed or wasted (*Annām na paricakṣīta*).

The same oil or ghee could be donated to a poor man, for the sake of maintaining the life-light in his body. After feeding the starving man and saving his life, you can preach to him about God and make him a devotee. How meritorious is this deed! Lighting a lamp at night for our need of light is perfectly meaningful. But if we needlessly light the lamp even during the day, it is the greatest sin because, you are burning food instead of donating it to a poor devotee. Moreover, burning any material causes environmental pollution and climate change, which is affecting the rains. Thus, the unnecessary burning of any material harms the world. What pleasure do we get in harming others needlessly? It is no different from the sadism of a demon! God gets furious with demons and people doing demonic activities.

There is another purpose of lighting the lamp. The light from the lamp removing darkness is a model to preach to you the importance of knowledge, which similarly removes ignorance. But seeing a lamp lit once at night, is sufficient to understand this concept. You need not light the lamp every night to learn this concept! If you still continue to light

the lamp every night to learn this concept, it is highly foolish. In that case, the original question remains as it is, which is, what purpose the lamp lit during the day serves? Moreover, even at night, when electric lights exist to provide light to you for all your domestic needs and even for your worship, what is the need of this duplication using oil lamps?

Types of Fire

The electric light need not be considered to be of lesser value than an oil lamp. The electric light (*vaidyutāgni*) is superior to an oil lamp having a physical flame (*laukikāgni*) since the former does not emit any polluting smoke and it remains on constantly, unlike the physical flame in the oil lamp, which takes some effort to maintain. In ancient times, a fire was constantly kept burning in huts in the forest (*Nityāgnihotram*) to keep mosquitoes and wild animals away. What is the logic in keeping a fire burning constantly at home today, when there is no such need? Shri Shirdi Sai Baba used to keep a fire burning constantly in the abandoned mosque, where He lived, only to keep away insects and wild animals. Today, you are burning wood constantly in His temples since you have not understood the real reason why He used to keep the fire burning!

The Gita says that you should perform any deed only after perfect analysis (*Jñātvā kurvīta karmāṇi*). You are lighting lamps without any analysis, following a blind tradition. In ancient days, before electric lights, an oil lamp was lit before God since it also served the domestic need for light. There are three types of fire (*agni*): (1) *Laukikāgni* or *bhautikāgni*, which is the fire lit by burning some fuel like wood, ghee, oil etc. (2) *Vaidyutāgni* is the 'fire' produced from electricity which can include electric lights and electric heaters. (3) *Devatāgni* or *Vaiśvānarāgni* is the fire of hunger in the stomach of a hungry person.

Fire is closely associated with the ritual sacrifice called *yajña*, in which food is to be sacrificed into the fire. Here, the first two types of fire are only meant for cooking the food and are called *yajña-sādhanam* which is the means to cook the food. The third type of fire is the *yajñopāśya* or the fire to be worshiped by offering the cooked food into it. The actual *yajña* is this offering of cooked food into the hunger-fire of the hungry person. Instead of analysing in this manner, ignorant priests are burning precious food in the first type of fire, which is physical fire! Sage Kapila clearly said that burning ghee in a sacrifice is

foolishness. God Krishna asked the performers of a ritual sacrifice to feed the cooked food to His hungry friends and thereby fulfill the real aim of the sacrifice.

Grasping the Concept Behind the Festival

We must understand that the lighted lamp is nothing but the spiritual knowledge that removes the darkness of ignorance. Since we have already learnt this concept by seeing a lamp being lit at night, we need not light lamps every day. There is no need to remind oneself of this concept again and again, claiming that you are forgetting the concept every day! There is absolutely no need to light any lamp unless it is needed by some one. A lamp is called *dīpaḥ* in Sanskrit and a row of lamps is called *dīpāvalī* (Deepavali). A single lamp represents the spiritual knowledge that is heard (*Śrotavyaḥ*). A row of lamps indicates the same spiritual knowledge, repeatedly heard, until it is memorized (*Mantavyaḥ*). If this real concept is not understood, what is the use of lighting either a single lamp or a row of lamps, when there is no practical need?

Today, the row of lamps that have been lit on this festival of Deepavali, should be understood to represent the real spiritual knowledge that should be learnt and memorized by us. We should leave behind the physical lamps, which are only models representing the concept and adopt the actual concept. Then, we are really worshipping Krishna. Krishna has clearly said that He can be pleased only by knowledge (*Jñāna yajñena tenāham...*). He has also said that the concept is more important than the physical model (simile) used to explain the concept since the physical model consumes precious materials (oil) (*Śreyān dravyamayāt...*). We worship Krishna as the embodiment of spiritual knowledge and as the Spiritual Preacher of the world (*Krishnaṃ Vande Jagadgurum*). Every chapter of the Gita, which contains a series of verses, is a row of lamps. **When even the lamps burnt during Diwali have been condemned in this manner, what to speak of firecrackers, which cause heavy environmental pollution!**

The celebration of any festival falls in the domain of creation, which is the imaginable domain. Scientific analysis is the ultimate authority in the imaginable domain. Scientific logic fails only in understanding the unimaginable God, called Parabrahman. It also fails

in the case of any miracle, which is an unimaginable event performed by the unimaginable God. **We should not attribute any unimaginable nature to imaginable activities like the celebration a festival or a sacrifice done to please God.** The festival and the sacrifice are both imaginable. They are done by us, imaginable souls, to please the unimaginable God. **The action done by the souls to please the unimaginable God need not be unimaginable.** In fact, it cannot be imaginable. If it were unimaginable, the soul could never have performed it at all! A soul cannot perform an unimaginable miracle, whereas, the same soul can celebrate an imaginable festival or perform a sacrifice to please God.

The sacrifice involves cooking food, which is to be provided to the participants of a ritual. The ritual is a meeting for discussing the concepts of spiritual knowledge and praising God through prayers. Unfortunately, nowadays, nothing uttered by the priest during the ritual is understood by anybody, including the priest himself! The priest recites Vedic verses and hymns in Sanskrit, which is not known to anybody. Such a ritual becomes a total waste since the participants neither gain the spiritual knowledge contained in the verses nor do they improve their devotion to God. Similarly, the objective behind the celebration of any festival is also to increase our spiritual knowledge and devotion to God. Today, neither festivals nor sacrifices performed are able to achieve their real objective. On the contrary, the performers incur sin because of the burning of precious food and causing pollution. Such people are actually damaging the world, exactly like demons.

Good and Bad Traditions

They are simply following blind traditions, without analysis. **These blind traditions are not the original ancient traditions established by the fully-learned sages.** These traditions have been developed by middle-age priests, who used to blindly recite the scripture, without understanding any word of it. How can such a tradition be the authority? Some people argue that justice or *dharma* is born from tradition (*Acāraprabhavo dharmah*) and that *dharma*, in turn, is supported by God (*Dharmasya Prabhuracyutah*). Hence, they say that tradition is always supported by God. There is no point in arguing in this manner since it is a total misunderstanding. The tradition referred to in that verse only means the original good tradition and not

the degraded bad tradition of today. If tradition by itself were the authority, the hatred towards the worship of God Viṣṇu was also the tradition of demons. Then why did the great devotee, Prahlāda, who was born in the dynasty of demons, not follow that tradition? Hence, tradition by itself cannot be an authority. Only good tradition is the authority.

Whether the tradition is good or bad, can only be decided by sharp analysis, which discriminates between truth and falsehood (*Sadasat vivekaḥ*). Without this analysis, we cannot even accept every statement of the scripture, because scriptures also get polluted by insertions (*prakṣepa*), in course of time. When the scripture itself is subject to analysis, what is the sanctity of such statements, which are not even from the scriptures? Divine preachers like Śāṅkara quoted the scripture and also analysed it for this reason. They did not simply quote the scripture and say that it should be followed without analysis. They analysed the quoted statements from scriptures, only to prove that those specific scriptural statements are genuine and are not insertions. Even God Krishna asked Arjuna to analyse whatever was preached by Him, before accepting it, (*Vimṛṣyaitadaśeṣeṇa...*) because Krishna knew that the Gita that He was preaching, might get polluted by insertions in the future.

Chapter 24

SWAMI ANSWERS DEVOTEES' QUESTIONS

October 31, 2019

1. What is the meaning of the vision seen by me in which Shirdi Sai Baba repeatedly merged with the photograph of Swami?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami and devotees. The devotees included Shri Parikshit and Smt. Bindiya, legal experts from Delhi and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad, professor of Sanskrit, Central University, Hyderabad. Smt. Bindiya asked: One day I saw Shirdi Sai Baba merging with Swami in a photograph again and again. I shook my head, rubbed my eyes and looked again. But the same scene repeated again and again. What does it mean?]

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Sai Baba was an Incarnation of God Datta and He tried to bring mutual harmony between Hinduism and Islam. A prominent follower of Adi Shankaracharya criticized Sai Baba, some years ago. But I explained to him that the philosophies of Ādi Śaṅkaracārya and Sai Baba are one and the same. Hinduism is a mini-model of this entire world. In the world, there are several religions. In Hinduism too, there are several sub-religions. Śaṅkara united all the sub-religions of Hinduism. Sai Baba brought mutual unity in Hinduism and Islam. Śaṅkara proved that God Śiva and God Viṣṇu are one and the same ultimate God. Sai Baba said that God Śiva, God Viṣṇu and Allah are one and the same ultimate God. If two different forms of God can be united by understanding that they are the same ultimate God, why can we not unite three different forms of God, with the same realization that they are all the same ultimate God?

2. Is it not wrong for other religions to try to convert Hindus?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad]

Swami replied: Just as all human beings are similar in nature in that they have both good and bad qualities, all religions too are similar in that they have both merits and defects. The good qualities of a person are the result of associating with good people, while the person's bad qualities are the result of associating with bad people. Similarly, **every religion has acquired merits from the original establishers of that**

religion, who were Human Incarnations of God. Every religion has also acquired defects from the followers of that religion, who were ordinary human souls. Quarrels arise between two persons because each person sees only merits in oneself and only defects in the other person. It is the same mentality that leads to quarrels between any two religions. There is a small seed called the rosary pea or crab's eye (*guñja* in Hindi). The upper half of the seed is bright red in color and the lower part is black in color. One seed, thinking that it is fully red itself, looks at the upper black part of another seed which is standing upside down, and mocks at the other seed. It does not notice its own lower half, which is also black. It also does not see the lower red part of the other seed. The other seed, thinking that it is entirely black itself, wishes to give up its own religion and adopt the religion of the first seed, thinking that the first seed is entirely red in color.

When another religion criticizes your religion, you think that your religion is entirely defective and that the other religion only has merits. So, you leave your own religion and convert to the other religion. You must realize that every religion is a mixture of both good and bad qualities just like every human being. **You must also notice the merits of your religion, apart from the defects pointed out by the follower of the other religion.** You must tell the other person that his religion also has some defects, which he is not able to see due to his blind fascination for his own religion. You must tell him that you are able to see the merits of your religion as well as those of the other religion. You must also realize and explain to him that the merits of both religions are exactly one and the same! This is an obvious conclusion because the same single God established both the religions by appearing in the form of two different Human Incarnations. The merits of both religions must be the same since they have come from the same God. The defects in both religions can be different because they arise from the human followers of the respective religions who are different from each other.

You must respect your friend's father as you respect your own father. This means that you should not criticize or abuse your friend's father. But under no circumstances, should you abandon your own father and say that the friend's father is your father. If there are any defects in your father, you may politely request him to rectify them, but you should never abandon your own father. Similarly, you can appreciate the merits of your friend's father, but you should never say that he is your

father. Similarly, you should rectify the defects of your religion and appreciate the merits of the other religion, but you should never convert to the other religion.

If you follow the merits of any religion, including your own religion, you will reach the ultimate goal of God. Imagine that in a city, all houses are circularly arranged around the city-center. You can reach the city-center following the straight radial path from your house to the city-center. You need not travel tangentially, towards your friend's house, to reach the city-center along the radial path that starts from his house! If you simply move tangentially from one house to another, you will only go around in a circle, without getting even an inch closer to the center. You must know that all religions are radial paths to reach the same center, from different starting points. This is true when you consider only the meritorious part of each religion, which is the original philosophy established by its Originator, who was a Human Incarnation. We must leave the wrong concepts introduced later by various followers, since these wrong concepts have adulterated all religions.

Both the Human Incarnation and the follower in any religion are basically the same human being. The electrified wire and the non-electrified wire are basically one and the same metallic wire. Only the mental setup is different in both. Both the shining diamond and black piece of charcoal are made of the same element carbon. The difference between the two is only due to the difference in the crystal structure!

Every religion says that its God has created this entire world of humanity. Unfortunately, there is only one world with only one humanity! If the Gods of different religions were different, then there would be different worlds with different humanities! But it is not so, which means that there is basically only one God. He only appears in different external forms with different names. This analysis will establish the correlation between different human religions. It will reveal the oneness in the philosophies preached by the different Human Incarnations of the same God. The languages and external cultures may be different, but the same subject is preached in every religion. The same subject, physics, is taught by different teachers in different languages. The difference is only cultural. It is difference of name and form alone. This Universal Religion, based on Universal Spirituality, must be realized by every human being in this world. It will establish world-peace. This creation has been established by God like a factory

established by a factory-owner. The owner always wishes for his factory to run smoothly and in perfect peace. Hence, the primary aim of God is world-peace. Several devotees like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Sai Baba, Vivekananda, Buddha, Mahāvīra, Jesus, Mohammed and others, dedicated their lives to achieving this goal and became most dearest to God.

3. How can we accept the scripture of a certain religion which says that those refusing to accept that religion should be killed?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad]

Swami replied: We need not blindly accept every statement of any scripture. Analyzing any statement is necessary to find out whether the statement is genuine or it has been inserted later on. Without this acid test, no statement should be accepted blindly or by force. Even God Krishna Himself said that everything that He preached, should be thoroughly analyzed before accepting it.

4. How can Prophet Mohammed be compared to God's Incarnation as Kalki?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad]

Swami replied: It is perfectly correct. The establisher of every religion is God-in-human-form and hence, Kalki and Mohammed can be conveniently compared. At the time of Mohammad, there were several religions, which worshipped several Gods. As a result, there was a lot of quarrelling and violence among those religions in His region. Such violence does not subside through the peaceful preaching of spiritual knowledge. That violence can only be suppressed by counter-violence. Any brutal violence in society can only be controlled by using the police-force and not by giving peaceful advice. Similarly, Kalki takes a sword in the hand to control the violence caused by unjust people. But the aim of such violence is peace. Such violence used to bring peace is called '*jihad*', which has now been misinterpreted to be terrorism. The Quran says that one should preach the message of Allah after helping the other person. It further says that one should leave the person to think about the message in a free atmosphere, without any force. **The wrong concepts developed and inserted later on by followers, are unnecessarily superimposed on the Human Incarnations, who originally established the various religions.** The blind fascination of

followers towards the old traditions in their religion should be rejected through perfect analysis. Traditions should be practiced only after they are found to be correct and beneficial through analysis. It is said that a person having a blind fascination for his own forefathers, will drink even the salty water from the well dug by his father. He will reject the available sweet and good drinking water (*Kṣāraṃ jalam kāpuruṣāḥ pibanti*)!

5. Why do the saints of other religions not propagate God Datta?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: The unimaginable God wished to express Himself to all the devotees in the world that He was going to create. So, He created an energetic form with which He merged perfectly. By way of that first Energetic Incarnation, the unimaginable God gave Himself to the world. This first Energetic Incarnation is called Īśvara. Īśvara is also called Datta, which means ‘given’ since the unimaginable God has given Himself to the world by way of this first energetic form. Īśvara and Datta, thus, are the names of the same first Energetic Incarnation of the unimaginable God. It is this same Īśvara or Datta who is called Jehovah by Christians and Allah by Muslims.

Due to His unimaginable power, the same God Datta appears as different forms, when viewed from different angles by the devotees of different religions. Each of these forms has a different name. Only the names and forms differ. All the names and forms belong to the same God Datta. Just as in the world there are different religions, there are different sub-religions within the Hindu religion. For the devotees of each of those sub-religions of Hinduism, God Datta similarly appears as different forms and He is also known by different names! He appears as God Brahmā to the sages of the sub-religion or sect called Hairaṅyagarbha Matam. He appears as God Nārāyaṇa to the devotees belonging to the sect called Vaiṣṇava Matam. For the devotees of the Śaiva Matam, He appears as God Sadāśiva. For the devotees of the Śākṭeya Matam, He appears as Goddess Parāśakti or Durgā. He similarly takes up many other forms for the sake of different devotees and is known by many other names. This concept is well-understood within the Hindu religion and we have no difficulty in applying this concept to other religions in the world. Hinduism is thus, a miniature representation of the Universal Religion of the entire world.

6. Is it true that Buddhism and Jainism are also atheistic like philosophy of sage Charvaka?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: This is an utter lie! Buddha is the ninth of the ten famous Incarnations of God Viṣṇu. If God Buddha were an atheist, it would mean that He was denying His own existence! He merely kept silent about the ultimate unimaginable God. He never denied God. Since the ultimate God is unimaginable, He cannot be described in words. Śaṅkara too said that God is best-expressed through silence (*Maunavyākhyā prakāṣita Parabrahma...*). Buddha's main emphasis was on the followers following the path properly. So, for sometime, He kept silent about God, who is the goal of the spiritual path. In keeping silent, He also indirectly indicated the essential truth of the unimaginability of God. But unfortunately, His silence was misunderstood by the followers, to be a negation of the existence of God.

After passing the IAS examination (civil services examination), one becomes a district collector. But what will happen if the student always keeps thinking about the goal that he will achieve after passing the examination? Will a good advisor not say to him, "Forget about the post of the district collector for sometime and concentrate on the preparing for the IAS examination"? Does it mean that the advisor is negating the existence of the very post of the district collector? The goal of the spiritual path is attaining the grace of God. But the most important point in this path is that the devotee should never aspire for any worldly fruit from God in return for the service and sacrifice done by the devotee for God. Buddha's main focus was this most critical point. He advised the followers to avoid all worldly desires.

Let us take Jainism. The first *Jina* (*Tīrthaṅkāra*) or the first spiritual preacher (*Ādinātha*) was the Incarnation of God Viṣṇu, called Rīṣabhadeva. Rīṣabhadeva is also mentioned in the Bhāgavatam. Being a Human Incarnation of God, how can the first *Jina* deny His own existence? So, it is absurd to think that Jainism is atheistic. Similar to Buddhism, Jainism also stressed on the path, keeping silent, for sometime, about the goal (God). This silence cannot be misunderstood to be the denial of the existence of the ultimate Goal. **We are always trying to divide the religions and worsen the quarrels, which is**

against God's aim. The wonder is that while we claim to be working to please God, we are actually making God furious!

7. Why do people worship Hanuman as God, when He Himself worshipped Rama like a devotee?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: Hanumān was a monistic Incarnation of God Śiva and Rāma was a monistic Incarnation of God Viṣṇu. A monistic Incarnation means that God had actually merged with the human medium in that Incarnation. A dualistic Incarnation is when a very close devotee of God is treated to be an Incarnation, even though God has not actually merged with that human medium. But Hanumān and Rāma were both monistic Incarnations of Śiva and Viṣṇu respectively. The Veda says that God Śiva and God Viṣṇu are one and the same God (*Śivaśca Nārāyaṇah*). Both Śiva and Viṣṇu themselves are Energetic Incarnations of the unimaginable God in the upper world. They entered and merged with the physical human media of Hanumān and Rāma respectively on Earth, to become Human Incarnations. But we have to consider Rāma as God and Hanumān as His devoted servant since those were the roles assumed by them. It does not mean that Viṣṇu is God and Śiva is His devoted servant! Śiva was born as a servant of God only to preach by example, how to ideally serve God. Viṣṇu was born as Rāma who was in the role of the God who receives the service of the devotee. The conclusion is that the same God was born on Earth as both God and devotee in a double-role. From the point of view of their roles, Hanumān remains as a devotee whereas Rāma remains as God. **But from the point of view of the original Actor, Hanumān was also a direct Incarnation of God. It is from this angle that people worship Hanumān as God.**

Of course, Hanumān can also be worshipped from the other angle, considering Him to be a devotee of God. He can be worshipped as a dualistic Incarnation of God, which means that even though He is a devotee, He has reached the climax of devotion. God is so pleased with Him that God has become the servant of the devotee, fulfilling every desire of the devotee. So, from this angle, Rāma is the monistic Incarnation of God. God has merged perfectly with the human medium of Rāma, leading to a monism between the human medium and God. As a monistic Incarnation, Rāma is equal to God. But Hanumān, as a

dualistic Incarnation, is greater than God since God has become a servant of the devotee. In any case, both are called Incarnations of God. Balarāma is another example of a dualistic Incarnation who is kept at par with the monistic Incarnation, Rāma.

Hence, from every angle, Hanuman must indeed be worshipped as God. If you serve the monistic Incarnation, the advantage is that you are directly serving God. But in serving the dualistic Incarnation, the advantage is that you are pleasing God even more. When you offer some sweets to a father, he is pleased. But he is pleased even more if you offer the sweets to his beloved son!

8. Is there any miraculous power in a *mantra*?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: The *mantra* is a sentence that you utter, even though its meaning is not told to you. When the meaning is not known, you cannot develop any feeling upon reciting it. If there is no feeling, there is no devotion. If there is no devotion, God will not be pleased with you and He will not perform any miracle in your favor. The mere utterance of a *mantra*, without knowing its meaning and without any feeling, is totally useless. Sound is energy, which is only an imaginable item. It cannot generate any unimaginable event, called a miracle. **Everything depends on the feeling that you develop while you utter the *mantra*.** You must know that the unimaginable God alone can perform the miracle. He might perform the miracle for you if He is pleased with you and if He thinks it will benefit you. The inert sound energy of the *mantra* or some technical process (*tantra*) can never produce any miracle.

Shri Parikshit told: Swami as told by You that Datta is in our house, fragrance of lotus flowers came to Smt. Bindiya. When she told about this to my father, my father also told that he is getting the fragrance in that time.

Swami told: It is good that you have mentioned about the miracle, which is a practical proof for the existence of unimaginable God in God Datta. Jesus said that one must give witness for the miracle of God, which helps the atheists to change.

9. Is randomly-done charity fruitful?

[This question by Smt. Bndiya, is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: Mere charity done to poor people is social service, which is not much related to God. **The basis of social service is one's love towards fellow-human beings.** If you love and serve humanity, without any connection to God, God will grant you a place in heaven, because charity is a meritorious action (*puṇya karma*). But heaven is temporary and once the merit (*puṇyam*) is exhausted, you have to return to Earth (*Kṣīṇe puṇye martya lokam viśanti*—Gita). Sage Bharata was highly spiritual. But he loved a baby-deer and his entire attention was concentrated only on that deer, instead of God. As a result of this very strong worldly bond developed by him, he was born as a deer in his next birth. Social service should always be blended with devotion. Then, it will be like scented-gold. Mother Teresa was an excellent social worker. But her social service was always blended with her devotion to God Jesus. Mahatma Gandhi did a lot of social service in getting freedom for India, but he always remembered God Rāma. In fact, the grace of Rāma was the hidden reason for his success.

People doing charity always make this one blunder, which is donating to the undeserving. Donating to the deserving alone takes you to heaven, whereas donating to the underserving, takes you to hell! We are always worried about the time and place of donation. As a result, we do not bother about the deservingness of the receiver. We always donate in a hurry to any beggar we find in a holy place like Varanasi city and on an auspicious day like Śivarātri. We do not even try to find out if the receiver is a real beggar or a greedy rich man acting as a beggar. The day you identify a deserving beggar for your donation, after due analysis, is the real Śivarātri day and that place of donation is the real Varanasi city.

Krishna donated to Sudāmā, who was the most deserving beggar and the donation given by Krishna was infinite wealth! **Krishna did not donate to Sudāmā on the auspicious day of Śivarātri or in the holy city of Varanasi!** Hence, one should never hastily donate to any person, without assessing the deservingness of the receiver, just because it is an auspicious time and you are in a holy place. Instead, you should save all the money until you find a deserving receiver. Over a long period of time, you can accumulate money that is meant for donation. Finally, upon finding such a receiver and after taking enough time to confirm that the receiver is really deserving, you can donate the entire accumulated amount to him. By such donation, you get full merit

because your entire donation was done only to a deserving receiver. Since you never donated to an undeserving person, you do not incur any sin.

The only exception is emergency donations. In the case of an emergency, when you are required to donate, there is no need to bother about the deservingness of the receiver. If a person is about to die of starvation, you must feed him and save his life, even without analyzing his deservingness. Charitable organizations and temple trusts must start beggar homes to give food, clothing, shelter and medicines to beggars. This must be the fundamental social service that must be done even by the government. Only when no beggar is seen on the streets, can the next higher level of social service be started. The next higher level of social service is serving the poor. Beggars are poorer and more helpless than the poor and so the service must begin with them.

10. How can we preach divine knowledge to the doubting public?

[Many people feel that spirituality is all nonsense. They are ready to believe in energetic forms of God but not Human Incarnations since they see many fraud gurus. If I tell such people about You, Swamiji, they will make fun of me. They will say that I am falling prey to a false guru and that instead, I should only believe in energetic forms of God. I have no problem even if people make fun of me, but if anyone says anything about You, I cannot stand it. Because of this fear, I am unable to disclose to even my parents and in-laws. Please guide me. (This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga or grand spiritual discussion between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.)]

Swami replied: There is a fundamental mistake in your approach towards the devoted public. First of all, without mentioning any names, you should establish the importance of the contemporary Human Incarnation of God, which is more relevant to humanity than Energetic Incarnations. Energetic Incarnations are relevant to the upper world which consists of energetic beings. You should say that Hanumān reached the highest goal by worshipping Rāma and that Rādhā reached highest goal by worshipping Krishna. Both Rāma and Krishna were neither Energetic Incarnations, like God Viṣṇu or God Śiva; nor were they past Human Incarnations. They were contemporary Human Incarnations of those devotees.

Then, you should say that the Human Incarnation should be recognized by the excellent knowledge that He gives since knowledge alone gives correct direction to souls. You should show them the excellent spiritual knowledge that is being given by the contemporary

Human Incarnation. You should also explain to them that miraculous powers are not the deciding criterion to identify the Incarnation because even demons can perform miracles. You must recommend the study of the divine knowledge given by the contemporary Human Incarnation in whom you firmly believe. After reading that knowledge, those devotees will also become devotees of the contemporary Human Incarnation in whom you believe. **If you introduce your contemporary Human Incarnation to those devotees saying that He performed some miracle for you, they might not be impressed. They too might have experienced miracles from some other preachers who are actually demons. One cannot distinguish the Human Incarnation from such demons based on the criterion of miracles.** Hence, only the excellent spiritual knowledge is treated as the unique identity mark of the Human Incarnation and not a miracle.

Of course, all devotees believe in Energetic Incarnations. The specialty of the Human Incarnation is that you can see, talk and clarify your doubts, while this benefit is not available in the case of Energetic Incarnations. You cannot see them easily, because they are irrelevant to humanity. Even if they appear to you after your long and severe penance, the appearance is only for a few minutes. God does not appear for long in energetic forms since the energetic forms are not relevant to this material world in which human beings exist. You should ask the devotees if they feel they are greater than Hanumān and Rādhā, who worshipped only their contemporary Human Incarnations and attained the highest fruit!

11. Which is the biggest sin that we should refrain from at all times and which is the greatest good action?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: The biggest sin is to deny the contemporary Human Incarnation due to ego-based jealousy. The greatest good action is conquering ego and jealousy completely and recognizing the contemporary Human Incarnation. This greatest good action yields the eternal spiritual result, which accompanies the soul in all births.

12. What is *mahapralaya* and when and why will it come?

[This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.]

Swami replied: This question is not important for your spiritual development. I have told a lot about this topic in My earlier messages. Briefly, I can say that in the *mahāpralaya*, the five elements get converted into their root cause, which is called *mūla prakṛti*. *Mūla prakṛti* is very subtle inert energy and is the root material-cause of creation. Even this root material-cause was created by the unimaginable God due to His unimaginable power and hence, this root inert energy cannot be claimed to be beginningless (*anādi*). After its initial creation by God, it will remain in existence forever, due to the will of God. During the dissolution (*mahā pralaya*), this root energy preserves the blueprint of all the souls and the entire world in a very subtle state (*avyaktam*). It is similar to the entire movie remaining in an unexpressed state in the film-reel, even after the movie-show is over. Hence, the dissolution of world means the end of the movie-show. Only the display on the screen is stopped, while the entire movie is preserved, intact, in the film-reel, until the next show. When the film-reel is projected again during the next show, the entire creation is recreated as told in the Veda (*Dhātā yathā pūrvamakalpayat*). The first Energetic Incarnation is this *Dhātā* (Īśvara), who projects this world-movie again on the screen, as it is. The interval between the two parts of the same movie is simply called the dissolution (*pralaya*) while the interval between two movie-shows is called the final dissolution (*mahā pralaya*). In any case, the movie shown in each show is the same. The film-reel, the electricity, the technology, the screen etc., are the resulting product-components of God's unimaginable power, which is called *mahā māyā* or simply *māyā*.

13. Is it alright to aspire for success and show it off to others?

[We often aspire to be successful so that we can show to the world, especially our relatives and friends. Hey Swamiji! Is it ok to think this way? (This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga or grand spiritual discussion between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.)]

Swami replied: It is okay as far as worldly life is concerned. Such an aspiration gives rise to the appropriate effort necessary to achieve the goal. But you should not concentrate much on the aspiration, because if you spend too much energy on the aspiration, it will weaken you and reduce your efficiency in achieving the goal. Whenever you feel any such aspiration, you should immediately leave it and concentrate all your energy on the work needed to achieve the goal. This can be understood from the first law of thermodynamics. Applying the law to

this context, we realize that the energy spent on the mental tension arising out of your aspiration for the goal, will reduce the energy available to do the actual work. If this aspiration-based tension is minimized, almost all the energy will be available to do the work. The same concept is told in the Gita as “*Karmanyevādhikāraste*” which means that you should concentrate all your energy only on the work required for achieving the fruit instead of wasting it on aspiring for the fruit and the resulting tension.

14. Should one publically attribute one’s worldly success to the Sadguru?

[Suppose I get success in this material world and become famous. Am I allowed to reveal to the world, in interviews and even otherwise, that the true reason for my success is Lord Dattatreya’s blessings, love and guidance through His Incarnation, Shri Datta Swami? Or should I keep it a secret? (This question is part of a Mahā Satsaṅga or grand spiritual discussion between Swami, Shri Parikshit, Smt. Bindiya and Dr. J. S. R. Prasad.)]

Swami replied: When you open any information to any person, you must estimate whether the consequences will be favorable to that person and whether the person will be benefitted by your information or not. It all depends on your judgment about that person; whether the information given will be absorbed by the person positively or not. What information to reveal and in what way to reveal it, should be decided so that it leads to the welfare of other souls. It must benefit the person in his or her spiritual life in the future. Based on all these factors, you are the best judge to decide about revealing the secret or not.

Chapter 25

MAHA SATSANGA ON TARKA SHASTRA

November 07, 2019

Following is a *mahā satsaṅga* (grand spiritual discussion) between Swami and Shri J.S.R. Prasad, Professor of Sanskrit, who specializes in *tarka śāstra* (logic), at the Hyderabad Central University, Hyderabad.

Logic and Science

Shri J.S.R. Prasad: What is the relationship between logic (*tarka śāstra*) and science?

Swami replied: O Learned and Devoted Servants of God! Both are one and the same. In both, the items of creation are discussed thoroughly (*Tarkyante padārthāḥ asmin iti tarkaḥ*). Logic was well-developed in ancient India by the intellectual exercises of various ancient Sanskrit scholars. Today, science is doing the same analysis of the items of creation. The merit of science over logic is that science practically verifies every concept through experimentation with the help of scientific equipment in a laboratory. Due to this advantage of science, certain concepts in ancient Indian logic were proved to be incorrect by modern science. Although such concepts are very few, they are important. For example, as per ancient logic, sound was said to be the property of space, whereas science has proved it wrong since sound cannot travel in absolute vacuum (space). Sound is basically mechanical vibrational energy. It is the molecules of air that transmit the sound energy in the form of vibrations. So, sound can only travel in a medium like air. In outer space, several massive explosions keep taking place, now and then. Yet, none of the horrible sounds from them are heard on Earth due to the absence of air in space. **Air exists above the earth, only upto a certain distance.** Of course, space is required for the vibration of the particles of air. But because of it, we cannot say that space is the cause of the propagation of sound energy. **Space exists not only in air, but in each of the five elements. Besides, space, by itself, cannot transmit sound. So, sound cannot be said to be the property of**

space. The actual property of space is volume (*parimāṇam*). There is no point in quoting the scripture to support the wrong concept that sound is the property of space (*Śabdaḥ khe—Gita*), because the scripture might have been polluted with insertions.

On this point of the property of space, ancient logic stands defeated by modern science. But science also stands defeated in the matter of explaining the unimaginable God. Both ancient logic and modern science belong to the domain of the imaginable creation. Within the limits of the imaginable creation, science is more authentic as compared to ancient logic since experimental proof is part of the scientific method. Science may defeat logic like Bhīma defeating Duryodhana. But science, in turn, is defeated by spiritual knowledge, in the matter of explaining about the unimaginable God. It is like Bhīma being defeated by Āñjaneya (Hanumān). Nevertheless, science still has a role in spiritual knowledge. If an item of creation has been misunderstood to be the unimaginable God, it can be analysed by science. Science will correctly identify whether the item is imaginable or unimaginable. If science concludes that the item is imaginable, we can clearly understand that the imaginable item is not the unimaginable God.

For example, the Advaita philosophers believed that awareness is the ultimate unimaginable God. But science proves that awareness is only a specific work-form of inert energy. When the inert energy functions in a specific ‘device’ called the nervous system, it gets converted into a specific form of work, called ‘awareness’. Awareness is nothing but the transfer of information from the senses to the brain through electrical impulses in the nerves (neurons). This awareness, which is imaginable nervous energy transformed into a specific work-form, cannot be the unimaginable God, who is the ultimate cause of the universe. Of course, this concept has already been captured in scripture since it is said that awareness is produced from food (*Annāt puruṣaḥ—Veda, Annād bhavanti bhūtāni—Gita*). The ultimate God cannot be created from anything like awareness since He is the ultimate Creator of this whole universe. So, there cannot be any cause above Him.

Music as a Path to Salvation

Shri J.S.R. Prasad: Some people say that music is a path to salvation. What is Your opinion?

Swami replied: Certainly, music is a path to the development of devotion. Devotion is the emotional feeling of love towards God (*Parama prema rūpā*—Nārada Bhakti Sūtram). Music can be a path to devotion only if the music produces this feeling in the person. The music which is part of a song, produces that feeling of love for God. Here, the mere sound energy of the music or the mere words of the song cannot generate any feeling by itself. Certain tunes may generate certain feelings in a person's mind, provided the person has already associated that specific tune with that feeling in his or her mind. Similarly, the words of a song must also generate the feeling of love for God in order to develop devotion. That happens through the meaning of the words. **A tape recorder playing a devotional song does not get salvation because it has no feelings at all!** The tape recorder is inert and God sees only the feelings of a non-inert devotee (*Bhāvagrāhī Janārdanaḥ*). Neither can a tape recorder playing Vedic hymns cause a miracle. It is God alone who performs miracles and He performs them based on the feeling of devotion in the devotee's heart. Since the tape-recorder has no feelings, why should God perform any miracle? Only human beings can develop the feeling of devotion by reciting Vedic hymns or by singing devotional songs. Only if God is pleased with the devotee's feeling, does He perform the miracle. **The feeling can only be the result of the devotee understanding the meaning of the words of the song.** The meaning of the words means concepts of knowledge. Hence, knowledge alone produces the feeling of love for God in the heart of the devotee. The love or devotion to God, in turn, is the cause for salvation since God grants salvation to the devotee, when He is pleased by the devotee's devotion.

The sound produced by a person is said to be of two types. (1) *Āhata Nāda*, which means the sound produced by the movements of the tongue, teeth and the palate. (2) *Anāhata Nāda*, which is the feelings in the heart, created by the sound produced as above. The heart is said to be place of the *anāhata cakra*. Of course, this distinction is not of much significance, because the two are closely related. The feeling coming from the heart produces the first type of

sound and conversely, the first type of sound produces feeling in the heart. But if the meaning of the words uttered is not understood by the person, the first type of sound cannot produce any feeling in the heart. When a person recites prayers or sings songs without understanding, such sound does not produce any feeling in the heart and God does not respond to that sound at all. Such sound is useless and causes nothing but sound pollution! This analysis precisely applies to the priests who blindly recite Vedic hymns, without understanding the meaning of the words. The clear conclusion from this is that any ritual-worship involving such recitation, without understanding the meaning, neither benefits the priest nor the performer (host) in any way.

The actual spiritual path has three steps. Knowledge (*jñāna yoga*) is the first step, which is intellectual. It involves the understanding of the divine personality of God. Knowledge gives rise to devotion or love for God (*bhakti yoga*), which is the second step. This second step is emotional. In the third step, which is the practical step, the devotion must be practically proved to be genuine. The proof of devotion is the willingness of the devotee to perform service and sacrifice (*karma yoga*) for the sake of God.

Hearing the detailed information of Mumbai city is the first step of knowledge. Developing an attraction (feeling) for seeing Mumbai is the second step. Both these steps are theoretical (mental). The third step alone is practical. It involves the effort of the person in traveling to the railway station (service) and purchasing the ticket to Mumbai by paying money (sacrifice), in order to reach it. The three divine preachers, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, each emphasized knowledge, devotion and service, in their respective philosophies, which are indeed these three steps in the spiritual path. The three preachers also came in the same sequence in time, as Śaṅkara was followed by Rāmānuja and Madhva. Śaṅkara condemned the philosophy of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, which claims that sound itself is divine (*Śabdāmātra devatā*) and that it is capable of performing miracles.

Direct Perception of God

Shri J.S.R. Prasad: Atheists deny God due to the absence of the authority of perception. What do You have to say in this matter?

Swami replied: The authority of perception pervades all the authorities for getting knowledge as mentioned in the ancient system of logic. It forms the basis or background of all the other authorities. The authorities for getting valid knowledge are as follows: (1) ***Pratyakṣam* or perception:** It is direct knowledge, in which one sees an item and derives its knowledge directly through the senses. (2) ***Anumānam* or inference:** It is indirect knowledge of the unseen, derived using logic. An example is inferring the unseen fire on the hill upon seeing smoke rising from the hill. This inference is based on knowing the link between fire and smoke, which has already been seen in the kitchen. (3) ***Upamānam* or analogy:** It is knowing an unseen or unknown item by comparing it with a seen or known item. The unknown animal called ‘*gavaya*’ can be known upon being told that it is similar to the known animal, *gau* (cow). Here, one person has seen both animals. When he explains to us that the *gavaya* looks like a cow, we can imagine how the *gavaya* might look like. We get knowledge about the *gavaya* since we have already seen a cow. (4) ***Śabda* or verbal testimony:** It is knowing something from the word of a reliable person. It is also based on direct perception since the person giving us the information about something that we have not seen, must have seen it himself. (5) ***Arthāpatti* or implication:** It is the unstated, but implied knowledge derived by us from available facts. E.g. We see that a stout person is not eating food during daytime. It implies that he must be eating at night. This is because, we have already seen (known) that a person who neither eats during the day nor during the night, gets emaciated and eventually dies. (6) **Anupalabdhi or non-recognition:** It is perceiving the absence of a particular item that is too subtle to be seen with our eyes. Its existence is known by other means such as, by using some instruments, but it cannot be seen with our eyes. An example is X-rays, which are so subtle that they cannot be seen with our eyes, even though they are present. In that case, we only perceive the absence of the X-rays. Of course, the existence of X-rays around us has been perceived by the scientist using sophisticated instruments.

Finally, we conclude that perception is the inevitable basis of all the six authorities of obtaining knowledge. Therefore, people who

depend on logic and science, require the existence of the unimaginable God to be proved by the authority of perception.

The Veda declares that God is indeed recognized through perception (*Yat sākṣāt aparokṣāt Brahma*). We say that God is unimaginable and hence, can only be expressed through silence. But we see genuine miracles that are clearly demonstrated by spiritual people. Miracles are unimaginable actions, the source of which must be the unimaginable God alone. Their source cannot be any imaginable item within creation. The Advaita philosophers have misunderstood and misled all of us by saying that awareness being an imaginable, perceived item, must be God. If you say that perception is the characteristic of God, any item in this world which is perceived, must be God. Thus, their definition of God applies to items that are not actually God, which is the defect of *ativyāpti* or over-extension. **The final essence is that the unimaginable God is known by the authority of perception.** God is known through miracles, which are perceived by us. The source of the miracles cannot be understood by us since miracles are unimaginable events. But the Unimaginable Entity, which is the Source of the miracles, can certainly be inferred from the perceived miracles. This Unimaginable Source of the miracles is the unimaginable God Himself. God has already been declared to be unimaginable by the Veda (*Yato vāco..., Yo buddheḥ parataḥ..., Naiśā tarkeṇa..., Atarkyaḥ..., Na medhayā... etc.*). Here, the word ‘unimaginable’ means that the nature of God is not imaginable. If God’s nature is not imaginable, it obviously means that it is not perceivable either. But the existence of that unimaginable nature and the unimaginable God who possesses that unimaginable nature, can be inferred from the perceived unimaginable events, called miracles. The Veda says that the existence of the unimaginable God can be easily understood by us, using the authority of the perception of miracles or using the other authorities that are based on the perception of the miracles (*Astītyevopalabdavyaḥ*).

When the unimaginable God is mediated by a human being like Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, that human being becomes the unimaginable God due to the perfect merging of God with that human medium. **The perception of such a Divine Person performing unimaginable events is the direct perception of**

unimaginable God Himself. In every generation, the Incarnations of God Datta are performing several miracles, so that the existence of the unimaginable God, called Parabrahman can be known on the basis of the authority of perception. By such perception, the devotee experiences the unimaginable God (*Anubhavaikavedyam Brahma*). Hence, scientists and atheists need not blame theists that God is not perceived. If people argue that the Veda also says that God cannot be seen (*Na cakṣuṣā paśyati, Na tatra cakṣuḥ...*), you should realize that those statements apply to the non-mediated unimaginable God. They refer to the imperceptibility of His unimaginable nature. But even in the case of the non-mediated unimaginable God, the knowledge of His existence can be attained through inference, which, in turn, is based on the direct perception of the miracles. The miracles are the inherent characteristics of the unimaginable God. Therefore, not only do we have proof of the existence of the non-mediated unimaginable God, but we also have the proof of the direct perception of the unimaginable God in the form of His Incarnation. The Incarnation is the mediated unimaginable God, in whom there is no duality, but instead, there is perfect monism between the unimaginable God and the medium. Therefore, we call Krishna, the Incarnation of the unimaginable Parabrahman as the Parabrahman Himself (*Śrī Kṛṣṇa Parabrahmaṇe namaḥ*). The Veda also says that one rare, blessed devotee has seen the unimaginable God (*Kaścit dhīraḥ pratyagātmānamaikṣat, Tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṃ svām*). The ‘seeing’ of the unimaginable God in these statements means recognizing His Incarnation. The Gita also says that one rare devotee comes to know (identify) the existence of unimaginable God and also perceives Him in person (*Kaścit mām vetti tattvataḥ*). When one sees God Krishna, both the perception of the existence of unimaginable God and the recognition of Krishna as the mediated unimaginable God are achieved by the devotee. The existence of the unimaginable God is known through inference, after seeing the miracles performed by Krishna, such as, lifting the mountain. The recognition of Krishna as the mediated unimaginable God is achieved by knowing that the unimaginable God has perfectly merged with the human body of Krishna, leading to monism.