

UNCOMMON ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

Nithyananda





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First Edition: 2004

Second Edition: October 2008, 2000 Copies

ISBN 13: 978-1-60607-045-1 ISBN 10: 1-60607-045-2

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FROM PAIN TO BLISS



CHAPTER 1

From Pain to Bliss

What is pain?

Let us explore the subject deeply.

Pain can be physical, mental or emotional. Physical pain is the least of our worries! It is in a way a basic necessity for the body. Just imagine if we could feel no pain, we might start styling our faces and limbs the way we style our hair today! We certainly can't put it past today's youngsters! But jokes aside, pain is the symbol of bodily wisdom. Pain is what makes us integrated human beings.

Contrary to what we believe, most of us are not 'living' with our entire body. We 'live' only in the upper parts, neglecting the lower ones. To understand me better, just try this: close your eyes and imagine yourself. Call out your name. Which part of your body do you recall? It would most definitely be your face and upper limbs, certainly not the lower body parts. This shows that we are not fully alive in every cell, in every limb of ours. Even in our minds, we make this distinction. The upper limbs are the masters, the lower limbs the servants. When you create this separation, unknowingly, your energy or life force is channeled only to those body parts that you focus on. Just touch your cheek. Doesn't it feel sensitive, alive? Now touch your foot. Does it feel the same? Notice that you are not as alive in your foot as in your cheek. Why is that?

Though hard to believe, it is due to your lack of attention to that part.

Can the mind control pain?

On the emotional and mental level, pain is usually the result of some form of judgment. Pain is always, ALWAYS born of resistance to the present moment. Significantly, every time you experience pain, it leaves behind a residue which becomes lodged in the body. By and by, this accumulated pain creates a negative energy field around you, which we call the 'pain

body'. The 'pain body' is responsible for, and controls most of our pain patterns.

Research reveals that emotional imbalance can deeply disturb the physical body. For example, sexual repression can result in back pain, or the sense of shouldering too much responsibility can cause pain in the shoulder.

In a crowded bus, you may be packed in together with people of all kinds. Your being will not be touching them; your mind, your consciousness will not allow that. So your being will shrink deeper into yourself.

A
small
story

In Calcutta there were two small ashrams whose presidents were not on good terms with each other.

One day a person of some authority arrived in one ashram and invited the president to join him in visiting the other ashram. The president was in distress. He could not refuse, but he didn't want to go either.

Suddenly the president developed a high fever which prevented him from leaving the place!

I saw this with my own eyes. As soon as the other person left, the temperature came back to normal again.

Haven't we all experienced 'Monday morning blues'? Even children display bodily symptoms of illness when forced to do what they don't want to do - like going to school! This kind of illness is caused simply by un-ease, caused due to the mind and body pulling you in opposite directions. This is what manifests itself as dis-ease.

The other day, a handsome young man belonging to an orthodox family was brought to our healing center.

His complaint was sudden blindness.

His parents started weeping and told me that the boy was in excellent health, and had turned blind just a week earlier.

All medical tests revealed perfect vision, but he couldn't see!

After scanning his energy, I asked to spend a few moments alone with him.

As soon as he was allowed to talk to me in private, the boy poured out his troubles to me.

He said that he was deeply in love with a girl, but had been forced by his parents to stop seeing her.

I immediately figured out the root cause of the problem.

I asked the boy to procure a photograph of the girl, and spend the next three days meditating upon it continuously.

His parents were taken aback at this unconventional solution, that too from a spiritual man!

But you will be amazed: the technique worked wonders. In 3 days, the boy regained his vision perfectly.

How did this happen?

When the boy was compelled not to see what he most wanted to see, his subconscious mind decided not to see anything at all. His blindness was deeply psychological. What tremendous power the mind has over the senses! The mind is everything.

A
small
story

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, a grand epic of Hindi mythology, it is mentioned that Krishna and Radha took birth within a few moments of each other.

Radha was a normal baby in every way except that she wouldn't open her eyes.

A few days later, Radha's mother visited Krishna's house to see the baby Krishna. She took her newborn daughter with her.

The moment Radha was brought to Krishna's presence, she opened her eyes and beheld Krishna before her!

Later in life, when questioned by a friend, Radha remarked, ‘What else was there to see? It is for Krishna that I have taken birth. So I waited till I was taken to his presence to open my eyes.’

This may be only a tale, but it illustrates the tremendous power of the mind over the body.

Actually, pain is a requisition letter written by the body to the mind saying, ‘Please pay me some attention!’ Understand: your attention is your energy. Wherever you direct your attention, there your energy is also directed, and in that direction you witness growth.

You invite pain upon yourself.

Not many people would believe it if they are told that all their pains are those they have invited upon themselves, like honoured guests into their household. Yet this is true.

A
small
story

One man entered a restaurant and began ordering vast quantities of food.

Platefuls of steaming *idlis*¹, *dosas*² and *jilebis*³ made their way to his table. He ate with relish.

After a hearty meal, he signaled the waiter to stop bringing in the food. The waiter duly returned with a little white slip.

‘What is this?’ asked he, looking at the bill innocently. ‘Why have you brought me this? I haven’t ordered anything like this!’

In much the same way, we too invite pain and disease upon ourselves with our immoderate habits and stressful lifestyles, and then forget all about it and complain later when disease takes its toll. And sometimes we do enjoy the disease too, though no one ever admits to that! Just as an organ asking for your attention develops a disease, you yourself fall ill in order to get the attention of others.

1. Steamed pancakes made of rice flour
2. Steamed pancakes made of rice flour
3. Indian Sweet

This is no wonder, for in the hectic pace of today's life, *who* has the time to pay attention to anyone else, unless they fall ill? Attention is such a basic need! Psychology proves that normally a man can stay alive without food for up to 90 days, but without the attention of others he will lose his sanity in just 14 days. Because attention is energy, it is a life-force.

Though we are unaware of it, the craving for attention is so great, that to gain it, we create our own low-energy pool, and gladly suffer everything from cold to cancer.

In a relationship, you often notice that both parties are begging for each other's attention, begging bowls outstretched. Do you think two beggars can have a positive and fulfilling relationship? To truly attain freedom from disease, stop begging for attention. This is a subtle, psychological begging, which happens without our complete awareness, and which is ultimately far more damaging than physical begging. Life teaches us a lot of things. Understanding them is our responsibility. But we live in a constant state of somnambulism, unaware of what we are inviting upon ourselves.

Let me illustrate with a small story:

A small story	An engineer working in a large firm would bring the same dish for lunch everyday.
	Every day he would complain about how much he hated that particular dish, and his sympathetic friends would share their lunch with him.
	Taking pity on the man's plight, his friends finally advised him, 'Why don't you ask your wife to cook something you like, for a change? How can she not be aware that you hate this dish?'
	'What wife?' the man asked in surprise. 'I'm a bachelor. I cook my own lunch!'

This may sound funny, but it is true. We live our lives in much the same way. Through our lack of awareness, we first invite pain upon ourselves, and then complain about it and resort to painkillers. And the truly shameful thing is, we don't even mind getting afflicted by the same disease again

and again, because we don't identify ourselves as the root cause of the problem. We throw the responsibility on others, never on ourselves.

What is the cure for pain?

If pain is perceived as the absence of your attention, then the remedy must be your presence. There is a simple and beautiful self-healing meditation technique that channels your 'presence' into the diseased limb. You can try it the next time you experience pain. It is definitely a better option than painkillers, whose side-effects sometimes prove worse than the original complaint!

Let us now come to the meditation.

Let us say that you have limb pain.

Lie down in a dark room. Make a conscious effort to forget about your whole body, focusing only on the limb/spot which is causing you pain. As you experience your painful limb, deliberately drop the word 'pain' from your mind. Your mental chatter will continue to tell you that you feel pain. Switch it off. Feel deeply; experience with an open mind. Look into what is happening inside your mind. You will soon see that your mind was just exaggerating the pain. Put all your awareness on the center of the pain, and it will soon shrink to become just a tiny pinpoint of pain. Concentrate completely on this point, and you will discover in a sudden moment, that the pain has disappeared, and in its place is pleasure, bliss.

The root of pain and pleasure are the same; it is the same sensation with two names. If you have ever received a good massage from a friend or a professional, you will realise that the same massage would seem like sheer physical violence had you received it from a stranger!

If you try to understand the truth of your experience, it will be that 'pain' does not exist at all. Pain has only a negative existence. Like darkness, it is only an absence - the absence of awareness. As darkness disappears of its own accord when light is brought into a room, pain dissolves automatically when the energy of your awareness is focused upon it.

Any kind of pain can be transcended by this meditation. I invite you to experience it for yourself, to channel your pain into meditation and use it as a tool to enter your being. You will find that pain itself can become a door to *ananda* - bliss.

Pain can be a valuable lesson!

A small story	Two men, one a <i>Gnani</i> (a wise man), and the other an ordinary person, were traveling through a forest on a dark, moonless night.
	Suddenly, a shaft of lightning flashed in the sky.
	The ordinary man began to tremble in fear.
	A storm! His mind was immediately given over to confusion. Should he continue to walk? Or should he find a safe place to stop till the storm was spent?
	He began wishing that he had never decided to undertake the journey. He cursed himself as foolish and unlucky. In other words, he fell headlong into suffering with just a few strokes of lightning!
	The <i>gnani</i> , on the other hand, simply used the moments of lightning flashes to take a better look at the road ahead and kept moving.
	He was assured that he was traveling in the right direction, thanked the lightning for its help, and moved onward.

Pain is just like this flash of lightning. You have no control over its existence. But whether you suffer from it, or learn from it, is entirely up to you. Then, you will realize that you are the cause of your own pain, and only you can be the solution.

When you observe your pain deeply, innocence opens up in you. For the first time, you become aware that you are not the body. No pain can touch the real 'you'. Once you realize that you are beyond pain, you transcend pain to become a *dukkha ateeta* (one who has gone beyond suffering). You experience the rare freedom that arises with non-attachment to the body which you will carry all your life. You transcend your mundane life

and enter into a spiritual plane. You then exist in the world as an *atman*, an enlightened master. The whole material world disappears and another world arises – of incomparable beauty, innocence, joy and compassion.

As the *Gita* says:

*Sama dukkha sukha swastha sama loshtaashma kaanchana
Tulya priyaapriyo dheerasthulya nindaatmasamstuti*

(He who is ever established in the self, takes woe and joy alike, regards a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold equal in value, is possessed by wisdom, receives the pleasant and the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike.)

With *gnana* and *dhyana*, awareness and practice, pain can become the magic portal to enter into *Nithyananda* - eternal bliss. My blessings are always with you.

Q. Is enlightenment the only way out of this world of pain and misery?

A. There is one thing you need to understand first: enlightenment is NOT an escape from pain! On the contrary, it is born of a deep insight into the nature of pain, a profound and total understanding of ‘Why am I unhappy? What is it in me that is causing this pain?’

Just observing the nature and cause of pain with intense inner clarity, will cause pain to evaporate of its own accord - because it no longer has a reason to exist in you. And this realization brings with it, a state of absolute bliss, which is the state of enlightenment.

Enlightenment allows you to see, for the first time, that what you called happiness and contentment earlier were not true happiness and true contentment. Enlightenment showers upon you real bliss, real ecstasy. It gives you a taste of the real. But remember, none of this can happen till you have crossed the ‘pain barrier’ - a total understanding of the whole

spectrum of pain. Enlightenment is certainly not an 'easy way out' of pain! Understand that.

And in a way, you need to be thankful for the pain and suffering you experience, because they are the catalysts that set you on your quest for truth and transcendence.

Q: I get easily angry and hurt when someone insults me. How can I avoid this?

A: Why do you try to avoid it? To suppress pain, anger and humiliation will only cause it to stay in your system in a repressed form. Suppressed emotions can be dangerous - a little anger or hurt can fester over time into a deep and lasting hatred.

Try accepting your emotions without judging yourself. Are you feeling hurt? Right. Now enter completely into the feeling of hurt. Don't avoid it, don't reject it. Don't sympathize with yourself either, and don't direct it against the person who hurt you - simply watch the emotion as it plays in your system. This may take a while - maybe a few hours, even a few days. And then you will see a transformation you never imagined. After all, emotion is energy, tremendous energy. Just how long can so much raw energy circulate in your system?

The moment you accept your pain with no rejection, welcoming its role in your life, the whole quality of pain changes. The same energy that was pain, anger or suffering, is transformed into the blessed emotions of love and bliss. This is compassion, the silent force that moves in each of us, the force that transforms the ugly into the beautiful. And compassion brings its own reward. Just give yourself a chance and you can experience what I am saying! I don't speak philosophy; I speak out of experience.

Pain is simply the response you have chosen to a particular situation.

Q. Why do love and pain always go hand in hand? I try to give a lot of freedom to my partner in my relationships, but just end up getting used.

In the first place, isn't your idea of 'giving freedom' to your beloved a very wrong one? Love itself implies giving the other total freedom, unconditional freedom. To say that you are giving a certain amount of freedom to the other (whatever you consider necessary!) itself shows that you are holding back something in your giving.

It is natural to want to possess your beloved - that is the play of ego. It is difficult to imagine that your beloved may need space and time away from you, isn't it? You try to do the right thing - by 'giving freedom' to your lover. But when she actually uses that freedom, you end up feeling exploited. Honestly, you never expected that she would ever use that freedom to do what she wanted or to be with someone else, did you?

So understand what I am saying and don't make the mistake of generalizing that 'every time I give freedom in my relationships, I get used'. Are you sure the fault is not yours as well? The reason that love usually brings with it so much pain is that lovers unknowingly force each other into the golden cage of their own expectations. But true love can never blossom in captivity. You try and imprison your lover, and she does the same, time after time, until you end up feeling that love is so much misery that perhaps it is better not to love at all. But once you close yourself to love, what is left? Nothing!

Love can be a door to joy and freedom, or it can become a living hell. To experience love as pain is to miss the whole point of love. There is a saying, 'If you love someone, set her free. If she is yours, she will come back to you; if she doesn't come back, it means she never was yours anyway.' Try following this, not just in your romantic attachments, but in all your relationships.

Q: We in India have been brought up on the concept of karma - necessary suffering. Is suffering really essential in our lives?

To start with, it will help to realize that suffering is not a state of life, it is a state of mind. It is not an event in your life - it is your response to some event. Whether you suffer or not in a particular situation, depends entirely on your reaction to that situation.

When do you undergo suffering? When you fall ill? When your neighbour gets a new car? When your boyfriend/girlfriend leaves you for someone else?

Well, suppose you decided to just accept these situations without anger or resentment; just as they are, would you still suffer as much? After all, there is nothing inherently painful about your neighbour getting a new car. Even if there is pain when a loved one leaves, you cannot wish it away. Try to accept - to welcome - the inevitability of the moment, without reaction. It is ONLY your negative response to an experience that allows it to hurt you. Don't you see? No one or nothing can make you suffer without your silent permission!

Make a habit of witnessing experiences, minus your personal judgment. Learn to recognise with clarity the causes of your suffering - the obvious and the subtle. The ability to do this will come - not in a day, but certainly with practice.

One of the most deeply hidden reasons for suffering is that you could be enjoying it! For example, falling ill can become a source of pleasure if it fetches you the attention and care you have been craving for. Examine why it sometimes gives you pleasure to inflict pain on yourself, or on others. Is there a better channel through which you can receive the same pleasure - without the suffering? *Become aware* - this is the first step.

The second is to accept totally the here and now - without question and without reaction. *Awareness with acceptance* - this is the only way out of suffering.

The second part of the question - is suffering essential?

Yes, in a way it is, because suffering can be a powerful catalyst to growth. Just like a seed has to rupture for the plant to grow and blossom, intense suffering can break down the defenses of your ego, leaving you open and vulnerable to Existence. With your usual thought patterns shattered, you begin to see things as they actually are. You begin to recognize a subtle distance between you and the pain - that it is not 'your' pain, something intrinsic in you.

In fact, pain is simply the response you've chosen to that particular situation. And once you see that, how can you suffer anymore? In consciously accepting your pain, you truly let go of it.

Suffering is not necessarily the key to bliss. But if you learn your lesson well, suffering can certainly open your eyes to the unreality of suffering. It can teach you how unnecessary it is to suffer at all.

Q: You say that the dropping of pain can bring bliss - but bliss too leads to pain when it ceases. How do I make the move from pain to bliss?

What you first need to understand is that pain and bliss are not opposites. Bliss has nothing to do with pain. Pleasure is the opposite of pain - and like all opposites, they have no existence without each other. You are right: you cannot enjoy pleasure without suffering, without pain. It is significant that ancient Indian scriptures used the same word, pain, to imply both pleasure and pain - because pain is the ultimate result of both.

Bliss is that which arises when you drop the ideas of both pleasure and pain. And you have to drop them both together; there is no other way. Bliss is what floods you when both pain and pleasure have ceased to disturb you. Bliss is beyond pain and pleasure. It is perfect harmony, complete inner silence, total peace.

Are you able to understand?

FROM WORRYING TO WONDERING

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Recently, an extensive survey was conducted worldwide to determine the deadliest disease afflicting humanity in our time. Many believed it would be AIDS, others suspected it would be cancer, still others assumed that it would be tuberculosis.

When the results were announced, it amazed the world: the killer disease of our century is none of these.

It is depression.

CHAPTER 2

From Worrying to Wondering

Why do we worry?

Listen carefully. The question I ask is not, 'What do you worry about?' For even a ten-year-old would be able to answer that one!

We are all ready with a list of things that get us worried - money, work, relationships, illness - just about anything under the sun could be a source of worry. Strangely, for some, the opposite reasons could be a cause for worry! When questioned, one person says, 'I don't have children, that is my problem', while his neighbour protests, 'I have children, that is my problem'! Money and the lack of money are both perceived equally as problems by different people. If one can't invent worries, even the lack of worry could become something to worry about! In fact, elderly retired people often come to me with the complaint that they have nothing to do and no one to worry about, and therefore have no reason to live!

We come from all walks of life – different cultures, financial conditions, age groups. Yet, we all worry just the same. If external circumstances were the sole cause of worry, why would we all suffer in the same way?

The real reason we worry lies deep within ourselves. Look deeply into your worry. You will find that worry, like any suffering is not an external event in your life. Rather, it is your response to an event. Whether a situation makes you worry or not depends entirely on how you choose to react to that situation.

Just suppose your friend lands himself a great job. There are two ways you could perceive the situation. You could think, 'He's got a great job.' Or you could think, 'Oh my God, he's got a great job! What about me?

What am I going to do? What will my wife say? Should I start looking for another job? What if I'm not good enough?

Why doesn't anything ever go right for me?

Do you see how worry slips into the situation even without your being aware of it? After all, there is nothing inherently painful in your friend getting a great job. Worry is simply what happens when you constantly check yourself against external frames of reference. Am I doing as well as my neighbours? Is my boss impressed with me? What will my kids think?

Worry can become a need!

Why this need to get approval all the time from others? The sad truth is, we all have stopped trusting ourselves a long time ago.

As children, each of us is strongly centered in our own being. Have you ever seen a little child worry about what people might think of him? But as we grow, society plays this idea constantly into our minds. Society teaches us to evaluate ourselves by the ideas and opinions of others - parents, teachers, friends, even strangers. As a result, we begin to believe less and less in ourselves. Without external support, without social 'certificates' for all our convictions and actions, we fear that our ego will collapse in no time.

When you worry about something, you feel as if you have a definite point of reference against which to measure yourself. That is why worrying seems to give a centre to your being, a direction to your life. Without worry, you feel as if your being has no axis about which to move! For this very reason, many of us are actually in love with our worries.

People come to me and say, 'My business is going from bad to worse. I suffered heavy losses last month, and I know that next month is going to be even worse.' So I ask them, 'If you can foresee that, why don't you close your business right away?' And they protest in horror, 'What? What will I do then?'

What they actually mean is, ‘What will I worry about then?’ Without a reason to worry, your ego loses its moorings; it loses its reason for existence. That is why you choose to remain in the dimension of *dukkha* (worry). You cannot relate to the opposite dimension, *ananda* (bliss) – for in that dimension, you are nobody. To enjoy bliss, you need to first drop your ego. Are you ready to do that? No! You are ready to take on all worries, but you can’t let go of your ego! So you keep finding excuses to worry. Most of all, you worry about the fact that everyone around you is happy, while only you are not. But the funny thing is that every single person feels the same way. How is this possible?

A
small
story

In a certain kingdom, it came to the king’s notice, that everybody was depressed, because they found themselves burdened with more than their fair share of worries, while no one else seemed to have any worries at all.

So the king announced a mega ‘worry exchange offer’, where people could trade their big worries for others’ minor ones.

A vast space was made ready, in the center of which stood a giant ‘worry pot’. Here each person could happily dump his own worries and pick up the worries of anyone else they chose.

The entire kingdom gathered for the event.

Strangers met and starting talking to each other.

In due course, the event was declared open. Not surprisingly, not a single person came forward – for who wants to drop his small, familiar worries, and take on the unknown worries of another instead!

The mind is the master of worry.

Before we can move towards easing worry, we need to figure out just what happens inside us when we worry. Just watch your mind when you are worrying about something. What is taking place? You’ll find that a continuous stream of thoughts is flowing through your mind - mostly negative, totally disconnected.

In fact, we all indulge in two kinds of speech – ‘speaking out’ and ‘speaking in’. Speaking to others is what we normally call speech. But what about the soundless inner conversations that we constantly carry on with ourselves? This continuous, uncontrolled inner chatter that takes possession of your being without your permission, is the gift of the mind - the source of all worry. This inner chatter is your true master.

With inner chatter, there is no cessation of speech, never a moment’s respite. It is a kind of madness. Often, speaking to others is just a way of escaping from one’s own being, from one’s inner chatter. That is why so much talking is going on in the world!

It is not easy to understand what is meant by inner chatter. Try this experiment. Sit down with your eyes closed. Don’t focus on any issue. In just a few moments, you’ll find that there is a continuous stream of thoughts flowing through your mind. Write down, honestly, whatever thoughts come into your mind. Do this for five minutes.

Now, sit down and read what’s written on that paper. You will be shocked by what you read! This is the record of your inner chatter. How disconnected your thoughts are! How irrelevant, contradictory and defying they are! Now do you see what a full-fledged lunatic asylum you are running inside your head? This is the true nature of your mind – this completely uncontrolled flow of thoughts, this expression of insanity. This is the mind you have entrusted your life to! This is the mind that has invented all your worries. It is this mind that is living your life for you. Simply understand this much, and you have already taken a quantum leap towards freedom from worry.

A
small
story

One man once purchased a new car and went off on his first ride. On and on he went, mile after mile through the city. People watched in admiration, but he was in a frenzy of fear.

Soon after he launched out, he realized that he knew everything about how to run the car – except how to stop it!

Luckily for everybody, the car finally came to a stop after colliding with a tree.

A stunned passerby enquired of him, 'What's wrong with you? Don't you know how to drive?'

'Of course I do', cried he indignantly, 'I only don't know how to stop!'

In fact, he was actually not driving the car – he was being driven by it. The car was in control, not he. To drive is to have the ability to make the car move and stop in accordance with your wishes, not its own fancy.

In much the same way, you are 'driving' a vehicle which you don't know how to stop - your mind. Just try to stop, even for a moment, your inner chatter. Can you? When you try to stop it, the gushing of thoughts becomes even more uncontrollable. It is as if you are fastened with a seatbelt and the vehicle is free to move in any direction that it pleases to move in. At least, in a physical accident, we stand to lose only one body, one life – but when we become slaves to our inner chatter, we could spend life after life being taken for a ride. And be driven through life like a madman – with no purpose, no awareness, not even an understanding of what the result is going to be!

When does worry become depression?

Depression is nothing but the clinical name for chronic worry. What is chronic worrying?

The mind is an excellent recording system. It stores your negative thought patterns, your complexes, your worries. Whatever you teach the mind, it learns and repeats faithfully.

So watch what you tell your mind!

For instance, suppose you experience a failure in business. To make it worse, your marriage breaks up around the same period. Chances are that

you'll begin to believe that something is wrong with you, that whatever you touch is bound to be a failure. By continuously repeating this negative idea to yourself, you help it get even more deeply rooted in your memory. And as time passes, the mind begins to automatically play back whatever you have taught it, even in other situations, disturbing you without your knowledge or permission. This becomes a habit for your mind, resulting in a serious inferiority complex.

Just as poor eating habits ultimately cause fat deposits to accumulate in your body, or cholesterol to accumulate in your arteries, constant worrying can actually cause worries to solidify in your being. And just as cholesterol creates blockages in your arteries, depression creates energy blockages in your being. Depression is felt as a total low, a state past all hope. It is a state where we have handed over our controls to a monster we have created ourselves.

On the physical level, worry quickly manifests itself as ailments of the stomach (just check how often you need to visit the bathroom on the day of an exam or a job interview!). This is significant, because worry is closely connected to the *manipuraka chakra*, the vital energy center that is located in the navel region. The energy of this *chakra*, which controls the functions of digestion and elimination, gets locked by constant worrying.

How to conquer worry?

To even understand worry, we need to possess a deep insight into the nature of our own minds. The way into worry is through the mind, and only through the mind can we find a way out. Instead, we insist on searching for answers in all the wrong places - in external circumstances. We tell ourselves, 'If only I had enough money there would be nothing to worry about; if only I was better-looking; if only, if only...' This is a truly futile exercise.

A
small
story

One evening one man was found searching earnestly for something in the courtyard before his house.

When his wife asked him about it, he replied that he had dropped a coin.

His wife joined in the search.

Soon others gathered and practically the whole neighbourhood was searching for the lost coin, to no avail.

Suddenly one young man asked him, 'Which is the exact spot where you dropped the coin? Even half an hour's search has yielded no results!'

'Oh', said he, 'I lost the coin inside the house.'

'Then why are we searching here?' cried an amazed neighbour.

'The problem is', said he, 'I have no lights inside my house. Out here at least there's the streetlamp. We can search by its light.'

It is an amusing story, is it not? But you must know that your behaviour too is equally amusing. You too go about your search for freedom from worry in much the same manner without a clue as to its true causes and nature.

Once you understand how the mind works, this becomes simple. Just as a key can be used both to lock and unlock a door, you can use the words playing in your mind to sink into depression or rise into ecstasy.

The *mantra* to combat worry is simple: continuous positive thinking. Be alert. Whenever you become aware of a negative thought surfacing, begin to feed your mind positive thoughts instead. It is not an easy task, of course. In the beginning, when you utter positive words, your mind (which has been so well-trained to respond negatively) is not going to learn these words easily. A small corner of your mind will continue to protest, 'Do you think I'm a fool to be taken in by a few positive words?'

But by and by, you can alter the quality of the mind. It is perfectly possible to change your mental programming. After all, it is you who has programmed it! You know how to do it. Now just redo it in a different

way, that's all. The moment you see how easily worry can be created and destroyed by mere words, you will realize how unreal it is. To go beyond inner chatter for even a few moments is to become aware, to become alive.

The very understanding of how unnecessary worry is, naturally unlocks the treasures of *manipuraka chakra*. Suffering dissolves of its own accord. And in its place arises that state which neither pleasure nor pain can disturb - the state of *ananda*, bliss. With *gnana* - knowledge and *dhyana* - meditation, awareness and practice, suffering itself can be the door that leads you to *Nithyananda*, eternal bliss.

Q: How can I stop comparing myself to others and being miserable?

At least you have realized that comparison only brings misery - that is a good beginning! Buddha makes a statement of tremendous significance. He says, 'Nothing exists except in relationship. Everything is relative, and draws its meaning only from its relationship with something else.'

What are the words you use to compare yourself to others?

Beautiful. Rich. Clever. Unlucky. Young. Weak and so on.

Now, imagine yourself on some new planet, where nobody lived but you. Would you then be beautiful or ugly? Tall or short? Rich or poor? Without anyone to compare with, these words lose their very meaning, because they are only concepts formulated by the mind; they have no real existence.

Try this. Close your eyes for a few moments. Imagine yourself all alone in the world. Do you feel ugly or beautiful inside? Foolish or wise? Where are all these concepts then? Only the fact that you exist remains - because that is the only truth.

To compare yourself with someone else is foolishness, because you can never be anyone else - and no one else can be you! Look around you. Do you know anyone else who is exactly the same as you? Don't you see how special you are?

A small story | It is said that the disciple of a Zen master once asked him, 'Tell me master, when will I become like Buddha?'
In answer, the master slapped him furiously across the face.

Why? Was it because the disciple was hoping for too much? No. The master simply had to jolt the disciple into the awareness that he was already a Buddha! How can you want to become something that you already are? You are so out of touch with your inner being that you have forgotten how extraordinary you really are. Once you realize this, the need to compare dies naturally. Even if you wanted to compare, each person is so different; where is the common point of reference?

So drop the attitude of comparison. Remember, you are truly unique - just like everyone else!

Q: I have just found a most wonderful partner, but I'm so worried that this relationship is too good to last!

Too good to last! This is really worry at its peak! To worry about not having anything to worry about is the most cunning game of the mind. The mind will never let you relax into the present - it has to keep imposing the past and future upon you. But to love is to forget both past and future - to surrender totally to the delights of the present.

Examine the true reason for your fear. Something that is simply too beautiful is happening to you. It is so beautiful that you feel you've done nothing to deserve it! So you start fearing the moment when it will be over. When is he going to find someone more beautiful, more talented, more rich? How am I going to prevent it? What will happen if he leaves?

But no matter how much you worry, is there any way you can prevent anything from happening? You don't possess your partner. You don't know when he might change his mind - you don't even understand your own mind! To imagine that you can control the situation is sheer foolishness. Trying too hard to hold onto a relationship is the most certain way to destroy it. Ultimately, all insecurities arise from a lack of trust in oneself. In love, you simply have to trust yourself. Only then can you trust your partner, and trust in your relationship. There is no other way.

Of course, no one can promise you that your relationship will last. Why do you want it to? Change is the nature of life. Accept that the relationship is here today, and it is beautiful. Yes, it may not be the same tomorrow. Isn't that all the more reason to enjoy it completely today? There will be enough time to feel the pain when it is over!

And the truth is, if you have loved completely, with your entire being, there will be no suffering in letting go of a relationship if it no longer works. To be afraid to love simply because it may not last, is as foolish as refusing to live because you are certain to die someday!

Q: Even though I am trying to change into a better person, I worry about being punished for my past sins.

We are never punished for our sins! Rather, we are punished by them. Sin always carries its own immediate punishment, but we are not aware of this. In fact, it is the concept of delayed punishment that allows people to commit sin; it is reassuring to know that one can sin now and pay for it later, maybe only on Judgment Day, or even in another life! The fact is that sin and punishment always come together. And I'm not talking about theft or murder.

To me, **sin is any act that is committed in unawareness.** Even over-eating is a sin - and it usually brings its own punishment in the long run. When you are angry, when you are jealous or revengeful, you are committing

violence against your own being. Your inner state is thrown out of kilter; your peace is ruined. Even a few minutes of anger can poison your entire system, and it will be hours or days before you can regain your normal state. This is your sin and your suffering.

Guilt is the most common and most major form of punishment you can inflict upon yourself. People usually pay for small, entirely forgettable sins with years of unnecessary guilt - like you are doing right now! The truth is, when you drop the guilt, you drop the sin also. A person committing adultery may be so lost in love that she is not conscious of sinning at all. Without the guilt, she is no longer a sinner, only a lover.

This is what heaven and hell actually are - psychological states of mind. You won't find them on a map of the universe - they exist only inside your own mind. And worry and guilt are the surest ways to enter into hell.

Guilt is useful in a limited way, in that it keeps you from committing the same mistake twice. If you have learnt your lesson, it is time to drop the guilt. No point in worrying about mistakes already made; there is no greater sin than refusing to let go of your past!

Q: This whole issue of enlightenment worries me. Am I working towards it in the right way?

If you are working towards enlightenment and worrying about it, you can be sure you won't get anywhere close to it! The only way to approach enlightenment is to forget about it altogether. Of course, it is not easy to forget, but the problem with focusing too hard on the destination is that you miss out on the joys of the journey. Surrender to the present moment, and the future will take care of itself.

The worry about enlightenment is the last big declaration of the ego. Don't be deceived by it; it is only taking you further away from your

destination. Enlightenment can happen only when you are in the egoless state, ready to receive. Enlightenment is not a performance; it is not something to be achieved through anxiety and effort. On the contrary, when you are ready, you will slip into it of your own accord, naturally and effortlessly. In the meantime, do the best *sadbhā* (penance) that you can; just enjoy!

THE SIMPLE TRUTH STRAIGHTAWAY!



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*Anything which is given straightaway is the truth.
Anything which is clothed in beautiful words, with
metaphysical terminology, is half-truth.*

A half truth is worse than a lie.

*Whenever a person experiences the truth, experiences
the ultimate, it is always the same. But the expressions
vary so much that it creates a lot of confusion; it creates
vast differences from one system to another system.*

CHAPTER 3

The Simple Truth Straightaway!

If you look deeply, neither science, nor mathematics, nor logic, nor history, nor geography - in fact, no other field has so many contradictions as the spiritual field. In all other fields, things are expressed almost in one line or one tune. Facts and figures may vary a little, but the main thread, the core, is one and the same. In science, you don't find much contradiction between one scientist and the other.

In mathematics, you don't find many contradictions. In history, you don't find many contradictions. In no other field do you find such major contradictions as in the spiritual field. In the spiritual field, if you don't have contradictions, that would be something new! There is a beautiful saying that if two sages preach the same thing, if two *rishis* don't contradict each other, you can be sure one of them is fake!

Why is there so much contradiction? Why are there so many new philosophies in the spiritual field? Everybody asks, especially in Hinduism, why are there so many groups, so many sects, so many *devatas* (Gods)? This is because, wherever you have freedom, you have variety.

In the Western society, they have plenty of social freedom. It is said that once in three months, they change their car, their house and their wife! All three are changed regularly, once in three months! They have tremendous freedom in the outer world, in the social structure. But they don't have freedom in the inner world. As far as the inner world is concerned, a set of beliefs, a set of faiths is spoon-fed to them. They have to eat that; whether they digest it or vomit it, is their responsibility!

In the Western system, they don't have the freedom of the inner world. That is why, not many groups or sects or cults have been created. Not as many Gods are brought into the market. But in the East, we have tremendous freedom in the inner world. Anybody can enter into the inner

life, do some research and publish their report, bring a new philosophy to the world, bring a new God to the earth, bring a new ideology to humanity. As far as society is concerned, as far as the outer world is concerned, we don't have freedom. But in the inner world we have great freedom. This is why we have so many groups, so many cults, so many sects, so many ideologies and so many masters. Vivekananda says beautifully, 'Freedom is the basic condition for growth in any field.' In the East, we have total freedom to enter into the inner science.

In the West, for somebody to become a spiritual figure, the organization has to declare that person a saint. The organization decides whether or not he is a saint. In the East, there is no need for any such thing. If a man thinks he has achieved, he can simply declare it to the world. In the East, things are totally different. In the East, we are free to enter deeply into life and seek the truth. That is why you will find so many philosophies, so many varieties, so many masters and so many ways in which the truth is uttered. Each and every master, and each and every way of expression, will ultimately lead you to the truth. Of course, there will be as many paths as there are, faiths. Ramakrishna says beautifully, '*Yathoma, tathopat* – as many faiths, that many paths'.

Each and every person expresses his or her experience in a different way. For example: Patanjali says that the *chakra* in the head, the crown, is *sahasrara* - which means, literally, a thousand-petalled lotus. But if you open people's skulls, will you find thousand-petalled lotuses inside? Surely not. (In some heads you may find the mud out of which the lotus is born!) Then why does he say thousand-petalled lotus? It is a metaphysical expression of the experience that takes place when the energy reaches the Sahasrara. When the energy reaches the crown, the crown center, the experience is something like a thousand-petalled lotus blossoming. How beautiful it is! In just that way, your being flowers.

Your being expresses itself in all its glory. It is a metaphysical experience expressed using a physical example. But when the immature mind hears the expression, it tends to take the experience literally. So what happens is

totally different from what is understood. When one attempts to explain metaphysical experiences in ordinary language, the words can't match the experience and tend to distort it.

A
small
story

A seeker approached an enlightened master, a Zen master, and asked, 'Master, does an enlightened man speak?'

The master replied, 'No, a really enlightened person can never speak. Enlightenment can never be expressed in words. An enlightened person can never speak - and if he speaks, be sure, he is not enlightened.'

The seeker then asked, 'So an enlightened person keeps quiet, he keeps mum?'

The master said, 'An enlightened man can never keep quiet. If he keeps mum, be very clear that he is not enlightened, because if you possess enlightenment, you cannot keep quiet. But in enlightenment, you can never possess, only enlightenment can possess you. If you possess something you can keep it under your pillow or put it in your treasure box and keep quiet. But when enlightenment, when God possesses you, you can never keep quiet. So if somebody keeps quiet, be sure he is not enlightened.'

The seeker was naturally confused, and asked, 'Then what is the truth? You say that an enlightened master never speaks, and then you say he never keeps quiet. Then what is the truth? What does he do?'

The master said beautifully, 'He sings'. There is only one way to express enlightenment - by singing. He becomes just a hollow bamboo. The divine uses him as a flute to express beauty, to express spirituality, to express reality.

What does the word 'singing' mean? The word singing means, the body language, the very body language is the only way to teach what enlightenment means. It can neither be said by words nor can it be conveyed by silence. Mere silence is something dead. Singing is also a kind of silence - a beautiful, vibrating silence. When the silence vibrates with energy, when it

expresses itself at its peak, it becomes singing. It is neither words nor silence. Silence in negativity is wordlessness, soundlessness. Silence in positivity is singing.

Whenever a person becomes enlightened, his very walk becomes a dance; his very movement becomes an expression of love; his very being sings, oozes bliss, oozes joy. That is the only way, the one and only way to express the simple truth. Whenever words are used to express the truth, you can be sure that it is not the truth. Of course, the Master is saying the truth – but you are not receiving the truth. Something happens in between; something is lost in transit, because he speaks on a different plane and you listen from a different plane. What transaction can take place between these two planes? Just one thing, actually: you can pick up something from his body language. You pick up something from his presence. That is the only truth that can happen with the master. That is why I say, ‘The simple truth straight away’. The simple truth can come to you in a flash, simply by being in the presence of a master.

A
small
story

Once a Zen master was invited by the king to his palace to express, ‘What is *dharmā*’ (spirituality).

The master came, sat on the dais; he was just sitting, sitting and sitting.

After a while, he simply walked out.

The astonished king asked the master’s disciples, ‘What happened? Your master never said anything. He came, sat and went away!’

The disciples replied, ‘Oh, no! He has never spoken so beautifully before. He has explained so wonderfully whatever needed to be explained!’

‘What do you mean?’ asked the King.

‘Whatever had to be said, he spoke through silence,’ explained the disciple.

‘Then why did he come here? He could have done this sitting in his monastery! Why did he need to come all the way just to say nothing?’

The disciple replied eloquently, ‘What he has to share cannot be spoken, but it can be given. Just through body language, by the being, by the presence, it can be conveyed in a way that is far beyond words.’

Something happens in the presence of the master. If you listen with inner silence, you can hear it. If you listen with your mind, you will be attending to your inner chattering, which will measure my words rather than receive my message.

Either your mind will be accepting my words, and responding with, ‘What a great orator he is! What a way he has with words!’ and so on, or you will be resisting my words, thinking, ‘I don’t believe a word of what he says. What I feel is totally different.’

Either you will be accepting my words, or you will be resisting them. If you listen with your head, with your intellect, you will be doing only one of these. Either way, you will have missed the whole point of my presence. In the process of accepting and rejecting, you will not be listening to what I say. By the time you accept, you have already missed one statement of mine. By the time you resist, you have already missed two or three good statements of mine. So what you carry with you is not the total truth. What you carry is not the whole. Only when you carry the whole, do you carry the holy truth. Only whatever is whole is holy.

If you listen with your head, you will be either accepting or rejecting – both are not going to help. Instead, if you listen with an attitude of openness in your being, if you drop your continuous inner chattering, you will hear something that is beyond my words. You will see that something happens in you. My presence transforms you in a way that my words cannot. What you receive then is what I call the simple truth. You cannot find it in cassettes or video discourses. It cannot be stated in books. It can only be given to you by the master - straight away.

In fact, you can never get the simple truth from the Vedas or the Bible or the Koran. Certainly, they were all truths when the masters who spoke the words were alive. But now they are just words. Whenever masters speak,

they do not speak just to give you some understanding or impart knowledge. Their whole purpose is different. They talk so that you drop talking. I talk so that you stop talking. Only if you stop talking, can something happen between you and me, some chemical process. Of course the right word is alchemy. Some alchemy happens. Some transmission of light takes place. That is the real truth.

Because you are not able to receive the message as it is, we just use a few words to put your mind aside, to keep your mind engaged. While your mind is engaged in the words, your being opens to my giving. The simple truth can be transmitted, the light can be transmitted, the reality can be experienced, and *Nithyananda* can enter into your being.

So just drop your mind; just drop your inner chatter, and see what is happening in your inner body right now.

We have two bodies. One is the outer body, which is here and the other is the inner body, which may or may not be here! Just feel what is happening to your inner body. Just put your inner body into your outer body and experience the presence of your inner body in your outer body; that is enough. You will learn from the body language of the master. If only your outer body is here, you will learn from my words. If your inner body is also here, you will learn from my body language. Whatever you can get from my words is half-truth. Whatever you can learn, whatever you can get from my body language, is the simple truth. Even as you are listening to me, something is transpiring between us. Simply allow that spiritual experience to happen to you, and you will have received the simple truth – straight away!

Thank you.

I shall spend a few minutes sharing your feelings, either answering your questions or questioning your answers; either way I shall spend a few minutes.

By the way, someone told me when I entered the hall, ‘the group is very small.’

I felt really happy. Whenever I sit with a small group, I have the tremendous satisfaction that I have really shared something. For political meetings, you need big numbers. For spiritual meetings you need only the group, never numbers.

OK, first question?

Q: Dear master, are we in the world or is the world in us?

Neither are you in the world nor is the world in you. The very idea that you are in the world makes you materialistic. The idea that the world is in you, makes you spiritualistic. Both are ideas. Please be very clear that if you think you are in the world, you become materialistic. You run behind the world. You just run behind it. You want to have it. You want to possess it. If you think the world is in you, you run behind your being. You want to possess it. It is the same running, just that it is diverted a little bit inside. The running for spiritual progress or running for some spiritual experience, we call mystery mongering. Even the running for mystical experiences is nothing but mystery mongering. Both are actually concepts; both are ideas. When you understand both are just ideas, you start allowing the spiritual experience to happen in you, and this cannot be done by words.

For example, take the river Ganga. Suppose a small bamboo stick is floating on the Ganga. Considering the bamboo as the center, if you think that the Ganga has been split into two halves, right-side Ganga and left-side Ganga, would you be right? Can you say the Ganga has been divided? No, in reality Ganga is never divided. Because you have taken the bamboo as the center and divided the river for the sake of utility, for the sake of your understanding, you have labeled it as right-side Ganga and left-side Ganga. In the same way, just for the sake of utility, you name *this* as the body and *that* as the world. It is just a naming, a labeling.

Just look in; look into yourself. Why do I say, 'Look in'? You know that for a long time you have only looked out. That is the reason I ask you to

look in. When you look inward, you see there is really no boundary between this and that, between you and the world. If you perceive one boundary as stronger, you will feel that you are in the world. If you perceive the other boundary as stronger, you will feel that the world is in you. The worldly people and the so-called materialists say, 'We are in the world.' People who close their eyes and sit in the caves in the Himalayas say, 'The world is in us.' But both are just concepts. If you feel this boundary is stronger, you think you are in the world. If you think that boundary is stronger, you think the world is in you, that's all.

Once you drop both concepts, you will see simply that you *are*, and wherever you are, you are joyful. Generally the great saints and enlightened people teach you that the world is in you. Do you know why they teach you that way? Because you are already addicted to the opposite idea, that you are in the world. Just to bring you out of that idea, they teach that the world is in you.

Actually to remove one thorn from your foot, you need to use another thorn. But once you have removed the thorn, you need to throw away both. The idea that the world is in you is only another thorn to remove the thorn that is already piercing you. In the ultimate sense, both are just concepts. When you drop these boundaries, you understand reality, you understand what the truth is. It cannot be expressed by either of these concepts.

If you remove that bamboo from the Ganga, can you say Ganga has become one? No, because it was always one. The very word 'one' exists only if you say there is 'two'. If there is no 'two', how can you say it is 'one'? Is it clear to you? The word singular exists only as long as the word plural exists. When the word plural is lost, how can you say this is singular? That is why the *rishis* and sages called this philosophy *advaita*.

Dvaita means plural - duality. But *advaita* cannot be translated as singular – because that would imply the presence of a plural somewhere, which *advaita* does not acknowledge. *Advaita* can be translated only as non-dualist.

It can never be expressed as ‘single’. It can be expressed only as ‘where there is no duality’. *Dvaita* means duality. *Advaita* means where there is no duality, that’s all.

If you say you are in the world, you are expressing duality. If you say the world is in you, you are doing the same thing. Only if you experience the fact that neither is true, do you experience the truth. The truth cannot be expressed with *dvaita*, it can only be expressed with *advaita*.

Q: Dear master - will the program also acquaint us with meditation techniques like the awakening of the kundalini?

Of course, the program that we are going to conduct in the next two days is the awakening of the *kundalini shakti* in a very safe and practical manner.

To get the best out of life, to have a joyful blissful life, to have a spiritual life, a real life, two things are necessary. One is maturity, the understanding about the being and Existence. The second is meditation. Understanding clears your conscious mind. Meditation cleanses your unconscious mind. There are lots of things that cannot be followed by understanding. Everybody understands that smoking is bad for health. In all the billboards about cigarette advertisements, they include a statutory warning. What are the words they use? ‘Cigarette smoking is injurious to health.’ We know it. Yet people smoke and suffer. They are unable to control themselves. Why is this so? Just an intellectual understanding will not be sufficient in some places. So we need to channel energy into the unconscious zone.

The conscious zone can be cleared by intellectual clarity, maturity. Of course, at least 50% of the problems can be cleared just by intellectual clarity. We cannot deny the role of intellectual clarity in our joyful life. It has its own place and importance. But it is not sufficient; it is not the ultimate. If you have intellectual clarity, it means you have an understanding about each and every *chakra*, the way in which the *chakras* work; what is the way in which the energy centers can be opened.

For example, why is depression very closely related to the *manipuraka chakra*, the navel center? Whenever you hear some news that you can't bear, that you can't tolerate, immediately the first blow would be to the stomach. You will either have a stomach upset or diarrhea. Has any of you experienced this? We always say, 'I can't digest it'. Not only in English, but in all languages this expression exists. In all languages, we have an expression; whenever you receive some news that you can't tolerate, we say, 'I can't digest it. I can't stomach it.'

The *anahata* is related to love. Love and heart, these two words are synonyms in all languages. It's not that all the languages were created at a time, as if God had created CD packages and put one package in each country. No! Tamil in South India, Hindi in North India, English in England - every language has evolved in a different place, at a different time. But in all languages, you see love and heart are used as synonyms. It means some deeper connection exists between your emotions and your being.

The *anahata chakra*, the heart center, is closely related to love energy. If you know how to handle that emotion, the maturity, the understanding to handle the emotion solves 50% of your problem. The energy to awaken that *chakra* solves another 50%. The maturity creates energy. The energy creates maturity. The ball rolls and you finally experience ultimate bliss.

Maturity clears the conscious portion of the mind; meditation clears the unconscious portion. When both are cleared, you will see a tremendous transformation of the being; a tremendous flowering of the being happens in you.

That is why I call this program *Ananda Spurana* or Life Bliss. *Spurana* means flowering. The flowering of bliss is happening in our being continuously. Only, we don't look inward. We don't see what is happening. Just look inward, and you will find it - this *Ananda Spurana*, this flowering of bliss.

Q: How do I know whether I am qualified for a spiritual awakening or not?

Nice question. The very idea that the person is not qualified for a spiritual opening or a spiritual awakening was created by the priests. If you are alive, that is enough; that qualification is enough for a spiritual awakening.

A small story		Somebody went to Ramana Maharshi and asked, 'Bhagwan, am I qualified for spiritual progress; am I qualified for the spiritual line?'
		Ramana Maharishi asked, 'Are you alive?'
		The disciple said, 'Yes, of course.'
		'Then you are qualified enough,' replied Ramana.

It is only the priests who created this idea to exploit the public. You see: if you are not held in guilt, if you are not kept one step lower on the pedestal, you do not obey. Just to exploit people, the idea of qualification was created. The very basic thing, which has killed intelligence, which has killed spirituality, is this business of qualification; the idea of qualification. You can never find anybody who feels they are qualified. Even after hundreds of years of practice, you will wonder whether you are qualified or not. I don't know why! This is because guilt has been implanted in you. Be very clear, not only in Mumbai city, wherever you live, you are qualified. If you think you are alive, that is enough; you are qualified. The idea of qualification was brought in just to exploit you mentally.

A small story		A man goes to a master with the same question, 'Master, am I qualified for the spiritual progress? I feel there are so many obstructions.'
		The master replies, 'The word 'obstruction' is the only obstruction, nothing else.'

The word 'obstruction' is the only obstruction to spiritual life, because each and every being is potentially divine. When a person is already potentially divine, how can you say that he needs some other qualification? All the rules are there merely to instill guilt in the other person, just to keep him

on a lower step. Otherwise there is nothing like qualification. If you need to have a qualification, what is the purpose of spirituality?

Somebody came and told me, ‘Master, I have never practised *ayama* and *niyama*.’ In Patanjali’s yoga system the first step is *ayama*. *Ayama* means – *brahmacharya*, *ahimsa*, *satya*, *apaikara* and *astheiya*. These great vows – celibacy, non-violence, truth, non-stealing and non-possessiveness are the ones you need to practise, and only then are you qualified for yoga.

Somebody came and asked, ‘I am not qualified in all these five things. How can I enter into yoga?’

I said, ‘If you are qualified in all these five things, you don’t need yoga!’

Both maturity and meditation help each other. Maturity gives you energy and energy gives you maturity. At first, you start wherever you are, that’s enough. You will see that the ball rolls.

Q: *Dear master, ‘I think, therefore I am.’ Is that true?*

The same question in the opposite way! Like old wine in a new bottle.

Be very clear, you neither think, nor you are. I am giving the same answer in the other way. You neither think nor you are. If you think, you must be. If you think, you must exist, if you exist, you can’t think. If you exist, you can’t think. If you think, you must exist. Actually it’s a very intricate question. The same old question, whether we are in the world or the world is in us: whether we exist and think, or we think and then exist.

See, it’s like a boundariless thing. Again you want to stand at some point, again you want to stand. Either you want to take a bath in the left side of Ganga or in the right side of Ganga. You must understand: you are neither in the left nor in the right! You *are* in the Ganga. Once you understand, thinking and being are not different; you will see that there is no boundary.

Today Raj was asking me in the car whether both matter and energy exist in the world. I told him, ‘No, there is no matter, only energy. And when

there is only energy, how can you say even the word energy? If there is something called matter, then you can use the words energy and matter. If there is only one thing, how can you call it either matter or energy? Similarly there are no 'two things' - thinking and being. There is only one thing. But you make a boundary, because you are not comfortable without boundaries.

The logic, the very quality of logic is cutting things into pieces. Unless you cut things into pieces, you can't understand. That way of understanding is by labeling things, by making them more intellectual, by making them more logical. So just for utility's sake, you can say the left side of the Ganga or the right side of the Ganga. But in reality, no two Gangas exist. Only in comparative reality, left side and right side exist. In existential reality, there are no two Gangas.

Like that, only in comparative reality, thinking and being exist. In reality, in existential reality, you exist. That's all. Only the word 'exists' exists. There is nothing different called thinking and being. If you make a boundary, then you can think that this is thinking and this is being, but there is no boundary actually. Can you say that up to this boundary you are being, and after this boundary you are thinking? There are no two such things. There is no *Shakti* and *Shiva*. There is only one thing - pure *Shakti*. When it is one, the word *Shakti* also cannot be uttered.

As long as you worry, whether you think because you are, or you are because you think, you will have confusion. Both are mere words with which we play. For play it is perfectly alright, but not for real life. If you fly in a small airplane, a toy airplane, you know where you will land, do you not? It's the same with words; they are good to play with, but taking them too seriously can never lead you anywhere.

Q: Dear master, why is there so much violence in the name of spirituality?

Fights and violence are not because of spirituality; they are because of religion. Whenever spirituality is alive, there are no fights. Whenever mere

rituals are alive, the problem starts. If you give importance to *Gita*, there is no problem, but when you give importance to Krishna, the problem happens.

But to understand *Gita*, you need to give a little importance to Krishna. To start with, Krishna is perfectly alright, but if you end with Krishna, surely there is some problem. It's beautiful, good to be born in the church, but not to die there. You can start with religion, but when you go beyond that, there won't be any fights.

Do you know the meaning of the word 'Ayodhya'? Ayodhya is the birth place of Rama and the word comes from *Ayodhi* - where there is no *yuddha*, where no war happens. The very word *Ayodhi* means 'where no war happens'. Because of the concept with which Rama created *Ayodhi*, the concept with which Rama named *Ayodhi*, I think he must have visualized a peaceful, joyful heaven. That is the reason he named that place *Ayodhi* - beyond wars, beyond fights, beyond disturbances. We idolise Rama, but drop his vision. There starts the problem. We caught him, but not his vision. When we catch Christ instead of the Bible, then the problem starts.

A
small
story

A devotee of Rama lived on the banks of the sacred river Ganga in the holy town of Benares.

His routine was, every morning he used to sing and chant the Tulsi Ramayana. He had one copy of Tulsi Ramayana. He used to recite the Tulsi Ramayana, to attain Godhood. The whole day he used to recite Rama's name and enjoyed the 'Ram Nam' - the name of Rama.

He was in a heightened state of bliss all the time. He was very popular in that entire area.

People used to go to him for blessings and he was leading a joyful and ecstatic life.

One day a beggar went to him and asked, 'Sir, I have not taken food for the last three days; please give me something to eat.'

He was filled with compassion, and could not tolerate that somebody had not taken food for three days. He could feel the man's suffering.

He could feel the man's emotion in totality. When you share your grief with ordinary people, when you share your suffering, they too get trapped in your pain. They 'fall in love' with your problems. They too fall to your level and just become part of your suffering. But evolved people, they just raise you with their love.

The sage could not tolerate that somebody was living without food, that he was hungry. He had with him nothing except a copy of the Tulsi Ramayana. Without thinking, he gave the beggar the book saying, 'Please take this book to the market, tell them that this book belongs to me, that this book was given by me. You will see that people will purchase this book paying a lot of money. With that money buy yourself something to eat.'

The book which he was worshipping every day, which he never even opened in front of others, which was like his very being for him, he just gave it away!

When the beggar left, the sage prayed to Rama, 'Oh Rama! I have given away your words to keep your words. I have given away your words to keep your words.'

What is the philosophy of Rama? What are his words? Nothing but giving. The ultimate sacrifice, *tyaga*. 'I have given away your words just to keep your words.' So when you give away the words, just to keep the words, no fight happens. Naturally the unity, the experience of bliss, the experience of peace, the experience of harmony happens, when you hold on to the spirit of the words, instead of clinging to the words themselves.

Instead of applying the words in your life, if you keep them in books, then the problem starts! So if you are ready to give away your words to keep the words, no problem can arise, no problem can exist. This is the only solution, the one and only solution. Put your energy into understanding and developing your life, than giving importance to the forms and the outer rituals.

Q: *Dear master, could you throw some light on chakras and mantras?*

You have asked about two things – *chakras* and *mantras*. Let me first explain the *chakras*. *Chakras* are the subtle yet vital energy centers which are in your being. Of course, they have no physical existence. By activating them, you can relieve a person of disease. There are seven such major energy centers that manage all your physical, mental, psychological, emotional and spiritual activities. Your attitude and activities are controlled and managed by these *chakras*.

For example, if your stomach is upset, even if you hear some good news, you will not be in a mood to relish it, cherish or enjoy it. If your stomach is relaxed, if your being is light, even bad news or mistakes, you would take in a lighter sense. You would forgive the other person.

That is why we say that these *chakras* play a major role in your physical, mental, psychological, emotional and spiritual attitude and activities. When they are disturbed, when they are not at ease with your system, the dis-ease occurs; when they are dis-eased with your being, the disease happens.

If the *chakras* can be activated by proper methods, by proper techniques, you can be freed from disease. Not only do you come out of the disease, you taste real well-being.

Even if we are not suffering from any disease, we rarely feel a true sense of well-being. What is the scale? How do you measure whether you are in a state of well-being or not? Early in the morning, as soon as you wake up from your bed, watch your steps from the bed to the bathroom. If they are a dance instead of mere steps, you are healthy; you are in a state of well-being. The steps from the bed to the bathroom should be more like a dance than mere steps. That is the way to measure whether your being is beautiful, whether you are joyful, whether you are healthy or not. That is the time you emerge from unconsciousness, out of your sleep. That is the time to measure who you are, how well you are.

Just watch the animals as they wake up from sleep each morning. You see birds chirping for no reason. The calf leaps at least two or three times around the rope with which it is tied. The cat does a few rounds for no reason. Man is the only animal that turns over and goes back to sleep! Early in the morning, as soon as the alarm rings, man is the only animal that turns over and goes back to sleep. He is the only animal that needs an alarm clock in the first place. He is the only one who has disconnected himself so completely from nature, from existence.

A
small
story

Once a middle aged man, for some reason, wanted to get rid of his wife.

His wife had a cat and the man thought he would get rid of both.

Thinking that he would start with the cat, he caught the cat, took it some ten miles away, dropped it in an unfamiliar place and came back.

When he left the cat and returned to his house, he saw the cat already standing there waiting for him at the doorstep!

The next day he took the cat to the other side of the town – 20 miles away. He dropped it and came back. Within one hour he saw the cat standing there at the doorway.

By the third day he was really disturbed and annoyed. He took the cat, put it in a gunny bag, took the bag and drove left, right, south, west, this way, that way and after two or three hours' drive he reached a place like a forest, a dead end.

He said to himself, 'I myself have not gone to this place, so the cat can never find the way back. Let me drop the cat here. This is the best place because I myself didn't know that there was a place like this; so the cat will never find the way back home.

He just dropped the gunny bag and drove back.

On the way back, he rang up his wife, 'Dear, is the cat in the house?'

She said, 'Yes, the cat is right here.'

The man asked, 'Can you please somehow find out the way back from him? I have lost my way.'

Man is the only animal that has lost connection with nature altogether, that has lost the way. So if you see that your steps early in the morning are more like a dance, you can be sure that you have not lost your way; you are living a life of well-being.

Awakening of the *chakras* not only cures you of disease, it also gives you a glimpse, a taste of real well-being. Most of us have never touched the state of well-being. We have never experienced the state of well-being. Just like a man who is blind from birth can never understand what he is missing, we too never understand what we are missing.

We would never understand what it is to feel a sense of well-being, because we lost it at a very young age. So only when you enter into these *charkas*, would you understand what you were really missing all these days. This is the basic explanation about *chakras*.

Now about *mantras*. Never think words are mere words. Be very clear: never think words are just words. They are embodiments of energy. For example, if I utter the word 'cow', immediately a figure appears in your mind, with four legs, a tail, two horns, two ears and so on. Am I right? Immediately, just by the sound, the form is created in your system. Just try to recollect the form without the sound. It may not be the cow but 'gau' - you might use the word in Hindi. Just try to visualize something without creating a sound, without creating a word. You can never do it, never. This visualization is what is called *ichcha shakti*.

You have three energies in your system: *ichcha shakti*, *kriya shakti* and *gnana shakti*. For the other two energies, *ichcha shakti* is the base metal. From this base metal, gold is created. *Ichcha shakti* is the raw energy, raw material from which *gnana shakti* and *kriya shakti* are developed. When it is 22 carat gold, it is *kriya shakti*. When it is 24 carat, it is *gnana shakti*. When it is 18 carat, merely a raw material, it is *ichcha shakti*. Raw material is *ichcha shakti*, 22 carat gold is *kriya shakti* and 24 carat gold is *gnana shakti*. But the raw material is the basic thing. The capacity to visualize, the capacity to imagine, is what is raw material. So the visualization capacity and the words are closely associated.

Adding *mantras* to raw material is like processing the raw material and purifying it in to pure gold. The word *mantra* can mean two things: *man-tra*: *man* means mankind, *tra* means that which shows the way. So *mantra* is that which shows the way to man.

Man-tra: *Man* also means mind, *tra* means that which shows the way, so *mantra* could also mean that which shows the way out of the mind, which brings you out of the mind. So the technique to bring man out of the mind is *mantra*.

You can say, the technique which brings man out of the world, which paves the way for man, is what *mantra* is. When *mantras* are added to your being continuously, like acid being added to raw material to cleanse it, it becomes 22 carat gold. If you continue the process, it will ultimately become 24 carat gold. So *mantra* is a powerful technique to enter into the spiritual zone or enlightenment or reality.

Even in day-to-day life, *mantras* are necessary. It is not necessary that the *mantra* should be in Sanskrit. You all use English *mantras*: I must succeed in my office; I must convince that person; I must flourish in my business. Even these words which you continuously repeat unconsciously are *mantras*. Don't think *mantra* means *Om Namah Shivaya*, or *Hari Om Namo Narayana*. These are ancient *mantras*, that's all. The modern *mantras* can be even what you think as soon as you wake up in the morning: Today I must talk to that man and get the business; today I must talk to her and settle things. Whatever you utter as a goal can become a *mantra*. That is the way to attain something.

Anything that becomes a reality in your life first appears only in the form of a *mantra*; then it becomes reality. If the *mantra* is unconscious, the result is also unconscious. If the *mantra* is conscious, then the result is also conscious. If you do it consciously, then you get conscious results and you will know how to enjoy it. If the *mantra* is repeated unconsciously, you will not know the cause and the result. When it is repeated consciously you will be very clear about the purpose and what you want to reach and what will happen.

If consciousness is flooded into your mind, into your *mantra* structure, then the path and the goal both become clear to you. You will achieve it safely and beautifully, by dancing and not by walking. If it is unconscious, you are unaware about your path and your goal, so naturally you just get dragged along. If you are conscious, you are traveling beautifully, or else you are dragged. If you know how to stop the car, how to apply the brakes, you are driving the car. If you don't know, then the car is driving you.

You are all chanting *mantras* continuously, whether you are religious or non-religious, spiritual or materialistic. You are chanting *mantras* continuously, either consciously or unconsciously, that's all. If you decide to chant the *mantras* consciously, you will know how to stop the car, and you will be driving the car. If you let the *mantras* chant you, if you let the unconscious process continue in you and control your actions, the car will be driving you. If you drive the car, you know where you are going. If the car drives you, you have no idea where you will end up!

Q: Dear master, you say we are part of the whole, but I experience myself as a separate individual. Can you explain?

You may think that you are separate from Existence, but you are not. Whether you like it or not, accept it or not, understand it or not, believe it or not, you *are* connected to God. It is like you are God's child. Suppose you have a small baby on your lap, even if he kicks you, you would still keep him on your lap. Just like that, even if you resist, you are in divinity. Whether you float with the current or swim against it, you are connected to the river. You are related to the cosmic consciousness.

All minds are very closely related to each other. If you look at the circle of cosmic consciousness, only on the periphery are there many points, but in the center all just converge. If you go towards the center, the distance between you and the other point becomes lesser and lesser. If you move

out of the center, the distance between you and others becomes more and more. So whether you believe it or not, at the being level you are connected with all the beings on planet Earth.

So anything done consciously creates a ripple in the mind. It is like if you throw a small stone in the lake, it will create a ripple that reaches the boundary or the shore of the lake. A wave is created. If you drop the *mantra* like a stone in the conscious mind, a ripple is created. It travels all over the lake and reaches the shore. If the stone is big, the wave is big, if the stone is small, the wave is small. So whenever you chant anything, or whenever you pray for anybody, it surely creates an effect on your being and on other beings too. It enters just like the stone that is dropped into the lake; it is dropped into the mind and it creates ripples; it creates an effect in your system and in other systems. Whatever happens in the center of the lake, will happen to your being. Whatever happens on the periphery of the lake when you drop the stone, that much impact will be there on other beings. So when you pray for others, the effect is more on you than on others. Others do get the effect, but you get the result too. They are only affected. You get the result itself.

Q: Can the hyperactivation of chakras have any side-effects?

If the *chakras* are activated by proper methods and techniques, it only gives good health, never side-effects. The techniques which I have designed are fool-proof techniques, with no side-effects. Even if you commit mistakes you would only not have the full beneficial effect. There will be no side-effect. The techniques should be proper. If they are proper then these problems don't happen.

Secondly, there is no such thing as 'hyperactivation' of the *chakras*. If a *chakra* is hyperactive, you would only feel the expansion of your consciousness. It would only do more good. You can never die by falling into *Amritasagara* (the ocean of nectar)! By falling in *Amritasagara* you will

never die. You will only become more and more joyful. As such the hyperactivity never creates any ill-effect in your system. If the *chakra* is hyperactivated, it creates only well-being, the joyful state, the spiritual experience, and ultimately enlightenment. It never disturbs you. It is only the laziness or non-activeness, the inertia, the *tamas* of the *chakras*, that creates trouble.

Q: Dear master, I am already following another master. Can I still practice these meditation techniques?

One thing: the practice does not involve a change of guru. Please be very clear: attending this two-day course does not involve change of guru. All great masters are embodiments of the same energy. So I never tell people to change their guru. It is the same energy through different channels.

People come and ask me, 'Can I attend others' discourses; can I follow another master as well?' Certainly! It's not like I am trying to get you away from someone else's shop and into my own shop. Spirituality cannot be reduced to business. Whomsoever is your guru, to whomsoever you are attracted to, with whomsoever you fall in tune, he is your guru. He is your master; perfectly alright. My techniques, my teachings, will only help you more, they will just inspire you. They will awaken you to follow your own master in a more effective way. What I am giving you is only energy and inspiration to flower in your own path, that's all. It does not involve change of guru or change of faith or change of religion or change of your spiritual system.

Of course, the *Kundalini* energy (the energy lying dormant at the base of the spine) can be awakened only by the grace of the master. When I say this, I don't mean the grace of the master Himself, it is the grace of His energy, the *guru Shakti* - that is the Existential energy. *Guru Shakti* as such is the same always. It may differ only in the forms that it takes.

Rama and Krishna never had any conflict. But Rama's monkeys and Krishna's cows would be fighting with each other till the very end! So it is only our ignorance that makes us think in terms of conflict. I tell you: nothing needs to be changed. Only the inspiration and the energy need to be awakened. So attending this two-day course does not involve any change of faith, change of belief system, change of guru or change of religion. It involves only the change of personality; nothing else.

Now I think it is time to finish. I will answer one last question, and then we will finish.

Q: Dear master, why are participants and volunteers required to wear white clothes?

The mind is deeply influenced by colours. Now they have discovered something new in the West called colour therapy. Did you know? If you put a red light in your bedroom, you will not be able to have good sleep. If you use a dim blue light, you will have dreamless sleep! If multicolours are used, the mind gets activated. Maybe that is why disco lights are in multicolour!

In India, we have been practicing colour therapy for centuries without giving it a name.

We know that the white colour has the power to create peace in the mind, and an attitude of receptivity. When white is used, the unnecessary wavering, the unnecessary thoughts are brought down. White always creates a pleasant mood, a mood of relaxation, bliss and harmony. That is why white is emphasized. Of course, it is not compulsory. I don't compel anything. It is only a suggestion. If somebody comes without white clothes - but of course, wears some clothes - that is enough! It is not as if we say that if you don't wear white, you can't do the course. Nothing like that. Whatever

rules are given are only as guidance. It is a guidance to have the maximum result for yourself. Everything else is your responsibility. It is just to give you a simple understanding.

I think it is time now for us to end this discussion!

Thank you.

IS SPIRITUALITY RELEVANT IN OUR LIFE?



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Spirituality is relevant in every time and age. Meditation is not an esoteric art practiced by sages and yogis. It has practical benefits for each of us, no matter what our age, culture or religion.

Meditation not only enhances our physical health and mental well-being, it helps us understand our interpersonal relationships better. Above all, it brings us in touch with our own divine nature, which we have forgotten.

CHAPTER 4

Is Spirituality Relevant in our Life?

Q: What are the benefits of meditation in today's society? At any time and age, what does every human being need in life?

Strength and well-being of the body, mind and spirit. The strength of the body (*sharirbal*) keeps us free of physical diseases and helps the body maintain itself in such a way that we can carry on with our day-to-day activities without any problem. The strength of the mind (*manobal*) keeps our minds calm and balanced and helps us live life fully and joyfully. The strength of the spirit (*atmabal*) takes us beyond these both. With *atmabal*, there arises a sense of compassion, a spirit of *tyaag* (sacrifice), of service to society. While the other two are necessary for the continuation and well-being of the individual, *atmabal* is essential for the continuation and well-being of society and humanity.

With only physical strength, a man can become a thug, a rowdy, a nuisance in society. If he possesses physical and mental strength without the strength of the spirit, he becomes cunning, dangerous. He could become a criminal, a menace to the society. Only when man combines all three strengths does he flower as a complete individual. He becomes an asset to the society in which he lives, and to the world.

The single master key that can unlock all these strengths is meditation. It is now well known that meditation can work wonders for the body. Through meditation, one can cure diseases like low or high blood pressure, diabetes, and a whole range of ailments. Many have experienced these benefits for all kinds of pains; even intellectuals agree on this matter.

Meditation helps you cleanse your *chakras*. Have you all heard about the *chakras*? In our body, there are seven subtle energy centers which control

our physical, mental and emotional activities. When all these *chakras* are functioning harmoniously, only then do you experience a sense of physical well-being. Meditation works on your *chakras*; it helps cleanse the *chakras*, to make them function harmoniously, to keep your body and mind free of disease.

On the mental level, meditation can free the mind from depression. It can help us acquire greater mental clarity, and guide us to live our lives more completely and with a sense of fulfillment, both individually and as a part of the family and society. Meditation helps us make fuller use of our time and energy, so naturally we get increased material comforts too.

In the same way, meditation helps bring out our *atmashakti* (strength of the soul) and creates a deep sense of peace. When bliss flowers within us, we naturally want to spread it in society. If we ourselves are miserable, how can we be of any use to the society? So meditation is the one route that gives us all these strengths.

Meditation benefits us on the physical, mental and spiritual planes. It enhances family and social life, and ultimately leads us to spiritual life. This is the wisdom gathered by the great enlightened masters over the centuries.

Q: A lot of people come to you for healing, not for meditation.

Yes. Healing is my visiting card. My real message is meditation. When I say that meditation can lead you to the ultimate, I need - or you need - proof, am I right? That is why I promote healing. When people see the miracle of healing, they become drawn to me; they want to know more about this path. Without that, do you think it is easy to draw people into spiritual life? Of the thousands who come for healing, if even a handful turn to meditation and spirituality in their personal lives, my purpose is served. And it is happening; it is happening everywhere.

Q: Lots of masters give many meditation techniques. What makes your techniques special?

I don't consider it necessary to promote any particular technique as special. I promote the principle of meditation. If more and more people are inspired to practice meditation after listening to me, that itself is sufficient - it is a good sign. It could be any method they feel comfortable with.

But if you are asking about my method, you could say that it is a way of balancing our inner energies. There is an energy that pervades the cosmos that works the planets, the sun and the moon. We are also part of this same energy, but we have lost touch. My techniques help in tuning us back to this cosmic energy. The more we tune ourselves, the more at ease we will be with our body, mind and spirit.

Q: There are so many meditation techniques, that we get confused. Each group tries to promote its own technique. How do we know which technique is right for us?

I advise you to try out as many techniques as you come across. Everyone should try out some techniques, at least 4-5 techniques. See, everyone who preaches has a spark of truth inside – without that, it is impossible to come out and be a master. But different masters preach the same truth in different ways. Also, different people have different mental set-up. So they may fall in tune more easily with one master, than with another.

So try out the techniques and see. Whichever gives you the deepest inner peace and the greatest clarity, follow it and forget the rest.

Q: There are so many problems in the world which have not been solved. How can spirituality solve them?

Whatever problem there is, you have to make a beginning to solve it. Have determination and faith; that is the first step.

Q: I don't mean our personal problems. I mean the huge social problems.

Spirituality is not just a personal thing. It can have definite repercussions on the social level also. Spirituality is not only meditation; it is also compassion and service to society.

Vivekananda said beautifully: *Aatmano mokshaartham jagat hitaayache.*

“Though we may attain enlightenment, to harness it for the service of humanity is true spirituality.”

Otherwise, it is only half spirituality, which causes even more trouble than agnosticism.

Q: Does true spirituality mean not having any desires?

No, that is the wrong way of looking at it. From my experience, rather than cutting down desires, harness your inner energy better, so that you can fulfill your desires.

Q: But in modern-day life, there are too many desires, too many expectations. How do we reduce them?

To reduce desires is to reduce the richness of life. As I said, the important thing is to create the energy inside to fulfill those desires. There is nothing wrong in having desires, but you should work hard towards fulfilling the desires. Even if they are material desires, even if you want to buy a Benz car, nothing wrong. Meditation can give you the energy to fulfill even materialistic desires.

Q: But how can you go on increasing your desires, instead of leading a contented and desire-free life?

Don't ever think of a contented life as a spiritual life. *Sattva* (goodness) and *tamas* (lethargy) may look the same on the surface. Do you think that

anyone who wears simple clothes and sits on a mat on the floor is more *sattvic* and contented? That could be only the external appearance. It could also be that simply because he doesn't have the energy, he may make do with whatever he has. Resignation and contentment are not the same, though they may appear to be so.

Q: But what if your mind is naturally content with what you have?

That kind of mind is the natural by-product of spirituality. Don't think that it can lead you to spirituality. It happens as a natural by product of spirituality. It happens from within. You can't learn the attitude of contentment and try to make that a stepping stone to spirituality. People always ask you to learn to be content. Be very clear, you cannot learn to be content, you cannot acquire the attitude. Contentment has to flower within you as a natural result of spirituality, of meditation. Through meditation, you get a deep satisfaction from life, which allows you to be content with whatever you have.

Q: Compared to other contemporary swamis, you are very young. Do you consider it a disadvantage?

Nothing is an advantage or a disadvantage. Ultimately, people are interested in what I have to offer. No one is bothered by such details. As far as spirituality is concerned, the ordinary 'life experience' is immaterial.

See, there are two kinds of experience – *anubhava* and *anubhooti*. *Anubhava* is acquired over a lifetime. It is like learning that fire burns, after testing hundred kinds of fire all your life. First you touch a log fire and find that it burns; then you touch a gaslight and find that it burns; then you try an oil lamp, then a match – and finally by the time you realise that fire always burns, it is time for you to go to the burning ghat! This is *anubhava*. But my experience is *anubhooti*. It happens when you learn from the very *first* fire.

All fires are like this, all desires are like this. That leap is spirituality. If you learn through *anubhava* you need a lifetime to become wise. *Anubhooti* needs intelligence, not age.

So age is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for me – it is such, that’s all!

Q: All over the world, attempts are being made to reform social wrongdoers, for example, in prisons, through practice of meditation. Do you agree with these efforts?

Certainly. We should definitely make these attempts. These places have become centers of negativity. Meditation can definitely do a lot in this area because ultimately the change has to come from within the individual. Before you can see the change in society, the transformation should take place in every individual, in every potential criminal. Meditation can not only transform individuals; ultimately it can ultimately bring down the crime rate in society.

Q: What are punya and paap?

Whatever fills you with love and joy, expands your personality, whatever makes you feel love and compassion for others, is *punya*.

Whatever withdraws you from others, makes you feel unhappy and depressed, is *paap*. Joy is your true nature. Whatever takes you away from that, whatever turns you into a masochist or a sadist, whatever makes you feel unhappy for yourself or others, is *paap*.

Q: In spiritual matters, should we worry about others’ opinions or not?

As long as we are not a nuisance to anyone else, as long as we don’t interfere with the functioning of their lives, there is no need to bother about others’ opinions.

Q: Why do those who are enlightened set up establishments?

At one time, this path was meant to be traveled alone. Today, I feel it is my responsibility to spread the joy and benefits to all. Of course, you may say this is not true spirituality. All I can tell you, from my deepest personal experience, is that as Vivekananda says, true spirituality is not just to get enlightened but to spread the benefits of enlightenment to all. That is what I took this birth for! For that, whatever is necessary - including an establishment - I need to maintain.

Q: Is the spiritual tradition still relevant in our times?

It is relevant in all times. Where would our country be today without the spiritual tradition? For centuries, they have been the protectors of our entire culture – from Sanskrit and scriptures, to *bharatanatyam* and *kalaachara*, to *ayurveda* and *siddha*, to religion and spirituality, it is the legacy protected by a handful of these people.

As the *Bhagavata* says, the very existence of the earth is because of enlightened masters. They have protected these sciences and arts by pouring their lives into it. Almost everything that civilization possesses today, all that you enjoy in the name of culture, is their gift. Even in our century, they were responsible for preserving the learning in an untainted form and maintaining the continuity. That is equally important.

Q: But because of a few wrongdoers in saffron robes, their name has been tainted...

Ok, let me ask you a question. When Harshad Mehta – I am sure you remember him from the Mumbai stock-market scam – when he cheated the country of millions, he was wearing trousers and shirt. Does that mean that everyone wearing trousers and a shirt is a Harshad Mehta? And if you think so, is that the fault of those who wear those clothes, or a fault in your perception? There have been cases where hundreds of false doctors

have been arrested for defrauding the public. So do you now look at every doctor with suspicion? Have you stopped going to the doctor? COME OUT! Forget the old arguments. These are just escape routes.

The spiritual masters don't lose anything because of your ignorance. If you miss me, you lose me, that's all. In every field there will be frauds. Use your intelligence, check out and choose properly, instead of denouncing the whole community as frauds. Because of this misconception, even the genuine masters are not recognized.

See now, how much clearing work I have to do – sorting out your false concepts, working past your prejudices, giving proof, etc., etc. I have to establish my credentials first before I can get to the point and give you the new religion, which is spirituality. It is a gradual change, but it must happen. Our social concepts about spiritual figures have to change. Otherwise the masters will be forced to turn their attention to countries where people are ready to receive their message with an open mind. That will mark the decline of the Indian society.

See, you are journalists. You are going to carry this message to society. Before you do that, I want you to be very clear about what I am saying. I want to know whether you yourself are convinced about what I say. If not, question it. Please question it.

The only thing is, keep an open mind. Don't come with your prejudice and foregone conclusions. Alright, so are you convinced?

Q: [One journalist] *No, I am not. I once surrendered to a guru but it didn't work out...*

Did you really surrender?

Journalist: Well, I tried my best to surrender.

One thing you need to understand. When you say you tried your best to surrender, it means surrender did not happen. If surrender had truly happened, this question, this doubt would not be there. It is only a means to hide confusion and hypocrisy.

We all happily keep some beautiful idea of religion in our minds, but carry on with our practical life in any way we please. Religion is something you have to tune your whole life to; it is not a part-time amusement.

The truth is, whatever life you are leading, that is your true religion. It may be money or power or sex. That is your religion. That is why you are living your whole life according to that ideology!

Do you understand? Try and find out what your religion actually is. To keep your ideology and your life separate is hypocrisy. Whatever you call your religion, you must be willing to practice it completely in your life.

Journalist: But I had a strong belief in this particular guru's ideology. Still...

A: See, I told you, religion is not that which remains a belief. It should turn into your very life. To keep religion and life separate is a kind of schizophrenia. Hypocrisy takes over our being. If you believe that a certain way of life or a certain ideology is right, you should be willing to transform your whole life in that way. Otherwise, search for whatever you feel is the truth.

Something that does not change your life cannot be the truth to you. If something is the real truth, a mere touch itself can transform your life. If it doesn't transform you from within, let go of it. Don't hold on and complain. That ideology was not the right one for you, that's all.

Q: Up to the 1970s, many spiritual institutions were doing excellent service in maintaining the places of culture and religion, temples, sacred books, etc. But this has declined. Is it due to external interference?

Again, since agnosticism has taken hold of society, the number of people who come for this service has drastically decreased. Instead of removing the flaws in the system, the whole system itself has been destroyed. It is a sad thing ultimately for society itself. It doesn't realise that.

Try to understand the reality of whatever I am saying. Whether you use these ideas in this article or not, try and follow it in your own life. Use your pen to spread these ideas to the public. It is your privilege and your duty.

Q: We hear stories of many miracles performed by various masters, like predicting the future. How does this happen?

Let me give you an example. Suppose you are standing at the side of a busy road. Look on either side of you. You can see the movement of traffic for say, 200 metres.

Now suppose you climb onto the terrace of a nearby house. You will be able to see the movement of traffic for a much further distance, is it not? In the same way, the ordinary mind can perceive the past and future only in a very limited way. The elevated consciousness (that comes after enlightenment) can see infinitely further into both past and future. It is a simple thing. The truth is always simple. Only the ordinary mind can't comprehend these things, so it seems like a miracle. *Jnaanis* (masters) and *jnaanshakti* (the energy of enlightenment) don't have any limitations of time and space. That is how many of my patients get healed in countries which I have never even visited. All over the world, people who have never seen me before, see visions of me in their meditation.

Q: Why do enlightened masters also promote rituals?

The misery of man is that when great truths are presented in a simple manner, he refuses to accept them. He can only understand complicated rituals because the mind is complicated, and it loves complicated things.

If I ask people to do half an hour of meditation, just sitting silently, they cannot do it. But if I ask someone to do 108 *pradakshina* (circumambulation) of a certain temple, they will do it happily, because doing complicated things gives much ego-satisfaction. But enlightened

masters are not concerned with the methods, they are only concerned with results. While you are busy doing rituals, your mind is engaged in that. At that time, your inner being is left open to me, and I can give you whatever I have to offer. It is a subtle technique. The mind that questions, the mind that resists, is kept engaged in some other activity. Then my actual message is allowed to sink into you. At least in this way, if I can get through to the maximum people, if I can benefit them, then so be it! To enter into meditation for its own sake requires a very mature mind. It requires an elevation in the maturity level of society as a whole. But it is happening. Slowly but surely, around the world, a subtle change is happening.

One more thing: rituals when done with deep understanding and intensity, can cause a solid integration to happen within you. This integration is needed to pursue your journey in the inner and outer worlds with untiring will and inspiration.

OK, I think we are running out of time. Last question?

Q: Is meditation a practical alternative for today's generation?

Of course. Especially in today's society, when stress is too much, family relationships are failing, meditation can make a tremendous difference. And it doesn't require too much of your time and effort. These days everybody is too busy to think about spirituality. I understand! But keep aside at least half an hour every day for meditation – any meditation is fine. It is not necessary that you should follow the techniques I am giving you. Follow whatever suits you best, whatever you feel tuned to. You will surely see a transformation, not only in your own life, but also in the ways you reach out to others and bring about a definite change in society.

Thank you.

DISCOVERING LOVE



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*Love
is that which
risks everything,
gives anything
and asks for nothing.*

CHAPTER 5

Discovering Love

What is love?

Such a deceptively simple question, but watch how deep it takes you!

What is ordinarily known as love is no more than the mischief of hormones. It works on the push and pull of greed, fear, anger and jealousy. To love in this manner, to be a victim of the havoc wrought by our hormones and our minds, must be hell indeed!

But most of us can imagine nothing beyond the selfish love we give and take all our lives. To understand the true meaning of love, we must first understand the nature of man.

Man is a 'triple entity' of sorts, composed of intellect, emotion and being. The innermost core, the *atman* or self, is beyond them all.

When the light of the *atman* floods the intellect, the intellect is showered with energy and is transformed into intelligence. When the *atman* works through emotion, emotion is purified and expressed as trust. When the *atman* touches the being, the being flowers in love. Love is the ultimate blossoming of consciousness. It is the ultimate possibility available to us.

Q: Do we all love in the same way, or are there different kinds of love?

There is only one love, but its expressions vary from person to person. Intellectual love is that which is expressed through the head. Because it is closely related to the mind, this love is the most corrupt of all.

The intellect perceives love as a bargain, as a contract of sorts. It believes strictly in give-and-take. Its attitude is a calculated, 'What is in it for me?'

This kind of love will always result in expectation, possessiveness, jealousy and violence. This kind of love transforms neither the giver nor taker.

Emotional love is expressed through the heart, and so it is a more purified expression of love. Here the emphasis is not on contract, but on contact. This love trusts and gives without much expectation. Whatever problems arise in this love are solved by love itself. This kind of love transforms the giver immensely.

When love is expressed through the being, there is neither give nor take; there is just the radiating of love, just a choiceless overflowing of love energy. This love can bring with it no pain and no problems, because it is not dependent on the other person. In fact, it does not even require an object; it is simply a radiance, an overflowing. This kind of love transforms both giver and taker in beautiful ways.

When love radiates through intelligence, it is rightly called, 'falling in love'! When it radiates through the emotions, we may term it 'rising in love'. When it radiates through the being, it results in 'flying in love'! And the only kind of love worth mentioning is the one that lends you wings.

Q: How is ordinary love different from divine love? Are they both expressions of the same quest?

I can say there are only two kinds of love – 'divide' love and divine love!

Ordinary love divides; divine love unites. Ordinary love perceives boundaries; divine love recognizes no boundaries. But yes, they are expressions of the same quest. These two kinds of love do not differ in kind, but only in degree. As ordinary love moves from the intellect towards the being, it approaches the quality of divine love.

Q: But in our day-to-day relationships, won't there always be some element of possessiveness, jealousy and so on?

No. If these exist in a relationship, then it is not a relationship of love at all; it is only an ego-fulfilling game masquerading as love.

If you love, you cannot possess – and vice-versa. One can only possess property. How dare anyone try to possess a being? Even to attempt that is to reduce someone who is energy to the status of gross matter. It reveals a deep-seated disrespect for the person. Then how can you relate with that person, or expect him/her to relate with you?

No matter how beautifully it is masked, the being senses this attitude of disrespect. That is why someone who is in a relationship with a possessive person will sooner or later try to break free.

As for jealousy, it is the complete antithesis to love. Jealousy tries to enforce love, trust, and loyalty upon the other. It tries to grab from the other the very gifts that can only be given willingly and with joy. How can jealousy and love possibly co-exist?

Possessiveness and jealousy both arise from the same root cause - fear. The ego is a coward! It is forever afraid of losing its power over the other person. So it tries to trap the other in a cage. It demands a contract of loyalty, renewable daily. Its whole show of aggression is mere drama to cover up its deep-seated fear.

Love, on the other hand, knows no fear. It trusts too much to feel fear. Love does not ask questions; it does not demand loyalty. It simply surrenders. When two people are truly in love, they are not surrendering to each other; they are both surrendering to the supreme experience of love.

The fact that you love is enough guarantee. There is no need for any other security. In truth, love trusts even if the trust is violated. It knows no other way. To react in any other way would mean destroying the other's happiness, and one who truly loves can never bear to do that! Love does not know the language of jealousy and possessiveness.

To bring these into a love relationship is the surest way to kill it.

Be warned!

Q: Without possessiveness, enforced loyalty and such things, won't relationships degenerate into what is known as 'free love' or 'free sex'?

No. On the contrary, the exact opposite happens. It is the existence of possessiveness which results in free sex. When love is given and received through the intellect, it results in deep dissatisfaction. No matter how hard you repress it, free sex will flourish as long as people keep looking for a better bargain. Love like this can never aspire towards spirituality or even beauty; it can only result in strategy, exploitation and frustration.

When love is directed through emotions, one experiences a sense of fulfillment with one partner itself. There is no longer any need to look outside for any satisfaction. The 'free' of 'free sex' disappears, and only 'sex' remains!

And ultimately, when love becomes an outpouring of the being, the word 'sex' itself disappears. One experiences tremendous satisfaction even without the other. There is such complete self-sufficiency that there is no longer any need for sex!

Q: Why is it the intellect which controls such a completely 'physical' phenomenon like free sex?

Who says sex is a physical phenomenon? If love or sex were to be expressed only through the body, you would snap out of it almost immediately. It is when it is expressed through the mind that the trouble starts! In fact, almost 90% of our lovemaking is cerebral. It's true! How many people can climax unless they imagine someone 'better' than the real person before them? That means sex is a purely mental exercise.

If you can climax without a mental game, with just yourself and your partner, you will be free from sex.

Q: Is it necessary for spiritual seekers to give up worldly love?

You need to drop the worldliness, not love! What we normally know as ‘worldly love’ is love tainted with attachment, possessiveness, jealousy and selfishness. Bring intelligence and compassion into your love. Cleanse the impurities of ignorance and expectations. What remains is true love. With love like this, you can transform even your ‘worldly’ relationships into sacred spiritual exercises.

Q: You were telling us about ‘love as a quality’ as opposed to ‘love as a quantity’.

When love is given in a calculated manner, it expresses as a poor, limited quantity, to be safeguarded from all except a select few who can receive it. This kind of love comes with the regular package of expectation, pain and frustration.

But when love becomes a quality of your being, it will pour forth like sunshine uncaring of who receives or who reciprocates it. This kind of love is simply an expression of the blossoming of your being. It spreads equally to all, and embraces all without question and without conditions.

Q: We normally say that the path towards the Divine has to be traveled alone. But is it possible for two people to travel together, through love?

The path towards the Divine is a deeply personal one. Up to a certain distance, you can travel together. It makes the path all the more beautiful when you are sharing it with your beloved! But after a while, a time will come when you understand that from this point on, each person has to take the step alone. Each individual is unique, and so is each one’s path. When this realization happens, the need to travel together will drop of its own accord. The ultimate flight towards the divine is always utterly alone!

Q: Does love mean accepting the other person as he is, with all his faults and imperfections?

The very words, ‘accepting the other person as he is, with all his faults...’ implies some kind of condemnation, doesn’t it? ‘Welcoming the other person as he is presented to you’ would be more like love! The whole of Existence is a gift to you from the Divine. Accept it with grace and humility.

Q: Can love also be ego-fulfilling?

A: Yes – when it arises from the intellect. In fact, most people are either exploiting or being exploited in a relationship. Ego is the whole basis of what we nowadays call a love-hate relationship. Most ‘love’ relationships end up this way because your partner will, at some point, refuse (or be unable) to meet the demands of your ego.

All the complaints you hear from people who claim to be in love point to a hurt ego, ‘she never listens; he doesn’t respect me; she doesn’t understand my needs’, etc., etc. are nothing but the complaints of a bruised ego.

Remember this: the ego thrives on conflict. Conflict provides the sense of separateness, the sense of ‘me versus him/ her/ them’ in which the ego feels strengthened. When you fall newly in love, you become automatically ready to surrender to the beauty of the experience. The ego is forced to take a back seat. But when the love comes from the intellect, it cannot sustain this ‘high’ for long. As soon as the relationship has become a familiar thing, the ego hits back, creating the situations of conflict necessary for its own survival.

Love-hate relationships are not confined to romantic attachments alone. Parents and children have a perennial ego tussle, with parents trying to live their lives a second time through their child, and the child’s ego trying to rebel against this imposition upon its own freedom.

If you recognize these symptoms in your own relationship, it is time to realize that what you are experiencing is not love. As they say, true love has

no opposite. It cannot turn into hatred, no matter what. What you are truly looking for is a better sense of self, which the other person's presence is temporarily fulfilling. Become aware!

Q: How do I know whether the love I am experiencing is real, or an illusion?

Love is always real, never an illusion. It only remains to be seen whether you have labeled the wrong emotion as love! Love is that which cannot be destroyed by anything - especially by reality! If it flies out of the window as soon as the honeymoon is over, it isn't love. If it diminishes because the partner has put on weight or forgets an anniversary, it certainly isn't love. If it continues to trust, even when the partner has been unworthy of trust, that is true love.

How do you know that what you are feeling for someone is truly love? Take this check.

Does the mere presence of the person fill you with joy, with peace, make you feel more centered in yourself? Do you enjoy sitting silently together, experiencing a communion that goes beyond words? Do you feel no fear of losing the person, no matter what?

Have challenges and anxieties helped your love to flower more fully? Above all, does loving this person come naturally to you - as if there were no other way?

This is the essence of love. In fact, love does not even know the fear that it might all be an illusion. So while you love, love as if it were the only truth. And if a moment comes sometime when you feel that it is an illusion, it simply means that love is now over and it is time for you to move on.

Q: If there is conflict in a relationship, is it better to keep trying or to move on?

Good question. Love is the most dangerous path there is! Only those with great courage dare tread this path. At any bend on this path, you have to be prepared for great joy, great pain, great beauty, great struggle, or great understanding.

Yes, there is bound to be conflict in every relationship, because every individual is unique, and no two personalities fit together so perfectly that no rough edges remain.

If there is conflict, don't sweep it under the carpet out of fear that it will destroy the relationship. On the contrary, ignoring it can do just that. Allow the conflict. Examine it. See what you can learn from it. Is it stemming from something in yourself that you are secretly unwilling to acknowledge? It is only in an intimate relationship that you discover yourself.

Your partner is like a foil reflecting your true nature. After all, who else dares point out your worst flaws with so much clarity? So examine the nature of your conflict. Also remember, in every relationship, there is a time to stay together and a time to move on. What kind of love do you share? Are you really, truly, surely in love? Do you relate deeply with each other, being to being?

Don't look for reasons and arguments; don't intellectualize the process - simply turn the question inwards with complete honesty and trust. The answer will arise on its own.

If your answer is 'yes', then understand that the issues of conflict are mere ripples on the surface of your relationship. These are just situations created by the ego to counter the sense of 'no-self', of surrender, that comes with love. Work around these situations with love and care.

If the answer is 'no', then maybe it is time to move on. To remain in a relationship where there is no true relationship of being to being is sacrilege, unfair to you both. Love for you may be elsewhere. Don't search for it; just be open to the possibility. In the meantime, don't let the conflict destroy the relationship, destroy you both. Nobody deserves that. Accept that this

is not the person for you, and move on without resentment or bitterness. Don't destroy your own capacity for loving. To become bitter will only cause you more suffering, and destroy your faith in love itself. And that is the most dangerous thing that can happen to anyone.

Q: Why do love and pain always go together?

All these questions point in the same direction. As long as there is a calculation, love is bound to result in pain. What we don't realize is that we usually turn to another person to make up for some lack, some incompleteness that we perceive in ourselves. As long as that person 'completes' us by bolstering our ego, the relationship is one of 'love'. But a time comes when the other person can no longer nurture and sustain our ego. When the ego is deprived of the other person's support, the suppressed feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and fear are unleashed again.

Be clear: relationships do not cause pain; they only bring out the repressed pain that is already in you. And as long as you look to an external source to complete and fulfill you, this will continue to happen.

Try to be self-sufficient, centered in your own being. Try to focus on what you can give in a relationship, rather than what you can get out of it. The first lesson of love is, not to ask for love. In one way or the other, we are all begging for attention, begging for love. When you are yourself a beggar for love, how can you give love to the other? Don't worry about whether your love is returned or not. Love is not a bargain; it is a gift. When love is an outpouring of one's being, it does not wait for the right person or the right place or time. It does not even care about whether the love is reciprocated or not. You are so full of love that you feel compelled to share the experience, like a rain cloud needs to share its rain, or a flower its fragrance. This kind of love blesses both, the one who gives and the one who takes. It is only when both partners move from the 'asking' polarity to the 'giving' polarity of love that you can move beyond pain.

Q: To fall in love with a master is also a kind of 'falling'?

Yes and no.

Ordinary 'falling in love' is an obsession with form. With the master, this is only a preliminary step towards moving beyond the form. Normally, when you fall in love, you 'fall' in a lot of ways because possessiveness, jealousy, domination and anger are sure to follow. Lovers play subtle games of hide-and-seek with each other. Though each needs the other to make them feel complete, the ego also resents the power of the other over itself. This resentment expresses itself as covert physical or psychological violence on the other. With the master, the same love and the same fear exist - but there are no halfway points. You have to fall completely - fall from the head and fall from the heart! The master offers total love and demands total surrender. Love and surrender both mean the sure death of the ego.

When you come to the master, you cannot play the games of deceit and domination that are so essential to keep your ego alive. This is the ultimate test for your ego; there is no running away. You have to choose, once and for all, between love and fear.

If you welcome the master into your being with total love and trust, the flame of the master's presence can simply burn your ego and transform your being. In the master's hands, you experience a new birth. That is why falling in love with the master always results in a tremendous upward surge. You may fall in love with me - but I will never let you stay fallen. I will ensure that you rise in love instead!

YOUR QUESTIONS
ANSWERED



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“Why do you so often find your questions dissolving in my presence?”

Because, when you are with me, you become so intensely aware, so totally present, that there is no space for questions to arise! After all, what are questions, but the imposition of the past and the future upon the present? That is why so many of your doubts disappear when you are with me. And that is what I am here for: not to solve your problems, but to dissolve them!

CHAPTER 6

Your Questions Answered

Q: Dear master, is it necessary to renounce the world to realize the self?

To realize the self, there is only one thing you must be willing to renounce: ignorance.

Self-realization has nothing to do with renouncing the world. To run away from the world is just as bad as clinging to it; in both cases it is evident that the world is controlling your actions. Aversion to the world is as much a product of ignorance as attachment to it. They are just two sides of the same coin.

A person can live in a cave in the mountains and be obsessed with *sansar* (worldliness), while another can live in the world and yet be completely detached from its pull and push. To take *sannyas* is not to renounce the world, but simply to renounce both attachment and aversion to the world. The very same life, when seen through the mist of ignorance, is *sansar*, and when seen in the clear light of self-awareness, becomes *sannyas*.

It is true, *sannyasins* always lead a simple life, untouched by *sansar*. But for them, the renouncing of attachment and aversion is not an effort. When self-realization awakens, renouncement happens naturally.

The first step towards *sannyas* is to become aware of your inner conflict between attachment and aversion. As you witness it, you become aware that there is a core inside you that is beyond this conflict, a being that is completely unconcerned with the questions of 'yes' and 'no'. This is your self, eternal and immutable. In the blaze of this awakening, all that is superfluous simply drops away like dead leaves from a tree. What remains is the completely essential - this is *sannyas*.

True *sannyas* is to live like a lotus in a lake, perfectly at ease in the muddy water, but untouched and unsullied by it.

A
small
story

A master and his disciple were on their way from one village to the next.

At the border of the villages flowed a shallow stream, which they usually crossed by wading through it.

This time, they discovered that due to heavy rains, the stream had swollen into a small river, too deep to wade across.

The disciple was alarmed, and enquired of the master, "Should we attempt to cross this river, master?"

Replied the master with a twinkle in his eye, "Certainly you should cross the river, my child. Just remember not to get your feet wet!"

This is the true meaning of *sannyas*. When you can cross the river of *sansar*, but the *sansar* can no longer wet you, you have found *sannyas*.

Q: Beloved master, how can we surrender the ego, when this wanting to surrender is itself an expression of the ego?

A question to you: How are you going to surrender the ego, when it does not exist?

Suppose you are sitting in a dark room. You want the darkness to go out. Can you push it out? Can you fight the darkness and force it to leave the room? No! No matter how hard you try, you are ultimately going to be defeated - and that too by something which does not exist! Ego is like darkness; it has no positive existence. Just like darkness is simply the absence of light, the ego is nothing but the absence of awareness.

To struggle, to kill the ego, is like struggling to push darkness out of the room. To really expel the darkness, what you need to do is to forget all about dealing with the darkness and focus your energy on light instead.

Just bring a small lamp into the room, and you will find that the darkness has fled on its own! So, I tell you to forget all about ego. Instead, focus on bringing a lamp of awareness into your being. When your entire consciousness has become a flame, you will find that the ego is no more.

The ego is an illusion. You cannot surrender it when you are unaware - because you don't know how. Of course, you cannot surrender it when you become aware either - because then you realize that there is nothing left to surrender!

What you have heard, read, been taught, to 'surrender the ego in order to attain self-realization', is an utterly nonsensical idea. It can happen only the other way round. Self-realization dawns, and suddenly you cannot find the ego anymore. The surrender has already happened, just like that.

However, I am glad that the question has arisen in your being. The ego is the root cause for all your anxieties, sorrows, tension. It is your doorway to hell. To actively feel that you want to drop the ego, to feel the need to be rid of this burden, is itself a step towards awareness. It shows that you are stirring from your sleep!

Further, if you are in the habit of praying, you can pray intensely that your intelligence gives way for the ego to drop, and it will drop. This very prayer will show you the intensity of your desire to drop your ego and also facilitate it to drop.

Q: Beloved master, whenever I am in your presence, all questions disappear and everything seems possible. But when I am away from you, all the familiar doubts creep in. Why does this happen and what can I do about it?

If a question disappears on its own in my presence, then it is time to realize that it was not a true question at all; it was merely a play of the mind.

When you are with me, the mind is no more in control - you simply flow into meditation. You become a loving, serene silence. In this state, only a question that is truly your question, one that is completely relevant to you, will still remain with you.

In my presence, you become so intensely aware, so completely present, that there is no space for questions to arise. When you leave my presence, the mind is free to impose the past and the future upon your present. Your questions are a play of the past and the future upon your present.

Just like the ego, there is no point in fighting with or condemning the mind. It is a pointless struggle which you will be sure to lose. Instead, it is enough to be aware that this is the very nature of the mind; it can be expected to behave in no other way. It is bound to bring in anxiety, confusion, doubt. Just to be conscious of this is enough. Do not pass judgment on the mind for its inane activities - even to get angry with your mind is to lose your energy to it.

As you witness the workings of the mind, you will slowly become aware that you are not the mind - you are more than the mind; you are the watcher. Once deprived of your energy, the mind cannot go on! In the place of the chaos of thoughts that you call your mind, a clear, intense consciousness will arise. At that moment, all questions dissolve and the mind is no more. A glimpse of this is what you experience in my presence. And what I have just told you is the way to make it stay with you always - even when you are not with me! It is a slow process; give it time. It will happen.

Q: Dear master, you ask us not to suppress our natural passions. But is it right to indulge these passions?

This question points in the same direction as the earlier question on *sansar* vs. *sannyas*. On this path, you will time and again come across apparent dualities: good/bad, false/true, attachment/aversion, and suppression/indulgence. In fact, raging inside your being is this constant conflict of

opposites. Whenever a duality asserts itself, remember this rule of thumb: Existence is non-dual. Opposites do not exist. To cling to either suppression or indulgence is a sign of ignorance. After all, suppression is nothing but a reaction to indulgence. What is essential is the awareness of one's own tendencies.

Recognize anger, recognize jealousy, and recognize lust and greed. Neither give in to these emotions nor try to suppress them. Simply attempt to know them for what they are. Keep your distance, and view your emotions as if they were strangers. You will be surprised to find that without your support, they cannot exist; they simply drop away! This may not make much sense to you when it is just someone else's experience - but through constant practice you will experience the truth for yourself.

It is only this awareness that can awaken self-knowledge, and free you of these concepts of indulgence/suppression, and of all dualities!

Q: Dearest master, you say that skepticism is a big hindrance to learning. But you also urge us to voice our doubts. Why?

You can raise questions due to either skepticism or doubt. But there is a world of difference between the two. Skepticism is a state where one refuses to believe in anything at all. Just like that! The skeptic will raise arguments just for the sake of raising them. In this sense, skepticism itself is an unconscious belief; it is a foregone negative conclusion against anything and everything. The skeptic has no opinions and no ideology of his own; he only has an argument against whatever idea you place before him. He will argue against an idea for hours, and if you present another idea that is just the opposite, he will argue against it equally emphatically! Actually, he has already settled into a permanent attitude of 'NO' towards everything. In this sense, skepticism marks the end of the journey for the learner, because with this attitude it is impossible to get anywhere. The skeptic has closed himself to all possibility of change.

Doubt, on the other hand, is a state of openness and receptivity. Doubt is an acceptance of 'I don't know, but I can learn.' This marks the beginning of the learner's pilgrimage. Doubt is the path of the seeker; it simply seeks to eliminate all that is untrue in order to perceive the truth. A man with doubt listens with respect, not with defiance. He possesses the humility of the learner. His is the attitude of 'YES'. He is only waiting to experience so that he can trust.

When a person of sharp intellect turns to skepticism, it is a dangerous sign - because it can be very ego-fulfilling to be able to put down all ideas in an effective manner. But ultimately, the skeptic is only burning his own bridges. Especially with a master, if you adopt the attitude of skepticism, there is just no way I can get through to you. There is no point in going to a doctor just to question the value of every pill in his prescription, is there?

So ask your questions, by all means. Just watch the attitude with which you ask them!

Q: Beloved master, you tell us to 'give our all' in love. But what if the love is not appreciated or returned?

If you are truly in love, you will 'give your all' naturally. Love is an unconditional outpouring. In love, you don't stop to ask yourself whether the other person deserves your 'all'. In fact, there is no question at all of the other person's worth. Love is a gift. If you were to measure the other person's worth and give an equal and exact measure of love in return, that would simply be a bargain. It would be business, not love. In true love, this question of 'should I give my all?' would not be raised at all!

Now the issue of the love being appreciated. Tell me, what is your reason for loving? Is love a performance for which you need to be applauded? Is it not enough that you love? What is the need to look for any further reward? To ask for a returning of love is to seek some kind of control over your beloved. You refuse the other person the freedom not to love

you in return. This is a kind of possessiveness, where you cage the other in the prison of your expectations. And as I keep repeating, love can never, never blossom in captivity.

Listen carefully: there are two kinds of love - love as a quantity, and love as a quality. When love is seen as a quantity, it results in the kind of selfish little exchanges that most people make all their lives. You hold out a tightly wrapped parcel of love to your man or woman, and expect them to promptly return an equal-sized parcel to you. If your partner should choose to give her parcel to someone else, or even to just open it and spread the love around, you feel cheated and angry. You are both bound to each other by a pact of reciprocation. You have to be 'made for each other'. Sooner or later, this kind of arrangement leaves you cramped and frustrated, and in anger you withdraw your parcel and go off to find someone else to exchange it with. Or else your partner does that.

Now the kind of love I would like you to grow towards, is love experienced as a quality of your very being. This kind of love is simply an outpouring of one's joy and gratitude, just for being alive. It is a fragrance of joy, it spreads itself around unconditionally. It does not need an object, it does not need a return gift. This kind of love is like sunshine or rain; it gives of itself unconditionally, and whomsoever stands within its circle can experience the warmth or the freshness without question. This love always enriches; it is the only kind of love that can be enjoyed without fear or guilt.

For love to become your quality, you must be willing to surrender yourself completely. Only in an egoless state can this love arise. This is not easy, but you can make a beginning. You will discover that simply through love and gratitude, you begin to let go of the ego, just a little. And as you let go, more and more love enters into that space. Try practicing this in your relationships. There's no need to make a fuss about loving; don't become serious in your love - just be totally sincere!

Q: Beloved master, in India we are brought up on rituals and idol worship. Are you for or against these?

First of all, I am neither for nor against idol worship or rituals - or anything, for that matter! But there is a reason why idol worship is so common in India, and elsewhere in the East. For a beginner on the spiritual journey, it is difficult to even conceive of the divine in the abstract. When given a form, it is crystallized into something he understands and can relate to. With an idol, he can commune with the divine in the language that he is familiar with. Our thousands of deities are nothing but expressions of the divine. And yet anyone can talk to them, pray to or play with them, seek solace or give thanks. The whole awesome, indefinable nature of the Divine is scaled down to comforting proportions in the form of the deity. It has to be this way; the Divine without form is simply too terrifying a concept for the ordinary mind.

At a deeper, subtler level, there is one more message being reinforced - the idol before you is cast in the same form as yours, and yet it is divine.

What does that say about you? Think about it. Even if you are an idol worshipper, there is no need to condemn yourself. As you grow spiritually, you will find yourself able to commune with the divine just as well without an idol. Just as children stop playing with dolls as they grow older, you will drop the idols of your own accord when the time comes. But right now if it gives you a sense of well-being to worship your favourite deity, do so by all means. Spirituality is a vast, shoreless ocean. When you are just learning to swim, it would certainly help your confidence to hold onto a lifebuoy, something you can be sure of, something that won't let you down. As you grow stronger and surer, you will naturally shake off its hold and enter the deep waters, freely and fearlessly.

As for rituals, it has been scientifically proven that certain colours, sounds and actions can deeply impact your state of mind, activate desired areas of the brain, and expand your consciousness. Rituals have lost their credibility today only because their true meaning has been lost upon the

masses over time. Only the shell of the ritual remains; the spirit has departed. But even if they seem irrelevant to you today, never underestimate the true potential of rituals. Rituals are the distillation of centuries of wisdom and the *tapas* of innumerable enlightened masters. When performed in the proper way, rituals have tremendous power to bring about unimaginable levels of awareness and change.

In the ashram, you may often find me performing *pujas* and *yagas*. The fact is, these mean nothing to me; I don't need a channel to commune with the divine. These are for my people. I do this to draw you all into a familiar territory, a space where you feel secure and tranquil. In an atmosphere that years of worship have sanctified, bowing before your beloved deities and listening to the chanting of well-known *mantras*, a silent, meditative state is naturally induced in you. At this time you are completely open and surrendered, receptive to my energy.

This is the time when I can truly work upon you, without your knowledge and without your resistance. Can you understand me now?

(Of course, I have never given up being a child, and so I perfectly enjoy my play with these beautiful dolls - but that is another matter!)

Q: Beloved master, what is karma?

Let me give you an idea about *karma*. Whenever an action has been started, but not fulfilled, there exists a force that pulls you to fulfill it, to bring it to completion. This force is *karma*. Whatever you have tasted, desired but not experienced completely, will continuously draw you to repeat that very experience, until you feel fulfillment. You will keep repeating that action till you actually become that experience, because you *are* fulfillment. You enter the body just to fulfill these actions. In the course of fulfillment, you meet all these things, these 'troubles'. This is the explanation which I give for *karma*. All the other ideas – it is because of my bad *karma* that I got this disease; it is because of my good *karma* that I met my master - all

these are just things we say after the event has happened. Whatever has happened, we give it the name *karma*.

The word *karma* is much misunderstood. I am not giving you an explanation for *karma* as we understand it. I don't mean *karma* as fate or *vidhi*. According to my experience, there is no such thing as fate. The future is left completely open by Existence. It is we who decide.

Ramakrishna tells a beautiful story which will give you intellectual clarity on the subject. Of course, no one can give you existential, experiential clarity on *karma* as it really is; that clarity comes only with enlightenment. And when you are enlightened, you cannot express it!

Coming to the story on *karma*:

A cow is tied to a post with a 5-meter rope. Inside that perimeter it can sit, stand, feed, do whatever it pleases. Our life is just the same. We have a limited amount of freedom; the rest is in the hands of Existence. But Ramakrishna also adds, if we use our 5-meter freedom intelligently, it is possible that Existence will extend our rope, or even free us completely. That depends on both us and the master, on *jiva* (ordinary mortals) and Shiva. You can choose whether to remain in bondage or work towards being set free. Someone once asked me, 'What if the cow learns to bite and break the rope?'

First of all, do you know where the rope is? To which limb it is tied? Where it begins and ends? Where to bite? How to bite? With an ordinary cow and rope, the cow can see these things. You people don't even know what or where your rope is! So whatever I can give you is only a glimpse, an inspiration to enter into me, to enter into the experience.

Q: Dearest master, since the mind is only 'inner chatter', is it necessary to drop the intellect in order to approach the divine?

Before I can answer that, you need to understand the working of the mind. The mind is a composite of 4 functions: *manas* (the part that receives information about the outer world from your senses), *chitta* (the memory or record of cosmic knowledge), *buddhi* (intellect) and *ahankaar* (ego). Beyond all these is the *atman* (self). All information is tracked through these areas of the mind.

For instance, when you see a marigold, the nonverbal information, ‘yellow flower’, is absorbed by your *manas* from the eyes.

This information is sent to *chitta*, which matches it against all records of flowers previously seen, and determines whether this particular flower is a familiar one.

The file then passes to the *buddhi*, which concludes that the yellow flower is a marigold; it is large; it is not a fragrant flower, and so on.

Then comes the turn of the *ahankaar*, which is in charge of generating opinions based on self-interest, e.g. ‘I like this flower’, or ‘I think the neighbours’ garden has better marigolds,’ or whatever. Based on the information supplied by the *ahankaar*, the *atman* decides the plan of action: ‘pick the flower!’ or ‘water the flower!’ or ‘throw it out!’

The unfortunate thing about this arrangement is that by the time the information reaches the *atman*, it has already been filtered by the *ahankaar* - with the result that what you see and act upon is not reality, but only a subverted version of reality that the ego wants you to see. No wonder you remain in ignorance and confusion, and come to the conclusion that inner chatter is all that the mind is capable of!

When intelligence awakens, the ego dies a natural death. For the first time, the *atman* takes direct control of the situation. It’s like President’s Rule (when the president takes control of a region in an emergency situation)! Tremendous sources of energy open up and become available. The absorption of information no longer depends only on the five senses. Consequently, information processing and decision-making become

infinitely swifter and more efficient - with the result that it appears miraculous to ordinary eyes. This is the state in which *yogis* fly or teleport objects and perform other such miracles. This is the magical state which is perceived as being in harmony with the divine.

So you see, to approach the divine, what you should be willing to drop is not the mind or the intellect, but only the ego. Don't make the mistake of throwing out the baby out with the bathwater!

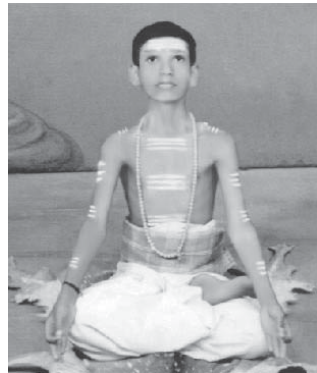
About Nithyananda



It was under the glow of the spiritual magnet Arunachala in the energy center of Tiruvannamalai in South India, that Nithyananda was born - as Rajasekharan, to Arunachalam and Lokanayaki on 1 January, 1978. The family astrologer predicted that he would be a king amongst holy men.

At the age of 3, Nithyananda was associated with Yogiraj Raghupati Maharaj, a yoga guru who took him through rigorous training and prepared his body, with apparent foresight into the energy explosion that was going to happen in the young body. From the age of 5, Nithyananda took to deity worship with great passion. He showed profound commitment to the rituals he practiced with the deities. Just a few years later, he came in touch with Mataji Kuppammal, a deeply pious lady who initiated him into *Vedanta* and *Tantra* and started his scriptural learning at that young age. Encountering many mystics from the town of Tiruvannamalai, he received esoteric teachings from them.

At the age of 12, he had his first deep spiritual experience: while sitting on a rock on the Arunachala hillock, he suddenly had a 360 degree panoramic vision, and experienced becoming one with everything around

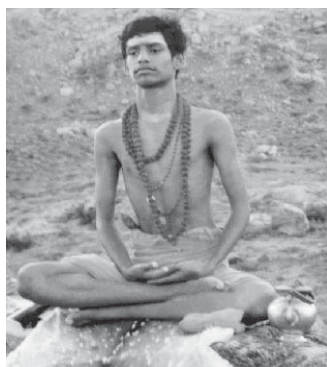


The earliest picture of Nithyananda in meditation taken when he was 10 years old

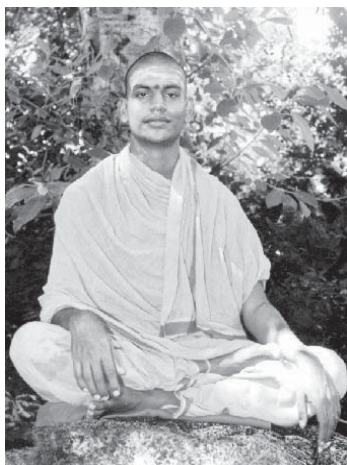
UNCOMMON ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

him. This experience further inspired him to forge ahead in his journey inwards.

Academics at school and polytechnic came naturally for Nithyananda. With only the attention he gave in classes, he passed all his grades with distinction. He obtained a diploma degree in Mechanical Engineering from a leading private Polytechnic in Tamilnadu.



*Nithyananda meditating
in Arunachala*



intense meditation and other austerities, he attained eternal inner bliss...the state of *nithyananda*. At the age of 22, Rajasekharan became Paramahansa Nithyananda.

Guided by Divine Vision, on Jan. 2003, Parahamamsa set up his

At the age of 17, he left home driven by the irresistible urge to jump into the real life that he was seeking. He wandered through the length and breadth of India studying Eastern metaphysical sciences and meeting many masters and mystics. He visited many great shrines, ranging from the Himalayas in the North, to Kanyakumari in the South, from Dwaraka in the West to Ganga Sagar in the East. After enduring



*Flagging off construction at
the mission site, Bangalore*



mission headquarters in Bangalore, India, in the land of mystical and sacred banyan tree.

Today, Nithyananda is an inspiring personality for millions of people worldwide. From his experience of the Truth he has formulated and makes available the

Technology of Bliss to every individual. His methods empower us to be physically and mentally fit, with sound spiritual strength in both the inner and outer worlds. Millions of people around the world have experienced radical transformation through his techniques in short periods of time.

Nithyananda gives the tools to live a creative and productive life, guided by intuition and intelligence, rather than by intellect or instinct. He shows the way to excellence in the outer world and radiance in the inner world at the same time. His programs guide one to fall into the natural space known as meditation.

He says, 'Meditation is the master key that can bring success in the material world, and deep fulfillment in your space within.' His powerful techniques and processes that comprise the meditative programs help the flowering and expansive explosion of the individual consciousness.

Nithyananda cooperates with scientists and researchers the world over, to record mystic phenomena through scientific data. He intrigues the world of medical science with results from his own neurological system. From the astounding observations, scientists feel that the potential for altering the rates and progression of diseases like heart ailments, cancer, arthritis, alcoholism, etc. are beginning to look achievable.

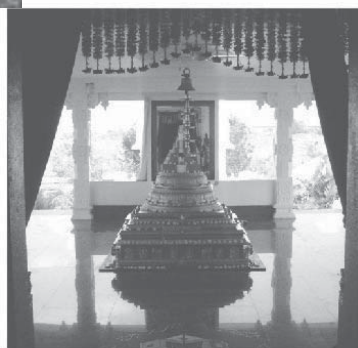
About Nithyananda Mission



Sacred banyan tree, Bidadi ashram, India

Nithyananda Mission ashrams and centers worldwide serve as spiritual laboratories where inner growth is profound and outer growth is a natural consequence. These academies are envisioned to be a place and space to explore and explode, through a host of activities, from meditation to science. They offer Quantum Spirituality, where material and spiritual worlds merge and create blissful living; where creative

Nithyananda Mission is Nithyananda's worldwide movement for meditation and transformation. Established in the year 2003, the Mission continues to transform humanity through transformation of the individual.



Hyderabad ashram, India



Los Angeles Temple, USA

intelligence stems from deep consciousness. **Nithyananda Dhyanaapeetam** is the spiritual wing that takes care of the spiritual activities of the mission.

APPENDIX



Seattle Temple, USA

Many projects are in development at the various academies worldwide; and new academies are being established to provide services in varied fields to humanity at large.

A diverse range of meditation programs and social services are offered

worldwide through the Foundation. Free energy healing through the Nithya Spiritual Healing system, free education to youth, encouragement to art and culture, satsangs (spiritual circles), personality development programs, corporate programs, free medical camps and eye surgeries, free meals at all



Salem ashram, India



Columbus ashram, Ohio, USA

ashrams worldwide, a one-year free residential spiritual training program in India called the Life Bliss Technology, an in-house *Gurukul* system of learning for children, and many more services are offered around the world.

UNCOMMON ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

Ananda Sevaks of the Nithya Dheera Seva Sena (NDSS) volunteer force comprising growing numbers of dedicated volunteers around the world, support the mission with great enthusiasm.

Offerings from Life Bliss Foundation (LBF)

Life Bliss Foundation is the teachings wing of Nithyananda Mission that offers specialized meditation programs worldwide, to benefit millions of people at the levels of body, mind and spirit. A few of them are listed below:

Life Bliss Program Level 1 - Ananda Spurana Program (LBP Level 1 - ASP)

- *Energize yourself*

A *chakra* workout program that relaxes and energizes the seven major *chakras* in your system. It gives clear intellectual and experiential understanding of your various emotions - greed, fear, worry, attention need, stress, jealousy, ego, discontentment etc. It is designed to create a spiritual effect at the physical level. It is a guaranteed life solution to experience the reality of your own bliss. It is a highly effective workshop, testified by millions of people around the globe.

Life Bliss Program Level 2 - Nithyananda Spurana Program (LBP Level 2 - NSP)

- *Death demystified!*

A program that unleashes the art of living by demystifying the concept of death. If you know the process and purpose of death, you will live your life in an entirely different way! It creates the space to detach from ingrained and unconscious emotions like guilt, pleasure and pain, all of which stem from the ultimate fear of death. It is a gateway to a new life driven by natural intelligence and spontaneous enthusiasm.

Life Bliss Program Level 3 - Atma Spurana Program (LBP Level 3 - ATSP)

- Connect with your Self!

This is a breakthrough program that analyzes clearly the workings of the mind and shows you experientially how to be the master of the mind rather than let it rule over you. It involves the whole tremendous intellectual understanding coupled with novel meditations to produce instant experiential understanding.

Life Bliss Technology (LBT)

Life Bliss Technology (LBT) is a one-year residential program for youth aged between 18 and 30 years of age, on practical life skills. With its roots in the Eastern system of Vedic education, this program is designed to empower modern youth with good physical, mental and emotional health. By nurturing creative intelligence and spontaneity, and imparting vocational skills, it creates economically and spiritually self-sufficient youth.

Above all, it offers a lifetime opportunity to live and learn under the tutelage of an enlightened Master!

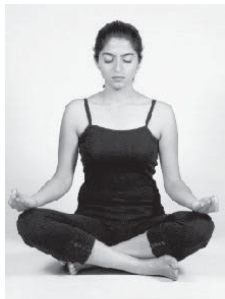
Nithya Spiritual Healing

- Healing through Cosmic energy

A unique and powerful means of healing through the Cosmic energy, this is a meditation for the healer and a means to get healed for the recipient of the healing. Nithyananda continues to initiate thousands of Nithya Spiritual Healers worldwide into this scientific and time-tested healing technique which has healed millions of people of ailments ranging from migraine to cancer.

Nithya Dhyaan

- *Life Bliss Meditation*



Become one among the millions who walk on planet Earth – Un-clutched! Register online and get initiated.

Nithya Dhyaan is a powerful everyday meditation prescribed by Nithyananda to humanity at large. It is a formula or a technique, which is holistic and complete. It works on the entire being to transform it and make it ready for the ultimate experience of enlightenment

to dawn. Each segment of this technique complements the remaining segments to help raise the individual consciousness. It trains you to un-clutch from your mind and live a blissful life. It is the meditation for Eternal Bliss.

If you wish to be initiated into Nithya Dhyaan, you may visit <http://www.dhyanapectam.org> and register online. You will receive through mail, a *mala*, bracelet, a spiritual name given by Nithyananda for your own spiritual growth (optional), Nithya Dhyaan Meditation CD and Nithya Dhyaan booklet in a language of your choice, personally signed by Nithyananda (mention your choice in the comment column).

Nithyananda says, ‘My advent on planet Earth is to create a new cycle of individual consciousness causing Collective Consciousness to enter the Superconscious zone.’

To achieve this,

Hundred thousand people will be initiated to live as *Jeewan Muktas* – liberated beings experiencing ‘living enlightenment’, and 1 billion people will be initiated into Nithya Dhyaan – Life Bliss Meditation – designed to cause a shift in the individual consciousness on planet Earth.

APPENDIX

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APPENDIX

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Rajapalayam, Tamilnadu

Nithyananda Dhyanaapeetam
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Nithyanandapuri,
Embalam to Villianoor main road,
Embalam post,
Pondicherry - 605 106
Ph.: 94420 36037 / 97876 67604

Poompuhar Aadeenam, Tamilnadu

Shivarajayoga Mutt
Opposite Poompuhar College
Melayur Post
Seerkaali Taluk
Nagai District - 609 107

For a list of centres worldwide, visit www.nithyananda.org

Suggested for further reading

- Guaranteed Solutions for lust, fear, worry
- Nithyananda Vol. 1 (The first volume of a biographical account of Nithyananda)
- Life Bliss Program Level 2 - Nithyananda
Spurana Program
- Follow me IN! (Life Bliss Program Level 3 -
Atma Spurana Program)
- You can Heal (Nithya Spiritual Healing)
- Meditation is for you
- Bliss is the path and the goal
- The only way out is IN
- Rising in love with the Master
- Bhagavad Gita series
- Uncommon answers to common questions
- Open the door...Let the breeze in!
- Nithya Yoga - The Ultimate Practice for Body, Mind
& Being

To purchase books and other items, visit
www.lifeblissgalleria.com or contact us.

Visit <http://www.youtube.com/lifeblissfoundation> to view over
400 FREE video discourses of Nithyananda.

UNCOMMON ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

As children, each of us was strongly centered in our own being. Have you ever seen a little child worry about what people will think of him? But as we grow, society plays this idea constantly into our minds. Society teaches us to evaluate ourselves by the ideas and opinions of others - parents, teachers, friends, even strangers. As a result, we begin to believe less and less in ourselves. Without external support, without social 'certificates' for all our convictions and actions, we are unable to live a joyful and courageous life.

Nithyananda discusses issues that bother us from time to time in a corner of our minds. This collection of questions and answers reveals the simple truth that lies beyond the complexities of human perception.

PUBLISHED BY LIFE BLISS FOUNDATION

