

These are the questions and answers with Baba Hari Dass at the Bhagavad Gita Class at the Pacific Cultural Center on Thursday, January 8, 1998.

Before Class:

B: Sat Existence Rajas
Chit Consciousness Sattva
Ananda Bliss Tamas

Some commentators say sat = sattva; chit = rajas; ananda = tamas.

When the Purusha reflects on prakriti, the chit or buddhi arises. Prakriti is the three gunas.

Chitta = sattva; buddhi = rajas; ahamkara = tamas. Manas is a part of buddhi.

Q: How is ananda tamasic?

A: The state of ananda is actionless. Tamas term is not always bad.

Q: Tamas seems to be more in form.

A: Yes. Kali is tamas - time.

Q: Is that what is meant by "don't get stuck in bliss?"

A: (Nods head yes.)

Q: Is yoga nidra a state or a practice? If it's a practice, how does one practice it?

A: Yoga nidra - yoga sleep: it's a state of the mind which carries the spiritual contact in sleep. One time a king went to see a gurukul which is a school for young aspirants. And all were asleep. The king said, "they are all asleep." The guru said, "Wake them up one by one." The king poked one boy and he woke up chanting spiritual verses. Same way everyone woke up chanting. The guru said, "In their mind in sleep they were reflecting in a spiritual subject."

Q: On New Year's Eve, we do practice late in the night and go to sleep. The practice seems to continue during sleep.

A: Is that the same idea as yoga nidra???

Q: Sleep is associated with tamas guna. How do you learn to maintain the spiritual vritti in the face of tamas guna?

A: They were not asleep. The body was.

Q: Is it like turiya?

A: Yoga nidra is much lower than turiya.

Q: If someone goes to sleep thinking of a chess move?

A: Reflection goes on. Answer can also come in a still mind: pratibha.

Q: How do we learn to practice this?

A: Abhayas and vairagya: regular practice and dispassion.

Q: In the course of our spiritual practice, we have direct experiences of knowing. First there is no sense of identity, then we strengthen the identity of the ego.

A: Identity means?

Q: Ego.

A: Direct experience is when the mind is still and the ego is seeing the truth. Indirect experience is through the buddhi experiencing the object. Change of identity 1) when the

pure ego is the experiencer, and 2) when the ego is rooted in buddhi and experiences appear.

Mandira read the chalkboard. Reading: Bhagavad Gita XI: 29-32.

- Q: The implication here is that the destruction is because of evil. Isn't destruction just a natural matter of course?
- A: Construction and destruction are two ends of the same rope.
- Q: Here he phrases it in a negative way that 'I am going to wipe out evil and wickedness.'
- A: To establish a pure society.
- Q: So he gives it a good-bad duality because of Arjuna's mind?
- A: In cosmic plan also some experiences are wiped out. Because their utility in nature decreases.
- Q: There is also an implication that the creative process itself is leading to a positive end.
- A: In a macrocosm. What happens in macrocosm also happens in microcosm. The question of destruction of all good and bad in the war is treated alike. Here the Gita separates in a very subtle way: the river by its force of nature merges back into the ocean. Creatures get attracted to the world and create their own destruction like the moths are attracted to the light. The teachers and spiritual people are like the rivers. Those who came to fight for self-interest, they were like moths.
- Q: Imagery is that the good guys are merging with the ocean. The bad guys are like the moths.
- A: Merging and burning.
- Q: By accepting death as a part of life, peace and contentment comes. How does this fit in with this and Self-realization and merging into the totality? Is that a way of describing Self-realization?
- A: Fear of death is resistance. In that resistance there is attraction to life. That's the light of the fire for the moth.
- M: We are attracted to the world and so we resist merging.
- Q: Is it significant that at this point Arjuna doesn't see himself in the river going into the mouth of Krishna?
- A: When someone dreams of the earthquake or California falling into the ocean, the dreamer is still alive.
- Q: What does this say about the stage of his progress? Is it a good thing or a bad thing that he doesn't see himself as part of this cycle?
- A: It is appearing in his reflection.
- Q: The vision of the cycle?
- A: If he doesn't exist, then how will the reflection continue? There is more than that to know.
- Q: He is beginning to identify with his mortal nature.
- A: In nonduality, no war. He is understanding what the divine nature is and what is its purpose.
- Q: Is each jiva's reincarnation always a separate entity or could we merge with other souls and recombine with them?
- A: There's a lump-up process of souls.

- Q: There seems to be evolution and increase.
A: Population increase or decrease doesn't affect the divine soul from where all souls original. It's like the sun reflecting on water but in several vessels.
- Q: Does each individual soul remain discrete?
A: Vessels can be increased or decreased but the sun remains unaffected. The soul keeps its individuality in a karmic pool. The karmas need to be worked out. But the soul is not a thing which can be explained in numbers. Souls can take a body, but may remain dormant for hundreds of years. Or may take a body of a lower being to work out karmas.
- Q: But Arjuna is still very afraid just before this when he sees the Lord as a destructive force.
A: Fear is an indication of his ignorance which projected in Chapter II.
- Q: Could you say more about the subtle difference between the flowing and burning analogies?
A: The moth is infatuated by the desire so it flies right into the fire.
M: The river is naturally expressing this continuous cycle.
A: The river was a symbol. As a spiritual function, watering the land, vegetable grows and everyone is benefited.
- Q: Aren't we really talking about thoughts on the battlefield of the mind?
A: Thoughts are negative and positive.
- Q: You said "souls can't be expressed in terms of numbers." Could you tell us more about the meaning of that?
A: Population increases or decreases in humans but we don't know that when human population increases the number of some species decreases at the same time. The term soul is used to relation to the body.
M: We tend to see them as "ours" which isn't the way Indian philosophy looks at it.
A: Living person has a soul; dead person had a soul. Soul of the person is in heaven. You always see there is a body connected.
- Q: Why would a soul lie dormant for hundreds of years?
A: Depends on the right body to manifest to work out the karmas.
- Q: Is there another way to look at the idea of soul, not connected with the body?
A: We can only say the soul is the divine potency trapped in the body.
- Q: I had a dream in which I saw the landscape and I became a bird and I could still sit at the table. And I realized that everything is made perfectly for my existence and will be in any future existence. Is that true? And is there any more to be learned from this dream?
A: The mind is working in two areas: 1) imagining as a bird, 2) one is attached to human functions. So the dream is putting the two together. The bird is eating and yet using a fork and spoon at a table. It can if it is dissected clearly. I don't do because then everyone writes their dreams to ask me.
- Q: If we reflect on our dreams, does it reveal the nature of our mind?

A: Dreams are constituted by desire, imagination and memory. Desire = the present; imagination = the future; memory = the past. So you dissect what comes from the past, future, or present.

Q: In the entire cosmos, beings fit in but it could be quite different in other realms.

A: It will fit according to their geographical situation. Air pressure, water, heat.

Q: Does the soul retain any of the positive aspect that it has gained in this lifetime after merging with the Self?

A: The subtle body which turns to a seed carries the soul in it. All samskaras are in this seed and not in the soul. In merging in the Self, nothing is retained as an individuality.

Q: I've heard it said that 'you have to hurry and find the Lord.' In this philosophy you never get lost. You just keep suffering until you finally get it.

A: The idea is great. That way by creating an allurements of heaven and fear of hell, the person tries to live a spiritual life. In reality, there is no heaven or hell out there.

Q: Am I hearing that all living beings are given a soul created through past actions? In the human body we are given the opportunity to improve that soul?

A: Soul is not created by past actions. The body is created by past actions and the soul starts acting like that body.

M: Soul is pure consciousness trapped in the body.

A: A human soul takes birth in dog body. The dog will not act as a human.

Q: Should it give up or should it dream of human birth again?

A: The soul is not an actor.

M: It's just the pure conscious principle.

A: Solar car's movement doesn't affect the sun.

Q: So there's nothing that can be done to the soul?

A: You can do a lot. Purify the mind which is trapping the soul.

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