

These are the questions and answers with Baba Hari Dass at satsang at the Samyam Retreat at Mount Madonna Center on Tuesday, October 10, 2000. Sarada read the chalkboard.

Q: If your body is in pain and you are having trouble sitting, what can you do to calm your mind in that situation?

A: Mind and body are tightly related. If the body is restless, the mind gets restless. If the mind is restless, the body gets restless. If there is physical pain that can be cured by medicine or herbs, then do it.

Q: We learned that sun salutations balance the doshas and calm the mind. Can they be done before meditation in that case?

A: It's okay but it's not a set rule. For someone else, it may not work.

Q: I have arthritis. I do japa at night and sit in the morning. How do you stay in the center between self-discipline and self-abuse? I want to find the balance between indulging myself and doing too much.

A: If the body is sick, then it's not wise to push the body to do something it can't do. It backfires. But there are several alternatives. To keep the discipline, do something. It's the motive that strengthens the will.

Q: Could you talk more about how the different aspects of creation sacrifice for the whole? What is the original sacrifice?

A: In mahat. When Purusha reflects on prakriti, its first evolute is mahat. Sacrifice means giving or creating something for the good of others.

Q: It sounds like Purusha is sacrificing oneness in order to create a duality, even though duality isn't real.

A: There's a duality which is the cause of the whole creation. In Vedantic terms, it is not reality. In Samkhya terms it is reality.

Q: What is the relationship between Ashtanga Yoga, Brahmanism, and Tantra, and what does that mean to us in the West?

A: In all different branches of philosophy, Ashtanga Yoga is the method to achieve the goal. Ashtanga Yoga is not owned by any one philosophy. In all religions it is used in part. Patanjali put it in an order. Buddhism, Samkhya, Tantra: any branch can use it.

Q: Is there one Purusha or many?

A: There's one sun that reflects on many water pots or anywhere there is water collected. We can say there is one sun above and many below. God is one but pervades the whole creation. Every living being has the same divine spark in a form of Atma.

Q: How will I know when I have found the right spiritual path or the right spiritual teacher?

A: Path is found by doing it. Teacher is found by faith.

- Q: Earlier I mentioned losing my self-discipline; during those times I am hard on myself. Is there some way to be kind to myself during those times?
- A: By being hard on yourself, how does it affect you? To start it or to forget it?
- Q: It depends.
- A: On what?
- Q: How stuck I am. The further I get away from my discipline, the harder I am on myself.
- A: In that case it is bad. But in some people, it pulls them back to the discipline. In your case, satsang is better to get back to your discipline.
- Q: I am dealing with deep grief. Of the methods we learned in the retreat, are there some that would be supportive in dealing with grief and others to be avoided?
- A: All can be done.
- Q: In my mind, it seems that if you are doing karma yoga, then you don't enjoy what you're doing.
- A: Is there any reason not to enjoy doing good for others? When we do things for our selfish reasons and call it karma yoga, then we may not enjoy it. If a wealthy person is pressured to give alms, he may not enjoy it. But one who gives with an open heart, there's joy in the offering.
- Q: So in sacrifice you give up something you would like to have in order to benefit others?
- A: Yes. You are sacrificing your attachment for the good of others.
- Q: How do you cultivate love for yourself?
- A: What is love in its essence? It's a mental state free from all selfishness. Why some people don't love themselves? They want something they can't have. A 5' tall person wants to be 6' tall, so hates himself. Self-love can't be separated from self-acceptance.
- Q: When we focus our mind on ananta, the infinite, how do we visualize that, as a light at ajna?
- A: Ananta means infinite. The mind expands so fast, it thins out and disappears. Like visualizing the horizon. It's also done sitting on a mountain-top.
- Q: How do I know that a karma is complete and not continuing?
- A: When its desire stops arising. How do you know you are not hungry? When the mind is not looking for food.
- Q: Has anyone ever done irreparable damage to themselves by sitting for too long? Is it normal to cry and become emotional after sitting?

A: Some monks took intoxicants and sat on the mountain for hours and damaged their mind and body. If a person has strong dispassion and devotion, then only one is able to sit for days. For common people, gradual progress is better. Emotions burst out when the devotional energy is activated. It often happens in meditation.

Q: If a person has a sick body but their heart is open after many years of practice, and has pure intention and motivation, can the person still attain enlightenment?

A: Body doesn't get enlightened. If a person has strong aim and firm devotion, whether sits or not, one can achieve enlightenment.

Q: We learned practices to raise the kundalini energy through the body at this retreat. What role does kundalini play in enlightenment?

A: What is kundalini? It's a tantric symbolical language. Kunda means coiled. What is coiled? The three cosmic energies. Coiled means inactive or dormant, like a coiled snake can't move. Full name is kula kundalini. Kula kundalini's destination is akula kundalini. Kula means a group or tribe, a group of matrikas or goddesses. When kula kundalini becomes active, all goddesses become active. In Raja Yoga, enlightenment and in tantra, awakening of kundalini are the same.

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