

These are the questions and answers with Baba Hari Dass at the annual 4th of July Liberation Retreat at the Mt. Madonna Center for the Arts and Sciences, on July 2, 3, and 5, 1981. Comments added by Shankar or Sadanand who read Babji's chalk-board aloud are indicated by (Sh:) or (SN:) Copyright 1981 by Sri Rama Foundation. Transcribed by Kamlā Bai.

July 2, 1981

- Q: I have a second-hand clothing store and I've been picking up samskaras even though the business is a service because a lot of people can't afford beautiful clothes and they can get them second-hand. We wash them, burn incense, etc. Isn't it a worthwhile service or is it too samskaric?
- A: You only sell (Sh: them)?
- Q: I wash them, clean them, find them, etc.
- A: It's OK.
- Q: Do you have a mantra I could say over the store to purify things? (Sh: Do you have a ladder?)
- A: Use a flying nun. (joke) I'll tell you (Sh: the mantra).
- Q: I have to take them home and work on them. I feel they are in my house all the time. Will this mantra clear my house also?
- A: Yes. I'll do mantra in water (Sh: charge the water) and then you can put the water everywhere. (SH: At your house, anywhere--sprinkle bits of it).
- Q: I practiced Kundalini yoga for a year. I came to the conclusion that it was not for me, even though I did get some benefits. Is there any way I would be able to do Ashtanga Yoga on my own? What's valuable just by my own experience, what feels right?
- A: If you go fast, there are always chances of getting repelled. If you gradually develop, then no problem. (SH: You won't exceed your limits.)
- Q: There was only a limit of what I could do, like pranayama and I often felt inadequate.
- A: Pranayama can't be forced. Also every person has a different limit.
- Q: If someone does push too hard and experiences getting repelled, should they start again gradually, is that the solution?
- A: Yes. It's like a romance at first. (Sh: You get intoxicated by the new thing. You've got extra energy, and you push and push.) Then you are pushed.
- Q: The people I work with are very secular. I tend to avoid them outside of work and they feel insulted when I don't have lunch with them and so forth. Am I being unkind by avoiding them because we have different interests?
- A: It's one of the methods to keep calmness. They will gradually understand.
- f Q: She feels she's losing those things she's held closely; her work and her home life. She always knew what to do, but now her values are changing.
- A: What's your work?
- Q: I work with movement.
- Sh: Movement teacher. In the sense of dance?
- Q: Yes.
- A: Why do you jerk? I noticed your body was jerking.
- Q: Oh, yes. I don't know.
- A: If you are into body movement, then it should not happen. Body should be controlled.
- Q: It happens a lot.
- A: When did it start?
- Q: After I was doing TM meditation. Then I got in a longer program, then it starts. A lot of time I don't have it. But suddenly in a strong surroundings, then it happens. I suppose a certain energy. It comes from my lower back. I don't know exactly what is happening. Sometimes it can also happen when I'm sleeping.

- A: In sleep it happens when there is half sleep and half waking.
- Q: Can you tell me what's the meaning of those?
- A: 1) Energy moves and hits wrong areas (Sh: blocks). 2) The air element is deranged and causes it. (Sh: It could be either). Do you feel healthy?
- Q: Yes.
- A: How's your digestion? Weak digestion is related to it (Sh: related to the air element)
- Q: It's to do with pranayama? Bad circulation of the air?
- Sh: Not the breath circulation. There are other kinds of prana in the body. Energies.
- A: Wrong pranayama can also derange the air humor.
- Q: What is happening when you always knew what you were doing, your direction in your work and in your life? Then things happening, values are changing, you lose a kind of interest in your work and your way of living you were doing?
- A: The mind gets dispassionate. (Sh: Gets non-attached to things by doing meditation.) Doesn't give much value. (Sh: The mind doesn't give much value to what was formerly held as valuable.)
- Q: It makes me feel like one's in a vacuum. I can't do this and I can't do that. It's not important.
- A: Any other symptom? How's your sleep?
- Q: Mostly it's very good. This night didn't sleep good.
- A: Dreams?
- Q: No, not much. But sometimes I have a very clear dream.
- A: Dryness inside the head?
- Q: No.
- A: How's your memory?
- Q: For a long time, my memory was very bad. Nowadays it may be a little better.
- A: From when (Sh: did this start)?
- Q: This bad memory?
- Sh: The whole thing.
- Q: It starts also on the moment that I stopped the long TM program. For two years afterward, I was very, very tired. Now it's more in balance.
- A: How long was the program?
- Q: Three hours a day.
- A: For how long? (Sh: a month?)
- Q: Oh no, every day for two years.
- A: Three hours is not much.
- Q: Why did I get so tired?
- A: What did you do?
- Q: Meditation, yoga asanas, pranayama, resting, reading.
- A: There is some air derangement. You can take a drink made with cucumber seeds. (Sh: Dev Priya can help you there.)
- Q: The more one goes inward and towards God, the less one cares about one's self -- one's physical body?
- A: The more the mind surrenders to God, the more nature takes care of the body.
- Q: Is it a point close to liberation or just along the way?
- A: Depends on the surrender. (Sh: Real surrender is liberation. If it's in degrees, then it depends on the degree.)
- Q: So in the meantime, one has to adhere to the laws of order and cleanliness without in order to have that within?
- A: As long as you see it your body (Sh: as your body). With the attitude of a caretaker. We were given this thing to take care of for a certain length of time, and we take care of them the best we can.
- Q: There seems to be a point of crossover. We take care of it and our lives, then at some point when one goes completely into another state when one (inaudible)
- A: It's called Ajgar Vritti. Like a python. (Sh: ajgar means python? A python just hangs there.) Never moves. (Sh: Nature brings the pything its food, if he waits long enough.)

Q: Babaji, what was your relationship to Neem Karoli Baba?

A: We lived together for 15 years. I loved him like my father, then I left. His son still contacts me. Now his son's the manager in the Brindavan Ashram.

Q: Did Neem Karoli Baba attain the highest state of yoga?

A: High state has levels. In the Kaivalya state (Sh: the highest level), all relationships are finished.

Q: Does that mean one would not talk then?

A: Function of talking is in the body. For a liberated saint, everything is the same, but that saint will see a dog and a horse as different. The sameness that that saint sees is seeing only the same soul in everything.

Q: When you're living with other people, can one take on the karma of those people?

A: Karmas are shared when people get together, like in a car accident. (Sh: In less extreme situations, when we're together, at some level, we're sharing karma).

Q: I'm obsessed with pain and death. I want to go for God, but if I'm liberated I want a body that's whole and strong. But it holds me back from doing sadhana. I always have pain in my physical body and I think that if I do sadhana I'll go into bliss and then I'll forget about my body which is just what happens. I can forget about my body in a few minutes when it goes into the right state. My body has so much pain...

A: It's a mistake to be afraid of death. We can't avoid or trick death. It's a truth and we all will die.

Q: But I've tricked death so many times in my life. (Sh: It was an imposter, I'll bet.)

A: It can come at any time to anyone. If we are not afraid, then we don't die. (Sh: conversely, if we are afraid of death, we die.)

Q: (inaudible)

A: What can you do?

Q: I always try to outwit it.

Sh: She thinks death has come to her several times.

A: If death comes, you can't say, "I'm brushing my teeth, wait."

Q: Sometimes I go into coma states at night.

A: How?

Q: I just lapse into unconsciousness. (inaudible) (sees images when in that state). Then I wake up a few hours later and I'm conscious. I never know how long it's going to last.

A: She's a doctor (indicating Dr. Bhayani). She can tell. Probably you feel that way. Mind can create all kinds of illusions.

Q: I can agree with that. But it's often during those type of things that I realize, 'Oh, I almost died again, but I didn't die.'

A: You have stomach problems. Naturally your air element is deranged. Air element is responsible for increasing emotions, frightening dreams and heart palpitations.

Q: Lots of time I tried to fix that air humor, but I feel it always comes back, because I'm just...(pause)...Should I accept this?

A: Exercise, light food, clean stomach. If you are constipated, it will repeat.

Q: He is approaching a decision that might affect his way of life in a lot of ways. Should he approach it in a slow, cautious way and analyze it very carefully, or just jump in and open himself up to it, and not put too many restrictions on it?

A: God has given us a fine mind which can examine and discriminate and give judgment. So we should use it.

Q: But it always makes me stop. I may love something, then my brain swerves away from it because it sees it lacks perfection. Stops me from engaging in (inaudible).

A: By purifying the mind, it will give a right decision. Mind is purified by meditation.

- Q: I read in a book, Life after Life, about different death experiences. Are there different levels after death, like there are different states of consciousness, mind and being during life? There are books like the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and books that speak of different states of heaven. Can you clarify any of that?
- A: People can retain the memory of a coma stage in which these people see all such things. If someone really dies, then the brain stops its work. (Sh: Those experiences aren't called after death experiences any more. They're now termed "near death" experiences. It's been determined that the people haven't actually died.) Near death is possible. (Sh: Things such as the subtle body hovering and watching what's going on and people being able to quote verbatim what went on in the operating room when they were under anesthesia when they normally would have not. This is a mental function also and the same thing can happen as a result of meditation. It's not a particularly high stage. The reach of mind doesn't stop with the skull.) In samadhi also, people get into such things.
- Q: What people fear then at death is that even though we know there's that (not recorded) they want to know where the soul goes.
- A: Fear of death is losing this reality. (Sh: (We think we will lose everything.)
(Sh: That's what it looks like.)
- Q: It's fear of the unknown.
- Sh: In the form of death. That qualifies it.
- A: If you think that after death, the body will be buried, you will start feeling suffocation. Because we are so attached to it, that even a thought affects us.
- Q: What about the descriptions in the Tibetan Book of the Dead?
- A: In books, they say things in a symbolic way. Sometimes they write it to frighten people to stop them from doing evil things. Like hell.
- Q: Are you saying there is no conscious perception after death?
- A: What is the instrument of consciousness then?
- Q: Consciousness itself.
- A: That's cosmic consciousness.
- Q: What about the subtle body? Can't it be the instrument of consciousness?
- A: It has become a seed. All potentialities are there, but dormant. Like a giant redwood tree is in its seed (Sh: which is very small), but it has no existence as a redwood tree unless it is put in the ground and given the right conditions.
- Q: There are yogis who have written that they could remain conscious at death and can steer themselves into the next body.
- Sh: But they say that in this body, right? Where's the proof?
- Q: Yes.
- Q: Didn't Sai Baba give information as to where he'd be born in the next life?
- A: Some people retain that memory (Sh: in the next body). Memory is not lost, it becomes dormant.
- Q: Why don't we remember things from former lives?
- A: Because we die. Complete forgetfulness of past identities is death.
- Q: If that's true, then how is it possible to remember (inaudible).
- A: Memory is not lost. (Sh: If you don't have the memory, then you've died, and you're reborn as a different being.) What is enlightenment? All memories past, present and future become known.

- Q: There are yogis who say they are in touch with their deceased gurus and that they are in contact with the spirit world.
- A: Who is not?
- Q: There's the story of Yogananda's guru manifesting physically in front of him.
- A: I believe on practical experience. I don't deny it is possible.
- Q: When you say remembering of past, present and future, does that mean that everything is happening at the same time, that we are just locked into time on this plane and we just haven't gotten there yet?
- A: What is present?
- Q: What's happening at the moment.
- A: How is it happening? It's based on the past. (Sh: As soon as we notice something, it's past already.) Past is the cause of this T.V. (Sh: the world, the universe.)
- Q: Have you heard of Edgar Cayce, the "Sleeping Prophet?" What were those states he was in, was it a samadhi state?
- A: It happens. I had a laborer who was dumb and deaf. He could tell which mountains would fall (Sh: landslide), about floods and earthquakes. The human mind possesses all kinds of knowledges. In some people, some special compartment opens up. Like a math genius. There is one professor in the USA who pours acid on his hands. It burns the spoon and not his hands.
- Q: What do you do with the judgments people make about you? How should we react to these judgments when we find out about them?
- A: If their judgment is right, then we have to accept it. If their judgment is wrong, then we don't need to argue. It's their fault. (Sh: Their wrong judgment is their own fault, so we don't need to argue about it.)
- Q: What if their judgment is right and we don't realize it is right right away. They have made us upset because they have reminded us of something. . .I can't explain it.
- Sh: I think he knows what you're talking about.
- A: Ego always tries to prove "I am right." You say this is a mango. I see it a mango and I say, "It looks like an apple." (Sh: just to be right.)
- Q: At that moment, what do you do? Try to calm yourself down or think about the Lord or feel the anger and let it go, or (inaudible).
- A: Always think. The problem is we don't listen right. Our mind is always talking inside and has no time to listen. So we listen 10% of the time and 90% we listen to our own talks, and then we argue.

July 3, 1981 w/SN

- Q: In the talk this morning, it was said that the ego was the cause of our bondage. But I think I've also heard that the ego can be a source of liberation. How can it be both?
- A: Who is in the bondage? The Self. When it is in bondage, it is called the ego self. Just like a politician, a political leader in prison is called a prisoner. We don't call him a governor or a judge. After his sentence is served, he can become a governor or a judge. (SN: but in the meantime, he's a prisoner.)
- Q: So the natural state of the ego is not to be in bondage, is that correct?
- SN: It's the Self that's in bondage to the ego, is what he's saying.

- A: The Self. It's bondage is acting like the mind. The Self is the energy in whose presence everything is activated like a magnet's presence rotates iron wheels. The magnet is not doing it purposely. In the same way, the Self is not a doer. But everything happens around the Self.
- Q: I've had a confrontation with my parents last week on religion. They're Catholic. I have a hard time dealing with them on the Catholic religion being the only way to reach (inaudible). I don't know how to deal with that.
- A: Catholic means? Universal. In Sanskrit, it says Sanathan (sp?).
- Q: But they don't understand that's not the only way, that other people have other ways.
- A: Every religion is false in human instrumentality and changes its shape, name and process. So they can't be blamed and they can't blame you. If they understand the Catholic means, then they can't tie themselves under a certain name or dogma, etc.
- Q: They tend to do that. (SN: They tie themselves under a dogma.)
- A: (SN: The word) Universal includes a vast area.
- Q: If one is baptized in a religion, does it leave a samskara that will affect your life?
- A: It's samskara just as any action creates a samskara. Samskara word is a print in the mind. All actions are stamping seals on the mind (SN: making prints).
- Q: (inaudible)
- A: The seals are left behind after death, but the prints remain. Those prints are the cause of making new stamps.
- Q: Is it sadhana that helps you erase the prints?
- A: Sadhana means controlling the mind with a process. When the mind is controlled, the prints are controlled. If someone has fainted or used drugs and the mind is stopped, it will not reduce the samskaras.
- Q: Isn't it very dangerous that people are using what they think are harmless drugs in order to induce samadhi-like states or that sense of consciousness?
- A: Drugs are one of the means of attaining samadhi, but what's the dose, who should take it, what drug should be taken, is determined first. (SN: Patanjali includes that in the Yoga Sutras as being a method, but it's regulated by time, place, dose. And we don't have that knowledge. It takes an enlightened person to see that. So prescribing your own drugs for that can be dangerous.) For samadhi, the mind should be pure.
- Q: What makes you sad, Babaji?
- A: People. If someone smiles only once a year, naturally people get sad to see that person.
- Q: In class this morning, they were talking about the ordering of the universe; is there any response to the question of why things are?
- A: There are three energies ever existing. There is no answer why. Those energies are consciousness, action and matter. They come together and separate and create different forms. The only answer is "that's the way it is." No one can say, "This is God." If someone says, then God will have a limit. Only to understand do we put a limit on an unlimited God. If someone says sky, immediately we think of a blue dome a few miles away. If we think about it, there are two questions: 1) Is there a limit to the sky? If yes, then what's beyond that limit? 2) If it has no limit, then how far does it go?
- Q: It looks quite different from outer space. It looks different from a blue dome a few miles away.
- A: Everything looks different from out there. A husband sees his wife as beautiful, but when they fight he sees her as ugly.

Q: Is enlightenment more a matter of your perspective?

A: An enlightened person sees a rope as a rope and not as a snake. You have a car. The way I see it, you don't see it the same. Because you have an attachment and you see that attachment mixed in with that object. We all do it. So nothing is exactly as we see or feel or relate. (SN: It's all colored by our perception.)

Q: When you're changing because of your development and other people don't understand the change, whether to be disciplined in that situation or go somewhere else so the change can be more complete? New people will see you in a new way.

A: You can't please everyone. If someone grows a beard, people will ask, "Why do you grow a beard?" And when he shaves, people will ask, "Why do you shave?"

Q: On what basis do you make decisions, choices? He was taught that you make choices on balance, on weighing the factors and making an intellectual choice. He sees there are other ways of making choices based on intuition, luck, inference or someone else telling you what to do.

A: How do you weigh things? You like one girl more than another girl and the other girl is more intelligent. But your mind will weigh the girl you like more (SN: value her more). You are not weighing selflessly.

Q: So I should leave those that I decide to (inaudible) up and they would ignore the mind, right?

A: (agrees)

Q: So where am I left?

A: Real weighing of things is selflessly. That's why the United States Court symbol is the balance scales. (SN: An impartial weighing of things).

Q: How do you deal with poor physical condition as being a limitation to spiritual growth?

A: The body is an instrument. If you go to cut a tree with a dull axe, it will take the whole day and will tire you out. If the body is not well, it is sick and weak and then you can't do very many things smoothly. If you do it, it will be like using a dull axe. So the first thing is to improve the instrument.

Q: To what extent do samskaras make illness?

A: The samskaras are the cause of all action. (SN: and the result also.) If you inherit it from your parents, or if you get it from climate or geographical conditions, etc., it's all samskaras. But it's up to us to either strengthen the samskaras or weaken them. A child born in a poor family can become rich by his own effort.

Q: When you were practicing in your early years, with a teacher and you had a progression say, of experiences in that practice, did those experiences ever get too far advanced for you physically, so that you had side effects?

SN: Did you mean like going in a trance-like state and your body wasn't prepared to deal with it?

Q: Right.

SN: People talking about Kundalini rising in the wrong channels and that kind of thing.

A: If a person loses its system (SN: the system of the teaching).

Q: If one does the practice the way it is taught, then there's no danger of becoming ill?

A: Illness can also come by outer environment.

Q: I'm talking about practices, from sadhana.

A: If one progresses systematically, then no. But in sadhana sicknesses can come as a part of purification.

Q: If life of people pre-determined?

A: Means what?

SN: Are you talking about free will and destiny, as to whether we have a choice or it just happens to us?

Q: Yes. The print in nature which you have to follow.

A: In your house you have a choice--to wear clothes, to not wear clothes, or to wear simply a rag. It's all your own choice. But you're still under the rules of the government. Our choices are within the jurisdiction of the mind. (SN: Our choices are controlled by the mind.) There is a fire burning. You can step on it or not step on it. God has nothing to do with it. He has already given you a mind to discriminate. That is your free will. But still you are within God's rule.

Q: Then it doesn't matter what you choose when you are doing the things with your consciousness and (inaudible)?

A: It matters (SN: what you do). If you do wrong things.

Q: What is it that a saint sees? Like a rishi? Like in clairvoyance when someone sees the future and says you are going to do this and that and that comes true. What is it that they're seeing if there's free will?

A: It always stays in God's rule. (SN: A person can see the future by seeing the present.) An enlightened being knows the future but surrenders on God's will. When Tibet was invaded by the Chinese, there were enlightened beings who knew it. But they believed the destiny of Tibet was to be devastated. They got killed and Tibet was ruined.

Q: Do you mean it has to happen?

A: (They saw it.) There were very advanced cultures in the world and the whole continents drowned.

Q: In the case of continents drowning, that would be a force of nature, whereas in the case of (inaudible) kill those people (inaudible) don't they have a choice (inaudible)?

A: That is also a force of nature. Violence in the human nature. When the population increases, war starts. The mind of every person changes and sees the justification in war. Hitler is an example (SN: of that). In racial wars. In tribal wars. They don't see anything wrong in killing.

Q: Because they have a group purpose?

A: He is not of my tribe so he should be killed. This kind of disease possesses the mind. In riots I saw it. They will never listen if you say killing is bad.

Q: People are talking about the future in a way of "Are we going to make it? Is this planet going to survive or not?" Can you say something about that? (SN: Because of man's propensity for pollution and wars?)

A: For how long? I can't say that it's immortal. (SN: According to yoga theory, there is a life cycle of the planet, of the universe, of the whole creation. So eventually, it will dissolve. It's in the Vedas.) Maha pralaya, khanda pralaya. It will come after Kali Yuga. (SN: Maha pralaya, which is the dissolution of this whole universe.) It comes (SN: khanda pralaya) in different areas. (SN: you mean smaller areas? Babaji agrees. SN: Solar systems or planets dissolve like within a planet's structure? Babaji agrees.)

Q: Then what happens with the planet?

A: The seed grows again.

Q: When I went into the sensory deprivation tank, I had a flood of thoughts, then during all this, suddenly the heart pounded unusually hard for a few minutes, then it quit when I focussed on it. Then the mind went back to the thoughts. Then it (heart pounding) happened again.

- A: When the mind internalizes for a few moments, it can hear the inner sound in different ways. You had some fear there.
- Q: When my time was up and I got out, my eyes had a strobe effect for 30 seconds.
- A: One should not come out with open eyes. (SN: Cover the eyes and gradually allow the light to penetrate.)

July 5, 1981

- Q: What is the difference between Yoga philosophy and Hinduism?
- A: Hinduism takes yoga within the religion. (Sh: considers yoga as a part of the religion.) Hinduism believes in the Vedas and the Shastras and the Scriptures and yoga is an independent thing. (Sh: Hinduism is so vast, there is no thing that can be easily qualified as Hinduism. Hinduism even includes certain forms of atheism.) Yoga is in Hinduism, but Hinduism is not yoga.
- Q: Are western mathematics opposed to Yoga philosophy or are they in harmony with each other?
- A: Mathematics is yoga (Sh: Yoga is also very broad. It's not just a set of 84 postures.) Adding in sanskrit is called yoga (union). (Sh: Also Samkhya philosophy is a form of mathematics.) Science deals with matter. In Yoga there are three things--consciousness, action and matter. There are three stages of knowledge. Gyan, vigyan and agyan (in yoga). Gyan is knowledge of spirit, vigyan is knowledge of matter and agyan is ignorance. (Sh: Ignorance is our normal state.)
- Q: Would mathematics be a knowledge of matter or a knowledge of spirit?
- Sh: It would be the vigyan category. Except for those few scientists who are pushed into the gyan category by their vigyan. They get so deep into the science of matter that they come to spirit. They can't any longer call it matter. It's no longer that tangible reality. It's something beyond they really can't explain. Some are content to leave it that they can't explain. Some say there is a greater power.)
- Q: Why is it I can't attain the same states sitting in meditation as I can dancing?
- A: In dancing, the mind is concentrated on the body and the mind is not thinking of anything else, so it gives some peace. But it can't go any farther than that. In meditation, the mind revolts, so one gets agitated, but when controlled, it can bring real peace.
- Q: What are the restrictions of a woman during her period? I heard that one is not to do inverted poses at this time. Are there any other restrictions we should know about?
- A: The period is under apan prana. By the inverted pose, apan prana reverses so it stops the flow. In rituals, a woman who has her period is not included because it's hard for a woman to stop the flow. In this country, women use things for it, but in India they don't. Except for the inverted postures, all other postures are OK. Pranayama and meditation they can do.
- Q: Is there anything I can do to increase my ability to concentrate when I can't seem to keep my mind concentrated?
- A: It's a universal problem. The mind needs regular training. We concentrate when we know we are getting something. But in meditation we don't know about God. The mind doesn't believe in it completely, so it revolts. If faith is strengthened, then mind will concentrate.

- Q: How do the use of small amounts of alcohol affect spiritual progress? I have the same question about sugar.
- A: Ayurveda recommends a small amount of alcohol. We need sugar for our bone development. In grains and fruits, in everything there is sugar. (Sh: The kind we need is natural to us.)
- Q: Why do people in India and foreign countries (Sh: and domestic countries) eat so much sugar?
- A: They grow sugar cane.
- Q: Don't they believe that white sugar is not good for them?
- A: (nods yes.)
- Q: They won't eat that jaggary which is good.
- A: White sugar was rejected by Indians. When the British introduced it. Then the British banned brown sugar. (Sh: This wasn't the brown sugar we have in this country, but jaggary which is raw sugar.) It was a political thing. Huge mills would go out of work. Ayurveda doesn't recommend white sugar. Sugar cane juice or jaggary.
- Q: Then why do we give candy to our children here?
- A: They like it. It's better than ice cream. (Sh: For them. A little bit versus a lot of frozen sugar.) Here, people stick to ideas. "Honey is good." They'll eat one cup of honey and get sick. Honey in large amounts causes amoebic dysentery. It is heating, causes pimples, itching and bad skin. In small amounts, it moves the juices in the body.
- Sh: In a good way?
- A: (nods yes.) When we touch a bee, the bee stings. If we steal the honey, the bee knows it and poisons it. Bears are honey stealers. Bees always destroy the honey (when the bears start flying at the hive.)
- Q: Do they inject their venom into the honey?
- A: They do something.
- Q: But not if you take it in the way like most beekeepers will? Like smoke the hive. It makes them think a forest fire is coming and they eat the honey and it makes them lazy so they tend not to sting.
- A: Smoke also disturbs them.
- Q: How can you take the honey in a natural way? (Sh: There's no "natural" way.)
- A: They always try to poison it, but we eat little so it doesn't affect us. It will affect the bigger bee. (Sh: Bumble bee?) One bee steals their honey. (People try to guess what the "bigger bee" is. No one knows.)
- Q: What is a small amount of honey?
- A: One teaspoon is enough. (Sh: per day.) Also cooking honey makes it sugar. We hate sugar, but cook with honey.
- Q: But honey is a whole food, even if it is cooked, if sugar isn't.
- A: (disagrees.) It is sugar. Sugar cane juice is not sugar. It loses its real effect. (Sh: When you make it into sugar, concentrate it, refine it.) In Basti (Sh: Yogic enema, which employs several mixtures of ingredients), you never use sugar cane syrup in place of sugar cane juice. It will harm.
- Q: You said once there was a danger in becoming too pure.
- A: By gradual practice, the mind purifies. You can't become pure by showing purity. (Sh: Thinking you're too pure is harmful.) When the mind is pure, the person can't tell if he or she is pure or not pure.

Q: How does Babaji feel about psychedelic drugs and what's their link to spirituality?

A: It can destroy a person by not knowing the dose, who should take it, when to take it and the reason to take it. But poison kills and poison cures. Depends how you use it.

Q: What keeps the body alive in breathless states and near-breathless states in yoga?

A: In one 3rd-class pranayama, we save twelve breaths and at the same time we extract ten times more pranic energy (than in normal breathing). That prana is stored and functions in a very subtle way.

Q: What are the good effects and benefits of what is considered a small amount of alcohol?

A: In Ayurveda, there is a drink called āsava. It has 5-10% alcohol. It's taken 1/4 cup after eating food. (Sh: Recent research has been done specifically on wine. They found small amounts are very beneficial to the system. Good for the heart and many of the internal organs, and people who consumed moderate amounts were found to have stronger hearts and better in health, etc. than people who hadn't but lived in the same conditions, etc.)

Q: I drink one or two cups of coffee per day. What are its effects?

A: Coffee dries the system. It's not a very good thing if one takes it too much. In small amounts, it cures inflammations. It can help internal inflammation.

Q: What's a small amount?

A: There is strong coffee and there is light coffee. If I say one cup, then one can make a strong cup of coffee. (Sh: One strong cup--that's like 10 weak cups.)

Q: Would a cup of strong coffee affect sadhana in a bad way?

A: It will cause dryness. (Pranayama also makes dryness). (Sh: So you'd have a double dryness.)

Q: The more I meditate, the more receptive I become. How can I maintain a balance and not take on other people's energies, stay grounded?

A: By meditation the mind should become sensitive. Taking other people's energy means what? Probably you get upset when they're close to you. Meditation develops dispassion. The mind should not care what others think of you.

Q: It's hard for me to believe what you just said. It's absurd. We're listening to you thinking that we might have some benefit from you.

Sh: In what way?

Q: Because you just said that dispassion is the ability of a human being not to care what others think of them. Yet, what is happening here, partly, is a process where people are specifically caring about what he says about them or to them about their lives.

Sh: He was meaning more in a negative sense. You won't care if people have negative energy toward you. But if you are truly dispassionate, you also won't care if they have good energy toward you.

Q: Then let me ask the question in a different way then. Suppose that I'm here (at MMC) and one of the teachers suggests that I do an exercise, and I don't like the exercise. It's hard. I might think that was bad. How would I know?

A: Bad for you. (Sh: perhaps and that might be valid. That has nothing to do with dispassion.) You can easily stop doing it without feeling guilty. (Sh: If you have some dispassion.) The world is not a burden. We make it a burden. Anything can be bad if we think it's bad. (Sh: Ramana Maharshi used to tell a story of a man who carried a heavy bag on his head and had to catch a train to the next town. He got on the train, sat down and kept the bag on his head and complained that he had to take the bag all the way to the next city.)

Q: Why do we do that?

A: Habit. (Sh: or say, samskara.)

- Q: If a nine-year old boy doesn't like to play with other boys his age sometimes, is this a positive thing or a fear?
- A: It could be a fear. It could be a different nature. We have competition and comparison in our nature. It causes violence. Some are afraid of violence but still compare and try to compete. They're torn between two things.