

February 11, 1979 Questions and Answers with Bābā Hari Dāss During a Satsaṅga Meeting of the Hanumān Fellowship Society

Edit notes: The following was typed from notes handwritten at the time of the darśana. Q denotes a question. B indicates what Babaji wrote on his chalkboard, as read by the reader, and then as heard and noted by someone present. R is comments likely of the chalkboard reader. Comments in square brackets are generally those of the typist. Comments in parentheses are likely that of the reader. There was editing for format and IAST transliteration of Sanskrit terms.

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- R: Maya means the illusion of the world.
A: Maya includes both.
R: Good and evil, purity and resistance. A.: That's how illusion starts.
R: The union of the sattva and tamasic energies.
Q: Should one meditate with the intention of receiving the grace or joy or love from God, or always just as a self-offering?
A: If we meditate with an aim to find God, it is an expectation and is a right expectation.
Q: Then it's a right expectation to expect to receive joy or love?
A: Yes.
Q: Is it possible for the devotee on the path to find enlightenment in this lifetime no matter whether somewhat a beginner or perhaps more than just a beginner?
A: Getting enlightenment has no specific time. Anyone can get it. It doesn't take much time when the mind is intuned with the Self.
Q: Have there been saints who've raised families and attained kaivalya in the same lifetime?
A: Lahiri Mahashaya worked in a government job. He had a large family and attained a high stage in yoga. In olden times the rishis and munis were householders. The attachment is the cause, and not the family.
Q: What does enlightenment mean?
A: To identify with the Self.
Q: Could you explain identify?
A: When we say I am this or I am that, we mean the body when we say I. So we are identifying with the body. When the mind begins to think that this body is not me, it begins to identify with the Self.
R: With the energy which moves this body. That's what Babaji meant by identifying with the Self.

- Q: Is receiving shaktipat a good thing?
- R: Shaktipat means the transmission of energy from one being to another with the effect of raising the kundalini or dormant energy of the recipient.
- A: If it is real. The problem is the self doesn't identify with the Self, so we can't explain it. Identification is done by tamas
- R: – or the quality of resistance –
- A: and in the Self there is total purity. A king can say, I am a king, because he and kingliness are two different things. In the Self, there is nothing borrowed from outside.
- Q: Can a house really be haunted?
- A: Evil spirits and good spirits are experienced in different places.
- Q: Why do Buddhist monks shave their heads?
- A: It is a symbol of enlightenment. In sannyass, they also do.
- Q: Why do Buddhist monks eat meat?
- A: Buddhists are not allowed to eat meat. They don't eat it in India.
- Q: Yogananda said if someone's desire for God is as strong as a drowning person's desire for air, he will know God and be enlightened. How does one get such a strong desire?
- A: It is written in the scriptures.
- R: What you said.
- A: Desire comes by samskara. And desire is developed by sadhana.
- R: Both. Two ways to get that extreme desire for God.
- Q: So if one starts out with small desire but feels it's necessary to gain desire by doing sadhana, it will come more, it will be more real to him?
- A: When you climb a mountain, at first you get tired. You don't want to climb all the way. But when you get closer, the desire to reach increases so much that you don't think of anything else except to be there.
- Q: When you experience the presence of God in meditation as a joy or love or peace, or an aspect of God in that way, is it through the grace of God or is it because somehow you have raised enough energy, perhaps kundalini energy, to activate the chakra in such a way that you are drawing that energy of God to you in the form of the love?
- A: The rising of kundalini energy is also the grace of God.
- Q: Is that the specific reason why you might be experiencing the love in meditation?
- A: Kundalini always rises or vibrates when meditation goes right.
- Q: Is there a difference between absorption in meditation and union with God?
- A: There are four stages. Union with God keeps duality and absorption is non-duality.
- Q: Is it better to raise kundalini by concentrating at ajna chakra, the spiritual light which would draw the energy up, or by doing pranayama which might neutralize the positive and negative flow of energy, or both?
- A: Pranayama is the fastest way, but should be done correctly. Concentration can do the same thing, but it takes time to train the mind to meditate.
- R: Pranayama, when done correctly, creates a situation where the mind will stop by itself.

- Q: Is one's ability to meditate affected by the magnitude and strengths of one's attachments?
A: Yes.
- Q: Why do we go through cycles of spiritual highs and spiritual lows, like waves?
A: Because the elements in the body change. When the air or ether element predominates, a person can go in deep emotional states.
- Q: How is it that the moon affects our consciousness, and gives us highs and lows?
A: Full moon attracts the water element. In some people, when the water element is excited, they can develop negative or positive emotions.
- Q: Does it affect our body humors in the same way?
A: Yes.
- Q: What is your favorite color?
A: Never thought about it.
- Q: Does that mean you can't think about it?
A: I never thought which color I like the most.
- Q: What is personality, and should one try to develop personality?
A: In Sanskrit, the word is byatiktwa, which translates as individuality. It has two sides, negative and positive. The positive side is developed by positive qualities.
- Q: That's worth developing.
R: The other side develops sense of I-ness and selfishness.
- Q: Do you believe extraterrestrial creatures might exist?
A: In other planets there must be living beings. We have very little knowledge of this creation.
- Q: What is loving kindness?
A: Kindness is always mixed with love. A doctor operates on an abscess and it appears to be cruel and unkind, but it is not.
- Q: Do the fairies, elves, and gnomes, that so many people claim to be able to see, really exist?
A: There are different kinds of energies. The form appears by our emotions.
R: There are different energies that have no form except for the form given them by our minds.
A: Like ghosts.
R: There are positive or negative energies that can be attached to a place that we can experience, feeling the energy, but according to our mental set, we project a form onto that energy.
- Q: Like imagination?
A: [Nods.] Ghosts are seen only when you're scared. But energy can be felt even if you are not scared.
- Q: Are there any holy places in California to which one might go on a pilgrimage?
A: Don't know.
- Q: Is it possible that you will one day go to Mexico?
A: If God wishes.
- Q: Could you explain the visions of Sri Ramakrishna?

- A: Ramakrishna was born a saint. His devotion was so deep that he could see the energy in a form. A little thought could create a vision of the Goddess in him.
- Q: You said that enlightenment is identifying with the Self. Could you explain the Self a little?
- A: The Self in a being is the static form of the three energies, consciousness, action, and matter, which created the whole world, and which is also called Brahm, or God. I wrote before: the Self doesn't identify, "I am a Self." So there is something missing. That's why no one can exactly explain.
- Q: Why does hard work of service sometimes give energy to the one doing it, and sometimes drain energy?
- A: When the ego is satisfied, you feel energy. When the ego is obstructed, you feel drained.
- Q: What can be done about that?
- A: It depends on the circumstances and the kind of work.
- Q: What about doing emergency room work with very sick and sometimes dying patients?
- A: Because you identify with that situation in yourself, and it scares you. It happens without your knowledge.
- Q: When negative thoughts such as anger and resentment come, is there any specific practice to get rid of them?
- A: Japa is the best practice.
- R: Japa means repetition of any name of God, or mantra. It's repeated in such a way that other thoughts don't have a chance to come in, like putting up a fence around you, in your mind.
- Q: Is there a deity of death?
- A: Name is Yama.
- R: The god of death in the Hindu pantheon.
- Q: What exactly is his role?
- A: The god of death keeps a record of the karmas.
- R: The actions of a being.
- A: After death, he gives judgment and sends some to heaven and some to hell.
- R: This is the traditional explanation of the god of death's role. In fact, that same god of death performs the same functions in many different cultures.
- Q: Allen Ginzberg was told by a Buddhist teacher that if he followed a certain path, he would go to the Diamond Hell, which lasts forever. Do you believe there is a hell which lasts forever?
- A: I don't believe in any hell or heaven outside.
- Q: Could having the thought that there is a hell that lasts forever make it come true for the person believing it?
- A: No.
- Q: Would death relieve a person of that illusion?

- A: You are not one person. From the day that you first took birth, you went through several different lives. Several good and bad samskaras were collected. All those samskaras work separately. If one's good samskaras somehow collect together, one can attain a very high stage, even if a person has done bad things. The sage Valmiki
- R: – who originally wrote down the Ramayana –
- A: was a highwayman and a murderer.
- R: But through his meeting with a saint, his life was changed and he attained liberation.

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