

II Shrī Hariḥ Sharnam II

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)



**Mānav Sevā Sangh
Vrindāvan (Mathurā)**

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

॥ Shrī Hariḥ Sharnam ॥

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

[Answers to questions asked by spiritual aspirants to the founder-saint of 'Mānav Sevā Sangh,' Sant Pravar Brahmaleen Pujaypād Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj]

Translated from Original Hindi by
Satinder Dhiman, Ph.D.; Ed.D. (USA)



**Mānav Sevā Sangh
Vrindāvan**

Publisher's Page



Dedication!

*Merā mujhme kuchh nahin,
Jo kuchh hae so terā.
Tera tujhko sauptae,
Kyā lāgat hae merā.*

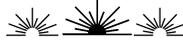
— Sant Kabīr

*Nothing within myself is mine.
Whatever there is, is Yours.
If I surrender to You what is already Yours,
What does it cost me?*



Table of Contents

<i>Dedication!</i>	4
Foreword: By Divya Jyōtī Devakījī	6
<i>First Prayer</i>	8
Translator's Submission	10
Prashnōttarī	15
Hariḥ Sharṇam.....	150
Universal Chant	150
The Invaluable Literature of 'Mānav-Sevā-Sangh' ..	151
<i>Second Prayer</i>	152



Foreword: By Divya Jyōtī Devakījī

The questions that arise in the mind of a person who is trying to free himself from the quagmire of duality of joy and sorrow—such questions are very vivid questions. The answers that become explicit in the compassionate, realized saint to steadfastly provide guidance on the virtuous path, the saint who is moved by the anguish of the person lost in the darkness of ignorance—such answers are very vivid answers. The coincidence of the coming together of such questions-answers is supremely beneficial for the seekers.

During the very childhood, the founder-saint of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh, Brahmaleen Shrī Swāmī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj, faced a great sorrow. In the alertly intelligent mind of the child, a question arose: ‘Is there such a state of happiness which is free from sorrow?’ He received the answer—‘Yes there is such a happiness, which is free from sorrow, and it is only accessible to *sādhus* and *saints*.’ The child having lost both of his eyes at the age of eleven found the answer to his question and decided right at that very moment that ‘I will become a *sādhu*.’ Having become a *sādhu*, realizing in himself the blissful existence free from sorrow, param Pujayey Shrī Swāmī

Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj

Sharnānandjī Mahārāj has done a wonderful service to all of mankind and to all seekers by providing infallible and irrefutable answers to the questions pertaining to the ending of sorrow, lasting peace, liberation-while-living, and devotion of the Lord.

Whenever anyone used to ask even the most complex questions pertaining to the various aspects of human life, Swāmīji Mahārāj used to answer them spontaneously with explanation in few words in such a manner that it used to awaken the questioner [from the slumber of ignorance] and, having found the stark and practical solution, the seeker used to find himself steadfast on the path of spiritual practice.

The answers provided by Shrī Mahārājī used to directly touch the questioner. The questioner used to feel as if Shrī Mahārājī has blown a new consciousness into him. Shrī Mahārājī's answers, being spontaneously arising, used to be in harmony with the scriptures. In addition, being convincing and logical, they used to be irrefutable as well. Being implementable at the practical level, the answers used to present a revolutionary transformation before the seekers.

Inspired by the foregoing features, the question of publishing the present *Prashnōttarī* arose in the mind of some admirers of Mānav-Sevā -Sangh. That the entangled seekers may receive adequate guidance [upon the path] to solve their problems— with this objective in mind, whatever material could be

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

presently gathered, is compiled and presented in the form of *Prashnōttarī*. This flower is lovingly and in good faith dedicated by the Sangh to the fellow seeker brothers and sisters.

Prem-Niketan Ashram, Jaipur
Gītā Jayantī, 1989

Humble Submission:
Divya Jyōti Devakiji

First Prayer

My Lord!

*By Thine Nectarine-Almighty-
Purifying-Motiveless Grace,
Grant the strength of renunciation
To those afflicted with sorrow;
And strength of rendering
Selfless service
To those who are happy;
So that they may be released
From the bondage of happiness and sorrow,
And become blessed by
Thy Divine Love!*

Om Anand!

Om Anand!

Om Anand!



*Sarvam parvasham dukḥam,
Sarvam atamvasham sukḥam;
Ethath vidyath Samasena,
Lakṣhanam Sukḥa Dukḥayo.*

*‘Dependence (in all matters) is misery.
Freedom (in all respects) is happiness.
Know these to be the general definitions
of happiness and misery.’*

—*Manusmṛti* (4.160)

*‘That one Supreme Ruler, the Self of all
beings, who makes His one form
manifold;—the wise ones who perceive
Him as existing in their own self, to
them belongs eternal happiness, and to
none else.’*

—*Kaivalya Upanishad* (verse 10)



Translator's Submission

No translation, howsoever accurate, can truly capture the pristine splendor of the original. We have tried our level best to stay true to the original, both in intent and purpose, while at the same time presenting a translation that is at once idiomatic, expressive, and free-flowing. This translation is not intended so much for scholars as it is for the spiritual aspirants desirous of a faithful yet readable rendition of the sublime words of Santshirōmani Swāmī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj.

The following four tenets have been used as “guiding principles” in accomplishing this English translation:

- I. Utmost care and circumspection have been exercised in trying to find the “exact English equivalents” of the respective Hindi words and phrases.
- II. To preserve the sanctity of the original, all the important words and phrases are also presented in a Romanized Devanāgarī script within the round brackets () next to the English translation. To avoid awkwardness, sometimes only a Romanized Devanāgarī version of a word or a phrase is presented.

- III. Where the translator has felt the need to add a variant rendering or a short explanation to render the original meaning clear to the English speaking readers unfamiliar with Swāmījī's unique terminology, he has used square brackets [] to provide such explanations. Detailed explanations, however, are given by way of a "footnote" where necessary. This practice, however, has been used sparingly and discreetly.
- IV. In making the English translation, throughout, the translator has aspired to *harmonize* the word-meaning (*shabdārtha*) with the inner-sense/meaning (*antaranga-bhāvārtha*). However, wherever there was a clash between *shabdārtha* and *bhāvārtha*, the translator has tended to side with the *bhāvārtha* or *bhāvānuvād*.

To avoid awkwardness, the masculine third person pronoun 'he' and likewise the object pronoun 'him' have been used throughout the translation. Needless to say, 'he' includes 'she' also and 'him' includes 'her' also.

In some rare cases, to preserve the pristine sanctity of Swāmījī Mahārāj's bhāva, the translator found himself doing what may strictly be termed as 'trans-creation' rather than mere literal translation!

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Ultimately, every work of translation falls short of the majesty of the original. It is even more so when the subject-matter involved is of highest profundity and depth. Arthur Schnabel, an Austrian classical pianist, having played Beethoven’s piano music all his life, is reported to have said this of Beethoven’s music: “This music is better than it can ever be played.” We feel the same way about our translation and the subject-matter of this short treatise.

It is quite possible that despite our best efforts, several deficiencies and inaccuracies may still remain as the work stands in its present form. We earnestly welcome all suggestions for its improvement at the following email ID: musafir57@gmail.com. This is at best a work-in-progress. So, kindly please send your suggestions unhesitatingly. One is endlessly tempted to revise the translation to make it as accurate as humanly possible. Nevertheless, we are also reminded of a Chinese author who said, “If I were to wait for perfection, my book will never be finished.”

If the reader finds any merit in the translation, all glories to the Southward-facing Person (Dakṣiṇāmūrti), the universal, silent teacher whose inspiration has accomplished this translation. The Blessed Lord is the doer of all and everything; the translator is His mere instrument—an imperfect instrument at that. Whatever mistakes remain, they are verily due to the translator’s limited understanding of Swāmījī Mahārāj’s sublime teachings. In

Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj

conclusion, we will like to quote a Sanskrit verse that captures our feelings admirably well:

***Yadatra dōshanam kinchattan teshām mameva tat
Yadatra bhōshanam kinchit tatttu teshām na eva mam***

Whatever deficiencies are found in this work, they do not belong to the masters—they are verily mine; whatever excellence is found here is theirs and certainly not mine.

Bhīṣma Ekādaśī
February 10, 2014

Sant-charan-raj rataḥ,
Shrī Hariḥ Sharnam,
Satinder Dhiman



A Note to the Reader

The special quality of the original is hard to capture in a translation. Usually, in translation, several ideas of the author do not get expressed fully. Therefore, the discerning readers are earnestly requested, if they have the knowledge of the Hindi language, to read the original book in Hindi. The readers are also requested to check www.swamisharnanandji.org for Swāmījī's Pravachans, pdf of Swāmījī's books in Hindi as well as English, and the latest blog information.



Prashnōttarī

Question—Mahārāj Jī! What is the duty of a teacher?

Answer—The job of the teacher is to make proper use of his or her ability and to build the character of the student.

Question—Swāmī jī! Why doesn't God fulfill our desire?

Answer—The Lord did not fulfill the desire of even his father, Dasharatha. Why would the Lord fulfill your desire? Whatever Sītā wanted did not happen. Whatever Kaushalyā wanted did not happen. What will your desiring accomplish?

Question—Swāmī jī! According to your view, if sorrow comes to teach something to man, then why do the children suffer?

Answer—Children are sentient beings. And there is indeed the experience of joy and sorrow in the life of the sentient beings. Only when they grow up that the sorrow will teach them something.

Question—Swāmī jī! How will the sorrow of the society end?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—You can end your sorrow; if the society so desires, its sorrow will end. A father cannot end the sorrow of his son; a husband cannot end the sorrow of his wife; then how can one end the sorrow of the society? Certainly, you can do this—you can present your sorrow-free life before the society, beholding which the society may become interested in ending its sorrow.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! How does the Lord cherish one who serves the creation?

Answer—As the one who serves your child is dear to you.

Question—Swāmī jī! How can one have a vision (*darshan*) of the Lord?

Answer—There is significance of the Divine-love; there is no significance of God’s vision. If you do not feel dearness toward God, you will not grow [spiritually] even if you behold the Lord every day. The important thing is the trust in God, the relationship [of dearness] with God, and the love of God.

Question—What is the nature of independence or (*svādhīnatā*)?

Answer—Independence means to be content in one’s self, and not to be bound to any object or situation.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Swāmī jī!

Answer—

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Why don’t Christians listen to Christ?

Answer—A pseudo-Christian will talk about Christ and a true Christian will listen to Christ (or live by his teachings). This is true not only with regard to the Christians but also applies to the Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, etc.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! What is the means to materialistic progress?

Answer—Competence, hard work, honesty, and generosity.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Who is liberated even while living (*jīvanmukta*¹)?

Answer—He who is honest; and only he indeed is honest who does not regard any worldly object to be his own.

Question—What is the true nature of Liberation attained while still alive (*jīvanmuktī*)?

Answer— If the ‘life-current’ (*prāna*) ends while the desires remain, then the “death” has taken place and one has to be born again. And if the desires end while the life-current remains, then that is liberation (*muktī*). For example, if you go to the market and run out of money while you still had some needs left, then you would have to go to the market again. But if your needs have come to an end while

¹ According to the Hindu philosophy, a *jīvanmukta* is a liberated sage who has attained *dr̥gha nishthā*—*firm abidance*—in the Self and is liberated while living, once-and-for-all free from the trammels of rebirth. And *jīvanmukti* is state of knowing, while still in the body, that one is really the eternal non-dual Self (which is Brahman) and that the Self is never bound to begin with.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

you still had the money, then why would you have to go to the market [again]?

Question—Reading and writing are on the rise. Even then, why aren't the faults on the decline?

Answer—A person behaves in a faulty manner when he does not even listen to himself [or accede to his own reasoning]. Reading-writing is a type of ability. And when the ability does not remain under the subservient guidance of self-reasoning (*nij-viveka*) ends up committing grave blunders.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Is the Divine Love also like the love of lustful man (*kāmī*) and passionate woman (*kāminī*)?

Answer—The lustful man does not love the passionate woman. They destroy each other; devour each other. The Divine Love makes both the lover and the beloved blissful.

Question—Is the arrival of sorrow the result of decadence or sinfulness of man?

Answer—The arrival of sorrow is not the result of decadence of man. The sorrow verily comes to end attachment to indulgence in [sense] pleasures.

Question—How can one escape from meaningless thoughts?

Answer—Meaningless contemplation is the effect of settled-unsettled emotional debt [or addressed-unaddressed desires]. Do not cooperate with it. [Or be indifferent towards it]. Do not try to suppress it; nor draw pleasure from it; do not be afraid

of it, and do not identify with it. Then the meaningless contemplation will end after having arisen.

Question—Swāmī jī! What should we do?

Answer—Service, sacrifice, and faith. Service means generosity; to be cheerful seeing those who are happy and prosperous; and to be compassionate seeing those who are unhappy and sorrowful. Sacrifice means that which we have been granted is not our own. To give up the desire for that with which we do not have identity of kind and identity of self-nature. Not to have sense of mine in that which has been attained; and not to have craving for that which has not been attained. Cultivate complete faith and trust in God. Service make man useful for the society, sacrifice makes man useful for himself, and full faith makes man useful for the Lord.

Question—Swāmī jī! My eyesight has been fine so far. But now after 75 years, I am feeling the deprivation after deterioration in my vision.

Answer—Dear brother, the eyes were not yours to begin with; it is only now that you have realized that they are being taken away. Every day, in deep sleep, despite our eyes being intact, we become blind. You have not even thought about it.

Question—Is there a place in life for the fulfillment of our resolves/volitions (*saṅkalpas*)?

Answer—Yes, there is place for the fulfillment of the *saṅkalpas* of others and not for the fulfillment of one's own *saṅkalpas*.

Question—How to cultivate devotion (*bhakti*)?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—Devotion is expressed through disavowing the world for oneself and by regarding God alone as one's own.

Question—Does dream has any reality?

Answer—The dream is a state only; the state does not have any reality.

Question—What is the result of the [Divine] Dispensation of sorrow?

Answer—The sorrow (or pain) is indeed brought about by the Divine Dispensation to end the bondage of pleasure. It is verily the result of our inadvertence.

Question—Are feeling sorrow and feeling compassion the same?

Answer—No, there is callousness/insentience in the sorrow; there is consciousness/awareness in compassion that severs the affinity with the world.

Question—Why do we feel pain upon the arrival of physical sickness?

Answer—'I am the body' or 'body is mine'—this understanding leads to sorrow.

Question—What should be done so that the pain does not bother the patient?

Answer—The disease is a natural penance— with this realization, one should bear it with joy.

Question—What should a patient do who is stricken with disease?

Answer—To experience the motiveless grace of the Lord under every state and to have heart saturated with Divine Love. The spiritual aspirant

experiences no gain or loss with the continuation or cessation of the physical body. It is necessary to give up the desire for keeping the body intact.

Question—Why one has to go through pain/sorrow?

Answer—The one who indulges in the sense-pleasure has to bear the pain/sorrow indeed. Such is verily the law. The sorrow comes to end the relish in sense-indulgence.

Question—Why is one afraid of disease?

Answer—The disease comes to end dependence on bodily strength. The spiritual aspirants should not be afraid of it; rather, they should make proper use of it.

Question—What is the proper use of the disease?

Answer—One should feel the influence of the disease. The disease lets one experience the reality of the physical body. The disease helps one to become detached with the body.

Question—What is the diagnosis or the cure of the disease?

Answer—To be free from attachment with the body should indeed be the goal of the spiritual aspirant. By taking care of the health of the body as far as possible, one should serve the body—doing so, the disease come to an end. The body is a resource for rendering service. The prayer of the spiritual aspirant should be—“O’ My Lord! May the body be of service to the world; may the ego be free from the

pride; and may the heart be saturated with the Divine Love.”

Question—When and how can man find true happiness?

Answer—In fact, this is the greatest problem of human life. And man is completely free to solve this. It is a great mistake not to think about this question seriously.

When man attains humanity he is able to get happiness that is free from sorrow; that is, man is able to develop true happiness when he attains to humanity.

In a simple manner, pray silently to the Beloved—‘O’ Lord! Fill this heart with your dearness. Make this body steadfast in the service of the sorrowful. Make the intellect full of discriminative wisdom. Make me a beautiful flower in the garden of your creation. May I always long for Thy Grace!” If you pray like this, the Lord will definitely make you worthy of His service; such is my conviction.

Question—How to forget bodily suffering?

Answer—Not to forget but to bear it stoically, remaining free from worry and wail. One receives greater power through penance. By forgetting, one will only become more callous. One should exercise forbearance (*titikṣā*) with regards to the body. *Titikṣā* means to bear the hardships with joy.

Question—In the first prayer of the Mānav-Sevā- Sangh, it is stated, ‘Grant the strength of renunciation to those afflicted with sorrow.’ What

can the poor fellow sacrifice who is [already] sorrowful?

Answer—One experiences sorrow when what a one craves for does not happen. This proves that craving is the root cause of sorrow. Therefore, if the sorrowful wants to be free from the sorrow, he should give up the craving or the desire. Man is free to give up the craving.

Question—What is the significance of ‘acting without attachment?’

Answer—An action that is not motivated by one’s own implicit pleasure, an action that is undertaken for the well-being of all beings, is called ‘action which is free from attachment.’

Question—Why do we notice others’ faults?

Answer—Because we do not notice our own faults.

Question—What is the meaning of worship?

Answer—Regarding the world to be of the Lord’s, for His pleasure, devoting the objects of the world in the service of the world is called worship.

Question—What is the meaning of invocation (*stuti*), devotion (*upāsana*), and prayer (*prārthanā*)?

Answer—To accept the reality and sovereignty of the Lord is verily the invocation; to accept the relationship of own-ness (*apnattva*) with the Lord is

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

devotion; to experience the need for Divine-Love is prayer.

Question—What is the impediment to God-realization?

Answer—To like the world is the greatest impediment.

Question—Why there is suffering?

Answer—The tree of sorrow is produced by indulgence in sense-pleasure. There is no sorrow whatsoever that does not spring from indulgence in sense-pleasure.

Question—What is the consequence of joy and sorrow?

Answer—The joy that is derived from someone's sorrow leads to great sorrow eventually. The sorrow that is the result of someone's joy leads to great bliss eventually. The human being gets bound by joy and gets liberated by sorrow. The joy leads to sorrow and sorrow leads to bliss.

Question—What is sacrifice or renunciation?

Answer—The complete absence of faith in the favorableness or the unfavorableness of the world is indeed the true renunciation. It is because favorableness leads to attraction/attachment and unfavorableness leads to aversion. The absence of attraction-aversion (*raga dveṣa*) is verily renunciation. As a girl in her parents' house is called daughter, in her in-laws house, she is called daughter-in-law, and upon having a child, she is called mother—in the same manner, renunciation itself is called love-divine,

and love indeed is called [self-] knowledge. By renunciation one attains religious faith—and then the renunciation gets transformed into love-divine. And with the true experience of religious faith (*āstiktā*), love-divine gets transformed into self-knowledge (*jñāna*).

Question—Why action does not bring permanent happiness?

Answer—The action, the body, and the world—these three are essentially the same in their nature. They do not have an independent existence. And that which does not have an independent existence cannot lead to independence. How can there be joy without independence. Therefore, one cannot attain joy through action, etc.

Question—How should one act?

Answer—The action should be performed for the sake of welfare of the world. By doing so one attains comes to know the true nature of sense-pleasures. The renunciation takes place automatically by knowing the real nature of sense-pleasures. Then there is no interest in the performance of actions. The attraction for actions comes to an end and one attains the communion with the divine.

Question—Why doesn't man attain peace?

Answer—One doesn't attain peace by performing actions for the fulfillment of desire. If the spiritual aspirant aspires for the purification of the mind, the peace is attained on its own accord.

Question—How should one know that the Lord loves us?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—One can know this if one has faith in God and one has relationship [of dearness] with God. As a mother longs for her child, even so the Lord longs for His devotee. Whether the child is dark or dull complexioned, deaf or dumb or lame, the mother loves him regardless. The child understands this as well. The Lord has several times more affection (*vātsalya*) than the mother. His love for the devotees is indeed indescribable. Therefore, those who accept the Lord alone as their own receive the Lord's love. There is no doubt about this. This is the experience of the devotees. The Lord seeks loving-devotees. The thoughtful spiritual aspirant seeks the Lord.

Question—How to notice and overcome one's own faults?

Answer—Everyone has the ability to notice merits and demerits. We should apply the same ability in noticing our own faults as we apply to notice the faults of others. One experiences deep anguish by noticing one's own faults clearly. The development of man comes to a halt by noticing the faults of others and by noticing one's own merits. This also strengthens the ego.

Question—How can the [real] need (*māng*) be fulfilled?

Answer—There are three kinds of needs: craving, longing, and yearning—craving for sense-indulgence, yearning for truth, and longing for divine-love. Yearning denotes desire to know [the truth]. Longing denotes desire to attain to the Lord. And craving signifies desire for sense-pleasures. That

which has all three—desire for sense-pleasures, yearning for truth, and longing for the Lord—is called the 'I' (*mein*). The craving arises due to error which can be dispensed with. The yearning gets fulfilled. Then God is realized. Therefore, abstention of the desire, fulfillment of the yearning, and the attainment of the Lord can be realized by man.

Question—How to end the sorrow?

Answer—Ending of the cravings lead to the ending of the sorrow. When the spiritual aspirant, applying the discriminative intellect, is able to realize that 'I am not the body'—then the passionate desires (*vāsanās*) and volitions (*saṅkalpas*) come to an end. With the ending of desires and volitions, all sorrows come to an end. When the senses and the mind become still, the desires come to an end automatically.

Question—What should I do?

Answer—If you can remain without doing anything, then you should not do anything. If you cannot refrain from doing, then you should do everything. The experience of sorrow is inevitable after sense-indulgence. Each action leads to two types of results. One is visible which ends on its own accord. The other is invisible which ends in the absence of desire for the fruit of actions. Therefore, whatever you do, do it by being free from the desire, the contemplation, and the expectation of result of the actions. Only those means should be undertaken which result in establishing the relationship with the

Lord. Therefore, if you will, perform service or else practice renunciation.

Question—Sometimes, it appears that the heart is full of divine-love. And sometimes, it appears that the heart is Godforsaken. Why so?

Answer—The surprising thing is that man does not trust the Lord as much as he trusts the world. One has been deceived several times trusting the world. No one has ever been deceived trusting the Lord.

Man wants to make his mind, intellect, and senses steadfast in God, while keeping his 'own self' aloof from God. This is where the mistake begins. The divine-love has kinship with the spiritual aspirant; it has no affinity with his intellect, mind, and senses.

Regard the supreme Beloved the Lord as your own, have trust in Him alone, and love only the Lord. Man has become bound by expecting joy from the transient objects. Due to this very reason, he has become estranged from the divine-love.

Question—What is the difference between the discriminative intellect and the intellect?

Answer—Discriminative intellect (*viveka*) is the light; intellect is the vision. As the eyesight functions in the light, even so the intellect functions in the light of the *viveka*. By honoring *viveka*², the intellect

² What is *viveka* (discriminative intellect/wisdom)? *Viveka* is the discriminative faculty that is able to discern the difference between the real (*sat*) and the unreal (*asat*). In Swāmījī's parlance, it denotes five things—

becomes illumined with discriminative wisdom. The glory of the discriminative wisdom is great indeed.

Question—Why the yearning for truth (*jijñāsā*) does not become intense?

Answer—Because the agony of doubt is sterile.

Question—How would one know that the ‘sense of mine’ (*mamatā*) has ended?

Answer—After your appetite is satiated, do you need to ask the server of the food whether your stomach is full or not. When the sense of mine has been given up, you will know on its own accord.

Question—In the philosophy of the Mānav-*Sevā-Sangh*, the idea of service, sacrifice, and love-divine is mentioned. Should one follow all three or anyone of them?

Answer—On accord of Divine-Dispensation, all humans are endowed with three powers—

1. Power to do (The Path of Action)
2. Power to know (The Path of Knowledge)
3. Power to believe (The Path of Devotion)

Of the three, any one power is predominant. Therefore, the spiritual aspirant should proceed on the path following that particular power which is predominant in his or her case. In this manner, the remaining two powers will be developed and properly

-
1. Nothing is mine.
 2. I do not need anything.
 3. I am nothing.
 4. Almighty God is all there is.
 5. Almighty God is my own.

utilized on their own accord. The spiritual aspirant, if so desires, can also proceed with the help of the three powers all at once.

Question—Knowing well that we should not be led by attachment and desire in our life, we still get swerved (*vichalita*) when afflicted with sorrow. How to be free from this quandary?

Answer—We will definitely have to suffer the pangs of separation of objects and persons from which we expect to get sense pleasures. Therefore, if we want to be free from sorrow, then we should give up the expectation of sense gratification or seeking sense pleasure from objects, persons, circumstances, and states. Then the sorrow will definitely depart from our life.

Question—How can an honest person life in a corrupt world?

Answer—Greed is the root cause of dishonesty. In greedless-ness lies the destruction of impoverishment.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! How long it takes to realize the Truth?

Answer—The greater the intensity of yearning, the lesser the time it takes to realize the Truth. When you will not be able to rest in peace without the Truth, you will realize the Truth right away at that time.

Question—Swāmī jī! Should the spiritual aspirant leave home if due to unfavorableness of the conditions at home he or she is not able to follow the spiritual practice?

Answer—The true practitioner of the Mānav-Sevā-Sangh never renounces home; rather he gives up the desire, the sense of mine, and his sense of entitlement.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Swāmī jī!

Answer—

Question—Mahārāj Jī! May I renounce my home and live in the ashram?

Answer—The Mānav-Sevā-Sangh does not want to thrive itself on the destruction of someone's home. But if your family is not dependent upon you and you are not able to make proper use of joy and sorrow, you are most welcome to come here.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Why does the lack of wealth feels so painful?

Answer—Because you attach too much importance to wealth.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! When I sit down to meditate, sometimes I feel great peace, and sometimes I feel that the intense flow of activity is still there.

Answer—The attraction for action has not been divested yet.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Swāmī jī!

Answer—

Question—Swāmī jī! I am not achieving success in spiritual practice.

Answer—You have not yet cultivated your spiritual practice according to your interest, ability, and competence.

Question—Swāmī jī! Why does God remain hidden?

Answer—Deep faith, devotion, and trustful self-identity and dearness with God have not yet been awakened.

Question—Swāmī jī! Lots of perturbations (*vikārs*³) keep on arising in the mind; what should I do?

Answer—You need to have deep anguish [to appease them].

Question—Swāmī jī! What is the significance of the Hōlī [festival]?

Answer—Burn the attraction-aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*) in the fire! Obliterate the body-conceit (*dehābhimān*) absolutely and get drenched in the holy color of divine Love.

Question—Should there be personal property or capital?

Answer—There should definitely be personal property; but one should not regard it to be one's own and for one's own sake.

³ *Vikārs* mean *deviations* from the natural human state. *Vikārs* are major weaknesses/defilements of the human personality that act as an obstruction on the path to moral or spiritual progress. According to Hinduism, there are mainly six *vikārs*—

- Kāma* (Lust),
- Krōdha* (Rage or uncontrolled anger),
- Lōbha* (Greed),
- Mōha* (Attachment or emotional attachment), and
- Mada* or *Ahaṅkāra* (Arrogance or Vanity or Ego), and
- Mātsaryam* (Jealousy or over-competitiveness)

Question—Swāmī jī! What is realization (*bōdha*)?

Answer—At the basis of all and everything there is an uncreated eternal essence. This essence alone has the independent reality. To know this essence indeed is called realization.

Question—Swāmī jī! What is the reason of struggle in the society?

Answer—We want to thrive by harming others. This verily is the cause of struggle in the society.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! The delusion (*mōha*)

Answer—Understand that all these delusional objects and bodily comforts are impermanent. To have a sense of mine in them or to crave for these is verily the mistake of man. They will certainly get separated one day. If one is attached to them, then one will only feel sorrow during the time of their separation. That is why they have been described as sorrowful. Therefore it is a great mistake to spoil one's future existence for these transient and sorrow-ridden objects.

He alone is truly wise who, relinquishing the attachment of sense-indulgence, and establishing self-identity with the Lord, has ensured his spiritual welfare by taking refuge in the Lord. Take refuge in the Lord, giving up attachment to sense-indulgence. This is the unerring and true path to salvation. In this alone lies the success and the fulfillment of human life.

Question—It seems that the world exists and that it will also be there later on. Is this true?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—This belief that the world exists is wrong. That which is perceived has no reality. Why do you accept it as such?

Question—Is it generous to get beaten up?

Answer—The weak always gets beaten up. Generosity is born of the relationship of self-identity (*ātmīyatā*). To be generous means to be one with the world. Become strong. Be compassionate.

Question—In the picture of Hanumanji, there is an image of Rāmji. Is it true?

Answer—The image is drawn on the feeling, as it were; it is not drawn on the picture!

Clean the inner chamber of your heart,
For the reception of your Beloved;
Let go of the contemplation of others,
To enshrine your Beloved's presence!

First you need to cleanse your heart.

Question—What is vital breath energy (*prāna*)?

Answer—That with which the body functions is called *prāna*. *Prāna* is the élan vital or life-current (*jīvan-shakti*).

Question—Swāmī jī! Does one need a strong body to engage in the spiritual practice?

Answer—In fact, strong body is not required to engage in the spiritual practice. The wellness or illness of the body is a mere state. Whatever may be the state or condition, there is nothing separate from the spiritual-resource. The spiritual aspirant should not give it any importance. Still if the body is healthy, it

is good. The spiritual practice is cultivated through holy fellowship (*satsaṅg*). *Satsaṅg* is the very nature of one's self (*svadharmā*); it is not the body-nature. One has to make proper use of the available situation in that.

Question—How should one develop trust in the reality of the Divine like one has in the reality of the manifest world?

Answer—The feeling of reality in the knowledge received through the senses; the lust for sense-objects, and the 'sense of I' (*aḥam-buddhi*) in the body—due to these three reasons, the manifest world appears to exist. With the ending of these three reasons, the trust in the reality of the Divine gets established.

Question—I have been engaged in the spiritual practice for a considerable period of time but I have not seen success yet. What could be the reason?

Answer—Those who engage in the spiritual practice while keeping intact the practices that are non-conducive to spiritual methods do not attain perfection in the present despite having been engaged in spiritual practice for a long period of time.

Those who want to engage in the spiritual practice while depending upon object and person do not attain success. Therefore, engage in spiritual practice while relying upon the Lord and you will definitely attain success.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

The aspirant who engages in spiritual practice without relying upon time, place, situation, object or person attains success quickly.

Remain content in your 'self,' respect humanity and trust in God—this is the spiritual method, this is called [true] existence. He in whose life these things are present surely attains success.

Question—Swāmī jī! What is the true form of dispassion (*vairāgya*) and how is it cultivated?

Answer—Listen, when the dispassion takes over a person, that person cannot think of anything else other than the search for truth. Renouncing all and everything, such a person sets about in the search for truth in a steadfast manner. He does not care for anything or anyone. He gives up his bodily comforts. He does not rest in peace in any manner until he attains truth. When a person severs his relation with the world, rejects the pleasures of the world, and, giving up everything, sets about in the search for truth—then there is no duty left for him to fulfill.

Now the question arises how can one attain to dispassion? As long as there is desire (*rāga*) in life, one cannot attain to dispassion. To honor one's discriminative wisdom (*viveka*) is the infallible means to attain dispassion.

Question—Why Shiva-*linga* is worshiped?

Answer—The worship is of the Shiva and not the *linga*. That which is formless is represented through a symbol. "I-am-ness" (*mein*) is also a [form of] *linga*. Establish the formless in your 'self.' Man is

composed of three strands or modes (*guṇas*⁴) of nature. Some have predominance of *sattva*, some of *rājas*, while others have predominance of *taṃas* [in their psychological constitution]. In the Lord Rāma, there is the predominance of the *rājasī* nature. In Śrī Kṛṣṇa, there is the predominance of *soundarya-madhurya* (Excellence of Beauty and Sweetness). There is predominance of dispassion in Śrī Shiva, the one who is easily pleased (*āshutōsha*), the thinker and beyond the triad of modes (*guṇātīta*).

Question—What is the meaning of ‘svadharmā’?⁵

Answer—‘Svadharmā’ is the best of all. By following *svadharmā*, one becomes steadfast in one’s spiritual practice. ‘*Svadharmā*’ grants the inspiration to sever relationship with the world and to establish relationship with the Supreme Self (*Paramātmān*). ‘*Svadharmā*’ means the *dharma* (duty or nature) of the self (‘*sva*’). The blessed Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa told

⁴ Guṇa is a technical term of Sāṅkhya philosophy also used in the same sense in the Vedānta. Prakṛti or Nature is constituted of three Guṇas: Sattva (equilibrium or purity), Rajas (attraction or activity), and Tamas (suppression or inertia). Prakṛti is the three Guṇas, not that she has them. Guṇa is wrongly translated as quality; it is substance as well as quality, matter, and force. Where ever there is name and form, there is Guṇa. Guṇa also means a rope, that which binds. (Swāmī Swarupānanda, tr., The Bhagavad Gītā, 1996/1904, pp. 55-56).

⁵ *Svadharmā* (Skt., *sva*, ‘own’, + *dharma*, ‘duty’): In Hinduism, it denotes one’s own right, duty, or nature; one’s own role in the social and cosmic order. *Svadharmā* is relative to one’s caste and stage of life (cf. *varṇāśramadharmā*). — *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Arjuna to abandon all the *dharmas* and to take refuge in Him alone.

Question—Why don't people follow the path of *dharma* in the present times?

Answer—They are interested in *bhōga* (indulgence in sense-pleasures) and not in *Yōga* (communion with the Divine).

Question—What is Self or soul?

Answer—That which experiences itself is the Self or the soul (*ātmā*). That which is seated in the soul is the Supreme Self (*Paramātmān*). That which is seen, is the non-self (*anātmā*). That which is accepted is the Lord (*Paramātmān*). Therefore, that which is different from non-self is the Self.

Question—How does one attain worrilessness?

Answer—1. Entrusting everyone to God,
2. By having a feeling of goodwill towards everyone,
3. Accepting our Beloved in our 'self' by being free from objects and desires and by being effortless.

Question—What do you mean by perfection of life?

Answer—With the light of Knowledge, one becomes liberated and immortal. The nectar of Love-Divine ends the tedium of life. Life is perfected with the light of Knowledge and with the nectar of Love-Divine.

Question—How should be the trust and how should it be attained?

Answer—Generally speaking, we have heard that a person dies by eating poison. This alone has created the strong belief that under no circumstances one should eat poison.

A person may be extremely greedy, impoverished and begging alms door-to-door, he will still not agree to eat poison even if you offer him one thousand rupees for eating poison. The reason is obvious—he knows it for certain that man dies by taking poison.

Regarding sense-pleasures (*viśhyeya*) all scriptures saints assert that they are of the nature of great poison. By tasting them, man experiences birth and death repeatedly. One dies only once by taking the poison; however, the enjoyer of sense-pleasures has to die several times. A person may survive after taking the poison; but a person given to sense-indulgence has to undergo 84 lakhs life-forms. We have read this in the scriptures; we have heard it time and again from the saints; and we have seen it with our own eyes that the sense-enjoyer (*bhōgī*) suffers a plight of severe wretchedness. Still the mind does not turn away from sense-pleasures. Tell me, what could be greater foolhardiness than this.

Even when we also know this very well that remembering God leads to spiritual welfare in life (*jīvan kā kalyān*), still our heart does not abide in God—what would be greater ungodliness than this! What is surprising is that despite being highly unwise and ungodly, we consider ourselves godly and wise.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! How to put an end to desires?

Answer— Your desires should not arise with regard to your own pleasure; they should arise in order to alleviate the pain of others. “O Lord! You have blessed me with the eyes. May I be of service to the blind! O Lord! You have granted me strength. May I be of service to the weak!”

Change the direction of your desires; they will get extinguished. The sad thing is that you want to derive pleasure from whatever you receive [from the Lord by way of ability, competence, strength, and resources]. You do not want to give anything back to the society or to the family; rather, you expect pleasure from them.

This desire should arise that I should be of service to others. When this need of yours will become strong, the desires will end. The Lord has made you so elegant and excellent that if you so desire, you can be of service to the whole world.

You will ask, ‘How should I be of service?’ Mānav-Sevā-Sangh says ‘Be free of evil in thought, word, and deed; then you will be of service to the world. Do no evil; you may or may not do good.

If, despite our best efforts, we find ourselves unable to give up sense-enjoyment and their attraction, then we should pray to the Almighty Lord with simple faith and with heart wrenched in sorrow. The sorrow will end definitely.

Question—What is *mook-satsang* (silent *satsang*)?

Answer—*Jāgrat-sushupti* (to be in a state of deep sleep during the waking state). By being silent, one has to non-cooperate with the contemplation and non-contemplation. No aversion toward them, but not to acknowledge their reality. This is not the body-nature but the self-nature [or this is not accomplished with the bodily effort but by virtue of the self-nature]. Through non-cooperation they will end forever and then one will attain competence to be free from desires and attachments, and to establish relationship with the Lord. To be still by renouncing the expectation for doing, achieving, and living is verily the silent-*satsaṅg*.

Question—What is the self-effort (*purushārtha*) of man?

Answer—To safeguard the association with Truth. By its very nature, there is association with Truth at the beginning and at the end of each task. We should like that association and safeguard it. This alone is the self-effort of man regarding which man is free or independent.

Question—What is the darkest-most time for man?

Answer—The worst time for man is—

1. That he has to die, when he wants to live.
2. That he has no strength to eat, while he wants to eat.
3. That he cannot speak, while he wants to speak.
4. That he cannot hear, while he wants to hear.
5. That he remains estranged from *satsaṅg*.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Question—Swāmī jī! Please be so kind to explain the essence of all scriptures and teachings.

Answer—The essence of all scriptures and teachings is—the devotion of the Lord and the devotion is attained through service, sacrifice, and love. If service, sacrifice, and love have arisen in man's life, then understand that he has realized the essence of all scriptures. And if service, sacrifice, and love have not come about, then he has not really learned anything even if he has studied everything. It is because the emergence of service, sacrifice, and love is the true worship.

Listen! The spiritual means to salvation that are described in scriptures such as the recitation of sacred name or *mantra (japa)*, penance (*tapa*), holy-narration (*kathā*), chanting (*bhajan*) etc., become means to earn a livelihood for the person given to sense-indulgence. A person through recitation and penance may acquire such perfections (*siddhis*) as the ability to fly in the sky, to walk on water, to bring a dead person back to life or to extinguish a person by casting a curse. But man cannot attain salvation without becoming taintless, selfless, detached, and without taking divine refuge. No external resources are required for its attainment.

Question—How can one practice mediation (*dhyāna*)?

Answer—No meditation is possible without knowledge of the object of meditation. For one cannot meditate on something regarding which one has no

knowledge. The shackles of the world get removed with Knowledge and one experiences bliss through meditation. In this manner, meditation takes place on its own accord with the dawning of Knowledge.

Question—What is renunciation and action (tyāga aur karma)?

Answer—Through renunciation one ascends the flow of *sañsara* (cyclic existence) and action takes one toward the flow of *sañsara*. Like a person who is ascending [swimming against the current of] the river is able to know the place of origin of the river, even so the person who renounces is able to know the cause of the world. Like the person who is swimming in the direction of the flow of river, drowning in the great ocean, keeps on going in circles in the same water, even so the person engaged in the performance of actions keeps on returning to dismal *sañsara* but is not able to find out the cause of *sañsara*.

Question—How does dispassion come to an end by abolishing desire?

Answer—Dispassion is like fire. Like the fire gets extinguished due to lack of firewood, even so due to lack of desire, dispassion gets transformed into love.

Question—Why does one develop desire or attachment (rāga)?

Answer—Pleasure gives birth to desire. If one does not sense pleasure in sense-objects, then one cannot develop desire or get attached. Regarding oneself as the body, one feels truth in the sense-knowledge; the feeling of truth in sense-knowledge

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

leads to lack of discriminative wisdom; and due to lack of discriminative wisdom, one misperceives pleasure-sense in the objects. And pleasure-sense in objects leads to desire or attachment.

Question—What is desire-aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*)?

Answer—Not to renounce knowing well the faults is attraction or desire (*rāga*). Not to adopt knowing well the merits is aversion (*dveṣa*). Attraction does not let the renunciation to happen and aversion does not let the love to arise. Attraction-aversion come to end through renunciation and love. All evils spring from *rāga-dveṣa* and all virtues arise from renunciation and love.

Question—What is labor and repose?

Answer—Exertion and repose are two aspects of life. Exertion is for the world; repose is for our own self. Exert for the welfare of others; take repose for your own self. There is eternal life in repose; there is nectarine life in repose; there is independent life in repose. In non-human life forms, there is exertion and no repose. But in human life form, there is service and communion. Repose means to become desire-less. Repose is simple and natural. Man becomes free from desire by performing right action.

Question—What is *sañkalpa-vikalpa* (will-thought or resolve and doubt)?

Answer—*Sañkalpa* is the result of those desires that have been experienced or enjoyed. *Sañkalpas* arise as a result of what we have already experienced. When one *sañkalpa* (resolve) gets

fulfilled and we have enjoyed its pleasure, then the second *saṅkalpa* will arise as a result of the enjoyment of the pleasure of the first *saṅkalpa*. The pleasure of fulfillment of *saṅkalpa* gives birth to the new *saṅkalpa*.

When we become sorrowful due to the non-fulfillment of *saṅkalpa*, then *vikalpas* (doubts) arise. If one does not derive enjoyment from the fulfillment of *saṅkalpas*, and does not become sorrowful due to the non-fulfillment of the *saṅkalpas*, then *saṅkalpa-vikalpa* will cease to arise. They are verily the result of our own activity.

After eating our food, it gets digested on its own accord without any effort on our part. There is what is called “happening” (*hōnā*) which takes place on its own. “Doing” (*karnā*) takes place on account of our ego and pride [of doership]. Therefore, that which “happens” is not action (*karma*).

The relationship with the world is for the sake of service; the relationship with God is for the sake of divine-love. Neither do we need anything from the world, nor from God. On the basis of this relationship, we should serve the world and love the Lord. Expect nothing from the world; nor ask anything from God. In this manner, *saṅkalpa* will stop arising.

Question—What is *bhajan*⁶ (devotion)?

⁶ The word *bhajan* is translated here as ‘devotion,’ keeping the context in mind. Normally, it means chant (noun as well as verb). To do *bhajan* generally means to chant the sacred names of the Lord. It is left untranslated for the most part.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—Service, sacrifice, and love—when all three are present, it is verily the devotion. Devotion included all three—service, sacrifice, and love. Serve with your actions, renounce by becoming desire-free, and be the lover by regarding the Lord as your own.

The Lord will not be dear to you until you regard Him as your own. And until the Lord is dear to you, you will not remember Him or miss Him. And until you miss Him, there won't be any devotion.

Accept the glory of the Lord—this is verily the invocation. Accept the relationship with the Lord—this is verily the worship; experience the need for the love of the Lord—this is verily the prayer.

Question—What is the real form or procedure of *bhajan*? How to engage in *bhajan*?

Answer—The real nature of *bhajan* is—service, sacrifice, and love. The method or procedure to engage in the *bhajan* is—to have a feeling of faith, devotion, trust, and self-identity with regard to the Lord. If these four things are present in life, then *bhajan* happens on its own accord. That is, the Lord is; the Lord is the best of all; the Lord is the treasure-chest of happiness and beauty; and the Lord is mine—the real *bhajan* takes place when we accept these four things.

One naturally has dearness in one's own. And one automatically remembers that which is dear to one. Therefore, to remember one's object of devotion naturally and spontaneously is verily the true *bhajan*. No *bhajan* will be possible until you give up the sense of mine, craving, and attachment. You will not develop

Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj

full faith in the Lord without giving these up. You will attain service, sacrifice, and love upon giving these up.

Service means to devote whatever we have received in the service of others on the basis of our relation with the Lord; to do good to all; and to behave in a good manner with everyone. Therefore, such service is the worship of the Lord. This service is verily the devotion. Whatever is there in the world, is not mine; it is not meant for my sake; and I do not need anything—this is sacrifice or renunciation. Detachment is attained when there is renunciation in our life. This renunciation is verily the devotion.

The world is pleased with service. One feels joy in oneself through renunciation. The Lord is pleased with love. The unrighteous or the hedonist is a heartless person; he is cruel and violent. Hence, he does not entitled to service, sacrifice, and love. Therefore, become virtuous and self-controlled. Only then you will become entitled to receive service, sacrifice, love; only then you will become human being. Then the *bhajan* will start happening. The love does not manifest itself without service and sacrifice. And the Lord cannot be attained without love.

Therefore, attain service, sacrifice, and love—this is true devotion.

Question—Swāmī jī! Some say read the Gītā; some say read the Ramayana; and some say—go to the temple, chant the holy name of the Lord; do the *yajña*; donate; and do penance. Don't

really know what to do? Kindly please do tell me what I should do?

Answer—Give up the known evil; do not repeat the evil that has been committed.

Question—**What should I do after giving up the evil?**

Answer—Have a feeling of harmony towards everyone and cooperate according to your capability.

Question—**Mahārāj Jī! What should I do after this?**

Answer—Do not expect anything from anyone in exchange of goodwill and cooperation—neither now, nor later.

Question—**And after this?**

Answer—First do these three things; you will come to know the fourth automatically.

Question—**Automatically?!**

Answer—Yes, automatically. O’ Dear! Why do you expect that I should erect the electric light posts from here all the way to your home? Do not make me work so hard, my friend! O’ Brother, I have given you the flash light. Walk as far as the range of its light illuminates; you will discover the next steps on the way automatically. If you could only practice the first advice—that is, ‘give up the known evil; do not repeat the evil that has been committed—you will attain everything: peace, liberation, and devotion. Your life will become free of evil and all things will get accomplished automatically.

Question—Does one indeed attain happiness by associating with untruth?

Answer—Yes, one attains momentary happiness. Like someone getting the money by telling a lie. In this manner, one got the temporary happiness by associating with untruth and got caught up in its enticement. In this manner one is never able to give up the untruth. The association with untruth indeed leads to suffering only.

If we keep our eye on its dire consequence, then we will be able to give up untruth easily. Just like, knowing well the consequence of eating poison, we won't like to eat sweets that are mixed with poison whosoever delicious they may be. Knowing the consequence of untruth in this manner, we will be able to give up untruth.

Question—How to overcome greed?

Answer—Greed does not come alone; it comes along with delusion. There is no fault that is insular. The root cause of all faults is—inadvertence (*bhūla*). Its effect is—inertness, dependence. To dishonor one's discriminative wisdom is the root mistake.

Question—Kindly please tell us the strategy to dispel delusion.

Answer—Delusion can be dispelled in several ways—

1. On the basis of religious faith—God alone is mine.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

2. On the basis of knowledge—by giving up attachment.
3. On the basis of service—Render service; expect nothing.

Question—Is bodily suffering due to one's sins? We have heard that sins get destroyed by reciting the Lord's name.

Answer—The bodily suffering is not the result of sins. If bodily suffering were the result of sin, then there must have been some pious soul, free from bodily suffering. The glory of the Lord's name lies in intensifying the devotion. The Lord's name should feel endearing.

Question—Why is there fear in life?

Answer—There are three kinds of fear in life—

1. Fear of Separation. It's cause is attachment to person. If we are able to experience that which is truly ours, then there is no fear of separation.
2. Fear of Loss. It's cause is attachment to object. We have regarded that object to be ours which is not ours.
3. Fear of Disgrace. It's cause is body-conceit (*dehābhimān*). We want to keep the body intact, that which is never going to remain intact. We have developed infatuation with the body.

Question—What is meaningless contemplation and what is meaningful contemplation?

Answer—The contemplation of the transient is meaningless contemplation; the contemplation of the eternal is meaningful contemplation. The contemplation of person-object is meaningless contemplation; the contemplation of the self (*ātmā*) and the Supreme Self (*Paramātmā*) is meaningful contemplation.

Question—What is the harm in enjoying the pleasure of respect and recognition (*sam'māna*)?

Answer—The pleasure of recognition is so severe a poison that while a person has to die only once after taking poison, the enjoyer of the pleasure of recognition has to go through birth and death several times.

Question—What is the harm anyway?

Answer—That which is an impediment in our being independent, that which is an impediment in our being generous—that verily is the evil.

Question—What is bondage? How to break free from it?

Answer—Taking (*lénā*) is the bondage. By not taking and by giving, there remains no bondage whatsoever.

Question—What is the harm in taking?

Answer—

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Swāmī jī!

Answer—The relish of taking is verily the mother of new attachment/attraction, which makes one angry if it is not fulfilled. Enraged, one becomes oblivious to one's duty, to one's real nature, and to the Lord.

Question—How does one become oblivious to the Lord and should one end this oblivion?

Answer—You will have to end all attachments if you were to end oblivion of the Lord.

Question—How to attain the Divine-Love?

Answer—By ending all attachments, regard only the Lord as your own—you will attain Divine-Love only through this. Regarding the Lord alone as our own and to expect nothing—this alone is the supreme means to attaining Divine-Love. Divine-Love is not attained by performing much penance and *yajñā*. Even Rāvana⁷ and Hiranyakashipu⁸ performed great penance but they did not attain the Divine-Love. The Lord Indira⁹ becomes the Lord of heaven by performing one thousand *yajñā*; still he does not attain the Divine-Love. One does not attain Divine-Love even by meditation (*dhyāna*) and contemplation (*chintana*); they only lead to the purification of the mind.

The main method of attaining Divine-Love is to have [a relation of] self-identity (*ātmīyatā*) with the

⁷ In the great epic Rāmāyana, Rāvana is the antagonist of the Lord Rāma and is depicted as having ten heads. He is the worshiper of the Lord Shiva and wanted to overpower the gods.

⁸ Hiranyakashipu, the infamous father of bhakta Prahlāda, is a demoniac character from the Purāṇas who performed a penance for Lord Brahma to gain magical powers. He was subsequently killed by the Narasimha Avatāra of Lord Vishnu. His tale depicts the futility of attaining powers for selfish ends and the omnipotence of the Lord to protect his devotees (such as his own son, Prahlāda).

⁹ Indra, the leader of gods and the lord of heaven in the Hindu pantheon. He is the god of rain and thunderstorms.

Lord. Self-identity occurs by giving up all attachments. The wealth is mine too and the Lord is mine too—both of these convictions cannot occur simultaneously. The dearness is bound to manifest (*prādurbhāva*) by regarding the Lord as our own. Everyone knows this thing. Our body is dear to us even if it is sick. Our son is dear to us even if he is one-eyed. Our house is dear to us even if it is old and falling apart. The Lord is all-accomplished and the treasure-house of all happiness and splendor. If we accept the Lord as our own and it does not lead to the awakening of dearness—how can this be possible?

Question—That every dispensation of the Lord is the most benedictory (*maṅgalamaya*)—how can one understand this?

Answer—This is a subject pertaining to the devoutness (*śrad'dhā*). One great benefit of religious belief to the spiritual aspirant is that s/he taps into the strength of the Lord. The Lord is supremely compassionate; He is not cruel; the Lord is supremely peaceful; He is not irascible. The Lord is ever-wakeful and does not make mistakes. He knows more than us about what is beneficial to us. We tend to do what we should not do and still expect all sort of facilities from the Lord. For example, we are constantly being blessed with the sunlight, with the air to breath, with water to drink and with mother earth as our support. How can He create harsh dispensation for us who is so very generous and compassionate?

By contemplating along these lines, there arises reverence for His benevolent dispensation.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

There are three things in the Divine-Dispensation— knowing, receiving, and happening. If we start respecting what we know and make proper use of what has been given to us, then whatever is bound to happen will be beneficent only! *By being careful in 'doing' one receives the competence to remain happy in what is 'happening.'* [Emphasis added]

Question—What is our [real] need and how can it be fulfilled?

Answer—The need of man is—ending of the suffering and attainment of the supreme Bliss. The method for the fulfillment of the need is—taking refuge in the Lord. For this, we have to sever our relationship with the three bodies. By severing relationship with the gross body, one does not have propensity to indulge in inauspicious actions. By severing relationship with the subtle body, undesirable contemplation comes to an end. By severing relationship with the causal body, all kinds of cravings and pride of virtues come to an end.

In this manner by taking refuge in the Lord, the sorrows of the spiritual aspirant come to an end and the supreme bliss is attained.

Question—What should one do to attain God?

Answer—The only thing responsible for attaining the Lord is to have a relationship of self-identity with the Lord. Consider the Lord as your own; you will attain to the Lord. In establishing the relationship with the Lord, the relationship with the

world is the impediment and not the world itself. Therefore, give up the relationship with the world.

Question—How to sever relationship with the world in order to regard the Lord as our own?

Answer—Serve the members of the family; do not accept the relationship. Accept relationship with the Lord alone.

Question—The mind keeps wandering.

Answer—The mind does not wander anywhere. You like the world and that is why you have its remembrance. This fault lies with us.

Question—What is the difference between pleasure and bliss?

Answer—Pleasure suppresses the sorrow; bliss ends the sorrow.

Question—What is self-inquiry (*vichāra*)?

Answer—‘This’—the world, ‘That’—the Lord, ‘I’—the entity given to body-conceit—to realize all three is verily the self-inquiry. The sun—is like ‘that,’ sunlight—is like ‘this,’ and ray of sun—is like ‘I.’ By attaining the knowledge of any one, one attains to the knowledge of all the three.

Question—What is inert (*jaḍa*)?

Answer—That which is illumined with the reality of the others, that which is not independent, and that which is dependent—is inert.

Question—What is consciousness?

Answer—Consciousness is like the sun which is self-illumined and which illumines inert objects.

Question—What is bliss?

Answer—That which once attained never ends; that attaining which, one does not have any desire left to attain anything else—that indeed is bliss.

Question—What is mind?

Answer—The aggregate of desires is verily called mind. The mind comes to an end with the ending of desires. And then the defilements (*vikāras*) such as lust, anger, greed, attachment etc., remain no more. The ending of desires occurs with the dawning of true knowledge (*yathārtha jñāna*) or by understanding things in their true essence. The true knowledge dawns upon the purification of the heart. The heart becomes pure by renunciation and Divine-Love. Not to regard any object such as body etc., is renunciation. And not to keep any type of distance at all with God is Divine-Love. Divine-Love is attained on its own accord with renunciation.

Question—What is world (*sañsār*)?¹⁰

Answer—The preparatory training to meet with the Lord. He who is able to live appropriately in the world is able to meet with the Lord properly. Even if he forgets perchance, the Lord takes it upon Himself to meet with such a person. If you are able to make a proper use of the circumstances, then you do not have to especially remember the Lord; the Lord will

¹⁰ The word ‘*sañsār*’ in Hindi is often translated as ‘world’ and is denoted by other variant terms such as *vishva*, *duniya*, *jagat*, etc. In Hindu philosophy, it has a special meaning and denotes the unending ocean of birth and death (*bhavasāgar*) and all that goes with the conditioned mundane existence. When, with God’s grace, liberation (*mukti*) is attained, this cycle ends once and for all.

remember you. The perfection will chose you and the virtue will descend upon you on its own accord.

Question—What does it mean to experience death in life and to die while living?

Answer—It is by experiencing death in life or by dying while living that one attains immortal life. To regard the present changeable life itself to be the true existence is to go straight into the jaws of death. It is because that which is constantly changing is not the true existence. That which eternally stays as of one essence is *de facto* the true existence. To steadily abide in the existence permeated with one essence (*ékarasa*) is verily to be liberated while living.

Question—What is the significance of independent existence?

Answer—Only that person has independent existence who does not have to depend on others for his happiness.

Question—How to attain independence?

Answer—“Expect nothing; be of service.” Expecting nothing, new attachment is not formed; being of service, existing attachment comes to an end.

Question—If we do not expect anything, how will we be able to sustain our life?

Answer—By entrusting the body to [the care of] the world.

Question—What is the true form of existence full of nectarine joy?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—An existence that is free from scarcity and is marked by constant bliss is indeed the existence full of nectarine joy.

Question—How to attain such an existence?

Answer—Surrender yourself to the Lord.

Question—The teachings of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh appear nice to listen to or to talk about but hard to enshrine in life. Why?

Answer—Because we want to get pleasure from body etc.; and, furthermore, we do not want to give up its attraction. If one comes to understand that all pleasure is verily someone's pain, then the attraction for sense-pleasures will come to an end on its own accord. And if this attraction is no more, then all the teachings of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh will descend in our life automatically.

Question—What is the spiritual method (*sādhan*)?

Answer—The spiritual method gets expressed through holy fellowship or holy association (*satsaṅg*).

Question—What is the obstacle in spiritual method?

Answer—To regard others as the cause of our sorrow is the biggest obstacle in following the spiritual method. Whoever we regard to be the cause of our happiness, we get attached to that person; and whoever we regard to be the cause of our sorrow, we develop aversion toward that person. While attraction-aversion remain, true expression of the spiritual method is not possible.

Question—What is devotion (*upāsanā*)?

Answer—Profound endearment in the object of one's spiritual quest is true devotion.

Question—How does one attain perfection in devotion?

Answer—By accepting eternal relationship with that which 'is' (*hae*)—with the Lord—is the true expression of devotion.

Question—What is the impediment (*vighna*) to devotion?

Answer—To regard the [spiritual] means as the [spiritual] goal is the greatest obstacle to devotion.

Question—What is meditation (*dhyāna*)?

Answer—To get immersed in the dearness of the that which 'is' (*hae*)—the Lord—is indeed the true meditation.

Question—How to attain perfection in meditation?

Answer—One attains perfection in meditation by withdrawing oneself (or one's attention) from all sense-objects.

Question—What is the obstacle to mediation?

Answer—Meaningless contemplation is the greatest obstacle to meditation.

Question—What is chanting or recitation (*bhajan*¹¹)?

¹¹ "Bha" in the word "*Bhajan*" means that which is *bhāvyam* (the Inevitable, the Sacred or the Holy). What is *bhāvyam*? The Supreme Self (*Parāmatman*). The letters "Ja" in the word *bhajan*

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—The perpetual remembrance of that which ‘is’—the Lord—is indeed the true practice of *bhajan*. The perpetual remembrance is of the one nectarine essence both for the person in whom it arises and for the person about whom it arises.

Question— **If one does not enjoy the sense pleasures born of inadvertently, won’t still the propensities based on the impressions of the past keep on manifesting?**

Answer—No, inadvertence is not the real nature of man. According to the doctrine of the Sangh, the present time is faultless (*nirdōṣa*) for everyone. The past impressions will present themselves based on desires fulfilled-unfulfilled but they will get destroyed if one does not oppose, support or identify with them; and the faultlessness of the present will remain intact by feeling the remorse over the mistake that had been committed and by not repeating it in the future.

Question—**In one of the principles of the Manav-Seva-Sangh it is stated, “Give up that pleasure that is someone’s pain.” Now the question arises, ‘Is there any pleasure really that is not someone’s pain?’**

Answer—No, there cannot be any pleasure that is not someone’s pain. Therefore, there is no place for indulgence in sense-pleasure in the life of spiritual aspirant.

connotes *japa* (chanting or recitation of the Lord's name). Hence *bhajan* and *japa* are one and the same.

Question—The matters relating to spiritual method seem to be very difficult to observe while leading a householder’s life. What should one do?

Answer—The life of a householder is a laboratory for the attainment of true existence. If we relinquish our rights while protecting the rights of others, then the entire householder’s life will become steadfast in spiritual method and one will not feel any difficulty whatsoever. But mistakenly we are not prepared to give up our rights; consequently, one feels the difficulty in one’s life as a householder.

Question—What is the significance of fulfillment of human life?

Answer—The fulfillment of human life lies in the complete development of its three dimensions—materialistic, spiritualistic, and theistic. The materialistic development means to cooperate with everyone considering them as our own based on some form of relationship (that is, either on the basis of our identity with the world, with the self, or with the Lord). The spiritualistic development means to be content in one’s self by becoming free from the trammels of objects and desires. The theistic development means to sacrifice over the Lord, for the sweet pleasure of the Lord, the peace attained by materialistic development and the independence attained by spiritualistic development. The fulfillment of human life depends upon the complete development of these [three] dimensions.

Question—What is the significance of becoming a person of discriminative wisdom (*vivekī*) and a devotee (*bhakta*)?

Answer—To have perpetual remembrance of one's real self (*nij-svarūpa*) is to be a person of discriminative intellect and to remain perpetually immersed in the remembrance of the Lord is to be devotee.

Question—How does the devotion get perfected?

Answer—To consider that which 'is' (*hae*)—the Lord—alone as our own is the fulfillment of devotion.

Question—What is the impediment to devotion or remembrance of the Lord?

Answer—The remembrance of the world.

Question—How does the worship get perfected?

Answer—One attains perfection in worship by making proper use of the present by being free from the sense of mine (*mamattva-buddhi*) and the sense of own-ness (*apnattva-buddhi*).

Question—What is the impediment to worship?

Answer—To have pride of doership and to have a desire for the fruit of action are the greatest obstacles to worship.

Question—What is the meaning of becoming free from efforts (*aprayatana*)? Regarding which matters we should be free from

efforts and regarding which we should put forth efforts?

Answer— To become worriless and fearless by entrusting oneself in every way to the Lord is indeed to become effortless (*aprayatana*). After this, there is nothing that remains to be done; rather the doing gets merged in ‘happening’ and the happening gets merged in “that which is” (*hae*)—the Lord. After becoming effortless, all undertakings keep happening for the sweet pleasure of the Lord.

Question—What is the simple and infallible way to attain to real existence?

Answer—To merge all beliefs in one belief, to merge all relationships in one relationship, and to merge all desires in one need is the simple and infallible way to attain to real existence.

Question—Having accepted oneself as the spiritual aspirant, sometimes one still has the feeling of aversion toward others. What should one do in this case?

Answer—After accepting oneself as the spiritual aspirant If one has the feeling of aversion toward others, that means that one lacks firmness in one’s acceptance. In such a situation, the spiritual aspirant should alertly strengthen his steadfastness. In the life of spiritual aspirant there should be no association of the known untruth and he should pray with the distressed heart. The success is guaranteed.

Question—Is there a God? If so, what is the proof of God’s existence?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—On the basis of the words of devotees, saints, and scriptures we believe that there is God. The proof of His existence is that He is present in man in the form of the need for peace, independence, and love. The Lord is supremely generous, supremely peaceful, supreme lover, and supremely independent. All these virtues are present in the form of need in every man. The very existence of this need is the proof of God's existence.

Question—Despite God being present in us, why are we not able to see Him?

Answer—Because we do not experience the need for God in our life; that is why He is not visible to us.

Question—How can we feel the need for God?

Answer—By relinquishing the untruth that is known to us, we can experience the need for God in our life.

Question—If all situations are created by the destiny, then what is the significance of doing something in human life?

Answer—It is true that all situations are created by the destiny. But man has been granted the freedom to use them properly or to misuse them. Secondly, we cannot refrain from doing because the intense desire for doing is present in us. To let go of this desire or attachment that is present in us, we should do essential activities in good faith, keeping focused on the goal, devoting full energy, with a pure mind—so that the desire/attraction for activity may

end. Therefore, there are two things with regard to doing—by making proper use of the present situation, an elegant society is formed. And secondly, with the ending of the desire/attraction for activity, one attains one's spiritual welfare, which is the goal of man.

Question—In Mānav-Sevā-Sangh, it is said that 'either do not regard anyone as your own; or else, regard everyone as yours own.' What does it mean?

Answer—By not regarding anyone as our own, the feeling of attraction/attachment (*rāga*) does not arise; by regarding everyone as our own, the feeling of aversion (*dveṣa*) is not arise. In this manner, with both the convictions, one becomes free from attraction-aversion, which is helpful in the development of man.

Question—What is the purpose of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh?

Answer—The purpose of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh is the [spiritual] welfare of man and the building of an elegant society. The meaning of one's welfare is that one feels no need for the 'other' for one's happiness. The meaning of building of an elegant society is the building of such a society in which everyone's rights are preserved, and no one is deprived of their rights. This objective is fulfilled by protecting the rights of others and by relinquishing our own rights. By protecting the rights of others, an elegant society is built and one is able to let go of the attraction/attachment that is present. And by

relinquishing our rights, the new attraction/attachment is not born.

Question—How should one attain freedom from attachment?

Answer—One attains freedom from attachment by not regarding any objects as one's own (*akīnchana*) and by becoming desireless or selfless (*achāha*).

Question—What is one's state after becoming desireless and effortless?

Answer—There is no state as such [after becoming desireless and effortless]; rather one attains to [true] existence. That is called true existence in which there is no lack, in which there is no sorrow; rather, the whole existence is infused with immeasurable, infinite, and ever-new nectar [of Divine Bliss].

Question—Is it essential to give up home and householder's life?

Answer—In order to build spiritual method, holy fellowship or association (*satsaṅg*) is essential. There is no importance of any special situation. All of humankind is equally free under all circumstances to engage in *satsaṅg*.

Question—If one is unable to give up evil despite wanting to do so, what should one do?

Answer—With distressed heart, one should pray with faith.

Question—What is the difference between discriminative intellect and truth?

Answer—The discriminative intellect is the means while truth is the goal.

Question—**What is the meaning of fast, penance, repentance, and prayer?**

Answer—The *saṅkalpa* to attain the goal is the resolve; to bear cheerfully the hardships on the way to attain one's goal is the penance; not to repeat the known mistake is the repentance; and the cry of the distressed heart in wake of non-fulfillment of one's goal is the prayer.

Question—**How to be free from anger and intense attachment?**

Answer—One can be free from anger and attachment by giving up one's own rights and by protecting the rights of others.

Question—**What is the meaning of circumstance or situation?**

Answer—The resource material for personal development is called situation or circumstance.

Question—**What is the meaning of materialistic progress?**

Answer—To be cheerful by seeing the happy and to be compassionate by seeing the sorrowful.

Question—**What is the meaning of spiritual progress?**

Answer—The spiritual progress lies in not to feel the need of the other to experience one's own happiness.

Question—**What is the meaning of theistic development?**

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—To love the Lord is theistic progress.

Question—What is the meaning of attraction-aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*)¹²?

Answer—To keep committing mistake knowing very well it to be a mistake—that is, regarding any one as our own knowing well that no one is our own in the world—is attachment/attraction (*rāga*). And not regarding that which is our own as our own is aversion (*dveṣa*).

Question—What is known as volition (*saṅkalpa*)?

Answer—That which establishes our link with an object, person, situation or state is called *saṅkalpa*.

Question—What is scarcity or lack (*abhāva*)?

Answer—We want to do something, but we are not able to do it; we want to achieve something, but we are not able to achieve it—this is called *abhāva*.

Question—When we are engaged in the tasks of the household, we are not able to maintain our awareness. What should we do to maintain our awareness or to remain alertly aware?

Answer—The *satsaṅg* is the only way to maintain awareness [in an alert manner]. By

¹² Swāmījī Mahārāj is providing a very special interpretation of the common words *rāga-dveṣa*: to regard any person, object as our own is verily *rāga*; and not to regard the Lord as ours is verily *dveṣa*. Everything (objects, persons, etc.) passes away except the Lord!

abandoning the untruth [that is known to us as the untruth], we should be able to attain worriless-ness and fearlessness. When we assume a sense of doership in our actions, then as a result thereof, we are not able to be free from their fruit and the pride of doership and get bound in insentience (*jaḍatā*). With *satsaṅg*, “doing” gets transformed into “happening” and “happening” gets transformed into that which “is” (*hae*); and then alert awareness remains maintained all the time.

Question—I like Mānav-Sevā-Sangh very much. I want that this stream of thought should be propagated or publicized at a very large scale. What can I do in this regard?

Answer—One should transform one’s life according to the ideology of the Mānav-Sevā-Sangh. The teaching which gets enshrined in an individual’s life conduct becomes ubiquitous (*vibhu*). And it affects the larger society on its own accord.

Question—What is meaningless contemplation?

Answer—The contemplation which has no relation to the task at hand is meaningless contemplation.

Question—How to give up meaningless contemplation?

Answer—To know meaningless contemplation as meaningless contributes to its relinquishment. If such contemplation takes place on its own, then do not be afraid of it—knowing well that I have no responsibility for that which is not being done by me

but is happening on its own accord. It is happening to come to an end [on its own]. One should neither oppose nor support such contemplation. Just one should not superimpose it on oneself as its doer.

Question—How will one be able to make proper use of the present by giving up the meaningless contemplation?

Answer—One will automatically be able to make proper use of all the powers one has been granted by giving up meaningless contemplation. Both of these matters are simultaneous and co-extensive. By giving up meaningless contemplation, the proper use of the present starts happening; and by making the proper use of the present, meaningless contemplation gets relinquished on its own accord.

Question—How will the future become bright by making a proper use of the present?

Answer—It is an irrefutable truth that the future will become bright by making a proper use of the present. The proper use of the present is capable of verily freeing oneself from the attachment of person, object, and situation. To be free from such attachments is indeed to be independent. To be independent is indeed to have a bright future. Only an independent person can be a lover. To have a bright future does not mean to attain a desirable object, person or situation. These are verily the root causes of bondage that lead to downfall and not to progress. The word ‘bright’ here signifies existence that is divine, conscious, and eternal. In the attainment of such existence lies the fulfillment of human life.

Question—How can all sorrows come to an end?

Answer—One feels joy in the fulfillment of desire and feels sorrow in the non-fulfillment of desire. Therefore, the sorrow comes to an end by becoming free from the desire—which is perfectible by honoring one’s discriminative intellect (*viveka-sādhaya*).

Question—What is so special about Mānav-Sevā-Sangh?

Answer—The Mānav-Sevā-Sangh assures that an existence that was attained by any great person (*mahāmānav*) so far, that very existence is attainable in the present too, and that it can be attained independently by every person.

Question—What is delay in attaining such an existence?

Answer—Not to give up the vices known to us [as vices] is verily the cause of delay in attaining such an existence.

Question—What is the solution to this helplessness?

Answer—To experience one’s helplessness or incompetence and to entrust oneself in the lap of the Lord is verily the infallible solution to it.

Question—What is the method to end the ego (*aham*)?

Answer—By giving up the untruth that is known to oneself [as the untruth] and by surrendering oneself unto the Lord, the ego gets obliterated.

**Question—What is the meaning of destiny?
And what is its significance in human life?**

Answer—The situations/circumstances that get created as a result of one's own actions—are called destiny. By embracing generosity in pleasurable circumstances and renunciation in painful circumstances, and by forgoing the existent attachment, one is able to enter into that existence which is beyond the reach of circumstances.

Question—What should one do to overcome anger?

Answer—The anger gets destroyed by not regarding any one else to be the cause of our joy and sorrow and by relinquishing our right [or sense of entitlement].

Question—Neither one is able to really attain the world nor one is able to give up its contemplation. What should one do about it?

Answer—By giving up all attempts to attain the world and by not acknowledging its sovereignty, one is able to become free from its attraction and its contemplation.

Question—In the society, the mind remains restless by observing other people making mistakes. What is the method to let go of it?

Answer—Becoming sorrowful in the sorrow of others is expression of compassion and ending of dreariness. Then the question of restlessness of mind does not arise. It means that the fault lies in oneself; and it can only be our limited ego.

Question—What is the indication whether one’s spiritual practice is proceeding in a proper manner or not?

Answer—One does not have to find out the marks of correct spiritual practice. It is because after eating the food, one does not have to ask others whether one’s appetite is satiated or not. If the spiritual practice is proceeding correctly, then interness, dependence on others, and attachment come to an end.

Question—Why is one afraid to die?

Answer—The destruction of vital breath (*prān-shakti*) and the remaining behind of unfulfilled desires is verily called death. If all desires come to an end before the ending of the vital breath, then one cannot be afraid to die.

Question—Attraction-aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*) do not end; they only change place. Is this conviction of mine correct?

Answer—Your understanding is not correct. By not considering others to be the cause of our joy and sorrow; by relinquishing our rights; and by protecting the rights of others, desire and aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*) end forever.

Question—How can one be free from the joy and sorrow brought about by the destiny (*prārabdha*)?

Answer—One can enter into existence that is beyond joy and sorrow by being generous in the joy and by embracing renunciation in the sorrow brought

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

about destiny (*prārabdha*); and one become forever free from the trammels of joy and sorrow.

Question—How can one attain divine love (*prema*)?

Answer—If you would approach God with your desires, then God will become the world; and if you would go to the world without your desires, then even the world will become God.

Therefore, approach the Lord purely for the sake of loving Him and approach the world purely for the sake of service; and by expecting nothing in return either from the Lord or from the world, one will receive love from both. There is nothing so exalted other than love in this world.

Question—Who is entitled to become a devotee?

Answer—That spiritual aspirant is entitled to become a devotee who finds even peace and liberation to be brackish (*khārī*).

Question—What spiritual practice is recommended for the seeker who does not believe in God?

Answer—Such seeker should become desireless by being free from evil. A person becomes virtuous by becoming free from vice and when such a person gives up the fruit of good deeds and gives up the pride, he becomes liberated.

Question—In the philosophy of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh it is stated that one attains both liberation and devotion by disliking the world.

How should one embrace this understanding in one's life?

Answer—To dislike the world means serving the world instead of making it a means to the fulfillment our self-interest. To like the Lord means to regard 'Him' as our own and expect nothing whatsoever in return. If we eat food, then it should be for the pleasure of the one who is feeding us; if we listen, then it should be for the pleasure of the speaker; if we speak, then it should be for the pleasure of the listener; and if we do any deed, then it should be to provide happiness to others—if we do so, we can attain liberation and devotion. There is no doubt whatsoever in this. He certainly wins who does not accept defeat.

Question—What is the fundamental problem of spiritual aspirant?

Answer—He wants to be calm but meaningless thoughts keep arising.

Question—What is communion (yōg)?

Answer—When the mind becomes pure and calm, it verily attains to yōg. The mind becomes pure by providing cooperation to others and by nurturing a feeling of amity and goodwill toward them; the mind becomes still or calm by expecting nothing in return. To embrace repose and refuge in the Lord to abandon exertion and dependence on others is a surefire method of becoming steadfast in yōg. Now if someone were to say that 'I cannot take refuge in the Lord,' then he should take refuge in one's own 'self' (sva) and, by becoming free from the sense of mine

(*nirmama*) and by becoming selfless (*nishkāṁ*), be free from attachment-aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*). If one were to say that I have no knowledge of my own 'self,' then he can at least have faith in his duty. The attachment also gets severed by relinquishing one's own rights and by protecting the rights of the others. And as soon the attachment ends, one attains to *yōg* on its own accord.

Question—What is the obstacle to *yōg*?

Answer—The relish of sense-gratification is the biggest obstacle on the way to *yōg*.

Question—What is meant by the science of duty, the science of spirituality, and the science of theism or religious faith?

Answer—To serve the world with object, ability, and strength is the science of duty. To give up the fruit of service and the ego is the science of spirituality. For the pleasure of the Lord, to love Him unconditionally in every way by being His own is the science of theism. In ordinary parlance, that the world feels our need—this is science of duty; that we do not feel any need for the world—this is the science of spirituality; that the Lord be dear to us—this is the science of theism.

Question—In life, why there is need for God and repose?

Answer—Because, except for God, there is no other companion who can stay with us forever. That is why we need God in our life. The tiredness that arises from toil is removed only through repose. That is why there is the need for repose.

Question—What is the obstacle in attaining the attained?

Answer—The attraction of the world is indeed the obstacle on the way to attain the ever-attained Lord.

Question—Given that our resources are limited, how can we serve everyone?

Answer—To be free from vice in mind, words, and action is the service of the world; to do virtuous deeds by becoming free from vice is the service of the society; relinquishing the fruit of good deeds and the concomitant pride is the service of the self; and one serves the Lord by love. Man is verily free to do all this.

Question—How to end meaningless contemplation?

Answer—Meaningless contemplation ends with the ending of dreariness (*nīrasatā*). And dreariness ends by generosity, independence, and endearment. Generosity means to regard everyone as our own. As we serve one body, in the same manner we should render service to the several bodies. Independence means not to experience the need of others for our happiness and to remain detached with our own body like other bodies. Endearment means to accept our relationship with the Lord, eternally and unconditionally.

Question—If the attraction is from the side of the Lord, then why does not God attract man toward Himself or why does not man get attracted towards God on its own accord?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—God does not want to take away the independence of man. That is why until man himself does not turn toward God, God remains in the background.

The objects do not have such power that they could attract man toward themselves. Man, by his own inadvertence, runs after objects. Nor do the objects have the power to counteract or retaliate (*pratikāra*). Hence, it is our own mistake that we do not feel ourselves attracted towards God.

Question—**Despite our efforts to make our mind thought-free, the mind does not become steady even for a minute. Other thoughts keep arising while doing the recitation/remembrance of the holy name (*nāma-japa*). How to end this?**

Answer—Only he is able to perfect volition/thought-free state (*nirvikalpatā*) who, disliking the visibly entertaining and enticing attractions of the world, likes the unseen, unknown Lord unconditionally.

Question—**In what part of the body does the the self (*aham*) get fulfilled?**

Answer—The self does not get fulfilled in any part of the body. As a matter of fact, the ‘self’ (*mein*) is not of the same class or nature as the body.

Question—**Swāmī jī! Out of the path of knowledge and the path of devotion, which one is easier and the best?**

Answer—Listen! Both of these paths are easy and the best. There is a difference in the competence of the spiritual aspirant. A spiritual aspirant who is

competent, the path of knowledge is more suitable and a spiritual aspirant who is not competent, the path of devotion is easy and the best. Although competence, ability, discriminative intellect have all been granted by the blessed Lord, yet he who respects the gift received from the Lord is thinker; and he is a devotee who, relinquishing all dependence, takes refuge in the Lord exclusively.

Question—How to love?

Answer—If you behold, behold it with love; if you speak, speak with love; if you hear, hear with. Perform all tasks considering them to be the Beloved's task. This alone is the easiest way to love.

Question—What is the method to attain objects?

Answer—The objects are attained by properly utilizing the available situation. The objects feel greatly distressed by the lustful and the hoarder. And he who makes a proper use of them, the objects remain always eager to come to such a person.

Question—What is so special about man?

Answer—Just that he can, disliking the beautiful and the pleasant world, sacrifice himself unconditionally on the Lord that he has only heard about.

Question—What is the greatest evil?

Answer—To like dependence is verily the greatest evil. No one can indulge in sense-pleasures without becoming dependent [upon someone else]. Therefore, to indulge in pleasure that results from being dependent is the greatest evil which arises by

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

regarding that which is not ours as ours and by not regarding that which is ours as ours.

Question—What is the means to become free from the evil?

Answer—To regard everyone as ours by virtue of our relationship with the Lord is the easy way to become free from evil, since no one does evil to their own people.

Question—How can one end fear and impoverishment?

Answer—The fear ends by giving up the sense of mine (*mamatā*) and impoverishment ends by giving up the desire (*kāmanā*).

Question—What is the easy way to attain to immortal life?

Answer—Do not be afraid to die and do not desire anything; then you will be able to attain immortal life before death—there is no doubt about it. If you can have faith in these teachings of the saints (*sant-vānī*), you may do so.

Listen, when we were incapable (that is, when we were very young), someone did take care of our body. And as we became somewhat capable (in youth), then too our body got protected. And when we will become incapable again in our old age, then too someone will take care of this body.

If for a minute we accept that this body will get destroyed if someone will not take care of this body during the old age; would this body get destroyed too while eating and taking its care? If it gets destroyed without food, what is the loss in that? So, if you want

immortal life, do not be afraid to die; and do not desire anything.

Question—What should we do by way of spiritual practice?

Answer—Honestly speaking—do nothing! This is the first and foremost thing. Secondly—do no evil. Thirdly—do not be proud of your virtuous conduct. Fourth—do not insist on your rightful share. Fifth—be independent. Six—be generous and loving.

The truth of the matter is that if you can resist doing anything, you are a great person. It is because all activity starts with the body-conceit (*dehābhimān*) and body-conceit results due to an [ontological] error. If you cannot resist doing something, at least ensure that you do not do evil deeds; and also do not do that which you cannot do. What will be left—fulfill that which you should do and that which you can do.

Until all our undertakings/proclivities become of the nature of spiritual practice, we do not attain the state of repose or abstention that comes naturally and spontaneously at the end of our proclivities/undertakings. It is meaningless to talk about spiritual life, God-realization, peace, and liberation in absence of the natural and spontaneous repose or abstention. A spiritual aspirant interested in these matters should first attain spontaneous repose. This is attained by correct engagement in activities and not by giving up engagement in activities.

If abstention/repose were to be attained by giving up engagement in activities, then there would not have been any difference between deep sleep

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

(*suśupati*) and deep meditative absorption (*samādhi*). There is a great difference between the two. In the deep sleep, the action is present in seed form but not so in deep meditative absorption. Here *samādhi* refers to spontaneous meditative absorption and not to the *meditative absorption* that is attained through much practice.

The spontaneous meditative absorption indeed is attained quite naturally at the end of activity. It has no trace of desire left even in the seed form. When there is left no seed of desire, then there cannot be any difference. When there is no difference, then how can there be any differentiation and separateness?

Thinking in this manner, our whole life, our every activity will become of the nature of spiritual practice. When will this happen? When we will not do what we ought not to do. The light of knowledge is present in all of the humankind in equal measure.

Therefore, O' discerning ones! Have trust in your own knowledge. If you want to engage in spiritual practice, then resolve that –I will never dishonor my knowledge; I will never search for doubt in my devotion; and I will never misuse my strength. These are the three matters that need to be decided; and the Lord has granted you strength to decide about them. It is verily on account of these matters that one is given the name of a spiritual aspirant. The question of spiritual practice presents itself before a spiritual aspirant and not before an ordinary being.

Question—When the desire does not get fulfilled, one feels pain; and when the desire has arisen, one feels pain. What should one do?

Answer—The momentary pleasure one experiences immediately upon the fulfillment of desire gives birth to another desire. The overall condition verily remains the same.

Let me share a true incident—Long time ago, I went to beg for alms from several households (*madhukari*).¹³ In one house, all the people were very happy. I became curious as to why these people are so happy. When I asked them, they did not say anything but just kept laughing. One girl said, ‘Wow, Swamiji! Don’t you know it? Our brother, Mr. Krishnā, has passed the BA exam. We have just received his telegram. That is why we all are so happy.’ I then started asking them, if the happiness they were experiencing then would last till tomorrow. For if this celebration is about passing the BA examination, obviously, the person will not get failed by tomorrow. Everyone there became quiet. They asked, ‘How so?’ After that I immediately asked, ‘Did he pass the exam with good marks/division? Will he be able to get admission into an MA class? Will he be able to get a job or not? Should he prepare for competition?’

¹³ Madhukari is the practice of collecting a little food from each and every householder. The word madhukari comes from the word madhukara and means "honey-forming bees." Just like bees collect a little bit of nectar from each flower, a *sannyāsīn* should collect a little food from each and every householder and should eat simply what is necessary to maintain the body.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Listening to this, everyone became quiet. I said— Listen, when among several desires, one of your desires gets fulfilled, you are not able to describe the happiness derived from its fulfillment. Then what could be the limit of the joy of that person who has no desire whatsoever? From this it becomes clear that it is essential to become free from the trammels of desire.

Question—Swāmī jī! Can one become desireless or selfless while living a householder's life?

Answer—Yes, one can become desireless [while leading a householder's life] by performing service and duty. Fulfill your duty and serve the sorrowful—to the best of your capability. You do not have to give up your work to become desireless. Fulfill your task for the sake of family, society, world, and the Lord; and become still at the completion of the task.

Do not do work for yourself; serve the society for the sake of your family and serve the family for the sake of your body. Do not raise your family by harming the society. Do not provide pleasure to your body by harming your family. The question of action arises in the context of householder's life only, and not in the life of the renouncer.

Action is helpful in becoming selfless; it is not an impediment. Change your sentiment; change your will. Work not for your own pleasure; work for the welfare of others. Even if you have to go through hardships for the sake of others' pleasure, you will still

feel blissful. This is the science of life. That is why the discerning ones do not like that pleasure which is founded upon someone's pain; they like that sorrow which brings joy to others.

Question—Swāmī jī! If the householder's life has everything, why do men leave it to live in a forest?

Answer—Men go to forest to end their shortcomings. Do they stay forever in the forest after going there? Don't they come back to the society? This is verily to compartmentalize life.

Question—What is meant by spontaneous meditative absorption (*sahaja-samādhi*)?

Answer—Spontaneous? Well, samadhi is verily spontaneous only; it cannot be unspontaneous. When senses turn away from sense-objects; mind becomes free from distinctions (*nirvikalpa*). When the mind becomes free from distinctions, *sahaja-smādhi* is attained.

Question—How to bring peace in life?

Answer—If you want to bring peace in your life, trust yourself and acknowledge the truth. Have faith in your 'self,' have faith in the Lord, and have faith in your duty. Rise above the indulgence in the sense-pleasures (*suhkha-bhōg se ūpar uthō*).

Question—What is the meaning of death?

Answer—According to the philosophy of existence, human body can be verily divided into three levels. These are—gross, subtle, and causal. The subtle body is the assemblage of desires. When the vital breath-energy (*prān-shakti*) gets expended

and the desire-energy (*ichchhā-shakti*) remains, this state is called death. The diminution of *prān-shakti* is called death. The Sun is the fundamental splendor of the *prān-shakti*.

Question—What is service?

Answer—Service is the foundation of sacrifice and love. What is the master key of service which is essential for everyone? Pious deed is one thing; service is quite another. There are four forms of service—1. World Service; 2. Service of the Body, the Family, and the Society; 3. Service of the Self; and Service of the Lord.

Service of the world—not to consider anyone as evil, not to wish evil for anyone, and not to do evil to anyone.

This service can be performed by everyone. The world will like us when we become free from evil in thought, word, and deed. Free from the evil, we will become good and virtuous deeds will start happening. When good deeds start happening, do not ask for their fruit. Then you will become desireless (or selfless) and content in your 'self.' If you do not indulge in that, you will attain to the love of the Lord, generosity for the world, and independence for yourself. All these three elements (divine love, generosity, and independence) are imperishable.

Do not do anything that is contrary to the discriminative intellect and contrary to your capability. This is will be a great service. Let the dutilness not arise; let the inadvertence not arise. To open a school

or a hospital is not service; it is verily repentance for hoarding.

Question—How is meditation done? We do sit for meditation; however, our mind does not abide in it.

Answer—I submit that as long as you try to do meditation, you will never be able to meditate. A few days ago, one American priest came to visit me in the hermitage (*āshram*). He asked me, “Would you please say something about the mediation?” I replied, “No.” Why? Because you will not be able to!

Think about it. If you are thirsty, the root cause of thinking/meditating about the water is—‘thirst.’ You remember about your family; the root cause of remembering about the family is—a sense of ‘own-ness’ (*apnāpan*) with the family.

Therefore, ‘necessity’ and ‘sense of own-ness’ is the basis of meditation (*dhyāna*). To sit with eyes closed is not the basis of meditation. This is not a matter of sitting; it is a matter of experiencing.

Question—Swāmī jī! How will the real service be rendered with [the help of] the body?

Answer—We have an imaginary relationship with the body. One can get the work done from the body through inspiration or even through command. Very many functions get done by the body and we think that we are doing those tasks.

Listen! Not to regard anyone as evil is the function of intellect. Not to wish evil for anyone—by whom will this be done? By our own self!

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

When we will not wish evil for anyone, when we will not regard anyone as evil—then that which should not be done by the body will not happen. We end up doing what we should not do through body owing to the fact that we regard others as evil, we wish others evil, and we do evil.

I regard being free from the evil to be the greatest service of all. My moral duty/nature is to be free from the evil; and the best use of the body is to do good. The body is not to be used to the detriment of the family in which the body is born—the family in which it is reared and nurtured—and to the detriment of the society and the world.

Do not speak harshly—this is verily the service. If you won't speak harshly, then you will say words that are beneficial to others. If you will not speak unnecessarily, then speaking, saying, and understanding that which is necessary will happen indeed through the body. But in this manner, the body will not be used for the detriment of others.

When will the body be used for the detriment of others?—When one employ the body for the pleasure of one's own self. It means that the body should not be utilized for the sake of sense-indulgence or sense-pleasure. What is the service of the body?—Restraint in food and refreshment (*āhār-vihār*), good conduct, and virtuous behavior.

Listen! There is something that is referred to as “I” (*mein*) and there is something that is referred to as “mine” (*merī*). The body is neither “mine” nor can it be referred to as “I.”—this is proven by the knowledge

and understanding. But don't you make use of the body or not? Be a non-doer (*akartā*) and a non-experiencer (*abhōgtā*) with regard to the body. Non-attachment is also [a form of] service. What will happen when you become non-attached? When you remove your right over things that you used to regard as yours, those things will then become as if belonging to the society and you would become free from the taint of [false] ownership.

To become free from the evil, to relinquish the fruit and pride of virtue—this belongs to the domain of action. One should be free from attachment-aversion (*rāga-dveṣa*). All human conflicts are due to *rāga-dveṣa*. *Rāga-dveṣa* lasts till we do not offer others what is their right and until we give up our right. The body is not the doer; it is the resource-material for action.

You have heard the word soul or self; you have heard the word the Supreme Self (*Paramātmā*). You have seen the body. There is no question in the self (*ātmā*). There is also no problem in the non-self (*anātmā*). You are neither the self nor the non-self.

Question—How can one attain renunciation (*nivṛtti*) of desires?

Answer—If one were to renounce desires, one should first examine one's desires. From among the desires that have arisen, one should fulfill those desires which—1. Have link with the present; 2. Are such that we cannot live without fulfilling them; 3. We have the means for fulfillment; and 4). If fulfillment, will

not cause any harm to anyone. However, one should be careful that one does not intend the pleasure of their fulfillment as desideratum or desirable (*abhīṣṭa*). If we keep relishing their pleasure, the desires will keep re-emerging and this vicious circle will continue unabated. In a thoughtful manner, one has to give up those desires which do not fulfill these four requirements.

Question—What is the meaning of saint (*sādhu*)?

Answer—The saints do not necessarily move away from the world but they definitely sever their relationship with the world. They do not necessarily throw their body into the holy Ganges but they definitely sever their relationship with the world. He indeed is the saint who severs relationship with the world, whether remaining at home or by going to the forest. He indeed is the saint who does not harm anyone and who endears the Lord. The Manav-Seva-Sang has shown the light—*O' Man! Do not harm anyone, do not regard anyone as evil, and, according to your capability, be of service to the family and the society in which you live.* Thus, sadhu means a spiritual aspirant, because—

1. We have to serve the society.
2. We have to love the Lord.
3. We have to become selfless.

Question—Swāmī jī! Who is temperate or self-restrained (*sanyamī*)?

Answer—

He who speaks for the pleasure of the listeners.

He who meets for the pleasure of those who want to meet him.

He who eats for the pleasure of those who feed him.

He whose eyes see for the significance of form.

He whose ears hear for the significance of sound; and he whose nose smells for the significance of smell.

If all the activities take place in this manner, then there is no effect of activities on the doer. Concentration and meditative absorption happen automatically. This is verily self-restraint (*sanyam*).

Question—What is [real] life or existence and what are the means to its attainment?

Answer—That is called real life in which there is nothing lacking, in which there is no dependence and tedium, in which there is alert consciousness, and which is full of [divine] love. Such existence can be attained by every brother and sister right now through repose (*vishrām*).

Question—What is the method to subdue or to control the mind?

Answer—

1. Remove the weight of your sense of mine-ness (*mamatā*) from your mind.

2. Change your liking. Like that thing on which you want to focus your mind and dislike that thing from which you want to remove your mind.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

3. Accomplish the task that is essential and let go of that task which is inessential.
4. Do not do that which should not be done and that which you are not able to do; and do accomplish that task which should be done and that which you are able to do.
5. Regard the Lord alone as your own.
6. Experience your most essential need.¹⁴

Question—What is called detachment (*asaṅgata*)

Answer—Detachment means—to experience our self as separate from the world. He who is the seer of the world cannot be the world. By serving we become detached from the gross body; by becoming free from desires, we become detached with our subtle-body, and becoming effortless, we become detached with our subtle body. Only upon attaining detachment with all the three bodies does one attain perfection in *yōg* which is saturated with [self-] realization and divine love.

Question—What is lust (*kāma*) and how to extinguish it?

Answer—Attraction toward object, person, situation, and state is called ‘lust.’ In other words, the attraction of ‘that which is not’ (*nahin*) is called lust.

By rejecting the reality of *nahin*—that which does not really exist—and by accepting the reality of ‘that which is’ (*hae*); that is, by accepting the reality of

¹⁴ Our most essential need is God-realization or Self-realization.

the Lord, the lust (*kāma*) gets destroyed and one attains to Rāma, the Lord.

Question—What is called spiritual practice?

Answer—That which ends the distance, difference, and separation from the object of attainment (*sādhyā*) is verily called the spiritual practice (*sādhān*). Generosity, detachment, dearness are all included within the meaning of *sādhān*. The constant remembrance of the Lord at all times indeed is the practice of the Path of Devotion. The constant remembrance of our real self at all times indeed is the practice of the Path of Liberation. The constant remembrance of our duty at all times indeed is the practice of the Path of Action.

Question—What is holy association with truth (*satsaṅg*)?

Answer—To accept the truth of life is *satsaṅg*. To be free from evil, to be free from desire, and to be [divine] lover is *satsaṅg*. To be free from evil means—to regard everyone as our own based on some relationship; to be free from desire or to selfless means—not to have no volition of one's own; and to be divine lover means—to have a relation of eternality and self-identity only with the Lord. All of humankind is independent in doing these three things in the present.

Considering everyone as our own brings forth purity of mind; not regarding any 'one' as our own leads to doubtlessness, and to regard Almighty Lord as our own brings about fearlessness. With the purity of mind, life becomes useful for the world, with

doubtlessness, life becomes useful for one own self, and with fearlessness, life becomes useful for the Lord. This is verily the perfection of life.

Question—What is rasa¹⁵? How many types of rasa are there?

Answer—To feel the fondness for or take delight in something is indicative of nectar (*rasa*). There are four kinds of *rasa*—

1. ***Bhōga-Rasa*** (Delight of Indulgence)—This delight binds man with dependence [on others] and

¹⁵ Rasa means taste or flavor of which there are six original kinds - sweet (*madhura*), sour (*amla*), salty (*lavana*), pungent (*katuka*), bitter (*tikta*), and astringent (*kasaya*). Rasa can also mean a taste or inclination or fondness for love, affection, desire, charm, pleasure, or delight.

Traditionally, there are nine different types of Rasa, although variations on these are also possible.

1. *Shringar* - This depicts the sentiment of love, sensuality, and erotic emotions.
2. *Raudra* - This covers the realm of anger, rage, and other violent wrathful emotions.
3. *Hasya* - Under this Rasa come the joyful, the comic, and happy emotions.
4. *Vibhatsaya* - Disgust and ludicrous emotions.
5. *Veera* - Bravery, heroism, and manliness are some of the attributes of this Rasa.
6. *Karuna* - Sadness, pathos, compassion, sympathy.
7. *Bhayanak* - This Rasa caters to the emotions of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.
8. *Adabhuta*- Wonder and curiosity are two of the attributes of this Rasa.
9. *Shanta* - Contemplative, meditative and peaceful emotions form this Rasa. [Source: <http://www.pelorian.com/rasadeva.html>]

inertness (*jadatā*) and keeps diminishing progressively (*uttarōttara*).

2. **Shānti-Rasa** (Delight of Peace)—This delight is indicative of potentiality and sufficiency (*sāmarthya*)
3. **Svādhīntā-Rasa** (Delight of Independence)—This is constant, immutable, and uniform. It is not subject to increase.
4. **Prema-Rasa** (Delight of Love)—This *rasa* is constant and infinite and keeps increasing progressively. It keeps getting new perpetually.

Question—What is the true nature or form of ‘I-am-ness (*mein*)?

Answer—Generosity, independence, and love is indeed the true form of ‘I-am-ness’ (*mein*). Through generosity, man becomes useful for the world; and through love, man becomes useful for the Lord. He does not need anything for himself either from the world or from the Lord. Thus, man becomes useful for himself by becoming free from desire.

Question—Why the materialist did not receive the adoration of the world?

Answer—Because he did not regard everyone as his own.

Question—Why the theist did not receive the Lord’s love?

Answer—Because he did not regard the Lord as his own.

Question—Why the spiritualist did not receive self-love?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—Because he did not relinquish attachment and desire.

Question—What is true materialism?

Answer—That we become so useful for the world that the world starts experiencing our need while we have no need of the world for ourselves. With the coming of true materialism, the ability to lead spiritual life comes automatically. And in the fulfillment of spiritual life, the ability to live theistic life is attained and then life becomes saturated with Divine Love, which is the real purpose of human life.

Question—Why does one not attain naturalness in meditation?

Answer—It is because we ‘do’ meditation that we do not attain naturalness in meditation. If one engages in *satsaṅg*, then the meditation will happen quite naturally.

Regard the Lord as your own on the basis of faith, devotion, and trust. One certainly will feel endearment for that which is one’s own. The remembrance of that which is dear to us will not be forgotten even if we try to forget it. Try to experience through understanding the fact that we do not have anything that is truly our own. Only then the dearness of that which is our own will find its expression in our own self and the meditation will start happening on its own accord.

Question—What is the meaning of materialistic progress and spiritual progress?

Answer—That the world experiences our need—this is material progress. That we feel no need for the world—this is spiritual progress.

Question—What is the meaning of theistic development?

Answer—That we be of use to the Lord and that we expect nothing in return—this is the meaning of theistic progress.

Question—What is the meaning of complete development?

Answer—To be of use to the world and the Lord and to expect nothing in return.

Question—How to awaken the yearning for imperishable existence (*avināshī-jīvan*)?

Answer—Upon the realization of the truth of perishable existence, the yearning for imperishable existence will awaken on its own accord.

Question—How to end boredom/monotony?

Answer—Complete the essential task with full capability, competence, and integrity and give up the unnecessary tasks. Safeguard the peace that is spontaneously present at the beginning and at the end of each task. Peace destroys the monotony/boredom. This results in the expression of and generosity, peace, independence, and dearness, which by its very nature is nectarine (*rasarupa*).

Question—What is the difference between pleasure and delight (or nectar)?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—Pleasure always keeps decreasing and delight keeps increasing progressively.

Question—How to end greed and attachment?

Answer—Greed comes to an end by not regarding as our own and for our own sake that which has been given to us. With the ending of attachment, fear comes to an end and with the ending of greed, impoverishment comes to an end.

Question—What is the meaning of ‘not regarding as our own that which has been given to us?’

Answer—Not to have the expectation of indulgence in pleasure from that which has been received; rather to apply it in the service of others.

Question—What is the true form of non-attachment?

Answer—To relinquish the fruit and the pride of fulfillment of the duty and to take delight in the peace of equanimity of the intellect—this verily is the true form of non-attachment.

Question—What is the meaning of invocation (*stuti*), devotion (*upāsanā*), and prayer (*prārthanā*)?

Answer—To accept the reality and sovereignty of the Lord is verily the invocation; to accept the relationship of own-ness (*apnattva*) with the Lord is

devotion; to experience the need for Divine-Love is prayer.¹⁶

Question—What is the easiest way to realize God?

Answer—To like God is indeed the easiest way to realize God. To merge all relationship into one relationship, to merge all faiths into one faith, and to merge all desires into one [overarching] ‘need’—this is verily the meaning of liking the Lord.

Question—When I show generosity toward someone, that person does not become generous toward others and this results in the lessening of my feeling of generosity. What should I do so that there is no lessening of my feeling of generosity?

Answer—Generosity is never shown; it is indeed the very nature of man which gets expressed through *satsaṅg*. If you accept everyone as your own on the basis of some form of relationship, then there will be no diminution of generosity.

Question—Please be so kind to tell the meaning of spiritual method (*sādhana*) and chanting (*bhajan*) according to Mānav-Sevā-Sangh.

Answer—According to Mānav-Sevā-Sangh, *sādhana*, *bhajan* is the fruit of *satsaṅg*. The real effort of man lies only in doing *satsaṅg*. *Satsaṅg* means—accepting the truth determined by our discriminative intellect (*viveka*); to become effortless by being free

¹⁶ This question is repeated again here. It is also found on pp. 23-24.

from the servitude of objects (*akinchana*) or desires (*achāha*). *Satsaṅg* means—to become fearless and worriless by accepting the Lord’s reality, sovereignty, and own-ness (*apanattva*) based on hearing about these qualities of the Lord. The fruit of *satsaṅg* performed on the basis of knowledge is the *sādhan* and the fruit of *satsaṅg* performed on the basis of religious faith is the *bhajan*.

Question—How to end identification with the body?

Answer—1. The identification with the body ends by experiencing through knowledge that “I am not the body or the body is not mine.”

2. By serving one attains detachment with the gross body; by becoming desireless, one attains detachment with the subtle body; and by becoming effortless, one attains detachment with the causal body.

By attaining detachment with the three bodies, the identification with the body comes to an end.

Question—How to stop the restlessness of the mind?

Answer—According to the philosophy of Mānav-Sevā-Sangh, the mind has no independent reality of its own. The aggregation of one’s likings is verily the mind. Our mind becomes steadfast in that [object] which we tend to like; it moves away from that [object] which we tend to dislike.

1. Therefore, like that object or thing on which you want to focus your mind and dislike that thing from which you want to remove your mind. We

only feel the restlessness of mind when we want to make our mind steadfast in the Lord while indeed we like the world.

2. The second method is to entrusting our mind to the Lord by removing the weight of our sense of mine-ness (*mamatā*) from your mind. The blessed Lord will make it pure, healthy, and calm. As a result, the restlessness of mind will end.
3. Mind is a mirror which provides knowledge of the location of an object. Do not regard the mind as evil, do not condemn it; rather, examine your status in the light of discriminative intellect and try to remove your perceptible deficiencies in the light of *satsaṅg*. This will also remove the restlessness of mind.
4. The mind becomes calm by not doing that which you are not able to do and that which should not be done; and by accomplishing that task which should be done and that which you are able to do.

Question—What is the meaning of rendering practical service to our nears and dears and to the society?

Answer—The service is of two kinds—practical and emotional. The emotional service is unlimited. And the practical service can be rendered, based on our means, to those persons with whom we have accepted our relationship. Therefore, the practical service, based our means, is urged for the society that is close to us. Our body is the closest to

us, then come our family members and other relatives, neighbors etc.

Question—What is the relationship between the spiritual aspirant (*sādhak*) and the spiritual means (*sādhan*)?

Answer—The means that a spiritual aspirant adopts to reach his goal are called *sādhan*. The *sādhan* is required only until one has not attained one's goal. After the realization of the goal, the means (*sādhan*) and the goal (*sādhaya*) become one.

Question—How to be free from *sañkalpa* (resolves or desires) and *vikalpa*?

Answer—In a discerning manner, try to experience this reality that all desires or resolves (*sañkalpas*) of no one ever get fulfilled and that some *sañkalpas* of everyone get fulfilled. Evermore, there remains behind non-fulfillment of desires after the fulfillment of desires. [The pleasure of fulfillment of *sañkalpa* gives birth to the new *sañkalpa*]. Therefore, fulfillment of desires (*sañkalpas*) is not the [true] existence. By not relishing the pleasure of fulfillment of desires (*sañkalpas*), new *sañkalpas* do not arise and the essential *sañkalpas* end after having been fulfilled on their own accord.

Question—Why are we not able to experience the bliss of the fact of existence of God?

Answer—Because we have regarded the Lord as the means (*sādhan*) and not the goal (*sādhaya*) of our quest. We want that the Lord should safeguard our happiness, comfort, and honor. Therefore, instead

of regarding the Lord as the *sāadhan*, we should regard Him as the *sādhaya* of our spiritual quest.

Question—What is the best utilization of the present?

Answer—1. To safeguard the *satsaṅg* is the best use of the present. In the beginning and at the end of each task, there is the natural association of truth (*satsaṅg*). Like it, experience its need, and protect it.

2. Generosity, independence, peace, and dearness are all the fruit of *satsaṅg*. Due to generosity, man proves useful for the world; due to peace and independence, man proves useful for himself; and due to love/endearment, man proves useful for the Lord. That man should become useful in this manner for everyone—this is the best utilization of the present.

Question—Everyday, I worship for two hours in a traditional manner. My family members oppose it and create obstacles in it. What should I do?

Answer—The real meaning of worship is—to serve the world for the sake and for the pleasure of the Lord. If you sit down for worship when your family members are expecting you to do some household work, then their opposition to your worship is quite appropriate. Therefore, embracing the true meaning of worship, serve your family members selflessly. If you are too attached to the traditional form of worship, then you can keep it either before or after the completion of the essential household work.

Question—What is attachment or sense of mine (*mamatā*)? How to be free from it?

Answer—*Mamatā* is merely a way of seeking pleasure. The greater the pleasure you seek from someone, the greater will be the difficulty to let go of their attachment. To regard someone as our own is verily the attachment. Once you have made the decision not to regard anyone as your own, there is nothing that remains to be done after that.

I will tell you a very interesting thing. We regard our body to be our own and give it a lot of importance. That is why the world does not give it importance. There cannot be two owners of one property. An object that has been entrusted to the Lord, its wherewithal is arranged on its own accord [by the Lord].

Make the determination that '*there is nothing that is mine*' or that '*only the Lord is my own*' [emphasis added]. This will serve the purpose. It is essential to do one of these two things. This is verily the real effort (*purushārtha*). *Satsaṅg* is the supreme limit of real effort.

No attachment with what one has received; no misuse of what one has received; and no desire for that which one does not have received—That's all; dutifulness, non-attachment, and steadiness will follow.

From the standpoint of self-inquiry (*vichār*), objects are not mine; from the standpoint of action, not to misuse objects; and from the standpoint of faith, all and everything belongs to the Lord.

Question—Swāmī jī! Why do you not have your name written on your books?

Answer—Should I have my name written leaving aside the powers of the Totality by whom the truth has been discovered?

Question—Mahārāj Jī! How long does it take to attain to the truth?

Answer—The greater the intensity of yearning, the lesser the time it takes to realize the truth. If you will not be able to live in peace without God, God will be attained right away.

Question—Swāmī jī! What is the merit of reciting the *pranava* (Om)?

Answer—The senses get merged into the mind and power of mind gets merged in the intellect, the intellect gets merged in the self, and the self gets merged in the limitless.

Question—Swāmī jī! Several perversions (*vikārs*) arise in the mind; what should I do?

Answer—Perversions do not arise as such; rather the remembrance of perversions keeps arising. Do not identify with them.

Question—My situation is not hidden from you. Kindly please tell me about my spiritual welfare.

Answer—In making the proper use of the situation discerning lies the welfare of man. Whatever situation a person is in, he can attain humanity by making proper use of it.

Question—How to make proper use of situation?

Answer—One should safeguard the rights of others by making oneself free from hankering after one's own rights.

Question—What is the benefit of relinquishing the rights?

Answer—By relinquishing the rights, new shackles do not get created; and by entrusting others their rights, the existing shackles come to an end.

Question—What is bondage and how to become free from it?

Answer—Giving and taking—this is verily the bondage. Nothing remains by way of bondage If we practice giving while refraining from taking.

Question—What is wrong in taking?

Answer—The relish of taking gives birth to new desire which, if not satisfied, makes one aggravated and angry. By becoming aggravated and angry, one forgets one's duty, one's real self, and the Lord.

Question—Why there is forgetfulness about the Lord? How to end it?

Answer—You have to end attachment if you were to end forgetfulness of the Lord. Attachment is the root cause of all weaknesses and disorders.

Question—Which task one should not do?

Answer—One should not perform the task that is contrary to the discriminative intellect and for which one does not have the capacity to fulfill.

Question— If someone were to pressurize us to do a task that is contrary to the discriminative intellect, what should we do?

Answer—By refusing in a justifiable manner, you should ask for forgiveness. One should express one's helplessness apologetically, so that the opposite party does not feel disrespected, nor you have to do what should not be done.

Question—You have stated the relinquishment of association with untruth to be the attainment of *satsaṅg*; and you also talked about the fulfillment of duty. What is our fault that we are not able to do so?

Answer—When you retire at night for rest, to find out about your faults, think about whether during the day you did something contrary to the discriminative reasoning, or something which resulted in causing disrespect to someone. This will help you to know your mistake. Then you should take a vow not to repeat the mistake again; and you should also resolve that all your undertakings will be for the common good or for well-being of the world. That is, resolve that—I will not regard anyone as evil; I will not wish evil for anyone; and I will not do evil to anyone.

Question—Wouldn't considering ourselves as the well-wisher of all (*sarvahitakārī*) lead to pride?

Answer—When one has become the well-wisher of the wellbeing of all beings in its entirety, one becomes completely pure and faultless; in this, there is not even a trace of pride.

Question—How would one know that one has attained purity or faultlessness?

Answer—If you want faultlessness, then become free from doubts. Just like a farmer, after having sown the seeds, does not turn over the soil again and again [whether the seeds are germinating or not], even so we should remain at ease (*nīścinta*) and confident that we will definitely become faultless once we give the evil.

Question—What the benefit of not wishing evil for anyone?

Answer—One who does not wish evil for anyone, the evil volitions of such a person come to an end forever. As soon as the evil volitions end, one attains freedom from doubts (*nirvikalpatā*¹⁷). The doubt-free state is the mother of peace, competence, and independence.

Question—Mahārāj Jī! Swāmī jī!

Answer—

Question—Mahārāj Jī! What should we do in our life?

Answer—Spiritual practice.

Question—Kindly please tell how should we do spiritual practice?

Answer—We have the knowledge of the spiritual means (*sādhan*) in us already. We also know what our duty is and what our ability is. Safeguard the

¹⁷ One meaning of the word '*vipkalpa*' is imagination of distinctions. In this context, the word '*nirviplapa*' is rendered as doubt-free state of mind; a state of certainty that is free from doubts or imagining of [false] distinctions.

rights of others and relinquish your own rights. But you have to first join the fellowship of truth (*satsaṅgī bannā hōgā*).

Question—How to become a *satsaṅgī*?

Answer—By giving up association with untruth you will become *satsaṅgī*.

Question—What is called untruth (*asat*)?

Answer—That indeed is *asat* which you do not want for yourself. Everyone wants honest and effective companions. Therefore, we should also become honest and effective towards others.

Question—What should we do if someone considers us bad in spite of our honest behavior?

Answer—Do not worry about whether someone considers you honest or not. If you feel that there is some fault in you, then try to correct it. If there is none, then do not worry about others.

Question—What is the glory of the Lord? How should one understand it?

Answer—The Lord has granted man the power of action and the power of discriminative wisdom to perform actions properly and effectively. But, instead of making proper use of these powers, man starts misusing them. The Lord is so compassionate that when these powers get depleted, despite knowing everything, and instead of paying any attention toward our misconduct, He keeps on granting these powers to us again and again. If the spiritual aspirant, understanding such a glory of the Lord, prays with distressed heart, then he will attain

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

the capacity to make proper use of his power and to honor his discriminative intellect.

Question—The motiveless grace of the Lord is present on everyone at all time. How should one experience it?

Answer—A spiritual aspirant who is confident about his strength and self-effort, and who understands that he, on the basis of strength received as a result of his actions, will be able to achieve his goal, such a spiritual aspirant does not get to experience the grace of the Lord.

Only that spiritual aspirant is able to experience the Lord's grace who has full faith on his grace. He who under all conditions always keeps waiting for the Lord's grace and who understands that whatever discriminative wisdom he has received, it is verily the boon granted by the Lord. Mind, intellect, senses, body and the rest of all the spiritual means are verily of the Lord's and that the Lord has granted these boons out of his boundless compassion for me to make proper use of these blessed divine gifts.

In this manner, a spiritual aspirant who considers himself as deserving to receive the Lord's grace definitely experiences it.

Question—How to concentrate the mind?

Answer—There are many methods to control the mind based on the interest, eligibility, and the level of development of the spiritual aspirant. Among these, the main method is dispassion—that is, the absence of attachment. The concentration brought about by practice does not last and turns into restlessness.

The second method is the absence of all desires. When all desires come to an end, then the mind naturally becomes focused. This concentration always remains stable.

This method is to be distressed by the restlessness of the mind. When one is not able to live without the concentration of mind, then the mind becomes definitely concentrated.

He who makes the concentration of mind the fundamental question of life and cannot live without solving it, is also able to concentrate his mind.

Question—When the body-conceit of a spiritual aspirant gets completely destroyed, and his heart becomes filled with purest love, then what difference is observed in his daily conduct?

Answer—All activities of that spiritual aspirant are undertaken for the pleasure of others. In the worldly conduct, such an aspirant treats friend and foe with the same love and good behavior. Despite there being the difference in action, there is no disparity in his affection. Therefore, he becomes lovable to all. Inherent in his every activity is the spontaneous well-being of all. That is why everyone loves him. His outer behavior is amicable to all.

Question—What is called death while living?

Answer—To sever relationship with the body and the world completely while the vital energy of breath (*prāna*) is still there—this alone is the death while living.

Question—One is not able to receive the lord's love despite desiring for it. What should one do in this regard?

Answer—The spiritual aspirant should never get disappointed with God's love. He who has the purest yearning for love, that person certainly gets the divine love. There are many facets of love. There are many types of entry points for divine love. The divine love never attains to its completion; that is why, in every state, the lover realizes the deficiency of love. If the spiritual aspirant experiences the deficiency of love in himself or herself in this manner, then it is not that s/he has not attained the perennially ever-new divine love. Love is infinite; the object of Love (the Lord) is also infinite; and the yearning for love is also infinite. Where all three (love, lover, and the Beloved) are infinite, how can there be perfection (or completion).

If one has not been really able to attain love while the longing for love has been there, then one should have deep anguish for it. That anguish will definitely facilitate the attainment of love.

If, despite there being the longing for divine love, there is no intense anguish, it means that there is still the relish of virtues and good conduct in one's life. As long as sense-pleasures hold some delight, the longing for true love has not even arisen. Virtues and good conduct are not the price for God's love. Even the most decadent person can be the recipient of God's love, for the Lord who is the purifier of the decadent is also the liberator of the soul and friend of

the downtrodden. The Lord loves the downtrodden, the impoverished, and the decadent.

A person becomes miserable even when a petty desire does not get fulfilled, then how can a person who desires the divine love live peacefully when such a person is not receiving the divine love. How can his ache be assuaged by any sense-indulgence, virtue, good conduct, and noble goal?

The spiritual aspirant who long only for the Lord, who are hungry for the divine love, who do not get any delight from indulgence, virtues, noble goals and those who have relinquished all delights—to such aspirants, the Lord definitely grants His love. There is no doubt about this. The lover wants no form of pleasure from his Beloved.

Question—Swāmī jī! Are human beings independent or dependent?

Answer—By respecting the discriminative wisdom granted by God, man is ever-free to put the received strength to proper use. This independence has been granted by the Lord. Expect this, human beings are absolutely dependent [on others].

In fact, only that person is regarded as independent who, by respecting his discriminative intellect, has become free from all types of desires. For no person can call himself independent while there is any type of desire.

As long as man regards some other person, object, situation, state etc., to be the cause of his happiness, till then he remains impoverished and dependent in his life.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

The human being is always free to purify his conscience (*antahkaran*) by ending the self-created faults by using the discriminative intellect.

Question—Why man is afraid to die?

Answer—Man is afraid to die due to regarding the body as “I” and due to not knowing the significance of death.

Question—What is the significance of death?

Answer—Birth, support, and death—these three seem to be separate. But upon inquiry one comes to know that there is no difference among these three. Just like the destruction of childhood and the birth of adolescence indeed is the youth and old age—all these situations keep on changing all the time. Death alone becomes the cause for another new life. If there were no death in the world, the population will increase to such an extent that one might not find a place to live on the Earth; and the misery may increase to such an extent that no one may want to live anymore.

Therefore, death is also necessary and it is a matter of greatest significance. The destruction of one body leads to another new body. The death alone grants new life.

Question—Kuntī Devī is regarded as a pious lady (*satī*¹⁸). How come her piousness

¹⁸ The word "*satī*" comes from the feminine present participle of the Sanskrit word *astī*; literally, it means "true/pure."

remained unimpaired by being blessed with son by the Sun-god?

Answer—In those days conditions were different than that of today. Those people knew very well what the religious /moral law (*dharma*) was and were steadfast in the *dharma*. The women have primarily two *dhārmās*—the *dharma* of piousness (*satī*) and the *dharma* of nobility and virtuousness (*sādhavī*). The *satī dharma* is one in which, regarding the husband as the supreme lord, the woman entrusts all and everything to him. The *sādhavī dharma* is one in which, regarding the Lord as the husband, the woman entrusts all and everything to Him. Mira and Gopis were the followers of *sādhavī dharma*.

Kuntī Devī was the follower of *satī dharma*. For a *sati* woman, there is none that is hers other than one husband. She does not consider her right over the body, or the house in any way. She considers everything as her husbands. Whatever she does, she does it for her husband. Her only purpose in life is the pleasure and well-being of her husband.

The situation before Kuntī was such that due to the fear of the curse, her husband (*Paṇḍu*) could not cohabit (*sahavāsa karanā*) with her. If he were to do so, that would have resulted in his death. *Paṇḍu* had a great desire to have a son. Thus, led by that desire, when he expressed his heart's desire to Kuntī, first she tried to respectfully help her husband understand the essence of *dharma*. But when her husband's desire did not get satisfied with it, then Kuntī told him the whole matter that—"I have received the *mantras*

by way of boon from the ṛshi, Durvāsā. By virtue of those *mantras*, I can invoke the demi-gods (*devatās*) and create a son.” Hearing upon this, Pandu gave the permission to produce a son by invoking the *devatās*.

Under these conditions, without any sense of indulgence in pleasure (*bhōg-vāsanā*), Kuntī followed the command of her husband for the sake of her husband’s pleasure alone. Why would her piousness get impaired by this? Whatever she did, she did to carry out her *satī-dharma*. She did not use to regard her body as her own. She used to regard her husband as having full right over her body.

Question— Swāmī jī! Why does the Lord (*Bhagavān*) have to assume the human birth form (*avatāra*)?

Answer—It is not that the Lord *has to* assume human form because the Lord is ever-Perfect, Omnipotent, and Free. He assumes the human form by His own sweet will.

In the scriptures, three reasons¹⁹ are described for the taking of the *avatāra* by the Lord in the human form—(1) To protect the virtuous or the saints, (2) to destroy the evil-doers, and (3) to establish the Dharma. Out of these three, the Lord could have destroyed the evil-doers and established the *Dharma*

¹⁹ **Paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām**

Dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge

The Bhagavad Gītā 4.8

For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma on a firm footing, I come into being in age after age.

without taking the *avatāra*. If these two were the main reasons of the Lord's *avatāra*, then the Lord should have taken the *avatāra* even now: The decadence of the *dharma* is at its peak even now and there is no dearth of evil-doers either.

If we think about the Lord's divine play or pastime (*līlā*), then we come to know that the Lord's *avatāra* is to accord the nectarine delight to His saints and devotees through His divine playfulness and to enjoy Himself through the nectarine love of his devotees. To establish the *dharma* and to destroy the evil-doers are the incidental or collateral functions of His *avatāra*. Even in that, ultimately, the well-being of the saints is implicit.

Only that person is saint who wants to realize God, who is steadfast in dedicating his life for the sake of the Lord. To assume a particular type of [holy] appearance is not called sainthood.

When the Lord takes *avatāra*, He is born in the homes of the saints alone. Think about the *avatāra* of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His manifestation happened in the home of Vāsudeva and mother Devakījī. He who is self-effulgent and all-pervading is called 'Vasudeva' and 'Devakī' is the name of illuminating Transcendental Knowledge (*prakāshamayī Brahavidyā*²⁰). From this we come to know that the Lord takes *avatarā* only in the homes of those saints

²⁰ Literally, speaking, *Brahavidyā* means that knowledge/science (*vidyā*) which enables one to realize the highest Absolute Reality, i.e., Brahman. In short, it means the highest transcendental knowledge enshrined in the Upanishads.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

who are supremely ever-pure (*vishudha*) and are the knowers of truth or reality (*tattva-jñānīs*). But the Lord does not grant them the nectar of His divine play or His divine love.

To accord the nectarine love of his divine playfulness, the Lord then comes to play in the lap of mother Yashōdā. One who provides the splendor (*yasha*) of divine love is called “Yashōdā” and “Nanda” is another name for “ananda.”

It becomes clear from the foregoing that the Lord brings ecstatic joy to the devotees by granting the nectar of his affectionate divine play and by enjoying himself the delight of the nectar of devotee’s love. This work cannot be fulfilled without taking the *avatāra*.

Innumerable secrets are implicit in every act of the divine-playfulness of the Lord. He fulfills the yearnings of the several types of devotees through merely one of his divine pastimes. The secret of his loving, divine-playfulness is not fathomable even by the highly wise. Not to speak of anyone else, even the great Lord of Creation, Brahmā, became doubtful of the Lord’s divine *Līlā*.

When the blessed Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa started dining with his young cowherd friends after having killed Adhāsura, Brahmājī became quite surprised by watching this divine play. Brahmājī started musing—“How can the God Incarnate play with these cowherds and eat their leftover food. What is this? This child gives his food-stuff to others and himself takes the food-stuff brought by others.

Led by this delusion, Brahmājī, in order to test the Lord, stole away the calves. The cowherd attention got diverted from the Lord toward the calves. They said—“We cannot see the calves anymore; perhaps they have strayed far away.” How can the Lord bear that His devotee turns his attention to some other person or to some other place. Therefore, the Lord said his companions—“Dear Friends! You please stay here; I will bring the calves here right now.”

As Shyam Sunder went on the other side, Brahmājī made those youngsters unconscious and carried them away to a cave. As their hearts turned away from the Lord, the cowherds had to get separated from the Lord for one year.

On this side, the cows and the Gopis had this intense yearning waiting for the time when they too, like mother Yashōdā, to nurse young Shyam Sunder; waiting for the time when Shyam Sunder will provide them the nectar of love by playing in their lap. To fulfill their yearning, the Lord Himself became a child and a calf. He accorded the nectar of love to the cows and drank their nectarine love in the form of milk. He accorded the nectar of love for son to Gop-Gopis by playing in their lap. He kept on relishing that delightful nectar of love for one year.

When Brahmājī saw that the activities of the *Braja* are going on as before, Shyam Sunder is dining with cowherds as before and playing with them; and the cowherds that I had stolen away, all of them are still sleeping in the cave also. Seeing all this Glory of

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

the Lord, all pride of Brahmaji's melted away. He asked for forgiveness by placing his head at the feet of the Lord and extolled the glory of the Lord.

In one pastime alone, the Lord demonstrated his Lordship and affectionate sweetness. How could this have been accomplished without taking *avatāra*. On one side, the pride of Brahmājī is crushed; along with it, warning is provided to cowherds (not to take attention away from the Lord at all); and the fulfillment of the Gop-Gopis' yearning for love. This can only be accomplished by taking *avatāra*.

When Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was six days old, he simultaneously demonstrated the *bhāva* of supreme power and opulence (*aishvarya*), sweetness (*mādhuraya*), Justice (*nyāya*), and compassion (*dyālutā*). When Pūtanā, who was a grave sinner and destroyer of young kids, came deviously impersonating for a beautiful nanny. She went to the Lord having malicious intention internally while outwardly showing a feeling of love and took the Lord in her lap and placed her breast full of poison in the auspicious mouth of the Shyam Sunder, then the Lord, protection and honoring her motherly feelings, drank the milk. Since she came to take his life, he drank her vital life breath, so to speak, along with the milk. With Lord's touch, her deceitfulness (*kaṭa*) ended, her whole body was filled with aroma and she came back to her real form. The Lord started playing sitting on her body and accorded her the final destination (*gatih*) of mother.

How could have the Lord done this type of divine play (*līlā*) without taking *avatāra*? Every pastime of the Lord is saturated with infinite nectar and infinite mystery. Only His devotees are able to relish the nectarine delight of the Lord's divine love.

The Lord's *avatāra* is eternal. His abode of pastimes, His parents, and his male and female companions are all made of supremely illuminating divine love. None of these is of the nature of a physical entity. There is no worldly/physical feeling in the hearts of the Lord's loving devotees.

The Lord's loving devotees enter into His divine pastimes even today and they keep relishing the nectar of His divine love. If the Lord had not assumed the human form (*avatāra*), this love could not have been seen its fulfillment.

Question— Swāmī jī! What is *gopī-bhāva* and how is it attained?

Answer—He alone can talk about *gopī-prema* who has attained to the *gopī-bhāva*²¹ and he alone is entitled to hear about it. As long as one has sense of 'I' in the physical, subtle, and causal body, till then man does not attain to the *gopī-bhāva*.

²¹Feeling of pure, true and selfless love is the *gopī-bhāva*. One who takes pleasure in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment is a *gopī*, and since Krishna takes highest pleasure and supreme enjoyment in Rādhārānījī's company, to serve Rādhārānījī and to help the divine couple in their pastimes is the goal of all the *gopīs*. The serving of the Divine Couple involves *manjarī-bhāva* (serving the divine couple in the mood of Rādhārānījī's maidservant). So *gopī-bhāva* is selfless service unto the Divine couple.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Even a *jñāni* and a *yōgī* of the stature of Uddhava, who was a friend of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, when he went to *Vraja*, he forgot all his *jñāna* and *yōga* when he saw the love of the *gopīs*. Instead he started calling his Lord and friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa as heartless and cruel and started praising the love of the *gopīs*. Even he started feeling that it would be his good fortune if he were to be incarnated as branches and leaves [of the trees of *Vraja*] and started craving to be the dust of the auspicious feet of the *gopīs*. Then how can an ordinary person understand that love of the *gopīs*?

As long as man has the body-conceit, he craves for some form of sense-pleasure. In order to realize the *gopī-prema*, what to say of the pleasure born of the union of objects and the pleasure produced by activity, one has to give up even the pleasure of contemplation and meditative absorption. As long as the feeling remains that that I will get pleasure from such and such object, such and such person, such and such situation, till then man remains their slave. The feeling of providing pleasure to others does not arise in his heart; rather, he remains interested in the enjoyment of his own sense-pleasures. This verily is the feeling of selfishness. One cannot understand the mystery of *gopī-bhāva* as long as the feeling of selfishness is there.

In human life, there is the association between truth and the untruth. The association with the body, the world, and the sense-pleasure along is the association with the untruth. And the yearning for

infinite life and eternal bliss is verily the association with the truth (*satsaṅg*). He who only has the association with the untruth is also not a human being because the association with the untruth [that is, sense-indulgence] is also there even in animal forms or transverse (*triyak*²²) forms of life. And he who has association with the truth alone can also not be called human being since that person is beyond the humanhood.

Therefore, in order to attain the *gopī-bhāva* one has to discerningly sever relationship with gross, subtle, and causal body and sever relationship with all sense-indulgences that have relation with these three bodies (gross, subtle, and causal). This is possible only through *satsaṅg*.

Only those spiritual aspirants are able to know the reality of the grief of the indulgence in worldly sense-pleasures who respect their received faculty of discriminative intellect (*viveka*). Respecting the discriminative intellect indeed is *satsaṅg*. Through this *satsaṅg*, the relish for sense-indulgence comes to an end and the yearning for the ever-new divine love gets awakened. Then a few really qualified ones attain to the *gopī-bhāva*.

Therefore, any spiritual aspirant who had to attain to the *gopī-bhāva*, and who has to understand the secret of the love of the *gopīs* (*gopī-prema*) by entering into their transcendental pastimes, such an aspirant should give up the desire for all sense-

²² *Triyak* denotes the plant world and the animal world.

indulgence arising out of the body-conceit (*dehabhāva*). When the yearning for the Lord's love, devouring all sense-indulgences, becomes intense, then the spiritual aspirant enters into that *Vraja* which is made of divine element; the *Vraja* where the earth, cowherds, *gopīs*, cows, branches and leaves, all of these are of the nature of divine light and consciousness; the *Vraja* where there is not even a smell of materiality. Entering this *Vraja*, the attainment of the *gopī-bhāva* is not too far.

The *gopī-bhāva* is attained much later than *Dāsyā-bhāva* [seeing oneself as the servant of God], *Sākhya bhāva* [realizing God as one's most true and intimate friend], *Vātsalya-bhāva* [cultivating feelings of motherly love and affection towards one's chosen form of God]. Therefore, the spiritual aspirant, to attain the *gopī-bhāva*, will have to enter the celestial *Vraja* by giving up the attraction even of the bliss of liberation. After that, one will attain the *gopī-bhāva* by depending upon the grace of God.

Question—What is the real nature of truth?

Answer—In order to know the real nature of truth, it is essential to know the real nature of untruth, for how can he who does not have the knowledge of night can have the knowledge of the day. Therefore, only upon having the accurate knowledge of untruth can the seeker of truth know the truth.

The civilized society of the world calls the virtues as the truth and the vices as the untruth,

because the virtues rule over the vices—as stability upon instability, good conduct over bad conduct, discipline over indulgence, love over hatred, sentience over insentience, and non-violence over violence. If one were to ponder over the fact that why virtues rule over the vices, then one has to say that it is because the virtues are more natural compared to the vices. In the same manner, if the ‘seeing’ by the eye remains a natural act; that is the doer have a sense of doership in this act, then the act of seeing cannot be regarded as a vice. It becomes a vice when one creates a desire to attain sense-pleasure through the ‘seen’ form. Even when it is certain that the pleasure cannot be attained, the poor eye, due to lack of proper reasoning, searches for pleasure in the form; that is why, it becomes sorrowful in the end. And that alone which gives suffering, is the vice.

The restlessness goes away with the stability of the senses. The world looks with respect toward such a person; and the world looks with disrespect toward a person who cannot restraint his senses. Based on this principle indeed every virtue secures triumph over every vice. The world is always in need of a person with virtuous qualities. If one were to lead a virtuous life in the world, then it is highly essential to cultivate the virtues.

The real nature of truth is beyond both the virtues and the vices, for even after the development of the virtues, one still feels the lack. Therefore, that which is ever-fulfilled with virtues in every way—that is, in which there is no trace of vices—that alone is

the real nature of truth. One cannot really express the real nature of truth, since all the means that are used for expression are inherently incomplete. That which is incomplete or imperfect can never describe that which is complete or perfect. The real form of truth is beyond the sense of individuality. The truth is self-illuminating.

Question—Why there is need truth?

Answer—There is the need for that thing without which we cannot live. Every person wants permanent happiness. When nothing that is worldly is able to accord permanent happiness, then the seeker of happiness is forced to renounce the world.

If a thoughtful person were to examine his/her longings, then s/he will come to know that longings are of two types—1. Longing for the satisfaction of bodily needs; 2. Longing for an all-round perfection. The action and the world are required for the satisfaction of bodily needs.

One can in no way find perfection with the help of action and the world since no state or condition of the world is perfect. As a traveller walking upon a round track never finds the end of the track, even so a person running toward the world never finds peace and perfection. Therefore, truth is required for attaining permanent happiness and perfection.

Question—What is the means to attain the truth?

Answer—The longing with good faith is the way to the truth. As a big fish, having consumed all the small fishes, dies herself, even so the longing for

truth, extinguishing all longings, finally comes to an end automatically. Right at that very time, one is able to experience the truth. No organization is required to attain the truth; rather, one has to end all organizations.²³

Perform actions according to the conviction that you have bound yourself, and give up all unnecessary actions. Those who do not complete the essential task and keep piling up inessential tasks in their heart, such persons keep thinking vainly about the past or the future.

What is the essential task? That task is an essential task without which we cannot remain alive; that regarding which we have the means to complete, and that regarding the performance of which we have no fear whatsoever. The doer progresses automatically by fulfilling his/her duty.

No matter what the conditions of life might be, everybody is capable of experiencing the truth. The truth cannot be found with the help of the world. If the person who is proud of his virtues is not able to end his pride of virtues, then he is not able to attain to truth. If the decadent most of all overcomes his nature, he is able to attain to truth. A person to whom the world is not able to accord any happiness, even

²³ J. Krishnamurti used to say, "Truth is a pathless land." Perhaps, his most famous quote is this: "I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect....The moment you follow someone you cease to follow Truth."

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

such a person is able to attain bliss by attaining to the truth.

The abandoning of the slavery of individuality is the means to attain to the truth. Have you ever seen the individuality that you feel in yourself? You will have to agree that you have accepted the individuality in yourself by listening [about it from others]; you have not seen it.

If one were to say that the individuality of the body is visible, then one has to say that the body is inseparable from the world; what it is that is yours in it? The body that you regard as yours is actually one with the whole world. The body and the world are like limb and the body. As various states of India are inseparable from India, even so our body is inseparable from the world.

Therefore, let the non-real individuality burn in the fire of self-inquiry. Upon the destruction of individuality, the slavery will end and the path of truth will become visible. The path of truth is so narrow that the seeker of truth can only walk alone on it. Even you have to let go of the company of mind, intellect, etc.; for to end the embodiment (*sangathan*) is the means to truth.

Question—Who is entitled to truth?

Answer—Whom the world is incapable of according pleasure. That is, he who experiences malady in indulgence, sorrow in joy, separation in union, pain in pleasure, forest in home, and death in life—that person alone is entitled to truth.

The powers get depleted by indulgence. With the depletion in the powers, the illness comes upon uninvited and the indulger becomes incapable to indulge in the sense pleasures. Upon the arrival of such a state, one experiences sorrow far more than the pleasure one has had by indulgence in sense-gratification. With this in mind, the thoughtful people experience the sorrow even in the pleasure. Howsoever beautiful the indulgence (*bhōga*) may be, howsoever favorable it may be according to the rules of the society, and howsoever strength one may still have for its indulgence, the depletion in strength is inevitable.

One is able to build one's strengths through *yoga* and the strengths get depleted through *bhōga*. This alone is the difference between *yoga* and *bhōga*: that in *bhōga*, one needs to have relationship with objects such as sound, touch, form, taste, smell etc.; while in *yoga*, upon the relinquishment of all [contact with] the objects, there is union with the infinite truth that is beyond [the contact of] objects.

This is the only difference between *yoga* and *jñāna* that the *yogī*, due to conceit in yogic attainments, is not able to become one with the Absolute Reality (*param-tattva*); that is why, several types of mysterious powers start manifesting in the *yogī*. *Yog* comes on its own accord in the absence of *bhōga*. *Yog* is independent and *bhōga* is dependent because one does not have to look towards the world for [the attainment of] *yōg*.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Just as one only pays the price for the fruits while buying the harvest of fruits and one gets the shade of the trees for free; even so with the attainment of jnana, yog is attained on its own accord. Although the person who is steadfast in transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-niṣṭha*) does not have any need for yog, yet such a person, due to non-attachment, attains to yog on its own accord. Therefore, only that person is eligible for truth to whom yog and bhōga are not able to accord peace.

Question—What is the significance of surrender or refuge (*śarana*)?

Answer—Refuge or surrender (*śarana*) is the key to success; it is the strength of the weak, the very life of the spiritual aspirant; the last experiment of the lover; the chant of the devotee, and the infallible weapon of the theist (or believer); medicine of the sorrowful; beloved of the lover; and the cry of the fallen. It accords strength to the weak, perfection to the spiritual aspirant, beloved to the lover, the Lord to the devotee; firm faith to the believer, bliss to the sorrowful, yog to the indulger (*bhōgī*), independence to the dependent, liberation to the bound, delight to the drab, and immortality to the dying.

Question—What is the benefit of taking refuge?

Answer—Every individual lives under someone's refuge. The only difference being that the believer (*āstika*) lives under the refuge of one while the unbeliever (*nāstika*) lives under the refuge of many. The believer fulfills his need while the

unbeliever fulfills his desires. The need is one while the desires are many. The need does not arise again once it is fulfilled. The poor person who runs after desires only attains depletion of strength. Therefore the *śarnāgata*, taking refuge under the *śranyaya*, renouncing desires and fulfilling the need, becomes fulfilled.

One has the need for that which exists; and the desire is born of attachment based on negligence. That is why one is neither able to fulfill the desire nor dispense with it. Ordinary people do not know that difference between desire and need. But to a thoughtful person, when such a person examines his life, the difference between desire and need becomes clearly evident. If there were no difference between the need and the desire, the theism would not have arisen since the desirous person does not know anything apart from the reality of the objects.

Question—Is *śarnagatti* a feeling or an action?

Answer—The moment one becomes *śarnagata*, the sense of ‘I’ gets transformed. ‘Śarnagatti’ is a feeling or an action. This is verily the difference between *bhāva* and *karma* that the *bhāva* gives its result (*phalam*) in the present itself while the *karma* gives its *phalam* in the future. The *bhāva-kartā* can have the bhaav independently; while the action depends upon organization.

There are many kinds of organizations since an ‘organization’ is verily the collection of various types of weaknesses. But according to subtle intellect,

to seek the help of someone apart from oneself is verily the 'organization.'

Question—How many types of *śarnāgatti* is there?

Answer— *Śarnāgatti* is of two types—of the nature of difference (*bheda-bhāva*) and of the nature of non-difference (*abheda-bhāva*). The *śarnāgatti* of the nature of difference is attained by merely accepting the *śaranya* (the object of one's love; the Beloved, the Lord). But the *śarnāgatti* of the nature of non-difference is attained only by attaining the accurate knowledge of the *śaranya*. The *śrnāgatta* of the *abheda-bhāva* becomes free from the desire of objects (*nirvishyeya*) even before taking the refuge (*śarnāgatti*); only a trace of the sense of 'I' (*ahamntā*) remains which gets obliterated by the grace of the Lord (*śaranya*). The *śarnāgatta* of the *bheda-bhāva* changes his sense of 'I' immediately upon becoming *śarnāgatta*—one who used to belong to many now lives by belonging to one.

The *śarnāgatta* has constantly this august feeling in his heart that—"I belong to the Lord." It is a law that everything that a person has belongs to the person he belongs to (that is, the Lord) and that person (*śarnāgatta*) constantly remains waiting for his Lord's (*śaranya*'s) love. As the fire of Beloved's (*śaranya*'s) loves increases in intensity, even so the sense of 'I' of *śrnāgatta* starts transmuting and starts becoming of the nature of the Beloved's (*śaranya*), just as the firewood starts becoming indistinct from the fire as it starts burning intensely. Upon the

destruction of the false 'I,' the *śarnāgatta* of the *bheda-bhāva* too becomes the *śarnāgatta* of the *abheda-bhāva*.

The *śarnāgatta* of the *bheda-bhāva* is also not separate from the *śaranya* at any time just as a pious woman steadfast in her husband devotion (*pattivaratā*) remains non-separated from her husband even while living at her father's house. The only difference between the *śrnāgatta* of the *bheda* and *abheda* nature is that the *śarnāgatta* of the *bheda-bhāva* relishes the delight of both union with and separation from the *śaranya* (the Lord), and the *śarnāgatta* of the *abheda-bhāva*, experiencing the *śaranya* in himself, experience the eternal nectar of perennial delight. Here 'experience' does not mean 'consumption' or 'indulgence.' The indulgence occurs when there is union. During indulgence, the doer (*kartā*) has the lingering feeling of the enjoyer (*bhoktā*). But as the nectarine delight of union keeps on increasing, even so the entity of the enjoyer keeps obliterating. That is why the enjoyer (or the consumer) never attains to desirelessness. But *śarnāgatta* is able to attain desirelessness. A lustful person cannot take refuge or surrender. In other words, there is no desire left in the *śarnāgatta*.

If someone were to say that the desire for *śaranya* is also desire, then upon reflection, we come to know that *śaranya* is the need of *śarnāgatta*; for 'desire' is born of attachment for sense-pleasures and inadvertence or negligence while the 'need' arises to extinguish attachment for sense-pleasures. As the

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

arising of the Sun and removal of darkness is simultaneous, even so the dispensation of attachment for sense-pleasures and arising of the need is simultaneous. Thus, it becomes irrefutably established that the need for *śaranya* is not [of the nature of] desire. Although, this need has no existence whatsoever, yet due to the distance of not knowing the Beloved (*premāspad*), it is felt as a need for the Beloved (*premapātra*)—just as the need for wealth is verily the poverty. That is why the love-lorn *śarnāgatta-bhakta* (devotee) remains enchanted in the delight of separation/absence.

The fulfillment of *śarnāgatti* is reached when the *śaranya* becomes the *śarnāgatta*. It is because the perfection of the lover is evidenced when the beloved becomes the lover. The lover becomes saturated with the sweetness of love when the beloved becomes the lover. The delight of the sweetness of the *śaranya* is so sweet that the *śarnāgatta* becomes helpless not to give up the warmth of *śarnāgatta*. This alone is the *śarnāgatti* based on the feeling of difference. When the *śarnāgatti* based on the feeling of difference becomes fulfilled, the *śaranya*, without *śarnāgatta*'s desire, make the *śarnāgatta* non-separate from Himself, just as a thief gets punishment without any desire on his part.

Question—What is the true life of *śarnāgatta* and what part of *śarnāgatta*'s life is an acting?

Answer—Before taking refuge, an individual's sense of 'I' remains divided in several feelings. Upon becoming *śarnāgatta*, those several feelings get merged in one feeling only. When several feelings get merged in one feelings alone, then the individual directly gets to experience two lives in one life. One of his lives is the true life of *śarnāgatta* and the other life is an act. The true life of *śarnāgatta* is the love of the *śaranya* only. And *śarnāgatta's* acting is his world-service according to his moral duty. In other words, whatever the world expects in a justified manner from *śarnāgatta*, the *śarnāgatta* does the acting accordingly for the pleasure of the world.

It is a law that in acting there is no benevolence; there is no difference of interest, despite there being the difference of activity. The actor does not forget himself and he does not have a sense of reality in the acting. At the end of acting, the assumed role comes to an end most completely. Right at that time, the *śarnāgatta*, turning away from all sides, turns toward the *śaranya*.

Question—How does one gets merged in infinite power?

Answer—According to the law of nature, the infinite power constantly attracts every individual toward itself by its very nature. But it does not take away individual's freedom nor does it rule over the individual. If that power were not attracting the individual toward itself naturally, then it would not constantly keep on shattering the limited love of the individual. It is a law that a thing gets merged into that

very entity from which it has arisen. Thus, the pure stream of love arisen from the infinite power gets merged into the infinite power itself. To bind that infinite power into object, state, and circumstances is a futile attempt. With the dawning of the feeling of *śarnāgatta*, the pure stream of love gets merged into the *śaranya*.

Question—What is the alchemy of the act of taking *śarnāgatti* (*śarnāpannatā*) leading one to one's center [of being]?

Answer—The natural development of man lies in surrendering to one's own center of being. We need to ponder over the fact of our center of being as to 'what is our center of being?' Only that can be the center of our being which is our [real] need. Our [real] need is for eternal-life, eternal-delight, and all-round perfection and independence. Therefore only that thing can be our center of being which is perfect and free in every manner. We verily have to surrender to that.

The biggest mistake that we make is that, before reaching our center of being, we stop our natural progress by establishing several mountains of our desire on the way; although the Infinite Power affectionately keeps on trying to shatter those mountains continuously, just as the mother tries to teach the child.

We keep on trying unsuccessfully to oppose this Infinite Power; this is our supreme mistake. The great mother Nature is teaching us this lesson constantly that the limited power is surrendered to the

Infinite Power, just as a river is constantly progressing toward the ocean and a seed is constantly progressing toward the tree. There is no object or state which is not changing constantly as if it is teaching us that we should not remain bound by a limited perspective; rather, we should remain progressing toward the supreme and independent center of being, which can be easily accomplished by taking refuge.

This is an immutable law that no feeling becomes lively until it becomes free from doubt. As the farmer becomes worryless after sowing the seeds—that is, he does not take out the seeds time and again; nor does he doubt [the process]. Only then the seed, having become one with the soil, develops according to its nature. In the same manner, the *śarnāgatta*, having become one with the reality that is Infinite, and is saturated with majesty and sweetness, develops according to his nature—and can, by ending his limited nature, become non-separate from the Infinite Reality. But his conviction for *śarnāgatta* has to be free from doubts since there is no doubt in good faith.

Those individuals who do not surrender to that Infinite which is saturated with majesty and sweetness, remain surrendered to several objects and situations—just as a lustful person surrenders to a beautiful woman arousing desire, a greedy person surrenders to wealth, and an undiscerning person surrenders to the body. It is because the sense of ‘I’ that is born merely through acceptance keeps on dividing itself in several sentiments. Whatever and

whichever sentiment the sense of 'I' accepts, it keeps on surrendering to that very sentiment. The individual who is surrendered to truth frees himself from the sense of 'I' that is born of acceptance.

Question—What is true human existence?

Answer—The sense of 'I' of the *śarnāgatta* is lifeless; that is, like a burned seed, it only appears to be as such. It because the limited sentiment and the reality born of acceptance get obliterated. When an individual ends up accepting the limited sentiment and acceptance to be his reality, then several types of obstacles get born. Think deeply about it—Although in each individual love is present, but even such divine element as love becomes limited by regarding mere acceptance to be the reality. Limited love acts like a destructive force which is utterly opposite to love—just as the effect of love of one's country on other countries; just as the effect of love of one tradition on other traditions; just as the atrocities of one race upon the other—this is utterly opposite to the life of man. By taking refuge with full religious faith, the limited ego remains no more as soon as the reality born of acceptance gets destroyed. With the ending of the limited ego, the divine love becomes ubiquitous, which is the true human existence.

Question—How to transform *śarnāgatti* into perfection in *śarnāgatti* (and transform human-life into the life of *ṛṣī* (sage or seer)?

Answer—The human-life arises naturally in the one who has taken refuge; and thereupon, realizing the seer-hood, one attains one's *śaranya* in

oneself only. The only difference between *śarnāgata* and *śarnapanna* is just this—*śarnāgata* waits for the love of *śaranya* and *śarnapanna* tastes the delight of the nectar of immortality.

Question—Is *śarnāgatti* a practice?

Answer— *Śarnāgatti* is not practice but a feeling of good faith. With the attainment of a feeling of good faith regarding *śarnāgatti*, the entire life of a human being becomes of the nature of *śarnāgatti*. That is, *śarnāgatta* appears to be a friend for a friend, father for son, teacher for student, wife for husband, husband for wife; an individual for the society, and nationalistic for a nation. Whosoever, with a sense of fairness, expects whatsoever from *śarnāgatta*, the *śarnāgatta* plays the role accordingly. For himself, such a person does not have expectation for anyone apart from himself. In other words, despite being everything to everybody, *śarnāgatta* does not look towards anyone apart from himself for himself apart from *śaranya*. When *śarnāgatta* does not need any person, society etc., for himself, then, at the end of playing the role, then the fire of separation from *śaranya* becomes aflame in the heart of *śarnāgatta*.

Therefore, *śarnāgatta*, despite doing everything, does not get parted from *śaranya*. Think about this deeply; there is no such practice from which the spiritual aspirant does not get parted, because the practice that springs from a discipline can in no way be constant. However, the sense of 'I' that gets transformed through *śarnāgatti* constantly remains of uniform delight. The only difference is that

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

śarnāgatta sometimes serves the world for the sake of *śaranya*, and sometimes waits for the love of the *śaranya*; while sometimes becomes non-separate from *śaranya*. That practice cannot be complete in which the spiritual aspirant gets divided. Because the perfect practice is that only which does not let the spiritual aspirant be parted from the spiritual goal. According to this viewpoint, feeling of *śarnāgatti* is the quintessential practice.

Question—How is *śarnāgatta* the *śaranya* of the *śaranya*?

Answer—It becomes evident on proper reflection that our undertakings are according to our sense of 'I.' The most decadent sense of 'I' (*patita ahamtā*) gets transformed right away by taking refuge in the Divine. As soon as the *ahamtā* gets transformed, the [past] impressions imprinted on it get destroyed. As it is impossible for any seed to grow with the Earth, even so it is impossible for impure impressions to arise in the absence of an impure *ahamtā*. Thus it becomes evident that the most decadent sense of 'I' (*patita ahamtā*) gets transformed right away by taking refuge in the Divine. Like the clay, surrendering itself to the potter, becomes useful to the potter according to the ability and strength of the potter, even so *śarnāgatta* becomes useful for infinite majesty and delectable sweetness of the *śaranya* and becomes the recipient of *śaranya's* love. It is a law that the person who is useful becomes the object of love of the person he is useful to. According to this very law, the *śarnāgatta* becomes the *śaranya*

of the *śaranya*. How can there be more easier and independent path than this which can freely make a spiritual aspirant *śaranya* of the *śaranya*.

Question—Why there is no pride in the *śarnāgatta*?

Answer—No trace of pride is left in the *śarnāgatta*. The pride of humility is also pride indeed. The *śarnāgatta* is not impoverished since he has complete self-identity with the *śaranya*. There is a difference between sense of impoverishment or enslavement (*dāsatā*) and the sense of own-ness. Enslavement leads to bondage; own-ness leads to independence. With the attainment of own-ness, the feeling of separateness comes to an end. And with the ending of separateness, independence is attained on its own accord. With the arising of separateness, some form of pride is born in the living beings. The pride melts away by taking divine refuge. With the melting away of pride, separateness gets merged into oneness (or diversity gets merged into unity). There is no fear for one who has attained oneness.²⁴ Hence, *śarnāgatta* becomes fearless in every manner.

Question— How sense of separateness or difference comes to an in its entirety in the *śarnāgatta*?

Answer—Separateness is ‘hatred’ (*dveṣa*) and oneness is ‘love’ (*prema*). There is no defect or disorder which does not spring from [the sense of] separateness; and there is no virtue or merit that does

²⁴ To experience fear, there has to be the ‘other’ to be afraid of.

not arise from [the sense of] oneness. Therefore, separateness is the cause of all defects and oneness if the cause of all virtues. Even the subtlest-most tendency for activity (*pravṛtti*) cannot arise without the sense of 'I;' but no need for any course or tendency remains upon becoming steadfast in *śarnāgatti*. Hence the tendency gets thoroughly finished (*nishesha*). With the ending of tendency for activity, the pride melts away in the same manner as the ice does with the heat of the Sun. Thus it become indisputably proven that there is no other means to completely end the sense of difference or separateness without taking the divine refuge.

Question—Who is eligible to become *śarnāgatta*?

Answer—Only he is eligible to become *śarnāgatta* who, making proper use of the available situation, experiences the need for himself of the eternal-life and the eternal-nectar [of delight]. A person who keeps decreasing his value during the unfavorable circumstances and keeps getting struck in attachment during favorable circumstances; he who accepts defeat in view of circumstances, and becomes disheartened about the goal, such a person can neither be a believer (or theist) nor a *śarnāgatta*.

To regard mere conviction or faith to be our [true] self is to diminish our value according to *tāttvik*²⁵ understanding. To have a feeling of imperfection in

²⁵ To understand things in their essential or true reality or essence is called *tāttvik* understanding.

the object of love or to have a doubt in one's sense of faith or conviction is to diminish our value according to theistic understanding. Not to have inclination according to one's conviction, or to be attracted toward an object, state, and situation, or to have an inclination which is not a means of fulfillment for someone, is to diminish our value according practical standpoint.

Although surrendering or refuge (*śarana*) is the strength of the weak, yet refuge becomes impossible for a person who accepts the defeat. The meaning of 'strength of the weak' is just this—that the *śarnāgatta*, without any help from anyone else, attains success solely on the basis of the conviction of *śarnāgatti*. Everyone person is always free to form conviction. When the sense of 'I' gets transformed by taking refuge, then the value of *śarnāgatta* increases in the eyes of the world. That is, he does not depend upon the collective organization for his value. Exactly at that time, in *śarnāgatta* life, virtues such as desirelessness, freedom from malice, fearlessness, equanimity, joy, etc. start developing automatically. *Śarnāgatta* does not invite, so to speak, any virtue, nor does he try to learn it. Thus according to this viewpoint, it is highly essential to merge the *ahamā* that is divided into several spheres into the notion—'I am verily His own,' which happens quite easily on its own accord with the conviction of *śarnāgatti*.

Question—When does one attain the eligibility to take divine refuge?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—When one is able to make proper use of one's powers that are received from the Infinite; when one is not disheartened about his goal—in this state, the feeling to take refuge arises on its own accord.

We should behold the infinite love of that Infinite Existence/Reality which cannot live without us. What a wonder of wonders that, that reality of objects which is abandoning us constantly, we keep running towards it negligently. And that Infinite Reality which constantly tries to embrace us lovingly, we remain stranger to it. A thoughtful person should completely end this state which is born of negligence, which can be freely accomplished through the feeling of *śarnāgatta*.

Question—What is the theistic philosophy?

Answer—To acknowledge the Lord without having seen the Lord, on the basis of hearing about the Lord is theism. Theism is the path of faith and not a path of reflection. That from which the whole world has originated, that in which the whole world exists, and that which is the illuminator of the whole world—the world does not know Him. One has heard about God, but no one has known God. Not to have doubt in the Lord one has heard about is theistic philosophy.

Question—If we do not apply our intellect [to our faith in God], would not that be blind faith?

Answer—The faith is blind indeed. It does not involve reflection. Ever since people started applying their thought to faith, they have developed one God into several forms. Some has said God has a form

(*sākāra*) while others said that God is without any form (*nirākāra*). This is to make God a food for our thought. He from whom the whole world has originated, He who is unborn cannot be known by the mind and intellect that are created. We have to accept That which we cannot know.

“God exists”—this is the beginning of the path of theism. “How is God?”—this dispute arises because we define God with our narrow intellect.

“God is verily like this”—this is the delusion. On account of this delusion, one theist fights with another theist. “How is God?”—only God can decide about it; you cannot. In the beginning, whatever form of God appeals to you, accept God to be of that form. Your accepted God will not be of inferior quality. Howsoever may we call Him, He understands our language. He recognizes our nature, interest, and our feeling of devotion. When we will keep transforming ourselves in divine love, then, at the end, we will attain that Lord which is.

Someone has worshiped the Lord with attributes (*saguṇa*). Someone said that this (*saguṇa-upāsana*) is the agitation of mind. Someone worshiped the Lord without attributes (*nirguṇa*). Someone said—how can one who has form worship the formless? Both of them will be losers. Therefore, do not argue about the nature of is God. That “God is”—just accept this!

Do not let your faith become weak due to some fear or enticement. Since you are a believer (theist), do not give up your belief, come what may.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Have faith in the heard God; let go of the known world—this is theism.

To accept the sovereignty of God means that we do not need anything. The sad thing is that we say that ‘I cannot make my mind dwell on God.’ When you have ten different worldly needs and the eleventh one is God’s need—how can you expect your mind to dwell on God? Then only 1/11th part of your mind will dwell on God. For one, we call the mind as our own, while at the same time we want to fix it on God. This dishonesty will not take us anywhere. While remaining our own, our mind cannot dwell on God, not even in three eons of time. For the theist, all his mind, life-breath, body, all and everything verily belongs to the Lord. He does not need anything for himself; he does not even need the Lord for himself. “I am of the Lord; the Lord is mine.” I do not need anything from my Lord. Whatever the Lord wants, the Lord may decree for me—gives me birth, sends me to hell, meets, or does not meet. He who wants anything cannot be a theist. What to say of the world, he who may toss away even *moksha* like a football—he alone can have his name written in the list of the theists.

The practice of the theist is—1. All is verily of the Lord. 2. The Lord dwells in everyone. 3. The Lord is all there is; there is nothing else apart from the Lord. Do you regard yourself eligible for any one of these classes or categories? You yourself should decide about.

The Lord is not unattained; the Lord is not invisible. But the relationship of the [truly] unattained

(person, thing, state, situation) and the faith of the unattained does not let us attain the Lord's love.

How to fix our mind on the Lord? Do not raise this question. Have faith in God; acknowledge your relationship with God.

But we are theists so that we can have the pleasure of meditative absorption (*samādhi*), so that we may become fulfilled by attaining the objects of the world. This is not theism.

The Lord is not incompetent; He can do everything. But it is not the job of the theist to think about His duty. The steadfastness of the theist lies in this understanding—"God may be of no use, but He is mine. Howsoever He may be; wherever He may be; I have extinguished several times; I will sacrifice myself one more time for His name, but I will not leave Him. He is mine; I will trust Him for sure." Accepting thusly, be worriless; be fearless. This will bring about self-identity with the Lord; strength, peace, dearness—all felicities will come with this [conviction].

Question—Who is a theist?

Answer—There is one who regards the worlds as smaller than himself. He who is not himself content within himself, such a high minded person believe in the Lord. Then there is another in whose life incapability has com, he who cannot do anything. The Lord is attained to both of these on its own accord, without any spiritual practice.

Question—How to fix the mind on the Lord forever?

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

Answer—Understand this in a thoughtful manner—what is the true nature of that in which I feel interested? When the effect of the true nature of untruth will dawn on us, then we will be able to fix our mind on the Lord. Mind is not bad. No one is bad. Do not regard anyone as the cause of your joy and sorrow. It is because the world is inert; it cannot give sorrow to that which consists of pure consciousness. And the Lord has no sorrow [in himself]; how will He give sorrow? Therefore, there is no one else who is the cause of our joy and sorrow. The sorrow comes in our life by the benevolent Dispensation [of the Lord]. The sorrow comes to end the attachment with the pleasure; the joy comes to make us generous. Both joy and sorrow are verily spiritual resources.

1. Do not be afraid of sorrow caused by non-fulfillment of volitions (*saṅkalpas*).
2. Do not have any temptation for the pleasure arising out of the fulfillment of volitions (*saṅkalpas*).
3. Do not be content in the cessation of *saṅkalpas*.
4. Reject [even] the independence.
Only then you can attain the Lord's love.

Therefore, 1. Accept God for God's sake. 2. Do not ask for anything from God. 3. Serve the entire universe, regard it as the Lord. 4. Regard every object as Lord's and worship the Lord with every object. 5. Regard the Lord's trust and the

Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj

Lord's love to be your very existence. 6. Ask the Lord's love from the Lord.

Not the Lord, but the Lord's trust, the Lord's love that is needed—this is verily the spiritual practice of the theist.

Question—Shrī Mahārāj Jī! We want to know your introduction.

Answer—The “body” always dwells in death. But “I” always abide in deathlessness.

Question—Shrī Mahārāj Jī! We want to write your life-story.

Answer—Write it down: My life-story is—*Benevolent Influence of Sorrow!*

Question— Swāmī jī Mahārāj! Where do you plan to go after finishing the program here?

Answer— How would a “ball” know, in which direction the “player” is going to toss it away.

Prashnōttarī (Santvānī)

॥ Shrī Hariḥ Sharṇam ॥

Hariḥ Sharṇam

Hariḥ Sharṇam, Hariḥ Sharṇam, Hariḥ Sharṇam.
Hariḥ Sharṇam, Hariḥ Sharṇam, Hariḥ Sharṇam.

Universal Chant

O' Lord of heart, O' Lord of all,
O' Lord of life-breath, O' Supreme Lord.
O' Lord of heart, O' Lord of all,
O' Lord of life-breath, O' Supreme Lord.
O' Lord of heart, O' Lord of all,
O' Lord of life-breath, O' Supreme Lord.
O' Lord of heart, O' Lord of all,
O' Lord of life-breath, O' Supreme Lord.
O' All-Powerful One, O' Ocean of Compassion,
Kindly accept our humble submission.
O' All-Powerful One, O' Ocean of Compassion,
Kindly accept our humble submission.
Remove our faults by showing our faults,
Bestow upon all Thy Nectarine Love.
Remove our faults by showing our faults,
Bestow upon all Thy Nectarine Love.
O' Lord! Remove the sorrow of all,
Remove the sorrow of all, O' Lord!
O' Lord! Remove the sorrow of all,
Remove the sorrow of all, O' Lord!



The Invaluable Literature of ‘Mānav-Sevā-Sangh’

1. Chit-Shuddhī (in two parts)
2. Darshan aur Nīti
3. Duhkha kā Prabhāv
4. Jīvan-Darshan (in two parts)
5. Jīvan-Patha
6. Mānav Kī Māng
7. Mānav-Darshan
8. Mānavtā Ke Mūla Siddhānt
9. Mangalmeya Vidhān
10. Mook Satsang and Nitya Yōg
11. Pāthyey (in two parts)
12. Preranā Patha
13. Prabōdhanī
14. Sādhan-Nidhi
15. Sādhan-Tattva
16. Sādhan-Trivenī
17. Safaltā Kī Kungī
18. Sant Jīvan Darpaṇ
19. Sant Pattrāvalī (in three parts)
20. Sant Vānī (in eight parts)
21. Prashanōttrī (in two parts)
22. Sant-Samāgam (in three parts)
23. Sant-Saurabh
24. Sant-Udbōdhan
25. Satsang aur Sādhan
26. Sant Hridayōdgār
27. Jīvan-Vivēchan (in seven parts)
28. Mānav Sevā Sangh kā Parichyey
29. Mein Kī Khōj
30. Krāntikārī Santvānī
31. A Saint’s Call to Mankind
32. Ascent Triconfluent
33. Sādhanā— Spotlight by a Saint

Second Prayer

My Lord!

*By Thine Nectarine, Almighty,
Purifying and Motiveless Grace,
Grant all mankind the ability
to respect discriminative intellect;
and to make proper use of one's strength.
And Oh! Ocean of Compassion!
By Thine boundless Compassion
Destroy quickly attachment and hatred.
Let the life of everyone be full of
Service, Renunciation, and Love.*

Om Anand!

Om Anand!

Om Anand!



Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj

To obtain Books and Audio Cds of Brahmleen
Pujayeypād Swāmī Shrī Sharnānandjī Mahārāj,

Please contact.

Mānav Sevā Sangh, Vrindāvan—281121 (Mathurā)

Uttar Pradesh, India

Phone: (0565) 2442778



www.swamisharnanandji.org



Om Śrī Kṛṣṇarpanamastu