

# SATSANG

Vol. 1 No. 9

September 20, 1973

Biweekly

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AT WASHINGTON SATSANG MEETINGS

- Q. Science is bringing forth new discoveries every day. The **Fivefold Path** given in the Vedas is ancient. Has nothing been added to it since it was first given?
- A. (Editor's reply) The curriculum revealed at the time of creation needs no revision. The **Fivefold Path** connotes eternal principles of religion. The principles charter the path, but the mapping has to be done by each of us individually. The **Fivefold Path** is the Divine blueprint for our happy journey on earth. Since the Path is eternal, it is equally applicable today as it was when given. It is applicable in toto to a person living in Washington, D.C., Tokyo, Paris, London, the desert of Arabia, an African forest or an Indian village.

To search for the One amongst the many, the changeless amongst the changing is the business of spiritual science. Man has changed through millenniums, mostly outwardly. The passions, lust, desires remain basically the same. Technology affords fresher avenues to sense enjoyments, and hence the problem manifests in diverse forms, but basically it is the same problem. This is the reason why the old solutions given through the various messengers of God, viz. Krishna, Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and others are ever valid.

Revealed knowledge is complete in itself. It needs no support for proof, for proof lies in experience. In matters spiritual, anything that needs long-winded intellectual gymnastics for proof is not worth the game. The Upanishads define Self knowledge in this way:

"Knowing which nothing remains to be known."

For the spiritual aspirant, the Upanishads state:

"He who says he knows, knows not; he who says he does not know knows."

Physical sciences are proliferating new discoveries. Is this not a proof that they are not complete in themselves? The **Fivefold Path**, revealed through the Vedas and sanctified and reiterated by all Divine messengers, needs no revision. This itself is the proof of its wholesomeness. The **Fivefold Path** takes care of you as and where you stand. It is the way for you, whatever be your station in life. Discoveries in physical sciences help to blast beliefs, but they also bolster faith; they foster faith. They accentuate the search for Truth. This is a big asset. In medieval times science was never on the side of religion. Today science helps us to arrive at the true perspective of religion. Furthermore, science threatens to destroy us if we do not establish ourselves in that perspective. People are no longer threatened by Hell and Paradise after death. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." The Kingdom of Heaven is coming nearer with advances in the physical sciences which point toward religion. For the first time in recorded history the scientist is on our side.

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From a discourse at Baltimore given by the editor:

"You say that you are meditating. Remember, meditation is not an action. It is a condition. You say, 'I was sleeping.' You do not say, 'I am sleeping' as the very statement is a contradiction of itself. Before meditation comes concentration and contemplation. Meditation is a condition which one is ushered into by the practice of concentration and contemplation.

"We speak of the neolithic age, the stone age, the industrial age and so on. Centuries elapse in between any two ages. But in the life of a person who is living today, many powerful ages have been sandwiched. With the explosion of the first atom bomb at Nevada the atomic age was ushered in. This was the fission of the atom. Then with the hydrogen bomb came fusion of the atom, and many times more destructive power was in the puny hands of man. With Sputniks, Apollos, Mariners came the space age. With methods of biological warfare the scientist placed a dastardly weapon in human hands, and the new age of bioengineering began. The breaking of the DNA code and similar findings may lead to many inconceivable results if the scientist does not seek reorientation in some other direction. A whole gamut of guilt is committed without the guilt complex. All these discoveries and their applications have had a terrific impact on society, especially when they came in a quick succession in one lifetime. The human mind has not learned to keep pace with these changes. The mind is crushed as it were, and psychiatry rules the roost. Under such conditions there is no time to lose, for the destruction is near if we do not take heed. This is the time when the message of the Fivefold Path needs to be implemented in toto without any complacency."

"You say, 'My finger is cut.; my leg is hurt.' Surely this means that you are not the finger; you are not the leg. By process of elimination you can conclude that you are not the body. Which is the entity that says 'my finger, my leg'? Who am I? This search is Swadhyaya, the fifth aspect of the Fivefold Path.

"It is futile to attempt to reach the soul through the agency of the mind. You have to transcend the mind to arrive at Reality. Can you imagine an apple tree going back to the seed stage? The mind does go back to that stage. This is SAMADHI with seed. The next stage is seedless state of the mind. Increasing interest in the occult sciences which we find today is a reaction to the conditions that we live in. That there is something beyond the physical is slowly being acknowledged by the masses. But it would be wrong to suppose that the doors of true mysticism can be opened by the exercise of mind manifesting phenomena."

TEN COMMANDMENTS  
of  
PARAMASADGURU SHRI GAJANAN MAHARAJ

COMMANDMENT SEVEN: BRAHMACHARYA

Penance of behavioral pattern for unfoldment of the Divine.  
ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा राजा राष्ट्रं विरक्षति ।  
आचार्यो ब्रह्मचर्येण ब्रह्मचारिणामिच्छति ॥  
Brahmacharyena tapasa raja rashtram virakshati  
Acharyo brahmacharyena brahmacharinamichhati (Atharva Veda II-5-17)

Purport: Wisdom dawns by penance of brahmacharya.  
A nation sustains by penance of brahmacharya.

Brahmacharya is commonly understood as celibacy or sexual continence. The root meaning of the Sanskrit word connotes setting up a pattern of behavior in consonance with the harmonious unfoldment of the Spirit within. The aim of all endeavor is "Not my will but Thy will be done".

Celibacy results in conservation of Prana (Life Force) for more fruitful purposes, provided mind is trained to cooperate. Brahmacharya means control of sexual lust, avoidance of overindulgence in sensuality and consequently attempting to rid oneself of hatred, envy, greed, fear and anxiety. Agnihotra, the first aspect of the Fivefold Path of the Vedas, is a potent material aid to bring about the transformation of the mind.

Celibacy brings about immense resilience, and we experience an influx of energy at all levels. Conservation of sexual energy contributes to spiritual regeneration, and we delve deep into subtle tiers of consciousness. The flow of energy which was drained off towards the sexual function can be channeled towards the higher task of Self realization.

It is not possible to control sex without simultaneously exerting control over all sense organs. To achieve this state we must first learn the 'why' of it. How does it concern me? Why should I take the trouble to undertake this penance? Is it going to benefit me in my worldly life? This is part of Swadhyaya, the fifth aspect of the Fivefold Path. We soon realize that we must learn to exert control over our thoughts. Practice of the previous six commandments leads to purification of the intellect and sublimation of thought. It is a matter of experience that control over the palate helps a good deal to control sex. We then learn to distinguish between hunger and appetite.

The brahmacharya way of life is a gift from the ancient Vedic seers. All your hidden treasures will be unsealed by its practice. Egotistic pattern of behavior is blasted by practice of Brahmacharya. Everyone wants to command, but none wants to obey. Resuscitation of brahmacharya way of life will teach us to be humble as little children, and the gates of "The Kingdom of Heaven" will be thrown open. Brahmacharya way of life rids us of all misery that is our desert. It is the only way to put an end to all misery.

Modern medicine has failed to rid humanity of misery for the simple reason that it does not take into account man in his totality, i.e. body, mind, and soul. Daring attempts are made by modern psychiatry to bring happiness to the corporeal frame by manipulating psychological channels. But again they do not go beyond body-mind complex, and hence the supreme necessity of spiritual discipline to lead a happy life on earth. The Fivefold Path ushers you into brahmacharya way of life. The first two aspects of the Fivefold Path are material aids to the process of spiritual unfoldment.

Man is not a simple contraption which responds to stimulus inputs. Bio-psychological operants need to be considered by therapeutic psychiatry if it aims at bringing peace to mankind. Brahmacharya way of life, the Fivefold Path, has to be imprinted upon children in their most impressionable period. Behavioral patterns have to be stamped even before kindergarten age if education aims to evolve Self culture.

Our happiness depends upon our way of life. Action and intellect act and react. Good karma sublimates the intellect. Purified intellect exerts control over sense organs. This leads to imperturbability of the mind, indifference to the duality of pleasure and pain, and happiness is ushered in like a ripe fruit falling in your lap. If mind is overruled by senses, the intellect gets disfigured and bad action follows. If mind joins the intellect in its power to choose between right and wrong senses are compelled to submit. This is how the spiritual discipline works.

Psychiatry engineers artifacts which are external. Psychiatry is administered while spiritual practice is volitional. Brahmacharya brings about changes in the will power. It teaches us to be best managers of our energy potential. The drain on energy is plugged. Targets of primary importance are stressed so that we come to know for ourselves what is necessary and right for us.

Let us learn that objects are mere symbols whence desire is triggered. Control of sense organs may be restrictive in the beginning. Anything that is restrictive may be disagreeable, but in due course of time the burden is redeemed and there is nothing but joy. This is the process of Tapa (penance), the third aspect of the Fivefold Path.

"The journey of life can be safely conducted and the Supreme world of Vishnu reached by keeping a watchful eye over the senses. The body is a chariot to which the senses are yoked like horses. The charioteer, understanding holds the horses in check with reins that are mind. The soul occupies the chariot; the world of objects is the path over which the senses move. If the reins are not held wisely the senses will go out of control and the chariot will not reach the destination. Wise man controls the mind and his senses are like good horses." (Kathopanishad III-3,4,5,9)

"Mind can be brought by practice and detachment." (Bhagavat Geeta 6-35)

Let us organize our tomorrow by self discipline today. Let us not defile the bodily tabernacle and turn it into a den of thieves. The thieves are passion, anger, greed, temptation, pride and jealousy. Let us learn to exert control over sense organs. It cannot be done overnight. It can neither come by mere wishful thinking or through listening to intellectual discourses. It comes only in the company of saintly persons. Let us imbibe the spiritual discipline in our lives as householders. Let us inculcate in our children by practicing what we preach.

From a painfully restrictive society of medieval times we have rocketed ourselves into exuberance of permissiveness. Neither is conducive to freedom. We behave like freed people and not free people. Freedom implies freedom from worry, tension, anxiety, misery. This involves discipline. The words disciple and discipline stem from the same root.

The younger generation is brought up with jet planes, T.V. spaceships, mass communication media, instant foods and psychotherapeutic operatns. They refuse to put faith in merely action-oriented legalistic moral code of institutionalized religions. They are also familiar with the instability, insecurity, void and tension syndrome of which they are hapless victims. They try to seek relief in drugs, sex and hippy nonconformism with no success. They are at the crossroads of destiny. It is either perish en masse or live together in tune with the Divine blueprint. Accentuated intellectual faculty no more permits them to adhere to hypocritical make-believe morality. Attenuated mental faculty puts heavy obstacles in the determination to practice the spiritual path. Under such conditions only the package deal of the Fivefold Path of Vedic wisdom grounded in scientific foundation of revealed knowledge will pull us up from the abysmal state. All messengers of God, all prophets have stressed the same message of the Fivefold Path in their revelations in words suitable to their times. In the scientific society that we live in we have to revert to the ancient language of Vedic wisdom. This is the Fivefold Path.

Brahmacharya way of life is character building in the light of scientific knowledge. Man is considered in his entirety as body, mind, and soul and evolution

proceeds with this premise. There are fixed natural laws in the physical realm; this is borne out by methods of experimental science. There are fixed laws in the mental and the spiritual realm also. While dealing with human happiness it is not enough to consider only the psychosomatic man. Sealing off the threshold at endocrine or psychosomatic level will never lead us out of misery. Let us repeat; man is body, mind and soul, and pay heed to the spirit that unfolds within. Practice of Tapa (penance) of brahmacharya alone will bring us out of misery and land us in the eternal "Kingdom of Heaven" which is our birthright.

Our daily actions are the warp and the woof of the pattern of life we create for ourselves. It might be useless to talk about the spiritual path if it does not benefit us in the work-a-day world. By observing the commandments we become more equipped to face our worldly problems. Practice of brahmacharya makes us a different person. Our attitudes change, and the world is different person. Our attitudes change and the world is different. We must try to understand why this mode of life is a necessity for happy living and then we must, with determination, take steps to tread the Fivefold Path. This is the essence of the message of all prophets.

Continence with full cooperation of mind and intellect is the cornerstone of a happy life as a householder. It blesseth both ourselves and society.

SAPTA SHLOKI  
(Seven Verses)

Commentary on verse 1 (continued 8)

Yada shrushtam jagat sarvam  
Tada Lokapitamahah  
Chaturveda samayuktam  
Shashwatam dharmamadishat

यदा सृष्टं जगत्सर्वम्  
तदा लोकपितामहः।  
चतुर्वेदसमायुक्तम्  
शाश्वतं धर्ममादिशत्॥

**Purport:** Along with creation, the Almighty Father revealed the eternal principles of religion (Law) embodied in four Vedas.

The eternal principles of religion (Satya Dharma) were revealed at the time of creation. They are summarized in five words.

YAJNYA: Purification of PRANIC content through the agency of fire.  
DAAN: Sharing of assets in a spirit of humility.  
TAPA: Penance of body, mind and speech.  
KARMA: Virtuous deeds.  
SWADHYAYA: Study of Self.

**This is the Fivefold Path.** The same message was reiterated by all messengers of God in words suited to the conditions in which they manifested.

All our happiness depends on the attitudes of the mind. To establish ourselves in happiness we have to remove the carnal aspects of the mind. The Bible says, "Carnal mind is enmity against God." Our physical appetites pull us in various directions and we have to learn to control the senses. The lust and greed need to be reduced as the first step in any spiritual practice.

If we can utilize an electronic gadget to achieve this, let us welcome it provided it does not introduce any derogatory factors. Mind is much subtler than the electromagnetic waves known to science as the subtlest thing. The Vedas prescribe a method to achieve this result.

Mind is too subtle to manipulate, but there is an interesting relationship

between mind and PRANA (life force). They are like ~~ob~~verse and reverse of the same coin. Any change introduced into the PRANIC content automatically affects the mind. How can we change the PRANIC content? Any change introduced into the atmospheric content results in change in PRANIC content. Thus we can now deal with a much grosser subject than the mind and through the agency of PRANA bring about beneficial changes in mental attitudes. This is the threshold where medicine, psychiatry, biology and chemistry meet. This is the beginning of the future science of bioenergetics into which men of science are groping at present.

The above picture is taken from the Vedas which were revealed at the time of creation. This is the process of purification through the agency of fire (YAJNYA).

Phenomenal things are intimately related and determine each other. YAJNYA is a material aid on the spiritual path and hence forms the first aspect of the Fivefold Path for happy living. YAJNYA has three inputs.

- (1) Burning of specific organic substances into fire prepared without mineral oil.
- (2) Vibrational content of MANTRA.
- (3) Timings of rotation of certain planets and the radiational effect on our longitude.

For preparing fire special varieties of wood are prescribed. All these trees are noted for their medicinal values. Clarified butter (ghee) from cow's milk and cowdung are two important items. YAJNYA is sometimes described as a process of fumigation.

Fresh cowdung possesses the property to disinfect bacteria which causes fever. Many baneful germs are killed by its mere smell. In many countries of Asia and parts of Europe like Italy, cowdung used to be an important item in sanatoriums to disinfect the area. Only a couple of decades ago it was the practice in Europe to give a drink of cowdung and water to patients suffering from chronic dysentery. Ancient treatises on medicine state that many bodily disorders could be set right by cowdung.

Fire should be prepared with branches of specific medicinal trees and cowdung. Offerings to fire should be made when it is fully ablaze. Raw rice and ghee are prescribed as offerings to fire in the smallest form of YAJNYA which any householder can practice with great benefit. This is AGNIHOTRA. The oil obtained from rice embryo becomes thick and buttery. It contains much olein and albuminous substance.

The resultant chemical reaction depends on various factors, some of which are stated below.

- (1) Nature of the substance.
- (2) Proportion of the substances offered to fire.
- (3) Temperature range during various stages of combustion at various points of fire pot.
- (4) Quantity of air supply.
- (5) Interaction among the products.
- (6) The influence of various agencies (especially light) through which diffusion takes place.

Most effective fumigation takes place during the temperature range 300° - 600°C; oxidation of these products leads to formation of formaldehyde. It escapes partly into air without immediate decomposition. Vapors of formaldehyde so formed arrest putrefaction. They also help sterilization of household dust. In this process formaldehyde is produced in accompaniment of water vapor in large quantity and it acts as a powerful disinfectant. The other product is formic acid which is also a disinfecting agent. The nonbacterial parasites are also affected. Carbon dioxide produced in Agnihotra acts as a mechanical vehicle to carry antiseptic and vermifuge products to surrounding areas.

Vibrations effect changes in the matter of bioorganisms. Music played to plants increases the yield and also brings about a qualitative change. Our food goes not only to building up the tissues and muscles but also to the mind. This qualitative change in mental realms will be borne out by scientists in the near future. Music played to palm trees yields more juice. Music played to cows causes an increase in milk yield. Vibrations have an effect on the atmosphere.

Sunrise and sunset are the timings prescribed for Agnihotra. At sunset the intensity curve of pathogenic bacteria is steep and the fumigation is an aid to undo the harm. There is also the effect of intensity variations in radiation from the cosmic objects. Full moon day, no moon day are some of the important occasions when the situation changes.

Changes in the atmospheric content through the agency of fire ██████ causes changes in the PRANIC content which brings a proportional automatic change in the mental attitudes of man. This is the modus operandi of a Yajnya. What cannot be achieved by years of efforts is achieved within a few weeks by Agnihotra. The tension on mind is reduced; some factors that go to depress the nervous system are eliminated. Our lust and greed are curbed. Thus, Agnihotra is an important aid for the spiritual aspirant. This is especially so in the polluted conditions of our existence.

A short summary of the Fivefold Path is given below by Sally Hobart:

### THE FIVEFOLD PATH

The first two pathways, briefly described below, are largely concerned with material effects and benefits.

(1) AGNIHOTRA is an antipollutionary measure. It purifies the atmosphere and consequently purifies the mind, bringing mental peace and material fulfillment. The effectiveness of agnihotra is due to its three inputs: (a) Timing (it is done at sunrise and sunset to coincide with the bombardment of cosmic rays at these times), (b) the substances used, and (c) a short mantra which is chanted to cause a specific vibrational effect. As a result of agnihotra the outgoing tendencies of the mind are reduced, thus lessening the pull of desires which disturbs tranquility. Thus, it is an aid to the spiritual aspirant.

(2) DAAN means "dividing assets." It is a heartfelt offering made to another person. It benefits you by helping you to cultivate an attitude of detachment from possessions and also guarantees many-fold material return for the giver. Daan involves giving a needed article such as money, food, clothing, etc., in a spirit of humility.

The next three pathways deal less with material consideration and more with one's own inner spiritual work.

(3) TAPA means penance. Tapa gives you access to the "Kingdom of Heaven within." A Sanskrit word meaning "to heat," tapa is the control of the mind and senses, the practice of which creates friction. Each person knows and decides for himself in what areas he needs the greatest self-control. If his life is one of comfort, he must learn to do with less until slowly he reduces to necessities. He must go at his own pace, however, so that his progress will be steady and permanent. The practice of tapa leads to inner detachment and lessens dependence on external conditions. It results in an influx of energy and increased awareness of the latent powers within us. When dependence on outside conditions is reduced, true happiness dawns. Performance of agnihotra and daan make the practice of tapa much easier by creating an atmosphere of tranquility for the mind.

(4) KARMA means action. According to the law of karma, you "reap what you sow." There is no action, good or bad, that does not have its consequences. The ideal is to employ our power of discrimination so that right action is always taken. Further, we must not seek the fruit of our actions or have expectations. Our duty is to perform right action regardless of what others do. With the practice of the first three pathways, our duty becomes clear, and we have the strength of will to carry it out. As the chains of karma are loosened, real knowledge dawns, and we are ushered into a state of peace and happiness.

(5) SWADHYAYA means Self study. As we practice the previous four pathways, we become aware of the true nature of Self. We strive to realize our "Self." The study of higher Knowledge given by the Messengers of Almighty (Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, etc.) sheds light on the Path. It consolidates our faith and yearning to unfold the Divine within. Swadhyaya is the awareness of the necessity of following the Fivefold Path to peace and bliss.

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SATSANG is published on the first and third Thursdays of every month.  
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