

Gururaj. Shall we meditate for a few moments to settle down? Should this be up high or is it okay. Ah, the expert at work! Many of you might know the meaning of this greeting, I'm sure you do, most of you. It means I salute the Divinity within you. That's what it means and these greetings are exchanged because Divinity resides in each and everyone. Good. Fine. Shall we start off with a question?

Questioner. Guruji, is the personality chosen by the soul before birth in order to learn certain lessons and does it become modified in any way by experience? Will the meditation techniques change our personality and would it help our evolution if we tried to change the less attractive aspects of our personality?

Gururaj. The answer is yes, next question! (Gururaj laughs) It's a very good question. Yes. As we said earlier in the first half, that we are nothing else but a bundle of all the experiences that we have gained, over all those millions of years perhaps, and that constitutes our personality. Now, through meditational practices changes come to the personality. For example, through certain experiences in life, one becomes hard or one becomes obnoxious, one becomes a heckler or a troublemaker or whatever. Now if that person is sincere enough, that will cease in him, for he will start viewing everything within the framework of love. Take the example of a heckler or a troublemaker. Why does he do that? What is the discrepancy in his personality that would make him do that? Of course, the teacher would always look upon such a person with love and compassion because he understands that there is something basically wrong here. What is the mechanism that is making the person tick? And the most commonest thing one would find is that there is such a blockage in him that he cannot express the love that is inherent in him. So, therefore because he cannot express the love, his awareness is limited. And, by his awareness being limited, he had a lesser understanding and many times even the answer to a question might not even be understood. So, when we look at these things and study the personality, we don't feel pity but we feel a greater love and a greater compassion. Now, in like manner, meditation does change the personality. It takes away the hardness that is there and brings that mellowness which love inspires, which love inspires and it teaches a person how to love. It teaches a person the meaning of love and not only that, it teaches a person to become love. That is the basic change required in today's man.

Now, because of the vast experiences one has had in lifetimes, there are conflicting thoughts, conflicting impressions in man's mind and these conflicting impressions has to be resolved. Now how does one resolve them? If one goes through all the various experiences and tries to resolve them one by one, it will take millions of years. And that is the process of psychoanalysis for example, where they try to find the cause of things and thinking that by finding the cause of things, the cause can be altered. But if the personality is defective in itself, how can the cause be altered? That

is the scientific way. The mystical way is this, that you don't analyse the causes. You go to the light. In other words you don't analyse darkness, you switch on the light. Darkness disappears. That is the shortest path, the shortest route towards finding that inner joy, and that inner peace that we all think about.

There's another part to this question, is the personality chosen by the soul before birth in order to learn certain lessons and does it become modified in any way by experience? Yes. Now, the personality chosen by the soul is not a choosing, for there is no difference between the soul and the personality. Where does the soul reside? Does it reside in your head or your leg or your head or your arms? No. You are the soul. Therefore the soul is the personality. And, this life that one has taken, is definitely to learn lessons.

Now in the subtle spheres of existence, after leaving this body behind, one goes through a process of evaluation. We evaluate all things we have done in all our lifetimes. And, evaluating that, we choose our circumstances in which we are born. There is a long talk I gave at one of the Courses, - which one was it would you remember - on life after death. There is - Keith will give you the details where I spoke of the mechanics of what happens you know, after death, the life after death. It would be nice if the various groups get a copy and listen to it, so I won't go too much into those details. But one thing is for sure, that the body perishes and yet the body is not destructible. Even all matter remains eternal. It will not remain eternal in the same form. It will disintegrate and go back to its original elements, dust to dust, and water to water. And in that way the atoms that compose the human body is not destroyed at all but it will be attracted to its like. Birds of a feather flock together, it's a true saying. Fine. So the body changes from time to time. But the subtle body in man, which is the carrier and conveyor of all experiences that one has had, has to carry on to resolve the conflicts that has been created. For example, the conflict between love and hate, the conflicts experienced between pleasure and pain, all those conflicts has to be resolved. And to resolve every conflict, one by one is a process that will take millions of years. But this process is not necessary. We do not need to analyse the mechanics of darkness. We switch on the light. And that we do through meditation, where we reach to the deepest layers, the source of light, and bring forth the light to banish all the darkness that is in our lives. So as one meditates and as one gains experiences, one is modifying oneself, modification of the mind is modification of the soul. For every experience gained, good or bad has its own particular value. No experience is for nothing. It must leave some impression.

Now within the range of evolution, we as humans on this planet, we are just a tiny speck within this vast continuum which we call eternity. And, one can digress by one's actions, not to a lower kingdom but within the strata of the human kingdom. One can be born again for example as a worse type of person than one is in this life, because of our actions,

because of our thoughts - for thought too is an action, it's a subtle action. And when the physical body acts, it is just a translation of that subtle action which started in the mind. So, thought and action, thought word and deed, as we normally talk about it, does modify the soul. Now here one thing must be understood and there has been many misconceptions about this that the soul is equated with the spirit. The soul is not the spirit. The spirit in man is forever pure. And the soul is the personality that has had its origin or impetus from that neutral power called the spirit. And it is the soul that evolves and modifies, because evolution necessarily implies change, all the time. The spirit is changeless. The soul is like the waves on the ocean, forever rising, and falling and rising and falling and yet at the depths of the ocean, the calmness, unchangeability is there all the time. So what we are trying to do by meditation is to modify the personality, modify the soul, in such a manner that the realisation dawns in man that there is no difference between the soul and the spirit. That is the realisation one has to come to.

At present we function as a soul, as a individual, but when 'I and my Father becomes one' then the individuality merges into universality and the wave is not seen as apart from the ocean, for the wave is the ocean. In Sanskrit they would say, 'Atman and Brahman is one'. In Christianity, 'I and my Father are one.' And so in Taoism, Buddhism, the same basic principle is expounded. So, the whole progress, the whole process of evolution is to modify that soul in such a way that it gains its primal purity and merges back into the purity which we know as the spirit.

Now the question goes on, 'Will the meditation techniques change our personality and would it help our evolution, if we tried to change the less attractive aspects of our personality?'

Very true. Yes. Now, how do we change the less attractive aspects of our personality? Now we said before, in the earlier part of the evening, that one has to have discipline. But discipline does not always work on its own. In the beginning it is such an effort. True discipline only comes when it is a spontaneous discipline. A child starts learning to play the piano. He spends hours and hours pressing the keys and says why doesn't mummy you know chase the piano teacher away? What a job this is. He'd say that because it is arduous. It is a job. It is work. Good. But as the child learns the piano later he will play Bach and Beethoven and Mozart, and Liszt, so automatically, spontaneously, he will flow just away with it. And he could even hold a philosophical conversation with you and he'd be so perfect in his playing. So in the beginning the work has to be put in. It is work. But when it becomes spontaneous, then the work goes out of work. And what is left is the 'W', for Wonderment and Wonderful. Do you see?

So, in order to change the personality one has to make a conscious effort. But man today generally speaking has the weaknesses because of his mind being so fragmented. We do realise ourselves that sometimes we think one thing,

say another thing and do another thing. We are pulled apart from various sides. We are fragmented. So now, because of this fragmentation of the human personality, how can he exercise discipline? He needs strength. And this strength is gained by meditation, for meditation integrates the personality, makes the mind, body and spirit flow in harmony; brings about a togetherness. And when this togetherness is brought about, discipline, self-help, self-effort in changing the unattractive aspects of our personalities becomes easier, for here we have the strength. If we have to knock in a six-inch nail into this floor, a goldsmith's hammer is not going to help much. Tinker, tinker, tinker, we'd be sitting here 'til next week perhaps, next year. We need a large hammer, a heavy one.

So, we need strength which is gained by meditation, which in turn helps us to discipline ourselves and very consciously, first with effort and then the effort becomes effortless, we change the unattractive aspects of our personality. And that is how the soul undergoes modification. That is how the soul evolves, because when we work towards the betterment of ourselves then we are automatically flowing with nature. And as we flow with nature, you'd find the swimming becomes more easier in the river. You are not swimming against the current but with the current. So you are exercising your strength in swimming and the current is also pushing you in the direction you want to go. Look at the mercy and the grace of Divinity, forever ready, forever ready to help the person that wants to better himself. And that is why the old saying that 'God only helps those that help themselves'. These old sayings have such deep meaning. One could write whole philosophies on these very simple sayings because they are not really understood. They remain just mental concepts. And they churn and churn and churn in the mind without coming to any realisations, without assimilating the truth behind these concepts. It is not the concept that is so important. It is the essence of the concept that is important because concepts are forever changing. Today you have one concept. Tomorrow that concept will change into something else. And then the next day another concept will be born from the previous one. But when the essence is maintained then the essence of the first concept is expanded and that is the impetus given in the formulation of a higher concept, until we reach the stage of assimilation. When we eat food, we throw out most of it. What we draw into our bodies is the essence of the food, the nutrients, the nutritional value of the food that gives us energy, that gives the body energy that keeps the body going.

So, during any lifetime, all experiences, and this does not apply this principle does not apply to human beings only but it also applies to animals. It also applies to plants. Human beings because having the ability to think can change and modify the unattractive parts of his personality but a plant for example needs help. We can help plants so much. It is also living matter. It also has life. I said the other day that there was a scientist, J C Bose, who proved to the world that there is a heartbeat in a cabbage. Recently there were experiments made in America where so many plants were wired up to

certain electronic devices and when one plant was burnt with a cigarette end, the other plants felt the pain. It was registered on the meter. Do you see the enormity of life and in all the various forms life can exist? Even in a stone, life is there, it is not dead. There is no death. Everything is vibrating with life.

If you study the stone, there are millions of systems of atoms and molecules swirling around. Where does that force come from to make the electron swirl around the nucleus, to preserve that cohesiveness. Where does that come from? That is the life force. That is the Divine force. We all say that God is omnipresent but little do we realise what omnipresence means. And then we say the stone is dead. If He was omnipresent and He is the life force, then isn't there life in the stone? And this can be seen. Leave the stone lying outside for a while and it takes changes. It changes. It changes not only because of the environment, because of the snow or sun or rain, but it changes because it has the life force within itself to make itself change, to subject itself to the environment. And such is man also, that he within himself has the ability to be subjected to the environment. Now in this modification process, a lot, everything depends upon us. We blame the environment. No. Through our spiritual practices, when we gain the inner strength, then any kind of environment does not affect us.

I, before dedicating myself entirely to the kind of work I am doing on a twenty-four hour basis, during those days before I started, I did a lot of social work. And, the social work involved trying to rehabilitate prisoners and various other kinds of things, for a certain amount of time per day was always dedicated to do something useful. I met one prisoner that spent a few years in jail. So the prisoner in the jail met people of a like kind and when he came out from jail, from the punishment, he came out a far worse person than what he was. Then I met another prisoner who through circumstances, which he perhaps drew unto himself - I am sure of that, he did - was in jail. And he spent two years in jail, but the two years in jail for him transformed his entire life. He became introspective. He analysed himself so thoroughly. He did not know of meditation so much at that time. He started meditating after I met him. He is a wonderful man today holding a very high position. But just through prayer, simple sincere prayer, - I have made quite a number of tapes on prayers, which you might like to listen to. The mechanics of prayer and what prayer really is. Prayer is not a bargaining with God. 'You do this for me Oh Lord and I will give so much in charity', business. That's not prayer. Yeah. So if you have a chance, listen to those tapes. Good. So this person because of his sincerity and being landed in the same circumstances as the other one, transformed his life and he became so much closer to God.

So when man has the inner strength within himself then any circumstance in life cannot affect him. He becomes like the lotus, though deeply rooted there in mud, he remains forever pure and strong - what is happening here? - he

remains forever pure and strong, strong. Though the circumstances does not affect him. And that is the purpose of meditation, to find that inner strength. For, in the modifications that the soul has to go through, one needs strength to bear the consequences of the changes. And it's not always very pleasant. It's not always very pleasant. But change has to be there sooner or later, and if one has the inner strength through meditation then the changes which occur in life are easily borne. Yes, one has to bear the cross but it has its own rewards, which is a great truth.

So, modifications are necessary. We have come to this Earth. We have chosen our circumstances. Our parents never chose us. We have chosen our parents. While in that subtle state of existence; while going through the evaluation, we have found our weakest areas. And it is to overcome those weaknesses in our psyche or subtle body that we take birth in the environment or circumstances that we are born in. Because Divinity is so just. Why should one person be born in happy circumstances and another in unhappy circumstances. Why one innocent little child born lame while another born full of health and strength? Why? Divinity is not unfair. It is because of our own actions. It is because of what we have to learn, for life is but a school nothing else but a school. Sometimes the Headmaster would be hard, but it is necessary for him to be hard to instil the discipline that's required. Right. So we choose our circumstances, we choose our life. And the very circumstances we are born in, from that very moment, modifications start, to the soul and you are the soul. But to make things easier, to repeat again over and over again, one requires the strength and that strength can only be gained by becoming integrated. Good. I think that covers your question. Can we have the next one? We still have time, don't we?

Questioner. Guruji, your message to us is the age-old message of love. Could you give us further advice on how we can awaken, cultivate and integrate this loving self into our nature?

Gururaj. Ah hah, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. How can we integrate, cultivate that which is called love? How can we talk in tangible terms of that which is intangible? Love. What people call love is not really love. You'd be surprised to hear this. Love, as most people know it, is a need. Real love knows no need. Love, as most people know it, is a dependency. It could be a physical dependence, an emotional dependency, all kinds of dependencies, and that they call love. Good. Then, what is real love? Can love really be cultivated? No. Never. Love is a happening. Love is like the fragrance of the flower. The flower does not fragrance consciously. It is the nature of the flower to give that fragrance. That fragrance is love. It is the nature of fire to give off heat. That heat spontaneously given by the fire, that is love. Now, when we talk of cultivation, we do not cultivate love, but we cultivate qualities within us to make it conducive for love to come. That is what we do. In other words everything is a preparation for love to come. When we plant the flower, we

nurture it, we use fertilisers, we use water. The sapling is well tendered. We tie it to a stick because it is so frail, until it becomes strong. Then we throw the stick away, the support is thrown away. So, what are the things necessary in the preparation for love? The things necessary in the preparation for love is all summed up in one word, Virtue, practised with consciousness. Virtue. Virtue. Because, our conceptions of love is at such a level, which only touches the mind and the mind is nothing but a patterned entity, a bundle of impressions as I have said earlier and it functions in a certain pattern. We have to repattern the pattern, by consciously exercising certain virtues.

Now the same principle applies as the child learning to play the piano. So the old lady is trying to cross the road. Now, you don't have that love in you for that lovely old lady, but you go up and help her cross the road. You have not expressed love but you have expressed a kind of pity perhaps. You pity the old. It might not even be compassion, for that person might not have heard of the word compassion. The only thing he knows in the word compassion is passion. You see. So a conscious effort begins in every sphere of life. 'Do Good. Be Good' is a very wise maxim to follow and if you can't do anyone any good, don't do anyone any harm. Now doing good and being good sounds so simple but so difficult. What do we mean by 'doing good'? If you study moral philosophy, you'd find so many different concepts of the mind of what good. You can examine it from the deontological aspect and from half a dozen other aspects, but that still doesn't make you good. And we use our Scriptures and we use our great religions like Christianity, as a guideline to what is good. We use that as a guideline to help us decide in circumstances, what should be done. Thou shalt not covet, Thou shalt not this. Those do's and don'ts have great value. So, we want to learn to love. So we start off by talking of love but we start by the virtues that surrounds love, because we are not capable of learning love yet, and we are not capable of experiencing it yet. The mind has some idea. Boy loves girl, they say. Girl loves boy. They look into each other's eyes and melt away. And how they wish they were not made of wax - then they would really melt away. It is not a question of looking into each other's eyes but the eyes of both looking in the same direction. That brings about an understanding.

So here the key word, to learn to love, is understanding, understanding of the moral principles as set out by the Sages, by Buddha, Krishna, Christ. Developing an understanding and with effort, putting that understanding into practice. And this requires some effort. And here meditation comes to help again where it makes that understanding easier and takes so much of the weight away from the effort. So when all this preparation is done, then you see a slight flicker of love just very slightly and it is so encouraging. Then need disappears. I don't need you to love you. I love you because I love you. What does that mean? It means, I don't love you. I love love. I love love, and you are only the object that enables me, that gives me the privilege, of loving love. You are the focal point. Yes. Need disappears. Dependency disappears. For love is always independent. Independent.

Now dependency disappears, which means that weaknesses go. A dependent love, be it emotional or physical, is not strength. It is weakness. It is because that we are so disintegrated, fragmented, that we have this dependency. So need goes, dependencies go and then, when dependency goes, there is a middle step, which is interdependency. Then, between two people, an inter-dependence develops. They are neither dependent and neither interdependent. Now they are neither dependent and neither independent. But they have now become interdependent. Now they are seeing a wholeness that there is no more you or I, but us. That's interdependence. There is still one step further, where you go even beyond interdependence. But, as householders, living a householder's life, family, children, that interdependence is necessary. For, when there is that interdependence, then conflicts cease. Good. In the lower form of independence, there is conflict. There are two forms of independence. I'll come to the second one later. Fine. In that lower form of independence, two people are independent, that causes conflict.

Now I was asked to say a few words at a wedding, the other day, a few months ago rather, the other day this chap got married, last Saturday, did you know about that. Good. So I said marriage is such a union where you start a three-legged run, no more four legs, three legs, the two legs are joined to each other, interdependence, but you can't move without the other. So at first when independence of the lower level ceases, then conflicts cease. And with development of the 'Inter' part of it, then they function as a unified whole. Right. After going through that phase, which is so necessary in daily living, then one comes back to independence, but of a different sort - it is spiralling, one at a low level and the other at a very high level. It is like sound. Sound at a very high pitch cannot be heard and sound at a very low pitch cannot be heard by the human ear and yet they are poles apart. So when the real top-level independence occurs in man then the interdependence ceases because he does not love any more. He has no need to love. He does not require an object of love. He does not love any more but he becomes love. And that is the higher stage of love. And when man becomes love then he and his Father is one. That is the higher stage of love, and when man becomes love then he and his father is one. That is the highest form of love, but in worldly living the best we can hope to achieve for now, for the moment, is the interdependent love, to live a happy home life. Some effort is required, oh yes.

There is this lovely little story about interdependence. A man says, 'I choose my own pants, the wife chooses the colour'. Which is good? I think that's nice. She cares for him - for what does the colour matter really? 'She chooses the colour because it pleases her and I wear my pants to please my wife'. Yes you see how beautiful it is? The only time I would object is when I get a tie that doesn't match any suit. Thank God I don't wear them. Will I stop now?



Nevertheless, so to find this love we don't need mental analysis. It is a happening and all the virtues we practise consciously brings about this happening. All the watering of the plants and the fertiliser and the sun and the air are the necessary conditions that are prepared for the flower to blossom. And that blossoming is love. It is a happening. It is existence on its own. It is self-effulgent, and therefore we say, 'God is Love and Love is God'. You see. That's the highest form of love. And all the mental meanderings we use are of no value, no value whatsoever, because all the mechanisms are inbuilt within ourselves as it is. Meditation awakens all that which is lying sleeping and dormant.

I'll tell a story before I end off, it will take about five minutes. It's a story I told this on one of the Courses and I might as well repeat it, a lot of new people here, how people rely on outside things instead of inbuilt things. But the story goes like this. You get soft drinks in a can and this man used to go to this café every day. And, the shopkeeper served him the can of soft drinks, and he used to take out this can opener and open the can and have his drink. The shopkeeper watched him for one day, two days. A few weeks passed and the shopkeeper started losing patience. He says, why does this chap use a can opener to open a soft drink can. So you know the customer is always right so you allow the customer to do what he likes as long you know the till tinkles a bit, the shopkeeper is happy. But he just couldn't help himself any more. And he said, 'Sir, do you know what that thingybob is there for - that ring on the can?' So this customer replies, 'Yes, I know, that's for people who haven't got can openers'. (Gururaj laughs). So the point of the story is this that everything is inbuilt in man. Meditational practices awakens, opens up that can which is closed and you don't need can openers. It's all there within you just to open and enjoy life. For life and living is the expression of that which is Divine. Life and living itself is Divine, only if we realise it by integrating ourselves through our spiritual practices.

Thank you very much. It was so nice being here.

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