

Gururaj. Good. What shall we talk about this morning? Are you reading someone else's question?

Questioner. No, I'm reading mine.

Gururaj. Oh.

Questioner. (Cont'd.). You look ever so surprised. Please could you talk to us about Ashrams, their purpose, how they run, and the type of person who would benefit on being on one?

Gururaj. Very good question. Can we handle a few questions together this morning? Have you got some more there? Yes.

Questioner. Gururaj, much has been written recently, mainly in America, about beliefs and motivation. We understand that our personal beliefs cause our behaviour patterns, and erroneous beliefs can cause many of our problems. The difficulty seems to be in finding out what our personal beliefs are. Can you suggest ways we can discover our basic beliefs?

Gururaj. Good. Now, if a person - is this alright? Now, if a person does not know what his beliefs are, then he should really go to deepening Courses, or to Ashrams. (Gururaj laughs) For Ashrams serve the purpose of strengthening one's beliefs. Now, a belief is a word not really understood. And as a matter of fact, I personally do not support belief very much in its totality. In other words, a belief is not enough, because a belief is necessarily created by one's own mental conditioning. You might believe that this chair is red. Meanwhile, it is yellow. A colour-blind person might go through the red robot light believing and seeing that it is green. So how valid is belief? Fine. Now, the validity of a belief lies in the fact that it must produce a definite result in the life of a person. Now, belief also has its value. If you believe something strongly enough, you with your own mental capacity and the force of thought that is generated by the capacity you have, can make that belief materialise. If you believe that this chair can move on its own and if your belief is strong enough, your thought will assume the power, it will assume a physical power, taking it from its subtle level to a grosser level of power whereby this chair can be moved.

Therefore, most theologies say, 'Believe'. In modern age, in this age, belief is not sufficient, the reason being this, that with the advance of technology, with the accent put more on mind development, people tend to become more and

more sceptical. And people are sceptical. Ages ago, a few thousand years ago, you can say, 'Believe' and people would believe because at that time they were more heart-orientated, because the very belief they had was not subject to any form of analysis. Because once you start analysing belief, then belief ceases to be belief. Belief knows no analysis. Belief, in this sense, is synonymous with a feeling that wells up within you. You say, 'I believe this man is good.' Now, you might not even know the person, or what the person has done, or the background of the person, and yet you would say the feeling wells up that you have belief in this person. And this applies not only to people, but also to things. Now most of the things that we do in life, is done on belief.

Now, belief necessarily has as its counterpart, trust. All the greatest things in life are done on trust. You came to this Course believingly and trustingly that Gururaj will be here. Fine. The biggest business deals are done over the luncheon table. The shake of a hand, there is trust. That we have discussed. The problems of the deal, the business deal, and the contracts only follow a few weeks later, when the typist gets round to typing it out. And signatures are appended. Fine. So, with belief, there is always trust. I believe my father is my father because I've been told that by my mother. And I trust my mother. So belief always is accompanied with trust. Fine. Now, how trusting are we? That is the question. That is the major lack in the lives of modern man, that he does not trust. He wants everything to be proven to himself before he can trust. You tell a man, 'Believe in God.' He might nod his head and say, 'Yes' but inwardly, he would say, 'Believe in God? What is God? Who is God? Where is He? To me, He is non-existent'. Where is belief? But if some tangible proof can be shown in the various areas of life, then the person will start believing in this modern age. And that is why I could come and talk and talk on philosophy or various practical subjects, they would mean nothing to people if they did not meditate and find some benefit from the meditation, so that the theory that goes with the meditation would be firstly believed and after belief, there would be faith. So here we have three things so far. Belief is accompanied by trust, and trust is accompanied by faith.

Now, when we want to know about a person's religion, most of the times, we never ask, what religion do you follow? We always ask, what faith do you follow? And the questions implies, what faith? In what have you got faith? So, that faith, the person might say, 'Oh, I am of the Christian faith, or the Hindu faith, or the Buddhist faith' but that, too, is just done on a mental level. Because I was brought up in a Hindu home, or I was brought up in a Christian home, or a Muslim home, so therefore I am a Muslim. And because tradition has taught me this, I condition my mind to have faith in the things that have been taught to me. Now, that is not faith. That is just the primary steps of belief. Because my parents, my elders, my church minister or priest has said such a thing, I assume to myself that I have faith, while in reality it is not faith. Faith can only be had by experience. You have to have some experience in order to have faith. You can describe

the heat that is in fire and you could even start believing that fire is hot. But only when you are nearer to the fire and feel the heat, experience the heat, then you have faith within yourself that fire has heat.

So, belief, trust, and then comes faith. But that is not the end and aim. These are but just steps on the ladder. The goal to reach is to know. To really know, and knowingness not on the level of the mind, because the mind does not know anything at all. There is a great difference between acquired knowledge and wisdom. What we strive for is the wisdom that is within us, and once we know, once we really know, then faith becomes strengthened, belief becomes strengthened, trust becomes an actuality, and not just a conception or a presumption. So man progresses - belief, trust, faith into knowingness, that is what we are after. When we find the deep peace within ourselves, having experienced the peace, we know there is that peace. And that peace cannot be analysed. You cannot believe in the peace until you have experienced it. So, the next stage is the experiential level. Belief has an intellectual level, mind level, while knowingness has an experiential level. You believe that chilli is very strong, it burns your mouth. But until you have eaten the chilli and have your mouth burnt, you cannot know. So therefore, the modern age, today's age requires a sense of knowing. Then all else follows. Now, he does not need to have total wisdom, because that could never dawn all at the same time. But there is one area of wisdom, which is very important, is to find through meditation, diving to the deeper and deeper levels of the mind where that area of silence is reached, where you stop pursuing happiness. I got a beautiful card the other day, which said that happiness is like a butterfly, the more you pursue it, the more it goes away from you. You're chasing it away. But if you sit still, it might alight upon you. You see.

So in that area where that peace is, once we touch that area then everything else that is to be known becomes known. One of the Upanishads starts off with the concept, starts off with the question, that 'What is there to know and by knowing which, everything else is known?' And that is the area of that deep - pardon - deep silence and peace that resides within us. And every man is capable of this. For example, I could sit here and you can ask me any question you like. And I will know about it. Why? The secret is very simple, really, all of you can do it, if you have reached that area inside and have become with that peace, or that joy, or that bliss, call it God, call it whatever you want to call it. Once you know that area, everything else is known. You see? So, belief, trust, faith, and knowingness.

Now, this knowingness can express itself through many different ways. People talk of the sixth sense. That is also in the area of knowingness. The mother just feels, 'Oh, my daughter's going to come and visit me today'. And she turns up a little while later, the doorbell rings. I experience it here, with these people that work so hard with me. I think of tea, and here one of them come and asks me, 'Guruji, would you like to have a cup of tea?' I say, 'I have been thinking about

this for five minutes, and why have you taken so long to pick it up?' (General laughter) And this happens all the time, all the time, all the time. I want to put on a blue suit this morning, I think it. And I would ask one of them, I say 'Get something out of the wardrobe', and they'll take out the blue suit. Yes. The reason being that every human mind is connected, inseparably connected and if that mind is sensitive enough, it will pick up what the other mind is thinking. You can ask Ted. He will tell you where the most profoundest and deepest thoughts are recorded by him in his meditations. He's going to publish a book very soon. Yes. It's a beautiful book. I've read part of it. Very, very beautiful. Where in Cape Town, I am doing a Satsang on a Saturday morning and the Saturday afternoon, or the Sunday, the day, the next day, the exact things that I have been talking about in the Satsang, he is recording it down on his typewriter through meditation. Do you see? Now, this proves the inter-connectedness of every mind, at the subtle level. It has nothing to do with mental telepathy. That is of a very low, low, low, low level. And anyone within a period of six months of practice can attain that. But the area we are talking about is that subtle area where everything is just known.

So, back to the question of the Upanishads, 'What is there that can be known and by knowing which all else is known?' And that is that silent area within. So, to the question that was asked, we could say 'Do not just rely on belief. Use belief as a springboard, use belief as a stepping-stone'. Yes. And if you are not sure, that is the right stepping-stone, or the right spring-board, then ask those that know. And the Scriptures of all the major religions are very good guides, are very good guides to help you channel your thought in a proper, moral, ethical way. And when that thought is channelled in a moral and proper ethical way, then you will start gaining certain experiences. And by gaining those certain experiences, even minute glimpses of them, then you would start trusting. And when the trust is sufficiently developed, you will start having faith. And that faith can become so powerful. As it is said in the Scriptures, 'Faith can move mountains.' Sure. Faith is so powerful, the energy released within man's mind by faith is so powerful, that it can move mountains. And science is only discovering that today, while this was written two thousand years ago and even before that. You see the, how powerful man's mind could be, how powerful man's mind is.

So, from the area of faith we proceed into the area of knowingness. You do not need to know every subject on earth. That is acquired knowledge. I have a wonderful young man in Cape Town, one of our meditators, he is a living encyclopaedia, a living encyclopaedia. Truly so. If I want to know some data or some detail, I do not need to turn up the Britannica. No. I pick up the 'phone. I say, 'Harish, this, this, this, this, that, what is it?' And he'll quote you time, date, substance, just like that, ad verbatim. But then he says, 'You know, Guruji, I am like a donkey, with a whole load of books on my back, because this what I have, is acquired knowledge'. It's the donkey carrying the books on his back. But we want experiential knowledge, not acquired knowledge. And experiential knowledge becomes wisdom. It becomes

wisdom. And that is the area which our movement is trying to lead people to. You do not need, if you want to start a business, you do not need to first become an accountant or get an M.B.A. in, become a Master of Business Administration. You do not need to study Mercantile Law in how to run your business. No, you don't need to. I have had business associates, multi-millionaires, who could just barely sign their name on a cheque.

But, there is that other sense of knowingness, ah, that inner business deal, you could only see up to that wall but the good businessman can see behind the wall, while sitting here. That comes from that inner development, that inner sense of knowingness, call it intuition if you want to. Call it intuition. But it is that inner sense of knowingness. And that is where movement will lead people to, to find that inner wisdom, that inner experience of that peace, which is wisdom itself. And because of that, every answer in life is answered, every question in life is answered. Every problem is resolved because once you are in that area, you are swimming in this vast ocean, you don't need the little well any more. So belief, in the beginning is necessary. When one is puzzled, 'Am I believing the right thing?', then let us consult people that know. If not, if they are not available, then our Scriptures are full of things that could really guide our belief into faith, and then into knowingness.

Now, some people could be fortunate in going to live in an Ashram, for example. Now, the greatest Ashram in the world is your own home. There's no better Ashram than that. Your own home, your own room is the finest shrine. And even better than that, the greatest Ashram and shrine is within your own heart. There is where all wisdom is, there is where all knowledge is, but because we have not been able to un-fathom that, we need an external source. We need this geographical change where conditions are conducive to make us dive deeper within. And this has to be under the guidance of a qualified guru. By a qualified guru, I mean a guru that has experienced the areas of life and of living so that life and living to him is synonymous with Divinity. That is the guru, a real guru. Not the bogus ones, that want to take your money off you, relieve you of all your burdens, (General laughter) relieves you of all your burdens, oh, yes. And funny enough, all burdens are carried on the back. Yeah. Back of the shoulder, or back pocket, or. Yes. What a racket! (Gururaj laughs) What a business, in the name of God! 'Tis such a shame. I've just done a tour of India - I had to go and see my guru - and I had some time. And I went to visit some Ashrams and I found, to my regret, that they have just become business institutions. And when I spoke to some of these people, some of these gurus, and very brilliant people, knowledgeable people, I told them that India might have been the cradle of civilisation, but the civilisation is gone and only the cradle is left. Yeah. Yes.

So you don't need to go to these places. You don't need to go anywhere. The place that you have to go is within yourself. That is the Ashram. Ashram means place of rest, place of retreat. Where better can you retreat to than within yourself? Where can you go to? It's all here and now. Where do you want to go to? You have these Indian Bhajans, Indian hymns - shall I sing one for you? Yes. Well, it reminds me especially of this one hymn that says that you do not need to go to these holy places of pilgrimage, like Benares and Mathura and Bindraban. You don't need to go there, for all of them are there within you. As a matter of fact, all these places of pilgrimage, you don't need to go to them, they come to you. Yes. You can command them to come to you. If you can command Divinity to come to you, then, what are these little places? Waste of time. You see?

But now, there is a necessity for an outer Ashram, a place of retreat, a place of rest. And if man is fortunate enough to find an Ashram that has a true guru. A true guru is none else but the finest representation of that Divine force, that is a true guru. He does not need to be perfect. He cannot be perfect because he is still embodied. Although the ego is expanded, and the ego has become totally transparent, where the fullness of that force, that light shines through. Like we always say, the windowpane, the glass is thoroughly cleaned and the light shines through, in its completeness, but the window glass is still there. So, within the limitations of the body, although he is a Jivanmukta, the living free, still, that glass is still there, although how much the ego has been clarified and expanded to its total purity that little trace of ego is still there. It has to be there or else that man could never carry his body. Firstly having the need to eat, or drink water, or to go to the loo, that is also an expression of ego. Because he is thinking of himself that I have to eat. So, always, in the lives of all the greatest men, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, there was that sense of that finest level of ego. And yet Jesus on the cross said 'Wherefore hast thou forsaken me?' 'Wherefore hast thou forsaken me?' when he prayed to his Father. Father there, me here. Little ego, although at the finest level, but it is there.

Nevertheless, if we are fortunate enough to find an Ashram, where exists or lives or teaches a man in total purity, at the finest level of the little ego, perhaps, that doesn't matter because total perfection can only be found when this body is discarded by that living God on earth. Then only can there be total perfection. I don't know if I told you the story, this little Zen story, where the Master was going away for a six-month's trip to another land and he had one chela who was a very keen gardener. And this gardener thought to himself, that when my master returns, this gardener thought to himself, that when my master returns, I want this garden to be totally perfect in every detail. So time passed, two months, three months, four months, five months, six months passed and the master returned. He looked around, and he saw this beautiful garden, so, so perfect in every detail. So the first thing the Master did was go to the dustbin and took out a few handfuls of dust and dirt and straw, whatever, and had it strewn on the path. The chela looked at him in surprise. He

said, 'But, Master, what have you done? I've kept the place so well.' So the Master replies, 'If you want to live in this world, do not be too perfect.' (Gururaj laughs) You can't be. If a man is honest to himself, he will admit to himself, that I cannot be totally perfect. There is only one perfection, and that perfection is Divinity. And because that Divinity is captured, or encapsulated within the limitations of a body, that very limitation adds that little perfection, so that, that little imperfection, so that the body can survive. Good.

Now, coming back to the Ashram, if we are fortunate enough in having an Ashram, and a true guru, in the true sense of the word is there, then for the person who wants to go into retreat, requires time, it is not a three-day Course. You need to stay some months and, slowly and gradually under strict supervision, you start realising yourself. You start going deeper and deeper within yourself. All the wrinkles in the cloth of your life is being ironed out, pressed out, with a steam iron. Yes. It is ironed out, and you would not even know it. The guru might not even give you a glance. He won't even look at you. And you will think in yourself, that I have come to this Ashram, and the guru doesn't even look at me or give me a smile, or doesn't even acknowledge me. What is happening? I am wasting my time. But gurus are funny people, you know. They are terrible. They know exactly what's required. They know exactly what is required. That person that seeks their attention, why does he seek attention? To build up his ego. And the guru, by ignoring him, is breaking down his ego until he feels, 'Well, look, I am here. Let me be here, enjoy the silence and the peace'. And then the chela does not need to go to the guru. The guru comes to the chela and knocks on the door. 'Hey, boy, open up'. That's what my guru did to me, that I was with him for eight months and we talked about this, that, in passing. Sometimes I had some question on my mind, and I say, 'Swamiji, what about this?' Then he would answer it very briefly, and if I should go deeper, he would say 'Ah, I don't know'. And after the whole eight months, just very casually, one day, he says, 'Come, let's go and meditate'. Yes. You see, we're funny people. Yes. But everything they do, even if they slap your arse, it's for a purpose. Yes. It's for a purpose. And the purpose is, to see you grow and to make you more and more happier, to take you on the path that you should be on, to serve and attain the goal and purpose of life, and not to drift aimlessly. They do that.

So Ashrams could be difficult for some people, but under the tutelage, under the guidance of a true guru, it could be very beneficial. That's what we need here in England. It will come. We'll have an Ashram here, that any time, people can just come and retreat and stay with me for a few days, perhaps, few months and longer, too. Yes, yes. And then we iron out all the wrinkles, iron out all the wrinkles, all the depressions disappear, all the repressions disappear, all the inhibitions disappear, all the limitations disappear. And the realisation dawns that I and my guru are one, non-separate. For there is only one spirit, one universal force and you could call it, one God. That is self-realisation. Self-realisation is God -

realisation. That is what we want. So perhaps, these things will materialise. They will, we just need to think it, it must happen. Aren't our thoughts powerful enough? You are meditators, aren't you? Yes, these things will happen.

So you see, Ashrams are necessary. That's it. The real Ashram, of course, is to find the Ashram within yourself, the place of retreat within yourself. But in the beginning, an outward retreat is necessary. An Ashram that could be self-subsisting, where people don't need money to come. The Ashrams in India, or there are Courses conducted by so-called gurus, blasphemers, that charge you four thousand dollars to go on a Course. That's not necessary. What's that necessary for? So what can you do, what are you capable of? Washing dishes? That's your job, okay. That's payment sufficient. You can do gardening, look after the garden. You can grow food? Do that job. Okay. Because there has to be some activity. You can't just sit round the whole day and meditate - something they call rounding. No wonder, yeah, no wonder they get so rounded. (General laughter) Yeah. Yes, yes, so rounded that they just keep on whirling in circles all the time. That's how it works.

So, belief, to trust, to faith, to knowingness in order to find the Ashram within, through the external Ashram, the place of peace, the abode of peace, the abode of love that's that. (General laughter) Naughty. Good. Where are we? One more question? You see, I can't even have a thought to myself. Thank you.

Questioner. No, no, we'll let you off lightly, Gururaj. Gururaj, Vivekananda says in Raja Yoga, that when we are enlightened, all our desires will be fulfilled, but this seems to be a paradox. Could you talk on this?

Gururaj. Yes, I can. Why do you want to know? (Gururaj laughs) Don't answer that. You see, the first mark of a true chela is to be obedient. That is very, very true, that when a man reaches enlightenment all his desires are fulfilled. You know why they are fulfilled? Because he has no more desires. He has no more desires, therefore all desires become fulfilled in enlightenment. Now, there's another meaning to this, that in enlightenment, you become everything. You become the heat of the sun, you become the fragrance of the flower. You become the love in the lover's heart. You become everything that is manifested, because in enlightenment, you become the unmanifest from which all manifestation proceeds. So desire is only known by the mind. The unmanifest, that Divinity, that Divine-ness does not know of desire because by putting desire onto Divinity, you are limiting Divinity. You are putting on limitations to Divinity by giving it the ability to desire. Desire stems from the mind. Now, when you reach the stage of enlightenment, you reach the area where all manifestation proceeds from you. And, knowing this, being this, that is the better word, being this, desire does not remain. But yet, within the laws of the three Gunas that we spoke about last night, within the functioning of the three



Gunās, with the various frictions taking place in trying to find equilibrium, so many factors are invoked. So many factors are produced that, which in turn produces desire.

Now you, at this stage of enlightenment, are watching the functioning of all these various functions. And you know, you know that whichever tendency there is, whichever way the tendency is flowing, will find its fulfilment within its flow. Therefore we say the joy does not lie in attainment but the joy lies in attaining. So, the process of attaining is a fulfilment within itself. The tree exists in the seed and the seed exists in the tree. Now the man of enlightenment, the man who is enlightened knows that the tree is in the seed in an involved state, and that involved state becomes the evolved state in the form of the tree. So fulfilment is already there in the seed.

So the man of enlightenment is the one that knows the essence of things. He knows the essence of everything in the universe. He has the answer of the proposition, of the question we discussed earlier, what is there to be known and by knowing which, all else is known? That is fulfilment. Fulfilment for the enlightened man is not a linear process, leading from A, B, C, D to Z. No, to the enlightened man, everything is here and now. The problem is created and at the same time, the solution is there in the problem. It is an interaction between two forces that are at friction and the enlightened man knows that the match that is lit must burn out. Anything that is started must end. Anything that is born must die. The whole process is seen, the whole tendency seen, not necessarily in detail, that is delving in psychic abilities, and, and expanding the subtler and subtler areas of the mind that has nothing to do with knowingness or fulfilment, for the knowingness itself is fulfilment. That is fulfilment.

So the enlightened man, to him, he being fulfilled, everything else to him is fulfilled. To the enlightened man who has reached that high state of perfection, or near perfection as we said sees that in everything around him. He sees no person to be imperfect. Every person is perfect. Every person is a product of the forces of love. Love has manifested itself concretely to make you what you are. That is fulfilment. And the fulfilled man can only see fulfilment. If your bucket is full of water, your cup is full, how can you fill it more? So, if you try to fill it more, the cup runneth over and adds greater joy to all that around him. That is fulfilment. Fulfilment is not born of desire. Man's mind has desire, which wants fulfilment. Man desires with his mind that I want to be fulfilled, while fulfilment is already there. Fulfilment is an 'is-ness'. Fulfilment is not in the past, and neither in the future. Fulfilment is here and now. It is. It was, is and forever will be. That is fulfilment.

So, the enlightened man becomes desireless. He has no desire, no desire whatsoever. But one thing he does is this, and you could call it a desireless desire, a desireless desire, which means that, he being fulfilled, and seeing everything else around him fulfilled, he would also because of his love and his compassion, want the very fulfilment around him to realise its own fulfilment. That is the desireless desire. And then, the ever, ever-growing, ever-expanding totality of joy is there. And everything is seen in its primal purity and glory. He sees the fulfilment in everything in a broader vision. And when that desireless desire dawns, he sees it in every detail. Every petal of the flower assumes the beauty of the entire flower. The petal does not become a component of the flower, but every petal is a beauty unto itself. That's fulfilment, when the minutest detail becomes fulfilled within the range of the totality of fulfilment. And that is what Vivekananda means. Okay. Good. Thank you, be blessed. Is it time to end now?

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