

Satsang with Sri Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Question

Acceptance means that I do not resist a situation. When I resist a situation, I feel compelled to react. Please comment.

Answer

Acceptance of a situation also requires a response to the situation. I can do what the situation requires me to do. When I resist a situation, I am responding, and my response is a reaction. Whereas when I accept a situation, that response is one of action. My mind is composed when I accept the situation, and then I can decide what is to be done. On the other hand, when I react, my decision is likely to be wrong because it is going to be an impulsive action. Acceptance prepares the ground for it being an action rather than a reaction.

Question

Can you please explain the relevance of *kundalini yoga* and other such practices?

Answer

Yoga and all such practices become preparatory to knowledge; they help in preparing our mind, and give us the capacity to understand. So, all of those things are helpful in that way. *Karma yoga* also is *yoga*. It is *yoga* of attitude. What the *Bhagavad Gītā* teaches us is that we can prepare our mind by deliberately maintaining these proper attitudes. *Yoga śāstra* teaches us that by the practice of concentration and meditation, we can prepare our mind. *Bhakti* teaches us that we can prepare our mind by worshipping the Lord, and by the attitude of devotion. All of these are means of preparing our mind for knowledge. Therefore, take up a means, which is most suitable to your own personality.

Question

Some people worry about what they do not have and do not enjoy life at all. How can we guide such people?

Answer

You could help them to appreciate what they have. Help them to gain an appreciation of the privileges they enjoy, the grace that they have. I complain about my not having shoes until I see somebody who does not have a leg! There are always people who are not as privileged as we are. That is not a very positive way to think, but it is ok if it helps the person to feel that he is enjoying some privileges after all.

A person does not feel that he is okay, and therefore, he is unhappy. He equates himself to his possessions, and if the possessions are okay, then he is okay. However, we say that you are alright as you are; you do not have to judge yourself. We can also help them see all that they do have, e.g., their two eyes, their two legs, their two hands, and so on. We should be glad for the many things we have. We are blessed that we can walk and talk. There are many, who cannot even walk or talk.

Question

Do emotions like *kāma* and *krodha* happen due to my lack of knowledge of my self?

Answer

It is because of lack of knowledge of my self that I do not accept myself. Emotions such as *kāma* or *krodha* happen as a result of my not accepting me.

Question

If it is a dream world, why do you talk of *karma* etc? If it is indeed merely a dream, none of it is true. Is there is some truth or order in all this?

Answer

There is order, but it is still *mithyā*. It is a very systematic *mithyā*, so systematic, that it looks real. That is why it is called *māyā*. Even though it is unreal, it looks very real.

Question

Pujya Swami Dayanandaji mentioned in one *satsang* that he does not even pluck a

leaf from a tree because it is *hiṃsā*. How do we account for plucking fruits, vegetables etc? Is it not *hiṃsā*?

Answer

You see, even if you do not pluck leaves, somebody else plucks it on your behalf. I do not pick fruits but somebody else picks fruit on my behalf. Both of these are not much different. Survival does involve a certain amount of violence. What Pujya Swamiji means is that he does not use a leaf unless it is required. That means that your needs are minimal, and what you require is meant just to sustain your body. Then, you are using minimum resources and minimizing *hiṃsā*. In our day-to-day living, we can minimize the violence if not totally eliminate it. For instance, at the physical level, there may be some violence involved even in breathing. The best way to minimize the violence is to minimize our needs.¹

¹ Summer 2003 *satsang*, transcribed and edited by Subbalakshmi Chandrasekaran, Chaya Raj, Jayshree Ramakrishnan and KK Davey.