

DIVINE WORDS FROM A DISTINGUISHED SWAMIJEE

- 1. Brahmacharya in one of stages of life. The coinage of the term 'Brahmacharya' is as old as our shastras. Please explain. What does brahmacharya connote to ? How can it be applied in the lives of today's students and youth ?**

Ans. - Rightly, brahmacharya is the first ashram of life. It is the foundation. In common parlance, people equate brahmacharya with unmarried or bachelor life. But there lies a difference between the two. Brahmacharya is a chaste and a austere way of life while a bachelor life may or may not be so. Therefore, Indian spiritual tradition speaks of diksha (initiation) swadhyaya (self-study or learning), sadhana (spiritual practices), upasana (worship) etc. while leading a life based on brahmacharya. The first step to enter into sadhana is to maintain brahmacharya or celibacy. A house-building may collapse if its foundations are weak. Thus like an individual life based upon weak brahmacharya may shatter in future. Brahmacharya leads towards a fuller, finer and loftier life. It helps life blossom and flourish with its full potential. Brahmacharya enhances the physical, mental and intellectual strength of an individual. It strengthens his or her soul force (Atma-Bala). That's why, brahmacharya is important for a student or youth pursuing education of any kind. One can see and feel how the youth all around have become victims of sexual pervertedness, mental imbalance, anxieties, frustrations, diseases, suicide, etc. Why ? Because they are now devoid of brahmacharya.

Generally, by brahmacharya we mean containment of semen or preservation of sexual energy. I may substantiate this term 'brahmacharya' at three levels- physical, socio-religious and spiritual. At the physical plane, brahmacharya means abstaining from loss of semen and preservation of sexual energy. Indian shastras describe about eight sorts of sexual-sensual relationships. A celibate is supposed to abstain from all such relationships. Our sages have told, "maranam bindu patena jivanam bindhu dharanat" Preservation of sexual energy is life. Its loss is equated with death.

Second, at the socio-religious plane "brahmaveda tatra charati iti brahmachari". One who seeks to know the knowledge of the Vedas, one who leads his life as per the ideal instructions of the Vedas is called a brahmachari. Third, spiritually 'Brahma' means paramatma,

the supreme soul. One who maintains to think of brahma in everything and everybody can be dubbed as a brahmachari. One who is engrossed in brahma-bhava is a brahmachari. Going by this conviction, even a Gruhastha may be a brahmachari.

However, in wordly terms, a celibate is a unmarried individual who has taken a vow to preserve his bindu or virya or ojas(semen). The same principles are applied for girls or ladies as well. In Durga Saptasati, shakti has been worshipped as Brahmacharini. "prathamam sailaputri cha dwitiam brahmacharini". Indian yogis and sadhakas have given utmost importance to food, habitation, movement, thoughts and attitudes in order to strengthen brahmacharya which, in turn, helps enjoying and realizing a fulfilling life.

We call the committed brahmacharis as Urdhareta as their sexual energy tend to move upwards through susumna. Sexual energy, confined to biology only, moves downwards. Its downward movement creates attachments and illusions-maya- and bind one with the samsara. But it should not be too frequent so that one becomes obsessed and mired in it. Restraint is necessary. Even in gruhastha ashram, one can observe celibacy for a certain time-frame and get the fruits of brahmacharya. But a committed celibate needs to remain over and above all sorts of sexual indulgence and sensual pleasures.

Observance of celibacy in the present day is damn difficult as the atmosphere around us is not conducive for brahmacharya. Starting from newspapers and magazines to television and internet, everywhere nakedness is at display. And it excites everyone from tender children to adult individuals. The sexuality arises, the libido rebels. Therefore, one needs to be alert and vigilant while observing celibacy. Now our social, economic, political and educational environs have changed a lot. Co-education is the order of the day. Gone are the days when the boys and girls were separated and confined to their own compartments. Today, the intermixing of the boys and girls is more open, free and frequent. As a result, many boys and girls slip from their chosen path and fall prey to lust and passion. The psychological effects of sexual excitement haunt every student or youth. They know not how to escape or remain away from such excitement and thereby, lose self-restraint or self-control. They are at loss of life energy or prana shakti both at conscious and sub-conscious (dream)states of mind. Many sorts of venereal diseases afflict the youth today which were not seen earlier. Shortly, present day life style or

way of living is at sharp contrast with the spirit of brahmacharya. That's why, we need to think about the ways and means of observance of brahmacharya.

The vow of brahmacharya breaks up due to lust or kama. Kama originates in the mind. Hence, another name of kama is manasija- which is originated from the mind. A celibate shouldn't develop too much attraction and attachment towards a sensual sight or sexual object. To remain chaste, one needs to develop ideal relationship with the opposite sex. Generally, for man, a woman symbolizes passion and vice-versa. To change such equation, in Indian tradition, we address woman as mother, aunt, sister or daughter. "Matrubatpara daresu". It has been advised by our shastras to see and respect woman as mother. Such attitude helps minimising one's lust. Varied sorts of thoughts always float in our minds. Therefore, we need to cleanse and purify out thoughts. Regular practice of yoga, pranayam, meditation and recitation of Gayatrimantra can help the students and youth pursue the austerities of brahmacharya. Satwik food intake also helps maintaining brahmacharya as it reduces excitement and impulsiveness of the body and enhances the power of discrimination.

The pineal gland situated near the point of Ajna Chakra profoundly influences the observance of brahmacharya as it reduces one's urge or desire for carnal gratification and lewd indulgence. But sometimes over-secretions from the pituitary gland counters it. So, one should meditate upon Ajna Chakra which profoundly influences the observance of brahmacharya as it reduces one's urge or desire for carnal gratification and lewd indulgence. But sometimes over-secretions from the pituitary gland counters it. So, one should meditate upon Ajna Chakra which, in turn, would stimulate the secretion of the pineal.

2. Can a householder or a Gruhastha attain the same spiritual prowess as a Sannyasin ?

Ans.- Why not ! A gruhastha can certainly touch the pinnacle of spiritual attainment as a sannyasin. But some practical or functional differences exist between the Gruhastha and sannyas ashrams. A gruhastha has to look after his wife and children, he has to maintain his household affairs. A gruhastha should and must discharge his familial and social responsibilities or obligations. If he runs away from those responsibilities and takes to sannyas, then it would be sheer escapism, cowardice. But if he shoulders all those responsibilities, if

he cultivates the spirit of detachment and does his duty without any selfish expectation, if he follows his own dharma in the righteous way, if he remembers the paramatma every moment then he is as spiritual as a sannyasin.

Lord Sri Krishna does not give the example of a sannyasin in the Gita. He takes the name of Karmayogi Rajasrshi Janaka as the example who was a gruhastha in its true sense. "Karmenye ba hi sang siddhim asthitah Janaka dayaha. Here, Lord Krishna justifies the greatness and grandeur of gruhastha ashram. Gruhastha ashram is the base upon which the rest of the ashrams depend. Hence, the responsibilities of a gruhastha is onerous and manifold, wearing saffron clothes, move on the streets in guise of sannyasins. Putting the garb of a monk does not make one a monk. So, such hypocrisy should be shed away. On the other hand, some sannyasins aspire and expect for money, power, post and other comforts like the householders which negates the true spirit of sannyas ashram. A sannyasin's life should be a life of sadhana dedicated for "bahujana hitaya, bahujana sukhaya" for the good and happiness of many.

Paramahansa is an elevated state of consciousness. Both the gruhastha and sannyasin can reach up to that level of consciousness, if they rightly move on their own path. "Paramahansa" is neither an award nor a certificate of merit nor a designation. Any saintly man, any pious soul who has experienced the truth or reality of life and existence and one who absolutely feels oneself as an inseparable part of paramatma is a Paramahansa.

3. What is the significance of phallus worship ?

Ans - Yoni is the base. From which the entire world (jagat) is born is called yoni. In the temples of Lord Siva, the unified symbol of yoni and lingam is worshipped. The entire universe is absorbed in the lingam. Yoni symbolises Prakriti and lingam symbolises Purusa. The mingling or unification of prakriti and purusa is the cause of all creation. Brahma is sukshma and sunya, subtle and void. The gross or manifested forms of Brahma are prakriti and purusa. Etymologically, lingam means symbol. Male and Female are distinguished from each other in terms of lingam or gender. But from the spiritual point of view, lingam means Brahma which is the cause of all creation—both matter and spirit. Hence, it is called the cause of all causes—Sarvakarana Karana.

4. How did Tantra evolve ?

Ans.- The evolution of Tantra is inseparably linked with the evolution of human civilization. However to tell the exact date or time of beginning of tantra is an almost difficult task. We may lack in exact historical evidence. But from the days of the yore till date tantra has been evolving Lord siva is regarded as the foremost pioneer of tantra. Hence, the first Guru of tantra is Lord Siva. In the puranas (mythological texts), Devguru Vrihaspati is acclaimed as the knower and master of the vedic cult, whereas Sukracharya the Guru of the Asuras (demons) is accepted as the knower and master of the tantric cult. The gradual evolution of tantra can be well-understood by going through the ancient Indian puranas and the modes of worship described therein. The twelve Jyotirlingams, the temples of Lord Siva and the worshipping of Siva lingam in almost all the villages all over India, the various seats of Shakti and Yoginis (Mother worship) imply the wide acceptance and endorsal of tantra. In Saivagama, Saptagama, Narada Pancharatra and even in Buddhism and Jainism, tantric traditions are well-founded. Many saints, siddha and paramahamsas have left indelible imprints on the tantric tradition.

The mode of worship which we follow today is a combination of both vedic and tantric traditions. For example, “Gananatwang Ganapati Gum Habamaye” is a vedic Mantra(hymn), but “Gung Ganapataye namah” is a tantric hymn. Starting from the birth of and individual upto the last rites in each samskra (sacrament) that we perform, everywhere we can see that combination of vedic and tantrik cults or traditions.

The way of life propounded in Sanatan Dharma has two main origins- the vedas and the tantra. The entire edifice of the Indian way of life has been erected on the foundations of Agama (Tantra) and Nigama (Veda). While vedic tradition is seen by the people as an ideal, the very utterance of the word “Tantra” injects fear in the minds of the people. But the practice of so-called black magic is not tantra.

“Tanoti trayate iti tantra”. That which leads to an expansion of our consciousness is called tantra. Tantra makes individual consciousness melt with universal consciousness. It liberates the individual from the cycle of birth and death. Tantra elevates the individual to the state of Advaita where dualism vanishes. Tantra visualises the entire creation as Siva-Shakti. Hence, tantra can be regarded as a liberating science.

- 5. Politicians feel blessed and secured by taking shelter of the tantriks. How do you view politicians chasing after tantriks ?**

Ans.- Politicians are as good human beings as others. They have also their own strength and weaknesses, desires and ambitions. The religious and profane are the two vital parts of life. In the mundane world, people tend to try their utmost to get their desires fulfilled. But when the essence of the religion is pushed to the background and instead, it is practised to consummate selfish personal desires, they it sends a wrong message.

The thrust of tantra is never the accomplishment of selfish ends. Tantra contains varied techniques to realize one's self or soul. Hence, it can be called Atmavidya or Brahavidya. Tantra teaches not to succumb to desires but to win over them. It tells, not to be carried away by momentary pleasures but to seek eternal bliss.

Unfortunately, some cunning people have made tantra a lucrative business. How could such people change the destiny of others ? How could the real tantriks be the brokers of the politicians ? Politicians fool others by their tricks and sometimes they get fooled by the tricks of the so-called tantriks. Don't you see how the common people get instantly attracted to the Hostel sadhaks and their "only three questions" business ?

Politicians have their own frailties like other common human-beings and in their weaker moments, they allow themselves to be exploited by the tantriks on whom they repose absolute faith. Such tantriks also get an opportunity to be highlighted in the media being close to the powerful politicians and they can manage to have an easy reach to get things done in the corridors of power. What can one do if politicians are delighted to be deceived ? May better sense prevail upon them so that they can discard their misconceptions regarding tantra.

6. How did superstitious practices creep into tantra ?

Ans.- Whenever anything be it of social spectrum or spiritual purview- is put into the wrong hands, then distortions creep in. Any wrong man in the wrong place would misuse, the right thing. The same also happened with tantra. Tantra is full of variegated modes of rites which if misunderstood and taught to ineligible persons sans the required sadhana, could only be degenerated into a bundle of tricks and superstitious practices to dupe the gullible masses. When superstitions are misconceived as tantrik practices, then anger, greed, lust, violence, increase manifold.

6. The temples are the holy places of worship. But in many of the ancient temples we can find erotic sculptures engraved upon its walls. What about it ?

Ans.- These are the symbols or reflections of tantriks culture. Symbolically, it inspires the people to leave their lust and desires outside and purify their beings inside the temple. It also tells that the same wordly desires or sensual pleasures can be sublimated for spiritual growth if practiced with that motive. God sits at the innermost core of our being. Desires which remain at the outer vicinity and obstruct our way to penetrate and realize the ultimate, can be overpowered. One can enslave desires instead of being a slave to them.

Moreover, there is a popular belief, mostly seen among the ancient people, that the temples are saved from the horrifying lightning if such erotic sculptures are there on the walls of the temples.

7. Revered Swamijee ! What is the true meaning of Sanyas ?

Ans.- Sanyas is a hoary tradition in India. There are four asharmas - brahmacharya, gruhastha, vanaprastha & sanyas. Sanyas is the fourth ashrama when we make a quartet division of life. Sanyas is wholesome renunciation. Lord Sri Krishna gave a anew direction to Sanyas as enunciated in our Vedic system. “ Kamyam karmanam nyasam sanyasam kabaya biduhu”. Sanyas means cultivating absolute detachment from the fruits of ones Karma and becoming a dedicated traveller in the great journey of self-realization. In common parlance people think Sanyas is going far away from this life & world and solitary living in a lonely place. But real sanyas is leading one's life with all its beauty and grandeur and at the same time, being detached from the mundane things which change fequently. Sanyas is searching for the eternal the absolute the infinite. One should live in this world as the lotus leaf in water “Padamapatra mimayasa”. Jagadguru Adisankaracharya and in modern times. Swami Vivekananda made sanyas a rare combination of the ideal & the practical. Realization of the self and dedication for the good of the world and the humanity is the quintissence of Sanyas “Atmano mokshyartha jagat hitaya cha.”

You know how today our society lives in a moral vacuum and spiritual bankruptcy. I think, Sanyas can give a galvanic touch to the modern-day society and can uplift it from moral degradation. Sanyas is the summit of our consciousness.

8. Sages Say - 'Dharma' is a vehicle to carry us towards truth. What should we understand by 'dharma'.

Ans.- In Indian context, dharma is a broader term. It encompasses all-everything & everyone. It accepts what is good noble and real in us. Truth, righteousness, non-violence, non-stealing, justice..... these are several facets of dharma. God himself represents dharma, He is its essence. That work, that thought which elevates both individual & collectivity to a higher state is dharma. It's noble, ideal way of living life. We may interpret it in several ways yet the real aim and purpose of dharma is the same everywhere. By embracing dharma, our life becomes enlightened here & hereafter. Hindu, Muhammadian, Christian..... these terms only connote different communities who accept a particular way of life according to their own religion.

9. What does the ancient Indian Vedantic or Upanishadic thought teach ?

Ans.- The Upanishads give a clarion call to man to merge with the cosmic consciousness- which they call 'Brahma'. Brahma or God is within us. We have to find it out. The world you see- in every thing & everywhere- there is presence of brahma. A man realizes it with the elevation of his consciousness. The Upanishadic thought is an ennobling message for the entire humanity. It is humanity's inestimable treasure. How thrilling is the feeling "Aham Brahmasi"- I am that Brahma. We are all divine sparks, children of the Lord. When one realizes that the same God is within him as well as within everybody else and in everything that he sees & perceives, then his thought-process expands, he becomes liberated from all worldly confines, narrowness & hypocrisy. But it is an irony that the Indians, whose ideal & philosophy of life should have been governed by the sublimest thought that comes from every page of the Upanishad, are squandering such an invaluable legacy.

It is high time we gave up our petty divisions, artificial barriers, sordid hatred and were guided by the undiluted truth that the Upanishad or Vedanta contains. How can we undermine the thundering voice of the Upanishad : O' Man! Transfer yourself from nara (man) to narayana (God). Metamorphose yourself from jiva to siva.

9. Swamijee ! Do you dream ? If yes, then, what sort of dream is it ?

Ans.- Yes, Certainly I dream. My dream is the good of all human beings : my dream is the happiness, prosperity and peace of my fellow travellers. But my dream is based on reality. I don't move in a fool's paradise. I do not indulge in whimsical thinking which is far & far away from reality.

Dream is a sub-conscious state of mind where one tries to get or satiate his unfulfilled desires and passions which he is unable to fulfil when he is awoke and awake. But he dreams of the saints, who have attained higher level of consciousness are utterly different from that of the common worldly man. Their dream do not consist of desires & passions. rather they are based on unvarnished truth, naked reality. There are different states of mind- conscious (jagrata), dream (swapan), unconscious or dormant (susupti). The turiya state of mind is the atmik state which leads to self realization by which all desires dissolve and individual consciousness melts with the cosmic consciousness.

10. What is self ? What is self - realization ? What is eternal spirit ?

Ans - Eternal spirit or 'paramatma' is omniscient, omnipotent & omnipresent. It is all- expanding above all delusions. Time or Kala can't consume it. Hence, it is eternal. Otherwise, everything & everybody in this world is consumed by Kala. We call that eternal spirit by various names- God, Almighty, Brahma, Purusa, Siva.... The inseparable part of this eternal spirit present within the individual is atma or soul or self. The realization of the self or atmapalabdhhi should be the paramount goal of every human-being. The relation between atma and paramatma is as good as the relation between bindu (a drop of water) & sindhu (vast sea)

11. Are the mundane & the spiritual opposite poles ? Or, should they complement each other for the society to be materially rich & morally sound ?

Ans.- When we say mundane & spiritual, these terms connote the gross & the subtle respectively. Body is gross & mundane, it dies. Atma or soul is subtle & divine, it never dies. There should not be a lopsided mundane development. We must evolve spiritually as we are growing materially. For the well being of an individual & the society, both material & spiritual development are badly needed. Otherwise it would spoil the balance in life. If we develop only materially, it will lead to hedonism, disease, greed, unrighteousness, fear, selfishness,

arrogance & what not of the likes. Therefore, we need to progress by balancing the material and the spiritual. Even in suing material things, a spiritual touch is needed which would change our attitude & outlook towards life.

12. What is real Education ? Why do you give foremost importance to it ?

Ans.- “Sa Vidya ja Vimuktaye”. That is real vidya or education which liberates. Everybody wants freedom, yet doesn't attain that state of mind so easily. Our worldly life is encircled by uncounted problems. How to overcome them ? Education shows us the way how to solve those problems, how to channel our innate potential which most of the time remains dormant. Education makes us conscious & expanded so that we come to know, appreciate, contemplate & realize the various facts of life. Education leads to self-reliance. It enhances the level of our consciousness. Upanishad says “Vidaya amrutam asnute”. Basically, education is two-fold : para and apara. Apara vidya fulfils the needs of our worldly life but para vidya takes us to self-realization (Atmopaladhi). A man, who has mastered both para & apara vidya, gets contentment in life. And it should be the real aim of our system of education.

In today's education system, man is preparing himself only to adopt a profession by which he can earn his bread & enjoy his life.

Earning money by any means seems to be the motto of life. You can see corruption, Theft, crime, violence all around you. Why ? Because man in man is dying. We are becoming living robots. I am enormously influenced by the saying “manur bhava, 'be a man'”. But without real education, this becomes hollow, a hopeless dream. That's why I do give utmost importance to education & for the inculcation of that spirit in the tender minds of the students, I have established “Viswatma Vidya Mandir”.

13. What is the essence of Guru - Sishya Parampara ?

Ans.- The parampara is of divine origin. For a student hell bent on learning anything, from a profession to life's utmost secrets, guru is essential. Guru shows the way, sishya or the student has to walk it. Generally, there are two sorts of Masters - Sikshya Gur & Diskhya Guru. The former teaches us various worldly affairs while the latter encourages us to aspire for the divine.

14. What is Viswatma Chetana ? Why have you chosen this name ? What is its significance in the contemporary world ?

Ans.- Viswatma Chetana is an all-encompassing, all-embracing consciousness. Viswatma Chetana means feeling oneness with all creation. God is Viswatma Swarupa. He is present in everything & in every body in His vast creation. But to see God in everything is easy saying than done. Therefore, we need to cultivate such a feeling all the time vigorously, Initially, one may fail and fall but at the end of the day he would realize the eternal.

I have so named the parishad because no sort communal, narrow or chauvinistic feeling should chain or bind our consciousness. We need to expand, nor contract. I don't want to create a community of disciples who will flow me bindly. We should know the self within so that we can better understand each other. We should know the self within so that we can better understand each other. We should live in unison. We must break artificial barriers, we should feel that the entire creation is ours we are in unity with the universe. In the parishad, there is no discrimination of caste, creed, colour, age, sex status or social standing.

The contemporary world is engulfed by religious hatred & cultural chauvinism. We envy, distrust each other. Religious antagonism is creating havoc in the way of humanity's progress. What we need is peace, contentment. Even though the aim of all religions is the same, yet every one of them wants to prove itself great and others as blots. I feel & hope the growth of viswatma chetna would help solving the rampant indiscipline and chaos.

15. Is there any sequential link between Sharma, Seva & Sadhana ?

Ans.- Yes, An individual should be educated and healthy. He must work to earn his livelihood. Out of the money or wealth earned he should spend something to serve others. Last but not the least, his individual life should be based on sadhana. It is all nothing but steps towards a full and fulfilling life. When he works for the good of others (parartha), it becomes seva and when he dedicates his work to the Lord (Paramartha), it is called sadhana.

16. Parishad is your brain-child. What are your plans in near future ?

Ans.- The parishad is going to organize "Viswatma Chetana Maha Sammelan" in 2005 in which pious seers and eminent intellectuals will be invited. Many of them have already consented to attend this grand function. We will speak, wish and pray for the flowering of humanitarianism and cosmopolitanism. Viswatma Vidya Mandir, a residential school, is under construction in the Ananda Niketa Premises. His Excellency the Governor of Odisha has laid its foundation stone in the holy presence of His Highness the Gajapati Maharaja. A guesthouse is also on the anvil to entertain guests coming from the far off places to visit the ashram.

17. What is your message for the youth ?

Ans.- Today's youth are suffering from the diseases of over-ambition. That is why they are confused, misled and many a time, they find themselves at sea. There is nothing wrong in aspiring for something. Total commitment to achieve one's goal is well and good. But one should be conscious of his needs, caliber and capacity while aspiring to achieve a goal. When one's goal becomes disproportionate to his capacity, then the result will be rack & ruin. Today's youth need to cultivate self-confidence and they should develop an optimistic attitude towards life as life contains within its fold unending possibilities. There is no need to blindly imitate others. Firmly believing in God and bubbling with confidence they should march forward to bury the bad and flourish the good. They should never forget to be self-reliant.

18. You have been going through : The Youth World" since its very inception. What is your valuable advice for this monthly journal ?

Ans.-This journal is containing well-thought articles, poems and other writings contributed by people from different walks of life. It should maintain its fearless & forthright spirit while delving into the various problems of our society. My blessings and warm wishes are always with it. All the Best. Hari Om.

19. Please explain the composition and significance of Gross body. Subtle body and Causal body.

Ans.- Gross body (Sthula sarira) is the combination of five Jyandriyas. five Karmendriyas. Pancha Prana and Antakarna Chatusthaya (Mind, Intellect. thought and ego). The subtle body (Sukshma Sarira) carries all our deep mental impressions. It cannot be visible like grossbody.

The subtle body remains even when the gross, body is burn to ashes. It is also called Linga Sarira or apanchikruta deha.

The causal body (Karana Sarira) is avidya or the Nature Trinity (Trigunatmika Prakriti- Satwa, raja, tama). We all have the same causal body. It is the subtlest of the subtle.

We can find the expression of gross body in conscious state that of subtle body in dream state and that of causal body in the dormant state (susapati). The spirit within us is shrouded by these three types of body. i.e. gross, subtle and causal. When these masks fail the individual self merges with the eternal spirit. He becomes nothing but Brahma only.

20. What is Prarabdha and Purusartha ? What is the theory of Karma ? Does it, make man fatalist ? Is a man poor due to his past Karma ? How should we look into this phenomenon ?

Ans.- You know the saying- “ As you sow so you reap.” The journey of a man, upward or downward in the cycle of birth and death fundamentally depends on his Karma. We have a threefold division of Karma Kriyamana, Sanchita and Prarabdha. Kriyamana means we get the fruit of Karma immediately. If you put your finger in the fire. It will immediately burn. If you put your finger in the fire it will immediately burn. Sanchita means we get the fruit of Karma in the later stage of our life. A time gap is needed here. If you sow rice you can harvest it after some months. Prarabdha is the fruit of the deeds of previous life- good or bad. We cannot hide without going through the prarabdha. This Prarabdha is known by various names like Daiva. Adrusya the Unseen Fate, Destiny and the so likes. “Purbajanma Krutam Karma tatdaivam iti Kathyate”. Prarabdha is the foundation of our present birth. Of course prarabdha can be controlled and balanced by purusartha. Purusartha is the deeds or activities undertaken by an individual in his present life. Purusartha is badly needed for both worldly achievements and spiritual pursuits. Man cannot blink the destiny. However he need not be a fatalist. You get nothing by cursing the fate only.

Karma is the deeds done by an individual with his senses brain and brawn. Karma is what is reflected from the deeds of a man it may be godly, manly or demonic.

Rich and poor are relative terms. In this world one can always find the rich and the poor. One may be poor due to his prarabdha but there is every possibility that he can be rich by dint of his purusartha (his

hard labour and incessant striving). One may be an ignorant fellow on the basis of his prarabdha but he can ignite and enlighten his being with knowledge. Of course this process may be time-consuming.

Therefore, we should always remember the great saying of the Ishavasyopanishad- "Krato Smara Krutam Smara" (Remember the Paramatma, remember the deeds done by you).

21. What is the significance of phallus worship ?

Ans.- Yoni is the base From which the entire world (jagat) is born is called yoni in the temples of Lord Siva the unified symbol of yoni and lingam is worshipped. The entire universe is absorbed in the lingam. Yoni symbolises Prakriti and lingam symbolises purusa. The mingling of unification of prakriti and purusa is the cause of all creation. Brahma is sukshma and sunya, subtle and void. The gross or manifested forms of Brahma are prakriti and purusa. Etymologically lingam means symbol. Male and Female are distinguished from each other in terms of lingam or gender. But from the spiritual point of view. Lingam means Brahma which is the cause of all creation both matter and spirit. Hence, it is called the cause of all causes- Sarvakarana Karana.

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Ans.-The evolution of Tantra is inseparably linked with the evolution of human civilization. However to tell the exact date or time of beginning of tantra is an almost difficult task. We may lack in exact historical evidence. But from the days of the yore till date tantra has been evolving. Lord siva is regarded as the foremost pioneer of tantra. Hence the first Guru of tantra is Lord Siva. In the puranas (mythological texts). Devguru Vrihaspati is acclaimed as the knower and master of the vedic cult whereas Sukracharya the Guru of the Asuras (demons) is accepted as the knower and master of the tantric cult. The gradual evolution of tantra can be well-understood by going through the ancient Indian puranas and the modes of worship described therein. The twelve Jyotirlingams the temples of Lord Siva and the worshiping of Siva lingam in almost all the villages all over India the various seats of Shakti and Yoginis (Mother worship) imply the wide acceptance and endorsement of tantra. In Saivagama, Saptagama, Narada Pancharatra and even in Buddhism and Jainism tantric traditions are well founded Many saints siddha and paramahansas have left indelible imprints on the tantric tradition.

The mode of worship which we follow today is a combination of both vedic and tantric traditions. For example. "Gananatwang

Ganapati Gum Habamaye” is a tantric hymn. Starting from the birth of and individual upto the last rites in each smaskra (sacrament) that we perform everywhere we can see that combination of vedic and tantrik cults or traditions.

The way of life propounded in Saatan Dharma has two main origins the vedas and the tantra. The entire edifice of the Indian way of life has been erected on the foundations of Agama (Tantra) and Nigama (Veda), While vedic tradition is seen by the people as an ideal the very utterance of the word “Tantra” injects fear in the minds of the people. But the practice of so-called black magic is not tantra. “Tanoti trayate iti tantra”. That which leads to an expansion of our consciousness is called tantra. Tantra makes individual consciousness melt with universal consciousness. It liberates the individual from the cycle of birth and death. Tantra elevates the individuals to the state of Advaita where dualism vanishes. Tantra visualises the entire creation as Siva-Shakti. Hence tantra can be regarded as a liberating science.

8.Q:- Beloved Swamijee! The creation and its creator, Birth, Rebirth, life, death, transmigration of soul, these topics haunt the human minds from time immemorial. They appear as enigmas before us. Please, unravel these mysteries.

Ans:- From spiritual point of view, the cause of creation is "Akoham Bahusyamah"- from one to many- as wished by the Almighty or Paramatma. Amongst all beings 'man' is the finest creation. Indian shastras have depicted human life as a rare gift of God. Hence, the sages have always inspired us to lead life in a meaningful way.

The Indian approach towards life is a holistic one. Death is not the end of life. It is just a pause. We all are travelling along an infinite path. We are revolving in a cycle of birth and death.

An individual being is a combination of para nature (the life energy) & a para nature (five elements of pancha mahabhuta mind, intellect and ego) When it unites with the spirit (Chaitanya). It is called Jivatma. In other words, jivatma is a union of Jada and Chetana (matter & spirit)

Of course our Acharyas differ on this subject. Some have propounded the theory of monoism and some others the theory of dualism to explain this complex phenomenon. Dualism to explain this complex phenomenon. Dualism means jivatma & paramatma are not one, They are different. But monoism, of which Adi Sankaracharya is the chief vocal proponent, says unequivocally that Jivatma and

paramatma are the one and the same. Only the delusive illusion of the world restricts man's consciousness to realize the self, the eternal being.

This mundane world is ephemeral, ever-changing. Hence, we accept life and death as realities. Man does not die all of a sudden. In fact, we are dying every moment. But spiritually the self neither born nor dies "Najayate mriyate ba kadachit". says the Gita. An individual being revolves in the cycle of birth and death till the individual realizes the undwelling eternal spirit. What we call Brahmopalabdhi (the realization of Brahma) Otherwise, no one can escape from the fact "Punarapi Jananam punarapi maranam punarapi janani jathare sayanam' Hence, the transmigration of soul.

An individual being takes rebirth on the basis of his deeds. (actions and thoughts). Desires create attachment and attachment compel one to take birth again and again. The Gita explains.

"An individual becomes in his next birth what he thinks of at the moment of his death in his previous birth. He may elevate himself to a higher state or degrade himself according to his karma".

After death on the basis of prarabdha and the influence of Gunas (satwa, raja and tama). one (jivatma) may immediately be attracted to the womb of a mother or it may wait for sometime till it finds a worthy womb. Jivatma in the subtle body may wonder in any of the 14 bhuvana (planes) (7 upper bhuvanas like Bhu. Bhuvah, Swaha, Maha, Jana, Tapa, Satya and 7 lower bhuvanas like Atala, bitala, Patala, etc.) This has been envisaged in our shastras. The concept of rebirth has been accepted and believed by almost all the religions except the believers in charvak philosophy.

9.Q:- Venerated swamijee ! What is meditation? What is the science behind it?

Ans:- In Maharshi Patanjali's Asthanga Yoga (the eightfold yoga), Dhyana or meditation is the seventh stage. The eight successive stages of Patanjali's Asthanga Yoga are : Yama (self-restraint), Niyama (observances), Asana (postures), Niyama (observances), Asana (Postures), Pranayam (vital energy control), Pratyahara (abstraction or sense withdrawal), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi (illuminate consciousness). The first four stages are called Bahiranga (external) sadhana and the last four stages come

under Antaranga (internal) sadhana. Thus, meditation is part of Antaranga Sadhana.

When the Indriyas are withdrawn from their respective senses and start moving inwards; when the individual looks within or gradually becomes introvert, the mind starts concentrating or fixing it up on one object. This stage is called Dharana. When this happens continuously and in an uninterrupted manner; when the mind of the meditator totally becomes concentrated on the meditated, it is called meditation or dhyana. The concentration on the meditated should tattle and indivisible-- like the flow of oil.

The stages have described meditation as a great experience. Meditation is not an act, it is an experience. It is never done, rather it happens. The effects of meditation are felt on various planes of human existence physical, mental, intellectual, psychological and spiritual. The entire personality of an individual becomes balanced and awakened when one practices meditation. The body, mind and prana (vital or bio-energy) become more stronger, energetic and calm. Tranquillity reigns the mind as meditation deeply influences the working of the mind. The close faculties of our minds open up and this leads to the expansion of consciousness. While meditating, the waves emanating from the brain become balanced and an energy cycle is created. This is not a belief, this has been examined by the scientists. Among the waves emanated, especially, the alpha waves make one utterly serene and free of distresses and anxieties.

The various glands in our body both-- endocrine and exocrine--secrete other chemicals in a controlled way. Meditation enhances the power of preservation, concentration, memory and discrimination. Negative thoughts vanish and positive thoughts crowd in. Working no more seems as headship, it gives pleasure. One becomes capable of taking right decisions. The spiritual spark, hidden inside us, is ignited by way of meditation. Meditation makes our (sexual) energy move upwards which has the normal tendency of moving downwards. Thus, one graduates in Brahmacharya (celibacy), The loss of semen is checked and contained. One's capacity to restrain increases manifold. Fickleness is astonishingly reduced. The blood-pressure and heart beatings become normal. The mind moves away from frustrations and always feel afresh, rejuvenated and invigorated. The resistance to diseases increases. The mind becomes engrossed in one's aim in endeavour. One remains at ease. When one dives himself deeper

and deeper in meditation complexes and phobias, anger and hatred, lust and greed begin to disappear. Unmeditated mind is a mess. Meditation illumines the mind. Most of the time, we act as per our instinctive emotions. Meditation makes one capable of having a grip over emotions. It curtails unabated desires and attachments and in turn, helps in spiritual elevation.

10.Q:-*Today human beings all around the globe are distress-ridden, tension-stricken. What changes meditation could bring about in this respect?*

Ans:- Meditation enable an individual to be conscious of the deeper aspects of life. Superficial attractions, superfluous desires fade away. It makes one optimistic and practical in life. The capacity to discriminate between the good and bad, virtues and vices, truth and untruth, reality and illusion is augmented. Meditative people always take right decisions. Meditation gives confidence and inner strength to face life's challenges. One does not fumble and mumble if anything negative happens.

Today we live in a society where we doubt each other. Even with in a family we can witness it. Doubt creates mistrust and mistrust gives rise to tension and conflicts. Meditation can help us better understand each other. Understanding reduces tension and relationship bonds become stronger. Therefore, meditation should be practised by people of all walks of life, students and youth, intellectuals and layman, businessmen and industrialists, army-men and police. Most importantly, meditation reduces the corrupt instinct. Today people all around the global are in search of peace and happiness. Meditation assures both.

11.Q:-*In which way meditation could help striking a mental balance in today's youth?*

Ans:- Youth represents strength. When one is young, his senses are strong, active and forceful. Beauty, dream, ability, courage boldness, enthusiasm, indefatigability.... these are the defining traits of youth. The body remains energetic and the mind moves hither and thither. Meditation can help the youth manifest their creative genius. If the mind becomes calm and concentrated in any constructive work or creative pursuit, then a young man is able to uplift his spirit. Meditation helps reducing infatuations and emotions are channelled in the proper direction which, in turn, help in striking a mental balance. A

mind in equilibrium cannot but be creative. Hence, meditation is indispensable for the youth. Today's youth are haunted by the problem of unemployment which breeds frustration and violence. Meditation can act as a panacea to control the awry developments, especially the antisocial and inhuman instincts like cruelty and brutality. Chasing after hallucinations and when failed, taking resorts to drug and alcoholism is the present day trend which is mostly seen among the youth. Mostly seen among the youth. Meditation can give them the real solace.

12.Q:-*The shastra says..."Yad bhavah tad bharati". Indian spiritual philosophy has given utmost importance to our thinking or thought process. What is the reason behind it?*

Ans:- How true is the adage, "As you think so you become" thoughts influence the body, mind and spirit. The various aspects of one's personality are shaped by his thoughts. Hence, the gurus or spiritual masters always advise us to think positively. Positive thoughts lead to right actions. Meditation transforms the thought of a common man to that of a saint. One of the meanings of Dhyana is thought or chintana. The Gita says."The man dwelling on sense objects develops attachments for them attachment springs up desire; from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger. From anger arises ignorance; from ignorance confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin.

But the self-controlled striver, while enjoying the various sense-objects through his senses which are disciplined and free from likes and dislikes attains placidity of mind".

13.Q:-*Is God-realization possible through meditation?*

Ans:-Certainly, God-realization is possible through meditation. In other words, meditation, if practised sincerely and regularly, culminates in God-realization. At the preliminary stages, the striver thinks of a meditates upon any form or name of God (Istha). While meditation he sees the glimpses of that Istha. Such visualization of Istha or the meditated showers on him bliss (Divya Ananda). His self within becomes illuminate. He feels enlightened. If this happens frequently, a time comes when the seeker feels himself one with God. That oneness is God- realization. The feeling of this state is explained by the sages as Sat-Chit-Ananda. However. God-realization is inexpressible, beyond words.

14.Q:-What should be meditated upon?

Ans:- Maharshi Patanjali says, "Yathabhimata Dhyana ba". It means the striver should meditate upon whatever is dear to him, very close to his heart and soul. If the mind starts contemplating upon and concentrating on the object of his interest and fascination or any Deity whom he loves, adores and reveres, then meditation happens. The objects may be the moon, star, flower, Omkara any particular point (Bindu) or flame (Jyoti) or any God or Goddess whom he worships and esteems as Ista. At the outset, the practitioner should try to meditate upon his object of meditation at Bhruvadhya (just the middle point between eye-brows which is called Ajna Chakra).

Q.26:-Swamijee! What is your view on religious conversion? Is it an organized religious campaign? Or, people convert themselves from one religion to other out of economic compulsion? Is there any political motive behind it that more the number, more the power? The allegations and counter-allegations vitiate our social cohesion. What is the way out?

Ans:-Truth is one. There are various ways to realize it. It is how various sects, various religions have sprang up the teachings and preachings of the prophets of various religions cater to the time, circumstances and socio-religious needs of a particular people. Yet they contain in them many aspects of truth. Today, we equate dharma with religion. But dharma is an ideal way of life while religion is an organized sect, community or group following some particular customs, rituals, codified principles and they are abided by the teachings of a prophet and guided by a scripture like the Gita. Bible. Koran. We should not hesitate accepting what is good in other religions. If a person follows a particular religion or way of life out of his own faith, inclination and in accordance with the dictates of his inner self, there is nothing wrong.

However, the phenomenon of religious conversion shows a mad race to convert the people of other religions into one's own religious fold. Frankly, I detest and condemn it. Should we exploit the ignorance, innocence and poverty of others to increase the number of followers of religions? Politics is a number game. dharma is not and should not be. Religion has to be over and above the political manoeuvres.

In medieval India, the fanatic kings converted their subjects to their own religion. The fear of sword made innocent people nowhere to go

but to accept the fanatic and lunatic diktats. Is such medieval trend worth following in the 21st century? Can the entire world and all human beings be converted into one religion whether it is Hinduism, Islam or Christianity? Never -- This is my bold conviction. Different ways of life, different thoughts and perceptions..... would always be there. We need not worry about it.

The menace of terrorism is the offshoot of a diseased mind-set. It shows lack of tolerance, denial of others and straightjacketing everything into one fold. It has disastrous implications. No Jihad or dharmayuddha can make the entire world the cradle of a particular religion. The religious hostilities and animosities engulf us when we start thinking that we are only right and great and others are totally wrong and petty infidels. The way and Hindu Pundits in Kashmir were compelled to desert their homeland or accept conversion which was an organized campaign by some religious zealots, was a blot on our national life and an utterly communal mindset.

Our Saints and seers have told "Krinwantu Viswa Aryam" (Make the World great). It does not mean that make the entire world Hindu. The saints, who have realized the truth, always pray for the well-being of humanity. The two most defining principles of dharma are Abhyudaya (the development and welfare of the world or Jagatika Kalyan) and Nishchreyasa (Liberty or Mukti).

One may stick to his own religion and at the same time, he can serve and love his co-religions as well. But if in the name of education, health or service, we encourage conversion, then it would spell the doom of our social cohesion. We would doubt each other's motives and mistrust would prevail. There would be frequent conflicts and skirmishes among the members of different religions. Again, there would be a counter campaign of reconversion and this vicious circle would continue to haunt humanity.

We also need to think seriously why the people, especially the Hindus of lower castes who today are known as 'Dalits' in the political language, are changing their religion. Caste exploitation, untouchability, discrimination and denial of lawful rights to some sections of our society have angered and provoked them to jump to other religion.

On one hand, we use to say that we all are the children of God; on the other, we continue to despise and deprive some members of our

society. Practically, in the worldly term, there would always remain inequalities. But we have to accept and cement spiritual equality to keep up the oneness and brotherhood of humanity. This spiritual equality is atmabhava or Viswatmabhava. Both the religious and political leaders should contemplate upon this fact. The Government should gearup its administrative machinery to eradicate poverty, dispel ignorance and provide basic amenities to the neglected sections so that they could think for them-selves.

I hope and pray, may the feeling of spiritual oneness (Atmabhava) flourish all-round the globe! What is good and acceptable in any religion needs recognition and reverence by all of us and what is bad, cruel, based on superstition or hypocrisy, we must abhor. Dharma or religiousness is always worth embracing but fanaticism is to be discarded in any form.

Q.27:-Swamijee! spiritual life is a broad term. But what is spiritual life in layman's understanding?

And:-Our rishish have made a two fold division of human life- mundane and spiritual. Household life of an individual with his own home and hearth, parents, wife and children is generally called mundane life. Here, one aspires for the enjoyment of his senses and fulfilment of various worldly desires. Dharma, Artha and Kama are the chief purusarthas practised in household life. But the ultimate goal of spiritual life is moksha-liberation of the soul. However, mundane and spiritual are the complementary parts of life. They are not diametrically opposite to each other. Spiritual life begins when one starts leading his worldly life as ordained by our scriptures. The very thought of 'I' and 'Mine' lead to attachment which, in turn, is the cause of sorrow. Hence, the feeling of 'doer' is the cause of sorrow. That's why a worldly man never finds bliss or ananda on earth inspite of achieving great success, position and riches.

But an individual should lead his life with detached attachment and without the feeling of 'doer' - thinking himself as an instrument in the divine scheme. He should dedicate every action at the feet of God and think that whatever is happening is happening as per the wish of the almighty. Such an individual is spiritual in the true sense of the term.

A life dedicated to Sadhana spiritual practices- is spiritual life. A layman may be mired in worldly things but if he thinks of God, then spirituality springs up. Spiritual life for a common human-being is to do

his duty in the right way following the right code of conduct, to have love, affection and respect for all beings, to help the needy, to base one's life on truth, non-violence, non-stealing, compassion and co-operation, to go to bed at right and get up in the morning with a thankfulness to God. This world is the right place to realize the self - both individual and universal. The knowledge of the self comes automatically if one knows well the realities and illusions of the world.

There is no need to shirk one's responsibilities, whether familial or societal, for self-realization. One should, rather, do one's duty as the part of worship of God. The Lord says in the Gita- "Swakarma tamahyarchya siddhim bindati manabah". One can realize the ultimate goal of life by worshipping God through his duty. How can one love God who does not love himself and his fellow-beings? How can one know God who doesn't know himself? That's why, this world is meant to know oneself and love our fellow men. God is all-pervasive. One needs to be trained in swimming if he dreams of crossing the English channel. Like that, in this very world, one needs to practise pure and divine love, and instil it in the hearts and minds of his family members if he desires to cross the sea of Samsara and realize the ultimate goal paramatma.

Guru shows the path of leading a spiritual life. That's why, in Indian tradition, Guru is highly revered. An athlete needs a coach to make himself an expert. Thus, Guru is a spiritual coach. A Guru is supposed to be possessed with divine qualities and spiritual wisdom who can bequeath it to his disciples. Therefore, a worldly man can take the shelter of a Guru in order to elevate the level of his consciousness. But remember, Guru's work is not merely whispering a hymn or mantra in your ears. However, there are examples of divine souls who because of the samskaras of their previous births are born as Atma-Gurus.

Marriage : Its mundane and spiritual dimensions

Ans.: - In the Varnashrama system of India, marriage is a dignified institution. The sanctity of this institution can be well-known from our Vedas and Shastras. In our scriptures, eight forms of marriage are described such as Gandharva, Prajapatya, Asura, etc. Amongst them, 'Prajapatya' is the ideal system of marriage which we call as Vedic way of marriage. Marriage is the meeting of two bodies, minds and souls. In this way, the married couples take forward the creation of Prajapati Brahma. Marriage makes the family as well as the society disciplined

and life comes to a balance. Marriage is sanctionorious in our scriptures as a yajna. It is one of the samskaras or sacraments. After the wedlock, the husband and wife start their journey of life in the world with a spirit a new and they try to move towards Moksha (liberty) by fulfilling the other three Purusarthas- Dharma, Artha and Kama.

However, physical enjoyment or sensual pleasure is not the sole aim of marriage. Married life is also a spiritual journey. The husband and wife unifiedly try to go up the ladders of realising the self without which life is sans any meaning. The couple embryos Karmayoga in their lives and face the challenges of samsara. They endeavour to cross the waves of birth and death, happiness and sorrows, gain and loss etc. in order to reach the divine abode of paramatma.

Marriage fulfils the natural law of uniting the opposites. The male and female understand and restraint their emotions, excitements and passions through the bond of marriage sanctifies the man-woman relationship. But in their private or personal lives, it gives the opportunity to know each other better in every respect. The Indian tradition of Sadhana (spiritual practices) speaks of various ways and means to control one's senses, mind and bio-energy if the aspirant is hell bent on spiritual elevation. In the life of a human being, marriage purports to restraint himself through his counterpart if understood in the right way. Thus, marriage is a sacred journey from body to soul, from gross to subtle. In Indian system of ashramas, Married life is known and glorified as 'Gruhastha' ashram as the other three ashrams depend on the Gruhastha for worldly sustenance.

In sanatan Dharma, marriage is also meant to bring out the progeny. And the husband and wife have to be aware and vigilant to give birth to right kind of children. To continue the line of ancestors and posterify, the lineage of progenitors and their descendants, the union of marriage has a great role to play. The very conception of a child is a samskara. Children should not be born accidentally out of physical relationship. Parents should be well-prepared before and after giving birth to a child. The very attitude and thought of the parents, their 'Samkalpa' influences the child to be born. Even before conception, the intent or desire of the parents during the sexual union can decide whether they would beget a son or a daughter. The desire to beget worthy children should run high in the minds of the parents. The period of pregnancy should be observed like a 'brata' - a spiritual practice- which, in turn, would instill divine thoughts in the sub-conscious mind of the child.

Those dormant samskaras would automatically be manifested in the later life of the child. Sex after conception, and during pregnancy should be avoided. The mother should refrain herself from seeing sexual or violent scenes. We all have heard the story mighty Abhimanyu learning the art of entering into the 'chakrabyuha' (a strategy in the ancient time war where the soldiers were to be rounded like a wheel) in the womb of his mother, Subhadra. In the modern times, prenatal psychology has delved deeper into these mysteries and it has brought before us various stages and dimensions of the mental and psychological growth of the foetus in the womb of the mother.

In the most ancient time, we didn't have in India the division of castes. But we had the 'Varna' system. From the Purusha Sukta of the Vedas, from Bhagavad Gita, we can know about the four Varnas coming out from the various parts of the Lord. The system of castes is not so ancient. The emphasis was on 'Varna' and 'ashram' systems. At first, the nature and deeds of an individual were the deciding factors of his categorization in the varna system. But later on castes emerged based on the work, activity or profession only and these castes continued hereditary. If we look into the shastras, Ravana was the son of a Rishi. Ravana was predominantly an asura. Maharshi Viswamitra was initially a Kshatriya, But he could elevate himself to the position of Brahmarshi.

Now, inter-caste, inter-religious, international marriages have been given legal sanction. In ancient Indian society marriages were being solemnised after due verification of the ancestry, gotra and family tradition of both the bride and the groom. It doesn't mean, no marriage was solemnised between higher and lower castes (varnas). There are enough examples of such marriages which are bifurcated as Anuloma and Pratiloma marriages. If a higher caste male accepted a lower caste female in marriage, it was called Anuloma marriage. But the nuptial tie of a female of higher caste with a male of lower caste was dubbed as pratiloma marriage.

It is known from srimad Bhagavat Purana that, Rishi Ugrashraba (Suta) who had told Bhagavat Katha (talks on Bhagavat) to 88,000 saints, was born from Pratiloma wedlock. His Mother was Brahmin and his father was Kshatriya. Inter-caste and Inter-religious marriages break the so-called social barricades. So, now-a-days, various sections of our society encourage such marriages. However, though such marriages seem to be ideal on its very face,. Yet many a time

they lead to the naked show of uncontrolled passions, individualism dominating upon the familial and societal..... interests. They create and encourage a queer cultural melange where nothing is certain. It doesn't mean that I am against inter-caste marriages. Truly, I do not put emphasis upon caste but I emphasize on 'Varna', not on high and low, rich and poor but on 'Samskaras'. I'm concerned with character, not with black or white beauty or ugliness. However, social dignity should be attached to marriage. I have recently read in the newspapers that Prince Charles, who is in the news for his extra-marital affairs with Camilla Parker Bowles, couldn't be invited to the White House, the official residence of the President of the United States of America as President Bush is a Catholic Christian. And the same American Society is the most open society in the world! Even the Bishop in London has admonished the erring Prince and advised him to beg excuse in the public. Why? There must have been some reasons. Truly, we are not so open and magnanimous to accept any kind of marriage. We are still guided by some principles though every society has its own principles. And are we really prepared to give freedom to the children who will be born from such wedlock to embrace any religion or custom of their choice without being guided by anybody? I so, then why the volte-face of the families when a Hindu boy marries a Muslim girl or Vice-versa? We cannot be the blind followers, at the same time we can't blink the realities.

According to Indian spiritual philosophy, marriage is a sacrament and not a contract which could be broken whimsically at the sweet will of any of the partners. And the western experiment of marriage has proved that changing partners doesn't satiate unrestrained desires but contrastingly, it brings sad and sour repercussions for the society, especially for the tender children. Even we can see today how some people of the west have gone mad over homo-sexuality and lesbianism. Man is losing interest in woman and vice-versa and hence, this psychological disease. Such people need to undergo psychotherapy to come out from such a diseased mind-set. Those people are not satisfied with such relationship only, they are demanding to legitimise such relationship by conferring on them constitutional right. Strange! and day is not far when the blind Indians would follow them in the name of so-called civilization and modernity. Our thinkers, philosophers, scientists and leaders should seriously think of it and they should take steps to arrest such trends.

Otherwise, it would spell the doom of our civilization. man and woman are tow sides of the same coin. Without their respective role, creation or existence is unthinkable. Male -female creation is the natural creation of the creator. If we go against this natural law, then we would be encouraging bestialities.

Before winding up, I would like to say a few lines on the modern-day trend of living in relationship. Such relationship is based on physical and economical considerations only. It cannot unite hearts and minds. Atomic relationship would be a far cry. It would result only in conflicts, shocking clash of egoes and at last, divorces. Living together and physical relationship between the couple before marriage can never be taken as an ideal way of life. Among the Advises and Vanavasis of India, who are called 'Dalits' and uncivilized today, we could see such custom of living together of the boy and girl before marriage and enjoy rights with sensual pleasures. Are we going back to that state in the name of civilization?

DIVINE WORDS FROM A DISTINGUISHED SWAMI

H.H. Swami Sri Satyaprajnananda Saraswati is cast in the heroic mould of the great indian tradition of Sanyas. He was born on 10th september, 1956 at Lukapara, an obscure village in the district of Raigarh of the present province of Chattisgarh. At the prime of his youth, he was initiated into Sanyas on the Mahasivaratri Day, 1980 by his Guru, the famous saint and Yogi, Paramahansa Swami Satyananda Saraswati. As a parivrajaka, with an insatiable intellectual curiosity to study the greatness of Indian civilization and its not-to-be-forgotten spiritual heritage, he moved from place to place all over India. He reached Puri, the abode of Sri Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe. He prayed, meditated, contemplated in this holy shrine and with the blessings of the Lord and Mata Bimala, who symbolies shakti, he came to Balangir to fulfil a great mission dedicated to the well-being of mankind. He could have established himself in any other popular, well known place where devotees throng in large numbers. But he chose Balangir, a poor and backward district in the map of our country, as the centre of his mission. Initially, he had to undergo a litmus test to

prove his calibre, conduct and character as society demands a prosecution from every great man, hell bent on serving that society. However, Swamijee, with his iron will, steely mind and never-say-die-spirit, faced several odds and proved himself what he is and what he intends to do. A many-splendoured personality, an incisive thinker, prolific writer, mesmerising speaker, poet, a saint proficient in Indian shastras, a preacher of Yoga and meditation for healthy body and sound mind he has been blessed with a cornucopia of gifts to be bracketed with other great seers of our age. He is the Founder and President of Viswatma Chetana Parishad, a socio-spiritual organisation with five-fold objectives- Sikshya (Education), Swasthya (Health), Shrama (Labour), Seva (Service), Sadhana (Spiritual practice). Under the auspices of the Parishad, there runs a school, 'Viswatma Vidya Mandir' which aims at creating a band of talents with thinking minds and feeling hearts. The parishad also runs a homoeopathy dispensary, 'Sivananda Arogya Mandir'. Swamijee is developing "Ananda Niketan" as his 'Karmabhoomi' which is situated in the district of Bolangir of Orissa. Ananda Niketan with its enchanting greenery, ravishing beauty, calm and serene environment gives the real *ananda*.