



WHAT TYPE OF LIFE
DO YOU LEAD?

A good life?



An involved Q & A

HER HOLINESS SRI SATHGURU
SWAMI GNANANANDA SARASVATHI

If there is true yearning for God and if it is time for that soul to find a Guru, when the disciple is ready, the Guru will come.

There is no problem. It is the disciple who has all the problems, not the Guru! He is waiting. He can't come till you are ready, because you cannot absorb His teachings.



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**Her Holiness Sri Sathguru
Gnanananda Sarasvathi is a jivan
muktha. In this detailed and easy to
understand question answer session
Her Holiness touches upon the key
aspects of mukti, humility, dharma
and the battle one needs to wage
against the lower nature. In this
battle and discovery for souls like us.
She highlights the advent and role of
the Guru, the need for self-analysis
and the eternal relevance of
Saranagati. All of which are
ingredients for leading a good life.
One that God really wants.**

Real yearning, true Bhakti-a strong force for liberation

Q. Who is eligible for videha mukti?

One who yearns to reach God although not capable of any real sadhana – is such a person eligible for videha mukti?

A. Sri Sathguru: There are two kinds of mukti. One the Videha mukti and the other is jivan mukti. jivan mukti is attained while one is still living in this world without dying. The Videha mukti comes after death. You don't need so much of learning or knowledge, book knowledge or anything, but you must have the basic qualification. That is the mind should be pure so that it leads you towards God. Attractions of the world do not interest you towards God. Attractions of the world do not interest you. If you are lost in the attractions of the world, then you can't expect to have any experiences, spiritual experiences. It is not possible. It is as if

you are stuck in a quagmire. You have got to get out of it, as I told you, through self-discipline.

But if you do have a true yearning towards God, love of God that helps you a great lot. But it must be a hundred per cent true and strong. That will make you overcome all the other deficiencies. You can work out all your bad karma of the past birth, of the prarabdha karma that you got here – good and bad – you can work it out provided you are able to think for yourself, I mean, to be detached and see yourself.

I have always told you, you must do self-analysis. Write out good points and your bad points without being too lenient on yourself. You should do that because you can't make any progress if you are kind to yourself. When it is somebody else, you are able to be tough, but when it is yourself, you are too kind. That won't do. Unless you are

totally self-disciplined, you cannot have any true sadhana unless if the yearning is there, this will stop you.

The lower nature, must be controlled, purified and directed – unless that happens, it is very difficult, even in spite of the great yearning that you have, to reach God. This has to be purified. Sometimes it happens that if the yearning towards God is so strong, then that purifies your lower nature. That can also happen. The love of God, Bhakti, can make you overcome your lower nature. The evil inside everyone can be overcome by true Bhakti.

For this, you must have the guidance of a Guru, who can show you the way to God. Even if it is a very great soul, there must be a guru – except in the case of avatars and souls like that, they don't need a human Guru, but otherwise it is not possible. You must have a Guru, not only in the spiritual life, whether it is in worldly life, why even in the

kindergarten, you need a teacher and that is a guru!

Different type of gurus teach you different things . You know the story of Dattatreya – he had 24 gurus!

If there is true yearning for God and if it is time for that soul to find a Guru, when the disciple is ready, the Guru will come. There is no problem. It is the disciple who has all the problems, not the Guru! He is waiting. He can't come till you are ready, because you cannot absorb His teachings. You don't like it when something is said about you and there are some types of discipline that you don't like. That means that the lower nature is strong. You to overcome that. Understand where you are wrong. Correct yourself, discipline yourself. That is why I say, you have to be a bit detached and look at yourself. A person, called X or Y, the soul detaches itself and looks at that person – where he is right, where he is wrong. These are the first steps.

As long as there is real yearning and true Bhakti, then that itself is a great strong force for liberation – very strong, indeed. But there will be problems because of the lower nature, especially if it is strong in you. It depends on that – how far that lower nature is stopping you from rising higher. There is what you call a higher nature and the lower nature in a human being. Lower nature must always be controlled and guided by the higher nature. In the early stages it is quite difficult. But as you go along, you find that things happen, which you don't like may be, but it for your own good. There is no use rebelling against it. It is in your interest.

Humble, invincible Krishna. Humble you?

But even to have a yearning for God, it is a very great thing. It is very important that you continue to increase the Bhakti by meditation, by japam, by study, by all these things and more than anything, else, by learning humility. Humility is very important. You know that Krishna is a purnavatara – there is no Avatara higher than that. He is famous for His two attributes. His invincibility – nobody could conquer Him. And His humility. In spite of all that He was so humble. Here in this world you find people so arrogant, and it is a world that is just plain tinsel. It is nothing good or nothing great; just plain tinsel, that is all. That arrogance shows them up. The greatest purnavatara. He wiped the feet of all great sages with His own cloth. He ate that plantain skin, without a murmur. He ate it! And we see ordinary human beings have got such huge egos,

mountainous egos. That needs a lot of hard knocks in life. That is how it is worked out. When they get lots of hard knocks, you know they are awakened. But why learn in that way? Why suffer? I don't know, some people like it that way perhaps. It's better to learn it, to understand it yourself. What is the thinking power God has given us for? If you can't use your brains, what is it there for? It should make you understand that it is your fault. You blame somebody else, why can't you blame yourself? Where has that self-analysis gone to? You must learn to blame yourself, not another person! When you do wrong, put your hand on your heart and say, "I have done wrong". Be honest. That takes you much higher. Cleanses you and takes you much higher. Is it how the mind becomes pure. Of course it leads you on till you get a Guru. Once you get a Guru, than there is no problem.

It is no easy, because the Guru must accept you also. You just can't go and pick one up like that; He has got to accept you. Your characteristics and the time, whether it is ripe for you or not, he knows. And more than anything else, as I said, the practice of humility is most important. If Krishna could do that and teach, then why can't we? It is the egoism that makes for all this trouble in all the world.

Throughout the world, it is people's ego. Minus that, everything is much easier; much easier than what we can even expect.

Once you reach your Guru, there is no doubting the Guru's teachings or Guru's orders. Unquestioning obedience works in your favour. The Guru gets nothing out of it. "Yasya deve tatha gurau" – that means, how you think about God, in the same way you must think about your Guru. And how you think about Guru, you think of God.

Both are same. So there must be unquestioning obedience. More than anything else, there must be trust and faith and absolute surrender. All this comes out of faith and absolute surrender. All this comes out of faith and trust. You can surrender only when you have the basic trust and faith in the Guru. Otherwise, how can you surrender?

Even if you have a Guru who you know is God and you look upon that Guru as God, then you find that whatever you do, always at every turn you are helped, but you must be worthy of this help. It is not something that you can go to the market and buy! You have got to work for it, cleanse yourself and be ready to receive it at the time that He has decided to give it to you.

That intense yearning, that intense Bhakti for God, characterizes every saint; every saint. They identify themselves totally with God or Guru.

You see the story of Padmapada – how he didn't even see the deep Ganges – it is one of the deepest and broadest rivers in India. He ran across it! It was his Guru's grace.

You are protected and looked after by the Grace of God and Guru, if you really want it, if you deserve it and if you are worthy of it – that's all.

Mind your own business

Part of the lower nature is always comparing yourself with somebody else. That is wrong. You must learn to mind your own business. Learn to mind your own business, that's all. Leave it at that. There is a saying, we used to say when we were children.

“Mind your own business and fry your own fish; and don't pke your nose into other people's dish!”

When we were kids, we used to say

that. This is a great truth. Don't poke your nose into other people's dish! Mind your own business, you see. Interfering in other people's affairs. Why should you see what another man is doing? Mind your own business – that itself is something you can't do! You are not fit even to do that. You want to go and mind other people's affairs.

Comparing yourself with somebody else and always thinking the other man is better and “the other man is getting a better deal and I am not getting it” it is very cheap. It has nothing to do with spiritual life. There is no discipline in this. But this type of thinking is very common, that is why I have to say it. And another thing is criticizing other people. Criticizing other, but not criticizing oneself. That is very I said self-analysis. I insist on that so much because unless you do that self-analysis, you will not be able to proceed. It is a major stumbling block.

“There is so much good in the worst of us
And so much bad in the best of us
So it does not behove any of us
To criticize the rest of us.”

My father wrote this in my autograph book when I was about 8 years old. He thought that it made sense. You know, people make a job of sitting down and criticizing other people. That's very wrong. You are wasting your time. You are going so many steps down, down the ladder not up. Understand that if they have faults, don't you have faults? Are you such a great saint, painted while like that, without even a dot of black? Let us stop all that nonsense, you know. You have got to control yourself if you want to go even one step on the ladder. You can't otherwise. All the time, if you keep on looking down, then you won't move up. For that you have got to look up.

Detachment the world. Attachment to God.

To come on to a state of Videha mukti, see you, have to be like the great saints. Look at the life of Mira. They had everything, but that did not distract them or drag them back into the mire. They went higher and higher. The more the disadvantages, the more suffering that they went through, took them higher. That is how you should use your sufferings. Lot of people suffer in this world today, everybody does. Those are opportunities. You must learn so many things from them. It should teach you detachment also, from your own body, from other people. You think because you have got a family, you can order them around or do what you want with them. They are not your servants. The relationship is of the past birth. And it is worked out now. Nobody owns anybody. It is not possible. The soul comes with all it prarabdha karma, all

its past connections, is born here. He or she has to work it out. So this is how all the relationships come into our lives. This does not mean that you should have selfish attachment. This brings only sorrow in its trail, nothing else.

You have got the right to work, the right to do your duty but not to the fruits thereof. He says, “Don’t look for the fruits.” And offer both to God. If you want the good, then you must take the bad also. You can’t get only one. You can’t pick and choose what you want – that is not possible! It comes as a package, you have to take it. Good and bad are both there in it. If you work for that, if you cannot do *niskamya*, then you have to take both. Whatever duties you have to do, do them as a service to God. And if the results are not what you want, then what do you do? Learn to accept it.

“O God, grant me the serenity to
accept the
Things that cannot be changed, the
courage to
Change the things that I can, and the
wisdom to
Know the difference.”

Sometimes you can't understand that
why things happen as they do. There is
no use trying to understand. It is not
going to help at all. You just have to
take it in your own interest. Work it out.
That means, for those who have
surrendered totally to God, He comes
there to help them- O mean really
surrendered, not trying to cheat God.
That won't work. That is the most
foolish thing that you ever do in your
life. You think you can cheat God? If
you think can cheat God, if you think
you can fool God, you will find people
laughing at you! What a fool!

You must be calm to accept anything
that you don't like. And if God is

allowing you to go through it, if you have surrendered so completely, and if still something bad happens to you, you can understand that what would have been one hundred has been worked out by Him and you are getting about ten to twenty which must be worked out by you. He is working it out for you. And with His help, you will be able to go through it fully. And learn so much from it. Work out so much of your bad karma so that in your next birth, you will have a peaceful life. A peaceful life – and what does it mean? It doesn't mean you will have the luxuries of life, or a lot of money and prosperity and all that. That generally brings sorrows. You should work out every day, that's all, in a detached manner, you know. You must be detached. It is your duty to do something, you do it, that's all, without expecting anything at all.

He says, “sarva dharman parityaja mamekam saranam praja”- whatever it is, you must be able to surrender it.

But you have to do that surrender to Him alone – “mamekam saranam praj” He says – you can’t surrender to more than one entity. You expect somebody else to look after you. Who will be able to do it? Either you expect human beings to do it or you expect God to do it. You can’t mix both together. It just won’t work. You surrender, depending on Him and Him alone. When you surrender, it means that you don’t have in mind thoughts like, “I want this, I want that, I must get this, I must get that” and pray for it. What is the use of tha?

That is not surrender! Accept anything that comes with trust and faith, and perhaps with some happiness, if you can – that is surrender/

Till you do all these things, purify yourself, and move to a very higher

level, there is no chance of getting videha mukti. But it is always possible the hope is there. You have to climb the first step.

The attainment is the most important thing. It is a gradual progress. Just as you go through first standards to the second standard in school you pass through each level and then go to the next. You cannot go straight into the high school or to college. It is not possible.

The spark of good life, God's life

The yearning for God is at first a sort of a spark. It can grow and grow. The yearning for God is Bhakti. It should be cultivated and this can be done through japam, dhyanam and parayanam. But you must be able to distance yourself from your human body and your mind. This is where the spirit must rule.

The most important part of it is humility. You understand that you can go wrong a hundred times. Something happens – could it be my fault? Why not you go on these lines/ Why should you think it must be somebody else's fault? Cultivate these main virtues – Truth, Humility, Dharma, and Purity. Don't swerve from truth, whatever happens. Satyameva jayate na anrtham" it is truth that wins, never evil.

Krishna had to take birth as a purnavatara, He had to come down during dvapara yuga for the establishment of dharma. The dharma had broken down so much. That is why the greatest of all battles was fought in Kurukshetra, it was a war for the establishment of dharma.

Paritranaya sadhunaam vinashaya
dushkrutham
Dharma samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge"

Anybody on the side of truth, on the side of dharma and lives according to that, he need not make a great name, or fame, or money – that is not important. The quality of your life – that is what important. What type of life do you lead, a good life – that is the only thing God wants. And if you are trying to reach God, you try to please Him, not human beings.

Narayana!



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