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Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha

Mantra - the meaning of Om

Q: I have a question about a mantra. I am using as a mantra the words 'O God' in my own language. Can I use this or should I use another mantra, for instance OM?

A: There is no problem in you using the words 'O God'. God Himself is not very much concerned with language. God is more concerned with love and love is common to all. Language is just a means for expression. When there is deep love, one forgets every mantra. A mantra is just a useful means which helps everyone but it is not the end. It acts as a link between the seeker - the bonded soul - and the infinite. The mantra is just a link.

So you can use your mantra. The mantra 'OM' can be used by everyone universally. One can use an expression in one's own language but 'OM' belongs to no one country or religion. 'OM' is the universal, primordial first sound that happened when the universe began. It is still going on everywhere and, in fact, in many languages the word 'OM' is found with little variation, something like 'Amen'. 'OM' is the indication - the name of that universal, eternal energy - God.

There are deeper meanings of 'OM' also. It is supposed to represent the four states of human beings. These four states are:

- * waking
- * dreaming
- * dreamless sleep
- * samadhi

The fourth state is that which is to be experienced. In Sanskrit it is called '*Chatur*' which means 'fourth'. They did not want give it a specific name. It is to be experienced or found out because it is the transcendental state. By giving it a name they would have been able to identify it. It has to be experienced.

In some yogic paths they say that you go on pronouncing the word '*OM*' and then some day you will hear the real '*OM*' from your navel inside - the '*OM*' which is everywhere resounding throughout the whole universe. It goes on resounding like this. So it is for everybody and even for the communists!

I speak specifically about communists so often because I have compassion for them. They consider that they are very intelligent but they do not understand many things. The problem is that those who consider themselves intelligent are generally not at all intelligent. My message for them is:

Who asked you to believe in God? You should believe in your own self and then in the science!

In the dimension of our work in spirituality every human being is included. I welcome the communists and the so-called atheists who do not believe in God. I tell those who do not believe in God that I will stop using the word '*God*', but God will still be there! What can you do? '*God*' means '*existence*' and is there anyone without existence? '*God*' means '*consciousness*' and is there anyone without consciousness? '*God*' means '*bliss*'. Bliss is everywhere but people weep unnecessarily. We are trying to help them to stop weeping and to have bliss - that is God. In our work no human being is excluded and everyone is welcome. So the mantra '*O God*' is alright if you are happy with it.

I sometimes go to south India where I have several seekers. There is one seeker who runs an ashram there. I noticed that he was reciting a mantra while he was driving me in his car. Usually I do not advise anyone or even give my opinion unless someone asks for it. He told me that he was using a well-known mantra called '*Om Namo Bhagwate Vasudevay*', but he has made a small change to it. He said that he was a Christian and he had changed the mantra, substituting '*Ishay*' for '*Vasudevay*'. '*Ishay*' is the Hindi word for '*Christ*' and '*Vasudevay*' means '*Lord Krishna*'. He asked me to tell him if he was doing the right thing. I had no objection but I said that it was not one of the usual

prescribed mantras. I said that if the love of God through Christ was there in him, I would have no objection.

Seeker and Guru

Q: I am very thankful to God and to you that I am here with you. I know very well that all that is happening is God's grace to me. Thank you for your divine presence, love, solicitude and patience. My sister wrote to me yesterday that she sends you greetings from the distant mountain over space and time with her son. Her son was also dreaming about visiting India some time, and thinks more about you when I am in India or before my visit to you. My colleague also wrote a letter for you and sends his greetings. My dear Guruji, I want very much to leave behind my egotistical desires, and go everywhere with you, with your holy presence. Without you I feel alone and lonely. I give you myself with humility - my relationships, all relationships, attachment, impurity, and everything to you. Please come with me in every situation. I want to realise you. Come with me please to my work, to my physical home and to my divine home (Guruji: "I am there already but you must have the eyes to see me!") You know that I know nothing, but even then God is giving me a good new and exacting job, and without you I cannot do my work. You know everything and I know nothing.

A: Knowing nothing is very good because only then will you start knowing everything. Those who think that they know everything generally miss the point. But God showers His grace very quickly on those simple people who have come to the conclusion that they do not know.

"Please guide me"

You are being guided already.

"Guide me and my relationship towards all and heart towards God. Let your divine love open our eyes. I am at your feet."

Thank you for all you have written. I am already with you, so you need not worry.

Mother's duty

Q: During my private meeting with you I was told that my main duty is to raise my son as a true man. I am divorced and have a six-year-old boy.

I myself grew up without a father, and after separating from my husband, I feel that I do not know how to raise a true man on my own. Can you please give me some advice?

A. Seekers often have this experience. This is the way of life which brings so many vicissitudes. It is quite painful not to have a father, but there is no need to worry because the eternal father is always there with everyone. God is the real father so you should have faith in Him. Bringing your son up in the right manner is real spirituality. You are doing your duty towards your son who will be a future citizen of the world. There is nothing more ennobling for a mother than to look after a child and to see that the son grows into a true man. As regards the method of doing it, I can give you one or two pieces of advice on how the child will grow into a true man.

The most important factor is love. It is through love that everything happens. When you give love to the child, you yourself will have to pass through many trials. Sometimes you will get irritated when the child does not obey you. You must have patience and tolerance. Love is the most important factor, and you should practice it in your own life. Remember that children are not fond of teaching and sermons, but they automatically copy what their parents do in their lives. Bringing up a child is a great penance and great lesson in spirituality. Your conduct in your own life should be the example that you set for your child. The more you become disciplined in your own life, the more your child will have the opportunity of seeing that this is the right way to behave.

Another important factor is that, because you have started following the spiritual path, I am always with you, and I am also with your child. The Bhagavad Gita is always there for extra guidance. There is no topic in the whole world, and there can never be, for which guidance is not available in the Bhagavad Gita. It contains such great wisdom. Of course, you may need a commentary in order to have deeper understanding of it yourself. A commentary will not always be sufficient and a master will be required to explain the difficult points. You should continue to read the satsangs which are printed out every year. Also they were planning to bring out some sort of book containing an abridged version of the satsangs. I do not wish to write anything myself, but I am willing to correct the draft versions because no one else can do it. I am certainly not going to read them myself. Because I think that the texts will benefit many people, the correction work does not appear burdensome and I do the work with love. I believe that they have translated the texts into Russian and into other languages also. You can also read translations of

the Gita in other languages. There is hardly a major language into which it has not be translated. In the Gita you will find many points of guidance for bringing up your child.

The evils of tobacco and alcohol should be eradicated from this planet completely. In most countries, including here in India, they are now passing laws against smoking in public places. The whole world is turning against smoking and one day it will turn against drinking alcohol also. Men drink in larger numbers than women, but women also do and for them there is greater suffering because they are mothers. The problem that the seeker has described is a universal one. Men and women are sometimes very cunning, but to my mind men are more cunning and also more irresponsible. The female is more responsible because she is a mother. It is highly irresponsible to leave one's child with a nanny. Parents who do not care for their own offspring are the most despicable creatures. When the husband is selfish and mean, the wife has to suffer because she has to bring up the children all by herself. Men tend to be more at fault than women. The male often deserts the children but the mother does not and will never do it. The male is not ready to understand this. A time will come when the dormant energy of the female will come up for the true path. At present in this country a woman has a lower status than a man. In ancient times in the Hindu culture there was complete equality of the sexes and great respect was accorded to the female. This has changed over time for historical reasons. This situation is gradually improving for the female but even now their status is far from equal. In every culture and in every country there are habits and situations which are both good and bad.

Alcohol – an obstacle on spiritual path

The drinking of alcohol is a very bad habit. Those who drink cannot evolve spiritually. All spiritual development requires a sattvic brain. All our efforts on the spiritual path are directed towards becoming more sattvic and pure in every way. What happens when a person drinks is that his capacity for discrimination is overpowered by the alcohol. The capacity for discrimination is the real key for knowing or experiencing Truth. Discrimination means knowing the difference between what is right and what is wrong, and the capacity to take the right decisions. A person who drinks heavily is unable to decide what is right and what is wrong.

Do you know why most people drink? It is said that they drink to forget their worries. They are really ignorant people if they try to find

peace and happiness by forgetting their own selves. True happiness will not come through forgetfulness. It will come through awakening and coming to know your own self fully. After that you will be happy for ever. The process of awakening is incompatible with drinking because drinking overshadows the capacity for discrimination. Awakening ultimately happens through this capacity of discrimination, of distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong. Drinking obstructs the process of progressing towards the goal of self-realisation. It takes a long time to rejuvenate the damaged cells of the body and mind, and to regain a sound thinking process. Thus we should make every effort to banish this evil of alcoholism from the world. All my efforts as long as I am alive are being directed towards this aim. I can tell you that there is no question of the spiritual seeker touching alcohol at all.

Medical experts tell us that drinking is very harmful. Modern medical science has shown that this is true. Some people claim that a small alcohol consumed in small amounts can be beneficial to health, but this is not correct. Drinking is similar to meat-eating. Most modern doctors consider that meat-eating is very injurious to our health. Certain diseases are prevalent among meat-eaters and not among vegetarians. The time has come when such knowledge should be disseminated generally. We should make every effort to spread the news when you return to your home-countries. If I happen to visit you there, we can talk about it scientifically.

I disagree with those who claim that it is difficult to have discipline. It shows a lack of will-power. To say such things in my presence is total bankruptcy of the mind. I spent three years in the armed forces where there is a strict routine of life for army officers. It is customary every evening in the officers' mess to have a small drink before dinner. They tried to convince me that I should have a drink but I never drank even once. I told them that it was a matter of self-protection for me. The question for me was not whether I should drink but whether the other officers, with whom I was living, should give it up! The question was how many of them should give up drinking in my company! On occasions such as these I take an attacking stance rather than a defensive one! They would have to follow me rather than me following them. The other officers were shocked by my attitude. I want to avoid self-adulation, which is bad, but sometimes I have to tell you something from life and not just theory from books. This was an actual situation that I faced in my life.

So, my dear daughter, you should not get worried or disappointed. I am with you but I am also sympathetic towards your husband. You should tell him that I love him and that he should give up his drinking. He should not be annoyed by this advice. This will be his test. You should not abandon your love for your husband. You should even consider whether you should not go back and live with him. We should all have tolerance and patience, and this will be a test of your patience. He may become angry with you, but you should tell him that you will not allow him to drink. You could try going on a fast until he gives up drinking! This could present a problem for your husband. If you get angry with him, he will get even more angry and there may be a scuffle. You can tell him that you will starve to death if he keeps on drinking. You can tell him that it is for the sake of your children. It was for their sake that he left the house so that they would not see him drinking and learn bad habits.

This is the irony of the situation. Every father wants his children to be the best in the world but does not want to reform his own habits. It is very easy to produce a child but it is very difficult to become a proper father! It is a trial to become a true parent and it requires great discipline, self-control and practice. So we should set an example to our sons and daughters because they will tend to copy us. God will help you in this.

I would like to see the whole world free of drinking before I leave this life. Why not? If we try together, we could be successful. Evil habits like this should be banished from our lives. Man has created problems for the whole of humanity and even for animals. Animals tend to remain healthy until they come into contact with human beings. Only those animals fall sick who come into the close vicinity of humans. Human beings are more evolved, so they should be naturally healthy, honest and full of divinity.

*May God purify our minds
May we have the desire to serve the world
May we not have the desire of service from the world
Remembering God,
May we be able to perform our duties well
May we find shelter at the feet of the Lord*