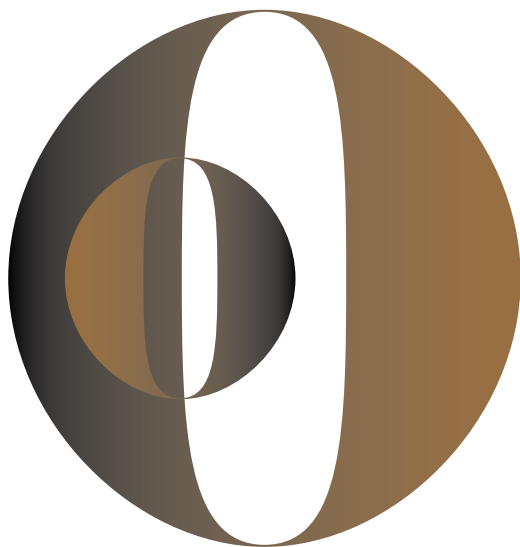


The Seer

Message on the occasion
of the 69th birthday of Pujya Daaji



Daaji

September 28, 2024, Kanha Shanti Vanam

The Seer

Dear friends,

We generally understand darshan to be a vision of godliness. Typically, people misunderstand it as catching a glimpse of a great Personality. Still, it is only by finding such a Personality within yourself that you can ever see Him outwardly. When we used to visit Pujya Babuji in Shahjahanpur, we perceived him from our own perspectives and through our own filters. In Babuji, many people only saw an old man sitting and smoking the hookah, and they ran away. We usually see people as reflected in the mirror of our hearts. If our heart's mirror is clean, the reflection will be true, whereas when our mirror is unclean or distorted, the reflection will be mixed with our own qualities, ideas, desires, flaws, and self-identities. Then, we judge that reflection, liking or disliking it according to our filters and level of understanding based on our conditioning arising from samskaras.

How do you assess a guru at the beginning of your association with him? When you have practiced what the guru has prescribed for some time, see if that practice is starting to bring you peace and inner transformation. If so, move on and see how you benefit further through some transformation in your personality.

When visiting any guru, that guru will seem real, unreal, or something in between based on our conditioning and clarity of sight. Our perception of holiness tends to be conditioned by our upbringing and background.

For example, if a person sees a man wearing all white, he might think, “This gentleman is so pure and religious.” But would a Vaishnavite or a Muslim have a similar appreciation for a Jain Muni, who is absolutely naked? Only when we have rid ourselves of conditioning arising from samskaras can we truly see. To have darshan, we cannot use our external eyes; holy robes can trick us. Similarly, we can easily miss the presence of a holy person in our midst. Imagine someone performing perfect jnana yoga or perfect asanas. They are so enamored by it that they ignore the presence of a perfect person like Mirabai at the culmination of bhakti. How could they recognize her when one is so high, and one is so low?



There is a beautiful story about a Sufi saint. A king wished to be initiated by the Sufi, but the Sufi kept postponing it (the Sufi must have understood the king's true condition). Over time, the king grew frustrated that the Sufi continued to refuse initiation, day after day, month after month. Eventually, the king decided to test whether this Sufi was genuine or fake. He placed spies around the Sufi to observe his actions. One day, the Sufi crossed the river, and the spies followed, carefully observing. They saw the Sufi meet a woman on the other side of the river. The Sufi laid a carpet and rested his head in her lap while the woman stroked his head and gave him something to drink. The spies were thrilled to have found something incriminating and rushed to report back to the king. The king seized this opportunity and

confronted the Sufi, asking, “What are you doing there? Are you a real master or just a fake?” The Sufi calmly replied, “Please do not speak this way, or you will regret it. Come with me, and I will show you what I was really doing.” He took the king to the riverbank, and there came the woman—an old lady with glasses and a teapot. It was the Sufi’s mother.

The samskaras that we carry distort our thinking, leading to wrong understanding. We embellish our lives or make them miserable simply by the influence of our degree of understanding or misunderstanding. But we can deflect the impact of samskaras before they even form with correct thinking, leading to right understanding. With understanding, we rarely form little impressions—especially negative ones.

When a problem arises, pause rather than reacting. This allows you the space to think clearly before your heart is affected. You will be able to sympathize with the person causing you trouble and let the issue go. You will then feel liberated within yourself. Similarly, your understanding of nature—how things work in life—will become easier. One true understanding will lead to another more profound understanding. By contrast, a person whose tendency is not to understand will remain within this frequency of continuously not understanding or even deliberately finding new angles of not understanding. Right understanding must be supported by an honest approach to life.

A person of understanding will act according to the demands of a particular situation. No response will ever be uniform since each scenario will be unique. Babuji wrote in his commentary on Maxim 9 that nature’s dealings manifest in diverse ways, and our dealings must similarly reflect each unique situation’s diverse requirements. A person of great understanding can never be dogmatic, behaving the same way under

all conditions. A person of understanding is beyond dogmas and fixed rules. They will enjoy flexibility and freedom. There is a vast difference between acting, following, and obeying out of right understanding and awareness versus doing so without any understanding or awareness.

Moreover, with understanding, one will be able to deflect stress and feelings of guilt, thus protecting oneself from the fossilization of *samskaras*. How can there be free will side-by-side with a fixed, dogmatic lifestyle? Without free will, liberation is meaningless. A dogmatic life is the opposite of a *godmatic* life. A godmatic life is lived in sync with the conscience of one's heart. Dogmatism comes from a life driven by ego, like the pride in identifying with a particular religion or community.

At times, understanding can be a burden. Consider the enslaved Indians and Africans taken from their homelands in previous centuries to a destination about which they had no inkling or idea. Imagine the difference between their stress level during the sea voyage and the stress level of their captors. Understanding their travel's purpose would have undoubtedly led to even more stress! Thus, we must appreciate both the positive and negative consequences of awareness. From the perspective of leading a yogic lifestyle, understanding helps us to see the futility of being violent. By becoming sympathetic and compassionate, we can easily see the viewpoint of another, and so we cannot commit offenses or violence.

Similarly, a person of understanding will see the value of being forgiving. Ultimately, a person of understanding sees the value of leading a disciplined life, a life of learning, and such a person becomes a perfect *shishya* (disciple). Meditating with the help of pranahuti

can help us develop correct thinking and right understanding. Unfortunately, it is also true that pranahuti can help a thief become a perfect thief if shadowy burdens of negative tendencies dominate that individual's consciousness. This is why Heartfulness emphasizes the need to become pure and simple by removing impurities and complexities. Experiencing the outcome of disciplined practice, one can intensify practice out of sheer joy rather than compulsion or control (though one may benefit from some level of control initially).



Another aspect of clear seeing is attentiveness and observation, which can be trained. It is best if this training starts in childhood. When children are very young, ask them what they see, with questions like, “What do you see in this field? What do you see on this flower? How many colors does it have? How many petals are there? What are the flower’s other characteristics?” Train them to see in depth. “What time did the sun rise today? See if it rises at the same time tomorrow! Where did it rise? Where did it set? When did the moon come up? When does it become big, and when does it become small?” Let them make some visible observations. When they go to someone’s house, a friend’s place, or school, ask them, “In which direction is their door? Did you enter the home from the north, south, east, or west? What color is their sofa? What color is the ceiling? How many windows are there?” Children can be trained to observe such things.

Then, from the visible you can move to the audible: “Did you hear any birds this morning? How many did you hear?” Continue to let the child’s training evolve, moving into the realm of feeling. “Was the bird happy or distressed? Was it male or female?” Then, whenever you can, ask the child, “How do you feel inside? Are you happy, sad, or nothing at all? When you feel bad, how do you feel in your heart? Is it heavy or light?” Such questions will prepare them to perceive things at deeper and deeper levels.

In meditation, we train ourselves to become more aware, alert, sensitive, and perceptive, with many finer nuances. For example, during meditational practices, the color we observe, the feelings we gather, the thoughts we witness, the vibrations we feel, and the condition we experience after meditation. After a sitting, report these observations to your preceptor so they can connect the dots and conclude, “Whenever I work in such a way, this is the feedback I receive.” We can then establish a connection between the work and its result. We can perceive the environment just as we observe another person’s feelings. How do we feel in a particular space? All this training prepares us to have a loving laser-like vision from within. Love is an essential element in seeing. We can never study anyone in the absence of love.

Almost all of us go through this exercise of perceiving our guru with different aims. This seeing is always from our level. For example, the sunset is there, but people in the valley cannot fully appreciate it because it doesn’t set at the horizon level. In contrast, a person on a mountaintop will have a beautiful view. The height makes that difference. Climbing on the ladder of consciousness, where chakras are rungs of the ladder, our incremental rise gives incremental clarity to our vision, and we experience darshan at various levels.

Similarly, we begin to appreciate the wonder of the guru due to our ever-increasing awareness. Zeal and complete darshan of the guru are possible only when both become one. Until then, all the information we get—the darshan we have—is conditional. With the conditioned mind, we can never have true darshan.



When you are with the guru, you must be *completely* with him. But unfortunately, these days, everything is distracting us, with phones being the number one distraction. Once you are desire-free, distraction-free, and samskara-free, how can you not derive the total benefit of his presence? When you are with him, the qualities required are reverence, love, humility, and openness. Harboring desires, expressing them through prayer, or even merely holding them in your mind will also prevent you from experiencing his darshan. Prayers express needs of all sorts, and who else can you turn to anyway? But it is too much if you bargain: “God, if you do this for me, I will give hundreds of millions, I’ll build so many cottages for the homeless, I’ll offer *chadar*¹ on your statue...” Asking for love, reverence, or humility from God also embellishes your ego. That is no different than asking God for more and more prosperity under the justification of feeding more hungry people or housing more homeless people. This business

¹ Chadar is a piece of cloth offered at a holy shrine. It is a symbol of devotion and respect, and is believed to carry the prayers and wishes of the devotee to a saint.

of bribery seems unstoppable. Just think, if a person is willing to bribe God, how will they behave with government officials and politicians? We can only pity that person.

When you have the baggage of desires and go to the guru to fulfill such desires, you will not have true darshan of the guru. The first requisite for darshan is purity. Second, you must be absolutely still when you are with him, with perfect *pratyahara* (sense withdrawal). But then, you must also resonate with him. For example, if you want to join a group of musicians, you must play the same music they are playing. You cannot play your own tune and expect to harmonize with them. The music must match. Otherwise, it'll just be noise, and even if you receive his darshan, it will be wasted.

When Krishna displayed his *Vishwaroop*—his destructive form—to Arjuna, he showed him that the destructive work was already finished. The message to Arjuna was, “The work is done. Now, you only need to complete the final steps.” However, upon seeing Krishna’s destructive form, Arjuna became fearful and begged Krishna to return to his friendlier, more familiar form.

To resonate with a great Personality’s reality,
you must touch that same reality
within yourself.

Additionally, Bhishma and Drona, elevated souls on the opposite side of the war, saw this form of Krishna and were in awe. But were

they truly in awe? If they had been, they would have dropped their weapons and said, “There is no need to fight.” If Krishna’s Vishwaroop convinced Arjuna to take up arms, it should have convinced Bhishma and Drona to lay theirs down. This darshan did not automatically grant anyone wisdom, not even Arjuna. Although he was then ready to fight, he still said, “I cannot bear to see this form.” Therefore, seeing the true form of the Lord does not automatically solve life’s problems. You might feel some satisfaction in saying, “I had the darshan of the Lord,” or “I had the darshan of the *murti*,” or “I felt certain divine qualities”—but much remains to be attained. The darshan of the Lord is just another experience you can have. It is momentary. What will you do with that experience? “I saw God.” So what? Have you become anything because of it? To resonate with a great Personality’s reality, you must touch that same reality within yourself.



In reply to a letter, Babuji once wrote: “It is good that you like to have the darshan of the *Maha-purushas* [great Personalities]. Better would it be to try to have the darshan of yourself alone.” Regarding the revelation of the Self, who is the seer, and what is seen? We often use the word *darshak* for a seer. In everyday usage, darshak typically describes a viewer or audience member who observes something. As sentient beings, we are all darshaks because we are all seers: we perceive, see, hear, experience, and understand. Yoga uses a more

precise term—*drashta*. *Drashta* refers specifically to the *purusha*, or soul, which is the true inner witness. Unlike the word *darshak*, which we tend to use for the entire aggregate of physical senses, subtle bodies, and soul, *drashta* refers only to the soul's witnessing capacity—not the eyes, mind, or other faculties.

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The soul is pure subjectivity—the witnessing subject of all objects of knowledge and experience. All that the subject perceives, experiences, or knows falls under the “object” category—the perceivable, the experienceable, and the knowable. Because of its nature as pure subjectivity, the soul can never become an object of its own perception, experience, or knowledge. But in that case, how can we have its *darshan*?

Just as the sun emits light that reflects off objects, making them visible to our eyes, the soul's consciousness illuminates objects of knowledge, allowing the seer to witness them. That which is illuminated by this light of consciousness is known as the “field of consciousness.” Through the light of consciousness, objects populating this field become known to the subject. In yoga, this field is called the *chitta*, which contains *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahankara* (ego), and *chit* (the light of consciousness itself). The degree to which we can perceive objects in the *chitta* depends on the degree to which the soul's light is clouded by *samskaras*, *vrittis*, ego, and other impurities.

Many confuse the ego with the soul. The famous question “Who am I?” is often posed to enable aspirants to realize that they are not the body or mind, but the soul. However, the basis of the question is wrong. The conclusion, “I am the atman,” or “I am the soul,” is incorrect; it is as mistaken as thinking “I am the body,” because it is only the ego that identifies as “I,” irrespective of whether that “I” refers to the body, mind, or soul.

The ego is the sense of “I.” Patanjali refers to it as *asmita*—“I-am-ness.” This “I” must be recognized as a false self because it is always an object of experience, never the subject. Although we have thoughts like “I do,” “I think,” and “I am,” these thoughts are objects witnessed by the actual subject, the soul. Therefore, any idea about oneself must be considered as an object, even when it gives the illusion that “I am the seer” or “I am the experiencer.”

It is due to ignorance (*avidya*), or lack of awareness, that we confuse this “I” for the true subject of experience—the soul. If something can be known or experienced—including the sense of “I”—it must be understood as an object of knowledge, not the subject. In short, the soul is our *essence*, not our *I-sense*.

When the chitta is permeated by ego, every other object in the field will be seen in relation to the “I.” That is the definition of identification: seeing all things in terms of how they relate to one’s self. The prescription for overcoming identification is constant remembrance, which is synonymous with the practice of AEIOU². There are three basic methods of implementing constant remembrance:

² See the chapter “AEIOU” in *Yearning of the Heart*, Vol. 2 by Daaji.

1. Doing things in remembrance of the Lord.
2. Doing things as a dedication to the Lord.
3. Doing things on the Lord's behalf.

By practicing these methods, the presence of the Lord begins to permeate our field of consciousness, and instead of identifying our actions and experiences with ourselves, we start identifying them with God or Master. As a result, the false identity of "I" starts losing its force.

Does this loss of "I" furnish us with a view of the seer? Patanjali's Yoga Sutra 1.3 states:

Tada drashtuh svarupevasthanam
Then [when the movement of the mind comes to a stop],
the Seer abides in its own nature.

The key to this statement is understanding that the nature of the seer is ignorance. A seer abiding in its own nature is neither conscious of itself (since the subject cannot see itself) nor of the false identity, the I, which dissolves in the remembrance of God. Babuji once made an offhand yet profound remark, saying that when he uttered the word "I," he did not know to whom it referred. Darshan of the Self is nothing but self-forgetfulness, a state in which the seer is wholly lost to himself. Babuji was opposed to the practice of asking, "Who am I?" Rather than trying to know oneself, he suggested forgetting oneself. However, to forget oneself, a focal point is needed, which is why we practice meditation and constant remembrance.

It is important to note that in self-forgetfulness, the seer still witnesses worldly objects and other beings; it is the sense of personal identity

that dissolves, and the formation and deepening of samskaras likewise ceases.

Often, we misunderstand guru-darshan as witnessing the guru's form in meditation. The notion is true only to the extent that we consider the guru's true form as formless. Just as darshan of the Self is a state of self-forgetfulness, dissolution, or negation, darshan of the guru means dissolving in the formless Absolute, which is devoid of any limited characteristics such as name or attribute. In this *layavastha* or state of oneness with the Master, the question of "seeing" does not arise, for in oneness there can be no subject-object relationship. Such is the ultimate state of darshan.

With love and respect,
Kamlesh

Message
on the occasion of the 69th birthday of Pujya Daaji
September 28, 2024, Kanha Shanti Vanam

heartfulness
advancing in love