



On the occasion of the
68th birthday of

Daaji

September 28, 2023, Kanha Shanti Vanam



Availability

“To serve entails that one’s life is no longer one’s own and that, in a way, one makes oneself available to deal with it. In this field, more than elsewhere, one should make choices that meet one’s profound aspiration to devote oneself to service without any materialistic motive.”

—Babuji Maharaj,

Wednesday, October 26, 2005 – 10:00 a.m.

In *Whispers from The Brighter World*, the divine messages transmitted from Babuji Maharaj to his scribe, Madame H el ene Peyret, Babuji often praises the scribe’s availability and commitment to service. She had no priorities apart from her beloved Babuji. Due to her absolute availability, she evolved to the highest levels of spiritual repose—even amidst great personal difficulties and health setbacks.



Availability suggests an openness to serve the Master and to be worked upon by him. The paramount example of availability is Babuji Maharaj himself. Never a moment passed when his attention was diverted from his Master, Lalaji. Had such a moment ever occurred, he would have considered it a cause for great repentance. Lalaji was not merely the focal point of Babuji's awareness; rather, Babuji's awareness was merged in that of Lalaji to such an extent that their unified consciousness exemplified the very principle of spiritual osmosis. Any thought-impulse arising in Lalaji's consciousness would pulse instantaneously into Babuji's awareness, and it was this that was the basis for the great service to humanity it was Babuji's destiny to perform. Those who sat at Babuji's feet in his courtyard in Shahjahanpur as his hookah bubbled away beside him were privileged to witness his unique availability to his work, by virtue of his availability to Lalaji himself. Babuji's body sat idle, curled up in his chair, but his attention soared wherever needed. Lalaji defined the very sum and substance of Babuji's existence.

In psychology, there is a concept known as "availability bias." Availability bias is a cognitive bias. We tend to favor information that is recent, easily accessible, or that is otherwise "top of mind." Our tendency is to keep our full availability in reserve and instead lend our availability to those things that are nearest to us. Ephemeral phenomena become our priorities—palpable objects of thought and senses that are most vivid to our daily experience—capturing our attention and motivating our actions. For example, suppose you have recently seen many news reports about robberies in your neighborhood. In that case, you may overestimate the likelihood of being robbed yourself. Your mind gives excessive importance to these news reports, because they are recent and



because there are many of them, leading to misunderstanding.

The cognitions that contribute to availability bias constitute not only our recent memories but our entire individual creation—our *samskaric* impulses, our wishes and aversions, our network of thoughts, emotions, and tendencies, and, of course, our sensory inputs. All these seem near and urgent and become distortions in our awareness, resulting in contradictory priorities and confusion of purpose.

Suppose you hear twelve different songs played simultaneously by twelve different musicians, each in a different key and with a different rhythm. How will it sound? However beautiful each song is individually, however masterful the musicians, it will only create noise. Likewise, our mind takes an interest in multiple things and becomes a center of chaos. There is nothing wrong with the mind; it likes to think, think, think! But it tends to remain absorbed in its own creation and becomes complex.

We must train the mind. Our intentions must be focused. We must learn to play one song at a time, one musical instrument at a time, one thought at a time. Otherwise, there is no beauty but only dissonance. Our availability of energy should be to just one practice.

Practicing any method demands some level of trust and confidence in that method. Practicing multiple methods creates multiple channels in the mind. It only means you are not happy with the method you are practicing. It is like saying, “I am married to my wife but available to all.” You are not fully available to anyone. Availability to many is availability to none. *Saranagati* and devotion mean giving yourself entirely. If you



give yourself to many, are you giving yourself entirely to anyone? You are always holding some part of yourself in reserve: “This is mine! I will not share it!” You are not really giving yourself to anything.

I will repeat an ancient story Swami Vivekananda shared in Chicago at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1893 (In Sanskrit, the story is called *kupamanduka*). Once, there was a frog that lived in a little well. It was born there, and never left that well in its whole life. The frog never imagined that there could be a world beyond the boundaries of his little well. That is, until another frog hopped in. This new frog was from the ocean, and she told the well-frog about the ocean’s waves, currents, depths, and vastness. But the well-frog could not believe any of this, for no ocean could be as vast as the well where he lived. So, he laughed at the ocean-frog and gave her a kick.

Vivekananda told this story to explain the differences between religions, meaning that some people are stuck in their Hindu wells, others are imprisoned in their Christian wells, and so forth. The analogy goes further: We are all well-frogs imprisoned in the wells of our own individual and collective creations. We lend great importance to the contents of our personal well but even more importance to its resident, the very self. Rarely do we consider looking beyond this shadowy lair of self. The well symbolizes the proximity of information that triggers our availability bias toward ephemeral objects, inhibiting our bond with the eternal.

Sahaj Marg is a way of transcendence. It provides the means to shatter the individual network, to become a frog of the ocean, so to speak. With



cleaning, we remove the emotional memory—the *samskaras* that distort our understanding and misdirect our intentions—so we are left only with the cognitive memories of events. Without cognitive memory, we could not learn from the past. Such cognitive memory becomes our accumulated wisdom. Still, we remain within the bounds of that well of wisdom, for it is a wisdom derived from the past.

Meditation bestows upon us the possibility of receiving superconscious inspiration, a futuristic vision not based on anything that has come before. It is a product of neither the past nor the present. So, with cleaning and meditation, there is the possibility of escaping the well of the here and now and stepping into the daylight of the eternal present.

I heard a beautiful analogy once: Imagine that you are standing on a bustling city street with a towering skyscraper overhead. Your view is limited, extending only a short distance in each direction before the street disappears from your view. Down the street, a red car is approaching, but it has yet to enter your field of vision.

High above, on the skyscraper's 20th floor, someone gazes out of a window. That person's elevated position gives them a broader view, perhaps spanning a mile in each direction. They can spot the red car in the distance long before it becomes visible to you. To you, the car remains in the future, yet for the person in the skyscraper, it's already part of the present. And when the car eventually exits your sight, it becomes your past, while it continues to exist in the present for the person on the 20th floor.



An evolved personality is like the person on the skyscraper's 20th floor. From this elevated perspective, such a personality can observe what is the past and future for the rest of us, with the same clarity as we perceive the present moment.

There was an instance during the Mahabharata war when Bhishma lay gravely wounded upon a bed of arrows. Lord Krishna approached him, and Bhishma asked the Lord, "What has led me to this fate? I've contemplated a hundred past lives, finding no justification for this destiny."

Krishna said, "Look beyond it."

Bhishma replied, "I cannot see beyond it."

In response, Krishna granted Bhishma the gift of glimpsing his deeper past. Now, Bhishma's awareness could travel beyond its previous time-bound limitations, and he witnessed a previous life in which he held the status of a prince. During a fateful hunting expedition, he encountered a snake, grasped it by the tail, spun it around, and cast it onto a thorny bush, where it died. It was the repercussions of this action that Bhishma now confronted, explaining why those arrows had become his final resting place.

"Surrender entails complete availability and acceptance; it is the price it takes for everything to take on its full meaning and to become constructive."

—Babuji Maharaj,

Saturday, August 13, 2005 – 10:00 a.m.



Being rigid, insistent, and demanding is antithetical to availability. Real availability is unconditional. To be available is to make oneself into an offering without any concern for reciprocity. To have a wish is normal, but to demand its fulfillment is to attach conditions to that offering of self. Availability that is conditional is not true availability. Unfulfilled wishes, both conscious and unconscious, keep us fixated and trapped in various emotional patterns and create a *tamasic* consciousness. Momentary disappointment is understandable, but a *sattvic* consciousness is resilient and quickly bounces back.

For awareness to blossom into refined sensitivity, a high degree of acceptance must be established. It is easy to accept things that are desirable, but true acceptance requires acceptance of that which is painful as well. A sensitive person remains vulnerable to everything. Susceptibility to pain increases. If pain crosses the limits of one's tolerance, Nature responds by kindly removing one's sensitivity. Being deprived of one's sensitivity, however, is tragic and bestows its own unique pain.

“What are the aspirations of your heart? It is its availability, the fervor of its call which draws our attention and which makes us focus on it particularly.”

—Babuji Maharaj,
Thursday, April 8, 1999 – 8:00 a.m.

The Sufi word for transmission is *tavajjob*, which translates to “attention,” given by the Master to the disciple. People have misunderstood Babuji's statement in *Reality at Dawn*: “We love him



with faith and reverence trying by all means to attract his attention and favor.” It can be readily comprehended if one substitutes the word “transmission” for “attention” and “grace” for “favor”: We love him with faith and reverence trying by all means to attract his *transmission* and *grace*.

Some individuals work for his attention and favor. Some shout and wave from a distance. Such attention is of no value, and if one labors for it, its fruit will be bitter. The true pursuit lies in drawing the Master’s transmission and grace, which embodies the essence of attention. The deeper one’s interiorization—*pratyahara*—the more this phenomenon unfolds. Pratyahara entails assigning due attention to the outer while devoting one’s primary focus to the inner dimensions. Worldly activities—work, conversation, reading, eating, and so on—necessitate a certain degree of attention, but not exceeding, let us say, five percent. Pratyahara’s essence lies in enhancing inner awareness and dedicating full attention to the inner world, for that is where one meets the Master. Availability to this inner presence is possible only when one remains in a state of pratyahara.

You can be physically present with the Master but mentally absent. You can be mindfully present but heartfully absent. To be heartfully present is all that matters. During mealtime, family members gather, but in certain households, each person remains absorbed in their smartphones, immersed in their virtual worlds. The family may be together physically, yet in that moment there is no togetherness. Similarly, Babuji said that it is better for a disciple to remain at home while remembering the Master than to be in the physical company of the Master but remember



their home. Being in the physical presence of the Master is a type of *salokyata*—being in his realm. However, it is on the spiritual level that one’s heart must be available and aligned with his. This is the state of *sayujyata*, osmosis with the Beloved.

My prayer is for all to embody the beggar’s spirit portrayed in the story “A Fakir’s Wealth,” one who stands before the Master but has forgotten the bowl in his hands and the very purpose for which he has come. Whether it is to give or receive service, he does not remember. Still, he stands before the Master in profound openness and unwavering availability.

“Serving with all one’s soul is to have one’s heart wide open to the Divine and completely available, without wondering about the how and the why of what must be accomplished.”

—The Venerable,
Tuesday, April 11, 2000 – 8:30 a.m.



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heartfulness
advancing in love