

॥ ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

॥ ॐ श्री भवानीशंकराय नमः ॥

॥ ॐ श्री मात्रे नमः ॥



INTERACTION OF PRARTHANA VARGA - BENGALURU WITH P.P. SWAMIJI

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- Report by Smt. SUDHA KARNAD

The children of Bengaluru Prarthana Varga were blessed with a memorable Interaction with Parama Pujya Swamiji on the Sixth of February 2010 at Shri Chitrapur Math, Bengaluru. Before Pujya Swamiji arrived for the interaction, the children were kept occupied with quiz and games on 'Shiva' as Mahashivaratri was coming nearer. The children were grouped age wise and were given the different sheets of paper with the Quiz matter. These included – 1) Counting the Trishuls 2) Add and Tell, and 3) Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word. Add and Tell game had a list of Lord Shiva's different names—half of each name was pictorially depicted and the other half was spelt for them. They were expected to guess and write down the full name (for example the picture of a crescent moon was given followed by shekhar and the children had to write the full name as Chandrashekhar). The games were planned by Trasi Gayatri Pachi. This activity was conducted in the Anandashram Sabhagriha. After these games, the children trooped upstairs to the first floor, where the Interaction was organized in the beautiful canopy. Here, the children were introduced to Savnal Archana Pachi, who interacted warmly with the children before Pujya Swamiji arrived.

As soon as Pujya Swamiji entered and was seated, the children did namaskar and one child offered a rose to Pujya Swamiji. The children then presented Pujya Swamiji with two folders, in which the children had expressed their ideas on "What Prarthana means to me".



The interaction started with opening prayers – "Dakshinasya Samarambha".

Pujya Swamiji began by telling the children that the Shri Guru Vandana they had offered on February 3rd evening was excellent, and very cute. The children were very happy and were all smiles.

Swamiji then asked the children what they would like added to the Prarthana course. The children came up with several suggestions — “We want to have picnics, field trips, annual sports day, competitions in singing, drawing etc.” One child wanted a visit to a museum, to which Swamiji replied saying-“*tummi Shirali yeyyati, thayin museum assa, tumka beachari suddayi whoryeda*”

Swamiji asked how many of the children had visited Shirali to which most of them raised their hands. Swamiji also asked the children how many of them had seen the newly opened museum at Shirali. Most of the children again raised their hands and Swamiji appeared pleasantly surprised.

At this point one of the little children was repeatedly drawing Pujya Swamiji’s attention and said that every morning he does ‘Om Namaha Shivaya’ japa and when he does ‘dhyana’—“*makka jhumm jatta Swamiji.*”

Swamiji responded with a very loving smile!

The children were then asked what they would like to ask Swamiji...

(Given below is a verbatim account of the interaction which followed, which will help you to understand how the interaction was, C=child, HH=Swamiji)

C1— I am not able to concentrate on my studies, Swamiji please can you help me.

HH— When are you able to concentrate?

C2— When we are interested in a subject.

HH— When are you not able to concentrate?

C (all) — When we don’t like a subject.

C3— When we are lazy.

C4— When we are distracted.

C5—Distraction is when our book is open in front of us and we concentrate on the TV.

HH— Also when you are tired. You should be fresh when you sit for studies. Start with a prayer. (Here Swamiji added that parents should help by setting a time for studies, a time for play etc.)

C6— My mother says, “When you play you play, when you study you study, when you do something do it perfectly.”

HH— When you sit for your studies start with a prayer, do your *japa*, and say your *mantra* properly-it helps a lot. Don’t label a subject as boring. The minute you label a subject as boring your mind has already prepared itself not to concentrate. If you find that you don’t like a subject, don’t leave it for the last, take the help of someone who is good at it.

C---What is the significance of the “*Danda*”?

HH---It signifies my strong commitment to God. There are many other things also, but what is important is the strong commitment.

C---What is the significance of the crescent moon on Shiva’s forehead?

HH---It is Shiva’s ‘*Kala*’.

C---While doing *japa* the thumb and ring finger are used-why?

HH---When you make a connection between the thumb and ring finger - *hrudayak* direct *sparsh jatta*. *Tarjani* (forefinger) use *karnati*. *Devakk dakkaitana tarjanine tho devu mhonu dakkainati, sagle hattane dakkaitati* (Swamiji showed this with action).

C--- *Japa malantu shikhamani kaslyakk asta?*

HH--- *Japa kartana* to keep count. When you do one or two *malas* it is not difficult to keep count without a *mala* Sometimes people do many *malas*, then you have to use a *japa mala*. When you reach the *shikhamani* you don't cross it, you turn it and start the next *mala*.

C---Sometimes my classmates trouble me, Amma tells me to ignore them. What can I do if I cannot ignore them?

HH---They think they are very brave when they do that. Find out if they do it only to you or to others also. If they do it only to you, confront them, ask them why they do so. If they do that because they are jealous of you when you do well in your studies etc. nothing can be done. If they do it to others also, then maybe it is their nature, you just have to accept that. You have to be strong.

C--- Sometimes my friends ask me a question, I answer them, they ask the same question again and again till I get angry. Why do they do that?

HH--- Because it is fun. When you show that you are irritated, angry - others enjoy your anger. When you don't react, don't show that you are irritated, they try to irritate you and even then if you don't react - they stop doing that.

C---Swamiji I can understand my subjects while reading them but I cannot remember them for my exams, what can I do?

HH---It helps some people to read aloud. Read repeatedly.

(Here Savnal Archanapachi gave a suggestion. She said that she used to pretend that she is a teacher who has to teach it to others)

HH---That definitely helps. Do your *japa*-that is the first protection.

C---Swamiji, some people do bad things even if they know that they should not-why do they do so?

HH---Generally when people are unhappy, when they are not happy within themselves they get an urge to do something bad.

C---People say that there are -"Chiranjeevis".Why can't we see them?

HH---*Chiranjeevi*— You must have been told in the stories—Markandeya, Vedvyasa— They are somewhere-we cannot see them. *Chiranjeevi astatu khayin tari caves-antu, nirantar japa kartathi*. They need not necessarily be in front of you, but they are somewhere.

C— Swamiji, sometimes we tell our friends something, they tell it to others and they in turn tell it to some other people, but at that time it is not what we said in the beginning, it turns out to be something different—why?

HH__ Hmm, People add their own interpretations and they do that when they have nothing useful to do in life—when you have useful things to do-*aslyaka poora* time *asana*-you have no time for such things. You should not do it.

C__ Why do we tease each other?

HH__ Because it is fun. When you tease others it is alright, when others tease you back it is not. You have asked the same question again.

C1__ Why shouldn't we talk about the '*mantra*' given to us or tell another person the mantra given to us?

HH__ When we have something precious with us, we do not show it to everybody—only to a few close people. *Mantra* is something even more precious. It is something between God, your Guru and you only. *Mantraka* respect *divnche astha*. When you talk about it to everyone it loses its effectiveness and then you will not be able to concentrate on it.

C2__ Swamiji, what happens when we do not pronounce our mantra correctly?

HH__ You will not be able to concentrate on your *mantra* properly and you may not get the full benefit of the mantra.

C__ Swamiji, sometimes we say something to people without thinking, which can hurt them. What can we do then?

HH__ Awareness comes, it is a lesson that we learn.

C__ But if it happens repeatedly, then what do I do?

HH__ Why does it happen repeatedly?

C__ Sometimes the other person irritates.

HH__ Now that brings a different dimension to it. Awareness *yenaphude* our mind feels ashamed and comes out of it. *Chikke* effort *ghalka padta*. You start thinking—why am I hurting this person, this is really not necessary. With awareness, up to ninety percent of this anger can be controlled. *Varlale* ten percent *chikke vaant assa*, effort *ghalka*. You have to tell the other person—let's stop at this point; if I say something further I may say something stupid. Give me some time to get over my anger.

C--- Sometimes even if we say sorry our friends don't accept and continue to be upset.

HH--- If they are your friends they will understand, they may be upset for a day but later on they will accept your apologies, and if they don't – what can you do? It's their nature; you will have to accept that.

C--- Swamiji, sometimes when I see my question paper my mind blanks out, why is that?

HH--- That happens when you are not prepared thoroughly for your exams. When you have not put in enough effort—last minute study—you don't know your subject well. You should pray to God—relax and look at your paper—you will see that even if there are some questions that you are not able to answer, you might know fifty to sixty percent of the answers.

C--- Swamiji, some thoughts keep coming to my mind, even if I try to forget them.

HH--- Same thoughts occur when your mind is weak. You have to make it strong. Try to bring in some good thoughts and dwell on them instead. Don't try to invite your bad thoughts. Doing regular japa helps to make your mind strong.

C--- We are told many stories about Gods and all, how did we come to know all the stories?

HH--- God told the rishis, they told their shishyas. The shishyas told the stories to their shishyas and so on and so forth. The stories were handed down from generation to generation like our Guru Parampara.

The children seemed satisfied for the moment and seemed to have asked all the questions they needed answered. They were then served refreshments, courtesy Nayel Bhavani Pachi and the Local Sabha. We thank Nainpally Naren and Kaikini Sameer for their help with the refreshments.

The interaction session concluded with Pujya Swamiji singing the bhajan —‘*Santata mantara*’ — with all the children repeating after Him.



Photographs by Kishen Kalyanpur

Then Swamiji spoke briefly about our Guru Parampara—that we should be proud of our rich heritage and that we should speak with conviction when we talk about it.

The children left feeling elated and fulfilled — having been in the sannidhi of their beloved Guru for over an hour.

NAMAH PARVATIPATAYE HARA HARA MAHADEV

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