

# SWAMIJI ANSWERS QUESTIONS ON CREATION, KARMA AND REBIRTH

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by

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**Visitor:** The scripture speaks of our dream state and our awakening state; but, at the same time, it says that everything is illusion.

**Swamiji:** It is not illusion. As long as you believe that it is there, you can see it. It is illusion only for the person who cannot see it, and will not see it. When you are seeing it with your eyes and you are believing that it is there, then why do you call it illusion? Who told you that it is illusion?

**Visitor:** No one.

**Swamiji:** Does your feeling say that it is illusion?

**Visitor:** No I don't think that it is...

**Swamiji:** Then what is the good of saying it is illusion? Somebody is saying something, and you are quoting it. Your heart should say that it is illusion; then, you are free from it. You will not cling to an illusion. Who clings to an illusion? It is an illusion only when you transcend it. When you are experiencing it, why do you call it an illusion? It has a relative reality. It may not be absolutely real, but it is relatively real. It has a workable reality – a tentative reality. What binds you

is your feeling that something is real. What the scripture says has no meaning; it has no relevance to you. The scripture cannot bind you, and it cannot liberate you. Your feelings will bind you and liberate you. Do you believe that the world is real? Then you are bound, even if the scripture says another thing. But if you say the world does not exist for some reason – “I have got some conviction that for some reason it does not exist” – then it cannot bind you. But your heart should be convinced that it does not exist, and you must also have a reason why it does not exist. What is the reason you say it does not exist? What are the proofs? Bring the proofs. If the proofs are there, the world will vanish. But if you have no proof to say that the world is not existing, it will be clinging. Merely saying something is not the answer. You must have an argument and a proof and a conviction in the heart that, “For these reasons I can really feel that it is not Ultimate Reality. Therefore, I cannot cling to it.” But if your heart says it is very nice, then why do you call it illusion? It is illusion to a person who is convinced that it does not exist. But if you are not convinced, then why do you call it illusion?

**Visitor:** Because I did not understand when I was saying to Swami Brahmananda...

**Swamiji:** Let Swami Brahmananda say anything. What are you saying?

**Visitor:** I said, “How can I say that it doesn’t exist, if for me it exists? Right now it exists. I exist and I can touch my body.”

**Swamiji:** To the extent it exists, is a binding factor. You cannot be free from it. But you must find out the way. Ask Swami Brahmanandaji, “Why do you call it illusion?” You ask him tomorrow.

**Visitor:** I am leaving tonight.

**Swamiji:** You could not find a better time to ask than now? Than one minute before going? You simply throw the world out and go out from here? In one minute? Why did you not ask Brahmanandaji? You were sitting every day and you would not ask him a question?

**Visitor:** No, I asked him for examples. He said as an example the bangle and the gold - that everything is gold...

**Swamiji:** Are you convinced that it is gold and not the bangle? The whole world is only gold and not the bangle?

**Visitor:** I can understand that it is gold...

**Swamiji:** You understand?

**Visitor:** The intellect can understand that I am...

**Swamiji:** Why do you say it is all gold and not bangle? What is the argument behind it?

**Visitor:** Well, he explained to us that 'bangle' is a name that we give to the objects and the subject.

**Swamiji:** We have to deeply meditate on this great truth that all these objects of the world are only variations, formations of a single substance, and, therefore, these variations and forms and diversities are not true. Gold has never become the bangles; it is still gold only, looking a little round. Similarly, the one substance looks like the world because of the shape it has taken through space and time. And you are also included in the various shapes that it has taken. Therefore, neither you exist nor the various forms exist. It is one substance that exists. You should not unnecessarily go on clinging to the form of Mr. So-and-so and the form of something else. It is like clinging to a chain and a ring or a particular ornament, forgetting that it is gold. It requires deep meditation. Whatever you see with your eyes, including your own self, actually is a form of the one Universal Substance. Therefore, when you think, actually the Universal Substance is thinking. You are not thinking; you are not doing anything, nor are you moving from place to place. Nothing is happening, really speaking. It is in the dream world of the Cosmic Consciousness and, therefore, it is one thought that is operating. The Universal Thought is thinking the whole cosmos - which means to say, you are not thinking. The idea that you are thinking must go away from your mind, because you are included in that universal

thought; therefore, you are not thinking it. Rather, it is thinking you. Instead of you thinking it, it is thinking you – the other way round. So, all your thoughts should be melted down into one single universal thought, and you should think nothing else but that. Then you will find that what Brahmananda Swamiji said is correct. The world will vanish; it won't be there afterwards. But, deep meditation along these lines should be carried on day and night.

**Visitor:** Thank you.

**Francis:** According to the Panchadasi, *avidya* is the cause of *aviveka*. What is the difference between the two of them?

**Swamiji:** The unconsciousness of the existence of a Universal Reality is called *avidya*, and the incapacity to distinguish between the Universal Reality and the appearance of the world is *aviveka*. You understand me? The unconsciousness of the existence of the Universal Reality is *avidya*; the incapacity to distinguish between the Universal Reality and the appearance of the world is *aviveka*. Do you catch the point? Do you understand what I say?

**Francis:** Is *avidya* connected with *avarana*?

**Swamiji:** Yes, you can say that. It is something like that.

**Visitor:** What is the technical difference between Ishvara and SagunaBrahman?

**Swamiji:** Ishvara is same as Saguna Brahman. There are three stages of the manifestation of the Supreme Absolute, Brahman: Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat. All these three stages – Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat – are also called Ishvara only, in one way. The total concept of the inclusiveness of Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat is also called Ishvara, and it is the same as Saguna Brahman. Qualified Absolute – it means Qualified Absolute.

**Francis:** From an absolute point of view there is no creation, but from a relative point of view there is creation. Do these theories of creation describe a temporal process, or rather do they describe the logical structure of the degrees of Reality?

**Swamiji:** It looks like a temporal process to the human mind which thinks in terms of temporal process. Here you have your great friend Immanuel Kant coming to your aid, who said that the mind of the human being cannot think except in terms of space and time and, therefore, every event is interpreted by the human mind in terms of space and time, which means the temporal process. Though that process might not be temporal, the mind thinks it is temporal. God has not created a temporal process, because God is not existing in time. Do you understand? Therefore, you cannot say that God has created the world as a temporal process. It is not a historical movement that God has initiated. There is no history for God, because that is in time and He is above time. It is a logical process rather than a temporal historical process.

**Visitor:** How can you prove that perception is the movement of the mind towards the object? How do you prove this movement – that perception is the movement of the mind towards the object?

**Swamiji:** I gave you that little book – you never read that book - that *Yoga, Meditation and Japa Sadhana* book which I give to all people. The first part of it is only that – and you have not read it. What I meant is, unless your consciousness contacts the object, it cannot become aware of the object. And if the object is different from consciousness in quality, consciousness cannot know that there is an object. Therefore, the object of consciousness cannot be totally outside consciousness. If it is not outside consciousness, it should be within consciousness and, therefore, it is a part of consciousness only. This is the answer. Do you understand the point? Otherwise, you can't be aware that there is an object, if it is totally outside it. How will you contact the object when it is totally different? What is the link between object and consciousness? Therefore, consciousness must have an inherent, implicit presence in the object itself, which is another way of saying that the object itself is a potential consciousness – concluding thereby that the whole universe is consciousness. Do you catch the point?

**Visitor:** Yes. When the scriptures say that sound is transmitted by ether and not by the air, how can we make it compatible with the normal physical theory that sound travels through the air?

**Swamiji:** Sound cannot travel without air. When the scriptures say that sound travels through ether, they mean it travels through air, which is in ether. That is the idea. Where air is absent, sound cannot travel. That is the point.

**Visitor:** About the theory of karma. I think we cannot prove that the things which happen to me in some particular moment are due only to my own previous actions, because it is possible that they are due to the other processes which are external to me.

**Swamiji:** What are the other processes?

**Visitor:** For example, weather, or somebody comes here...

**Swamiji:** You see, again you are bringing in weather and all that. Weather, etc., are objects of consciousness. And I told you, you cannot have any connection with objects unless your consciousness is implicit in them. So, we should not say some external causes are troubling you. There are no external causes. They are connected with your consciousness. Therefore, they seem to be troubling you. So, there is no external cause. The external cause, so called, is also implicit in your consciousness. Otherwise, you won't be affected by that. If there is no connection at all between you and the weather, it won't affect you at all. It has connection with you, because it is also an object, and every object is implicitly consciousness – which means to say, it is connected with your consciousness also and, therefore, there is action and reaction between subject and object. That action and reaction between subject and object is called karma. That is all. It is like the law of gravitation. The whole universe is conditioning you because of your consciousness being connected to everything in the world. Every cell of the brain of a person is connected to every atom in the cosmos; this is the modern theory of physics. Every cell in your brain is

connected to every part of the cosmos. And so there is nothing with which you are not connected. Hence, you are a cosmic man basically, wrongly thinking that you are an individual person, and so this action and reaction taking place between your wrong notion of the individuality and the actual Absolute is the cause of this gravitational force, which is morally or ethically called karma. It is like the law of gravitation, which is operative between the individual and the Absolute on account of the wrong notion of the individual that it is separate from the Absolute. Karma will not act if you are identical with the Absolute. Karma acts as long as you are outside it. Do you understand? So, there is no karma for the Absolute. And you also will not have any karma, provided you are merged in the Absolute consciousness in your deep meditation. All karmas will be destroyed in one minute. But if you persist in thinking that "I am Mr. Francis and some separate individual from the cosmos", it will react upon you. That reaction is called karma. That is the point.

**Visitor:** Yes, I understand.

**Swamiji:** What I am telling you just now is explained in a little more detail in my book, *The Philosophy of Religion*, under a section called *The Theory of Karma*.

**Visitor:** I am not convinced about the proofs of the theory of rebirth.

**Swamiji:** From where do you come - from Spain?

**Visitor:** This individual, this body of mine - what you call 'I'.

**Swamiji:** Are you Mr. Francis?

**Visitor:** Mr. Francis.

**Swamiji:** From where have you come?

**Francis:** As far as I know, there was a combination between my father and mother - some biological thing.

**Swamiji:** Who compiled the biological elements into the form of this Francis?

**Francis:** I don't know - the biological laws.

**Swamiji:** Who created these laws? Why are the laws so bad that they are creating Francis? They could have created some angel. [laughter] Why are the laws operating so badly? You would have certainly liked to be an angel and a godman instead of a poor little suffering fellow. Why are the laws so bad? Why they are operating in that way? Tell me. Who is initiating it from behind? Without a cause, an effect cannot follow. So you could not have come unless a cause operated. Who is this cause? You cannot say laws, because who made these laws?

**Francis:** I think that this question may be... It is not possible to ask this question...

**Swamiji:** I want to know who created these laws. Because you want to know the cause of a thing, we are going to probe into the cause. How did the effect follow from the cause, unless the cause has some intention behind it?

**Francis:** We can speak of causality inside the world.

**Swamiji:** Inside the world? There is no inside the world. Again you are bringing the inside/outside business. In the world there is no inside/outside; it is a total organism. In a total organism, there is no inside/outside. The idea of inside/outside arises because you have separated yourself from the Universal. The moment you separate yourself from the Universal, the Universal looks like an outside. But if you are actually an organic part of the Universal, where is the question of inside/outside? It is a total action taking place – a total action. Actually, rebirth or birth, whatever you call it, is only your desire. You want to be reborn; that is all. If you don't want to be reborn, you will not be reborn. If you say, "I don't want to be reborn. Why should I be reborn? I have no business to be reborn. I have no desire for rebirth" - you would entertain no desire at all for anything whatsoever; then, why should you be reborn? The rebirth stops in one second. But you want to be reborn. Your consciousness concentrates itself in a particular fashion according to the

laws, as you are saying, and projects itself into that location. Consciousness condensing itself, solidifying itself and becoming a form for the purpose of fulfilling the existing desires is called rebirth.

**Francis:** But I still need proof...

**Swamiji:** How can I prove that you have got desires? What is the proof?

**Francis:** I have desires, yes.

**Swamiji:** What is that proof that you have got desires? You yourself are the proof. And you have to fulfill the desire. And you cannot fulfill the desires in this birth, because they are so many in number.

**Francis:** But then maybe I will never...

**Swamiji:** You will never fulfill them? You will certainly fulfill them. The law of the cosmos is such that every desire has to be fulfilled.

**Francis:** But if we have faith in... or we have faith in a possibility...

**Swamiji:** It has nothing to do with faith. It is a scientific law. It is a scientific law of action and reaction. Even if you have no faith that if you go to the top of a tree you will fall down, you will certainly fall even if you have no faith. Why you want faith? There is no question of faith here; it is an action between you and the Universal. These problems will not arise if you don't persist in thinking that you are an individual outside the Universal. You have created the problem unnecessarily by thinking that you are outside, and then going on arguing against the Universal.

**Francis:** I think this state of consciousness of non-duality ...

**Swamiji:** If there is not duality, where is rebirth? The question doesn't arise.

**Francis:** I think this question of rebirth is of *vyavaharika*...

**Swamiji:** It is *vyavaharika* only. It is perfectly right. The rebirth is *vyavaharika* and your existence as Mr Francis is also a *vyavaharika* existence. Absolutely, you are not existing. Absolutely, you are existing as nothing. So, you have not been born. And therefore, you will need not to be reborn. This is an illusion, as this gentleman was talking about. But it is an illusion only when you identify yourself with the Absolute. Otherwise, if you are yourself convinced that you are outside it, all the laws that operate in the universe will act against you because you have contravened the law of the universal whole. That is all. It is the law of evolution. Something evolved from matter to plant, plant to animal, animal to human being. How can one thing become another thing unless the previous stage has ceased and the second stage has started? And the starting of the second stage is the rebirth of the first stage. What you call evolution as the process in biological law is same as rebirth. How can the higher form come unless the lower form has gone? The lower form dies. That is, there is a mutation taking place. And the mutation of the lower transforms itself into the new form which is the higher form. That new form is what you call the rebirth. What you call rebirth is nothing but the law of evolution taking place, and evolution will not take place if your consciousness is identical with the Absolute. The whole evolution will cease in one second.

**Francis:** So then, there is some progress.

**Swamiji:** It is the progress of the Absolute.

**Francis:** Is there any purpose?

**Swamiji:** It is the cosmic purpose.

**Francis:** There will be some moment when this purpose is fulfilled.

**Swamiji:** It will be fulfilled, and you will never see the universe afterwards.

**Francis:** Not the universe, maybe...

**Swamiji:** You will never see the universe.

**Francis:** That happens in a new life?

**Swamiji:** The individual will not be there at that time. Then why are you again saying individual? Again you are bringing the individual.

**Visitor:** During the night of Brahman, it is timeless. Therefore, it must exist in one moment, and there can be no temporal gap between one day of Brahman and the next one.

**Swamiji:** There is no gap.

**Francis:** There is no gap between one day and the next one?

**Swamiji:** Where is the gap between day and night?

**Francis:** I mean between one day and the next day.

**Swamiji:** Where is the gap? We are also passing through one day and the next day. Where is the gap? There is a continuity. No gap.

**Francis:** Is not deep sleep a temporal state also? So there is no separation between my previous...

**Swamiji:** They are continuous. If they are separated one from the other, then you cannot know that you are one continuous person. The sleeping person, the dreaming person and the waking person are one person; and if each state is different from the other, there would be discontinuity of self-identity. Inasmuch as self-identity is maintained in all the three states, it shows that all the three states are continuous and are not cut off one from the other. Otherwise, the sleeping man would be different, the dreaming man will be another man, and the waking man a third person. It does not happen. It is one continuity.

**Francis:** The right eye is more active than the left one during the day.

**Swamiji:** That's what they say. As they say, the right hand is more active than the left hand. This is a kind of usual traditional belief. Perhaps it has some connection with the two *nadis* operating, the solar and the lunar, the solar being

more powerful than the lunar, and maybe the right side is influenced by the solar side, which is more powerful than the lunar side, the left one.

**Francis:** About the idea of rebirth. I will give two arguments – not against the idea but against its importance for spiritual life. The idea of rebirth is not essential in spiritual life because there have been many saints who did not believe in it.

**Swamiji:** Rebirth? If they don't believe, you need not bother about it. Why are you worried about them?

**Francis:** There are saints who attained this spiritual state, who have different beliefs. So it is not essential.

**Swamiji:** A person who has reached the highest state will know everything that is taking place in the cosmos. And rebirth is one of the things that is taking place. Otherwise, he will not be omniscient. Omniscience includes everything, and you cannot say you don't know something. You must know everything. Otherwise, what is omniscience?

**Francis:** I think *jivanmuktas* are omniscient.

**Swamiji:** *Jivanmukta* also is a very lesser condition. There is something higher than that – Cosmic-consciousness. It is Universal-consciousness, even above *jivanmukta*. And they must know everything – every atom – so there is nothing that they cannot understand. They should not say they don't know something. That is not possible. They will know everything. They can count how many hairs are there on the heads of all the people in the world, such consciousness is there. They can know how many leaves are there in all the forests in the world, by direct perception.

**Francis:** If rebirth is true...

**Swamiji:** What is rebirth? It is a kind of transformation taking place in the cosmos. Why are you using that word 'rebirth'? It is a transmutation taking place in everything in the cosmos. And everybody has to undergo that transmutation. And nobody could have become *jivanmukta*

unless he has undergone this transformation. Otherwise, he would be a pig or a buffalo always. How would the buffalo become a *jivanmukta* without undergoing transformation? That is called rebirth, which I mentioned to you earlier. The mutation of species for the purpose of a higher state of consciousness is called rebirth. Otherwise, how would you reach God? You would be the same person forever, unless the mutation takes place. It has to take place.