

That is the miracle of spiritual experiences: all that is ugly simply disappears, and all that is beautiful is enhanced. The evil disappears and the good is enhanced. The world and the worldly desires are no more relevant to you -- a totally new dimension opens up.

The second question

Question 2

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Shivanand,

MEDITATION is A STATE OF NO-MIND Meditation is a state of pure consciousness with no content. Ordinarily, your consciousness is too much full of rubbish, just like a mirror covered with dust. The mind is a constant traffic: thoughts are moving, desires are moving, memories are moving, ambitions are moving -- it is a constant traffic! day in, day out. Even when you are asleep the mind is functioning, it is dreaming. It is still thinking; it is still in worries and anxieties. It is preparing for the next day; an underground preparation is going on.

This is the state of no meditation -- just the opposite is meditation. When there is no traffic and thinking has ceased, no thought moves, no desire stirs, you are utterly silent -- that silence is meditation. And in that silence truth is known, and never otherwise.

Meditation is a state of no-mind.

And you cannot find meditation through the mind because mind will perpetuate itself. You can find meditation only by putting the mind aside, by being cool, indifferent, unidentified with the mind; by seeing the mind pass, but not getting identified with it, not thinking that "I am it."

Meditation is the awareness that "I am not the mind." When the awareness goes deeper and deeper in you, slowly slowly, a few moments arrive -- moments of silence, moments of pure space, moments of transparency, moments when nothing stirs in you and everything is still. In those still moments you will know who you are, and you will know what the mystery of this existence is.

And once you have tasted those few dewdrops of nectar, great longing will arise in you to go deeper and deeper into it. Irresistible longing will arise in you, a great thirst. You will become afire!

That's what sannyas is all about. When you have tasted a few moments of silence, of joy, of meditateness, you will like this state to become your **CONSTANT** state, a continuum. The desire to make meditation your whole lifestyle is what sannyas is all about.

And if a few moments are possible, then there is no problem. Slowly slowly, more and more moments will be coming. As you become skillful, as you learn the knack of not getting involved in the mind, as you learn the art of remaining aloof, away from the mind, as you learn the science of creating a distance between you and your own thoughts, more and more meditation will be showering on you. And the more it showers, the more it transforms you.

A day comes, a day of great blessings, when meditation becomes your natural state.

Mind is something unnatural; it never becomes your natural state. But meditation is a natural state -- which we have lost. It is a paradise lost, but the paradise can be regained. Look into the child's eyes, look and you will see tremendous silence, innocence. Each child comes with a meditative state, but he has to be initiated into the ways of the society -- he has to be taught how to think, how to calculate, how to reason. how to argue; he has to be taught words, language, concepts. And, slowly slowly, he loses contact with his own innocence. He becomes contaminated, polluted by the society. He becomes an efficient mechanism; he is no more a man.

All that is needed is to regain that space once more. You had known it before, so when for the first time you know meditation, you will be surprised -- because a great feeling will arise in you as if you have known it before. And that feeling is true: YOU HAVE known it before. You have forgotten. The diamond is lost in piles of rubbish. But if you can uncover it, you will find the diamond again -- it is yours.

It cannot really be lost: it can only be forgotten. We are born as meditators, then we learn the ways of the mind. But our real nature remains hidden somewhere deep down like an undercurrent. Any day, a little digging, and you will find the source still flowing, the source of fresh waters. And the greatest joy in life is to find it.

"Buried in the deepest stratum of his unconscious, at the wellspring of man's existence, lies an immense psychological force. In pure form, it is experienced as a longing, the object of which is constantly receding from him as the horizons of his world widen throughout his growth. It begins perhaps with the infant's amazing discovery that the breast which brings it comfort is not part of himself. From that moment, longing drives the human organism to relate himself to, to comprehend, in the deepest sense to love, that which lies beyond him. This longing can become attached to many kinds of objects and pursuits. But to know it in its purity, without any object, is to know life itself. This longing is God, and to be this longing, pure and simple, without any content, is meditation."

A child is born; the child comes ready with great energy. The child is nothing but pure energy embodied. And the first thing the child has to seek and search for is the mother's breast obviously. The child is hungry. For nine months in the mother's womb the child was fed automatically; the child lived as part of the mother. Now he is cut from the mother; he has become a separate entity in himself -- and the first thing, the first necessity, is to search for food. And that's how the outward journey begins.

The energy is there; the energy starts reaching outwards. And the first thing that the child wants to find is some source of food. He finds the mother's breast. It is not an accident that the woman's breast has become one of the greatest symbols to humanity. In art you will find it, in sculpture you will find it, in poetry you will find it -- everywhere you will find it!

The female breast has become a focal point. Why? For what reason? Basically it is nothing but a gland, nothing but a mechanism to feed the child. But why does it haunt people? Men are interested in it; women are interested in it -- why so much obsession with the breast? The reason is simple: that was the first contact of the child with the world, the first experience, the most fundamental experience. Everything else is secondary.

The first experience was that of the breast. That's why it has dominated the world of art, poetry, sculpture. Man has become obsessed with it. And so have women! They may be hiding their breasts, or they may be showing their breasts -- and in fact both the processes are not very different. Hiding is a way of showing; hiding is a way of making it more interesting, more intriguing. Hiding the breast provokes the desire in the man to know how it is, what it is. The hidden breast becomes more beautiful than the naked breast. The naked breast is just a part of the body. But why has so much obsession existed about the breast? The reason is simple: it is the most fundamental experience, the first experience. The entry into the world is through the breast. And the breast did two things: it nourished the child -- and the first thing was to survive, and the breast was the food, the breast was life. And the second thing: the breast gave warmth to the child, shelter to the child, love to the child. That's why food and love have become so much associated.

Whenever a woman loves you, she prepares beautiful food for you. That is a symbolic invitation. Whenever somebody loves you, he invites you for food. Why? The food, in a subtle way, represents the breast. Food and love became associated because both were flowing for the child from the breast.

And there are very few people who are really grown-ups. Childishness remains there. That's why the bigger the breast, the more you are interested in it. Why? A simple biological reason: because the bigger breast is a bigger source of food for the child. If the breast is very small, that simply shows the child will not survive. That's why the flat-breasted woman is unattractive -- not that there is really any aesthetic reason for her unattractiveness, but there is some biological reason. She cannot be a mother to your children; that is the reason. The bigger the breast, the more motherlike she seems, the more motherly she will be. She seems to be able to give birth to children and will be able to help them to survive, and in a healthy way.

That's why whenever you are not feeling loved, you start eating too much. The people who become addicted to food are the people who are missing love. They start substituting with food. If you are really loved, you cannot eat too much. You will be surprised by this psychological discovery: that the people who are loved and are in love eat less. they eat always in a proportionate way. People who are not loved or are not in love eat too much, because food can do two things.

It can fill them, can give them a feeling of being full, and they are feeling very empty because love is missed. Have you not watched it? Girls when they are unmarried are not fat; once they get married, they start getting fatter and fatter, and uglier and uglier. Why? Now there is no problem -- they have attained. And once they are married, the desire for love disappears. They become settled in the routine of life, they start taking everything for granted. And familiarity breeds contempt. Husbands and wives hate each other; although they go on saying, "We love each other," they hate each other. Deep down they feel imprisoned by each other. Love disappears and people start eating too much. Remember the relationship between love and food. But the reason is because that was the child's first experience and he was getting both the things from the same source. They became associated: a simple case of conditioned reflex.

And once the child starts groping for the mother's breast, now the journey outwards begins. He has come to know one thing: that the source of his life is outside him. That is the original fall. Now he will always think of having more money, of having more power,

of having more prestige... of getting more and more people's attention, because the source of life is outside. And in fact the source of life is inside.

MEDITATION MEANS BECOMING AWARE that the source of life is inside. The body depends on the outside, true -- but you are not the body alone. You don't depend on the outside. You depend on the inner world. These are the two directions: to move outwards or to move inwards. Mind is a process of moving outwards, and mind starts the day the child finds the mother's breast. That is the beginning of the mind. And mind takes you farther and farther away from yourself.

Meditation is the recognition that "There is an inner world too, and I have to search for it."

Mind is focussed on some goal, some object. Meditation is the search to know the pure longing -- not the object, but the longing for the object. "What is this longing in me that wants to have much money, that wants to have great power, that wants to become famous... what is this longing in me? Who is this longing in me? What is its nature?"

To know this longing is meditation. And to know it in its purity is to know God. Longing without any content, pure longing, just the flame without any smoke, is God. Meditation brings you to God, because it brings you to your innermost core. And when you start moving inwards, the circle is complete.

You become mature only when meditation has started; otherwise you remain childish.

Your toys may go on changing -- small children are playing with small toys, and big children, aged children, elderly children, are playing with big toys -- but there is no qualitative difference.

You can see... sometimes your child will do it. He will stand on the table when you are sitting at the side on the chair, and he will say, "Look, Daddy, I am bigger than you." He is standing higher, on the table, and he says, "Look, I am bigger than you," and you laugh at him. But what are you doing? When you have more money, just watch how you walk. You are saying to all the neighbours, "Look! I am bigger than you." Or when you become a president of a country, or a prime minister, look how you walk, with what haughtiness, with what ego. You are telling everybody, "I have defeated you all. I am sitting on the biggest chair." These are the same games! From your childhood to your old age, you go on playing the same games. You can play the game of Monopoly, or you can go and play the real game of monopoly in the sharemarket -- it makes no difference, it is the same game just played on a bigger scale.

Once you understand it, that this is the root of your childishness, the outgoing mind....

Small children start reaching for the moon, and even the biggest scientists are trying to reach the moon -- they have reached. There is not much difference.

Reaching outside, you may reach other stars but you will remain childish. Even if you reach the moon, what are you going to do there? You will be the same! With the same rubbish in your head, with all the holy cow dung that you go on carrying in your heart, you will be standing on the moon. There will be no difference at all! You can be a poor man, you can be very rich; you can be absolutely anonymous, you can be world-famous - - it makes no difference at all. Unless the mind takes a turn and starts moving inwards, unless mind takes a totally new dimension and becomes meditation....

Meditation is mind turning towards its own source.

Meditation makes you mature; meditation makes you really a grown-up. Growing in age is not really becoming a grown-up, because I see people eighty years old and still playing games, ugly games of power politics -- even at the age of eighty-two, eighty-three, eighty-four! The sleep seems to be so deep. When are they going to awaken? When will they think of the inner world?

And death will take all that you have accumulated -- your power, your money, your prestige. Nothing will be left. not even a trace. Your whole life will be nullified. Death will come and destroy all that you have made; death will come and prove that all your palaces were nothing but palaces made of playing cards.

Maturity is to know something in you which is deathless, to know something in you which will

transcend death -- that is meditation. Mind knows the world: meditation knows God. Mind is a way to understand the object: meditation is a way to understand the subject. Mind is a concern with the contents, and meditation is a concern with the container -- the consciousness. Mind becomes obsessed with the clouds, and meditation searches for the sky. Clouds come and go: sky remains, abides.

Search for the inner sky. And if you have found it, then you will never die. The body will die, the mind will die, but you will never die. And to know it is to know life. What you call life is not real life because it is going to die. Only a meditator knows what life is because he has reached the very source of eternity.

The third question

Question 3

WAS JESUS REALLY BORN OF A VIRGIN MOTHER?

ONE THING HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD: the ancients used to talk in metaphors, the ancients used to talk in poetic ways -- and that has been misunderstood very much. We talk in scientific ways; our language has gone totally different from the ancients. The difference is as much as when you think you think in concepts, but when you dream you cannot dream in concepts -- you dream in pictures. And if you are a poet, a painter, you dream not in black and white but in colour.

Ordinary people dream in black and white -- poets, painters, those who know what colour is, those who are really in tune with the world of colour, are very sensitive, they dream in colour.

But in dreams you don't use logical concepts: you use pictures. That's why you need a psychoanalyst to interpret your dream, because you have completely forgotten the language of metaphor.

For example: a man dreams continuously that in the night he becomes a bird and starts flying into the sky. And he is puzzled -- why? What does this dream mean? When he is awake he cannot make any sense of it. He will have to go to the psychoanalyst. In fact, there is no need to go anywhere -- it is so simple.

Becoming a bird in the dream is nothing but a translation of your ambitious desires into the language of pictures. You want to rise high -- simple! And you can rise high only when you have wings. There is a great desire to rise high in the world. In the dream you become a bird; the dream is simply using a poetic language.