

# *Satsang with Om Baba*

*(from Satsang on 23.11.2015, Rishikesh, India)*

## **Brahmacharya**

Hari OM!

So, in these days, in these Satsangs, we are focusing on the foundations of yogic practice that is the yamas and niyamas. We are taking one discipline in every Satsang and getting deep inside it and trying to understand it as clearly as possible. Trying to understand the necessity of putting it into our everyday life.

The five yamas: non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, Brahmacharya, simplicity. We have spoken about the first three. Today, we are going to speak about the fourth, that is Brahmacharya.

It's a very, very important and subtle issue. These days, there are so many teachings speaking to us about Brahmacharya, about tantric techniques – practices, yogic practices mixed with sexual practices and all these things. This is something very contemporary; very, very modern that didn't exist 30 or 40 years ago – something very modern.

However, the sexual energy is something supremely ancient. It is the very first thing that initiated creation. It is what initiated, you can say, the Mahamaya, the illusion, the universal play.

In the beginning, Shiva was alone. When I say Shiva, I don't mean a certain form with a trident and a drum. When I say Shiva, I mean the Supreme Self. You can call it Shiva. You can call it Paramatma. You can call it Vishnu. You can call it God. You can call it as you like. It has no name. But for the moment we'll give it the name Shiva, because it's a beautiful name.

So, in the beginning, Shiva was alone – pure awareness, all-including awareness. Pure Being, just Being. Blissful in Its own Self. Then, in His blissful, playful mode, you can say Shiva manifested Shakti.

Now, Shakti is not something different from Shiva. Shakti is the very power of Shiva. It's not two things, it's one thing. Shiva and Shakti are one thing. But Shiva, in His playful mode, He decided for a moment, "Let me just forget this oneness. For the sake of playing, I will pretend that this Shakti is something different from me; for the sake of playing".

So, for the sake of playing, Lord Shiva closed His eyes. He forgot the Truth of His Being and He perceived Shakti, His own power, as some companion – something external to Him. And He felt very much love for Her because She was so beautiful. She was the supreme embodiment of beauty. The most pure, the most high, perfect beauty. And Shiva wished to unite with Her. In His playful moment, He wished to unite with something with which He was already one. He wished to unite with Her, just for playing. It was very innocent and very joyful.

That was the very first union that existed. A union, we can say, of two different things in an illusion. Of male and female, of one and another thing. The very first unity. And that unity happened because of ignorance. Lord Shiva had to convince Himself that She was something other than Him. It happened from the ignorance of "I am one thing and you are something other. I am Mr Like-this-and-this, you are Mrs Like-that-and-that".

So, from this misconception – I am one thing and you are another thing – the desire for union came.

Now Lord Shiva enjoyed it very much. It was very, very enjoyable for Him. It was very pleasant. So, He thought to Himself, “I need one or two conditions to make it more enjoyable. One thing is, I need to perpetuate it. I need to perpetuate this game. To make it last longer and longer. And secondly, I need to expand it”.

So, the wish, or the need, for perpetuation and for expansion came from the primal wish for unity. That is why, even today, the first reason somebody wants to unite with someone else – either in a sexual way or in a friendly way – the first reason is the ignorance that I am one and you are another. It all starts from this ignorance.

But, although all sorts of unities are beautiful, the specific unity between husband and wife is much, much more powerful. Much more powerful. Why? Because there is a second layer of ignorance inside: the wish for perpetuation and the wish for expansion.

As soon as the awareness becomes identified with a human body, and it begins to share the lot of a human body, it begins to share the joys and sorrows of a human body. It begins to share the destiny of a body. It begins to share the fears of a body. The limitations of a body. A very powerful fear comes: the fear of death.

The soul that is immortal, perfect, spotless, it becomes afraid that one day everything will go black. “One day I will die and everything will finish. The supreme universal play will finish... one day. So I need to do something about this; I need somehow to escape death, I need to cheat death. Somehow, I need to free myself from that fear. So what shall I do? I will perpetuate myself. I will continue my existence and I will continue the cosmic play through my children.”

So, this is a very powerful, subconscious programming as well as a wish of human beings to escape death. And they feel that they do perpetuate themselves through making children. And, in a way, it is true. In a way, because the genes, the DNA, perpetuates itself through the making of children. That is true. The only misconception is that you are not the DNA. You are not the genes. So you are not going to perpetuate yourself through making children. In fact, you don't need any perpetuation from the very beginning, you are deathless.

The second wish, you can say a subconscious, very powerful wish for union of husband and wife, for sexual union, is, as we said before, expansion – the wish for power. This is our inner programming – the programming of the DNA. It exists inside all of us. Our subconscious programming that guides us, that forces us, into the perpetuation of the cosmic play.

Expansion... Now, today, I am one body, like this, having these qualities like that, or like that and certainly *'I am the best body'*. I deserve to be more than one. I deserve to be two, three, five. I deserve to be a full clan, a full nation. So, this is the idea, subconsciously – expansion. That creates a powerful drive and need for sexual union. These are the two basic, you could say subconscious, principles: perpetuation and expansion. And they are interpreted on a more conscious level as the sexual drive.

Originally, if we ask ourselves why does sex exist, why it came into being, there is only one reason, which is procreation – the making of children. This upholds these two basic principles of perpetuation and expansion.

So you can say, if you look at the very root of the sexual drive, it is a drive towards the outside, becoming more and more, expanding. It's a drive from the Truth that we are towards the infinite variations of untruth of the illusion. It's an outwards drive.

Brahmacharya is the opposite of it. The meaning of the word Brahmacharya; Brahma is the supreme, we can say Lord Shiva, God, Paramatma, Brahma is the supreme – the true Being. Charya means to walk. Brahmacharya means to walk with the Supreme or to walk *towards* the supreme. To walk from the infinite illusion, which has infinite variations, infinite colours, sounds, smells, thoughts, emotions, infinite; to go from the infinite into the *One*. To go from the wish for unity into the recognition of Oneness.

I will say this again: going from the wish for unity with other beings into the recognition of Oneness – that you are already One.

If you know you are one with another being, why would you have a wish for unity? There is no space for it. As long as there is not a clear understanding that I am one with you, there might be a wish for unity. Or there might be a wish for distance: “I don’t like you”. When there is the understanding you are one, there can be neither the wish for unity nor the wish for distance, you cannot have any of it – you are one. So, the essential concept behind Brahmacharya is this.

Now, going to a practical level, in the quest of seeking for this Oneness, having a sincere wish to recognise that Oneness – a very sincere and burning wish – still we have to deal with some instinctive programming. We have to deal with our instincts. We have to deal with the subconscious desires that exist even within the Lord Shiva. So they exist within all beings. We have to deal with this wish for perpetuation, this wish for expansion, with the wish to make children, with the wish to have sexual union. If we have a sincere wish for the recognition of Oneness, then we have a chance to do it. If we do not have a sincere wish, we have no chance.

Sexual power is tremendous. It squeezes all human beings. It makes them lose their judgement, their intelligence. It clouds their intelligence. It is like a spell. Nothing more.

Physiologically speaking, it is just a set of hormones that come into the brain and drive you mad. And it’s very interesting because, for example, a human being, a male human being, will feel very much attracted, when his hormones work, to a female human being but he will not feel attracted to another male human being or towards an animal. He will not be attracted to a chicken, even if it is a very beautiful chicken. On the other hand, let’s say a rooster will be very much attracted to the chicken. But he will not be attracted by a beautiful lady. Not at all, he will not have the slightest interest.

A human being will be squeezed by that. If you don’t fulfil it, you will feel pain, you will feel suffering until you fulfil it. The rooster will also be squeezed by that, and a bull will also be squeezed by that. And every species; the birds, the fishes, the lions – the lions will kill each other for that. Being squeezed by that, being controlled by that, they will kill each other. The monkeys - you can have a look out – they will kill each other for that.

So, the question comes: would you like to be free from this craziness? Would you like to be free from that ‘squeezing’? Be free from this iron ruler inside of you, controlling you, creating so much suffering? There is only one way to freedom, and that is Brahmacharya.

Now Brahmacharya is something much wider than we think it is. It’s a much wider concept. It’s not just staying in your room and suppressing yourself. It’s not just this. Brahmacharya is a science. It’s a very broad science.

The Vedas and the yogic scriptures, they describe very beautifully this science, and give us very specific practices that help us in this way – in this way of transforming sexual energy. If we don’t transform it, we are in big trouble. We will just have all sorts of negativity inside us, aggression – psychological problems. Perhaps physiological problems also, if we don’t transform it. If we express it, if we take it out, we will be free...for a few minutes, maybe for a few days. Then, again it comes.

So, yoga teaches us that neither suppression nor expression will do. There is a higher way. This is a very precious power to waste, it's very precious. It's very important. It's like gold, it's like the most beautiful jewel inside you; use it, utilise it. It's like nuclear power.

So, Brahmacharya is of two kinds: the Brahmacharya of the monk, of the sannyasin. This means complete abstinence.

This is very clear and we'll speak more about it.

The second is the Brahmacharya of the householder, and this does not mean complete abstinence, it means to have a little control of it. It means sometimes yes and sometimes no. In the case of the monk, it means no. In the case of the householder, it means sometimes it's ok, sometimes we restrict ourselves.

Now, in the old times, in the Satya-yuga, in the golden age, everyone was a brahmachari. So how did we make children? I will explain.

They had very great respect for this (sexual) power, and they had very great respect for marriage.

So, we will speak first of the householder's Brahmacharya. In the good old times, everyone was a brahmachari in the first stage of their lives, until around the age of 20 years. That's very important because this power is essential for physical and mental growth. So, for the first years of their life they were dedicating their life exclusively to studies and service to the Master. No distraction. In this way, the body and immune system will grow much more strongly, because this is the time when basic, vital functions of the body are being created – in the first twenty years. So, we keep that vital energy – we keep that nuclear power inside, so that we get a strong immune system and a clear mind for studies.

After this period, the young boys and girls could decide whether they would be a householder or a monk. Most of them, of course, decided to be a householder. So, in the case of the householder, if I could put the term Brahmacharya in just one sentence, it would be, simply: get married and stay with one partner. That's it. Don't fool around. Get married and stay with one partner. Don't look at marriage as a means of enjoyment. Marriage is a means of self-growth and self-development. It has many, many difficulties inside it, always. All marriages and relationships are full of challenges and opportunities for our growth.

So, the first principle of the householder's Brahmacharya is get married – if you can, with the blessing of the elders – that would help a lot. In some traditional societies there can be the blessing of the father and mother, or the guru, or the elder brother. The blessings of the elders will help, if you can have them. Choose a partner, stay with him/her.

Two or three more yogic practices concerning the householder's Brahmacharya; at certain times of the month, don't touch. Which are these times? The day of the full moon, the day of the new moon, the three days of the lady's menstruation. So, that is five days. So, for five days, you must be a complete brahmachari. And one more principle, which is very useful, if you can do it. It is very, very helpful; don't have sexual contact in the daytime.

If you observe all these principles, you will be a brahmachari, while married, while having the capacity to make children, while having the capacity to enjoy with your partner as you like – sometimes enjoying, sometimes restrained. That is called Brahmacharya of the householder.

And the scriptures tell us, the saints tell us, that the one who practises this Brahmacharya is almost as good as a full Brahmachari – he will take almost the same fruit, spiritual growth. He will not lose his spiritual energy. Of course, his focus will be distracted by many things that might not be desirable, but his spiritual energy, his moral energy will be maintained.

Now for the Brahmacharya of the monk. You know very well that in all traditions, in all religions, we have the monks – Christian religion, Muslim religion, Hindu religion. As a general rule, the monks are not married. They stay by themselves in celibacy, in Brahmacharya. However, there are, you can say, different approaches – there are very fundamental differences between them. For example, in the case of Christianity, they say to you if you have a sexual thought, they say to you, “Remember, it is the devil! Just pray! Stay inside your room and pray”, that’s it. More or less, this is the teaching. It can work. We see some cases where it can work. But we see many cases where these people suffer very much... unnecessarily. They suffer very much. And this is not what is wanted – this self-torture is not yoga. Yoga says, “Listen, this is a complete science. You are going to practise celibacy. You are going to transform your energy. It will be so beneficial for you: physically, in your health, in the clarity of your mind, in your spirituality. In your meditation, you will feel such a tremendous difference”.

You follow the steps. First step: food. Be very careful with your food. Be a vegetarian. It’s an absolute condition to be a vegetarian. Second, take no onion or garlic. They dull a pure mind. Onion and garlic dull your mind – maybe they have a nice taste, maybe they purify your blood – but there are many things that can purify the blood, so take something else. There are many things that have a nice taste. Use asafoetida. You don’t need onion and garlic. They stupify the mind. Secondly, they are very powerful aphrodisiacs. If you need an aphrodisiac in your life take onion and garlic. If you don’t need one, if you wish to transform this energy, you leave them out. It will help you very much.

Try as much as possible to cook your own food, or receive the food from a pure source. In other words, don’t eat every day in restaurants. Try to cook your own food or have your food cooked by a good person. All the thoughts a person has while cooking go inside the food. If it is a passionate person you will have passionate thoughts. If it is a pure-minded person, perhaps you will have no passionate thoughts. Even if usually you have them, if the food is cooked by a pure-minded person, your mind will be more pure.

Fourth, avoid very spicy food. Not too much chilli. This creates unnecessary rajas inside, unnecessary fire – avoid it, it’s not necessary.

If you want to go for the good taste, you can do so. But if you want to taste the nectarine fruit of Brahmacharya, you will need to make some sacrifice. If you want to succeed in this, to transform that energy, to be free from the squeezing, then don’t take chilli, or onion, or garlic. Thus, food is very important.

Second, in yoga we are taught many asanas – special postures that are helpful for Brahmacharya. The sexual drive requires that the vital energy goes downwards, especially to the first and second chakras. And it does this, you can say, because of gravity. It falls downwards. So, inverted postures in yoga help Brahmacharya very much. Postures like the headstand, shoulder-stand, some others like chakrasana. All inverted postures, they all invert the energy and they help with Brahmacharya.

Certain kinds of pranayama also help. They have the power to break through obstacles in the way so the energy can flow upwards.

Third, and most important – *spiritual practice*! A person who does not do spiritual practice, who does not aspire for his True Nature, who does not dedicate himself in spiritual practice, he will fail to transform the sexual energy. He will only have one option; to express it. For a moment he will be relieved and then it will come again. And again he expresses it and he is relieved for two or three days and then it comes again. This is not a solution.

Spiritual practice, Japa, meditation, Kirtan, study of the scriptures, austerities, charities, selfless service – especially selfless service.

In the yogic monasteries, where many-many sannyasins live, the most important principle is; throughout the day to be constantly occupied with something. Don't stay idle for one second. Constantly be occupied with something useful. They say that idleness is the source of all evil. If you stay idle, if you stay lazy, the mind will take control of you. Constantly be occupied with something beneficial – something good for you or the others. That's why, if you go to a yogic monastery, you see all the young people constantly working, constantly doing something. They wake up at 3 in the morning, start their practice for three or four hours, yoga and meditation, tireless karma yoga, cleaning the place, cooking the food, taking care of the cows, everything. Constantly occupied with something.

In this way, you are using your energy, you are using your rajas – your rajasic energy. Do you understand what rajasic energy is? Active energy. So, the rajas does not become sexual energy – you are using it for something beneficial. At the same time, you are working through spiritual practices to elevate the energy and transform it.

In truth, from the eyes of a realised Being, neither of the two paths is better. It is determined by your destiny or by your nature which of the paths you shall follow – that of the monk or of the good householder, the brahmachari householder.

In fact, Brahmacharya does not say that sex is a bad thing; no, this is not truly the meaning. It says that it is something very sacred – so recognise the sacredness of this union. Honour it, respect it. Don't fool around with it. If you fool around with it, it will burn you, it will bring you down. You cannot defeat it. Respect it. Use it with respect, with love, dedication. It's not a toy to play with.

Or, if you feel it is not your thing, then refrain from it, become a sannyasin and transform it. For some people, one way is more easy, more natural; for other people the other is more easy and more natural. Whichever is more natural to you, that is best.

Many teachings in the Vedas, they say that many people, in order to achieve the full freedom from their sexual drive, need to pass through this householder stage. For many people it is like this. They need to have a very good, very moral married-life. A married-life of dedication, of sacrifice, of purity, truth and, after this, they are freed – then they can become sannyasins.

There is a very famous story in India. In the West, very few people know about it. One of the most famous sages of India, Sri Sankaracharya – one of the great cosmic teachers. Perhaps all the profound Indian wisdom we have today is mostly because of Sri Sankaracharya and his teachings. He is the father of Advaita Vedanta.

So, Sri Sankaracharya was born in a time of very great religious division. There were many different sects and false teachings. There were 72 major sects in India at this time. Most of them deviated somehow from the path of Truth and spreading fanciful teachings. Among all these sects, there was one very truthful teacher, whose name was Madan Mishra. He was the most famous teacher in India of his time, Madan Mishra. This man, he was a householder. He had hundreds of thousands of disciples. He was very famous, very intelligent. He was a very beautiful being and a householder.

However, he had one weakness: he hated sannyasins. He despised sannyasins for some reason. Himself being married to a most virtuous lady – they say she was the embodiment of Saraswati. He despised monks and sannyasins, and the path of the monk. He used to say, “No, this is not the true Vedic way. The correct Vedic way is that you first become a householder; you fulfil your duties, to your own ancestors, towards the world, to everything. First you fulfil your duties then you can become a sannyasin”.

So, Sri Sankaracharya, he was 16 years old, and he got the mission from his Master to go and spread the true message; just like Christ, he was a chosen one. He was a true Christ.

He was 16 years old. Already at 16, he had written some of the most profound scriptures we still have. At only 16 years old, a young sannyasin, having nothing, perhaps accompanied by 2-3 young boys of his age.

So, he thought to himself, “Where can I start? There’s so much ignorance. How can I start to bring the teachings of Truth to the world?” So he decided, “I will go to Madan Mishra. He is the most popular. He is the best. And I will challenge him to a debate. I will challenge him to a public debate.”

This is a very famous story in India.

“I will go to Madan Mishra, the greatest teacher in India, who despises sannyasins” – he was a sannyasin – “and I will challenge him to a public debate and let’s see what will happen.”

So, he tried to see Madan Mishra, but he was surrounded by thousands of people and bodyguards. Madan Mishra didn’t want to see the young sannyasin – but he insisted and insisted. In the end, he managed to see him.

So, Madan Mishra told him, “You’re a fool. You don’t make a family. You just became a sannyasin from such a young age. You don’t understand the teaching of the scriptures.” Sri Sankaracharya told him, “No, YOU don’t understand, and I can prove it to you in front of all your disciples. I challenge you to a debate in front of all your disciples.”

Madan Mishra was a very busy man and didn’t have time for nonsense. So he said, “OK, let’s do it, why not. But, if I defeat you in the debate, you will have to get married to a woman of my choice. I will choose a wife and you will have to get married to her.” Sri Sankaracharya said, “I will do so. But if I defeat you, you will have to give up your wife and house and become a sannyasin”.

So, the debate started – perhaps the greatest and most fascinating debate ever in Indian history. The greatest debate in Indian history. And both of them were very intelligent people. They had perfect knowledge of the Vedas. They had great inspiration. They had pure hearts. They were truly spiritual people.

Day 1 passed – there was no winner... day 2 passed...day 3 passed. Full days, and perhaps full nights. Sixteen days passed in this manner. There was no winner.

After 16 days, after enduring 16 days in the presence, in the divine presence of Sri Sankaracharya, Madan Mishra finally bowed down and fell at His feet. And he said, “You have won. You have persuaded me. From today, I will be your disciple”. And Madan Mishra gave up all he had; he gave up his wife, his family, his hundreds of thousands of disciples. He gave up everything and he received the orange cloth and started following Sri Sankaracharya everywhere.

We don’t really know the whole story of the debate, but one of the main arguments of Sri Sankaracharya that we came to know was that, if the person goes through the usual circle of the householder (in the beginning being a Brahmachari and, at 25 years old, starting making a family) then he will end up at the age of 50 years or 60 years being free from the family.

He will be ready to be a sannyasin, but it will be too late, because, to do spiritual practice, you need to have much strength and you need to have time. So, a man of 60 years old doesn’t have so much strength. And perhaps he has no time.

So, Sri Sankaracharya said, “As soon as you can, give up everything. Recognise the Truth of your Being and then you are free to do whatever you like. As soon as you can, while you still have strength, while you still have time. Don’t waste it. It is such a gift to have a human life and to be somehow blessed with spiritual surroundings. To be blessed with a teacher. To be blessed with inspiration. It’s such a gift. Appreciate it. Honour it. Utilise it fully. It is a golden opportunity to realise who you are. Realise, and then you are free to do whatever you like.”

So, both paths can lead to perfection. Both paths can be recognised as Brahmacharya in its broader sense.

Again, if you have a very strong craving for the Truth, do not waste your energy on distractions. Focus on it. If you have a strong craving for the Truth, focus. Get the Truth. It is within your reach. Get it. And then you can do as you like, then you will be free. Before that, you will not be free. Before that, you will be squeezed. You will be squeezed by the idea that 'you are one thing and I am another'. It is the source of all suffering.

Brahmacharya means to walk with God. To walk with the Truth. To walk towards the Truth. And that is freedom.

For some people, this freedom can come today, when they decide to focus, fully focus, fully dedicate themselves. Some other people, they say, "I cannot do it. It's not in my destiny. I went to the astrologer and he told me that I would have three marriages". If that is the case, then just have one marriage and dedicate yourself in that. Dedicate yourself in that fully. You will be freed from the squeezing of sexuality. These are the two ways.

Either one way or the other way, the benefits of Brahmacharya are staggering. It brings you to a completely different level of perception. A completely different level of awareness, just by practising this, just by Brahmacharya. You see through different eyes, you understand things differently.

*Question: You said that if we know that we are one then where's the space for any desire for union. So, certainly we're one on the level of Brahma, but on the physical and energetic level there is differentiation of polarity. There is another vedantic philosophy, Achinta Bheda Abeda – inconceivable simultaneous difference and oneness. So might that be an explanation for Lord Krishna and His 16,000 girlfriends?*

Yes, yes, it's exactly what I was saying at the beginning with Lord Shiva. It is a *Lila* (a cosmic play). This philosophy of which you speak, it was expounded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, right? Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was married initially. And then he became a sannyasin. And then he started speaking about this inconceivable unity within the duality – an inconceivable combination of unity and duality.

You see, in truth, the main philosophies of Sri Sankaracharya and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are the same. The essence is the same. If you can understand it properly.

Sri Krishna, playing with the gopis, or Lord Shiva imagining Himself to be different from His Shakti, which is one and the same. Sri Krishna knows that He is inside all the gopis. He plays with it, He knows it. It is a fascinating play. We have no problem with the play – the play itself is fascinating. Our problem is with the forgetfulness.

What we are trying to do as spiritual beings is to remember the Shiva that we are, not to destroy the play. The play is very beautiful, why would we want to destroy it? The play is very beautiful but, during it, we have forgotten ourselves and the play has become our only reality. Mahamaya is all that we can possibly see. And we have forgotten, "Who looks at Mahamaya?"

*Question: Did Lord Krishna forget himself?*

I don't think he forgot himself.

*Question: Do we have to get to Krishna consciousness before we can fully enjoy the play?*

I would say so, because if we don't come to Krishna consciousness every enjoyment we will have on the level of ignorance will be accompanied by suffering.

That is the problem. It will either be preceded by pain or followed by pain. Any enjoyment. This is what we said yesterday in the Satsang, that the Universe is like a supermarket: you can buy anything you like, but you will have to pay the price. The more fascinating the product, the greater the price.

So, all this is beautiful, we don't try to stop it. But you have to remember who is walking in the supermarket. You have to remember who the shopper is. Then, this whole experience changes completely. Because, if you remember who you are, even if you don't buy a product, you will still be fine. You can just go into the supermarket and have a look around. Otherwise, if you go in and forget who you are, if you get absorbed by the beautiful products, you will go crazy if you don't get them. Do you understand?

So, this is the power, the freedom we get from remembering who we are.  
*And Brahmacharya is one of the most excellent tools, in the quest for Self-rememberance.*

*Om Shanti Shanti Shanti!*