

Thought for the Month

If every action is directed towards the Identity then it becomes Asur or destructive. Just like only centripetal force can't work, it needs a balance of centrifugal. The Asura needs a balance of Sura and Shakti is the force which balances it. Jai Maa Shakti 🙏

Swamy Srii RajVibhu

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July 16, 2022

Everyone strives for success. Through a story of Krishna, Arjuna and a beggar, Swamy Srii RajVibhu addresses three fundamental questions: What is Ishwara? What is our relationship with Ishwara? What is the path to success? He explains the concepts of Guru, Shiv-tattva, Shakti and Maya, along with our sense of 'I' and spirituality, and advocates Kumbhak practice to achieve whatever we aspire for.

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Recent Events

Recent events and highlights from across the Kumbhak Samaj

Advanced Soma Sthapana Program at Lonavala

1-4 October 2026 | Lonavala

Astika Kumbhak held its first in-person Advanced Soma Sthapana Program for Diabetes care at Le Tranquil Resort, Lonavala. More than 60 participants of varied ages joined from across the globe.

The programme included one-to-one meetings with Swamy Srii RajVibhu and instruction in a new Kumbhak module for diabetes therapy. Participants warmly received the programme, expressing gratitude for the opportunity and appreciation to DarshanJi and the Astika Kumbhak team for their thoughtful organisation.

Pitru Tarpan Sadhana and Navaratri Pushti Sadhana October 2026 - Online

6-10 & 11-19 October 2026 | Online

Swamy Srii RajVibhu initiated Pitru Tarpan Sadhana on 6 October, guiding participants in specific Kumbhak and Pitru Tarpan practices. AnuradhaJi and team conducted the daily sessions with care and dedication. At the Mahalaya satsang on 10 October, SwamyJi shared insights into the meaning and significance of Pitru Paksha.

The online Navaratri Pushti Sadhana programme, held from 11 to 19 October, brought participants together for special Kumbhak practices initiated by SwamyJi for the Navaratri period.

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1. The Power of a Place

Greetings to everyone.

So, who is a Guru?

When you travel to different places in the world, you will see the landscape changing. Go a little higher, and the trees, plants and birds change. Go to another region of the earth, and even the people change.

Who has shaped all this? Who has created it?

You may have noticed that if you prepare the same food in two different places, the taste is different. What makes regional food different? Who created these recipes?

People's languages change from place to place. Their height and build change. Their structure changes; the way they speak and think changes. First of all, look at how the whole environment changes. You find different kinds of stones and different kinds of hills. Who is shaping all of this? You are not doing it. So who is? There must be a certain force in every region, and that force changes from region to region.

These are different forces or Shakti or powers. Only Shakti can shape something; what else could do it? You may call it Shakti, effort or force - the force operating there. Gravity is greater in some places and less in others. Did you know that gravity varies from place to place? If the earth's gravity changed, would you remain exactly as you are? Your children would change. Their shape and size would change. So what determines your shape and size? The place - the location. Place is very important.

When you were in your mother's womb, who was moulding you? Who was making you? Were you doing it? You did not even know what was happening. You simply felt like eating one thing and not another. You were not creating your own body. You were going along with the process, enjoying it or perhaps suffering through it. So who was doing it? The forces of the environment were moulding that child.

Ideally, you should be born at home. Nowadays, doctors seem to have taken a contract for both bringing people into the world and taking them out of it! Birth is a natural process. Do you think the hospital does something magical that makes a baby be born there? No. It provides a place and charges you for it.

If you were born at home, that place would be your Matrubhoomi, your motherland. Our Matrubhoomi has almost disappeared now. How can a hospital be your motherland? The place where you are born is your Matrubhoomi. And who is that mother? It is Shakti. Shakti itself is called Mother. In the Indian tradition, we call Shakti the Mother.

Shakti has different levels. If you follow it all the way to its deepest level, you find Shakti with Shiva. Without Shakti, or without the force present in an environment, nothing can take shape. That Shakti moulded you and made you, did it not? It shaped you.

Let us take this a little further. Today is Guru Purnima, isn't it? So I must give you some Guru-mantra. Listen carefully; many things in your life may open up for you.

2. Guru, Teacher and the Questions of Life

We often connect a Guru with a teacher, but that is not quite right. Adhyapaka, Acharya, and Guru are different. Adhyapaka and Acharya are generally kept separate from the category of Guru. But what is the fundamental meaning of Guru? I want to place that before you today in such a way that you can actually see it. Try more to see something than merely to understand it. Seeing requires greater effort.

In our civilisation and history, we call this seeing - Darshan. The word "philosophy" does not really express what we mean here. Here we have Darshan. I regard this as the world's uniquely scientific civilisation. Other civilisations tend to operate through beliefs. Our tradition is not fundamentally based on accepting a belief. Human beings, however, have a

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habit of turning everything into a belief and then acting on it.

I am going to tell you something. If you understand this, you will understand Adhyatma or spirituality itself. Let me take up a few questions that keep lingering in the human mind.

The first question is: What is God? What is this “God” business? Even the word “God” is a strange word. If we reverse it, what is it? It may be better to use the word Ishwara. So what is Ishwara?

The second question is: Is there anything at all? And if there is, what are we supposed to do with it? If there is Ishwara, what are we to do with Ishwara?

The third question is: What is your life all about, and how can you make your life successful?

Three good questions for Guru Purnima, aren't they? Let us begin.

I will return to the point with which I began, but without the context you will not understand it. When what we now call science was taken away from Indian knowledge, Indian tradition and Indian culture by Westerners, they did not take the key. They forgot to take the key because they were not intelligent enough.

Only people lacking Buddhi or discernment would do something like that. The whole Western world is, in this respect, a world lacking wisdom. When people lack Buddhi, whatever they do can lead to destruction. They have damaged the land, depleted water, polluted the air, damaged space and harmed the human body.

Why do they behave this way? They are conquerors. Their civilisation has often been built around conquest: kill someone and eat, kill someone and live. Even today they do the same thing, only in a more refined way. You may not even recognise how it is happening. They will speak sweetly to you and still cut you down. It is easier to persuade someone with affection, fool them and then harm them.

Look at the manners and dress codes they have developed. Say “Hello,” “Hi,” and “Thank you” in the

right way, and then quietly do the damage behind the person's back. This is conquest - the attempt to dominate the world. We must understand this today.

Think of the pills you take every day. If you want to lower your blood sugar, you might try bitter-gourd juice, neem decoction, playing with children, singing a song or repeating a Mantra. But instead, you are told to take metformin, a medicine whose patent is held by a large pharmaceutical company in the West, which then allows another company to manufacture and sell it for a share of the proceeds. The medicine they give you damages your body; then another problem appears, and they make another pill for that. You begin with one pill and keep taking more and more.

I am making a broader point about a system that creates one problem and then sells you another solution. Even the people inside that system suffer from it. The pattern is still conquest: “We will survive by taking from you.”

Our children study theorems that, I say, came from India. Even what is called vaccination has Indian antecedents. In our tradition there is Sheetala Mata, associated with smallpox. Historical evidence exists, I say, for smallpox inoculation in India around seven thousand years ago. The practice was taken elsewhere, developed and sold, and Edward Jenner came to be called the “Father of Vaccination.” I am pointing out, that important ideas were taken from here, including ways of thinking logically.

But one thing was forgotten. What was it? In our tradition, we say that a Mantra will not work simply because you repeat it. It must be properly unlocked or “nailed open” - (Kilana)(kīlana) must be removed. If you do not know how, you may keep repeating the mantra and nothing will happen.

Think of a car. If you want to open it, you need the key. You can look at a car and copy its shape to make something else, but if you want to unlock that car, you need its key. The key to everything is you. You are the key.

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3. The “I”, Context and Māyā

Whatever you do, you do it from your own context - from your own “I”. You look at things according to your ideas. That context may prevent you from seeing things as they really are. This is one of the biggest traps in Adhyatma: if you say you want to attain Ishwara and move towards it from the “I”, you may actually move farther away. Whatever you do from the “I” strengthens the “I”. And an expanded “I” is the world of ordinary existence.

Later, Einstein also spoke about perspective: everything is seen from a perspective. If you act from any limited context, you do not know the whole truth. If you cannot see something fully, what you do with it may go wrong.

Take a scientific experiment. An experiment is conducted under certain conditions. But do you know the conditions under which you yourself came into being? How many things contributed to your existence? The whole universe works together to bring one life into being. Your context is that vast. Can you reproduce the entire universe in your laboratory?

That means every experiment is contextual and limited. It cannot contain the whole truth. If you wear green glasses, you see things as green, but that does not mean the things themselves are green. Your own actions, tendencies and Karma influence the way you see the world.

Every person therefore sees the world differently. Each person looks from his or her own context, not from the truth of existence. We always look through coloured eyes; our eyes are never entirely uncoloured.

So standardising everything and telling everybody, “This is the one correct way,” is an unintelligent way to understand or regulate life. Look at India: in the same family, one person may be an atheist while four others worship different gods and goddesses. We do not have to treat that as a problem. If someone in your house is a devotee of Hanuman, will you go and cut his throat? No. That person connects with what feels right from his or her own context.

Life is relative; it is not absolute in the way you usually imagine. You see everything from your context. If your context is very limited, your actions will also be limited. With their limited context, I say, Western societies have caused great damage to the world.

Then what is the key? In India, we have always tried to reduce this “I”, to make your context universal. That is why, when a child begins education, the teaching may be placed in the child’s ear: Aham Brahmasmi - I am Brahman. You are not an isolated entity; you belong to the whole universe. A child raised with that context will not want to destroy everything. The child will include rather than exclude.

If you want to understand anything in life, the first thing to do is step out of this “I”. To practise spirituality while clinging to the “I” is a contradiction. To pursue science while clinging to the “I” is also a contradiction. You must expand your context; only then can reality begin to become visible. Otherwise, one context gives one result or inference, and later that result changes.

One person said the atom was indestructible and received a Nobel Prize. Another said it was destructible and received a Nobel Prize. A third said it was not matter in the way we thought, and also received a Nobel Prize. Is that what you call settled science? As science advances, people say their logic is giving way. Fuzzy logic has appeared, and we admit we do not fully understand how creation exists.

Yet people say, “We will believe it only if science confirms it.” But science may change tomorrow. First we were told cholesterol was bad; now we are told that the picture is more complicated. Standards also change. My point is this: science cannot progress fully without expanding its context. Only a universal context can help you see reality.

This is what the Saptarshis (the Seven Sages) asked Shiva: “What is the nature of the universe?” And Shiva answered: “Maya. It is contextual. It is relative.” Things appear as they do because you are looking from

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a particular context. What you see is not necessarily the truth.

You can play within this appearance and enjoy the process, but do not assume that whatever you think is the truth. Understand Maya carefully. It does not mean simply “illusion”. It means that something seems real to you, but what you see is only contextual; it is not the whole of reality. You may take it as the truth and even fight someone over it. That is exactly what happens.

Unless you reduce this “I” or set it aside, you are only deceiving yourself. This is the key: keep yourself aside. There are many ways to do that. When you sleep, you set yourself aside, don’t you? Without doing so, you cannot sleep. If you can remain aware while setting the “I” aside, you may begin to sense reality.

4. What Is Ishwara? The Example of Ghee

Let me give you a practical example. I want to explain everything in a way that you can relate to and understand. Everyone knows Ghee; most of us eat it. Is there butter or cream in ghee? Can you see it? No. If Ghee said, “I do not know anything about butter,” would it be telling the truth? In a way, yes - you cannot see butter in ghee. But can you make Ghee without butter? No.

Is there curd in butter or cream? Without curd, you cannot make butter. Yet you cannot see curd in the butter. Is there milk in curd? You cannot see the milk as milk, but without milk you cannot make curd. So milk must be present in curd in some form.

Is there water in milk? Now go subtler. Is there movement, dynamism, in water? The cohesive movement of water is the ‘water principle’. Without movement, can there be water as we experience it? There is movement or dynamism in water.

How do you notice movement? From what position can you see it? If you are travelling in a car at the same speed as another car, you may not notice the other car moving. You need a point of stillness from which to perceive movement. Movement or activity is seen against stillness.

Is there stillness within movement? If there were no stillness, how would you recognise movement? Movement can be perceived against stillness; without stillness, movement cannot be recognised. This absolute stillness is called Shiva-tattva, the principle of Shiva.

Now here is a relevant question: can you make Ghee without Shiva-tattva? Is Shiva-tattva present in Ghee? Take any example. Is Shiva-tattva in you? Is it in the universe? Is it in anything at all? Without Ishwara, you could not exist.

So where is Ishwara? Where will you look? You may point to an image, or say that Ishwara is inside you - and then you create an image inside yourself as well. No. It is not an image. It is behind the image, behind everything, present in everything. Even saying “inside” can mislead you, because you begin imagining a location inside your body. That is not what I mean.

Nothing can be made without Ishwara. This is not merely a theory; this is how things are. So saying, “I must reach God; I must attain God; I want to meet God,” is a strange idea. It is as though someone has trapped you in a game. Indian culture says Shivoham - I am Shiva. Do not imagine that Shiva is sitting somewhere in your heart or kidney. That is not the point.

5. Adhyatma, Shiva-tattva and Guru-tattva

What, then, is spirituality? I will not get caught up in English terminology. In the Indian context, we speak of Adhyatma: that which lies behind everything. If you begin to experience what lies behind a thing and move towards its core, what do you experience? You experience Shiva-tattva - or, rather, you become Shiva-tattva.

Let me return to where I began. Many forces bring the universe into being. Behind those forces, too, is Shiva Tattva. It is that principle which underlies their activity. When something is created and given a form, a direction is involved, isn’t there? A tree is given the

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form of a tree; a human being is given the form of a human being. There is a direction in that shaping.

That direction is Guru-tattva. It is not the thing that is being made; it is the direction by which it is made. Let me explain with another example.

There was a Guru with a gathering of disciples before him. Someone asked, "What is a Guru?" The Guru did not want to say anything, so he simply indicated a direction. It was around the full moon, so the moon was above them. Everyone began looking at the moon. Do you see the point? They asked, "What is a Guru?" The Guru showed them a direction. The direction was the teaching, but what did the people look at? The moon.

There is a catch here. The word Guru is also explained as the remover of darkness. But you can get trapped even in that explanation. You may cling to the sentence instead of seeing what it points towards. As I said, you cannot see the absolute truth from a limited context. You cannot see life in its entirety because you are always looking from one position - from the "I", from a perspective.

When you do not know something, you feel a strong urge to know it. If you do not know what the neighbour has been saying about you, you become restless and want to find out at any cost. 'Wanting to know' is a fundamental feature of human life.

Right now, you may not realise that you cannot see the absolute truth. The day you truly realise this, you may not be able to remain content with not knowing. You will want to know. For now, you enjoy life partly because of its uncertainty and its limited view. Sometimes, people who see too far ahead find it difficult to enjoy life and may become depressed because they see its limitations.

Think of Gautama Buddha. He asked, "If I am going to die, what is the point of living?" That was the anguish he faced. You may not understand that longing, but it was what he was going through when he left home and said, "I want to know."

So what is the direction of knowing? Keep your "I" aside. Reduce the "I". If you want to know reality, the direction of reducing the "I" is Adhyatma. There are thousands of ways to do this, and each becomes a path.

You can reduce the "I" by dancing, singing, swaying, turning the body, keeping the body still, gazing steadily or practising Asana. These are all paths. I am showing you the routes, but ask where each route leads: it leads towards reducing the "I". You can do this in thousands of ways.

So what is Adhyatma? It is a method, a path, for reducing the "I". Do you really want to reduce your "I"? You will die, because without the "I" there is no "you" as you currently know yourself. This is a path of death: you will no longer exist in the same way. Who will remain? Nothing that you now call "you".

Do you want to die? When you see a benefit in something, you say yes. When you do not see a benefit, you say no. Do you really want to die? No, you want to live - and at the same time you say you want spirituality. Do not make contradictory statements. You want Yoga, but Yoga is a path of spirituality, a movement towards the death of the separate "I". You say, "I want to live, but I also want yoga." Think about that contradiction. That is why I say: I am a dead person walking.

6. Who Is a Guru? Direction, Initiation and Sadhana

Now let us ask: who is a Guru? A Guru is one in whose presence this direction is created, because the Guru has set the "I" aside and is, in that sense, dead. The Guru becomes a vortex, a pull, a direction.

What does "darkness" mean here? You are afraid of darkness because you do not know what it is. When you know something, it becomes light in the sense that you can understand it. Do not take this to mean that someone simply takes you from a dark room into a bright room. Whatever you do, you may still fail to know the reality of life. When a direction arises

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because of someone's presence, that is Guru. **A Guru is fundamentally a direction.**

That direction can arise through anything: a tree, a dog, a human being or the environment. That is why India has the practice of establishing a sacred field or place (Kshetra Pratishta). It means giving direction to an entire region. When you enter such a place, the direction may arise automatically because the pull there is so strong. There are places where PraNa Pratishta is performed, and places established through Kshetra - the whole area is consecrated and given a direction.

I am speaking about a science that may be difficult to understand because you have adopted what is called Western science, which often relies on simple logic. You can go beyond simple logic, then beyond complex logic, and even beyond fuzzy logic.

A Guru is a direction, and that direction can come from anywhere. You do not necessarily receive direction just because a Guru tells you what to do. If a Guru says, "Do this," that alone does not create the direction. You may practise yoga and still fail to achieve anything. You may repeat a Mantra and still achieve nothing. This is why people become frustrated and say, "Nothing happened to me. I did not get anything."

If you are doing a spiritual practice, ideally you should work towards setting yourself aside. Only then can something happen. This does not mean you must perform some particular practice or that you must do nothing at all. If you have the right direction, you can live your life and arrive there. If you perform a thousand activities without direction, you may never arrive. That is simple logic, isn't it?

First, most people do not really want what they call the ultimate spiritual destination. Second, if you truly want it, you do not need to force your way there through endless activity; what you do will lead in the direction you have created. Think about buying a car - or a phone. Once you decide that you want a particular thing, you start noticing it everywhere. You search for

it on your phone and look at it wherever you go. Your direction has been set. That is how you move through life.

When you have created a direction and remain focused, your actions lead you towards it. But most people are not focused. I am giving you a Mantra for success. Have you seen a child who wants a toy? The child wants it so intensely that he cries, kicks and struggles until you give it to him. What you want in life must have that kind of intensity. When you create a direction, even a small push will take you along that direction. Your actions will lead you there.

They say, "Why are you deciding your destiny? Let Shiva decide your destiny. Even if you die, accept it." If you allow Shiva to decide your destiny, your direction will move towards him. What elaborate Sadhana do you need? Do not keep deciding everything for yourself; let Shiva decide for you.

They may reach more quickly than people who compete at yoga, do one practice after another and then suffer a heart attack or some other failure. People can practise yoga for years and still die of illness without spiritual upliftment. Understand the point: do not turn Yoga or Kumbhak, i.e. breath retention, into a competition.

There is a direction embedded in Kumbhak. First, it may take you towards what you want in life. But there is also a deeper direction within it, because **Kumbhak is connected with Shiva**. I always say that what you receive from Kumbhak is something you may not even be able to comprehend. You may carry it forward across lives.

The direction has been given to you without your even knowing it. It has been placed there quietly, hidden, because we do not want to make a noise about it. It is not that I am consciously doing this as some deliberate trick. This is simply how things are.

He is my Guru. Whatever I do, he is doing. I am just playing around, enjoying myself; he is doing whatever needs to be done. He has chosen me to do something, and he is doing it. His direction is already there.

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Whatever I do, the direction of Guru-tattva remains present.

What does Tattva mean? It means the fundamental principle. When you do not want to describe something as merely physical, and you want a word that can include both the subtle and the physical, you use the word Tattv). It means the fundamental nature of what is there. Whatever I do, Shiva-tattva will be embedded in it. I cannot help that. If you take something from a sugarcane field, sweetness will be there, won't it? You cannot avoid it.

7. Living Fully, Desire, Exchange and Lakshmi

I have now addressed the first question: What is God? The second question is: what are you supposed to do with Ishwara? Nothing special. Decide what you want in life and create a direction. The more wholeheartedly you move towards it, the more you will find Ishwara with you. There is no time when Ishwara is absent, because it is your fundamental nature. It experiences life through you.

When you eat food, the essence of that food is also being experienced through you. When you enjoy yourself, that enjoyment is also being experienced through you. So be clear about what you want in life, and move towards it with full force. Do not keep only half a foot in the race; put your whole foot in it. When you have fully experienced what you wanted, you can move beyond your attachment to it.

What is attachment? What is craving? When you cannot experience something fully, you keep craving it. You develop tendencies and attachment. When the experience is complete, you can become free of it. That is the nature of life.

So, in the first situation, if you want to experience life, experience it fully. In the second situation, if you are tired of life and have no interest left in it, then turn towards its source. You do not need to force anything.

When you are free of your attachments and have fully experienced what you needed to experience,

the "I" no longer gets its food. It begins to fall away.

Spirituality is a consequence of life, not something opposed to life. You do not need to do something special for Ishvara. Live your life - that is what you can do. Once you have lived it fully, your direction towards the core of life will arise by itself.

Do not spend all your time thinking about spirituality; check your bank balance too! Do things. Stop thinking that somebody else should give you something. That is the mindset of a slave. Do not teach your children to think that way either.

Nothing is truly free; effort must be put into it. If you do no work and receive something anyway, that thing may harm you and destroy you. Never take something for which you have done nothing. Give your labour, your Shakti, your effort, your time, your hard work or your money - give something in exchange. Without that, you cannot fully experience life. If you receive something without experiencing the path by which it is achieved, it may destroy not only you but the generations that come after you.

That is why exchange is very important. This exchange is called Lakshmi. If there is no exchange, Lakshmi disappears.

Never lose your activity. Do not retire! I mean it - do not retire from being active. And do not throw away your desires. Do not eliminate your desires or wishes. You should have many desires; you should always be thinking of something you want to do.

Remember your grandparents. They did not have television, entertainment or mobile phones. They worked and sang; they enjoyed the work itself. Today, we want to finish work quickly so that we can watch television or look at our phones. We are losing a fundamental truth of life: action is life, and action is experience.

Do not retire from action. Make your activity beautiful. Turn the way you walk into a dance; you will enjoy it. This is happiness - the key to happiness.

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If you have a direction and work wholeheartedly towards it, Ishvara helps you.

I am trying to express something, but language has many limitations. Do not get stuck on those limitations. It is important to move from information to knowledge, and from Gyana to Vigyana (deeper or fundamental understanding). Information merely tells you something about a thing. Understanding why it happens is Gyana or Knowledge. Vigyana goes further: it is an understanding of how the process of knowing or science itself happens. What is commonly called “science” is Gyana; Vigyana goes behind it.

Can anyone be aware of Ishvara as an object? There cannot be an awareness of God in the way people usually mean it. When you hear people talk casually about “God awareness”, be careful. If there is a painting on a canvas, can you see the canvas itself? You see the painting. You do not see the canvas. You would have to remove or rub away the painting to see the canvas. In the same way, the “I” must be removed. Then consciousness of Ishvara may be spoken of - but by then, you will not be there as the separate “I”. Who, then, will experience it? Nobody in the way you imagine. Catch the point. Be cautious when people make easy claims about such things.

8. The Two Sides of Success

Now let us take the third question: how can you be successful?

First, create a direction. Then integrate yourself completely towards it. If that is what you see day and night, you can become successful in it. Otherwise, perhaps you do not really want it. Why should you become successful at something you do not want?

You must have a strong desire for something. If you do not have one, you can strengthen the aspiration. Make the desire powerful, and integrate yourself towards it. The first part of success is to decide on a direction: “This is what I want. Whatever happens, I want this.” If you keep looking in that direction, Ishvara - call it Guru, God or whatever you like - will help you move towards it.

But the coin of success has two sides. The second side is even more important. Shall I tell you a story? I tell this story in many places, and some of you may have heard it before. Shall I tell it again? It is a simple story that explains the second aspect of success. Remember the first aspect: create a direction and have an intense aspiration.

Krishna and Arjun were walking through the region of Hastinapur when they saw a beggar. The beggar told them about his life and how unfortunate his circumstances were. Arjun gave him a bag full of gold coins and said, “Take this. Your next seven generations will be able to live on this. You will become rich.” The beggar was delighted and began dancing.

A thief had been watching him. While the beggar was dancing, Krishna and Arjun left. The thief snatched the bag of gold coins and ran away. Just like that, the beggar’s fortune collapsed. He had been rich for a short time, but he became a beggar again. He went home and told his wife the whole story.

The next day, he returned to the same place and started begging again. Krishna and Arjun passed through that area, and Arjun saw him. “Why are you begging again? I gave you money yesterday!” The beggar replied, “A thief took the whole bag of gold coins.”

“All right,” Arjun said. He gave the beggar his diamond ring and told him, “This is worth a great deal of money - more than enough for your lifetime.” This time the beggar did not dance or jump with joy. Had he learned something from life? He quietly went home. His wife was asleep, and he thought, “I will not even tell my wife.” He put the ring into an old earthen pot that was no longer being used.

The next morning, he woke up late. As soon as he got up, he went to look for the pot - but it was gone. He asked his wife, “What happened to that pot?” She said, “I went to the river to fetch water. Our other pot had broken, so I took this one.”

The beggar asked, “Was there anything inside it?” She said, “Yes. When I turned it over to fill it with water,

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something fell into the river. There was something inside, and it fell into the water.” And once again, the beggar was a beggar.

On the third day - or rather, that evening - he went back and stood in the same place. Krishna and Arjun passed that way again. This time Arjun was furious. “You fool! I gave you so much money for two days. Where is the ring now?” The beggar explained what had happened. Arjun said, “Your luck really is terrible!”

Krishna had been watching the whole scene. He gave the beggar two cowries. You know those small sea shells that were used as currency in earlier times? They were worth very little. But the beggar was a beggar; he would accept whatever he could get. He took the two cowries and walked home in a very sad mood.

On the way, he saw a fisherman who had finished catching fish and was preparing to take them home. The basket was full of fish, and one fish was jumping about violently. The beggar felt for that fish. For a moment, he forgot his own misfortune and thought, “Look how much this fish is suffering. This is not right.” He said to the fisherman, “Brother, please give me this fish. I will release it into the river.”

The fisherman asked, “Who will pay for it?” The beggar said, “I do not have much. I have these two cowries. Will you give me the fish for them?” The fisherman replied, “No, this fish is worth more than two cowries.” The beggar said, “Look, I am a beggar. I am offering you whatever money I have. I do not want to eat this fish; I only want to release it into the river.” The fisherman felt compassion for him and agreed to give him the fish for the two cowries.

Because the fish was jumping, the beggar held it tightly. As he pressed it, the diamond ring that had fallen into the river came out of the fish’s mouth. The moment he saw the ring, he began jumping and shouting, “I have found it! I have found it! I can see! I can see!”

The thief who had stolen the bag of gold coins was still following him. He heard the beggar shouting and

thought, “This man seems to know Krishna and Arjun; perhaps he is their friend. If he complains to them and says he has found something, perhaps he has found me. If he complains to Krishna and Arjun, they will not spare me. They will kill me.” So the thief came forward and said, “Listen, do not tell anyone. Take your bag of gold coins back, but do not say anything.” Thus the beggar got both things: the diamond ring and the bag of gold coins.

On the fourth day, the beggar again stood in the same place. Krishna and Arjun passed by, and Arjun said, “Now I will not spare you! What is this drama you are carrying on? I gave you a bag of gold coins, and then a diamond ring. What happened this time?” The beggar replied, “I do not want anything now. I have a question - a question I want to ask Krishna.”

Arjun asked, “What question?” The beggar said, “You gave me a bag full of gold coins, but it could not change my destiny. You gave me a diamond ring, but that could not change my destiny either. Krishna gave me just two cowries, and they changed my destiny. I want to know the secret of how my destiny changed.”

Krishna said, “You are looking in the wrong place. What you have noticed is correct, but you are looking in the wrong place. For the first time in your life, you did not think about yourself. You thought about someone else. You set yourself aside and thought about another being. You expanded yourself. That is the key to changing your destiny. Understand this!”

When you build up your own desire, you increase your ‘I’. The more you increase your ‘I’, the more your whole life becomes confined to this small area. It does not expand. You create Karma, but that Karma can constrict you rather than expand you, because everything starts revolving around you. Your field of activity becomes very narrow. If you think only about what is around you, your activity remains limited to yourself. You may create Karma, but you will not be able to extend it or give it a wider reach.

So one aspect of success is to create a strong desire. The other is to think not only about yourself but about

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everybody. If these two do not come together, your success will destroy you. Look at the Western world: with all its so-called facilities, people are not enjoying life. They are not even able to be happy. They have to take something just to get a little happiness, and even that ends up making things worse.

They think only about themselves, and that is destroying the whole civilization. We are moving in the same direction. Where have our extended families and joint families gone? We are unable to expand; we are becoming more and more constricted. First the nuclear family - and now the “proton family”! Husband and wife cannot live together. They come together to have children and then say, “All right, let us live separately.” The children live separately too. Families keep getting smaller, yet people are not happy even when they live alone. We have understood everything in the wrong way.

Please understand these two aspects. Together, they make the process complete. Otherwise, you will keep destroying yourself. You may think you are moving in the right direction, but that direction may take you somewhere entirely wrong. Success comes only when both aspects are present. You cannot remove the second part; they are two sides of the same coin. If you look at only one side and ignore the other, it will not work. It has never worked, and it never will.

Someone may say, “If we work hard towards it...” But this idea of simply working hard has also ruined you. We must expand our minds and understand this properly. Otherwise, you may achieve everything you want, yet that achievement will bring you no happiness and no real fulfillment. If you are not satisfied, what is the point of living? Why live a life in which you are not satisfied?

You will see perversion - people becoming mentally distorted. People grow old but are not satisfied; they are not sexually satisfied. They may be ill, yet they are not satisfied with the taste of food. They are not satisfied with their cravings. Look at what you have created: “I must have this, whatever happens. I must have a drink of this; I must have two drinks of Royal

Stag.” You have created that desire and cultivated that habit. People even develop habits around ringing a bell or doing some other little thing. What will that give you? You will not be satisfied. And if you are not satisfied, your life becomes meaningless.

That is why the second factor must be present. Without it, the process does not work. Our culture maintained a balance: we worked for ourselves, but we also had Daan, i.e. donation or giving and Service. It is fine to do something for yourself, but a part of what you do must be for someone else. Keep both sides together.

I am explaining the mechanics of success from the right perspective - from a holistic perspective. Whatever you do, make sure you also do something for others: something that brings a smile to someone’s face, fills someone’s stomach a little, or gives someone something to cover the body. Even an animal can be satisfied after receiving some food, can it not?

Keep one side for yourself, but keep the other side for everybody else. Do something for others. I am not asking you to give beyond your capacity or to take on more work than you can manage. If you can set aside even ₹100 a month for someone else, please do so. That is what will expand you. Earning does not expand you; giving does. How wealthy are you? You are as wealthy as you are able to give - not merely as wealthy as you are able to earn. Your value grows when you are able to help someone.

All this comes through giving. It does not matter what you give; what matters is that you give. If you can help someone in any way, help them. When you eat grain, you should give some of it too. Give some grain. This is part of Indian civilization and culture: before you eat, you give to others. You offer a roti to a cow and set aside a share of food for your ancestors. Traditionally, you do not eat before giving. But we no longer do this.

This was placed first: first you give, and then you may have. In this way, the food’s harmful effect does not fall upon you. If grain contains something harmful, you first make it Prasada by offering it. You are saying

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to the Shakti, "Please receive this first. It is because of you that we exist." And that Shakti removes its harmful effect.

Who is Kali? Is she Tamas? Kali has the power to remove Tamas, even from highly Tamasic things. Have you ever seen Kali walking around wearing a sari as she appears in posters? Have you seen that anywhere? No. We do not understand our civilization or our culture. Your children are reading books written by people who oppose this tradition, and they do not know their own culture.

When we make an offering, we are not literally feeding someone. Kali is not smoking a cigarette. The point is that when something is offered to her, she removes its Tamas. Sit with Tantric practitioners and see: a flame may be lit using alcohol, yet the smell of alcohol may not remain. Some very great tantric practitioners are like fathers to me. If there is smoke from a cigarette or tobacco, you may not smell it. What has happened? Kali has removed the smell; that is, she has removed its Tamas. These practices are part of a science of evolution. People who do not understand this will call it foolishness; the Western sciences cannot understand it.

So complete the formula for success. Do not keep only one side; keep both sides, and you will move in the right direction. This is the Guru mantra I am giving you.

What is Tamas? It is an impact - the effect something has. It is not the smell itself; the smell produces an effect, and that effect is Tamas. If something stops you or holds you back, that is Tamas. Tamas can create life; nothing else can create life. Only Tamas can create life, but it can also stop you from evolving. If you remove or reduce Tamas, you begin to evolve spiritually. I am speaking here in terms of spirituality. The day of Guru PurNima is about spirituality.

I have explained the method of success. If you practise Kumbhak, both aspects can come together. The first aspect is that you will be able to create a strong desire and direct your efforts towards it in an integrated way,

so you will achieve success more quickly. If you practise Kumbhak, you can achieve success faster. The second aspect is that through Kumbhak, you will be able to experience things fully. You will become satisfied, and when you are satisfied, you give. When you are completely satisfied, you give. So Kumbhak can help you give - but please practise both aspects consciously, with awareness.

Watch the full talk

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In-person Retreats



AVISA KUMBHAK

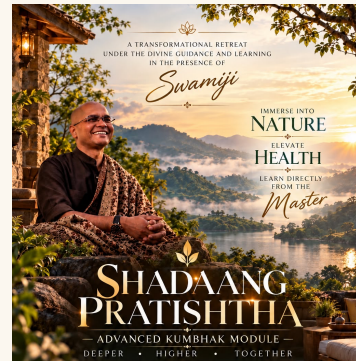
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Understanding Kumbhak

WHAT IS KUMBHAK?

Notice how the breath pauses during moments of intense effort. Kumbhak is understood as both this breath-hold and the body's effort-making ability. It connects the pause in the breath with the inner strength that supports action.

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