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Satsang and Q&A with Swami Dayamritananda Puri, 19 April 2020

Prostrating at the lotus feet of our Amma and to each and every one of you.

As we progress in time, we can see that there are some changes which are really positive. I've been talking to some of the devotees around the globe but in Europe, especially in Italy, they have relaxed the lockdown, and in some other places also they are going to or they're slowly changing the rules of the lockdown.

Here in India, where I'm sitting now in Amritapuri, it's also changing, especially in Kerala where the COVID cases are very low in numbers. They are slowly trying to change the lockdown rules and relax it, and make it less tighter from April 20th, for some areas it will be like 23rd and some areas it'll be from May 1st. But anyway, we are seeing a very positive sign, just like as the spring has come and the sun is coming out more and more, and that is one of the signs they said, where the coronavirus will get less intense.

I pray that all the devotees, all the people around the world get some relaxation, less tense life, during this period. Amma has been very specifically repeating about the fact that we need to be still careful, even though the rules are going to be relaxed.

Amma said we should be still be careful wearing masks, we should keep the social distancing rules, follow the rules and regulations of the local country or state or city. Some devotees, especially from Holland and some countries... I'm just saying all these things because I know there are a lot of devotees from all around the world who are watching this or who will watch this.

Last time, when I said certain specific things which Amma had said, people asked this question, "you know that our country or our government or our local government or state government is

saying that the rules are different". So definitely, if the rules are different, please follow the rules that have been laid by your local government or local authority. Do not worry about what I am saying or about what Amma says, please, follow those rules. But, in general, you have to be careful. And even if the rules are going to be relaxed, please be careful.

Amma said to keep the social distance, to wear a mask and to be careful wherever you go. Also try not to go out too much because right now there will be a tendency. Just to give you an example: when the teenagers or when the students who are graduating from high school, then they go to the college: suddenly you get an immense freedom, especially like from your parents and the surrounding areas under which you were tightly regulated. So when we get that freedom we have to understand that we have to use it wisely. And now it's not a season to celebrate. It is not yet a season to celebrate. You have to be careful, you have to maintain strict rules about social distancing, wearing your mask and being careful.

Amma said that it has been proven also through scientific experiments that this virus can just pass through surfaces, plastic surfaces or metal surfaces and it can remain there for three days. So be careful when you go out and still wear your protective equipments and please follow the rules laid by your local governments or authorities.

Another positive thing is that I've been talking to a lot of doctors, nurses and health workers around the world, Amma's devotees, Amma's children. The beautiful news is that whomsoever I've talked to, even though they are tired, they are exhausted and they are giving their hundred and fifty percent to take care of the patients, they are still feeling so energetic and hardly any of them have contracted the virus. Most of them feel safe, and most of them feel encouraged to do more, thanks to Amma's grace. So I'm praying: let Amma's grace continue to such people who are the health workers, doctors, nurses and also the volunteers who are helping the patients in such dire circumstances.

Now, I'll go to the question & answer for this session tonight. There might be a lot of questions and there has already been a lot of questions. I'll try to answer as much as I can but I may not be able to answer all of them. So please forgive me if I cannot answer your questions. We'll try to

do most of the questions that come especially online. So if there are any questions, you can do it online on the comment session. Somebody is watching and taking down the questions. Please feel free to write your questions and if I am able to answer your questions within the constriction of the time I will certainly answer them.

Are there specific things we can do now to help Earth heal besides planting trees, veggie gardens, carpooling and our sadhana?

Are there specific things we can do to heal and help Earth? The very fact that we are not going outside, the very fact that we are not driving our cars, the very fact that we are not traveling, and using less and less of the resources which has been provided by Mother Earth, itself is healing the planet and Nature. As you can see, there have been positive signs. Wherever in different countries there have been signs where the animals have started roaming around freely. For example in South Africa, in the parks, there have been lions who have been roaming around freely. And in certain cities, they were saying in South America, the pumas have come out into the streets. And even in Kerala I saw a video where the wild elephants have started walking on the roads. And there are a lot of deers, there are a lot of other animals coming out. That by itself is showing that without the human interference, Nature is healing. So where does the problem lie? The problem lies with humans being interfering with Nature, destroying Nature. The fact that we are isolated, the fact that we are chained and the fact that we are locked down, itself is healing. We don't have to do much. So all we just have to do is just keep quiet. Keeping quiet for human beings is very hard, we know, because our nature is to destroy everything. And whatever we get, we want to take more and we want to use more things. So one of the things that we have to do when, after this, is, as Amma says, source reduction. Try to take less and try to use more of the things that you use daily, like plastics, plastic bottles and, or the other ones also the paper bags, try to recycle them as much as you can. And when you go for shopping take your own bags. Try to use less, and when you buy things, buy less. Do not buy unnecessarily. Use your discrimination to buy things. And do not fill your garage or your rooms with junk. That by itself will help nature.

And of course one of the things, that I want to stress here, is about sadhana, spiritual practice. The time that we get by saving, not going for shopping, not going for entertainment, movies, etc, and not dining out, we can definitely use it for spiritual practices. Don't belittle the importance of spiritual practices. It is very, very, very high and whatever practices you are doing is certainly much more effective than all the things that you do physically. Because when you do sadhana, it has not only the physical aspect, but also the subtle aspect. When we are chanting, what the most important thing is the half an hour, or one hour, when you are sitting in meditation, it brings a lot of peace to you. If it's not for yourself, it's bringing a lot of peace for others around you, especially your family members and friends. You're not on the phone, you are not talking to them and so that brings a lot of peace, not only to yourself but to others. And that is the physical aspect. Whereas the subtle aspect is that when you chant mantras, when you do your meditation, when your mind is quiet, that produces the vibration which is helpful for nature.

As you can remember, when Amma was talking about 2020, She said that if Her children had not prayed and if they had not done so much spiritual practices, the things would have been much worse. What we have to understand is that our spiritual practices have had benefits already. So we should continue with our spiritual practices, we should continue do our sadhana. Not only it will bring peace to all, and also to the people who are not doing spiritual practices, the people around us, our friends, our family who have not met Amma, the family or friends who are skeptic even skeptic about our own spiritual life. And when you talk to them and when you interact with them, they're deriving the peace that is already within you. And you are actually giving out that peace, the bliss that is inside of your heart to them. So please do understand and please do not always belittle the importance of doing spiritual practice.

How long until we can see Amma on tour?

That's a very hard question, because I cannot foresee future. It's very hard to say, but at least, I would say, until they have taken enough precautions or they have found a vaccine. Finding a vaccine is about 12 months away, that's what they are saying. (But if something happens before that) As you know, while Amma tours one of the most important things that Amma does is darshan. She's touching people, She's hugging them. So one of the most important things that

you are not supposed to do are those things. We have to wait. We have to watch how they are going to develop the vaccines or how they are going to prevent and how they're going to test. I mean one of the other things they were saying is that we can always cordon off the patients by testing very rapidly. So now they have a rapid test where results can be seen in two or three minutes, which I think they have started implementing in airports all around the world. So we just have to wait and watch.

And of course one thing that I want to say is: more than you, Amma is so keen on seeing all of you. Amma does want to come on tour, but what prevents Amma from coming on tour, are all these things. So please do understand that. And please continue to keep praying. It is definitely what Amma said, that our prayers will help Her to come to us faster. So if you have the yearning and if you are praying continuously with intensity, definitely Amma will come to you sooner. And something will happen. With Amma, there's something out of the normal, something abnormal, something phenomenal will always happen. Everything changes around Amma.

So if we keep praying enough, we will see that there will be changes, faster. All I can say is, please keep praying. And has Amma said how long this will go on? Is this our new normal? Amma has not said how long it will go on. Amma has not predicted anything. Of course when we say it is our new normal, things are going to change; always there will be changes. That is the nature of this world. You cannot expect the world to remain the same, it is always changing. So as we have seen earlier, during the tsunamis, during all the natural disasters, there has been so many changes. And what and how this change happens is, as we see, gradual, sometimes it's very rapid. So what we have to understand is how to cope up with the changes. We have to adjust as Amma says. All we need to do is to adjust to the changes and we slowly have to adapt to that. As Amma says, "if we cannot change the outside then we have to change ourselves". So try to change yourself, try to adapt to the new circumstances.

Will you be coming back to the San Ramon Ashram or back to the US?

I will certainly try to come back as soon as I am asked to come back by Amma. That's what I believe. Please, be patient with me, I need Amma's permission to come back and also, of course,

I need a plane to fly back. I heard that the international flights are going to start from June 1st onwards, which can be delayed or which cannot be delayed, so we'll wait and see.

Is Amma ok with us going out of our homes to serve those in need during the shelter in place? That is volunteer at food bank, donate blood, etc, or this is not the time to do seva?

I have been talking to doctors, I have been talking to experts and they all tell me the same: “please do not go out, unless if you want to do seva which is really, really important”. One of the things I wanted to say is that during this lockdown, the mind has like a thousand reasons why you should go out, especially to 7-Eleven or McDonald's or something like that. We have to understand is, “is this a valid reason to go out”? Of course, I would say, donating blood is a good reason, but first of all, ask them if they will come and take blood from your home, or if you can go to some place which is nearby your home where you don't have to drive too much and donate blood. But volunteering at food bank and all these things... be extremely careful; you should not go out unless it is highly, highly, and I'm stressing that again, highly necessary and important. Because of the nature of this virus, of this disease, the moment you go out, not only that you can contract it, but you are going to give it to the people in your family so when you come back, you'll be just giving them a beautiful present. You have to understand that you try to curtail all your activities, as much as you can, and focus, and try to go within deeper.

How to plan ahead when you don't know what the future looks like?

(like for example the landlord wants them to sign a year lease, don't know how long this pandemic will last or shelter-in-place).

All I can say is please go ahead, as if plans for the future, as if things are bright, as if things are going to become normal. And if the landlord is asking to sign a year's lease, please tell them that to add a clause saying that under normal circumstances you are signing a year's lease and if something happens abnormally or if something changes, we have to change the lease. There is a force majeure clause which is used in contracts, normally in most of the countries. All those incidents that occur above and beyond your control, above and beyond the control of the people and which are natural disasters, which are things like this. Make sure you put those clauses in

your contract and explain to them that you will sign a year's lease provided everything is normal. Just go ahead and plan, but please understand, you should also be aware that anything can happen. As Amma says, “tomorrow anything can change”. As I was saying earlier, change is the nature of this world, so expect change, but don't be afraid, don't be fearful, don't yield to that fear, be courageous, as Amma says, and move forward with optimism and understand that anything can happen. If something changes, as Amma says, “when we look at a wound and keep crying it's not going to help you, what you have to do is apply medicine”. Similarly, if something changes make your mind strong and move forward. Expect as much changes to come. The problem is that we do not expect things to change and we tend to think that everything will remain the same. What we have to understand is that if changes happen, we have to gather courage; we have to have our mind focused and to move forward.

And we have already learned a big lesson with this. We never expected it to change like this, at this time, even though Amma has been warning us for two and a half to three years, that things are going to happen. We never expected things to happen like this. And we always had experiences of things in the past like thunderstorms, hurricane, storms, flooding, or such types of disasters, or earthquakes. But we never expected a virus. So we have to understand that anything can happen anytime and changes are not according to our expectations. So expect the unexpected and be courageous and gather your strength of mind and move forward.

Will we get to have bhajans with Amma again?

Keep praying, and I will also pray that Amma will come back and have live bhajans again.

The next question is spiritual advice for parents with children. How do we make sure kids are comforted and not affected by this long-term lockdown?

What I would suggest is, as Amma has always been telling us, which we have been neglecting, is the fact that we need to give some dedicated time to our kids. You have to sit with them and talk to them. Talk to them not as parents but as friends or as acquaintances, and comfort them by giving them something, words which will be meaningful to them and not like in the form of an

advice. The problem is that many of the parents do not go down to the level of the kids and understand their problem. See for example, I have seen this happening a lot of times, that when kids teach meditation to other kids, they are more receptive, than adults teaching them meditation. Why? Because they can relate to other kids quickly. So you have to bring that relationship in this equation. You cannot be always a parent at all the times. Just like Amma's example of a doctor; you know when he goes to the hospital he's a doctor. But what happens if he comes back home and starts behaving like a doctor at home also? And he starts taking knife and cuts open his children or his wife; it won't work. So we have to be parents but at the same time we have to be also friends to them and we have to go down to their level to understand their suffering.

When they are suffering, first of all be sensitive to their suffering, do not walk away from it and do not worry also, that you will not be able to take care of them. The most important thing, as they say is a kind word, or word that has love embedded in it. What you have to do is you have to talk to them in a loving fashion, in a manner which they can relate to. By doing so, they will get a lot of comfort. Especially the mothers have to be more motherly at this time and take care of their children and give more time to their children.

What seva or selfless service can we do? We are stuck at home. How do we contribute to society?

As I said earlier, just the fact that we are stuck at home and we are not doing anything is already contributing to nature and the society. One of the other things I forgot to say earlier is that because the pollution has reduced, as there are less cars or almost no cars and buses on the road, you might have seen these news items where cities which were filled with smoke and pollution now are looking so much better. And then some of the scenes what they're saying: like a village here in India, which is about a hundred and forty miles away from the Himalayas and they said for the first time in 30 years they are seeing the Himalayas from that village. It's after 30 years so I can just imagine how much pollution there has been for the last 30 years and it has been building up. So definitely it is contributing.

Another thing that we can do, I've seen some of the devotees making masks for health workers, doctors, nurses. So if you can stitch masks, provide masks, please do that. There have been people who have been doing the 3D printers and printing masks and giving them out, that's another thing you can do.

And the most important thing: please call your parents, please call all your relatives, and please call all your friends and devotees whom you know. And please talk to them, take time to talk to them and at least keep about one hour to talk to people and by just talking to them they will get so much of release from their tension and they'll feel better. I read an article in which one lady just called and said she was calling from an agency which counsels people and asked some - most of the people whom she called were old people - and she just started talking to them. They did not even ask her for any credentials, they did not ask her who she was, why she was calling, but they were so happy to talk. So please call people, please take time, and that's also what Amma has been doing. Amma has been taking like two or three hours every day and calling devotees, people all around the world, making sure that they are fine and just making sure that everybody is feeling well. So please do that. So that is the best way to contribute also. That's another way of contribution.

Think about it, you can be more creative and you can do more things. But, as I said earlier, please make sure that it's not an excuse to go out of your homes.

How do we entice ourselves to do sadhana?

So, there is another question "how to inculcate discipline?" So what happens is one of the most important things about enticing ourselves with sadhana is discipline. It starts with discipline. We have to understand that discipline is part and parcel of enticing ourselves to do sadhana. And the most important thing of discipline is to do your spiritual practices exactly at the same time. Do not find any excuse to procrastinate. But now there are no excuses, and you are sitting at home and still in spite of that your mind can find so many excuses to procrastinate. "Oh let me look at the news", "oh let me find out how many people have died", "oh let me look at how close are the people who have the Covid". And there are umpteen numbers of excuses to check and to

procrastinate our sadhana. Please don't do that. What we have to do is, if you have a particular time in mind, and fix that, and start doing your practices at that particular time: for example if you are doing it 9 o'clock in the morning or 8 o'clock, say start at 8:00 and no matter what happens whether the birds start flying upside down, or the sun rises in the West, or whatever happens around you; even if there is an earthquake just sit there and do your sadhana. And make sure you start doing it at 8 o'clock.

And one of the things that really helped me was I associated my spiritual practices with food. So of course you can drink a cup of hot water or tea or coffee in the morning but don't fill your stomach right in the morning because that will create lethargy and that will also induce sleep. Just do the sadhana on an empty stomach. And make sure that if you start at 8 o'clock set a time to end also. Not 8:10. Not 10 minutes after. Make sure you end around 8:30 and every day try to extend it by 2 minutes or 3 minutes or if you can do it for 5 minutes or 10 minutes, please do that. Suppose you are finding it boring after half an hour. Definitely you can stand up, you can walk around, do your mantra japa, or if you're doing your thousand names, you can walk around in your home itself, do the thousand names, do the mantra. And if you are meditating and if you're falling asleep please feel free to get up walk around, then come back and sit and continue with your meditation. As you set a discipline and as you keep doing your spiritual practices you know you don't need to be enticed. After some time your mind gets so attracted to it that it becomes, I would say, like drugs - it's a such a very gross example- but it's actually much more attractive than having drugs or coffee. What happens is that we go to such a state where we cannot exist without having our sadhana. And always feel that something is lacking if we don't do our sadhana. So the most important thing is -I am repeating again- do your spiritual practices with discipline at a particular time.

Now we have a lot of time, please take whatever free time you get to do your mantra japa, another one more thousand names. You can also read books and make sure you don't fall asleep while reading spiritual books. If you are going to fall asleep and if you feel sleepy or lazy just get up and do something else: walk around, change your spiritual practice to chanting mantras. So you can do various spiritual practices: sitting and doing your meditation, standing, walking around doing your japa, walking slowly with awareness and do your japa. And the other thing

you can do is also doing thousand names. Keep changing what are you doing, there's nothing wrong in changing what you have to do. As you keep doing this your mind also becomes more and more quiet. That is the greatest benefit. You will be able to cope up with the pressure. So one of the most important things to cope up with this situation is doing spiritual practices.

All the Swamis have been mentioning to practice yoga and meditation. Does that "IAM" count as yoga or should we practice something else with it?

“IAM” exercises does not count as yoga because the exercises in “IAM” are very short. Even though those exercises have been derived from yoga it is not yoga. What we have to understand is that if you want to do yoga, do it separately. So you have to take time and do yoga separately. Please take time, that is a beautiful way of spending your time also and if you chant your mantra that also becomes like meditation. These are the things that which you can do while we are stuck in our homes.

What are some ways to avoid bad habits and tendencies while stuck inside all day?

In short, it is awareness. In one word, it is awareness. We have to develop that awareness. How do we develop awareness? That's the question right? We have to understand that we tend to have a victim's attitude: to be locked down inside our homes. What we need to do is first understand that it is not somebody else who has done it and you are not a victim, it is your own doing. It is because of your karma that this is happening, it is because of a collective karma and which you are a part of it.

Amma says the example of an eagle which was flying and then it comes and sits on a tree. Suddenly all the dry leaves fall down. Was it the dry leaves fault? Was it the fault of the eagle? Or was it the fact that the eagle just landed there? You cannot say that the tree was victimized by the eagle and you cannot say that the eagle was the reason. Anyhow it was supposed to fall. And similarly this was supposed to happen because of our collective karma. We have to own up, first of all, and understand. As Amma says, “it's not a time to just sit there and keep crying”, “oh we are going through such a bad period. Oh my God, you know, we have to go through such horrible karma”. Just leave those things behind. Now we know the nature of this beast so get up

and try to fight. So how do we fight it? We have to understand that we first have to gather courage as Amma said.

Incidentally I watched a video. They said: “If we have courage, we can develop more immunity also”. They said these are the things to develop immunity: first, good food, second, enough sleep and third thing, rest relaxation, like doing exercises and all these things. The fourth thing they mentioned was meditation, and the fifth thing they said was, most important, having the courage to move forward. And if you have the courage to move forward it will build immunity. We have to leave that feeling of being victimized by these circumstances; we have to get up and start moving forward and understanding that this has been a collective karma for all of us. You are not the only persons who are stuck inside homes; people from all over the world, all the countries except, maybe, I saw the map, maybe only one or two countries have not been locked down or maybe three countries have not been locked down. All the countries in this world have been locked out, so we have to understand that all the people in these countries are sitting inside homes and we are not the only ones. Instead of having that feeling of being victimized, let's think about all the people who are sitting inside and have more compassion. So develop compassion for those people.

As I said, when we develop this awareness, the feeling that we are not the victims, we can move forward with courage. Like that we can develop awareness slowly like that. One of the things that happen when we develop awareness is that, when we sit down, we can see many of our actions, like eating a lot of unwanted food and doing things which we should not be doing, like binge watching and sitting just doing nothing and thinking and brooding unnecessarily. So all these things, we can see that we are losing time. So get up, gather courage and move forward, understanding that we should not waste time. This is not time for wasting. Even now there is so much time that we can utilize. If you utilize properly, with diligence, you can definitely get the benefit.

As I was saying earlier, during this astrological period, if we do our spiritual practices it gives double or triple the benefits. If we do our spiritual practices we are reaping much many more benefits than normally we would do. So please keep doing your spiritual practices and use that

time wisely. As far as your food is concerned, the other day Amma was talking to us and explaining, especially to me She was saying “eat during specific periods but you have to eat little, not too much not too less. So you have to eat the right amount but at the right time also. So eat small portions at the right time. That is the key”. When you are at home and you are cooking, there's a tendency to cook more than what is needed. Don't eat it, you can just keep it in the fridge or you can just eat it later. Keep it for some other time. When? Don't overeat thinking “oh it's going to go to waste and what will I do?”

If you catch on to just even one habit like this, eating or sleeping. It's very easy to sleep all the time now. Take regular naps and when you feel sleepy; make sure that you get up and walk around, and do enough exercise, just even by walking inside the rooms. That's what Amma does many times, She just walks inside the room and gets a lot of exercise like that. So just get up, start walking and that will help you. If you focus on even one of those habits it will end. It's as the example that Amma cites, one ant that finds a sugar bowl, what happens next, it goes back and tells all the other ants and then there will be soon hundreds of ants. Similarly, if we change one bad habit it will change all the other habits and tendencies. So focus on one rather than changing everything. You might not be able to focus on many, so it's better to start with little steps, small baby steps and take one at a time. Take one bad habit and try to change it. Soon you will see that there will be much more progress with other habits also.

Many have spoken of this unique time as a retreat, an opportunity to do more sādhanā and go within. At the same time, there are many who are working overtime: health care and grocery workers, IT support, parents working from home and homeschooling multiple curriculums for various age children, etc. What does Amma say for this group?

As I said earlier, people who have to work, they should consider that as their sādhanā now, especially healthcare, grocery workers and sometimes IT support and all these people. You take it as your sadhana or spiritual practice. Do it as karma yoga. If you do it as karma yoga, which means to change your karma from action to yoga. How do you change it? The first and foremost thing is to make sure that you are not doing it for yourself, because of your ego or for a selfish purpose. Make sure it is selfless, and make sure it's benefiting others. Even if it is your family,

sometimes you have to do it as your dharma, your day to day dharma. So make sure that you you're not doing it out of your vasanas, or for the fact that you want to do something. You cannot just keep quiet so you have to do something because of your restlessness. And then, what you have to do is to make sure you're doing it selflessly; you're just giving and not receiving through that.

By doing selfless actions the karma becomes karma yoga, the yoga of action. Especially, as I said, the health care workers and grocery workers, they have to work overtime and they might not have time to do sādhana at this particular time. So please do not worry about that, because if you are doing karma yoga that is as good as spiritual practice. One of the devotees was asking me this question: that she's foregoing her time for sādhana because she was stitching masks for others. Masks were really badly needed for her community and she was giving it out. During this time it is appropriate to do such actions.

Think about what Amma did during the tsunami? Did she sit there and meditate saying that “Oh everything will be taken care of?” As soon as the tsunami hit this area, She was walking around, She was trying to make sure everybody was okay, and not only that, then She started directing people;. She gave instructions to everybody to set up a temporary housing to cook food and set up bathrooms, taking care of the needs of the people who are suffering. If you are doing that, that by itself becomes karma yoga. So do not worry, that is also spiritual practice. But make sure it is selfless service. It's not because of your vasanas, it's not because you need to do something, it's not coming out of your selfishness.

In a time like this, where we see so much negativity and we are forced to stay isolated, many find doing outside activities and socializing as a distraction from everyday stress and troubles. But now we are forced to stay isolated. How do you battle the inner fears and negativity that creeps up when doing spiritual practices or other activities that are meant to keep the mind at peace?

That's a very good question. The first and foremost thing, when these things arise: please do not be afraid, because this is the nature of the mind, the mind is always like this.

There is another question connected to this: in the great epics like Mahabharata or Srimad Bhagavatam, how do you apply those stories in this situation?

This is how you apply it. They talk about churning the mind and, what came out when they churned the great milky ocean? The nectar did not come first, what came out first was poison. Similarly, when we do our spiritual practices, don't expect to be blissful right in the beginning. Of course, there will be comparative peace of mind, but also there will arise so many negativities, there will be vasanas coming out. The most important thing and first and foremost: do not be afraid of those things and understand, just have the awareness when you do these things, this is what is going to happen. Just like the example Amma says, "When you go to a temple where firecrackers are being burst and if you already know that these firecrackers are going to be burst, if you hear the loud explosion, you will not be afraid. But if you do not know, then you are going to start trembling out of fear, saying that a bomb has exploded nearby."

What you need to understand, is the nature of this mind: the mind, always, tends to be negative, it's like water flowing down, it always flows down, right? It does not flow up, it always pulls you down. You have to stay strong, you have to understand. First you have to understand the nature of this mind, and as long as you understand and become aware of it, then it cannot have the force that it ordinarily has. So stop allowing the mind to go down. You have to sustain the downward movement by doing your spiritual practices, by doing your mantra, by doing your thousand names, by doing your meditation. And don't give so much of importance to these negativities, let it happen.

Suppose you are watching a movie. Let me give you an example: What happens if there are explosions and the hero is getting beaten up by the villain or the hero is being kidnapped? You don't jump and do all these things, you know that what you're watching is a movie. Similarly, when these things happen in your mind, understand that you are watching a movie. To try just to be a witness, detach yourself from these negativities and don't give them importance. The moment you give them importance, the moment you identify with them, that's when they start pulling you down. So what you have to do is, just like the social distancing, you have to distance yourself from your thoughts and your mind: keep the social distance. Use this as an opportunity

to understand, that all these thoughts, negative thoughts, are like viruses or even worse than the corona virus. So just pull yourself back and understand that it's not good to identify with those thoughts. What you need to do is just look at them, and not be afraid.

The other thing you have to understand is that Amma is always with you. Amma is always giving you the push, Amma is always holding your hands, and Amma is always with you to fight the battle. Remember the Mahabharata war? Who was sitting in the front, with Arjuna? It was Lord Krishna and Lord Krishna was giving all the most important advice: what to do and what not to do. Similarly, if you keep Amma as your charioteer, if you keep Amma as the person who is driving your life, Amma will definitely guide you. Amma doesn't have to be near you, even though you are far away physically from Amma. Amma will internally or very subtly guide you through people, even through children, your own children. She might tell you things, so watch out for those things. As I said, most important, do not be afraid. Become aware and distance yourself from these thoughts, do not give importance to these thoughts and do not worry about them. Keep Amma as your charioteer and then let Amma drive the chariot of your life. Then you will definitely win the battle and that's how Mahabharata can be applied in your life.

Last question is from my dear friend, Bihaan, who is only four years old. He would like to know why the Hindu gods have many heads and arms?

I just want to finish answering this question and as I said, I'm so sorry that I could not answer all your questions. Let me answer Bihaan's question.

Bihaan, if Amma had 10 arms, wouldn't She be giving you 10 candies, one in each arm? Isn't that what She is doing right now? Just think about what She does with Her two arms and one head. She is looking at us. She is smiling and She is making everybody happy. So, the different heads and different arms are there for us to understand how to use them and how to make others happy. What we need to do is, we have to take that example and understand that if we have like 10 or 15 heads, we can smile and make more people happy. And if we have 20 arms, what we can do with 2 arms, we can multiply that 10 times and give more. So, it is a representation of giving more and making others happy. What you need to do is: you try to make your parents happy, you try to

make your friends happy and you try to make the kids around you happy. That is what we have to learn from this. Next time Bihaan, when I meet you and when Amma meets you, we will definitely give you more chocolates!

Absolutely, absolutely sorry for not answering so many other questions, as I see there are like 10 pages of questions and I will definitely take time in the next session to answer more questions and give answers to these questions. I can also ask my fellow brothers and sisters to answer some of the questions that you have written.

I want to end with this prayer. As we see the small changes, let there be bigger changes in our lives. And I'm also praying that the lockdown ends pretty soon and life returns to normal. I'm praying for everybody's peace of mind, everybody's well-being. I understand that some people already are becoming more depressed, so try to do more sādhana and try to talk to people who are depressed, to people who want just to have somebody to listen to them. That will help people. With these words, I am ending this session with a Lokah Samastah prayer. We'll do the Lokah Samastah nine times. May Amma be with each and every one of you both subtly and inside your heart.

Om Lokah Samastah Sukhino bhavantu (x 9)

Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih

Om Sri Gurubhyo Namah, Hari Om

My brothers and sisters from all over the world:

Om Namah Shivaya