

Dialogues with The Masters



Dr. Swami Veda Bharati

JANET ATTWOOD: Good morning, everyone. For those in India, good evening. This is Janet Attwood, and welcome to the Dialogues with the Masters call. This morning we are honored and blessed to have Dr. Swami Veda Bharati, who I met at the National Conference on Spiritual Science in Hyderabad, India. I'd met him before in Rishikesh, just briefly, at the International Yoga Festival, but it wasn't until last month in Hyderabad at the conference, where both Swamiji and I were guests and presenters, that I was able to really spend quality time with him, where he captured my heart completely, absolutely, 100%.

Swamiji has to be one of the most heartfelt beings who I've ever met on this planet. Sitting with him was like sitting with rose petals and hearts all over the room. It was just one big pounding heart. Everyone around me who was with Swamiji had that same feeling level of just divine love. We very blessed and honored. Swami Veda Bharati is the current spiritual director and preceptor of Sadama Mandéer.

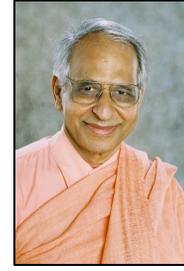
He spent the last 52 years teaching and providing spiritual guidance around the world. He was raised in the 5,000-year-old tradition of Sanskrit-speaking scholar philosophers of India, and has topped the yoga sutras of the Patanjali from the age of 9 and the Vedas from the age of 11. He's the author of the most comprehensive commentary on Patanjali yoga sutras and many other books.

Swami Veda is a poet, a scholar, a research guide and an international speaker par excellence. All of his knowledge has come intuitively, and he has attained the highest academic degrees: BA and Honors from London, an MA from London, a Doctor of Literature from Holland, all between June 1965 and 1967. In 1969 he met his spiritual master, Swami Rama, and was initiated into one of the highest paths of Jnana yoga.

He is studied and is well-versed in the scriptures of all religions. He understands 17 languages with varying degrees of fluency, which allows him to teach meditation to different people of different faiths, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, from within their own scriptural and meditative traditions, as he is familiar with all known meditative traditions and the different schools of Eastern and Western philosophies.

The Buddhists are given Buddhist mantras. The Christians are guided in accordance with the rich Christian meditative and contemplative traditions, and so forth. Upon meeting him, one is immediately aware that one is in the presence of an extraordinary person who has incorporated spirituality into his daily life, one who can speak with authority and depth about a person's relationship to others, to the events of daily life, and to God.

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Before taking his vows of Swamihood in 1992, he was known as Dr. Usharbudh Arya. A prolific writer and speaker, he is the author of numerous books including *Superconscious Meditation*, *Mantra and Meditation*, *Meditation and the Art of Dying*, *Philosophy of Hatha Yoga*, *God, Sayings*, and *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Good morning and welcome, Swamiji. We are so completely honored.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Good morning, Janet. It is wonderful. The honor is mutual, and I must compliment you on the calm voice in which you express yourself.

JANET ATTWOOD: Thank you so much.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: That is the major test of one's spiritual achievements. I always look for that in joy.

JANET ATTWOOD: I'm glad I didn't drink chai this morning. There we go.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: I don't think that would make a difference.

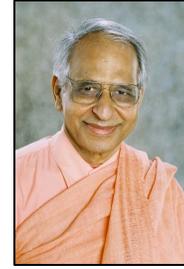
JANET ATTWOOD: Now I was reading your other bio that was sent to me, and it said that at 9 years old you taught Patanjali yoga sutras. Can you tell me how that came about?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: When I was teaching in those years, I just used to wonder why others were not doing the same. I still have not solved that mystery. I really do not know what it is that people do year and year and year after year in their schools, and why we do not teach our children in all the world's education systems how to reveal the knowledge from within themselves. I was fortunate to be born in the tradition where this self-revelation is taught through the practice of meditation.

You begin to see things. The same letters are in front of you, letters of the alphabet, but their meanings just sort of jump up at you if your mind is truly becalmed through the practice of meditation. That is all I can say. In a country like India, which believes in reincarnation as the norm, people used to attribute whatever my limited ability is to having been blessed with the memory of the past life, and out of past life events, whatever knowledge I might have received in previous lives.

I would attribute it to the practice of meditation from the very early years. When you do that, as I say, the meanings of words just sort of jump up at you, and you simply cannot hide from them. That is all I can say about it. I still wonder why it doesn't happen to everybody. I'm still not clear on that.

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JANET ATTWOOD: I've been wondering why it hasn't happened to me yet, myself.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: I think it happens to you. I have seen you present your teachings to large audiences and how you manage to bring out knowledge from within themselves. You are an expert.

JANET ATTWOOD: I'm going to have fun this morning, because remember when we were in Hyderabad, how you crept up, and I turned around and there you were, right? I thought you're surprising me. I thought "We're going to have some fun." What I love about you, and what I was so taken by, is how lighthearted you are. A good reflection, for me, of a great Master, is the disciples around him. All of the people who were with you, Swamiji, were also that way, and just so filled with love and very fun. Thank you for that. I was so happy to see that.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Thank you. Thank you. I know the levels of ego I still maintain inside me, and I'm praying to my masters and my gurus to take away that remainder of ego. In the meantime, I feel that if people are complimenting me, let us say, on whatever little I know, and this pride comes into you creeping up from God knows where, I immediately think of those who have risen much higher, the great Masters themselves, the Great Buddhas and enlightened beings.

I say to myself, "Now come on. You're listening to all these compliments, and you're taking them seriously. Where are you compared to those highly realized ones?" That sort of keeps me in my place.

JANET ATTWOOD: Very good. Then I'll be there to remind you that I don't think there's much difference. Swamiji, what is enlightenment? Are you there?

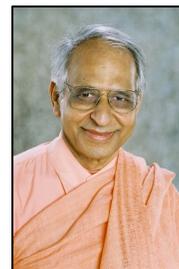
SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: I just answered.

JANET ATTWOOD: Thank you. I knew it. I should ask that question again.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: The answer to that question is only in silence. If it could be described then it is not enlightenment. Light is the nature of our spiritual self. We have covered our light with all different colors of lampshades: black, yellow, purple, green, blue, ultraviolet. The light that comes out through our personality to our surroundings is a very highly colored light, but inside all of these lampshades, the pure-white crystalline light keeps burning unaffected.

The spiritual path is the path of removing those lampshades. Remove the green lampshade, the color changes. People say you are highly enlightened. You know how

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many lampshades you have to remove yet. You know the blue one and the purple one and the yellow one and the green one and the ultraviolet one. Then the light was always burning there, and you come upon that light of your own being, and that is enlightenment.

In fact, I think that the word is not really proper, because 'enlighten' is what we would call in grammar a causative form, as though someone else is lighting up something. We haven't come across the right wording. It's just simply the realization of the light that you are, that I am; that is enlightenment. The real answer can only be in silence.

JANET ATTWOOD: Swamiji, can anyone achieve enlightenment?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: There is nothing to achieve. The light was burning all the time. What did the light achieve when the purple, red and yellow lampshades, or the curtains from around it, were removed? The light achieved nothing. The light was always there burning the same way. That is why we have a phrase in Sanskrit, very commonly used, describing the nature of Atman, the pure spiritual self.

It's a nice rhythmic word for non-Sanskrit-speaking friends who are listening in. They will also enjoy this phrase: Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Svarupaya. Nitya Shuddha, ever-pure. Nitya Buddha, ever-wise, ever-enlightened. Nitya Mukta, ever-liberated, ever-free. Not that this purity, this light, this freedom has been achieved. No. It is there by Svarupaya, by its own being.

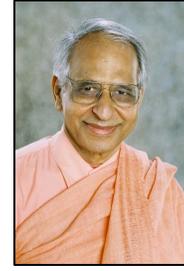
Ipsa facto: it simply is the nature of one's being, so there is nothing to achieve. There's only to unveil. There's only to remove the coverings. That is why in the Vedas, we have a prayer, the face of truth is covered with a golden lid. Lord, remove that golden lid from me.

JANET ATTWOOD: That's so beautiful. What are the different ways that one could unveil this state?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: What are the different ways in which one could unveil? At one time, Janet, I thought that I would make a big chart of all the different methods, systems, and practices of meditation and their sequences, and how they connect with each other. In thinking about it and visualizing the chart in my mind, I came upon the conclusion that I would need a paper the size of four Olympic swimming pools, and maybe more, to be able to make that list.

I don't want to start making that list. The human personality is a compound of millions upon millions of faculties. Many of these we use knowingly. Many we use unknowingly.

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A large part of our faculties, an average person never uses. It's unfortunate. We just don't use our faculties. There are as many parts of meditation and contemplation as there are faculties that compose a human being.

If one were to make a start, I would say that it is not just one particular meditation technique, one particular method, one particular denomination's way of worship, or one's partiality to what we call here in India Ishta Devata, one's favorite form of divinity, because divinity has so many forms. That is not where it really begins. For my own personal journey, I only like to share from that journey. I don't like to share from books any more.

In my own personal journey, and what I try to lead my students through, is continuous verification of my emotional states and emotional reactions. I've coined a phraseology of ethics of emotions, the morality of emotions, the morality of non-anger, the ethics of non-anger, for example, our reactions to our surroundings. The same varied events flowing to us are being thrown at us from our surroundings, from the world, from others around us.

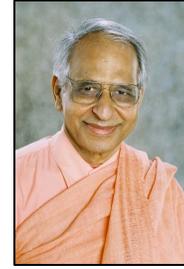
Those events that evoke an angry response in us if we have realized the Atman's freedom, we're also free to choose a very different response. For example, a person is angry at you, and so you throw the anger back. He throws bigger anger back at you. Then he throws a pebble. I throw a stone. He throws a brick. I pull out a sword. He pulls out a pistol. I make a bigger gun. He makes an atom bomb, and so on.

It goes on. That is what we have been doing all these millenniums of history. The other option is to shift the ground of my own mind and heart, and say to myself, "I wonder what was this person's pain in him, in her, that made him, made her, so angry? How can I remove that pain?" I have the freedom to choose that response as we realize the Nitya Mukta, the ever-free, ever-liberated nature of Atman, the spiritual self.

We then are no longer slaves to helpless emotions like anger, jealousy, envy or malice, which many people consider to be normal reactions, average reactions of human beings. We choose a different response. Gradually, our habit changes. Gradually, a loving response to someone's anger makes us a happy person, because we see that when we gave the loving response, the anger went away.

The other party began to smile, and you know that it works. When once, twice, or three times you have seen it work, then you constantly cultivate that particular positive, creative choice. Personally for me, that has been the start, besides the practice of meditation, of wherever I'm trying to reach.

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JANET ATTWOOD: For you, Swamiji, what, if any, practices had you done or do you do, or would you recommend to those listening? How's that for an ongoing question?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: I was trained in meditation by my father, and he taught me some breathing practices and so on, and special mantras like the well-known Gayatri. It's very similar to reciting the Rosary in the Christian tradition or doing the Tasbih in the Muslim tradition, and so on.

Then when my Master came on the scene and he blessed me, he taught a very simple way. Now, what I'm going to describe here is something with which people can begin their practice of meditation. As one advances, the practices change. One goes deeper, and thereby the definition of meditation changes. At each people's level of the mind's self-discovery, the definition of meditation changes.

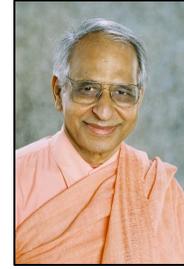
When we start here in our ashram, or anywhere that I have the opportunity to share whatever little I've practiced, it's simply those who are listening and have not had the opportunity before to share this. I would ask them to join me and simply bring your attention only to the place where you are sitting. Be aware only of your being; no names, no titles, no successes or failures; just simply being.

Enjoy that self-awareness. Then relax your forehead. The relaxation procedures can go on into very complex parts, but we'll not do that here right now. Just relax your forehead. Bring your mind's attention only to the feeling of the flow and touch of the breath in the nostrils. Breathing gently, slowly, smoothly. No jerk in your breathing. Wait between the breaths.

Now whichever name of God is your favorite according to your religion, your tradition, do not bring it to the mouth, nor to the tongue. Breathing out, think that name without a break, breathing in. Think that name. Feel the flow and touch of the breath in the nostril. Exhale. Inhale. Say the divine name. Notice how the breath, the mind and the name are flowing together as a single stream. Your entire mind becomes an even, flowing stream.

Maintain that flow and gently open your eyes. Maintain the flow even with your eyes open. Use the heart and your mind to calm the mind in this way many, many times in the day. Now when the mind is in such a calm state, that is the time to make difficult decisions, to make choices, to find answers to philosophical questions, to calm one's anger, or to go for a job interview with a calm mind.

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It's very simple. This is just the beginning. There are thousands of different ways. They're all interrelated. They have sequences and connections, but you can begin with this one. It does not violate the concepts of any religion, and people of any path can practice this. It's just a beginning for you.

JANET ATTWOOD: Thank you, Swamiji. I think in my two years of these interviews, this is the first time that we have had a meditation during this, so thank you so much.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: All right. It's a pleasure. I take every opportunity of doing it, because do you know what my secret is? I don't guide a meditation. I just BE in meditation.

JANET ATTWOOD: Beautiful.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Then if you are in meditation, that is a teaching. If people who use meditation teach as though they are teaching a technique, but they are not themselves in a meditative state, the meditation thought will not be as effective. My Master taught me how to be in meditation and walk, and how to be in meditation and eat, and how to be in meditation and give a lecture or an interview.

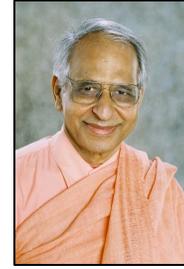
This can be done by anyone, because that becomes your underlying baseline mental state. Everything else is as though it's a script written over a line, as though small little ripples arising from a very calm lake. Your activities are like those ripples, little ripples, in a calm lake. Personally, I have found that this makes my life easy, because somehow whatever I wish for just begins to happen without any effort.

JANET ATTWOOD: Even the answer to the question that I hadn't asked you yet, you just answered. This is the 'do less, accomplish more' practice, right?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Yes, and as you practice the calm state becomes one's nature. Whatever you will do with the mind again and again will become mind's habit. People choose to do disturbing and distracting things with the mind, and then they complain, "Why can't I meditate? I sit down to meditate and my mind remains distracted."

It's because that is the habit we have given to the mind. If we give the mind a calm habit by becalming it over and over many times in the day, even standing waiting for the streetlight to turn, we have two minutes there to calm the mind, but we don't use that time.

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JANET ATTWOOD: Now that brings me to another question that I hadn't had until you just said that. That was that, in the very beginning of a practice, I would think that that might be an experience some people might have, because they're not used to diving within. I also know, though, that after many years—say 20, 30, 40 years—of meditation, there can come a time where that roughness again is there, that inability to center the mind, to go within, and feeling like you're hitting upon hard rock. Will you speak on that?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Yes.

JANET ATTWOOD: What is that?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Janet, I'm sorry. I don't mean to be egotistical about it, but personally I have not had that problem.

JANET ATTWOOD: Okay. Never mind.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: No. I must say that the thoughts do arise in my mind during meditation, but over a period of time, the nature of those thoughts has become more and more refined. For example, in the early, early, early days—let us say when I was a householder—it was like with so many of our friends who sit down to meditate and only plan the next quarrel with one's wife, or how you are going to go tell off your neighbor, and those kinds of things.

Gradually, as meditation deepens, the nature of those thoughts changes. Now, in my meditation, I do have extraneous thoughts, but those thoughts are either, "I wonder about that person who wrote me with a very disturbed mind, with a problem, I wonder how that person is doing?" or sometimes, "Such-and-such person seemed very promising when I gave him the mantra initiation. I wonder if he's sitting down to meditate?"

Those kinds of thoughts arise. That is why, as you know, I have this system of Full-Moon Meditations worldwide. A few thousand people sit with me on full-moon days. There are times for different continents. In the USA, we sit at 10:00 PM, New York time. In India, we sit at 7:00 AM. People sit because at that time those thoughts, which otherwise would be disturbing thoughts, are not so disturbing. They are thoughts of loving concern for people who are meditating.

My Masters taught me how to make those thoughts as vehicles of directing one's own meditation to these few thousand people worldwide while I'm sitting in one place and they're sitting in their own homes. The nature of the thoughts arising becomes refined.

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For this, as I said earlier, one has to learn to refine one's own emotions. As the content and context of one's emotional reactions changes, gradually the meditation practice becomes more and more refined.

I do not know what extraneous thoughts somebody has, but there also, I have been told, that a little shift does sometimes occur. This goes on, actually up to the last minute of enlightenment, but they say continuous refinement, and it is not viewed as a problem. I have a book titled *Superconscious Meditation*, and I've given some of these answers there. Ordinary worldly thoughts that arise, they are actually our unfulfilled karmas. They are reminders that you have not yet paid off this particular debt.

JANET ATTWOOD: Our unfulfilled karmas.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Yes, the karmas for which we owe a certain debt from our past lives or from this life. Let us say that I hurt someone. Now I sit down to meditate. That hurt that I caused to someone also leaves an imprint in me, and that imprint comes up. It's like when you are boiling some food and the froth comes up. For these thoughts that arise during meditation, they are the froth of the food that is being cooked inside their minds. As you remove the froth, that is as you pay off your karma in the most positive, loving and selfless way, the meditation becomes more and more refined.

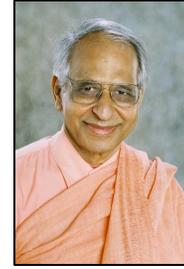
JANET ATTWOOD: What a beautiful way to describe that experience. Thank you. Swamiji, I was looking over your lectures. By the way, I want to mention a number of times, for those of you who would like to hear more of Swamiji, find out where he is in the United States, and read his books, there's a wealth of knowledge at his websites; he has many websites. For his main website, you can go to www.SwamiVeda.org.

Swamiji, as I was looking over the different lectures that you give and that you have on your website, one of your lectures is titled, 'How to Counsel Yourself.' How does one counsel oneself?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: How does one counsel oneself? We are counseling our self at all times. I'll give an example. A husband and wife are sitting there quarreling over nothing. The phone rings and it's the boss. "How are you two people doing?" It's just a casual question. Now at that time, you counsel yourself, you make a choice of your answers.

To make the choice, the correct choice, you shift your level of emotion. "We are doing fine. We're just having a nice quiet evening at home." You know that bringing your internal domestic quarrel will not go well with your boss, because you will disturb his

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mood, make him feel negative towards you, and all the rest. We have this in-born capacity to make choices within ourselves.

Some people go completely out of control with their jealousy and anger. Others know where to draw the line. They would go to the extent of saying one angry, hurtful word, but not lift their fist at someone, or not go around committing murders in anger. We all counsel ourselves. My own basic principle in self-counseling, and again, I only speak from my own journey, is this act of mine, this choice of mine, this emotion of mine, this heart of mine.

Is it conducive to my ultimate goal of full enlightenment? That is all. If not, abandon it. For each choice, each option, each volitional emotion, each decision, each thought, I ask myself this question: “This last thought I had, is it in line with the way an enlightened being behaves? Or is this the kind of thought that a Buddha or a Jesus Christ thinks?” If not, then abandon it. That is all. That has been my primary form of self-counseling. Yes, I’m feeling hurt.

Okay, you’re feeling hurt by somebody who did something to you, or somebody misused your goodness, or something or the other. Fine. All right. Now, these kinds of thoughts that you are having, will they lead you to your goal of ultimate enlightenment? Will your meditation tomorrow morning become more refined by this? No, it won’t. Will it grant you peace? No, it won’t. Then abandon it and replace it with something else. There are flowers and gems galore in the universe with which you can fill your mind.

JANET ATTWOOD: Thank you for that, Swamiji. That’s beautiful. Is it conducive to the ultimate goal of enlightenment?

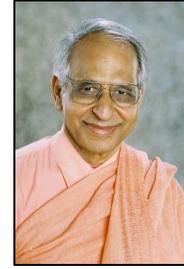
SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Right.

JANET ATTWOOD: That’s a beautiful question to ask.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Or even is it conducive to having a nice, good, calm, undisturbed meditation tomorrow morning?

JANET ATTWOOD: You must have been going over in your mind what you wish you had said. Now we talked about, when we were in Hyderabad—I’m sure you remember—that you’ve been studying brainwave coherence, learning how to produce whichever brainwaves on command. Can you speak more on that? How do you do that? Why do you do that?

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SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: My personal goal is neither enhanced nor hampered by these experiments. The machine does not help me in my meditation. I only do my meditation to the best capability to whatever degree of refinement, or lack thereof, I have arrived at. Let us put it this way. I'll be a little bit roundabout. In the history of world civilizations, a yogi's meditation Masters, of all hues and colors, have traveled to those civilizations and have taught there.

They taught in Greece, in China, in ancient Iran, and in India. In each place they spoke the language, the verbal language and the language of terminologies which was prevalent at that time in that particular part of the world. This has remained the tradition of the great yogis. Today, just as 2000 years back when the yogis went to China and merged the path of Taoism with the path of yoga meditation, the same way today the yogis are traveling to countries like USA or Europe, the civilizations that are at a crossroads.

Just as in ancient Iran we might have spoken in the Pahlavi language, today we speak in English. Just as at that time we would have used the [indiscernible 44:32] terminologies, today we use the scientific terminologies. The present-day efforts on the part of yogis to allow themselves to have their brainwaves measured and so on, is to be able to speak in the language that is current.

As you know, today much of the meditation research has only confirmed what the yogis have been saying for thousands of years. I don't need that proof, because my proof is internal. People who are living in an externally oriented civilization, they need that proof. I'm trying to provide that proof, that yes indeed, when you meditate your blood pressure goes down.

Or when you meditate a certain phenomena of neuroplasticity occurs. The pleasure centers of the brain become more awakened than the pain centers of the brain, and so on and so on, because that is the language everybody speaks. It is only to inspire, it is only to encourage. It is only to prove to those who require that kind of proof.

JANET ATTWOOD: Thank you. In a moment, I'm going to ask Chris Attwood to give an overview of what you have shared today. Before I do that, Swamiji, I wanted to ask is there anything that you would like to share before we ask Chris to come and share his part?

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: I think we have shared quite a lot. I can renew my invitation for people to sit in meditation with me on Full-Moon days. They can get the dates and times from the website you have so kindly quoted. Thank you very much for doing that. I would say that just the five-minute meditation that we shared, even if you

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have no other way of learning meditation, just start with that simple breath awareness, with whatever divine name you prefer.

One last thing. If someone would say, “I don’t believe in any divine name and stuff. I’m not religious. I don’t believe in God.” Very good; it doesn’t matter. Don’t use a divine name. Use the count of exhaling, thinking the word one. Inhaling, two. Exhaling, one. That will also help. Get started, because the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

It’s not in discussing what that pudding might be like and what enlightenment might feel like. Just go ahead and try it out. Taste it. That is all I have to say. Thank you so much, Janet. I’m so glad for this conversation.

JANET ATTWOOD: I can’t wait. I really, truly am so looking forward to the time when we’re together again.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Next time, yes. It’s the same here. We’ll share something more.

JANET ATTWOOD: Yes. I’m sure we are going to, because I’ve been thinking as you were speaking as well. Thank you so much for blessing us this morning. We always look forward to you being with us, Swamiji.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Come to Rishikesh sometime to my ashram when I am here, as well. Everyone is invited to come also.

JANET ATTWOOD: For those of you who would like to visit Swamiji and to know more information, again—and we’ll be giving this out at the end of our program—it’s www.SwamiVeda.org. Chris, are you with us?

CHRIS ATTWOOD: I am, Janet.

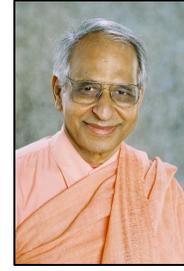
JANET ATTWOOD: Would you like to go ahead and give the overview?

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Sure. Great. What a great honor and privilege it has been to sit with Swami Veda Bharati this morning, and thank you so much, Swamiji, for this beautiful time.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: The pleasure was all mine, Chris.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: This morning, Swamiji has been sharing with us, really, the pearls that have come from years and years of meditation, deep reflection. This morning

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we began, as Swamiji shared, as Janet asked, how was it that he was able to teach of the sutras from the age of nine. He said, “Teaching in those years, I just wondered why others were not doing the same.”

He said he still had not solved that mystery. Why is it that we do not teach our children how to reveal the knowledge from within themselves? He said that he was fortunate to be taught this self-revealing meditation from a very young age. In this, the meanings of the words just jump up to you when your mind is calmed through that meditation. He said that people used to attribute these abilities to being blessed with some memories of past life or knowledge from past lives.

He said what he found was that it was this meditation that allowed the meaning of the words just to jump up at you. He said that this is available to everyone. It’s just a matter of allowing the mind to go to that place of calmness, of peace, within. Swamiji also said, as Janet was expressing how impressed she was and how she enjoyed how lighthearted he was, “You know, I’m so aware of all the levels of the ego that are still maintained inside of me.

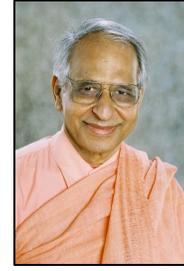
I prayed to my Masters to take away that remainder of ego. If people are complimenting me,” and I think this is something for all of us to be alert to, “I notice that some pride comes into it, creeping up from God knows where. Then I immediately think of those Masters who have risen to much higher levels. I remember them and think, “Then who am I really?””

One can hear, just in listening to Swamiji, this beautiful state of humility and acceptance which has come from this beautiful practice of meditation that he has been sharing today. When Janet asked Swamiji, what is enlightenment, his response was this state of silence. He said that it is silence that can describe enlightenment. If it could be described, then it’s not enlightenment.

He said that light is the nature of our Atman, our spiritual self. He said that that light has been covered by all different colors of lampshades: yellow, green, blue, ultraviolet. The light that comes out from our personalities to our surroundings as a result is this colored light. Through the process of meditation over time that these lampshades get removed, until what remains is that pure white light that still keeps shining.

The process is just a matter of removing these lampshades. He said there’s nothing to achieve. The light is always there. As the lampshades get removed then we come upon the light of our own being, and that is enlightenment. He said the word is spoken in a causative form, as if someone else is lighting something, but the truth is the light is always there.

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It is the revealing of that light, the realization of that light, which is what I am. The real answer, he said, is in silence. Swamiji, if you're still there, I would love it if you would share again the Sanskrit description that you gave. I got only a portion of it.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: The words are Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Svarupaya; ever-pure, ever-wise, ever-free by nature.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Thank you for that. Thank you so much. That's so beautiful. Swamiji said that this light, this state, is simply the nature of one's being. He said there is this saying that the face of truth is covered with a golden lid. Lord, remove that golden lid from me. As Janet asked him what are the ways that one could unveil this light, Swamiji said, "At one time, I thought I would make a big chart with all the methods, practices, their sequences, and how they connect."

He came to the conclusion that he would need a paper the size of four Olympic swimming pools. I love that. He said the human personality is a compound of millions of faculties. Many we use knowingly, many unknowingly. Many, the average person doesn't use at all. Then he said if one were to make a start, it's not one particular meditation technique, one denomination or way of worship, or one particular Ishta Devata, one's favorite form of divinity.

That's not where it begins. He said that for him it begins with what he calls the continuous purification of emotional states and emotional reactions, what he called the ethics of emotions, the morality of emotions. He gave the example of the ethics of non-anger, for example. Events are thrown at us. Our surroundings, others around us, events evoke different kinds of responses.

When we have realized that freedom of Atman, the self, that light within, then we are free to choose a different response. Oftentimes, a man throws anger at you, and we throw anger back. He throws angry words; we throw angry words back. He throws a stone; we throw a brick. He throws a boulder; we throw a bomb, even a nuclear bomb. He says the other way of approaching this is to choose the response of my mind and heart, and to think what it is that made this person so angry.

Then in connecting to that, we create that state of compassion within. In that, what Swamiji said is, "As I practice this, I notice that then the anger disappears." As we realize this ever-liberated nature of Atman, then we are no longer slaves to anger, envy, or to malice. We can choose a different response. We discovered that gradually our habits change.

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A loving response to someone else's anger becomes a habit, and we see in that loving response that the anger goes away. As we see it work, then it encourages us to constantly cultivate that positive creative choice. There was so much that Swamiji shared with us today. He gave us, during this session, this beautiful experience of meditation of coming into contact with that inner quiet state of inhaling and exhaling, and connecting with the softness of the breath.

Then we connect that to our favorite name of the Divine. At the end he said that if we don't believe in a god, or if we feel that that's not something we can relate to, then just use this: breathe in with one, breathe out with two. Use some numbers, but just connect with that soft, inner state, that calm state. When the mind is in such a calm state, then that is the time...

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Chris, you have a phenomenal memory for words. You're so succinct and lucid.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Thank you so much, Swamiji. I think I am just reflecting the clarity that was expressed here today. I thank you for that.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: You have a very clear voice. You must have a very clear mind. I'd like to shake hands with you.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: I would love that. I look forward to that, Swamiji.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: We all look forward to our next reunion.

CHRIS ATTWOOD: Absolutely. Thank you so much for this.

JANET ATTWOOD: Swamiji, again, thank you so much. It's time for us to close. For everyone, again, it's www.SwamiVeda.org. Please join us next month when I'll be interviewing Swami Sukhbodhananda, who I also met at the National Conference on Spiritual Science. Swamiji, it has been an honor and a privilege to sit with you. Thank you so much for blessing the world.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: Thank you. You know, Janet, your book has been really very impressive. I must say I really wish you success in what you are trying to do for the people through that medium.

JANET ATTWOOD: Thank you so much, Swamiji.

SWAMI VEDA BHARATI: All right. Take care.

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JANET ATTWOOD: We'll call you soon. Thank you. Bye-bye. Thank you to everyone for listening this morning. Namaste.