

THE QUARTERLY  
JOURNAL OF  
THE HEART-WORD  
AND BLESSING WORK  
OF THE DIVINE  
WORLD-TEACHER AND  
TRUE HEART-MASTER,  
DA AVABHASA  
(THE "BRIGHT")

FOURTH QUARTER, 1993

# The *Free Daist*



"I BLESS ALL FROM HERE"  
SRI DA AVABHASA'S WORK IN FIJI

# Closing the Door to the Worldly Life

A Presentation on the Listening-Hearing Process

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MAY 16, 1993

**K**ANYA SUPRITHI: I have been asked by my fellow devotees to describe the disciplines that intensified the listening-hearing process for me and evoked the crisis of hearing in Sri Da Avabhasa's Company.

I would say that the most important practices were study and intense application to pondering. I used the Great Questions and did the cycle completely, just as Sri Gurudev Describes it, not omitting any questions. I constantly studied the Great Questions He has Given so that I could understand what the process of pondering is all about, and so that I could make real use of the exercise rather than engaging it as a mechanical daily routine. This intensive study brought depth to my pondering. Because of this study, it meant something to me, and listening became a living process.

Because attention is always breaking from the intensity of practice, you must focus your attention through discipline. The more you limit the excursions of attention to distractions, subjectivity, and forms of self-indulgence, the more intense your practice becomes—at any time, not just at the listening-hearing stage. If there is intensity in your practice, there is always something to observe and discipline.

The moment in which I was awakened, by Grace, to true hearing was a crisis and an actual event—a day and a moment—that I can recall. The moment when I heard stands out in my life. Before then I thought I had heard a number of times. When the crisis actually occurred, however, I did not think in that moment, "This is the crisis of hearing." It was not revealed as hearing until many months later, when it became obvious that I had the capability and the will to understand and transcend the self-contraction in each moment of life. I had the arms to do it. I understood the self-contraction as my activity, that it was not something that was happening to me. I could be responsible for the self-contraction totally, rather than in particular moments. Devotion to Sri Gurudev was magnified now because I realized that I had been "saved"—saved from the destiny of being subject to and tormented by every single "high" and "low" of experience, and from failure and unlove. I could do something entirely different!

But all of that required the commitment to self-transcending practice in every moment, rather than to my destiny as "Narcissus". I was more than happy to do it. I was overwhelmed with gratitude to have the capability to do it.

Sri Da Avabhasa has made it possible for ordinary men and women to cut through the seemingly impenetrable "thickness" of self-obsession and rise up to an understanding and a responsibility that are beyond suffering.

True hearing "radically" penetrated every reason, excuse, and bit of logic with which I had justified dramatizing un-Happiness. Before that most fundamental self-understanding took place, fundamentally no thing and no one was ever reason enough for me to just be Happy. No matter how much I was loved, there was always a "reason" to test it and doubt it. At last, I saw that I was the one who was unloving. In the crisis of hearing, I saw that I had not been practicing a self-transcending life, but that I was a seeker of Happiness. I was not willing to be Happiness.

For me, hearing was the realization of the total picture of my independent self as the activity of "Narcissus", in such a profound way that it was clear to me that I was habituated to failure, self-destruction, and other-destruction. It was a profound picture of what I do when bereft of insight and the will to self-transcendence. I was not doing anything any more outrageous than what anybody else does, but the ego is profoundly destructive. It makes you fail at the Way of the Heart. It makes you fail

at relationship. It makes you focus on yourself, so much so that everything you say, no matter how good your intentions are, is about you and always communicates a self-based, partial, and even false point of view.

The only One who Reflects this to us Perfectly is Sri Gurudev Da Love-Ananda. His Purity, His Mere Being, whether He Speaks or not, Reflects to us how bound we are. He Reveals the ugliness of "Narcissus". He Gives us the impulse to transcend the ego. He Inspires us to outshine "Narcissus" and to Be As He Is, to Be Happiness and Radiance. His Mere Presence provides all His devotees with this reflection, by virtue of His mere Attractiveness.

In the moment of hearing, I made a decision to change my life and to practice the Way of the Heart just as Sri Gurudev has Described it, which is moment to moment application of His Heart-Word in everything that I do. There was a discipline to apply to every waking moment of my life. I firmly decided to live the disciplines in every moment rather than only when it was easy. I decided to apply His Instructions and practice self-discipline instead of becoming overwhelmed by experience or reactive emotion. I would deal with whatever came up in my life through application of the actual practice of the Way of the Heart rather than my own interpretation of the practice.

Even though there was some steadiness to my practice before I heard Sri Gurudev, I was mediocre, because I took what was arising in myself seriously. I took my own content so seriously that my practice was always, to some degree, focused on my problems. I was always working to overcome this moment, this instant, this relationship, this crisis, this illness, this weakness, and was using some insight to overcome each new difficulty.

That was my point of view for the first thirteen years of my practice of the Way of the Heart. It seemed

legitimate at the time. Dealing to the best of my ability with what was arising seemed to be the practice. I would deal with it by breathing and releasing. Yet all the while I was it. I was generating the very difficulty I was struggling to remove. In hearing, I understood that this is not the Way of the Heart. The practice is to release mind and all attention on the thing itself, and to practice Guru-devotion, self-surrendering, self-forgetting, and self-transcending feeling-Contemplation of Sri Da Avabhasa.

Although before hearing it seems a good idea to try not to be "Narcissus", this effort inevitably fails and you find yourself—in spite of your intentions—still looking at yourself. When you lift your head up from the pond, you say, "Oh, my God! I'm doing that again." This is, in some sense, the listening process—the observation of "Narcissus". Hearing is no longer "I'm doing that again." Something profound has broken in you, like a severed cord. Now you are no longer perplexed by the self-contraction. You are certain that it is always only one thing, that all arising is self-contraction. You continue to see things about yourself, including things that perhaps you did not see before, and you continue to make mistakes at times. For instance, as I moved on into the seeing stages in the Way of the Heart, I made all the classic errors of each stage of life. It was necessary for me to make those mistakes, so that I could understand the nature of seeking in that context, and so that I could understand the Way of the Heart in contrast to the traditional paths of seeking.

It is not that you never make mistakes in practice after hearing, but something fundamental in you has changed and is unshaken. You are no longer surprised by the revelation of "Narcissus". When you observe something about yourself, you take immediate responsibility for it. There is a certain clarity in your life and a



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renunciate intention. You realize that the body-mind is only about self-contraction unless there is surrender of the egoic self, so the arising content ceases to be important.

I sometimes think that people do not understand what Sri Gurudev means by renunciation in the Way of the Heart. They immediately think of celibacy and raw diet. True renunciation is much, much more than that. The renunciate intention and practice is a profound practice of the heart. Renunciation in the Way of the Heart has nothing to do with what you do with mere bodily signs. It is a heart matter. The things that you do with your body—with diet and sexuality and relationships—only reflect your level of seriousness and your response as a practitioner. You cannot superimpose disciplines on the body-mind if the heart-intention is not there. If the heart-intention is there, then the disciplines that you apply to your life make sense. They are spontaneous and natural, and they have a real religious and, eventually, Spiritual basis. The disciplines are a heart-response, not techniques.

The renunciate intention is there before hearing. It shows itself at the very beginning of practice, actually. It is the intention of everyone who comes to Sri Gurudev. It is knowing in your heart Who He Is. It is not a mental intention—it is a heart matter. It is the impulse of each of us to give our life to the Divine. The impulse is instantaneous, deeper than mind. It is the impulse of the Heart Itself.

DEVOTEE: Kanya Suprithi, how did you find the cycle of pondering to be useful?

KANYA SUPRITHI: The cycle of the Great Questions was important to me. The questions took on a progression of “consideration” that was ultimately about Communion with Sri Gurudev. “Avoiding relationship?”

was at first not a very profound question, just one that I answered “yes” to, as Sri Gurudev has Described will often be the case for beginners. In a very simple, direct way, it was obvious to me that I was avoiding relationship. The other questions followed, which drew me into a feeling-intuition of Divine Ignorance.

This most intense listening-hearing “consideration” occurred during the Indoor Yajna (a gathering period of almost a year in 1987 and early 1988). Sri Gurudev made it clear that, although we had been studying His Wisdom-Teaching for many years, we had not applied it as He has described it. We had created our own practice. He Admonished us to just apply it as He has Given it and not to superimpose anything else. That is what I did, and I found this directness to be most useful. It was a self-forgetting practice of direct devotion to Sri Gurudev and of obedience to His Instruction.

I studied and applied His Heart-Word, and “considered” His Instruction throughout the day. I “considered” the Great Questions throughout the day and used them in all circumstances. Because I invested myself in the cycle of pondering through real study and application, it became important to me.

I was not yet inclined either to the Devotional Way of Insight or the Devotional Way of Faith. But my choice of which form of the “conscious process” I would use became obvious through this listening process. When I awakened to hearing, it was very clear to me that self-Enquiry was my right practice. I remember telling Sri Gurudev that it was a practice that, for me, left no loopholes, no uninspected areas. When I had experimented with the Sat-Guru-Naama-Mantra, certain things would escape me. There would be lapses of attention that became dramatization. It was not the most appropriate form of the “conscious process” for me.

However, self-Enquiry kept me up against the necessity to understand the self-contraction all the time.

DEVOTEE: Did you use all of the Great Questions in one cycle?

KANYA SUPRITHI: Yes, in fact several times. I wrote the questions on a piece of paper and took them into the Hall with me. If my meditation was not effective, I would read the questions. I repeated each one. I made myself apply each question, because I felt that each question was significant, a cycle in the process of my Communion with Sri Gurudev.

I did not know very much about deep meditation then. I have been Given greater Gifts since that time. Now I understand what depthful meditation is, but we are talking about pondering now, not deep meditation. I did not really begin to participate in depthful meditation until the seeing stages of the Way of the Heart, when it was based on a Spiritually Awakened devotional response to Sri Gurudev’s Hridaya-Shakti Transmission. Then I was no longer separate and independent in my application to meditation. I was no longer doing my own meditative disciplines. Sri Da Avabhasa was doing the meditation. It was not a fabrication in my own mind and effort. I knew that it was true meditation, because He was doing it. Sri Gurudev is the One Who Draws us to more and more profound depths of Contemplation. Once you have heard and seen, your relationship to Sri Gurudev changes. You realize there has always only been His Great Heart-Transmission, but now you are alive with His Spirit twenty-four hours a day.

DEVOTEE: Kanya Suprithi, what led up to that moment when you got the picture of yourself as an ego? Was there a certain process that led up to it?

KANYA SUPRITHI: Yes, application to study and discipline. I felt that Sri Gurudev was keeping me in place,

closing off the avenues of my distractions and conventionally purposed comforts, all the things that made me feel good about mere bodily life and that reinforced a superficial, positive attitude toward conditional existence, asleep to the necessity to responsibly transcend the self-contraction in all moments.

DEVOTEE: They were probably really simple things, too, I imagine.

KANYA SUPRITHI: Yes. Of course, there is the basic discipline of the Way of the Heart, but I was mediocre in applying it. Before hearing, I had been bargaining with Sri Gurudev, not exaggeratedly, but for the comforts of mere ordinary life. I did not know Whom I was bargaining with. I did not notice the Great Opportunity that was being Given to me, and I did not realize what I was bargaining for—my un-Happiness! When I understood this, I saw that the disciplines had become real for me. They became responsive based on self-understanding.

On the day when the crisis of hearing occurred, no one knew I was having any difficulty. I was apparently my normal self. Yet I was dealing with something that was fundamental to my character and that I had avoided confronting all these years—my basic technique of bargaining with Sri Gurudev.

I always felt just a bit dissatisfied with life. I felt that I was not quite getting what I wanted. On this night I was a little depressed, but I felt,



“Oh, I can handle it—it’s no big deal.” I was bargaining! I was still looking for that little hit that would make me feel good, or at least better, about life. But on this night I saw myself clearly. Hearing made it obvious to me that I was never going to feel good about life. I saw that life is inherently limited, that it is suffering, and that it can never be fulfilled.

I saw that “Narcissus” is not simply a mechanism, not simply a characteristic of “me” when I am dramatizing. “Narcissus” was everything about me. I realized that I did not

have the capability for self-transcendence by tendency. I was unqualified. I felt that I could no longer blame or look to anyone else—I had a lot to deal with! I saw that I had a strong determination to remain a worldly character, and this sobered me. I made a decision to do whatever was necessary for me. It might be a more strict form of discipline, but I knew that I was compulsive, an addict in need of discipline. I also understood that I am not unique. Everybody is “Narcissus” in his or her own fashion. But I came to accept my own necessary ordeal of practice and self-transcendence.

In the course of real practice, truly applied, you see something about yourself, you take on a discipline relative to it, and you do not do that any more. Once you have seen that something you do really does not work and that it is destruc-

tive to your relationship to Sri Gurudev and other devotees, once you see that you have been bargaining relative to the changes you know you need to make, you drop that egoic activity and you do not do it any more. You keep moving on, closing the doors on the ego as you go.

Even though the discipline is progressive, however, it is not a formula. We are not all heading for some ultimate juice diet! Self-discipline in the Way of the Heart is much more profound than that. It is about heart-conversion and self-understanding—



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taking manly responsibility, male or female, for what you know in your heart to be right and true.

DEVOTEE: Kanya Suprithi, what about mortality and coming to grips with fear of death? Did this happen for you at the point of hearing?

KANYA SUPRITHI: At every stage of practice before Divine Self-Realization, there is something to “consider” and release about the mortality of the body-mind. There is no way to overcome it in one fell swoop. You are not going to finally confront your fear in the moment of hearing in such a way that you are utterly free of fear. Fear must be understood as only another form of self-contraction. Therefore, only enquire of that arising, nothing more.

During the listening period of my practice, I was attracted to study about death. I read about the five-part cycle of emotions that people experience when they are about to die. I was feeling this cycle. I felt myself come up to the point of what I felt was a kind of ego-death, and then I would retreat. I observed that the listening process was about this discipline of closing the doors, and I did not want all of the doors closed. I was not willing for my un-Happiness to die. I could not release myself. Sri Gurudev did it. He did close off the doors. Hearing was accepting this death.

In one of the gatherings, Sri Gurudev said to me, “Suprithi, you have to deal with yourself. You are really going to have to deal with yourself.”

I said, “Sri Gurudev, I know You will Help me.”

“Do not bargain with Me,” He replied.

I knew what He was talking about: By thinking that He was going to Help me, I was grasping for comfort, for something to make me feel good. But Sri Gurudev zipped that away. He Works very hard to get His devotees

to that point of vulnerability and responsibility.

What I am trying to help you to understand is that what served me was His closing off the avenues of distraction so that I had to let go of my undisciplined ways. I had to really do whatever discipline I was Given. If I was meditating, then I had to really meditate. If I was exercising, I had to really exercise. Really living all the disciplines, rather than just doing some of them some of the time, is fundamental to the listening process. And it goes on from there—you have to deal with yourself at every level of practice. The disciplines Sri Gurudev has Given us are sufficient for our transformation.

In the midst of that discipline, you will observe what you are up to. But until hearing, there will be blind spots in your observation. That is why study is so important to the listening-hearing process. Study focuses your attention on Sri Gurudev’s Argument relative to the self-contraction. Study is like being in Sri Gurudev’s Company. It does not give you a back door.

You do not have to worry about designing a life that is going to be most intense for you. Just apply more of the things that Sri Gurudev has already Given us to do. You can apply the appropriate discipline in any moment. Discipline in the Way of the Heart is not pleasureless—it is about feeling-Contemplation of Sri Da Avabhasa, about self-forgetting and self-transcending Love-Communion with Him. It is ecstatic, and it requires ecstasy of you.

Your sadhana is constant resort to Him. It is not that when something arises—a felt desire or reaction—you are to feel that it is really bad and recoil from your resort. Those things are going to arise. Disciplining all of that is the fundamental commitment to your One-on-one relationship with Sri Gurudev, your fidelity to that personal relationship.

Never abandon that relationship, no matter what arises. He is our only Advantage. Embrace Him. He is the greatest Advantage there is in this world. Study will remind you of this now and now and now.

Study and self-discipline help close the doors for you. If you engage them, you will become less dull. Your mind will be cleared, and you will actually function differently. The process in Sri Gurudev's Company will literally change you. It will make you a different person. When I suggest that you take on more discipline, this is what I mean. Find every way possible to magnify your resort to Sri Gurudev.

I did not know that Sri Gurudev's Grace was so profound. I did not think that the kinds of changes that have taken place in my practice would ever happen for me—maybe for others, but not for me. I simply had to observe all the games I was playing with Sri Gurudev, bargaining for the good life and so on. I had to look at myself. I had to see how I had been defeating myself, destroying my own Happiness.

My worst liabilities were to be foggy and unclear. Because of this, I was unable to finish even a simple task. I was just in my head all the time thinking about myself—self-imploded, doing my own thing. So, for me, a principal area where I needed to apply counter-egoic activity was in my service. For instance, Sri Gurudev would ask me to get Him a glass of water. I would get the glass of water and leave the faucet running. Or Sri Gurudev would ask me to do something, and I would just forget to do it. Or I would offer Him a meal, and He would tell me what He wanted and I would forget something He had asked for.

Sri Gurudev Admonished me, "This service is your sadhana. You are here to do this service." I was in a constant struggle to get it right. I would be horrified at my constant failings, but I could not help it. It was

not until I put myself aside and said, "Do the practice—just that," that things began to change. The moment to moment application to practice broke the gross spell of my self-limitation and awkwardness, my clumsiness, and my inability to speak. It opened all of the knots in the body, including the head.

I understood that my failure was my activity, my way of saying, "Sri Gurudev, I cannot do it." Instead, I said, "I can. I will do it." I would sometimes check three or four times after I had performed a service to make sure I had not forgotten anything. I did not care how weird I looked to anybody else! More and more Sri Gurudev allowed me to take on greater responsibility and to care for Him bodily, personally. It was a profound Gift. I had never had the capability to take care of Him before—He was always taking care of me.

I was really happy and very grateful that for the first time I was able to do something in my life and in my relationship to Sri Gurudev that was entirely positive. And there was nothing conventional about it whatsoever. I was simply His servant and nothing else. I released Him and everyone else from any expectations or requirements on my part. It was time for me to get serious and be dedicated. I had already been Given everything. Now it was my time to give. What I got in return was Happiness.

I started to see that practice is practice—it is not about my anger or my fear or my discomfort in any given moment. Practice is the actual release of all of that, giving that up. Even that "little bit" of un-Happiness that I wanted to express, that "little" moment of bargaining—that was the self-contraction. My commitment was to practice, and no longer to the destiny of my own suffering.

To animate a different life from the one I had been leading as "Narcissus", I had to overtly demonstrate devotion.

I had to demonstrate overt Happiness, overt gratitude, and real, obvious evidence of the application of the disciplines. I had to do this very consistently, with no reactivity, no complaint. If I was given the most menial task to perform while everyone else was relaxing, my discipline was no complaint and no comparison. Release the mind. Just surrender. That is the practice.

In the crisis of hearing, the picture becomes clear. I saw that I could take responsibility for my egoity! It was my own activity. I did not have to fail. We have everything that a human being could have in terms of help. We have the Love of our Beloved Guru. We have His unsurpassed Wisdom-Teaching. We have no real limitations. None! It is up to us—to you and to me.

Hearing gave me a different relationship to my egoic self, to my subjectivity. It is not about "feeling better" in any conventional sense, but having a different relationship to your own subjectivity and your own body-mind is a great freedom. After hearing, I was not looking for the "great hit" anymore. I did not care about feeling good or feeling bad anymore. I did not care what I felt like anymore. I was one-pointed in the process of self-transcendence.

Paradoxically, I do feel much better now than I did before hearing, but only in the sense that I have the capability now to transcend the self-contraction. That is the difference between a religious life and a worldly life. When you close the door to the worldly life, then you are on the other side of the tracks. You are in the religious life. Tapas is just part of your life. On the one hand, there is tapas, and great intention is required. On the other hand, change takes place by Grace. Both have to be there—Grace and your will to have the process be true in your case.