

Session 4 – Inner Organs, Liberation & God

February 2nd, 2014

Jai Swaminarayan! Sahajanand Swami Maharajni jai, Bapashreeni jai, Sadguruoshreeni jai, Swaminarayan Bhagwanani jai, tatha anant anadi muktoni jai!

A humble prayer in their lotus-feet and lotus-feet of our Guru AMPP NarayanMama-LeelaMasi to augment this assembly with their divinity and grace, and to enhance our knowledge and guide us towards them.

Additionally, February 5th, 2014 is AMPP LeelaMasi's birthday. She has led an exemplary life inspiring all us aspirants. She was gentle yet strong, she was affectionate yet practical and her organizational and planning skills would beat any C-level officer today. And of course Her divinity and grace lit the way for so many of us so many times in our lives. I truly and humbly bow my head to her divine feet with utmost respect and awe and request her divine blessings on all of us today and always.

During past couple of weeks I have received a suggestion from 2-3 people to pick up a little pace in speaking. So I might speak a little faster today. I will however not talk at the speed of my normal conversation, I talk very fast in my normal conversation. I will not talk at that speed because AMPP NarayanMama used to say that speaking too fast is not very helpful during learning and spiritual progress endeavors. Please stop me right away, if my accent, pronunciation, etc. are not clear as I speak a little faster.

Last week we talked about senses, quintessence and mind. This week we will delve into one last thing on Mind or Man, and then talk about Intellect, Subconscious mind and Ego. We will then spend some time on what is liberation, why liberation, and is there a God. Following that we will touch upon Endocrine system and Chakra. This will wrap-up our conversation on Mind, Body & Soul.

One last but quite important thing about mind is the question that can our mind be controlled by others? Is hypnotism real? The answer is yes for both. Mind-control is a technique used on soldiers in many nations – in the present and in the past. They have been known to commit acts under the influence of their superiors or the system itself, which even they are later on surprised of. Mind control by language is a very common technique – we call it convincing or negotiation skills, where one person uses the power of language and reason, to manipulate or divert or control the thoughts of others and gets them to agree on a solution. We call such people charismatic! Another common example of mind control is how the emotions in the movie or TV series make us get so involved in them that we feel elated or enraged or melancholy watching them.

While mind control is real, one thing we must all remember is that someone can control our mind only if we let them – either knowingly or unknowingly. There have been experiments done to show that some people are so strong-minded that they do not let themselves to hypnotism. Hypnotism is nothing but letting someone in our mind and subconscious mind. If we build that internal resilience we discussed

last week and always keep Lord Swaminarayan and His Mukta with us, there is no way any one can control our mind. I have a personal experience on this from the life of my grandfather, which I will share someday. But along these lines, there is another debate that goes on about ghosts being really taking over control of someone's mind. But if we think about it, ghosts are nothing but souls who do not have a physical body. Just as other human beings are able to manipulate our minds, so are ghosts. The only difference is that when ghosts exercise mind control, they also take control of the body as well, in order to fulfill their desires. So that was one last thing I wanted to talk about mind. About mind control and if mind control is real.

Let's now move on to the next inner organ – Buddhi or Intellect. Shreeji Maharaj has mentioned in Gadhada Pratham 12th Vachanamrutam that “Sanshay” or doubt/reason/analysis, “Nishchay” or determination, will, decision making, “Nindra” or sleep and “Smruti” or memory reside in the intellect. Intellect is also the seat of knowledge of anything and everything and the knowledgeable awareness of the senses is also due to the intellect. We can relate all these functions to the frontal cortex of the brain. The immediate short-term memory and memory related to activity of senses, and knowledge are stored in Intellect. Scientists have determined that there is an area in the frontal lobe that manages an internal body clock which determines our sleep cycle. This internal clock is also sensitive to light. But we already knew this, didn't we? That sleep resides in the Intellect. The internal clock also determines the effectiveness of our frontal lobe. Those with high frontal lobe activity count time faster than those with low frontal-lobe activity.

One interesting research around knowledge is that knowledge is hard to decay with age, so is language. Through study of the preserved brain sections of Einstein, it is determined that Einstein had large number of glia than a normal person. Glia are cells in the brain responsible for supporting, protecting and repairing neurons. So his knowledge was preserved better and he was able to relate more things together. Interestingly larger the brain, more is the percentage of glia cells. Nematodes contain only a few glia, a fly has 25% glia cells, mouse have 65% glia cells, humans have 90% and elephant has 95%. Science has been so focused on neurons that research on glia and its functions is in its infancy. But based on what we know about Einstein's brain and what the glia cells do, maybe they play an important part is what we call as Intellect in spiritual world, as they help preserve knowledge. That was just another research that I thought was very interesting.

There is one very important aspect of intellect that I wanted to spend some time on. Depression. Depression and stress are becoming very common in all generations these days. While depression is attributed to hormonal imbalance physically and misaligned expectation from the world psychologically, Intellect can come to rescue. The power to resolve, the power of determination lies in the Intellect and knowledge also lies in the intellect. In Sarangpur 18th Vachanamrutam, Shreeji Maharaj has said, “An ignorant tries to tackle a problem by sleeping, crying, picking up fights or giving up food. Sometimes the ignorant goes to the extreme of committing suicide.” The knowledgeable, He says, “associates with elevated ones, understands the inner workings and thoughtfully eliminates the problem.” So an intellectual person, through the sheer power of analysis, reasoning, knowledge and faith in Lord Swaminarayan and His Anadi Mukta, can overcome any and all depression and situation. So the best way during such times is to overcome the effect of the hormones or situations by positive and powerful thinking. Let's not tie ourselves down by hormones and situations – they keep changing, but what has a

longer life is our knowledge, our internal strength and faith. So Intellect control to think positive, to be resolved and determined, to do the right thing, is equally important as the control of mind and senses.

Shreeji Maharaj has mentioned in Gadhada Pratham Prakran 50th Vachanamrutam that the one who is not using the intellect to progress on the spiritual path is the most ignorant, even if he/she is smart and intelligent in worldly matters. Both Shikshapatri and Bhagwad Geeta say that the scripture (Shikshapatri and Bhagwad Geeta itself) should not be given to the one with demonic intellect. So the intellect can be of different kinds – one form could lead to negativity and make us fall prey to demonic things whereas the other can help us become a good human being and progress on spiritual path. Also the neural paths that define the intellect can be changed. So we need to continue working on it all the time to make our intellect bright and positive. There is one incident from the life of Swaminarayan Bhagwan – in a procession in His honor, He was once riding an elephant. But while the procession was on and he was seated on the elephant, he started eating a cucumber with its juice dripping all over. Looking at that, one person said, “He sure is God Himself – no ordinary person will dare to eat cucumber like this in His own procession sitting on an elephant. He won’t have the guts to do that.” Looking at that same thing, another person said, “Look at Him. He does not even know how to eat a cucumber.” So it is all about how our intellect is – positive or negative. The first step to make a better intellect is to feed it with positive thoughts and resolve that no matter how others are, I will become a good and a genuine human being. Only when we become genuine human beings, that we will be able to progress on the path of spiritualism. Those were some thoughts on the Buddhi or Intellect inner organ.

Let’s move on to Chitta or subconscious mind. Subconscious mind is the much talked about in the field of psychology and spiritualism. In Gadhada Pratham Prakaran, 12th Vachanamrutam, Shreeji Maharaj has described Chitta or subconscious mind as, “Chitta is undifferentiated from Mahattattva. Entire universe is stored in its subtle form in Mahattattva, and it is immaculate, brilliant, clean, pure sattva oriented and peaceful.” So just as Mahattattva is the subtle store for the entire universe and all the souls within the universe, Chitta or subconscious mind is the subtle store for the soul. We will talk more about Mahattattva in a couple of weeks, but to understand this concept, let’s go to our favorite laptop example. We had talked about taking a backup on a hard drive when switching from one laptop to another. But this requires every person switching laptop to have an external hard drive. Nature has a more efficient solution to the problem and we too have recently adopted it. Every week Vishalbhai uploads our interaction on Google drive. Google drive itself is a huge memory store in itself and it gives away parts of it to users like Vishalbhai for him to store his own stuff. It is not exactly the same but a similar concept between Mahattattva and Chitta. So nature has been using Cloud technology for years now!

It is good to know that Mahattattva and Chitta are undifferentiated, but what is Chitta? A while ago, it was believed that sub-conscious mind mapped to Cerebellum in the brain. But let’s look at it with a fresh perspective. When we do anything – read, write, talk to others, help others, cheat others, it all gets stored in the short-term memory in frontal lobe. It is believed in scientific community (there is no definitive answer yet) that it is during the time we sleep that our short-term memory gets converted to long-term memory, which is stored in hippocampus. These then get converted to long-long-term memories to be carried forward from one body to another or in other words, one birth to another, which can probably be physically mapped to genes. However, just like Mind and Intellect, what spiritualism calls Sub-conscious mind is a subtle sentient awareness and not a particular brain or body part. To understand this, let’s think about what determines the features, etc. before a child takes life? It is said that parents’ genes do that, but what determines which genes from which parent will be picked

up? Where are these records kept? There has to be some subtle place to keep these records. So just as the subtle sentient awareness in and around amygdala is the mind, there is a subtle sentient awareness around the memory store –the long-term memory in the hippocampus and the long-long-term memory in the genes, and that is the Chitta or the sub-conscious mind. Chitta stores our actions and experiences. Science has found that decisions are already made subconsciously in the brain before even we become aware about them. What are these decisions based on? These are based on our past experiences stored in Chitta.

Let's move to the last inner organ – the Ego or the Ahankar. The Ego like Chitta is tied to an Universal Ego or Ahankar. This universal Ego is of three types – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas – we had talked about it a couple of weeks ago when we talked about the cause of the States of Mind. We will talk about universal Ego subsequently, but as far as our Ego goes, based on Gadhada Pratham 12th Vachanamrutam, it has three attributes – Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which as we discussed have their characteristics – At a high level, Sattva is peace and calm; Rajas is activity and desires and Tamas is darkness, ignorance and arrogance. Ego is the feeling of me, my, mine, and myself as we discussed in our very first interaction. Ego is what we identify ourselves with. This feeling makes us react and behave during our interactions with others and outside world, based on the pervading attribute. As other inner organs, there is a lot of literature available, not just in religious and philosophical scriptures but also in psychology and management on how to overcome Ego. But one simple approach is to take the Ego through a progressive journey through continuous improvement – first get rid of arrogance and ignorance associated with the self – by engaging in interesting activities and pursuing interesting desires. Then get rid of the association of the self from the activities and desires and move to calm and peace. Once we become calm and peaceful we then become capable of moving to the next step – give up identification with the Self to identify with God.

Just as we did with Mind and senses, overcoming Ego is a topic in itself, and we can discuss it separately if there enough interest later. But for now, let's look at some scientific findings around Ego. One thing scientists are trying to find out is when does the sense of self become visible in a child. They are working on it by showing a mirror to the child and understanding when does child recognize that what they see in the mirror is their own image – I believe this age is determined to be 8-12 months. Another experiment is when does a child become conscious about its own image – what will other think about me? That self-awareness is I believe determined between age 3-5 years. Hindu scriptures say that a child should be considered completely naïve and innocent till the age of 5. So we already knew that age of self-awareness. However, identification experiments only go up to the identification of the soul with this body – the current body. So it is at some level Ego, but does not provide the complete picture. AMPP NarayanMama used to say that when one becomes completely devoid of Ego, the body will not exist. The fact that the soul has taken a birth, indicates presence of Ego. This Ego goes beyond one body – it continues and carries forward from one birth to the next.

Another interesting research on Ego (again in very initial stages) is that scientists are now figuring out that the sense of self is stronger in the left hemisphere of the brain. May be in future we will be able to relate that part to the Ego just as we have mapped other inner organs to some parts of the brain or body.

So far we talked about inner organs and senses separately. So let's take a quick holistic view. We only desire things that we see around us. About 25 years ago, no one desired a cell phone or a smart phone since it did not exist. Similarly, 10 years ago no one desired a Tablet, since it did not exist. So we only desire things that exist around us. The Mind, from where the desires arise, has tremendous power. So when we desire something, the thought or the desire travels from Mind to the intellect. Intellect analyzes and reasons the desire and then decides to either pursue it or leave it. Ego also feeds into the decision making process. Sometimes, the memories of past experiences from Sub conscious mind also feed into this decision making. After the analysis and decision, the mind then commands the senses to act appropriately. This entire process of desiring, thinking through it and acting on it creates an impression on Sub conscious mind. The entire experience and lessons learnt during the experience are also stored as an impression in the sub-conscious mind. The impressions of the associated fruits are also initially stored in the sub-conscious mind. As we discussed a couple of weeks back, the impressions are formed only if we are attached either to the desire, or the actions or the result of those actions. If we are not attached to them, the impressions are not formed. That completes the cycle of one desire. This cycle continues for every desire. So that was the holistic view on the entire process of how it works.

This wraps-up our conversation on Mind, Body and Soul. This knowledge is useful to anyone and everyone irrespective of whether or not they want to progress spiritually. There are a couple of things I want to touch on before we move on to talk about what is liberation and why liberation.

Research on human body is reaching greater heights with every day that goes by. One of the findings is that we share 85% genes with Zebra fish & 95% with Chimpanzee. Also so far, even after the all the research that is being done, only 2% of Genetic code is understood. We also know that genetic molecules have the ability to store memory just like neurons. There is research going on to create liquid brain to download all our memories into, using extracted genetic molecules. University of Minnesota is trying to grow human organs perfectly matching a person, using that person's DNA, stem cells, and synthetic materials. This research has made tremendous progress. There is another similar research going on in UCLA to tap similarity of heart beat and pulses on a jelly fish, and use jelly fish cells to develop organs for human beings. However, these cells need an electric trigger to work – they do not have life to work on their own.

I have mentioned this before and will mention it again, AMPP NarayanMama used to say that no matter how much science progresses, it will not be able to create a soul. Through some experiments and research, scientists may figure out a way to capture a soul into a body or an organ, but it will not be able to create a soul. In Gadhada Pratham 13th Vachanamrutam, Shreeji Maharaj has said that when a plant is created through a grafting process, the soul in the original plant does not get split into two, but a second soul gets into the grafted plant, and it was the second soul's destiny to be born that way. So there might be some souls in future, whose destiny might be to be born in a Lab. I am using "might be", since this has not happened yet – we are only talking hypothetically. My Dad told me the story of Ramayan and Mahabharat in great details when I was a kid. The story was not available on TV and DVDs when I was a kid as it is today. So I heard them from my Dad. In Ramayan, all four brothers were born out a Yagna. So were Draupadi and her brother Dhrushtadyumna in Mahabharat – they too were the products of a yagna. Also, 100 Kauravs were said to have been born in pots. It was their destiny to be born that way.

So if, hypothetically, scientists figure out a way to capture a soul through their scientific experiments, it will be the destiny of the soul to be born that way. It will not mean that science has been able to create a soul.

Another thing that I hear very often these days is, what is wrong in eating artificially engineered Eggs or synthetically produced meat – since it does not involve killing any soul's body. One thing that scriptures preaching non-violence do not clearly mention is that there is violence towards others and there is violence towards self. Maybe, I am saying maybe since we really do not know what happens, but maybe there is no soul in artificially engineered eggs or synthetically produced meat, so there may not be violence towards others involved in it, but, what about the violence towards the self? The chemical composition of meat is such that it takes a long time to digest. It rots in our intestines for 3-7 days before it gets digested. Secondly non-vegetarian food is characterized by Tamas. By intake of Tamasic food, we promote Tamas in ourselves. The effects are subtle and not observable right away, but gradually we become arrogant, ignorant, non-sentient – so much for pleasing the sense of taste or trying to blend in. Why would one put one's self through such violence? When someone breaks our trust, we feel so violated and upset. But what about us violating our own self? Why does that go unnoticed? Just because it is our self? After so much of promoting about fertilizers to grow crops from late 60's to late 80's, since early 90's, there is a trend to move towards organic foods. Even with milk – people are now moving to non-hormone induced organic milk. It took us 3-5 decades to even begin to understand the effects of the chemicals. Who knows how many years it will take to analyze the impacts of eating synthetically generated meat. Why not stay ahead of the game, stop violating ourselves, and stay on track to make our body more conducive to spiritual progress? Or any other progress for that matter.

Talking about spiritual progress, let's transition into what is liberation and why liberation. We live in a limited world. There is only so much pleasure that can be attained. There is only so much quality that can be demanded. There is only so much variety that can be provided. There is only so much quantity that is available. I use this example very often. Arnold Schwarzenegger, an actor and ex-governor of California. When he was a Governor, he was known to have 18 Hummers – those bullet-proof vehicles. What would one do with 18 Hummers? At the end of the day, each one is only a Hummer – nothing more and nothing less. So that is the limitation of vehicular luxury, and it is imposed by human limitation in developing that technology. Another example of limitation that I really like to use, is Gold. Everybody likes Gold. Gold is a precious metal and is formed when big stars go super-nova. All cultures and societies in the world value gold. But there is only so much gold that is available to us. There are many gold mines in California that have run out of gold. These have now become tourist attractions. But where is this limitation of gold coming from? Physicists believe that there is so much gold in Earth's core that we can cover entire Earth surface, be it water or land, with a 10-12 feet thick sheet of Gold! Same goes with diamonds. So Earth has plenty – but it is the human limitation that keeps us from extracting it. We really don't know how to extract it. Then there are other limitations of the physical world. The chip being designed for brain/body implants keep getting smaller by the day. But they have a limitation that they cannot be smaller than 5 atoms. That is the structure of the basic core of the chip. So there are physical limitations. Lastly, in last couple of weeks we have learnt that all the senses are limited.

The bottom-line is, we live in a limited world. We are limited – either due to our bodily boundaries, or mental boundaries, or societal boundaries, or physical universe boundaries. We crave for freedom from them. Just as there are degrees of these limitations – personal limitations, human race limitations, Earth limitations, Solar System limitations, Physical world limitations, there are related degrees of freedom or independence. We get free from one, but remain trapped in another. But freedom from each degree of bindings is, well, a freedom. Are we cheating ourselves by accepting lower degrees of freedom? Don't we wish to be boundless, immense, and free completely? Liberation is all about becoming free every step of the way. We all crave that, we all desire that. That is what liberation is – freedom from limitations. Freedom from bindings. So that answers what is liberation. Liberation is freedom.

Some limitations or boundaries are hard to break and some are easy. Let's take an example of a photon to understand this. A photon is a particle of light. A photon emitted from a light bulb, takes a little time to become free of light bulb and travel to our eye. But it is able to do that in a quantifiable time. Now think of a photon trapped inside the Sun. It gets flung here and there, there are so many other photons flying around, they collide with each other, and one lucky photon finally manages to reach the surface of the Sun. The electromagnetic force of the Sun, pushes it back inside, and this could continue for millions of years. Physicist and Science has determined this. It might take forever for a photon to escape the Sun. So bigger the limitation, harder it is to escape or become free.

Another analogy, and we will continue using it as we go forward, is that of a corporate world. Progress is inherent to the human nature. An engineer wants to be free of limitations imposed by team lead, and therefore wants to become a team lead. Till then he/she does not realize that the team lead is also limited by the manager and so on. As one progresses upwards transition to the next level becomes more and more difficult. Rising up to a Manager is difficult but not very difficult, but transition from Manager to Director or Director to VP is very difficult. Similarly, during our course of study in school, as we transition from one grade to another, we become free of one grade, but immediately get bound by next grade, and each grade is consequently difficult. So we continually want to progress to gain higher and higher degrees of freedom. Progress therefore, is the reason for liberation. That answers why liberation.

With the body that is given to us, we may choose to do nothing or choose to progressively become free. Continuing with our laptop example, one may choose to use it for internet surfing and watching videos, or may use it to code an extraordinary application, sell it to Google, and become rich and capable of buying much better laptop. Does it not make sense to do the latter? If we desire progress and freedom, then it automatically means we desire liberation! It is that simple! It is just that the degree of freedom varies and so does the degree of liberation.

So, in a nutshell, liberation is nothing but becoming free from bindings and progressing. And this definition of liberation also answers why we should pursue liberation – to progress and to become free. We also discussed that there are degrees of bindings and using different examples saw that depending on the bindings we overcome, the degree of liberation also varies. We will talk about these degrees in detail as we continue forward, but I just wanted to establish this fundamental here that there are degrees of liberation.

Let's now move to belief in God. With all the latest discoveries, and Science progressing so fast, one common question that I am hearing more and more and more these days is, "Is there a God?" A couple of weeks ago we had talked about Galileo and church. Galileo was imprisoned by Church for supporting heliocentrism instead of geocentrism stating that Earth revolves around the Sun. Galileo, before he became a physicist and theoretical astronomer, wanted to become a priest. Later he had also developed interest in astrology. There is a similar thing about Newton as well. There is another physicist in UK, in the present day, who has written 17 books on astronomy and has finally become a priest – John Polkinghorne. I will include link in my slides on his Wikipedia. He believes that though it can all be explained away by Mathematics and Physics, someone must have created these paradigms in the first place. Einstein, though did not believe in normal religious practices, went ahead and talked about cosmic religion – a whole new belief system. On the other hand, accomplished Physicist like Stephen Hawking, who refuse to accept existence of God, say that it all works as designed, and that the design just happened on its own, but then are unable to explain behavior of blackholes even after their lifetime worth of work!

So while one might say that Physicists and Mathematicians are split in their belief in a higher power, they are all unified in their struggle to find one mathematical equation that defines entire creation. They keep coming up with different theories. One such theory is the String Theory which talks about 9 dimensions (we have 3, and they talk about 9), and other worlds inter-twined or overlapping with ours. If String Theory is true, may be one of this other worlds is the world of subtle bodies, or the world of daanav or the world of Dev. Who knows? But they say there is a possibility that such worlds exist. There is another theory that everything is formed of loops not strings – since everything else is circular or spherical – stars, planets, galaxies; so a Loop theory. Based on that approach, arriving at one single mathematical equation predicts even more inter-twined worlds and even more particles of proton than those have been discovered so far. I worked for Electronic Arts on one project, long time ago – the very first version of their Sims Online. It internally used mathematical equations to define the behavior of avatar, the landscape, etc. These techniques are extensively used these days not just in games but also in machine learning and robotics. There is an eerie similarity in the output of some of those equations and the real world. Just as someone is writing these equations in our world or on Sims game, there must be someone who must have designed and implemented those real world mathematical equations. If physicist and mathematicians refuse that, then they definitely need to consider the question of what is beyond the bindings of those mathematical equations? All these equations do is define the limitation – they do not tell us what is beyond them, or how to overcome them. That answer lies only with spiritual masters.

Let's take this a little more forward and ask this question to ourselves – again, no need to answer this to anyone, this is just for introspection – Why is it that we give in so easily to peer pressure, trends, fashion, but ask so many questions when it comes to belief in God? Is it because we cannot see God? If the answer is yes, then the next question is, "Have we made any attempts to see God?" If yes, then I am sure we have felt His presence in one form or another. If we have not made any attempts, then how can we definitively say one way or another, about His existence? Once Jesus was passing by a village and based on the law of the village, the villagers had gathered to throw stones at a poor lady as a

punishment for some sin she committed. He could not bear this and stepped in and said, "I am not questioning your justice, but only those who have never in their life committed any sin can throw a stone. Others do not have the right to do that." Everyone slowly put their stones down. So let's not refute the belief in God without ever having made any attempt to seek His presence. Only if through our efforts we have established with proof that He does not exist, that we have the right to make such a bold statement. Even science is saying that there are other worlds and other dimensions which even the latest and greatest scientific equipment cannot perceive. So there are things that we do not know so much about, and science is humble enough to accept it. Then who are we to blindly dismiss existence of God through our sheer arrogance? When non-believers ask for a proof of God's existence, let's start asking them for a proof that He does not exist. The search for proof will not be a wasted effort since attaining Him is progress –if He created the universe, He is definitely greater in power, more resourceful, greater circle of influence, than us. And progress as we discussed is liberation! So if we find Him, we get liberated and if we do not find Him, then we have proof that He does not exist. Belief in God is therefore not a topic for debate, but topic to initiate a search.

One last thing around soul, body and mind is quick conversation around Endocrine system and Chakras. I did not create this picture, borrowed it from the Web, and the last slide has all the links that I have referred to earlier during our conversation. So we have talked about liberation, and one very common and fundamental belief system in the spiritual progress theory of Hinduism is the belief of Chakras and Kundalini. Chakras are the energy centers and Kundalini is the energy for spiritual progress. Interestingly, there is a 1:1 mapping between Chakras and Endocrine glands. I will not be going in the details of each endocrine gland. I have included a link to an all comprehensive chart of endocrine system for those who are interested. I will also not focus on each Chakra as such. There is a huge amount of information available on the web around chakras. It also does not directly (there is always an indirect relation) relate to the path of meditation explained by AMPP NarayanMama and Abaji Bapashree, but its knowledge is important to have – since it will help us understand the energy centers and their endocrine system association.

Those on Webex I have a picture of these chakras. I have also included additional links for those who are interested in further reading. So the Muladhara Chakra – there is a lot of debate on what Muladhara Chakra relates to, and people try to explain it many different ways. Staying outside of that debate, let's say that the Muladhara Chakra is the coccyx – the very tail-end of our spinal cord. The next is the Swadhisthana Chakra, associated with our gonads and reproductive organs. In the naval is the Manipura Chakra associated with pancreas and adrenal gland. In the heart is the Anahata Chakra associated with Thymus gland. In the throat is the Vishuddha Chakra associated with the Thyroid. Then there is the Ajna Chakra or the third eye associated with the Pituitary gland. The last one is the Sahasrara Chakra associated with the Pineal gland. "gya" and "gna" is the same letter or alphabet. It is pronounced "gya" in Hindi and "gna" in Gujarati. We will stay Gujarati pronunciation and call Ajna Chakra. So that's the association and as I said, I have included links so once I share the presentation, everyone will get those links. While all chakras are important and have their own relevance, there are a couple of things that I wanted to talk about a little bit today. Someday if we have conversation about meditation, we will probably talk about all of the chakras in details.

Pituitary gland is called the master gland and is responsible for regulating all the other endocrine glands. The spot of Agna chakra is a direct access to the dangling pituitary gland from in between the 2 hemispheres of the brain. Agna Chakra is right in between the two brows. Doing a chandalo on Agna chakra, especially by the elevated ones helps bring harmony to all endocrine glands and the chakras and expedites spiritual progress. The reason for the color of the chandalo to be red is that our minds associate the color red with victory. There is a scientific research done on colors which shows that we associate the red color with victory and valor, and that it slows down time for us – means we can accomplish more in less time in presence of red color. Also Shreeji Maharaj has mentioned in Vachanamrutam (I could not locate the number) that mind keeps moving like a pendulum and other Hindu spiritual scriptures describe mind to be the size of a seed of pea. So maybe they are referring to pituitary gland and pituitary gland's neurotransmitters might be affecting amygdala that has been identified as seat of emotions and desires. It is not far-fetched, because the hormonal secretion of the glands do affect our emotions and moods, and since pituitary gland is the master gland, the subtle sentient awareness that we call mind could also be residing in pituitary gland.

The second thing I want to talk about is that Scientific discoveries show that humans are wired to trust. We want to trust and have faith. When our trust is rewarded or reciprocated, pituitary gland produces oxytocin, which is called a “feel good” chemical. This release of oxytocin in turn enhances faith and trust. Interestingly, Shreeji Maharaj has mentioned in Vachanamrutam that God cannot be attained through logic, but through faith (tarke karine Bhagwan nathi pamaata, vishwase karine pamaaye chhe), and the agna chakra is also associated with trust and faith. I found it to be a very interesting correlation and thought of sharing.

This wraps up our extensive topic of mind, body and soul, and liberation. There are many things in this conversation, where we can go in further details and spend more time. But our first goal is to understand each spiritual stratum and the overall framework. Spiritualism otherwise is such a vast topic that we can easily get wrapped up in minute details. So far, whatever we discussed is all at our level. We have made fleeting references to other levels, but have not really explored them. We will continue into next strata starting next week. Before we do that, we will build a foundation. Next week, we will look at the overview of the spiritual world, so that cross-references between strata are easily understood, and we will also talk about some common and overarching things like immanent and transcendent form of God, Cause and Effect, concept of Soul and Body continued through perishable world, distinction of perishable and unperishable world, three attributes and dual nature of the existence. This will lay the foundation for our further journey.

Today it took longer than our usual course. Thank you to the sabha for giving that extra time. Next week onwards we will maintain our one hour window. Jai Swaminarayan to everyone!