Shrimad Rajchandra's Reply to Gandhiji's Questions

Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram Agas
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Foreward

Gandhiji had a long association with Shrimad Rajchandra, starting from his arrival in India as a barrister from England until the last day of Shrimad Rajchandra.

This association with Shrimadji, both in person and by correspondence, had been very useful and beneficial to Gandhiji in the religious and spiritual matters, particularly during the time of his stay in South Africa when he was in great religious ferment & terpitude.

From Durban in S. Africa, Gandhiji sent a long religious questionnaire (as many as twenty seven questions) to Shrimad Rajchandra to obtain guidance from him, which he readily obliged with a prompt and detailed reply.

This letter by Shrimadji is very useful to all of us—mumukshus & novice—even today.

This booklet is a reproduction of that important letter, written by Shrimad Rajchandra in reply to Gandhiji’s questions regarding soul, moksha & other crucial religious matters. Shrimadji’s letter in original in Gujarati and its English version are given questionwise, in this booklet. The English translation has been made available to us from Mani Bhuvan, Bombay and the authorities have given us their kind consent to publish it, for which we are thankful to them.

-Manubhai B. Mody

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Shrimad Rajchandra’s Reply to Gandhiji’s Questions

1. प्र७-(१) आत्मा हु जीर? (२) ते हो अजीर? (३) अने तने हर करे हो? के जीर?

२०-(१) हेम चटपठाई दढ़ पहुँचे थे, तेह आत्मा शास्त्रुप बसू थे. चटपठाई ‘अनिव’ थे, निवान को खरू स्थिर दर्जी हिंसा थी. आत्मा आधे लखी स्थिति हिंसा दर्जी थी, अन्यो ‘मित्र’ पहुँचे थे. हे पहुँचनी उपस्थित कोई पशु संयोजनीय दर्ज न होते हे, हे पहुँच ‘मित्र’ होते हे. आत्मा कोई पशु संयोजनीय दर्ज ने कोई पशु मजाल थो, उदाहरणे हास्यमये संयोजनीय को मान दर्ज न होते थे. हे पशु को पहुँचनी होते ने तेह दर्ज न मजाल बनावे. दर्ज ने तेह दर्ज ने दर्ज ने हे, अन्यो सी हर अनुभव दर्ज ने को दर्ज हे. हे चटपठाई पहुँचे थे. तेह विबस शास्त्रुपात लेखान संयोजनीय आत्मा न होते. तेह पहुँचनी परिक्षामये को संयोजनीय होते अनुभव पहुँच होते, हे पशु ते तेह ज़रिया धारण, अर्थात शास्त्रुप धारण, पशु शास्त्रुप न धारण. तेह पशु ते पहुँचनी संयोजनीय आत्मा को कोई शास्त्रुपात गुणी शास्त्रुप बुधलालो हे को हे, ते पशु हेम (चटपठाई, पूर्वी, पशु, अन्यो) पहुँचनी, हेम दर्ज ही दर्ज न होते योग्य हे. ‘शास्त्रुपाते’ को आत्मा मजाल हे, अने ‘तने आत्मा’ गुणी लक्ष्य जरुर हे. ते नेता नाती सहल स्वात्म हे.

आ तरी कोई तेह सहस्रसे प्रभासी आत्मा ‘मित्र’ प्रतिपादन करी किरे हे. तेह ते तने विशेष विमार करी सहल स्वात्म
1. Q. (1) What is the Soul? (2) Does it perform actions? (3) Do past actions impede its progress or not?

A. (1) As there are physical objects like a pot, a piece of cloth, etc., so there is an entity called the *atman* whose essence is knowledge. The former are impermanent. They cannot exist through all time in the same form. The *atman* is an imperishable entity which exists eternally in the same form. Anything which is not the product of a combination of other elements is imperishable. We cannot think of the *atman* as being such a product, for, no matter in how many thousand different ways we combine material substances, such combinations cannot possibly produce life and consciousness. Every one of us can know from experience that by combining several elements we cannot produce in the compound a property which is not present in any of those elements. We do not find knowledge to be the essence of physical substances. If we change the forms of such substances and combine them, or if they change and combine by chance, the products will be of the same kind as they are; that is, they will be of a material nature and will not have knowledge as their essence. It is not possible, then, that the *atman*, which the seers describe as having knowledge as its essential character, can be produced by any combination
of the elements (earth, water, air, space) of which physical substances like a pot, a piece of cloth, etc., are composed. The atman has knowledge as its essential character, whereas material substances are characterized by its absence. These are the eternal natures of the two.

This and a thousand other reasons prove the atman to be imperishable. Further reflection on the subject enables us to realize that the atman from its nature is imperishable. There is, therefore, no error or logical difficulty in believing that the atman, the existence of which is the cause of our experiencing happiness and suffering which also withdraws itself from either, and which is conscious of something which thinks and impels, is characterized by awareness as its essential nature and that, in virtue of this nature, it is an imperishable entity which exists eternally; on the contrary, belief in the atman has this merit of accepting truth.

(2) When the atman has attained a state of knowledge, the state resulting from a true understanding of its essence, it is the karta of that state, the state of illumination (determination of what it truly is) and of the resulting state of pure awareness, which is its true nature. In a state of ignorance, it is the karta of the emotions of anger, love of honour, attachment, greed, etc., and, when enjoying the fruits of these emotions, becomes, as the occasion may require, the karta of physical objects like a pot, a piece of cloth, etc., that is, he is not the creator of the original substance of those objects, but is only the karta of the action of imposing some form on it. This

latter state is described in Jainism as karma, and in Vedanta as illusion or in other similar terms. If we reflect carefully on the matter, we shall clearly see that the atman cannot be the karta of physical objects or emotions like anger, that it is karta only of the state of self-realization.

(3) The karmas performed while in the state of ignorance are like seed in the beginning and grow into a tree in course of time; in other words, the atman has to suffer the consequences of those karmas. Just as contact with fire produces the experience of heat, the natural end of which is pain, so the atman, being the karta of emotions of anger, etc., has to suffer, as consequence, pain in the form of birth, old age and death. You should carefully reflect over this idea and ask me any question which may arise in your mind about it, for an understanding of the state from which the soul must withdraw itself and the effort to withdraw will bring deliverance to it.

1. Karta=Author, Doer
(2) These are the result of past karma. The atman is the source of all that. The atman is the supreme reality. The atman is the source of all that. The atman is the supreme reality.

(9)

(2) Ishvar is not the creator of the universe, that is, atoms, space, etc., can be conceived only as imperishable entities and not as created from some other substance. If it is stated that they came into being from Ishvar, that, too, does not seem likely; for, if we believe that Ishvar is a spirit, how can atoms, space, etc., come into being from Him? For it is impossible that matter can come into existence from that which is spirit. If Ishvar is regarded as material, He will then lose His Ishvarhood; also, a spiritual entity like the soul cannot come into being from such an Ishvar. If we regard Him as being both matter and spirit, that only means that we are pleased to call the world, which is both matter and spirit, by another name, Ishvar. Instead of doing that, it is better to call the world the world; If we hold that atoms, space, etc., are imperishable entities and that Ishvar only awards the fruits of karma, this, too, cannot be proved. Convincing reasons have been given in support of this view in Shatdarshan Samuchchaya.  

3. Q. What is moksha?

A. While the atman is in the state of ignorance.

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1. Ishvar=Ruler, God 2. Aishvarya=Power
characterized by anger, etc., it is under the bondage of the body, and complete cessation of such a state, deliverance from it, is described by seers as moksha. A little reflection shows this to be logical and convincing.

4. Q. Is it possible for a person to know for certain, while he is still living, whether or not he will attain moksha.

A. If our arms are tied with a rope wound several times round them and if the twists of the rope are loosened one after another, we feel the loosening of each twist and in the end become conscious of the rope having been removed. In like manner as the innumerable bonds, the products of ignorance, which bind the atman loosen one by one, the latter becomes conscious of progressing towards moksha, and when the bonds are about to fall off, the atman shines forth with the light of its essence and knows beyond doubt that it is about to be delivered from the bonds of ignorance. While still dwelling in this body, it comes out of the state of ignorance, etc., and becomes conscious of its pure essence and of its absolute otherness and freedom from all relations. In other words, it is possible to experience the state of moksha even while living.

5. Q. It is said that after his death, a man may, according to his actions, be reborn as an animal, a tree or even a stone. Is this a fact?
latter existed before the time of the Buddha and Mahavira, the last teacher of Jainism; it also seems likely that they are really ancient works. But we cannot say that only that which is ancient is true or perfect, nor that what came later is necessarily untrue or imperfect. Apart from this, the ideas propounded in the Vedas and in Jain doctrines have existed from the beginning of time; only the outward forms changed. There is no totally new creation or absolute destruction. Since we may believe that the ideas propounded by the Vedas and in the doctrines of Jainism and other religions have existed from the beginning of time, where is the room for controversy? All the same, it is only right that you and I and others should reflect and consider which of these systems of ideas has more power—truth—in them.

8. Q. (1) What is Arya Dharma? (2) Do all Indian religions originate from the Vedas?

A. (1) In defining Arya Dharma, everyone has his own religion in view. Commonly a Jain describes Jainism, a Buddhist describes Buddhism and a Vedantin describes Vedanta as Arya Dharma. But seers describes only that Arya—noble—path as Arya Dharma which enables the soul to realize its true nature, and rightly so.

(2) It is impossible that all religions had their origin in the Vedas. I know from experience that great souls like the [Jain] Thirthankars have revealed knowledge of a thousand times deeper import than what the Vedas contain. I, therefore, believe that, since something imperfect cannot be the origin of a perfect thing, we are not justified in asserting that all religions had originated from the Vedas. We may believe that Vaishnavism and other sects had their origin in the Vedas. It seems that the

9. Q. (1) Who composed the Vedas? Are they anadi? (2) If so, what does anadi mean?

1 Self-realized men whose teachings evolved into Jainism

1 Without a beginning
A. (1) The Vedas were probably composed a long time ago.

(2) No scripture, considered as a book, is anadi; but with respect to the ideas propounded in them, all scriptures are anadi, for there have been souls at all times who taught them in one form or another. It cannot be otherwise. The emotions of anger, etc., are anadi and so are those of forgiveness, etc. The way of violence, too, is anadi, as is the path of non-violence. What we should consider is which of these conducive to the welfare of the soul? Both classes of things are anadi, though sometimes the one and sometimes the other may be predominant.

10. प्रौं-वीष्णु कोणे अनादी ? कीर्ति तो नथी ? जो तेंम होय तो तेनौं किन पुस्तके?

शास्त्रकारेगरे निरंतरे देशसुं का साधारण वह शक्ति योग छै, कीर्ति त्यां केवल शास्त्री (कामचारिणी) श्रृंगी कर्मदी पेठे अनादी वही भाव; पर निते अहिंसा अनादी अनादी में द्वारा अनादी द्वारा रस्ते ज्ञातं ज्ञात पर तथा सुमतिः परमे नहीं, ग्रेम ते तो साधारण अर्थ छै, के जेनुं तत्त्वात्मा आरतापुर्वक होय छै, अनादी नथी होती।

शास्त्रकारेगरे मेंहवाणा पुस्तक गायण छै, अने महत्त्व महत्त्व अवैद्यने तेनों भव कर्महि होती, माते नुपर्सिं त्री काल्पक हेमलाल छै, के वात संबंधित छै। प्रेम ग्रेम छै, तेनो भावां अनादी काल्पक होय छै, पर्स ते नष्टी अनादी शास्त्र अर्थे अनादी योग नथी; तें महत्त्व महत्त्व पर्स तेनी परमाधम होय अनादी योग नथी। सहिय वेटे दिनें देशसुं कीर्तिकारिणी ते हिंद मनुष्य होय छै। माते संपूर्ण शास्त्री ते देशसुं छै, अने तेनाची ओढावली

10. Q. Who is the author of the Gita? Is God its author? Is there any evidence that He is?

A. (1) The replies given above partly answer this question; if by God we mean a person who has attained illumination—perfect illumination—then we can say that the Gita was composed by God. If, however, we accept God as being all-pervading, like the sky, eternally existing and passive, the Gita or any other book cannot have been composed by Him. For, writing a book is an ordinary activity undertaken at a patricular point in time and is not anadi.

(2) The Gita is believed to be the work of Veda Vyasa and since Lord Krishna had propounded this teaching to Arjuna, He is said to be its real author. This may be true. The work is indeed great. The ideas it propounds have been taught from the time immemorial, but it is not possible that these same verses have existed from the beginning of time. Nor is it likely that they were composed by God who does nothing. They can have been composed only by an embodied soul, who acts. There is no harm, therefore, in saying that a perfectly illuminated person is God, and that a Shastra taught by him is one revealed by God.

11. प्रौं-पशु अनादी योगाची कारे पुस्तके घरे अर्घः?

वेशसुं दशक, लोक्यी हे कराते तेने दुष्कोण आचरणाशी पाप बे छै; तें दशक दशक हो बे, हे जे कि कीर्तिकारिणी दानादी हिंद घरे छै; दानादी हिंदादादी हे के, कैंडेल दुप्तिएळ्या; तथापि हिंदिन देशसुं हे ते पशु आचरणाशी योग नथी।
11. Q. Does any merit accrue from the sacrifice of animals or other things?

A. It is always sinful to kill an animal to give it as an offering in sacrifice or injure it in any way, even if this is done for the purpose of a sacrifice or living in the very abode of God. The practice of giving gifts at the time of a sacrifice does earn some merit, but since this is accompanied with violence, it, too, deserves no commendation.

12. प्राणे धर्म उत्तम छे अन्य श्रद्धा, तेनो परावर्ती माणो श्रद्धाप

पशुकाले माणांतू पुणे अन्य, अन्य उत्तम छे अन्य परावर्त श्रद्धाप्रतिशंका करवावा आहे, ते तो धर्म, अन्य धर्म, अधर्म, तो उत्तम ज हे. प्राणांतू धर्म उत्तम अनुभव अनुभव आहे जे धर्म संसार रहिती करवावा सर्वत्र उत्तम होय, अनेक विविध धर्मस्थिती कर्त्तनेचा विषाणु होय ते ज्ञात, अनेक ज्ञान होय.

12. Q. If a claim is put forward that a particular religion is the best, may we not ask the claimant for proof?

A. If no proof is required and if any such claim is made without proof in its support, reason and unreason, dharma and adharma, everything will have to be accepted as "the best". Only the test of proof can show what is the best and what is not. That religion alone is the best and is truly strong, which is most helpful in destroying the bondage of worldly life and can establish us in the state which is our essence.

13. प्राणे राज्यकाली धर्म अन्य श्रद्धा आहे जी? तो श्रद्धा

हो तो अपान निवार हला.

14. प्राणे तेनो अन्य हो जे जेणे वाशी धर्मे विचार ची इ?

हे जेणे ते
14. Q. The Christians hold that the Bible is divinely inspired and that Christ was an incarnation of God, being his son. Was He?

A. This is a matter of faith and cannot be proved rationally. What I said above concerning the claim that the Gita and the Vedas are divinely inspired may be applied to the Bible too. It is impossible that God, who is free from birth and death, will incarnate Himself as a human being; for it is the changes of attachment, aversion, etc. which are the cause of birth and it does not appeal to reason that God, who has no attachment and aversion, will take birth as a human being. The idea that Jesus is, and was, the son of God may perhaps be acceptable if we interpret the belief as an allegory; otherwise, tested by the canons of reason, it is difficult to accept. How can we say that God, who is free, has or had a son? If we assert that He has or had one, what was the manner of the son’s birth? If we believe that both God and His son are anadi, how can we explain their being father and son? These and other objections deserve examination. If we reflect over them, I think the belief will not be found acceptable.

15. Q. Were all the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Christ?

A. Even if they were, that should only make us think about the two scriptures. Nor is the act of the prophecies having been fulfilled a sufficiently strong reason to justify us in asserting that Jesus was an incarnation of God, for the birth of a great soul can also be predicted with the help of astrology. Even if, however, someone foretold the event by virtue of his knowledge, unless it is established that person had perfect knowledge of the path to moksha, the fact of his having predicted a future event appeals only to faith as proof of a thing and we cannot believe that no reasoning on the opposite side can diminish its force.
16. q—“ईसात र्रििसा महत्तर” वििे लब्ध् छ।  
है—क्या आपनातील जवाब देतो घड्यो होय, ते ज जव ते ज  
क्चीताच लम्बत कोि होय, आपल्या कोटी बोल्या घड्याचे तेंची दाणून कसे  
होय, ते ते बन हळू गेल्या संवधनवत नरी; अनेक धारा तो पत्री  
क्रावड्या व्यक्तत्त्वपर्यंत निर्णय घड्या. याची वांदणी सिद्ध्या  
देवतांक समाध्य उत्तम घड्या होय, ते तेंची नाथ खोजणे होय, तो  
तेंची नायक फर्तू घड्याचे असंभवत होय अपण्या नरी; तेंची सिद्ध्या  
आतापणा शेषाचे अभाज्य अभाज्य घड्या होय, आतामातून अभाज्य  
तेंची अनंतगुण  
महत्त्व संवधनवत होय घड्या आहे याची आहे. तयासंबंधाने पूर्वपूर्व योग्य  
होय घड्या.

17. A. In this question you ask about the miracles  
attributed to Jesus Christ. If it is said that he put a soul  
back into the body which it had left, or that he put another  
soul in its place, this could not possibly have been done.  
If it could be done, the law of karma would lose its  
meaning. Apart from this, mastery of yoga techniques  
enables a person to perform certain miracles, and if it is  
claimed that Jesus had such powers, we cannot assert that  
the claim is false or impossible. Such yogic powers are of  
no consequence compared to the power of the atman; the  
latter is infinitely greater than the powers attained by  
yoga. You may ask more questions on this subject when we  
meet.

18. q—कोरी खड्य ठीक घड्या?
  है—आतीं उंटर उंपर आपली घड्या होय घड्या.

18. Q. If yes, who can?
A. The answer to this is contained in the reply  
above.

19. q—संयोग पाठभाराने नाम आपण घड्या ते या आधारे  
प्रश्नही?
  है—अने आपल्या प्रश्न संयोजनाने घड्या, तो तेंची उंटर आपण  
कोटी शक्य होय आपल्या संसारसत्ता परवस्थाचे अनुसार घड्या होय,  
तेंची प्रश्न अथवा अभाज्य अभाज्य घड्या आपण, आपण ते कसे घड्या,  
अनेक असे पहा पोलता  
आतापणा अनुमोदन घड्या होय; अनेक तेंची आधारे तेंची गस्तांबे  
केल्या; अनेक पहा घड्या ते परमाणु होय अभाज्य परमाणु पहा  
शास्त्रीया अभाज्य शक्य.
19. Q. You have given the names of some who have attained moksha. What is the authority for this statement?

A. If you have addressed this question personally to me, I may say in reply that one can to some extent infer from one’s own experience how a person whose involvement in earthly existence is about to end is likely to speak or act, and on the basis of this one can assert whether or not such a person attained moksha. In most cases, we can also get from Shastras reasons in support of our conclusion.

20. (24)

A-वृक्षेष्य पर भोजश्री गीत अनु परिपूर्ण अपर करो को?

वे-तेष्य शास्त्रसीतिको भाषा. जे प्रमाणे में नहीं शाय-शिक्षितों के, ते ज प्रमाणे जो तेजी में अभिन्नार्थ होय तो ते अभिन्नार्थ पूर्वर विशिष्ट पर नहीं करते; अन्ये ते नहीं शाय-शिक्षित अनु नहीं।

शाय-शिक्षित जो न होय त्वम शाय-शिक्षित नाथ प्रामाण्या संपूर्णता नहीं। ज्ञान तेज त्यां संसारसन्धाय नहीं। जेठे वेदना वेदना नहीं संसारसन्धाय। जेठे उद्धरण तेज से होय अभिन्नार्थ कहैं भी होय अभिन्नार्थ नहीं; अन्ये में शोषणों के अभिन्नार्थ हो, ते विस्मय वीरी तेजी में अभिन्नार्थ होते, ते वीरी रीढ़ अभिन्नार्थ अन्ये तेज कहैं नहीं; अन्ये तेज भी होर होर होर होर अभिन्नार्थ अभिन्नार्थ होते तो ते विस्मय वीरी अभिन्नार्थ अभिन्नार्थ नहीं तम अभिन्नार्थ नहीं।

21. (25)

A. It does not seem rationally possible to me that all souls will attain absolute moksha or that the world will perish completely. It is likely to continue to exist for ever in the same state as at present. Some aspect of it may undergo transformation and almost disappear, and another may grow; such is the nature of the world that, if there is growth in one sphere, there is decline in another. Having regard to this fact, and after deep reflection, it
seems impossible to me that this world will perish completely. By "world" we do not mean this earth only.

22. आनन्दितां उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ?

हो-अभ अभावं उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ? ततां ततो उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ? ततां ततो उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ?

हो-अभ अभावं उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ? ततां ततो उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ? ततां ततो उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ?

22. Q. Will the world be morally better off in the future?

A. It would not be proper to encourage any soul which loves immorality to take wrong advantage of the answer to this question. All modes in this world, including morality and immorality, have existed from the beginning of time. But it is possible for you and me to eschew immorality and accept morality, and it is the duty of the atman to do that. It is not possible to assert that immorality will be given up by all and morality will prevail, for such an extreme state cannot come about.

23. यें-निष्ठानां प्रलयं चे ?

हो-अभ अभावं उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ? ततां ततो उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ? ततां ततो उस्मिति तथा वासना भवे ?

23. Q. Is there anything like total destruction of the world?

A. If by pralaya is meant total destruction, that is not possible, for complete destruction of all that exists is impossible. If by pralaya is meant the merging of everything in God, the belief is accepted in some doctrines but that does not seem possible to me. For, how can all objects and all souls arrive in an identical state so that such a thing may happen? If they ever do, then diversity cannot develop again. If we accept the possibility of pralaya on the supposition of unmanifest diversity in the souls and manifest sameness, how can diversity exist except through connection with a body? If we believe that such connection exists [in the state of pralaya], we shall have to believe further that all souls will have one sense only and in doing so we shall reject, without reason, the possibility of other modes of existence. In other words, we shall have to suppose that a soul which had attained a higher state and was about to be free for ever from the contingency of existence with one sense only, had none the less to be in such a state. This and many similar doubts arise. A pralaya involving all souls is impossible.
24. Q. Can an illiterate person attain moksha through bhakti alone?

A. Bhakti is a cause of knowledge and knowledge of moksha. If by an illiterate person we mean one without knowledge of letters, it is not impossible that he may cultivate bhakti. Every soul has knowledge as its essence. The power of bhakti purifies knowledge, and pure knowledge becomes the cause of moksha. I do not believe that, without the manifestation of perfect knowledge, absolute moksha is possible. Nor need I point out that knowledge of letters is contained in perfect [spiritual] knowledge. It cannot be true that knowledge of letters is a cause of moksha and that, without it, self-realization is not possible.

25. Q. (1) Rama and Krishna are described as incarnations of God. What does that mean? Were they God Himself or only a part of Him? (2) Can we attain salvation through faith in them?

A. (1) I, too, am convinced that both were souls of great holiness. Each of them, being an atman, was God. If it is a fact that all the coverings over their atman had
fallen off, there need be no dispute about their having attained absolute moksha. I do not think that any soul can be a portion of God, for I can think of a thousand reasons against such a belief. If we believe a soul to be a portion of God, the belief in bondage and moksha will have no meaning. For then God Himself will be the cause of ignorance, etc., and, if that is true, He ceases to be God. In other words, in being regarded as Lord of the soul God actually loses something from His status. Moreover, if we believe that the soul is a portion of God, what motive will a person have to strive for anything? For in that case the soul cannot be regarded as the karta of anything. In view of this and other objections, I am not prepared to believe any soul to be a portion of God; how, then, can I believe that such was the case with great and holy souls like Rama and Krishna? There is no error in believing that these two were unmanifest God, but it is doubtful whether perfect Godhood had become manifest in them.

(2) The question whether we can attain moksha through faith in them can be easily answered. Moksha means absence of or deliverance from all forms of attachment, ignorance, etc. It can be attained when we cultivate faith in a person whose teaching will enable us to win such freedom from attachment and ignorance, and, reflecting on our true essence, come to have the same faith in our atman that we have in the teacher and identify ourselves with his personality. Worship of any kind other than this cannot win absolute moksha. It may help one to win the means of moksha, but even that cannot be asserted with certainty.

26. Q. Who were Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva?

A. If people believed in three gunas\(^1\) as the cause of creation and personified them [as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva], this or similar explanations may make the belief plausible. But I am not particularly disposed to believe that they are what the Puranas describe them to be, for some of the descriptions appear to be allegories intended for religious instruction. Even so, I think it would be better that we, too, try to profit from the instruction they contain rather than attempt in vain to ascertain the principles embodied in the personification of Brahma, and so on.

27. Q-गे पर्व करखवा आवे तवरे मारे तेरे करखवा हेवो हे मारी मारसो? तेरे शीर रीते हुर करवाली मारसो शलित न होय अर्थ घरीको छीमो?

A-सर्च तमारे करखवा हेवो असुं अमातात्विकाम संभवम अत्यन्त तेेन शुभे तयतपी न होय तीं गुण होय, तय तय अशांतता तेह्ना अशामिष्ट, तेरे तेहमा प्रमाण होइ छीमो, अर्थ शर्मणे, तमारे मारसे उम गोब्य होय रेलो सत्तमिता उष्मु होय

\(^1\) Modes of cosmic energy
27. Q. If a snake is about to bite me, should I allow myself to be bitten or should I kill it, supposing that, that is the only way in which I can save myself?

A. One hesitates to advise you that you should let the snake bite you. Nevertheless, how can it be right for you, if you have realized that the body is perishable, to kill, for protecting a body which has no real value to you, a creature which clings to it with love? For anyone who desires his spiritual welfare, the best course is to let his body perish in such circumstances. But how should a person who does not desire spiritual welfare behave? My only reply to such a question is, how can I advise such a person that he should pass through hell and similar worlds, that is, that he should kill the snake? If the person lacks the culture of Aryan character, one may advise him to kill the snake, but we should wish that neither you nor I will even dream of being such a person.