

Artha Forum @ Mumbai

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Speaker: HH Radhanath Swami

Topic: What to learn after you know everything about everything

It's my great honor and fortune and pleasure to be with all of you this evening. Thank you very much for being with us. Actually Mr. Mafatlal, Mr. Desai, these wonderful people, this film. They said certain things about me, but actually they have done everything. Have you ever seen a sporting event? You know what a cheer leader is? A cheer leader just stands on the sides and says "Yes yes and go go go" and the team does all the work. So I am like a cheer leader (laughs). I just try to encourage. But it's the dedication and the incredible compassion of these people that have actually offered the world, wonderful services. Real fulfillment can only take place in the heart. The body, the senses, the mind can have some flickering gratifications. But the Bhagavad Gita explains these flickering gratifications the nature of it is the more you have the more you need, like fire. If you put fuel in fire, the fire gets hotter and bigger and hungrier. And that's the way wealth, power, and prestige, sensual pleasures that are the nature of all these things. They have a beginning they have an end. They can give some gratification to the mind and senses. But they cannot touch the heart. It is said in a cultured society, people love people and use things. But unfortunately in this world, people love things and they use people to get them and to keep them. That life is so shallow. It leaves us with an empty heart. My Guru Srila Prabhupada gave an analogy of a lady who had a bird cage. And a neighbor came over and looked at the bird cage and it was beautifully decorated. It was actually gilded with gold and there were emeralds and diamonds and nice ribbons and silks decorating it and she said see my bird cage. And the person looked and was horrified. The bird cage was fantastic. But the bird inside was dead due to starvation. Now the purpose of a bird cage is to be a nice place for the bird. It's a kind of a simplistic analogy but its analogy of our times. People are concerned with what they have, what they wear and what their titles are. But the living force within us, the heart is starving for actual real fulfillment. I write about in this book that recently came out "The Journey Home" the time I spent with Mother Teresa in Calcutta in about 1971. And I remember she told me something very striking. She said the greatest problem in this world is

hunger. Not hunger of the stomach. The real problem is the hunger of the heart and because of the hunger of the heart there is so much hunger of the stomach too. She said there is only one nourishment that can satisfy the hunger of the heart. That is love, to love and to be loved. If somebody has everything else and not that, the heart is empty. And in that emptiness we have to somehow divert our attention away from the loneliness and the pain and the futility of our life and we try to fill that with all kind of sensory entertainments and all kind of accomplishments and all kinds of sometimes drugs and alcohol and just things to divert us from what's within. A rich life is when we find the treasure when we find love within ourselves and that naturally manifests as compassion towards others and that's our actual motivation. Whether we are little swami's just travelling around without any real resources or whether we are farmers or doctors or lawyers or teachers or politicians or millionaires or billionaires. They are all potentially wonderful if we have right a fulfilling motivation behind it. Meaningful life is fulfilling life. When I was a teenager in America in the 1960's, I heard Martin Luther King speak this. If you do not have an ideal you are willing to die for, you have nothing very meaningful to live for. I wanted to find that ideal. And in my search I hitchhiked all the way from London to the Himalayas in India and it took 6 months. And I found in India people were trying to get visas to go to America (laughs). Usually not to find an ideal (laughs). But that's alright. If you have an ideal then we can go to America and we can get so much or wherever. Laxmi is the Goddess of fortune. According to the sacred Vedic literatures wealth is not Maya. Wealth is sacred. Wealth is spiritual. Wealth is divine, when it's used with compassion for a divine purpose. Otherwise wealth is Maya. And poverty is also Maya. Is a knife good or bad? If a knife is used by a crook to kill somebody, a knife is negative. If a knife is used by a surgeon to heal somebody, a knife is something very positive. Everything, our wealth, our intelligence, our abilities, our connections, everything is potentially either spiritual or material. Either productive or destructive. According to the consciousness that the person has that is striving and utilizing it. In family life the most fulfilling thing a person could do is leave a legacy for their children. A legacy that could bring fulfillment. Legacy that could bring values. And it's not what we give them that are going to make that definition. It's how we live. It's what we prioritize. It is our integrity and our character. I grew up in Chicago. I would like to tell a story that I used to hear when I was a child in Chicago. And it actually struck me very hard even then. May I share the with you, exactly how literally correct are the details in this story are I cannot testify to. But as

far as I know it's a true story. And it affected my heart. In fact I am going to tell you 2 stories. First is the story of a man named Easy Eddie. Raise your hand if you have heard of Easy Eddie. He was one of the greatest attorneys or lawyers of the time. He was a criminal lawyer. And he had such a power that he could manipulate juries and manipulate the law and find loopholes that can practically get anybody out of the crime. And because he was so good, back in the 1920's and 30's the Chicago mafias hired him. Now you may not have heard of Easy Eddie, but you ever heard of Al Capone. Well he was the main client of Easy Eddie. And he and his other gangsters they were killing, they were having this business where you just go to these innocent shopkeepers and say you pay us 200 dollars a month as an insurance policy and we will make sure that nobody bombs your shop. But if you don't pay us the insurance policy, we will make sure that someone does bomb your shop. And the whole city of Chicago lived in fear. Because if they didn't live up to it nobody is going to take it seriously. So these people were dying, there was prostitution, that time liquor was illegal in America. There was the prohibition and they were bootlegging they were producing liquor and they were making huge amounts of money. And nobody could touch them. There was a television show when I was a boy and it was called the Untouchables. That's talking about the mafia. They were untouchable. And one of the reasons was they had Easy Eddie (laughs). Do you know how much they paid to this man? He was so wealthy. He had an entire city block in downtown Chicago area that was his state and he owned it. And he parks and he had beautiful mansions and he had best cars and he had an airplane and he had a yacht and he could go anywhere anytime and he had everything and he had a son and he gave all this stuff to his son. His son was driving airplanes and his son was driving the best cars, best clothes and best foods. But he started seeing his son was becoming arrogant and taking things for granted. And he was wondering, I have given my son everything that a man could possibly give a family. But there is one thing that I have not given my son, a father that he could be proud of. A father that lives with values, character and integrity. And if I do not give my son that, I have failed as a father. He will simply be spoiled with all the wealth, power and prestige I have given him. And he realized the only way that he could give that pride in the values of his father to his son as he Easy Eddie would have to testify against the mafia. Which means he would be murdered? There was no doubt about it. That because he actually cared about his son, he loved his son. Love means to sacrifice for the person we love. He testified against the mafia. And along with his testimony which opened the doors for so

much other evidence to come in and so much others, Al Capone and so many other leaders of the mafia were sent to prison. And shortly after he was driving a car and another car pulled up to him with three machine guns and shot him dead instantly. He paid the ultimate price. To give what he understood he had to give to his son a legacy that his son could be proud of. A legacy of values that would actually make his son a great person. Now I am going to tell another story - World War II. In the Pacific America and Japan, were having big battles at the sea. And there was a huge battleship called, The USS Lexington. That had several thousands of soldiers, sailors, and aircrafts on it. It was an aircraft carrier. And a group of about 6 or 7 planes took off together to go fight some battle at some distant place. And one of the pilots of one of the planes happened to look at his fuel gauge and he saw that he forgot to put fuel in his plane. So he had to kind of peak to all the other planes whatever way they communicated and say I have to go back. So they all kept going and he turned around. So going back to the battleship what he saw on his way back shocked him to the core. He saw The USS Lexington was just sitting there going about like any other day whatever they do, you know, just making everything happen and there was a whole squadron of about dozen Japanese bombers heading toward it to sink it. And he had no way to notify them. All he had to do was just kind of fly by and he would have been safe. But you know what he did? He single handedly went to fight against 12 bombers. This is an impossible feat. And they thought this person is insane. This one plane and comes 12 planes are shooting at him and he shooting at them. He actually caused about 3 or 4 of them to fall in to the ocean. But then he ran out of bullets. So now what? They are shooting at him and he has nothing. He was so wild. Because he cared so much about all those thousands of people on that ship. They were going to die if he didn't do something. He started flying at the planes and knocking their wings off. They thought this man is totally crazy. And there were about 5 planes left and they just flew away because they could not deal with this person. He was crashing in to them. He came back to the USS Lexington and he had all these eye witnesses that saw what he did. They were not prepared to fight. His plane was all beaten up and it kind a like landed on the ship. He was the first person in the World War II in the US air force to win the highest honor of the US Congressional Medal of Honor. Why? Because he was willing to sacrifice his life for the welfare of the others. Please listen carefully. What makes this story so important to me is this person. His name was Butch O Hare. Have you ever heard of O'Hare airport? O'Hare airport was named after him for this greatest feat of bravery in air

force history in America. Butch O'Hare was the son of Easy Eddie. That is the values his father taught him. A much greater wealth than having a big house and having a big bank account. And not knowing what in world to do with it all. He knew what to do with his life. Because his father loved him. And he lived with the legacy of that love. From a spiritual prospective, the origin of love is the atmas what a soul's love is for Bhagavan, for God. It is our deepest inherent nature to love God and to be an instrument of God's love in whatever we do. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he spoke of a beautiful verse "nitya-siddha krishna-prema sadhya kobhu noy, Shrabanadi shuddha chitte koroye udoy." That love for Krishna, love for God, is one God for all living beings has many names, but that love for God or Krishna is within the heart of every living being. It's our nature. But it has been forgotten. Because of the Ahankaar, the false ego. Its identifying with so many temporary designations, we are forgetting that we are satcitananda, we are eternal, full of knowledge and full of bliss and nothing could change that. One of my dearest God Sister who was like a mother to me. She was on her death bed in London and I left from Mumbai to go to visit her. By God's grace I happen to come just the day before she passed away. And she was saying, she was a very independent, active, dynamic lady who loved to get things done and organized and she was always caring about people and her she was with cancer, paralyzed, crippled, emaciated. Her husband had to clean her excrement because she couldn't even move. And she said with a smile that even though I appear so helpless, she said I have infinite relevance. I have infinite significance. Because Krishna loves me. And nothing could ever change that. Not disease, not even death. That's my greatest wealth and that gives me such unlimited importance forever that God loves me. And then she smiled and then she said that I have nothing to be proud of over anyone else because God loves everybody. To experience God's love and to actually understand our own love for God is the greatest wealth and it's within us. It simply has to be awakened. And that's what religion, that's what spirituality, that's what yoga, that's what true human culture is meant to do. Awaken the divinity that is within us. And to be an instrument of that divinity. When you water the root of the tree, the water naturally extends to every leaf, to every branch, to every twig, to every flower of that tree. And similarly "aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate". Krishna tells in the Gita, I am the source of all material and spiritual world, everything emanates from me. The Bramha Sutra tells "janmady asya yatah" The absolute truth is from whom everything emanates. Another word is the 'root'. When we water the root of the tree of our heart, when we

actually connect with God's love and when our love reaches that place it naturally extends to every living being. We no longer see male, female, black, white, red, yellow, brown. We no longer see simply rich or poor or eastern or western. We not even necessarily see human or dog or cat or elephant or cow. We see wherever there is life it is sacred. If we understand the sacredness of our life we will recognize wherever there is life. But if we are too dull and forgetful to see the sacredness of our own internal beautiful existence we can't recognize it in others. We just become either attracted or averse to all these external things. Real knowledge according to the Gita is the ability to see all living beings with equal vision. And that is our natural state. When we connect when we access that love within our heart. When we tune in to that divinity. Then we will naturally feel genuine compassion for others. And then our fulfillment in life is not just in what we can get but what we can give. And actually in that state the more we get with proper character, the more we have actually have to give. Some people think if a person becomes spiritual they become demotivated. But it's just the opposite. A mother's love for a child, what profits is she's getting from it? But yet I am a Swami, I never had a child, I never had a wife. But I like to watch people. That's kind of the way my life has been, just observing, learning and trying to get messages I can share. So it's nothing else to do actually. A mother, she will, a father will come after 8 or 9 or 10 hours work and watch television or go to sleep or whatever else they do. But the mother is 24 hours a day in service. Especially little babies, when all of a sudden they cry. I give classes upstairs and then when a baby cries then the mother's take them away. The least expected moment the babies need you. What is the motivation that she has to stay up all night when the baby is sick all day? I have known mother's who have not slept days on days because of the difficulties that their children are having. It's love. A business person, a politician, an educator, a mother, a father, whatever we may be. If we are motivated with compassion, if we see all the needs of this world, all the sufferings, and we understand from our heart we are all one family. We are all God's children. We will be so motivated to make a difference, through our character, through our integrity and our efforts. I would like to end with one little story. Actually I am going to tell 2 things. First the story. Last year I went to Red Wood forest in California. And there was this massive Red Wood trees. Some of them 2000 years old. Others are 1000 years old, 100's and 100's of years old. They are the tallest trees in the world. They are the biggest trees in the world. And there are some of the oldest trees in the world. I was walking with a friend. And we happen to come across a

group of Chinese tourists. They had their cameras. And they were all in a circle around the forest ranger. Did you love the story so far? The forest ranger was teaching the underground secret of the redwood trees. Now I am from the counter culture of the 1960's in America. So I have always been attracted to underground secrets. So I stopped and I said to my friend lets listen to this. And the forest ranger, I never thought I would hear a Bhagavat Gita class from a forest ranger. He didn't know what Bhagavat Gita is. But he was speaking the message of Bhagavat Gita, by just explaining the nature of the redwood trees. He explained that in order for a tree to grow tall, the roots must go deep. Because the roots are like a foundation. Like in your house. If you don't have a strong foundation when a storm comes it's going to crumble. But nobody sees your foundation. People might say that when you are building a house why waste time in building a foundation. Nobody is going to see it. Just make everything else nice. But it is necessary. So the tree its roots is what is keeping it alive. It's where the life comes from. He said the redwood trees are the tallest trees in the world and the biggest trees in the world. And the roots do not grow deep. And then he explained how here in Northern California there have been massive destructive earthquakes. There have been incredible snow storms, wind storms, hurricanes. How is it that these redwood trees in loose soil and hilly terrain are growing higher and higher and higher for several thousand years through the earthquakes and the storms if the roots are not deep. He told that the redwood trees, their roots they grow outwards. Underground they grow out. And they specially grow seeking the roots of other redwood trees. One redwood trees go in this way and another go this way and then their roots intertwine and make a permanent lock with each of their roots. That's on one side. On the other side, so many other redwood trees and its going and locking the roots with it. We started looking at some roots that were over the ground and they looked, unbreakable. Essentially every tree in the forest is interconnected with every other tree directly or indirectly. This is like their networking. And the little tiny baby redwood trees, just when they start growing the big ancient giants come with their roots and wrap around the little baby roots. To make the little redwood trees almost indestructible. And it grows and grows. And as they help each other they all become strong. And in this way they live to be the oldest trees in the planet. And they grow higher and higher and higher through all the storms and earthquakes. You see our roots as human beings are our affection, our love, our compassion to each other. When the roots of our heart are interconnected, that's what gives us intellectual and collective strength and power. As they say

united we stand and divided we fall. And what I got from this story was the beautiful illustration of Mother Nature that teaches the concept of seva. In love, in compassion, in service to others we gain the greatest strength, stability and fulfillment within. Human beings are meant to live in this spirit. Real leadership is to inspire these values of seva, of service from the heart with compassion due to the realization we have found in our life. And I will end with one little statement. Earlier this year I was invited to the House of the Lords in London. What am I doing in the House of Lords. I was remembering that 43 years ago I was sitting on the river bank of the river Thymes completely confused about where I was going in life or where was the river of destiny going to take me. And now I am giving lectures just across the river in the parliament. But I spoke about so many things. But I got a loud ovation when I said one sentence. And it really moved me because I thought this is just a sense which is common sense for everyone. The statement that they applauded for, because these are Lords and Ladies and Princesses and there were Dukes and Duchess and very big entrepreneurs and entertainers from the Westminster areas, members of the parliament, very affluent people. But they applauded. And afterward dozens of people came to me and said that this one sentence has completely transformed their way of looking at life. May I share with you? Its very simple. I happen to say that you can tell how rich you are by trying to find out how many things you have that money cannot buy. That's love. Money can buy lot of things, but it cannot buy love. Only love can buy love. That is the greatest inheritance that we all have to find that and to share that in the world is the leadership that we are all crying for. Thank you very much.