

*asamshaya* in Gita VI: 35, VII: 1, and XVIII: 68 (and elsewhere) is a noun that means non-doubt, freedom from doubt, but easily misunderstood by English-speakers to mean undoubtedly.

When Babaji was asked in Gita class 8/15/13 about the meaning of “without any doubt” for *asamshaya* in XVIII: 68, he said “no doubt.” When pressed further, he said “doubtless.” Arguably, Babaji’s “doubtless” is an adjective referring to the frame of mind of the aspirant, meaning that Arjuna is doubtless i.e. free of doubts, in the same way as he is desireless or fearless.

Babaji’s original for VII: 1, in his handwriting, places “without a doubt” at the end of his translation of the sloka, and again at the end of the last sentence of his commentary. In that position, his meaning could go either way. But our editors have moved “without a doubt” at the end of the commentary to a position in the middle of that final sentence where it can only mean “undoubtedly.” In the already-published translation and commentary for VI: 35, “undoubtedly” is given as the translation for *asamshaya*, and “no doubt” has been positioned so as to be understood unequivocally as the adverb “undoubtedly,” rather than as a quality of mind difficult to attain.

However, the chapter VII context flatly contradicts such an interpretation for VII: 1. Immediately ahead, sloka 3 (and later sloka 19 likewise) establishes how utterly rare and scarce will be those who will reach the final goal. In such a context, *asamshaya* cannot possibly mean that if you do as instructed, success is guaranteed “without a doubt.” Babaji and his editors have talked right past each other, because Babaji didn’t hear “without a doubt, no doubt, doubtless” in our idiomatic way, and we couldn’t hear those same words in his simpler, literal way that died out in English in the Middle Ages. To convey such a literal meaning into modern English, we have to say “without doubts” or “free of doubts” or “having no doubts.” To make that into an adjective, we would have to say “undoubting” or “never doubting,” rather than “doubtless.”

The cessation of all doubting is a cardinal feature of complete enlightenment. An internet website with tens of thousands of sannyas names, compiled by a swami named Prem Sarovara, lists *Asamshaya* as #1410, and translates it as “Freedom from Doubt.” Gita XVIII: 73 uses other terms to convey how enlightenment has removed Arjuna’s doubts, and Babaji has rendered that as “I am firm, my doubts are gone.”

Q&A on attainment without full realization, remaining in duality---

In retreat Gita class 12/29/96 on chapter VII, Babaji was asked to clarify the statement in sloka 3 that “few who attain will know God in truth.”

A: Succeed in their meditation, but they do not attain non-dual state.

Q: Partial, incomplete success is due to laziness, complacency, or misbelief that one did achieve the final goal?

A: There are so many pitfalls. Some attain a certain stage and think this is it. Some think supernormal powers are the divine power. In each state, if the mind doesn’t maintain dispassion, then the mind slips back.

Q&A placing “faith with doubts” within the stage of duality and theoretical knowledge---  
In Gita class 4/10/86 on chapter VII, Babaji was asked about worship of God with form:

A:: The form is a mental creation, and untrue. But the idea which is created by the form is true. In that way ... one worships the Absolute in an indirect way. ....

That’s duality and it purifies the mind, and then a nondual state appears. .... The ego can’t be surrendered to a form. It is surrendered to energy ... higher than the form. .... In the lower stage we choose, because the mind/ego is working.

Q: How, in duality but knowing of nonduality, can we have faith in one thing as opposed to another?

A: Nondual is a concept, until it is experienced.

Q: So we can’t have faith in it?

A: Without experience, there is a faith with doubts. All forms are no different than the garbage can.

Q&A describing the experience of faith without doubts---

In Gita class 12/26/85 on the first slokas of chapter VII, Babaji said, “If you go into the nondual path then you are the Self and accept it with complete faith.”

Q: Is this something to look forward to, rather than just losing our self?

A: By losing your ego self you are losing all your pains.

However, centuries ago in English, “doubtless” became an adverb meaning “undoubtedly.” Thus Webster’s says that “doubtless” in English is an adverb and an idiom, namely a usage unlikely to appear universally in other languages. To our ears, doubtless, no doubt, and without doubt all mean undoubtedly. In French, *sans doubt* is used in this same idiomatic way. The idiomatic phrase “beyond a doubt” arose in English around 1300, becoming the basis for our legalese “beyond a shadow of a doubt.”

Similarly, four hundred years ago in Shakespeare’s play, Henry V, the soon-to-be-executed Lord Scroop, (in act II, scene 2, line 19) says “no doubt,” meaning “undoubtedly,” as does Henry himself in act IV (scene 3, line 96). In the first scene of act V, Fluellen commands Pistol to eat a raw leek as punishment, to which Pistol pleads, “Must I bite?” and Fluellen replies (line 42), “Yes, certainly, and out of doubt and out of question and ambiguities too.” In act IV (scene 1, line 20), Henry says “out of doubt” in a context that might sound ambiguous to us, but scholars and editors consistently understand it to mean “inevitably” --

‘Tis good for men to love their present pains  
Upon example so the spirit is eased  
And when the mind is quickened, out of doubt  
The organs, though defunct and dead before,  
Break up their drowsy grave and newly move  
With casted slough and fresh legerity.

Unsurprisingly, previous Gita translators, when rendering *asamshaya* from Sanskrit into idiomatic English, have taken it to mean “undoubtedly.” It has been misinterpreted so by Shastri (the Ramakrishnamat translator of Shankaracharya’s commentary), by the Gita Press translators, by the Bhaktivedanta-HareKrishna people, and by our editors of

Babaji's translations and commentaries. The Gita Press went so far, for XVIII: 68, as to create an independent clause proclaiming "there is no doubt about it," even though the subject of the entire sloka is the frame of mind of the perfect devotee and teacher, who thus comes to the Lord free of doubt(s).

More unsettling are the words *na samshaya* at the end of sloka 170 in Book Six of the Panchadashi Vedanta text composed in about the fourteenth century, at the time of the appearance of our expression "beyond a doubt" thousands of miles away in Middle English at the start of the European Renaissance that was based on the introduction of learning from the East. The subject of this Vedanta sloka is not the perfect devotee free of doubts, but the typical human who sees all objects in the world according to his own distorted desires and, according to the fully plausible English translation by Swami Swahananda, "There is no doubt about it." Furthermore, standard Sanskrit-English dictionaries, as well as Hindi-English dictionaries, render *asamshaya* idiomatically, just as in modern English: doubtless, no doubt, undoubtedly. The argument in favor of, instead, a non-idiomatic understanding of *asamshaya* in the Bhagavad Gita thus becomes esoteric indeed, requiring the judgment not merely of a Sanskrit scholar, but of a historian of Sanskrit.

A need to overturn quietly a twentieth and even nineteenth century tradition in Gita translation may come as a bit of a surprise, but if it should be done, who better than Babaji and his students to do it? With Sanskrit-English dictionaries themselves offering no support, consultation with a historian of Sanskrit at Harvard or Oxford may be needed in order to provide back-up and reassurance (not just with G. S. Sahota at UCSC, Fred Porta at Stanford, Stephanie Jamison at UCLA, and our own Canadian Sanskrit PhD scholar, Samyukta).

## II

Mandira may have dealt, in her introduction to volume II, with the problem of Jnana vs. Vijnana vs. jnana that arises in the first sloka of chapter VII. Babaji was asked during Gita class 12/29/96 (at a New Year's retreat) about Jnana and Vijnana in the Gita Press edition, and he said:

A: Gita Press of Gorakpur is on a devotional system. ...we are using the jnana yoga system of Shankaracharya.

R: Vijnana means being able to live the knowledge.

A: That means experienced knowledge. Vijnana also means science. A knowledge which is proved. In the Gita it is used as experienced knowledge because it is proved in one's own mind.

The word *jnana* in Sanskrit can span the whole range of knowledge from highest to lowest. The term *jnani* is used again and again in chapter VII for the highest of yogis. Jnana Chakra is at Mula, the crown chakra, whereas Vijnana Chakra is at Sri in the center of the head. Jnana Shakti (energy of consciousness) is the highest of the three shaktis that Mahashakti splits into. At the lower end of the scale, savitarka samadhi involves a

debate between shabda, artha, and jnana which is one's previous conception of the object of concentration, and in nirvitarka, shabda and jnana are left behind and drop away.

### III

Babaji's handwritten translation of sloka 22 is close to the Gita Press version but simpler, ending "obtains his desire as ordained by Me," needlessly changed to "obtains his desires which are being verily ordained by Me." The inserted word "being" mimics Shastry's version, with the archaic, Biblical-sounding "verily" borrowed from somewhere else.

In his translation of sloka 29, Babaji's "know Brahma" has been changed to "they realize in full that Brahman." These words are directly plagiarized from Shastry. For Babaji to have lifted something from another translator is one thing, but for us to replace Babaji's perfectly adequate wording with exactly the words of an earlier translator is unjustified.

Babaji's original needs other corrections:

#10 commentary -- "the intellect is a derivation of Prakriti in which Purusha reflects" should be changed to "the intellect is a derivative of Prakriti in which Purusha is reflected," or "the intellect is a derivative of Prakriti that reflects Purusha." A "derivation" is not a derivative, evolute, product, or progeny, but rather is a lineage of ancestors or roots (etymological, for example).

As for "reflects," in standard English (irrespective of Babaji's usage that we have grown used to), water or a mirror reflects the moon or sun, the moon or sun is reflected in water, and the moon reflects the sun's light. Thus the lesser thing plays the active role, which is the more accepted usage grammatically, and also is more compatible with Babaji's teaching (according to which Brahm and Purusha are inactive, but everything that actively happens reflects their presence).

### IV

Some corrections of Babaji's original are needed in order to be self-consistent. (Otherwise the result is flawed in ways that any reader will notice).

#1 commentary -- the order of 2) and 3) should have been reversed (logically).

#8 translation should say "strung on God," as does the commentary (not strung in God).

#10 translation and commentary should say "the glory of the glorious" (rather than "the glory of glorious"),

#12 first sentence of commentary should say "strung on God" (not strung in God).

#29 translation should say, in order to correspond to the Sanskrit:, "Those who strive for liberation from old age and death, taking refuge in me, know Brahman (the all-pervading Self), Adhyatma (the totality of individual souls), and Karma (the entire field of action)." That change can bring the #29 translation into conformity with the format of the comparable #30 translation, which Shastry failed to do and Babaji followed Shastry's inadequate example.

[Find Brahma as “all-pervading Self” in the first sentence of the fourth paragraph of Babaji’s #29 commentary, and find Adhyatma as “the totality of individual souls” and Karma as “the entire field of activity” in the first sentence of the second paragraph of #30 commentary. This three-fold list in the Sanskrit corresponds to Shastry’s and Babaji’s three-fold list in English, making clear that Shastry’s “individual Self” refers to Adhyatma, which Babaji in his commentary renders so much better as “the totality of individual souls.”]

grammar and spelling:

#4 -- Astadha Prakriti is what Mandira wrote in by hand and is what the Sanskrit says, instead of Ashtha Prakriti as typed.

The second “would” in the next to last sentence of the next to last paragraph should be changed to “were.”

#5 -- at end of main paragraph of commentary, Babaji wrote “Due to the conscious principle, everything is sustained, nourished, and functions properly.” That was fine, or “functions” could be changed to “functioning.” But instead, the order was reversed in the editing, putting “functions” first and “sustained” last.

In the first sentence of the last paragraph of #5 commentary, “it” should be removed.

#12 -- in the translation and in the second sentence of first paragraph, “whatever beings that are...” should be changed either to “all beings that are....” or to “whatever beings are....”

#14 -- end of first paragraph: “world exists” has been changed to “world exist” (which is ungrammatical)

#15 translation -- both original and edited versions are ungrammatical. Babaji wrote, “the lowest of men, those whose discrimination has been destroyed by the maya and [who] follow the ways of demons” and his editors wrote, “the lowest of men, deprived of discrimination by the maya and follow[ing] the ways of demons...” [Bracketed words are suggested insertions.]

#18 -- in the translation and in the first paragraph of commentary, “my very self” should be capitalized in both, or not capitalized in both. (Babaji had it one way in the translation and the other way in the commentary, but his editors switched both, so the result stayed just as inconsistent as before.)

## V

A number of unfortunate changes have been made, some perhaps inadvertently, that sacrifice the meaning of Babaji’s original:

#3 in second sentence of commentary and #19 in second sentence of commentary -- Babaji’s “liberation from all experiences” should not be changed to “liberation from experience,” because in the singular it sounds so unnecessarily deadly. Compare II: 2, where his plural was retained and published (page 116, defining *moksha*).

#4 -- in last paragraph, “distinction between purusha and prakriti” should not have been changed to “distinctions between purusha and prakriti” – Babaji never talks about this in plural.

#6 -- in the translation, “being” should be changed back to “beings” as Babaji wrote it, and in the last sentence (or maybe next to last as edited), “kind” needs to be changed back to “kinds” to be grammatical (“kinds of shapes, sizes, colors of objects....”).

#13 translation -- “All the world does not know me, the supreme and imperishable” has been most unfortunately changed to “does not know me as higher than they and imperishable.” This seems to represent a misunderstanding, as if Babaji had been trying to say, “does not know me to be superior and imperishable.”

#15 -- fourth and fifth paragraphs (or united as originally, constituting Babaji’s fourth paragraph) originally were devoted to contrasting human and animal consciousness, and then in Babaji’s final sentence he said the lowest of humans are at the animal level. This was the punch line. The edited version has changed all the sentence so that they all contrast humans at a human level with humans at an animal level. This is cumbersome, unnecessarily abstract, and much less poignant.

#19 -- last paragraph now begins: “A human being after going through the cycle of birth and death many times achieves liberation,” but Babaji’s original did not make it sound so inevitable. Here is Babaji’s original, with just the word “if” inserted at the start and the word “when” removed in the middle: “If a human being, after going through the cycle of birth and death many times, attains Self-realization, it is the end of the cycle of birth and death, because the wise yogi knows that there is nothing else except God (Self) and merges in it.” To break it back into two sentences, the word “because” could be removed.

#21 commentary -- Babaji’s second and third paragraphs appear to have been accidentally combined (as a typo). Also, the portion of the sentence that is in quotation marks has been shortened unnecessarily. It does not matter that Babaji’s words veer from a direct quotation of the translation of the other sloka . His words say the meaning in a paraphrase that is easier to understand.

#26 -- in Babaji’s sentence, “In all evolutes of matter, the pure consciousness is the illuminating principle,” the word “illuminating” has been changed to “ultimate” due to a typo or to a misreading of Babaji’s handwriting (that might have been poorly xeroxed near the right hand margin?), and despite the obvious repetition in the following words: “just like the sunlight illuminates all objects of the world.”

#27 first paragraph of commentary -- The word “Self” appears in each sentence, four times altogether and capitalized each time, but in the editing the fourth instance got uncapitalized (probably inadvertently), and should be restored to “the Self remains obscured.”

## VI

Changes have been made unnecessarily that sacrifice Babaji’s semantic freshness:

#3 last sentence of the first paragraph -- “wakes up” was changed, apparently by Ma Renu, to “awakens” (which sounds hackneyed and like something that might happen to others, rather than to yourself)

#4 -- “finds itself” in final sentence was changed to “discovers itself” (which is nice, too, but is used elsewhere)

#8 translation and commentary -- OM would be better not changed to Om (but already has been, in the published first volume)

#11 commentary -- “behave” should be changed to “act” in third to last sentence  
#22 last sentence -- “But” has been changed to “However” right before “whatever,”  
creating stylistically an ugly combination. How about “Nonetheless” instead?  
#30 commentary -- “gist” should not be changed to “essence” at start of third paragraph

Unnecessary verbosity has been added to some of Babaji’s commentaries:

#14 -- four more sentences have been created and tacked on at the end  
#18, #20, and #23 -- final “recap” sentences have been created and tacked on which are unnecessary and tedious. We get enough repetition in Babaji’s original writings already.  
#24 -- Babaji wrote three paragraphs. His first two paragraphs, originally two sentences each, have been thoroughly rewritten, with added material, and two new paragraphs have been created and inserted between Babaji’s second and third, to explain terms used in his second paragraph. One paragraph explains God’s “higher nature” by repeating what is in Babaji’s sloka 4, 5, and 7 commentaries, and the other explains the term “unmanifest.” These new materials add one and a half times as many words as constituted Babaji’s whole original.  
#26 -- an extra sentence has been created and inserted before the last two sentences of the second paragraph.

## VII

Babaji penciled in several corrections in the PCC binder that hopefully and probably have been duly incorporated, as did happen for the already-published volume I.

#6 title – “the sustainer” is inserted into: “the creator, the sustainer, and the dissolver”

#6 commentary -- “womb of all beings” replaces “womb of all being,” and “entire” is inserted into “source and dissolution of the entire universe.”

#24 title -- Babaji replaced “Why people do not strive.....” with “How the ignorant see the Self and do not strive.....”

#24 commentary -- Babaji inserted “main” into; “It is the main principle by which they are able to function.....”

[All suggestions here are based on comparison of Babaji’s handwritten second commentary (originally written in the 1990’s) against the edited and typed version in the binder at PCC, which undoubtedly does not represent the current final version. Similar review of VIII-XII could be prepared if Babaji’s handwritten commentary were made available, and a week allowed per chapter.]

chetanashakti @ hotmail.com --- 831- 421-0432

