

## A Few Questions of Universal Interest.

BY JAYADAYAL GOYANDKA.

A friend has sent me some very useful questions. They are reproduced below together with their answers.

*Question:* How can Dispassion (वैराग्य), in the true sense of the term, be developed?

*Answer:* True Dispassion may be developed through the realization of the fact that all worldly objects being transient and perishable bring nothing but sorrow. This realization has to be gained through association with people who possess true Dispassion.

*Question:* God is realized through 'exertion' as well as Divine Grace. How is 'exertion' to be practised, and how is Grace to be comprehended?

*Answer:* 'Exertion' (पुरुषार्थ), in the real sense of the term, means complete surrender to God, who is all-pervading and embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss. Making the heart full of the spirit of Dispassion, one should diligently try to surrender oneself to God. 'Surrender' means practice of *Japa* of the Divine Name, practice of meditation of the Divine Form, careful observance of the Divine injunctions, and realization of Divine Grace at every step, both through the means which bring either pleasure or pain, and through the actual experience of pleasure or pain. The secret of Grace may be comprehended only when one has surrendered himself to God.

*Question:* What is the easiest method of attaining God-Vision and God-Realization?

*Answer:* Practice of exclusive Devotion is the easiest method. The Lord says in the *Gītā*:

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवविधोऽर्जुन  
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥

(XI. 54)

"O performer of matchless austerities, Arjuna! Through practice of exclusive Devotion alone I may be thus known in essence, directly perceived, and realized through establishment of identity."

The character of exclusive Devotion is as follows:

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।  
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥

(*Gītā*, XI. 55)

"O Arjuna, he who performs action only for My sake and has wholly surrendered himself to Me, who is My devotee, freed from attachment, and without any hatred towards any being, he (possessed of exclusive Devotion), attains Me."

The realization of *Paramātmā* as all-pervading Knowledge and Bliss may be gained even through the practice of *Jñāna-yoga* (the *Yoga* of Knowledge), but the direct perception of the Divine Form possessed of attributes may be gained only through the practice of exclusive Devotion. 'Exclusive Devotion' and

'Complete Surrender' mean one and the same thing; in explaining 'Surrender' one has to give a description of 'Exclusive Devotion,' and in explaining 'Exclusive Devotion' one has to describe 'Surrender'. Just as the word 'सत्परमः' in the above verse indicates surrender to God, even so in Chapter IX, verse 34 'Exclusive Devotion' has been described as being included in 'Surrender'. In Chapter IX, verse 32 the Lord says that women, Vaiśyas, Śūdras and even men born of sinful wombs (untouchables etc.) attain the Supreme State by taking refuge in Him (surrendering themselves to Him).

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनिनः ।  
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

In verse 34, only a verse after the above declaration, the Lord has explained the character of 'Surrender' as follows:—

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।  
मा मे वैश्वसि युक्तवैवनात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥

"Fix your mind on Me, be My devotee, worship Me, bow down before Me. Having thus surrendered yourself to Me, you will identifying your soul with Me, attain Me."

Though the whole of this verse describes 'Exclusive Devotion' in the name of 'Surrender' yet when it says 'be My devotee' (मद्भक्तो भव), it enunciates *Bhakti* (Devotion) in very clear terms.

*Question:* Why do not people feel the need of God? What are the means to feel that need?

*Answer:* People fail to realize the need of God because of their

ignorance about God's Form, mystery, innate nature, qualities, glory and the Truth about Him. As soon as this ignorance is removed, they begin to feel the need. This ignorance is removed through association with men, who possess actual knowledge of the Form, etc., mentioned above.

*Question:* "O Umā, he who has known the nature of Rāma, likes to do nothing except *Bhajana*."\* What is this nature of God, a knowledge of which makes it impossible to withhold oneself from *Bhajana*?

*Answer:* God, the Supreme *Puruṣa*, is the greatest friend who scatters mercy and love to all without any motive, He treats those with affection who surrender themselves to Him, He is the protector of the distressed,— a possession of true knowledge of all these and other virtues of God makes it impossible for one to withhold oneself from *Bhajana*.

The Lord Himself says:—

"O Bhārata, the undeluded soul, who thus knows Me in truth as the Supreme *Puruṣa*, he, all-knowing, constantly engages himself in *Bhajana* with all his heart."

(*Gita*, XV. 19)

"Having known Me (in truth), who am the Enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Lord of all the worlds and Friend of all beings, that is, a lover of all without any motive, he attains peace."

(*Gita*, V. 29)

\* उमा रामं सुभाषं जिह्वां जाना ।  
तिह्वां भजन् तज्जि भाव न जाना ॥

“O Arjuna, in whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I seek them (and fulfil their desires); men of understanding knowing this secret follow My path in every respect.”

(Gita, IV. 11)

“It is My resolve that when a being takes refuge in Me, and seeks My protection, by saying even once ‘Oh Lord, I am Thine’, I offer him security against all creatures.”\*

(Valmiki Ramayana, XVIII. 33)

*Question:* We are in the habit of talking big, but do not seriously devote ourselves to the practice of any discipline. Why does this happen?

*Answer:* This happens because of our bad habit. This habit may be removed through association with noble, worthy souls and advanced practicers as well as reflection on the teachings of the scriptures.

*Question:* What is the reason of our developing, now and then, lack of faith even in true Mahātāmās?

*Answer:* Association with unbelievers and the awakening of the latencies of sin done in the past—these are the two reasons which cause occasional lack of faith even in true

Mahātāmās. Therefore, the association with unbelievers and evil latencies should be abandoned with the help of discrimination. Prayers should be offered to God for the destruction of evil latencies.

*Question:* If we do not take to ‘exertion’ (पुरुषार्थ), but try to realize only Divine Grace, can this not lead to our deliverance?

*Answer:* The realization of Divine Grace cannot lead to the evil result of depriving the practicer of the power to exert himself with a view to please God. For true ‘exertion’ lies in surrendering oneself to God, and through surrender alone it may be possible for one to comprehend the mystery of Divine Grace.

*Question:* How can we develop the strong faith that God is present everywhere, that He hears our prayers with a sympathetic heart, and that when we feel sufficiently agitated, He may reveal Himself and give us the privilege of His sight?

*Answer:* Strong faith may be developed through hearing, again and again, the immortal stories relating to God’s virtues, favour, majesty, mystery, sports and reality from the lips of devotees, who know the truth about this reality, and reflecting on the same, and through the practice of some discipline laid down by them.

*Question:* By constantly reflecting that he is low, a person becomes low; but Goswami Tulasidasji attained the Supreme State by regarding himself to be fallen and low. How did this happen?

\* यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।  
स सर्वविद् भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥  
भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।  
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥  
ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।  
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥  
सङ्कदेव प्रपन्नाय तवासीति च याचते ।  
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्भ्रतं मम ॥

*Answer:* A person becomes low through performance of action which is vile and low, and not by regarding himself to be low. He who prays with humility before God, though he may be fallen and low, attains the Supreme State. What is there to wonder, then, that Goswami Tulasidasji should attain the Supreme State? God delivers only him who regards with a sincere heart that he is the humblest, the most fallen and degraded of creatures. For God is called the friend and protector of the fallen. He who considers himself to be superior to others sinks in the spiritual scale. For it leads to pride, which, proceeding as it does from ignorance, causes his downfall. To regard oneself to be superior to others is nothing but ignorance. To regard oneself as humble is a virtue. One does not become low by regarding himself to be low, on the contrary he is held to be a high soul.

*Question:* How can one develop true attachment to God?

*Answer:* This may be developed through association with devotees who are attached to God and carrying out their commands.

*Question:* How is it possible to make one an instrument, and God the wielder of the instrument?

*Answer:* This may be done through association with persons who have already made themselves instruments of God, *i. e.*, who have completely surrendered themselves to God, and through practice of disciplines according to their instructions.

*Question:* How can we come in contact with true devotees of God?

*Answer:* Through latencies of good *Karma* stored in the past, through sincere reverence for such devotees, and through the grace of God and of such devotees, one may come in contact with true devotees of God.

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## The Realm of God.

A dike to hold these worlds asunder that they intermingle not; such is God. Day and night pass not across that dike, neither old age, nor death, nor grief, nor good nor evil deed.

From it all wicked men turn back. For the realm of God of which we speak is one from which all evil is driven away. Therefore, a blind man when he has crossed the dike is blind no longer, a wounded man no longer wounded, a sufferer no longer suffering. Therefore, for those who have crossed it, night, too, appears as day. For the realm of God is for ever bright.

Aspirants who find that world of God through observance of *Brahmacharya* (chastity), theirs is that heavenly country; theirs, in whatever world they are, is freedom.

*Chhândogya Upaniṣad.*

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