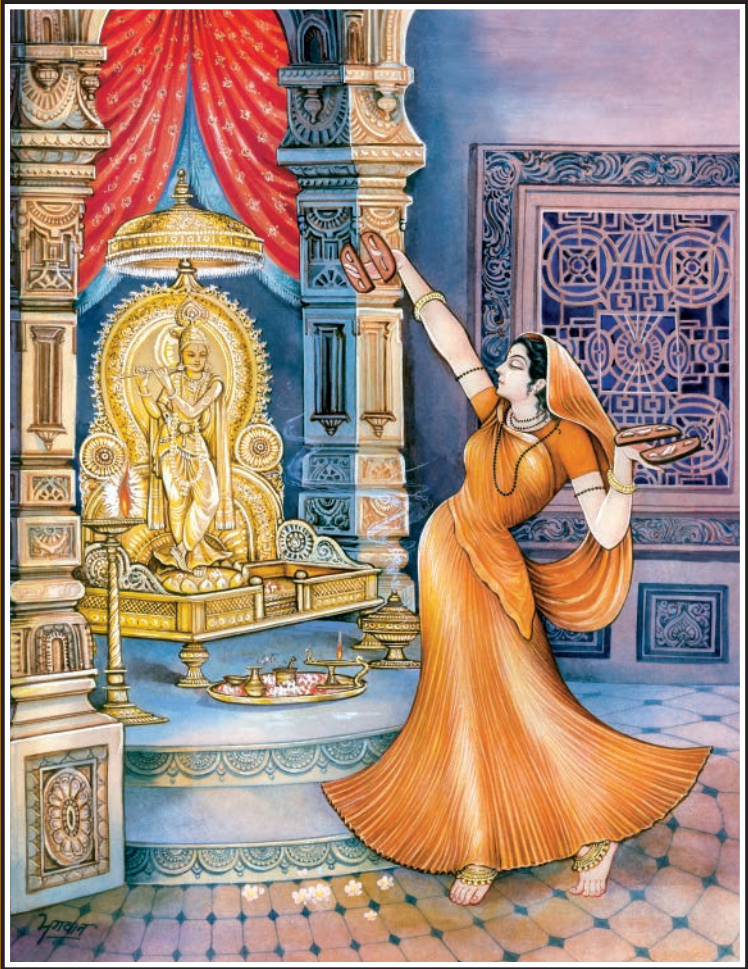


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Devotee Mīrābāī

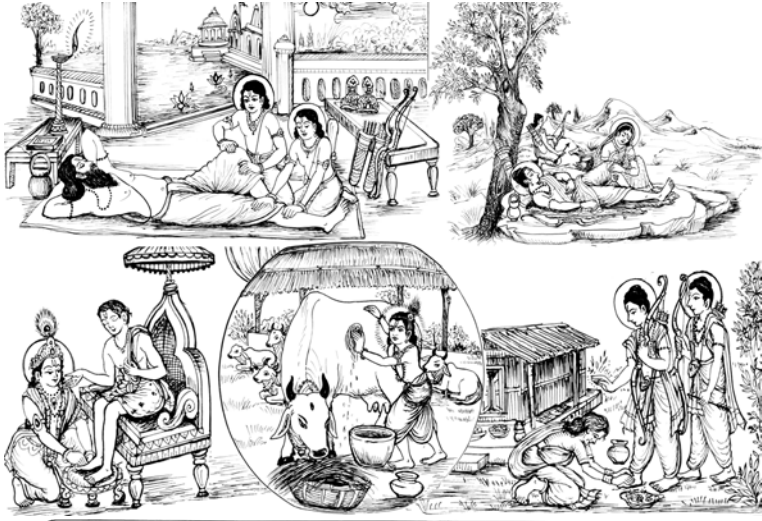
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ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



KALYANA-KALPATARU

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL
IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

Vol. 63

February 2018

No. 5

Subhāṣitam

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके स्वर्गस्योपरि तिष्ठतः ।

प्रभुश्च क्षमया युक्तो दरिद्रश्च प्रदानवान् ॥

These two people are above the glory of heaven although remaining in this world; one who is in authority but kind-hearted and full of pardon and the other who though poor is charitable in nature.

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Selfless Action

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

“Renunciation of the fruit of one’s actions or in other words, disinterested or selfless work is higher even than meditation; for from such renunciation immediately follows peace of mind.”

It is the elimination of selfishness that is sought to be conveyed by the word ‘renunciation’ in this context. It is this spirit of selflessness that is of supreme importance in every field of activity.

This frail body is perishable. It is the height of folly to lavish money on nourishing or beautifying it. That money should be devoted to the service of the distressed, the needy and the forlorn. Every effort should be made to overcome attachment for the money that we have in our possession and which should ever be put to the best use possible. For, when we depart from this world, we shall leave behind all our possessions and there is no knowing what will be their fate. We have been afforded this opportunity only for a short time; it is not going to stay long. Hence we should avail ourselves of it before it is too late. In the end this body as well as this power and self will cease to be. Whatever is owned by us today is soon going to part from us. Even as time is rolling by, all these things are also drifting with time. They will not endure in spite of our best efforts. When our body is not going to survive, much less will its belongings last. Hence all these things should be utilized in the service of God manifested in the form of the world.

Everyone of our mothers and sisters should remember that this body is soon going to perish, that one day it will be reduced to ashes. Hence before it is burnt to ashes, it should be used to the best advantage in the service of God appearing in the form of the universe, so that our birth as a human being may be fulfilled. One should feel the same satisfaction in serving all as one would feel in serving the Lord; for all are images or shrines of God. Hence service to the cosmos is virtually the same as service rendered to the Lord. It is this kind of disinterested or selfless service that goes by the name of disinterested action. The mind gets most speedily purified and genuine love for God enhanced through such disinterested action. Hence all our movements should be intended to please the Lord.

We appeal to our mothers and sisters to accord such treatment to their children as may conduce to their best interests. The interest of the latter obviously lies in their acquiring knowledge and building an excellent moral character. Hence they should be imparted the highest learning and good moral instruction. If the parents bear a good moral character, their progeny too, are bound to be morally good. Good morals should be most scrupulously placed before our children in the form of exemplary conduct; then alone can healthy moral influence be exerted on them. If you continue to tell lies and practise deceit, thieving and adultery and ask your children to speak the truth, observe a vow of strict non-violence and continence and abstain from thieving, your precept alone will carry no weight. What you are required to do, therefore, is to set a noble example before them and then instruct them accordingly.

Widowed mothers and sisters would be well-advised

to lead an absolutely pure, abstentious and unworldly life and completely eschew luxuries and comforts, lickerishness and smartness, mirth and coquetry. Asceticism should be their watchword. They should practise control of mind and senses. Nay, they should avoid the very sight and shun the company of such ladies as are given to luxuries and comforts, lickerishness and smartness and so on. A widow should feel that the latter are sunk in worldliness and are wasting their precious life. She should not, therefore, throw away her life by cultivating their fellowship. Widows should particularly spend their time in adoration and contemplation, worship and recital of sacred texts, prayer and singing praises to the Lord, as well as in rendering disinterested service as enjoined by the scriptures. They should always take the best possible work for their body.

It is obligatory on those whose husband is alive to serve their widowed sisters and gratify them with a sincere heart. Whosoever oppresses a widow, meets with a downfall in this world, is subjected to calumny and is cast into terrible hell after death.

Widows should themselves refrain from attending functions of a purely *Rājasika* (mundane) character such as weddings and betrothals and should scrupulously avoid secular festivities, musical performances etc. Of course, there is no objection to their joining religious and devotional congregations and attending spiritual discourses. On the other hand, they will be profited thereby. But whenever they are required to stir out-of-doors, even to attend a religious function, they must always be accompanied by their own people, whether of their husband's family or of their parents home; under no circumstances should they venture out alone. A lady who moves freely all by herself, exposes herself to the risk of moral degradation. Hence ladies should never move

freely out-of-doors.

Manu says:—

बाल्ये पितुर्वशे तिष्ठेत् पाणिग्राहस्य यौवने ।
पुत्राणां भर्तरि प्रेते न भजेत् स्त्री स्वतन्त्रताम् ॥

(V. 48)

“A woman should remain under the control of her father during her childhood, of her husband in her youth and of her (adult) sons when her husband is no more (or of her husband’s relatives if she has no adult sons). On no account should she enjoy freedom.”

It should be borne in mind that in the event of a master perpetrating a sin, its evil consequences are not shared by his dependants. Similarly, if a husband commits a sin, its consequences are not shared by his wife; for she is dependent on her husband. But if a wife goes astray, the evil consequences of her transgression are shared half and half by her husband, who lords it over her. On the other hand, a faithful wife gets one half of the merit earned by her husband by virtue of a meritorious act performed by him. But a wife who is not amenable to the control of her husband, does not get this share. That wife alone who is devoted to her husband and stands by him through thick and thin, receives an equal share of his merit.

Hence wives whose husband is alive should strive till the last moment of their life to observe the rules of conjugal fidelity.



Supreme Wealth

—*Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar*

Remember : he alone who is possessed of supreme wealth in the form of reverence for and faith in God and practice of God-remembrance, is a truly rich man. And from this very wealth flows eternal peace, eternal happiness and eternal satisfaction.

Remember : in fact, the worldly possessions that you treat as your property and the riches you regard as your fortune, serve only to aggravate your want and poverty. Their non-acquisition too carries with it a sense of want and indigence, while their acquisition brings even a still more acute feeling of want and impecuniosity.

Remember : real wealth and real fortune is only that which ends our want. Would that wealth be worth the name should its acquisition only increase one's want?

Remember : the more a man gets the means of worldly enjoyment, the more he craves for them. And it is self-evident that the wider the range of desire, the greater is the want. The very sense of want is clear evidence of one's poverty.

Remember : he who is contented and is never perturbed by any material want, enjoys supreme peace and happiness, even though he is impecunious in the eyes of the world. While the so-called millionaires, men in authority, rulers and leaders wail and weep, he constantly revels in his sublime and natural peace.

Remember : desire is a formidable fire, which blazes all the more furiously when successively fed with fuel and

clarified butter in the form of sense-enjoyments. And as it grows in volume, the burning and agony caused by it, increase in the same proportion. A man burning with the fire of desire, may get the most rare and choicest objects of sense-gratification and attain the highest position in the world; yet he would continue to burn all over his life. Nay, he will die full of burning and will be reborn with a heart burning with the same fire.

Remember : this terrible fire of desire will never be extinguished by the acquisition of objects of one's liking. It will be extinguished only when one develops reverence for and faith in God and believes that every benign dispensation of the Lord is full of blessings and lastly when one takes to the adoration of God in a spirit of resignation and with implicit faith, regarding such adoration as the supreme end.

Remember : you have been invested with a human body only for the adoration of God. Blinded by infatuation, you are viewing the objects of this world as embodiments of bliss. Nay, ever worried for their acquisition and developing an inordinate attachment and infatuation for them when acquired, you are thus, doing a very great harm to yourself through your own folly, forgetting your real purpose.

Remember : worldly loss, however great, is no loss at all. It is only the want or non-acquisition of a worldly object or the destruction or disappearance of an object already in your possession that you regard as your loss. This loss you are bound to suffer *nolens volens* the moment you die. You may be the owner of countless invaluable things; nevertheless, on your death you will be surely disunited from them and they will surely pass out of your hands. Hence their loss should never be reckoned as such. Your

real loss lies in the fact that you have wasted your human existence without achieving its object. And that object will be realized only by giving up the attachment and infatuation for worldly objects and developing reverence for and faith in God and practising His adoration.



May you build an abode of Goddess Lakṣmī in the chamber of your heart with the bricks of virtuousness and the mortar of harmony. She will be immensely pleased with you and will abide in you for ever. She will bless you with all that is needed to lead a life of fullness. You will become goodness personified.

Money does not determine man's prosperity. It is the noble qualities, generosity included, which make him prosperous. All bad qualities, including stinginess, doom him to poverty.

—Swami Ramarajyam

As without '1' before zero has no value. You put ten zeros, it has no value but put a '1' before the zeroes, then everything shines. Every new zero then contributes plenty to the value. Therefore, put God first and then everything else. Then they all become meaningful. Take away God everything becomes meaningless.

—Sri Ramakrishna

Goal of Human Life

—*Brahmalina Swami Ramsukhdas*

One man was going to his village on a camel ride, he reached a midway village at the fall of night. There at one place a marriage ceremony was taking place. Drums and trumpets were being beaten and blown. That man was a Brahmin. Having reached the spot he came to know that “*Bhūra*” was about to be disbursed. “*Bhūra*,” in Sanskrit, is known as ‘*Bhūyasī Dakṣiṇā*,’ a special gift which is given to Brahmins on wedding occasions. That Brahmin fastened the camel outside the house and went inside to obtain the ‘*Bhūra*.’ The thieves who happened to be there, saw the camel staying, untied it and drove it away. Inside, as a result of the distribution of ‘*Bhūra*,’ Brahmins received four annas each. When the travelling Brahmin came out, he was sad to see the camel missing. What a tragedy! There was on the one hand, the gain of four annas while, on the other, there was a big loss of five hundred rupees, the cost of camel. The purport of the illustration is that in the petty achievements of transitory worldly things—some honour, some wealth, some pleasures, some status, some rich food—the camel of God-realization is forgotten and lost sight of. Such is the plight ! The great Bliss is foresaken in favour of temporary glitter of worldly pettinesses and small pleasures ! Eternal happiness is being lost in ephemeral happiness ! People become happy in small doses of honours. One saint was told by some people that he was highly honoured and respected by them. The saint said : “What honour you can confer ! Dust? All of you

people can hardly pay any honour. We are honoured by God ! What power have you to honour us?" Truly, indeed, God alone decks His devotees, the saints, with the honour of immortality ! How does a worldly fellow know what the Real Honour is !

The supreme gain which you crave for, is in reality, the deep longing for God-realization. You may call, if you so desire, this longing 'the urge to know,' 'the urge to love,' 'the urge to be happy for ever,' 'the urge to see God face to face,' 'the urge for God-realization'. All mean one and the same thing. Only this is our goal. Be firm and fixed on this objective. Do not be pleased with the incomplete. If you do not get stuck up in the half incomplete, you will realize the Full.

This human body is the best of all the living forms. So, its ultimate goal should also be the best. There should be no higher goal than that ever thinkable. It is thus self-evident that God-realization is the highest and the noblest goal of human life. Human life is meant only for this supreme purpose.



If one's whole life is based on the comfort of the flesh, coddling the little body, how can one know divine happiness? Why give so much attention to something that has to be cast away at a moment's notice? To be busy day and night with the body, is a bad habit. It is a delusion by which one becomes more and more attached to his physical existence.

Sweet are the Uses of Adversity

—Swami Sivananda

You will find in the writings of Shakespeare, “Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet on its head a precious jewel.” The best thing in this world is pain or adversity. During pain only man remembers God. Pain is the eye-opener. The quest of God begins from pain. The starting point of philosophy is from pain. Had there not been pain in this world, man would never have attempted to get freedom (*Mokṣa*). He would have been satisfied with mundane life only. In trying to get rid of pain, he comes across Truth or the abode of Peace, *Parama-Dhāma*. He starts prayer, *Japa*, charity, selfless service, study of religious books, etc. *Bhaktas* always pray to God, “O Lord! Give us sufferings always so that we shall ever remember Thee.” Kuntī Devī prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, “*Hey Prabhu*, let me always have adversity, so that my mind shall be ever fixed at Thy Lotus Feet.” Adversity develops power of endurance and will-force. Adversity develops fortitude and forbearance. Adversity melts a stony heart and infuses devotion to God. Adversity is a divine blessing in disguise. Do not be afraid, therefore, when you are in adverse circumstances. Adversity has got its own virtues. People have risen to power and position from adverse conditions of life. Adversity makes a man to struggle hard. The late Sir T. Muthuswāmī Iyer, who was Chief Justice, High Court of Madras, was in adverse circumstances. He used to study at night under a municipal street lantern. Many prime ministers of England had risen

high from adverse conditions of life. All the prophets, saints, Fakirs, *Bhaktas*, *Yogīs* of yore, had to struggle hard in adverse circumstances. Śaṅkara, Jñāna Deva, Rāma Tīrtha and Tukā Rāma were all placed in adverse circumstances. They were all highly benefited by adversity. They would never have achieved greatness and glorious spiritual heights had they been placed in luxurious conditions.

God puts his devotees to severe tests and rigorous trials before he gives His *Darśana*. Tulasīdāsa, Rāmadāsa, Sūradāsa were all put to tests of several sorts. If God tries His devotees, He, at the same time, bestows upon them immense inner strength, power of endurance and spiritual patience also. Prince Surendranātha told me, “Swāmījī, I do not see any good in renunciation. All the Sadhus, *Saṁnyāsīs* and *Mahātmās* also suffer from diseases.” I replied, “Dear Prince, you are young. Sadhus are quite indifferent. You cannot understand their internal state. They do not identify themselves with their bodies. They may even cry out but their *Jñāna Sthiti* is not broken. They are firm in their *Brahma-Niṣṭha*. They have no sufferings at all. The by-standers may foolishly imagine that they are undergoing sufferings. Their minds are fixed on God or Brahman. Their strong conviction is that there is no body, in the past, present or future and that they are all-pervading *Ātmā* or pure consciousness. Swāmī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa had cancer of the throat. He never felt any pain as his mind was fixed always on Mother Kālī. He had not time to think of his body even. A *Tyāgī*, Sadhu or *Saṁnyāsī* has his inner peace, delight and divine bliss, quite unknown to the worldly man. Even if you offer them kingdom, riches, etc., they will shun them ruthlessly. Riches have no value before their eyes. They know their worthless nature. My dear prince, you have really no idea of the

happy life of a *Samnyāsī*. You are still worldly-minded, though there is a slight trace of *Bhakti* in your heart.”

Prince Surendranātha said, “Swāmījī, thank you very much. I now understand your point well. The matter is quite clear now. I am really sorry, I had a wrong notion.”

Just hear, Prince Surendranātha, this anecdote of two devotees. Rūpa and Sanātana, though enjoying regal powers, left their royal states at the bidding of Lord Gaurāṅga and passed the rest of their days under trees, relying on food that came to them unsought (*Yadricalabha Santushta*). They had all the sufferings which people would consider unhearable; yet they were, according to their own testimony, far happier when they were under trees than when they could sleep in palaces. The *Bhakta* has his celestial joys unknown to the men of the world. Surendranātha said, “Swāmījī, you have thrown a flood of light on the point. My doubts have vanished now. I am grateful indeed.”



Man remains fully convinced that he is essentially a body, even though he daily receives proof to the contrary. Every night in sleep. “The little death” he discards his identification with the physical form and is reborn as invisible consciousness.

*

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A multitude of lectures about sunshine and scenic beauties will not enable to see them if my eyes are closed. So it is that people do not see God Who is omnipresent in everything unless and until they open their spiritual eye of intuitive perception.

Ramana on Satsaṅga

“Our real nature is Liberation, but we imagine that we are bound....All spiritual teachings are only meant to make us retrace our steps to our Original source. All you have to do is remove the coverings that conceal it. The path of knowledge removes the illusion of ‘I.’ The path of devotion removes the illusion of ‘Me’...Surrender is giving oneself up to the origin of one’s Being. In due course, we will know that our glory lies where we cease to exist. *Satsaṅga* means association (*Saṅga*) with Sat or Reality. *Satsaṅga* (*Satsaṅga*) really means association with the unmanifest Sat or Reality (*Satya*). But as very few can do that, they have to do the second best, which is association with the manifest Truth (*Sat*)—that is, the *Guru*. One who knows or has realised the Truth is also regarded as Truth. *Satsaṅga* will make the mind sink into the Heart. Such association is both mental and physical, The externally visible being of the *Guru* pushes the mind inward. He is also in the Heart of the seeker and so he draws the latter’s inward-bent mind into the Heart. Therefore, the *Guru* is both ‘external’ and ‘internal.’ From the ‘exterior’ He gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the ‘interior’ He pulls the mind towards the Self and helps in the quietening of the mind. So seek the association with holy men. Such association with *Sat* or with one who knows *Sat* is absolutely necessary for all. Śaṅkara has said that in all the three worlds there is no boat like *Satsaṅga* to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths....”

Saints and God are Identical

—Radha Baba

It is entirely through His Grace alone that one can know Him. An impure person like me cannot even really imagine the essential nature of saints and the Lord. The following occurrence relates to Bengal—it is a recent one. There was a woman—she had become a widow. She developed an affection towards the Lord as if towards an offspring (*Vātsalya-Bhāva*) and she offered worship for thirty years to Gopāla (the Protector of cows) considering Him like her son. Every day she used to offer food to Gopāla with affection. Gopāla was now moved with compassion. One day He came and actually began to partake of the fare. He however, fled away after eating only half the food. She became indeed mad with love. Crying, ‘Gopāla, Gopāla,’ she used to wander about aimlessly. In those very days there used to be a very eminent saint by name Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa in Calcutta. Some people were going to him alone and they told her, “Come along O old lady! You will find Gopāla there.” Mad as she was already, she took with her some rice and a little salt in the hope that if she found Gopāla there, she would feed Him. She arrived there. There was a crowd of people and the Paramahansa was giving a discourse. People had brought various kinds of gifts, sweets and fruits, etc. All then were arranged in front of him. The old lady went to him and immediately on seeing the Paramahansa she became absolutely quiet. The Paramahansa stopped his discourse and said, “O Mother, I shall take *Khicaḍī* to be sure (rice and pulse boiled

together in water and seasoned with salt).” *Khīcaḍī* was prepared; the old lady had come to her senses. She thought to herself, “I had gone mad and have now become all right through the grace of this saint.” She received the command—the people considered the old woman to be very fortunate. The old lady felt embarrassed, but the people told her, ‘Paramahansa wants to take your *Khīcaḍī*.’ Paramahansa Rāmakṛṣṇa too used to live almost like a mad man. The old lady prepared the *Khīcaḍī*, but she left a sort of hitch as to how to offer to the saint *Khīcaḍī* made out of only rice and salt. Rāmakṛṣṇa sprang up from the assembly-hall and leaping and jumping, he reached that place saying, “O Mother! Feed me. I am very hungry.” Rāma Kṛṣṇa sat down and the old lady served the food. No sooner was it served than did Rāma Kṛṣṇa assume the form of Gopāla. The old lady then started crying saying, “Gopāla—dear Gopāla.” From that day onwards the relation between the old lady and Gopāla became eternal. What I mean to say is that there is not one but so many instances which occur openly and which do prove that a saint and the Lord are entirely identical. At the same time it is also proved that there is no demand and that is why the saints do not manifest themselves in that form. There have been such saints who just with one look transmitted love that very moment to the most impure of living beings.

There is one thing more to understand. Even though there is no difference between a saint and the Lord, one finds that the sentiment of duality in the form of ‘Lover’ (प्रेमी) and ‘Beloved’ (प्रेमास्पद) does exist in the loving devotees.

Even as Rādhā Rānī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are essentially one, yet both of them remain manifest in two forms, similarly the loving devotees, inspite of being identical with the Lord, maintain a separate identity of their own. And as

the secret to win the pleasure of Rādhā Rānī lies in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that to win Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure lies in the service of Rādhā Rānī,—just so is the case with the couple consisting of a devotee and the Lord.



To try to be a millionaire in this incarnation, is really much more difficult than to be a true son of God. Earthly environment is so limited that many people die without having become what they want to be. But to know God is possible in one lifetime, because you don't have to acquire Him, He is already your own.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

Bhakti is intense love for God—“When a man gets it he loves all, hates none; he becomes satisfied forever”. “This love cannot be reduced to any earthly benefit” because so long as worldly desires last, that kind of love does not come.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Pleasing Paradox

—*Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande*

Life is a teasing paradox
That belies pleasing lies
So now and again have a go
To share the obstacles of flow.

The graceful river travels slow
The ebb tide deflects very low
Dig up the bed deep to unearth
For the base shows some dearth.

Make bare the garb of truth
Meet falsity's gaping mouth
Reeking filth rude uncouth
Wheezing vigor of the youth.

Falsehood stands undaunted and bold
Not to allow beauty's blissful mold
Holds her by horns into impish fold
To get the essence of divine gold.

Fear engulfs surging feeling
Apathetic face below ceiling
Finds no new alternative save
To erase symbols within cave.

In intensifying awkward tune
Conscience grows more jejune
Psychic-stuff swiftly seize
Makes bridges made of breeze
All distances fade and cease.

Nativity's shores though bound to eternity
 Overflow time and again the extremity
 Heavy downpour and torrents unending
 Inundate only barren stark and pending.

Leaving behind sand and silt
 Moving fast to withdraw the tilt
 Forming a habitat calm and quiet
 Where intruders dare not to bite.

Situated at an altitude serene and still
 A new plenitude of being will fill
 A form for benediction of one and all
 That to surround the memorial wall.



If by bathing daily God could be realized
 Sooner would I be a whale in the deep;
 If by eating roots and fruits He could be known
 Gladly would I choose the form of a goat;
 If the counting of rosaries uncovered Him
 I would say prayers on mammoth heads;
 If bowing before stone images unveiled Him
 A flinty mountain I would humbly worship;
 If by drinking milk the Lord could be imbibed
 Many calves and children would know Him;
 If abandoning one's wife could summon God
 Would not thousands be eunuchs?
 Mīrābāī knows that to find the Divine one
 The only indispensable is Love.

—Saint Mirabai

Mind-Body Interaction

—Dr. M. S. Manhas

The Scientific View—

Some Tibetan monks are known to have the ability to lower or raise their body temperature and heartbeat by several points. Some Indian holy men can sleep on nails and walk on burning charcoal. Some *Yogīs* can undergo serious surgical operations without the use of general anesthesia. All these extraordinary feats are achieved through the control of mind developed by the practice of *Yoga* or hypnosis.

Amelioration of distress, caused by diseases or superstition, through prayers, performance of special ceremonies and incantation of *Mantras* (potent spiritual words or sentences) has been practiced by primitive societies throughout the world. References to the use of such treatments, which are a reflection of the mind-body participation, are available in the old Greek literature. Hippocrates, the originator of the famous Hippocratic oath on which all medical graduates swear, has made the observation that ‘nature is the healer of disease.’ Over the centuries, voluminous scientific data have accumulated which supports the observation that mind and body are inextricably linked with each other and this conjunction profoundly affects our health and happiness.

But the road to this realization by the medical profession has not been very smooth. As late as 1985, The New England Journal of Medicine published an editorial comment on a research publication relating the effect of social and psychological factors on the course of cancer. It stated, ‘It

is time to acknowledge that our belief in disease as a direct reflection of the mental state is largely folklore.’ Since the publication of this caustic remark, significant medical discoveries have been made that support the concept of intervention by the mind-body complex in a positive or negative way. In general, positive thoughts profoundly help in the physical well-being of the body, whereas negative thinking adversely affects it.

Rene Descartes, a French scientist, philosopher and mathematician is generally accepted as the father of modern philosophical thought. Before his time, philosophy was primarily dominated by ‘scholasticism.’ As a scientist Descartes would not accept any conclusion as true unless it could be scientifically proved to be so. Starting with the dictum ‘Cogito ergo sum—‘I think, therefore, I am,’ he developed the dualistic theory called ‘interactionism.’ According to this theory human mind, a non-extended (which does not occupy space) substance, interacts with the body, an extended (which occupies space) substance. This interaction generates various activities, such as, rational thinking, feeling, willing, imagining, etc. The Almighty God was pressed into service as the agency responsible for the interaction between the two disparate entities. Since then the mind–body interaction theory has been extensively commented upon, severely criticized and prudently affirmed by later philosophers, theologians and medical practitioners.

In 1990, Khansari and coworkers published a schematic diagram in the Journal of Immunology, showing a direct relationship existing between stress and the three vital biological systems in the human body, namely, nervous system, immune system and endocrine systems. Stress directly affects the nervous system which is reversibly linked to the immune and the endocrine systems, using

neuropeptides and immunotransmitters on the one hand and endocrined and pituitary hormones on the other as the mediators. In turn, the immune and endocrine systems also affect each other through immunotransmitters and endocrine hormones. A thorough understanding of this relationship would clarify the scientific basis of mind-body interaction and its effect on human physiology.

Mind-body interaction has now been recognized as a fact of life and forms an important part of the regular curriculum in medical schools. Treatment of various ailments, using *Yoga*, hypnotism, biofeedback, relaxation, attention, etc., are prescribed as an auxiliary therapy by experts in this area. Many sophisticated instruments are in use to quantify brain impulses. This information becomes critical in the treatment of patients suffering from a variety of mental and physical disorders. Cases are on record, which show that terminally ill cancer patients and sufferers of other medically incurable diseases have miraculously survived and have become completely disease free through sheer will power, family support and minimal assistance from mind-body treatment experts. The medical experts have recognized that the emotion generating centres in the body are located in the hypothalamus, amygdala, basal forebrain and the brain stem. The major role of the physician in such treatments is to help the patient to help himself/herself. The doctor cannot cure the patient. His/her primary role is to make the patient understand the cause of the malady that may be lying hidden in the subconscious mind. By now it is well recognized that the principal cause of the psychosomatic disorders from which the patient suffers, may be related to the stress and strains of daily life, the residual anger from infancy or childhood or internal conflicts arising from various causes.

The Scriptural View—

Yoga Vasiṣṭha is a very ancient and monumental treatise on *Advaita* Philosophy. It consists of 32,000 verses divided into six *Prakarāṇas* (parts). Its primary focus is on the means to achieve liberation, but it also covers a variety of other social, ethical and spiritual topics.

While discussing *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga* in the last part of this book, sage Vasiṣṭha has tangentially brought in the subject of human ailments, which must be eliminated to enjoy a healthy body that is fit to bear the rigours of *Yogic* practices. In this connection the role of mind-body connection for the elimination of certain maladies has also been discussed. (*Yoga Vasiṣṭha, Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa, Pūrvārdha, Chapter 81*).

Sage Vasiṣṭha has further mentioned that ailments are a source of *Kleśa* (pain, suffering, sorrow, affliction) for human beings. Their avoidance results in happiness, but their eradication is the source of bliss. In *Yogasūtra* (II. 3-4), *Rṣi Patañjali* says that ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred and clinging to life are the five main causes for human suffering. Out of these, ignorance (spiritual and material) is the root cause of the other four. Elimination of ignorance would automatically erase egoism, attachment, aversion and an inordinate desire to live. Ignorance causes loss of self control leading to wickedness, delusion and multiple psychic disorders. *Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa* says in the *Gītā* (V. 15): ‘Wisdom is shrouded by ignorance and this deludes human beings.’

Ādhi (mental disorders) and *Vyādhi* (physical ailments) are the two principal afflictions of the body. Sometimes these maladies arise simultaneously, sometimes they follow one another and sometimes one becomes the cause of the other. The physical disorders are incidental to the body and are easily corrected through medication. The mental afflictions

are much more serious and require a sustained and expert attention.

Sage vasiṣṭha has mentioned the way health and sickness are connected with the functions of the organs and arteries of the body. He says that a lack of self control, poor quality of food consumption, unhygienic living conditions, unethical and immoral work habits, performance of daily chores at inappropriate hours, greed, entertainment of evil thoughts, intemperance in social and sexual indulgences, longing after undesirable objects, etc., contribute to the development of an unhealthy mind and body. Besides taking proper care of the body, the use of suitable medication, virtuous acts, service of the holy, religious observances and entertainment of positive thoughts purify the mind and body and drive away many of the physical and mental ailments.

To explain how psychic disturbances can independently lead to physical ailments. Sage Vasiṣṭha has indirectly touched upon the subject of mind-body interaction. He says that a person suffering from mental delusions cannot comprehend the right course of action that is conducive to the maintenance of a healthy body. Because of a flawed mental vision, he/she follows the wrong path of incontinence, covetousness and illogical behaviour, which further aggravate the existing health problems. The vital nourishment needed by the system, instead of flowing normally through nerves and blood channels, now flows indiscriminately. As a result, these channels either get clogged or are depleted of the nourishing material that they are supposed to carry to the heart and other vital organs. It is well known that, in a healthy body, vital nourishment flows freely through the blood vessels. Thus, the various organs of the body, which depend upon a regular supply of energy through these

channels, are adversely affected in the absence of proper nourishment thereby, leading to new physical disorders. In short, when the mind is agitated, it adversely affects the body. *Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa has said in the *Gītā* (IV.40), ‘A doubting Self (mind) goes to destruction.’ Pleasant thoughts have a calming effect on the mind and help in restoring the normal functions of the vital systems that sustain the body in an optimal condition.

It is interesting to note that Sage Vasiṣṭha has made a profound statement in this ancient treatise (VI. 80. 47). He says, “All veins in the body are connected with this grand artery and flow together like so many cellular vessels into the cavity of the heart, where they rise and fall like rivers in the sea.” (Quoted from *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha Mahārāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, translated by Vihārī-Lāla Mitṛā). This shows that ancient *Ṛṣis* were well aware of the circulatory system that was necessary for maintaining a healthy body. In the modern text books on Physiology, William Harvey, an English physician, is credited with the discovery (1628) of blood circulation and the role of the heart in propelling it.



To be with God now is of utmost importance. His love is the only shelter in life and death. Time should be utilized to its best advantage. Why shouldn't it be to reclaim oneness with the Creator of this universe; our Infinite Father?

Saint Maṇikkavācakara's "Acho Pathikam"

—R. T. Nathan

Saint Maṇikkavācakara is one among the four religious masters (Samaya Kuravars) who had an immense role in the spread of Śaivism. His actual time is not clear but he is believed to belong to 3rd, 7th and 9th centuries AD variously. The famous Śiva temple Tiruperunthurai is constructed by him, when he was minister to the then Pandian king at the instance of God Himself. He along with the other Kuravaras, Nayanāras and devotees numbering 27 have authored 12 Tamil Holy Scriptures (Tirumurais) comprising of 938 poems and 18382 verses on deities in various Temples dedicated to Śiva. 12 denotes 12 months and 27 denotes 27 stars. The 8th Tirumurai known as Tiruvācakam is authored by Maṇikkavācakara. This consists of 51 poems of 658 verses. Each poem is in praise of and heart rending entreaties on God which are of spontaneous, continuous and humblest devotion surrendering to Śiva totally. The style of language employed by him is akin to the mode of surrender to God. The following is a humble attempt to present the gist of the 9 verses of the last and 51st poem of Tiruvācakam.

This poem (*Pathikam*) is in praise of the greatness of Lord Śiva of Cidambaram Temple. The devotee poet feels that Śiva purified him into *Śivam* and took him over under his care and control. The devotee author is excited at the kind gesture of the Lord and wonders who else will get this fortune. These 9 verses end with the word *acho*

meaning an expression of surprise in Tamil. Hence the caption, Acho Pathikam.

(1) I wasted my time in the company of fools who had not understood the ways to attain *Mukti*. Lord Śiva taught me that Love is at the base of *Bhakti* mode. With his profuse blessings He washed out of my sins and erased the stain of ego from my mind. He converted me into Śivam wiping out my demerits and took charge of me. Who else (other than me) will get this fortune of Śiva's fatherly affection? Surprising!

(2) I had been cultivating habits and manners which are not acceptable as good. Lord Śiva pulled me out of the wrong way and directed me in the right way. The Lord who does not own anything as His own, made me realize the significance of his divine dance of wisdom who else will have this great opportunity? Surprising!!!

(3) Lord Śiva who keeps Umādevī as part of Himself on his left side saved me while sinking in the carnival enjoyment like beautiful women. He also blessed me with the opportunity to secure his holy feet. Who else will have this rare boon? Surprising!!!

(4) I get tired and dejected after taking birth after birth in this earthly world. Just then Lord Śiva blessed me with unimaginable and spontaneous empathy and took me over under his care. He made me wear the sacred ash. He granted me the fortune of merging with Śivam. His essential attribute. Who else will get this exciting experience? Surprising!!!

(5) Distracted by the side views of pretty women with soft feet, I was standing aghast helplessly with a heavy heart. Just then I got your benign blessing offering me immense relief. Oh Lord, you composed me saying not to worry or fear at all and took charge of me. Who else

will get this rarest luck? Surprising!!!

(6) I foolishly believed that this body which is after all to become ash on cremation in fire is true. I remained enjoying the beauty of women with flowers in head and bangles in hands. I thus, abounded my sins. Lord Śiva lifted me up from the vain attachments and took control of me eschewing all my sins and made this *Jiva* pure. Who else will have this liberation profusely granted to me by him? Surprising!

(7) I was about to be deluded by infatuation with the pleasing damsels. The Lord slowly and slowly pulled me up opening the bolt of false attachment and showed me the virtuous way. He revealed me the inner spirit of *Om̄kāra*. Who else will have this revelation direct from God? Surprising!!!

(8) I got caught in the whirlpool of repeated births and deaths, with attraction towards pretty women. Śiva who wears Umā Devī as part of His body, helped me attaining his holy feet. Who else will have this exalted Kindness? Surprising!!!

(9) I wasted my time with the foolish folk. Who did not know the bliss of liberation. Śiva who is the leader of all world leaders, cleaned me of my three stains of ego, *Karma* and *Māyā*. He treated this worthless fellow as something of worth. It is just like enthroning a dog. He showered immense bliss on me. Who else will get this rare fortune? Surprising!!!

Note: The great devotee poet refers to the allegory of woman only to highlight that the attachment with woman makes man forget his real self (the converse is also true). Thus, he gets stuck up in the ocean of *Māyā*.

“*Kanakam mūlam kāmīnīn mūlam kalaham palavidham ulakil sulabham.*”

(Palavidham—Various kinds; Ulakil—in the world).

From Kāminī arises the yearning for *Kanakam*. *Kanakam* (wealth) is a result of “myself and mine” feelings. Wealth is earned and accumulated for the sake of “myself and mine,” arising out of women little realizing that the ultimate plight of the lofty edifices erected are to collapse as a house of cards. Man, who came from God with nothing, is to go back to God in the end as he came.



Goddess Lakṣmī is found in those ideal homes which are kept clean and where God is regarded as the be-all and end-all of life, gods are worshipped, festivals are celebrated and the cows are raised.

* * *

In the cow-dung abide Goddess Lakṣmī. She herself reaches the spots which are smeared by the cow-dung. *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Avanti, Re* 83.108)

* * *

Goddess Lakṣmī abide in those ideal householders, who never speak harsh words or behave rudely; possess the qualities of perseverance, contentment, serenity and restraint and are always ready to run barefooted when the opportunity to serve the needy knocks at their doors.

—Swami Ramarajyam

The Divine Pair

—*Sree Rama Devi*

Blessed are those who worship the Supreme, whatever be the method, they adopt to approach Him. But to worship Him through the love of the heart is the safest and the surest path. The external paraphernalia of worship which constitutes ritualism, help to keep the human mind within a circle where it can fix its attention in the object of worship. The real worshipper is *Jñāna*, the object of worship is Love and the fruition of worship is attainment of identity with the Supreme, who is the absolute of Knowledge and love.

The most sanctified shrine in this universe, is the heart because it is there that the Supreme Being eternally dwells as the self-shining Self. The heart is nearest to you or to say more correctly, you are the heart. By heart-Mother means, not this physical anatomical heart, but the spiritual heart, which is situated in the deepest core of consciousness. The place which every sentient being feels, but cannot exactly locate, the place from which emanate the light of self-Awareness and the exalted emotion, love, is the Heart.

Though the heart is one of and is the seat of the Ultimate Reality, for the convenience of understanding, it can be classified into two, the *Nirguṇa Hṛdaya* and the *Saguṇa Hṛdaya*. *Nirguṇa Hṛdaya* is the abode of the attributeless Absolute and is situated beyond the *Ajñā Cakra*. It is experienced only when you transcend self-consciousness by going beyond the triad—the knower, the Knowledge and the known. It is the infinite vast of

transcendent silence. *Saguṇa Hṛdaya* is the abode of the personal God, the Deity of your love and adoration. It is from *Nirguṇa Hṛdaya* that the *Dharma Megha* of *Samādhi* falls upon the *Yogī* blessing him with omniscience. From *Saguṇa Hṛdaya* springs up the fountain of love, the dynamic power of God.

Love subsists in relationship. The relationless Absolute does not admit of any quality or characteristic, *Viśeṣaṇa* even that of love. Hence, the *Nirguṇa Hṛdaya* is verily the impersonal, all-transcendent, attributeless Brahman Itself, for whom no altar can be raised in this world for worship, no praise can be sung. His altar is in the region of transcendence, His worship is in the bliss of union; His praise is offered in the absolute purity of stupendous silence.

Personal God is verily the absolute appearing with the enchanting, soul-entrancing garb of supreme love. His abode is the *Saguṇa Hṛdaya* where the human soul maintains a relationship with Him, not a physical, mental or psychic relationship, but a spiritual relationship of separation within the knowledge of fundamental oneness. In the *Saguṇa* abode God is not a mere ineffable Absolute of abstract Intelligence, but a power of dynamic love and engaged in Inscrutable transcendental sport with His own kindred souls, the devotees.

The *Vaikuṇṭha*, the *Goloka*, the *Kailāśa* and the *Maṇḍiwīpa*, all signify the supra-cosmic spiritual abode of the Personal God, abounding in the glory of spiritual love and spiritual relationship between God and souls.

The attributeless Absolute is undoubtedly the Highest and absolute identity with Him, the highest achievement. But yet it is not an achievement. It is the ultimate nature of your true spiritual being. Though your very self is the Absolute, you have become stranger to your divine nature

owing to ignorance. Go beyond ignorance and knowledge and you become one with the Absolute. Though the merger in the Absolute and attainment of oneness with it is the highest goal, if the devotee's soul hankers after the perpetual experience of divine love, God, out of His own will, may take him to his *Saguṇa* abode where the soul enters into a spiritual relationship with God

When the worshipper of *Saguṇa* Brahman finally realizes his own-self as identical with the Absolute, he straightway enters here and now into Brahman. Becoming one with the Absolute he has no other plane of existence to go to. He has attained to his own real nature, Brahman. For him, *Vaikuṇṭha*, *Goloka*, *Kailāśa* and *Manidwipa* are all the immutable, infinite Consciousness, Brahman.

When you worship the image, worship the Lord who is present in the image or the Supreme Reality signified by the image. Establish a relationship of spiritual intimacy with the Supreme. Just as the photograph of the father evokes the tender feelings of love in the heart of the son, so does the image set the devotee's heart to the high pitch of devotional ecstasy.

The sense of intimacy is the most important factor in the worship. This is possible only if you conceive a true and motiveless love for God. During the worship, feel the Divine Presence, the presence of His personal embodiment before you. The Divine immanent in the image is not a phantom. He is visible to the pure eye of the heart, the eye of love. The worship without fervour, without a feeling of intimacy, without a loving faith in the divine immanence, without a self sacrificing love for the Deity, does not yield a direct vision of Godhead in the image. Many priests worshipped Mother *Kālī* of *Dakṣiṇēśwara* before and after *Rāmakṛṣṇa*. Why did *Kālī*, the Divine Mother, reveal all

Her glory to Rāmakṛṣṇa and not to all those who worshipped Her image? Rāmakṛṣṇa worshipped, not the stone image, but the love-inspiring, effulgent form of the living Goddess seated in the shrine of his own heart. It was the Mother of his own heart whom he saw in the image.

Giridhārīlāla danced before Mīrābāī; Rāma played with Tulasīdāsa; Viṭhobā kept company with Nāmadeva, Kālī frequently appeared before Rāmakṛṣṇa and talked to him. Were all these illusions or hallucinations? The power of love inherent in the devotee's heart can make even the Almighty dance before him. Under the persuasion of ecstatic love, the Infinite becomes the finite, the Formless One assumes the form, the Impersonal becomes a Person. This is the supremacy of love.

Philosophers do not know the secret of the Personal Beloved. Those who deny reality to the *Saguṇa* form of God, do not know that the very concept of *Nirguṇa* Reality has brought the relationless Absolute to the realm of *Saguṇa*. *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa* both exist together. If you admit one, you have to admit the other also. God, the Absolute, is beyond both *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa*.

Theological conceptions of Godhead are of no significance in the realm of spiritual love. If you have intense love for Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa reveals to you in any form or aspect you aspire to see Him and teaches you His supreme wisdom and absorbs you unto His own being. Have faith in this. Reasonings lead the immature *Bhakta* astray. Let him cling to the lotus feet of His beloved without caring for what the world says or what the philosophers speculate. Love contains not only the quintessence of the scripture that speaks of God but God Himself. *Rasa* is Brahman. This *Rasa*, this essence of pure love, which has no admixture

of worldliness, is indeed Truth.

While clinging tenaciously to your love of Kṛṣṇa, do not impose your views upon another or argue against other deities whom others worship. Know that it is the self same Supreme Being the Beloved of your heart, who is being worshipped by all though in various forms and ways.

A sort of harmless fanaticism is reasonable and desirable in the path of devotion. Kṛṣṇa appeared before Tulasīdāsa with his enchanting *Muralī* and soul ravishing beauty. But Tulasīdāsa's heart longed to see the gracious form of his beloved Rāma. Under the mighty influence of this guileless love of the devotee, the Lord had to cast aside His *Muralī* and reveal Himself as the bearer of the matchless bow. Is this outlook of Tulasīdāsa, one of fanaticism? If so, it is good, let all devotees become fanatics like Tulasīdāsa. It will do them infinite good. Those who speak like *Jñānīs* that all deities are one, have no real and genuine love to their own Deity of worship.

Lose yourself in the worship and you will experience what superior ecstasy is. Concentrate all your mind and heart upon the Deity and forget the self and surroundings in overwhelming devotion. You should have *Niṣṭhā* as to the timings and mode of worship. Look upon it as a great *Sādhanā*. Do not sip even a drop of water without first finishing the morning worship. This habit will purify the mind and increase your devotion.

Offer your worship in all the guilelessness of a simple-minded lover of God. The intellect always isolates. It is the heart that embraces. The intellectual lover stands before the idol and offers his worship saying in his mind: 'I am the self. It is the Higher Self alone whom I am worshipping. Kṛṣṇa is the Self in me; But the simple minded devotee melts in love as he stands before the Deity. He has no

time to philosophize, no mind to think about his identity with the Deity. For him, the Deity is the Love Absolute, the only object of his supreme love and in the pure ecstasy of his love he forgets his ego. He feels the very presence of God and sees His form too. To him the Deity smiles and speaks; with him He dances and sings. This is the power of profound devotion of a simple heart. As you progress in mental purity, as you come nearer to your Deity through love, you will gain subtle perceptions and a mystic insight into the divine personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

From external worship, you should proceed towards the higher forms of internal worship. That does not mean that you should discard the worship of the image. The ultimate object of worship being the realization of the Divine within the worshipper's own soul, the practice of spiritual discipline like *Japa* and meditation is necessary. Here let Mother tell you one thing. The soulful worship of the Deity will definitely take you to the realm of divine intimacy with the Lord of Your worship. But his realisation of the all-pervasive divinity will come only through the Grace of the *Guru*. It is spiritual initiation into the system of higher inward contemplation that confers upon you the illumination that every seeker aspires for. It is the God-made law that His true form is to be perceived only through the *Guru's* Grace. He Himself is the universal *Guru* seated in your heart, who has been guiding you all these years and giving you all the love and inspiration needed in the worship. He Himself is the *Guru* who appears before you in a personal form to direct your mind inward from this phenomenal world around you. No one realizes the Lord unless he transcends ego-consciousness and this is possible only through the gracious glance of the illumined preceptor. Even Nāmadeva, before whom Viṭṭhala used to appear

personally, had to seek refuge at the feet of the *Guru* to receive enlightenment. It is the *Guru* who introduces you to the Divine.

So, until you receive the spiritual initiation from the *Guru*, practise *Japa* and concentration in addition to the worship and *Kīrtana* in which you are engaged now. Seat yourself in a comfortable posture close your eyes and fix your inward gaze upon the space between eyebrows and mentally repeat the Name with concentration and devotion. Feel that the Lord is seated in your heart and that you are in communion with Him through His Name. You may either concentrate on the pleasing sound of the Name or on the vibrant silence that lies at the back of the sound. Concentration on the Name means concentration on the Divinity Itself which the Name signifies.

(To be Continued)

Sender—*Deepak Patel*



A common man sees only plurality in this world, like man, stone, cow etc. But if he could see only God in this plurality with all the force of his conviction, it would be salvation for him in this very life.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Read and Digest

Blessed are those who are criticized for doing good.

* * *

The divine way is to fridge yourself, not others unless
Thou doest their own house-cleaning, Thou hast no right
to tell others their houses are uncleaned

* * *

Those who hate and revile Thee, are not knowers of
truth. Forgive them, for in their ignorance they know not
what they do.

* * *

True words may be hurtful and bitter, so coat them
with sugar of love and kindness that they may be more
easily swallowed by the one stricken with the fever of evil.

* * *

He who is down needs not to be trampled on.
He needs Thy lifting hands of love.
Think of other's woes as Thine own and than
Wouldst feel for all.

* * *

Love is a saving friend that rejoices in others happiness
and well-being.

* * *

Those who lovingly fridge Thee are Thy best friends.

* * *

Those who flatters Thy faults are Thy worst enemies.

Faith and Spirituality

—Dr. V. V. B. Rama Rao

Great sages and seers, ‘*Draṣṭās*,’ as they are called in *Devabhāṣā*, language of gods, Sanskrit, wrote out long and inspired visionary experiences to reveal to us what they envisioned in an inspired effort to illumine what is dark in the likes of us. They invariably believed in a Supreme Being and showed time and again in their envisioned narratives, what should be viewed as good and what its dangerous opposite is.

Man is unique in creation in that he is bestowed with discrimination, judgment and capacity to choose between several courses of action. Spirituality surfaces in man when he intently wishes to know the purpose of human life. When he is befuddled and is intent on trying to understand the declarations and caveats of his elders, teachers, the wise and the knowing ones, he is led into spirituality.

The lamp of *Jñāna* is essential both for physical welfare and spiritual well-being and the soul’s journey upward. When worldly desires and turbulent physical pleasures suffocate the psyche all around and all along, there would come a day when the individual is confronted with questions like ‘Who am I?’ ‘What is the purpose of life?’ ‘Does life end with the burning *Ghāṭa*, the crematorium or the burial ground?’ Answers to every one of these questions have to be found by the individual all by himself or herself. It is at this juncture that the lives and teachings of great *Sādhakas*, seers, saints and *Mahātmās* help us to find a little light for the mind groping in darkness. It is only with

a sincere effort that we can realize the greatness of our forefathers, the seers (*Draṣṭās*), *Sants* and *Munis*. *Jñāna*, knowingness, is *gnosis* as opposed to *praxis*, action. This is wisdom, a state of fruition. Distinct from this is knowledge. Reading and learning about things in various subjects, acquiring skills, scientific information and so on gives knowledge. But wisdom is independent of knowledge. A mere knowledge of even the *Vedas* does not guarantee the acquisition or possession of wisdom. Knowledge acquired should reflect in one's own deeds and actions. Wisdom is a matter of ripeness of the thinking, of intuitive understanding.

Bhakti is a part of our tradition and there is no single word equivalent for this emotive word in English. It is a condition of elevated and enlivened consciousness, largely flowering as faith in the Supreme Being, the Absolute Reality or *Parabrahma*. C. Rājagopālācārī, while introducing *Ādi Śaṅkara's Bhajagovindam* to listeners, explained it in detail. *Bhakti* is an awareness of the Self as part of the universal spirit. It is the way of devotion not very different from *Jñāna*, Knowingness. "When intelligence matures and lodges securely in the mind, it becomes wisdom. When wisdom is integrated with life and issues out in action, it becomes *Bhakti*." *Bhakti* and music are closely related in that both are the states of elevated knowingness suffused with faith. The ebullience of *Bhakti* gives rise to harmonious expression in devotional song. Saint Tyāgarāja (*Tyāga Brahma*), Purandara Dāsa, Mīrā Bāī and many others sang the praises of their godheads setting them to mellifluous music. *Tyāgabrahma*, who belonged to a much later age on the wide arena of music in Andhra. composed a *Kīrtana* starting with the lines: "*Saṅgītajñānamu*" *bhakti vinā sanmārgamu galade manasa!*" Rhetorically, he asks 'Without

a knowingness of music and *Bhakti*, is there a path of goodness and rectitude, O! *Mānasa*, Mind-heart?' It is as much the music as the composer-musicians *Bhakti* that keeps the compositions everfresh and ever elevating.

There are many exemplars of spirituality in this our land, *Āryāvarta*, where the most civilized and the most meritorious moved. The sages and seers have always come to the rescue of seekers, the aspirants *Sādhakas* to make their journey fruitful. There have been men like *Bhīṣma Pitāmaha* an exemplar of spirituality at the highest level or incarnations of the divine as human beings like *Śrī Rāma* of *Ayodhya* and *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* of *Gokul*. There have been any number of these exemplars right from *Ādi Śaṅkara* right up to *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa* to name just two. Basically these are all sublime minds who are divinely inspired and blessed for their spirituality *Sādhanā* and setting an example for all others to follow with devoutness and determination. There may be slight variations in their practices but all have an intense sense of spirituality.

Spirituality is not a matter of birth or one's own station in this worldly life. In fact voluntary poverty is almost a precondition to spirituality. We are reminded of *Jesus* telling his disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of *God*. Celibacy, uprightness, a sharp sense of morality, a rare degree of equipoise and equanimity mark the spiritual exemplars. The monks in the order of *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa* stand testimony to this. *Ādi Śaṅkara* taught us the simple but grand truth: *Arthamanartham*, Money is Evil. Spirituality is not a matter of physical beauty or social status. *Kubjā*, the devout devotee of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* and the *Mālākāra*, the garland maker, *Sudāmā* are cases in point. The Prayer he sends up to *Kṛṣṇa*, is highly elevating: He

asks the Supreme Being to bless him with limitless, immeasurable reverence and compassion for all living beings. His is a personality permeated with the highest spirituality. Kubjā is a hunchback and a servant maid to grind sandal paste in Mathura, Kaṁsa's kingdom. She draws the love of no less a personage than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. What makes her dear to Him, is her simple and absolute devotion. Self-effacement in Bhīṣma Pitāmaha coupled with his sense of duty and high moral sense makes him realize the divinity in Śrī Kṛṣṇa who hails from a family of cowherds.

We read so much, learn so much, earn so much and spend so much but not many of us go anywhere near real spirituality. This attitude of mind is a culmination of hard, painstaking effort. It is truly God's gift. Service, simplicity, rectitude and most importantly, Prayer, these are the means for deserving and obtaining this superb and splendid gift from the Supreme Being.



It is a common occurrence, especially in modern permissive societies, for men and women to leer at each other with sensuous thoughts and yearning.

According to human law unless there is physical adultery. There is no cause for condemnation. But the divine law condemns mental adultery also, because without its advent, physical adultery would not be enacted.

—*Jesus Christ*

The Greatness of Vraja

—Swami Akhandananda

You are blessed to love Vraja and the people who live there. The word “Vraja,” in Sanskrit, is split up in such a way that it means “the pure Brahman.”

Vrajanam vyāpti ityuktā vyāpanāt vraja ucyate.

In the introduction of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, it is written that “Vraja” means the “all pervading.” What is all pervading? The Brahma! So, Vraja, is one of the names of the Brahman. This is not made up of the five elements of nature, nor can it be proved, nor experienced by the senses. It is just the pure essence of the Brahma. It is this pure Brahman which is called Vraja. The dust of the place is not easily available even to the important *Devatās* (Demi-Gods). It’s an amazing thing—the establishment of Totality in the dust! But those who desire excellent food and comfort, houses, and physical delights, will get nothing from this dust, because this dust lacks physical properties like sound, touch, beauty or flavour. However, the one who is free of worldly desires and seeks no sensual pleasures, will have a deep love for the sweet essence of Vraja, “*Chodke raj le tat hai raja men,*” means that the one who abandons the *Rajoguṇa* (mixture of good and bad tendencies) rolls in the dust of Vraja. So, leave one *Raja* and get covered by the other. Now, the first syllable of Brahman—*Bra* and the last of *Raja* (dust)—*ja* and the essence of Brahm (Brahm + Raja) became Braja. Where even the dust is composed of the essence of Brahman it is Braja or Vraja.

Now, the portions of *Vṛhadāraṇyaka* are such that the other side of the Yamunā is the area of Gokul. Gokul and Mahāvan are called the Vṛndāraṇya. The area on this side

of the Yamunā—Barsana, Nandgaon, Kāmvan, Govardhan, Vrindavan—is called the Vṛndāraṇya. So, Nandīśwara Girirāja and the banks of the Yamunā and the twenty Kosa area of Vṛndāraṇya, in the dust of which the Lord Himself rolled playfully and where He climbed the trees and frolicked in the river water and played His flute and followed the cows and looked after them. In the *Bhāgawata*, the importance of the earth of Vraja is described thus—

तद् भूरिभाग्यमिह जन्म किमप्यटव्यां
* * *

यज्जीवितं तु निखिलं भगवान् मुकुन्दः ।

(X. 14. 34)

Brahmājī (the creator) prays to the Lord, “Oh Lord! Don’t grant me freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Grant me birth.” When asked why he wanted to be born again, since only humans have rebirth and where he wished to be born. Brahmājī replied, “In Gokul, where the Lord followed the cows with the big horns; is the place where I wish to be born. For me, it will be a great good fortune.”

“Oh Brahmājī, why do you wish to take birth? Why not freedom from the cycle of birth and death? Don’t you like to live in the land of the Brahmā, that you seek to be born on Earth?” asked the Lord.

“Yes I wish to be born in Gokul. In Gokul the dust of someone’s feet will fall on me.”

Once, I was elaborating this *Śloka* for a *Mahātmā*:

यद् गोकुलेऽपि कतमाङ्घ्रिरजोऽभिषेकम् ।

I explained that Brahmājī said, “It will be my good fortune if the dust of the feet of the *Gopīs* (cowherd women) and the hooves of the cows falls on me.” The *Mahātmā* was quiet at that time, but later, when we were alone, he said, “Look here, it is not the description of the dust of the feet of the *Gopīs* or the hooves of the cows.

Why not? Because Brahmājī has wronged the *Gopīs* by kidnapping their brothers and has wronged the cows by stealing their calves. This is why he does not have the courage to ask them for the dust of their feet.”

“Then what does Brahmāji want?” “*Katamanghrirajo abhiṣekam*”—any bird, butterfly or worm in Vraja, the dust of whose feet may be carried by a gust of breeze to cover me—even that dust is of no small importance, because the lives of those who live in Vraja are filled with Mukunda—Mukunda (one of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa); so much so that when they lie down at night, they do so thinking that they’ll sleep early, in order to get up early next morning. They want to get ready quickly, so that when Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes out from His house they will be able to have His *Darśana* (vision) and go to the forest with Him, when He takes the cows out to graze. They eat, drink and massage themselves and dress up, so that Śrī Kṛṣṇa will be happy when He sees them well and happy.

Nijāngamapi yā gopyo mame’ti samupāsate.’

*Tābhyaḥ param na me’ kincinnigoodham pre’
mabhajanam.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa stated that there is no greater recipient of His deep love than the *Gopīs*, “Because everything they do is for Me—whether it is combing or oiling their hair, wearing good clothes or jewelry—they do so, thinking that I will get pleasure by looking at them. Or they think their body is Mine and by decorating it they are decorating Me.” So, these Vrajavāsīs (the people who dwell in Vraja) are such that all their tears and laughter, their living or dying, eating and drinking, even their toilette, is filled with the essence of the Lord.

“*Yadjivitam tu nikhilam*” their entire life is for God and the Lord Mukunda-Mukunda, which means “*Mukum dayati,*” the one who gives love, is Mukunda. The one who crushes

Mukti—freedom or salvation into smithereens and throws it away. Go, *Swarūpa* (the salvation where the individual soul is transformed into the same shape as the Lord). Go *Sāyujya* (the salvation where the individual soul dissolves into God). Go, *Sāmīpya* (where the individual soul is always close to God). This Mukunda is the one who gives true freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from worldly relationships. And Mukunda also means:

“*Mu mukhe’ kundavat hāso yasya*” the one whose face is like a lotus in full bloom, who is always smiling with radiant joy, such a Mukunda is always showering love on the people who dwell in Vraja. He is their life.

Adyapi yatppadarajah śrutimrigyame’va.

They, the dust of whose feet is sought, even today, by the personified verses and sentences of the *Vedas*—why do they seek this dust? Because it is their experience that whatever happens in this world is dear only for our self.

Na vā are’ sarvasya kāmāya sarva priyam bhavati,

Ātmānastu kāmāya sarva priyam bhavati.

No one can love another unless they find joy and satisfaction and comfort in this love. People love because they gain happiness. This is the experience of the *Vedas* and the *Śrutis* (the writings of the *Ṛṣis* who heard the Truth directly from the Lord). But, the *Gopīs*? Theirs is an amazing way of life. The milk and curd are lying about uncovered, and the door is kept open. Why? Why have you not covered the pots of milk and curd and shut the door?” It is because if our *Lallā* comes, He will have to open the door and uncover the pot to eat the butter. It will be a botheration for Him.” Now, see everywhere else we find that the hand of the devotee is below, asking and the hand of the Lord is above, granting. “Take this, my devotee, take.” But, this Vraja is such that here the hand of the devotee is above and the Lord’s hand is below. “Come, come, Śyāmasundara.

Take milk, take curd, take butter, take sugar, take a Rotī.” The Vrajavāsīs give to the Lord, take nothing from Him. So, the Śrutis are seeking such lovers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, wondering what type of rare love this is, which has the manifested form of the Lord as its goal and is not bothered about experiencing the pure Ātman. “Āsamaho charanare’ nu” is written to justify and “*Bhe jur mukunda-padavim Śrutibirvimrigya*”—the position sought even by the Śrutis, is what the people dwelling in Vraja have achieved. So:

अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यं नन्दगोपव्रजौकसाम् ।
यन्मित्रं परमानन्दं पूर्णं ब्रह्म सनातनम् ॥

(*Bhāgavata* X. 14. 32)

Śrī Viśwanātha Cakravartī said, “The love of the Vrajavāsīs was such that the Lord Himself was tempted to leave *Goloka* (His heavenly abode) and come to Vraja to love them and obtain their friendship.”

यन्मित्रं परमानन्दं पूर्णं ब्रह्म सनातनम् ॥

And He filled the people of Vraja with His love, His sweetness his Happiness and His frolic. Who can describe the great good fortune of the people of Vraja?

एषां तु भाग्यमहिमाच्युत तावदास्तामेकादशैव हि वयं ब्रत भूरिभागाः ।

(*Bhāgavata* X. 14. 33)

Even the Demi-gods consider themselves, as rulers of the sense organs, to be fulfilled, because the people of Vraja experienced the Lord tangibly through the five sense.

So, my brother, the greatness of Vraja is exclusive to Vraja. It is difficult for the people of Bombay to understand this. They will not find even the dust of Vraja any different from the dust of Bombay! But, just ask the people there about it! They will say that they can be happy only in Vraja. They are happy eating the pickle of *Tenti* and *Roṭīs* made of Bājarā and diluted curd. Why? For Śrī Kṛṣṇa!

Think of God

—*Raj Kishore Das*

We are like the dew drops
On the tips of blades of grass
The moment the sun is up
The dew drops evaporates
And so.....does our life begin and end
And yet.....in this short span of time
We are motivated by greed
While we are in this mood to acquire things
And to enjoy all the pleasure of life
We do not contemplate on God
But God alone.....will be our constant companion
All those people who benefit
From our labours will forget us soon.....



Man's Need for God

In the world, as in the *Āśrama*, the most satisfying life that man can have lies in following the inner spiritual path. When he has God, his heart will not crave anything else. All he has ever sought or longed for, he will find in the complete contentment and satisfaction, he enjoys in God. Such a man has only one prayer: that he be deluded no more by this world. Having found God-communion, the opening through which he can escape from the little prison cell of body—and ego-consciousness into soul freedom, he doesn't want ever to be confined again.

This understanding of the imprisoning nature of the ego, develops according to the degree to which we surrender that ego, with all its limitations and selfishness to God. It is impossible for Him to enter into the consciousness of the man who is constantly thinking, "I, I, I". In one who is wholly absorbed in "I" there is no place for "Thou." The first goal to strive for is to remove that "I." It isn't simple, but it becomes easier if one develops a deep yearning for God.

Very often, that yearning for Him comes through suffering. However, I do not regard suffering as essential on the spiritual path. Many interpretations of Jesus life and teachings dwell on the virtue of sorrow and suffering. This concept is very depressing. Even as a young girl, I rejected it as it was then presented to me; I could not imagine anyone's voluntarily and joyously seeking sorrow or suffering. It is not a realistic or practical approach to God, because those negative states are not natural to the soul.

I would never have taken up *Yoga* had I thought it a path of sorrow! I believed that seeking God ought to bring an end to all pain and unhappiness. Now, after some thirty-odd years on this spiritual path, I am convinced beyond any doubt that finding God and communing with Him does indeed put an end to human misery.

This is not to say that the spiritual aspirant doesn't pass through certain phases of difficulty. It is an unrealistic notion that merely because we pursue God, He ought to remove all obstacles from our path. He certainly could do it; but if He did, whence would come man's strength? A muscle is made strong by use. An inactive arm, hanging limply at one's side, gradually becomes weak and shriveled. So it is with man. If his muscles of faith, dedication, compassion, patience, devotion, loyalty, perseverance—all those undeveloped qualities that lie deep within his soul—are not called upon and exercised during his *Sādhanā* or spiritual search, he will never change and overcome his human weaknesses and limitations.

God and Man Seek Unconditional Love

God is very patient with His children; He loves us unconditionally. And isn't this the kind of love we crave from Him? We do not want from God a love so insubstantial that if we do something wrong or are not always able to live up to our highest ideals, He forsakes us. Nor should our love for God be so fragile that if we mistakenly think He has forsaken us, we in turn forsake Him. That kind of love has no meaning. We want love that is unconditional and unending. And if we want it for ourselves, it would seem we ought to be willing to give that kind of love to God and to strive to give it also to others in this world.

I know full well, no doubt from many past lives and

experiences, that no human being can give me what I seek. All the adoration, glory, praise or love that any human being could give me, cannot be enough. God alone can satisfy my soul. Only He can satisfy fully the deep cravings of every one of us.

Hold Fast to God; He can Help You

We should have faith that whatever be the experiences that come to us, they bear the will and blessing of God. Their purpose is not to punish, but to strengthen us and to prove our love. The One who is ever guiding our lives is God. To the degree that you hold fast to the hand of God, he can help you. Withdraw your hand because of resentment or because your faith has been weakened by feelings that you are not getting what the world would call a fair deal and know for certain that you are withdrawing from the very Source of all you are seeking. This great truth is a repeatedly demonstrated fact of life.

Remember that we get in this world exactly what we have given out. It isn't God who punishes us; we create the causes of our painful experiences by our wrong actions of this and past lives. The cause is equal to the effect and the effect is equal to the cause. Never doubt it for a moment. Strive always to create the cause that will manifest the desired effect. The greatest cause we can set into motion is an active, conscious, ever increasing love for God. He alone can bring unto every devotee the total fulfilment of all his desires. We ought never to lose sight of this truth.

Pleasing God should be our Motive in Life

Words of devotion for God have very little meaning in the ultimate sense. The only way we can really express what we feel for God is by our actions. Perhaps this explains why the Bible says that by a man's work you shall know him. It matters little if no one evidences any

appreciation of what we do. We should never feel discontented, even if after great effort to be good and to do good, no one seems to care or appreciate it. We are on earth to work, not for man but for God. Every act should be performed as an offering of devotion to be laid reverently at His feet. It is with God we have to do, every moment of our lives and in everything we do. He is the Living Force that is guiding us, sustaining us. He alone is ever with us and conscious of our every thought. This is why it is important that our thoughts be always the highest and noblest. Our motivation should be to please Him. In pleasing God we can hope that our life and our service may also be pleasing to His children.

Misunderstanding and the pain that comes therefrom, does not arise in those whose hearts are pure. The heart will be right only if we do not lose sight of the Goal—God. The devotee cannot lose his way if he remembers to follow the steps that lead to the Goal: constant yearning for God, which comes from practising His presence and talking to Him; daily meditation, even when there is no desire to meditate; and giving wholeheartedly of one's life and service to God in a spirit of dedication.

God doesn't need us, but we desperately need God. We need Truth. We need to catch hold of the Reality in this great ocean of unreality and cling to that raft of Reality until we reach safely the shores of infinite, eternal awareness of God.

—*Only Love*



The Philosophy of Vivāha

—B. Kutumba Sastrī

There are invaluable and innumerable gems of truth enshrined in our *Sanskrit* literature and among these one is the philosophy and purpose of ‘*Vivāha*’ as conceived by the ancient sages of India. If there is any country in the world, it is India, I believe, where religion and philosophy reign supreme and where every minute act of human life is valued mainly from the philosophical and spiritual point of view. Nowhere in the world, except in India, is seen the harmonious blending of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. As such there is no wonder that even ‘Sex’ or ‘*Kāma*’ is taken to be a sacred one, provided it does not go against ‘*Dharma*’—‘धर्माविरुद्धा भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ.’ In the following lines I shall endeavour to show how *Vivāha* (marriage) was spiritualized by the sages of ancient India.

Saṁskāras

There are in the Vedic religion, sixteen *Saṁskāras* or purificatory rites and among them *Vivāha* is one. It may be noted here that the word “Marriage” is not the exact synonym of the Sanskrit word “*Vivāha*.” Bharadwāja, the author of “*Karma Mīmāṃsa Darśana*” says that *Vivāha* is a special and important *Saṁskāra* for a woman—‘नारीणामुद्गाहो विशेषः’ (*Saṁskāra pāda*, 41). A girl according to this sage, must be married before she attains her puberty and for this, he offers an explanation also in the *Sūtra* ‘प्रागृतुप्रवृत्तेः सन्धिभावात्’ (Ibid. 42). Age before puberty is one of transition between ‘*Bālya*’ and ‘*Yauvana*’ and it is at this age, that the *Vivāha Saṁskāra* will have its best effect. Hence the necessity of pre-puberty marriages. For a man

all the sixteen *Samśkāras* are necessary—“पुरुषाणां तु सर्वे.”

The Important feature in family life is sense-control, i. e., this stage in life is a field wherein we must train ourselves to control our mind and senses—‘संयम प्रधानं गार्हस्थ्यम्’. Really the sage seems to me here as giving out a sane view that had never crossed the mind of a theoretical philosopher. Are we not reminded of Kālidāsa’s saying that whosoever mind is not allured even in the presence of a cause for temptation, he indeed is a hero—‘विकारहेतौ सति विक्रियन्ते येषां न चेतांसि त एव धीराः.’ According to the sage Bharadwāja one must before taking to *Samnyāsa Āśrama*, arm himself with self-control. As such, we see that progeny even is not the only purpose of *Vivāha*.

Man and Woman

Our *Śāstras* assert that every man is *Mūla-Puruṣa* and every woman the *Prakṛti*. Bharadwāja also asserts the same in the *Sūtra* ‘प्रकृतित्वान्नार्याः.’ etc. In the *Durgā-Saptaśatī* it is stated that all women are but the manifestations of the Goddess—‘विद्याः समस्तास्तव देवि भेदाः स्त्रियः समस्ताः सकला जगत्सु’. This *Prakṛtī*, we must remember, is the creative factor of this world.

Viśeṣa Dharmas

There are certain *Viśeṣa Dharmas* both ‘for man and woman. The *Dharma* of a man is that which has ‘*Yāga*’ as its main feature, because that *Dharma* can lead one to salvation—‘यागप्रधानो धर्मः पुरुषस्य कैवल्योपयोगित्वात्’. (*ibid*).

Yajña (sacrifice), *Dāna* (charity) and *Tapas* (austerity) are the three important religious duties that are to be performed by every human being in the world.

यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत्।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम्॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 5)

Yajña, again, is of three kinds, viz., *Karma-yajña*,

Upāsanā-yajña and *Jñāna-yajña*. So *Jñāna* also is one of the varieties of *Yajña*. We see here that of the three important duties, *Yajña* is most intimately related to *Jñāna*, which is the only means to salvation—“ऋते ज्ञानान्न मुक्तिः” and so *Yajña* is selected as a *Viśeṣa Dharma* for a man.

The *Dharma* of a woman is that which has “*Tapas*” for its main part, because it cannot give *Kaivalya*. “तपःप्रधानो नार्याः कैवल्यानुपयोगित्वात्” (*ibid*).

Now it may be asked how the *Dharma* of a man can give him salvation while that of a woman cannot. The answer is simple. *Kaivalya* is *Kevalatva* or oneness. We are told that in the beginning of this creation there was one Being who differentiated himself into two and from this duality emanated all this creation, the chief and independent streams in every aspect of the world being masculine and feminine.

द्विधा कृत्वात्मनो देहमर्द्धेन पुरुषोऽभवत् ।

अर्द्धेन नारी तस्यां स बिराजमसृजत् प्रभुः ॥

स इममेवात्मानं द्वेधापातयत्ततः पतिश्च पत्नी चाभवताम् ।

(*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*)

द्वे धारे स्वतन्त्ररूपत्वात् स्त्रीधारा पुंधारा चेति ।

(*K. M. Darsana*)

Now, to regain this unity or oneness is to achieve *Kaivalya*. We have also to note here that a wife is not different from her husband—‘यो भर्ता सा स्मृताङ्गना’ (i. e., in truth, husband and wife are but one and the same). So a woman (the *Prakṛti*) must merge herself into man (the *Puruṣa*). Thus, obviously a woman has to depend upon man for her salvation, whereas a man can regain his natural form and realize himself through *Jñāna*, which he should try to acquire by dispelling *Ajñāna*. Thus, we see, how *Viśeṣa Dharmas* of man and woman are different. To

become identified with man, there is no better means for a woman, than 'Tapas' by which she can become the *Puruṣa* himself on the analogy of *Bhramara-Kīṭa* phenomenon.* This is why our *Śāstras* require a woman to be devoted to her husband. It appears that to some extent it is easier for a woman to gain salvation than for a man who has to pass through several births and stages of growth. A woman, on the other hand, to whatever caste or social status she may belong, gains salvation by her devotion to her husband alone. Nay, it has also been asserted that a woman, through her chastity, can materially help her husband to go to heaven, even though he is a sinner—

व्यालग्राहो यथा व्यालं बलादुद्धरते विलात्।
एवमुद्धृत्य भर्तारं तेनैव सह मोदते ॥†

This much about the *Viśeṣa Dharmas* of man and woman.

Vivāha and Mokṣa

What we have to see now is how *Vivāha* is a means to gain salvation. It has already been hinted in the previous paragraph, but Bharadwāja tries to explain the same in some scientific terms. As has already been noted above, this world is constituted of feminine and masculine streams. The *Jīva* in the feminine body becomes one with that in the masculine body and then the former soul also will be fit to acquire knowledge and thereby gain salvation. 'स्त्रीधारा पुंधारामयी कैवल्यधिकारिणी.'‡ Another similar explanation also is

* The phenomenon of the larva of a wasp becoming a wasp.

† Just as a snake-charmer forcibly takes out a snake from out of a hole, even so a devoted and virtuous wife is able to redeem her husband and enjoy heavenly bliss with him.

‡ From this it appears the sage is of opinion that a woman cannot get salvation without becoming herself a man, i. e., man only can attain salvation.

offered by the sage—‘शक्तिर्द्विविधा आकर्षणविकर्षणभेदात्’. (this world is constituted of two kinds of forces, attraction and repulsion). These are the two magnetic forces that are maintaining this world. Even the atomic mind is constituted of these two forces, says a Puranic passage.

सम्बध्येतेऽथ शक्ती द्वे आकर्षणविकर्षणे ।
 दिवौकसो रागमूला शक्तिराकर्षणात्मिका ॥
 भवद्विरवगन्तव्या समुद्भूता रजोगुणात् ।
 विकर्षणाख्या या शक्तिरपरा द्वेषमूलिका ॥
 अवधार्या भवद्विः सा समुद्भूता तमोगुणात् ॥

Passion or *Rāga* in our minds is the power of attraction and hatred or *Dweṣa* is the power of repulsion. Of these a man has the power of repulsion and a woman has the power of attraction. ‘तत्राकर्षणं नार्या विकर्षणं पुंसः’ (*Dharmapāda*, 58). Truly man is destructive and woman is a creative power.

‘निःश्रेयसं तत्समन्वये’—When these two forces meet each other and are of equal magnitude, then will result *Sattvaguna* wherein there is neither repulsion nor attraction and which is nothing but complete Knowledge and Bliss. Where there is neither *Rajas* nor *Tamas*, *Sattvaguna* will naturally form itself.

समता या द्वयोर्यत्र शक्त्योः संजायते शुभा ।
 तत्रैव सत्त्वसंजुष्टज्ञानानन्दस्थितिर्भवेत् ॥

Now it may be said that even a woman cannot attain salvation by mere chastity, for all the *Vedas* say that without *Jñāna* there can be no ‘*Mukti*’ (Salvation). For this, the sage gives a ready answer in the following two *Sūtras*:—

- (1) एकतत्त्वतपोभ्यां सतीलोकलाभः ।
- (2) पतिमयत्वात् पुरुषत्वम् ।

Two answers are given here. By her chastity a woman goes to ‘*Satīloka*’ wherein one can aquire *Jñāna* easily and

thereby attain salvation. Secondly, a devoted wife will think of her husband even on her death-bed and so in her next birth she will become a man who can acquire *Jñāna* easily, by virtue of his power of concentration earned in his previous birth and thus, attain salvation. What we think of on our death-bed that will we become in the next birth, is a well-known psychological fact.

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥

(*Gītā* VIII. 6)

तदेव सक्तः सह कर्मणैति लिङ्गं मनो यत्र निषक्तमस्य ।

(*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*)

After all, all these seem to be mere explanations. For a woman of chastity, her husband is not mere flesh and bones but God incarnate and so even when she is on her death-bed, she is only reminded of God and thereby becomes one with Him.

It may be noted here that even a woman who fails to keep up her chastity in spite of her attempts, will be benefited at least in her next birth, by taking to the practice of *Yoga* and also by virtue of meritorious deeds in her past births—

Cf. भ्रष्टापि योगिनी श्रेयोभाक् । (*K. M. Darsana*)

Cf. न हि कल्याणकृत् कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ (*Gītā*)

But to gain *Mokṣa* through mere love is easier than through the practice of *Yoga*. All these theories may seem to be full of fancy, but what we have to grasp here is the spirit and thought that is concealed herein by the ancient sages of India. Thus, it is shown, how *Vivāha* also was spiritualized by our ancients and that it was not taken by them merely as a social custom.

Truthfulness of Younger Boy

Two young boys were going. In a small orchard multicoloured flowers were blooming. The whole path was scented with the fragrance of the flowers. Observing it, a boy said, "If however I could get some of these flowers; I would have given to my ailing sister, she would feel much pleased." Hearing this the other boy remarked, "Then why don't pluck these flowers. If your hand does not reach there, I can pluck as I am taller than you." The former boy holding the hand of the other boy said, "No, never, don't do this, stealing is a great transgression. I would beg of the owner. Not caring for the words of the younger boy, the other boy plucked a bunch of rose flowers. From the distance the gardener seighted the boy plucking flowers, he runningly grabbed the boy, thrashed him and imprisoned him in a small room.

On the other side the younger boy knocked the gate. A kind old woman came and opened the gate. The boy begged, "O Mother! Would you be kind enough to give me some flowers of rose for my ailing sister"? The old lady said—"With great pleasure. O My darling! I was hearing talks of both of you. You are a good boy. Come along with me, I would pluck a bunch of rose flowers for you."

The old lady plucked flowers and further said—"O Darling! Whenever your sister desires flowers, come to me and take away flowers for her." Not only this much, the old lady went to see the ailing sister, her mother and arranged the expenses for education of the boy. When the boy completed his education; then the old lady employed him as an employee at her garden. What a beneficial result is of truthfulness!

Ego of King and God

—Swami Jyotirmayananda

King Akabara, a great king in India during the sixteenth century, had a very witty minister named Bīrabala. Bīrabala had many enemies among the court officers because he was always favoured by the king.

One day these officers thought up a plan to degrade Bīrabala. They started spreading the idea that the King was like God. They knew that Bīrabala would not agree to that and if Bīrabala did not agree to it, the king would punish him. Certainly every king wants to be praised and could not bear anyone who would not praise him.

So the officers started bowing to the King saying, “Oh King, to us you are God himself. But Bīrabala doesn’t hold that view.” King Akabara, who was very pleased with this praise, looked at Bīrabala and said, “How is it that you do not agree with what the officers are saying? Don’t you have any reverence for me?” Bīrabala replied, “Why should I agree with these people? I consider you greater than God.”

“How so?” King Akabara asked, intrigued by this response. Bīrabala replied, “If someone commits an error, God cannot drive him out of His kingdom, because His kingdom includes the entire universe. However, if someone commits an error in your kingdom, you have the power to drive him out. Therefore, you are above God.”

The subtle implication of this story is that when you have ego, you place yourself above God. The things around you are controlled by God’s plan. But ego becomes overly assertive and makes you feel as if you are moving the world.

Wake up to Your Real Self

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

It is true that a dream-built sword is necessary to vanquish a dream-tiger. But from the standpoint of wakeful consciousness both the sword and the tiger of dreamland do not count anything. Just so with the empirical sciences and arts: however indispensable they may be as worldly knowledge, they carry no value in divine wakefulness. One of the great stumbling blocks in the way of Self-realization is the deference and abnormal respect for intellectual capital—university degrees, certificates, titles, honours and other mental possessions. To a man of realization the world is simply the creation of the hypnotism of people who in this self-created bedlam keep each other in countenance by mutual suggestions. All the objects in the world are simply like the lakes created by a hypnotized man on dry floor and being of such nature, the knowledge of those objects also, on which the doctors and professors pride and take airs of superiority, is nothing more than hypnotism. The world is but etherial and so is the knowledge of these people. To a man of realization who has risen to the fountainhead of all worldly phenomena, neither the great spheres, the rivers, the mountains, the suns and stars appear as surprising, nor the knowledge of such phenomena as possessed by astronomers, mathematicians, botanists, geologists and zoologists appears to be of any intrinsic value beyond mere play, amusement and fun. The people who possess worldly objects (capitalists) and those who possess the knowledge of objects (scientists) stand on the same level

with those objects, that is to say, are phenomenal. The frowns and favours, criticisms and suggestions of the doctors, philosophers and professors, fall flat upon a man of God-realization, have no meaning to him. Usually universities, shows and fairs are nothing short of different means to prolong the hypnotic state. As a rule churches, temples, gatherings and meetings are all different methods of prolonging the hypnotic world-sleep. The *Jivan Mukta* feels no surprise or wonder if the Sun were to cool down to the freezing point or if the Moon were to rise in temperature to the highest degree, nay, even if the flame of fire were to burn below the fuel instead of above it or all space were rolled away like a scroll.

There was a time when the *Brāhmaṇas* (priest-craft) ruled the world; there was an age when the *Kṣatriyas* (chivalry) reigned; these are now the days when the *Vaiśyas* (capitalists) govern; and next is coming the era of the supremacy of labour in *Śūdras*, but *Śūdras* blessed with the spirit of *Samnyāsa*.

In Europe and America, the working class (the *Śūdra* caste) is not stereotyped and rigidified by rules of heredity and religious injunctions and yet matters are very unsatisfactory. In India the evil and injustice is doubly multiplied by the caste-system coming to aid the self-delusion of all the parties. This prevents strikes but makes the whole nation more helpless and more timid than innocent sheep.

Up to this time *Vedānta* has been the exclusive property of a few only. It has lived on the intellectual plane mostly. This child, conceived so long ago, remained in the womb of the earth (the Himalaya), but it comes down at last to the plains as the holy Gaṅgā, washing alike the *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śūdra*, purifying man as well as god, sweeping

away all unnatural differences. Organic man should be one which is seldom felt. Just as regular meals you need to take consciously but the assimilation or distribution of the food material into different parts and organs of the body takes care of itself unconsciously to you, while you concentrate in unity and integration (love and divinity) the differentiation and appropriate variation will take care of itself.

O princes, priests, *Śūdras* and ruling classes of India! Can you conceive the state of affairs a few years hence? Call it odd and curious, yet Rāma sees before him a world of *Swāmīs*, gods walking on the face of the earth, clay-classifications of man swept away; the distinctions in India, China, America, England, etc., dissolved; new crystals springing up to be dissolved again in their turn.

O dreaming darlings! Cast away the scales from your eyes and see the highest *Samnyāsīs* joining hands with the lowest *Śūdras*; lo! There, is the begging bowl converted into a spade or hoe. *Samnyāsīs* shorn of their laziness, *Śūdra*-labour exalted to the dignity of *Samnyāsa*, the spirit of renunciation actuating all, shameless boldness of a harlot and the purity of Rāma combined, the tenderness of a lamb wedded to the resolute intrepidity of a lion, the extremes meet and the intermediate unnatural distinctions dissolved, the world becomes one family. See all this, look there and see!

Shall we require sword or fire? No. Any police? No. Is it Utopia? No, flimsy phantom this. Is it communism or Socialism? May be. But for India it is native growth, the most natural application of *Vedānta*. O Indians, if you know yourselves and adopt this renunciation, where will the disease be? When the mental malady is gone, material disease is bound to flee. No need of underhand work, no

need of policy-playing, no need of suspicion and fear. Let that be followed by the timid deicides.

“I am Emperor Rāma, whose throne is your own hearts. When I preached in the *Vedas*, when I taught at Kurukshetra, Jerusalem, Mecca, I was misunderstood. I raise my voice again. My voice is your voice. *Tat twam asi*. Thou art all Thou seest.”

Some of you are scowling. Some of you, Rāma sees, have turned up your noses at an angle of thirty degrees. Some of you have thrown off the paper in disgust. Do what you please but the dispensation must work. No power can prevent it, no kings, devils or gods can withstand it. Inevitable is Truth’s order. Faint not. Rāma’s head is your head; cut it if you please, but a thousand others will grow in its place.

Shams Tabrez sings the same melody. Did the sweet Bullah Shah and Gopal Singh of the Punjab chant the same song! Did Jesus babble the same Truth! Did Mohammad see the same crescent moon! That is nothing to me. Rāma’s *Id* comes when he sees her. Old truth is ever new. Your *Id* comes when you realize for yourself. All the prophets and saints, the heroes of your self-ignorance, are merged in you the moment you wake up to your real Self, God-Truth.



Attainment of God-realisation

The goal of life is Self-realisation or God-realisation and thus, attaining one's real life, which is useful not only for oneself but also for the world and its Creator as well. Immortality, Profound peace, Absolute independence and indescribable Bliss are the characteristic features of this real life of ours which exists eternally and is therefore present within us even now. The reason why we do not actually experience peace, independence and bliss in our present day-to-day life is that we have identified ourselves completely with our body and the world which are both subject to birth, change and death. The truth is that one's body and real self are quite different from each other. Body is mortal while the self is immortal and not subject to any mutation or death. The compulsion of birth and death and the concomitant misery and suffering, ceases for ever in persons who conquer sorrow and death and achieve their real life by attaining Self-realisation or God-realisation.

—Revelation of the Spiritual Path

The Foremost among Devotees

He who sees his own Self permeating all beings as *Brahma* and sees all beings in God, who is his own Self, is the foremost among devotees.

He who, while enjoying all sense-objects through the senses, is swayed neither by repulsion against disagreeable objects nor by attraction for agreeable objects, knowing that the world is nothing but an illusion created by *Bhagavān* Viṣṇu, is the foremost among devotees.

He who while engaged in remembrance of God does not identify himself with birth and death, toil and exertion, hunger and thirst, fear and hope, which are the characteristics of the body, the senses, the vital airs, the mind and the intellect respectively, is the foremost among devotees.

He whose mind is altogether free from desire and the impulses for different kinds of actions and whose sole refuge is God, is the foremost among devotees.

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