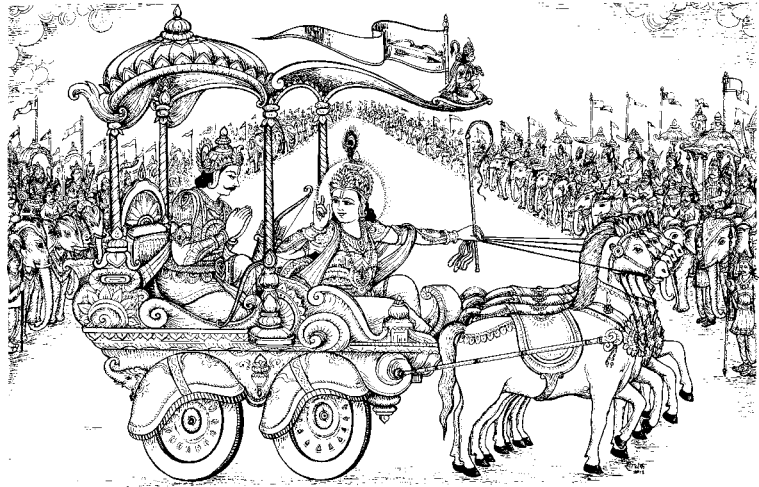


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KALYANA-KALPATARU

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Prahlāda teaching Friend-Students

मतिर्न कृष्णे परतः स्वतो वा मिथोऽभिपद्येत गृहव्रतानाम् ।
अदान्तगोभिर्विशतां तमिस्रं पुनः पुनश्चर्वितचर्वणानाम् ॥

(Bhāgavata VII. 5. 30)

The mind of those who are deeply devoted to their family affairs and whose unsubdued senses repeatedly fall into enjoyment of pleasures already enjoyed many times, does not think of Śrī Kṛṣṇa on its own or even by others' proddings.

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The Meaning of Loka-Saṅgraha

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

Let us bestow some thought on the meaning of *Loka-Saṅgraha*. Many learned expositors of the *Gītā* have understood “*Loka-Saṅgraha*” in the sense of weaning the people from the evil course and urging them to their own prescribed duty. According to other commentators *Loka-Saṅgraha* consists in deterring men from lapsing into evil ways. Some commentators, again, have understood it to mean maintenance of the world order or defending the faith of the people. The late Lokamānya B. G. Tilaka has explained the term in his ‘*Gītā-Rahasya*’ as follows:—“*Loka-Saṅgraha* consists in binding men together and protecting, maintaining and regulating them in such a way that they might acquire that strength which results from mutual co-operation thereby putting them on the path of acquiring blessedness while maintaining their good condition.” Etymologically speaking, ‘*Loka*’ means mankind and ‘*Saṅgraha*’ denotes bringing them closer together or consolidating them. The idea is that due to diversity of thought people are getting disintegrated and wandering here and there in quest of happiness, but real happiness eludes their grasp. Hence it is the duty of exalted souls who have the welfare of the people at heart to divert the mind of extroverts from all sides and focus it on God. As a matter of fact all the actions of exalted souls who have attained perfection as also of God are as a matter of course directed towards *Loka-Saṅgraha*; it is such altruistic actions of theirs that serve as a model for strivers to imitate. Hence strivers too can with a view to their spiritual well practise *Loka-*

Saṅgraha in a disinterested spirit as a spiritual discipline. Strivers would do well to forswear evil deeds themselves and take to noble pursuits enjoined by the scriptures in a disinterested spirit with an eye to the attainment of blessedness; for he alone who performs noble deeds himself can direct others to do so. Arjuna was a striver of a high order. The Lord urges him too to act with an eye to *Loka-Saṅgraha*—

“It is through action (without attachment) alone that Janaka and other wise men reached perfection. Having an eye to *Loka-Saṅgraha* too you should take to action”.

(*Gītā* III. 20)

The purport of the Lord’s exhortation is that the responsibility for the maintenance and protection of all living beings rests on man. Therefore *Loka-Saṅgraha* consists in efficiently discharging one’s own obligatory duties in a disinterested spirit in consonance with one’s own grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances and thereby weaning others by one’s own noble example from vices and immoral conduct and urging them to their own duty in the form of noble virtues and right conduct—and thus helping and maintaining the world process without hindering it in any way. Giving up the feeling of meum, attachment and interested motives many men have realized God through the Path of Action to this day. Hence a seeker of blessedness should set in a detached spirit not only with a view to God-realization but even with an eye to *Loka-Saṅgraha*, arguing to himself thus:—“If I fail to do my duties enjoined by the *Śāstras*, others too will relinquish their duty following me as their pattern, so that a chaos will ensue in the world order and everything will get topsyturvy. Hence with a view to maintaining the world order I ought to perform my obligatory duty.”

Nay, later on the Lord further tells Arjuna that he who popularizes among His devotees in a disinterested spirit with an eye to their welfare the text as well as the meaning and ideas of the *Gītā* taught by Him, is sure to attain to Him as a reward—

“He who, offering the highest love to Me and free from doubt, preaches the most profound gospel of the *Gītā* among My devotees shall come to Me alone.”

(XVIII. 68)

The idea is that he who puts men wandering in the wilderness of metempsychosis on the path of God-realization by popularizing as aforesaid the ideas of the *Gītā* for the good of the world is sure to realize God. Thus it is proved that even a striver can perform actions with an eye to *Loka-Saṅgraha* by way of spiritual endeavour.

Although the Lord says in the *Gītā* that an exalted soul who has attained perfection through spiritual enlightenment no longer has any obligation:—

“He however, who revels in the Self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the self, has no obligation. In this world that great soul has no use whatsoever for things done nor for things not done; nor has he selfish dependence of any kind on any creature.”

(III. 17-18)

He none the less enjoins such enlightened and exalted souls to engage in action with an eye to *Loka-Saṅgraha*—

“Arjuna, as the unwise act with attachment, so should the wise man seeking *Loka-Saṅgraha* act without attachment.”

This inclination on the part of enlightened noble souls to practise *Loka-Saṅgraha* is attributed to them only figuratively. When we say in common parlance: “This precipice is inclined to fall” there is really no inclination in the precipice to fall down; only this is a mode of

expressing the truth that the precipice is on the verge of falling. Even so an enlightened noble soul has no inclination whatsoever; it is his spontaneous assiduity in the cause of common good that has been indicated through such expressions.

The Lord has urged enlightened noble souls to activity only in view of the fact that devout men naturally try to mould their actions according to the precepts and example of such enlightened souls. The Lord Himself says:—

“For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same.”

(*Gītā* III. 21)

As a matter of fact all the actions of exalted souls of top rank are unimpeachable, carried on as a matter of sport and conducive to public good; hence they are exemplary. By following their example one can attain blessedness as a matter of course. Questioned by the *Yakṣa* figuring in the *Mahābhārata*, the pious King Yudhiṣṭhira observed as follows:—

“Reasoning is inconclusive. *Śruti* texts are at variance with one another. There is no one seer whose judgment is authoritative. The secret of virtue is shrouded in mystery. The path (to be followed by the generality of men) is (therefore) that which has been trodden by great men.”

(*Mahā.*, *Vana Parva* CCCXIII. 117)

It is for this very reason that granduncle Bhīṣma says Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira:—

“The exemplary conduct of the righteous, which is motivated by considerations of the good of humanity, and which reveals the subtle principles of morality and economy, was declared by the creator at the beginning of creation as a model for all.”

(*Mahā.*, *Śanti Parva* CCLIX. 26)

For, the characteristics of perfect *Yogīs* as described in *Gītā* VI. 6–9, those of perfect devotees as mentioned in XII. 13 to 19 and those of a *Guṇātīta* (one who has transcended the three *Guṇas* and realized God by treading the path of Knowledge) as described in XIV. 22 to 25 of the *Gītā* are naturally found in such God-realized noble souls. By moulding one's conduct according to the aforesaid characteristics one is sure to realize God. Hence a seeker of blessedness would do well to imbibe the traits and follow the example of such God-realized exalted souls.

The exploits of the Lord of course are all supremely sanctifying and of the nature of mere pastimes. When one attains blessedness by following the example even of exalted souls of top rank there can be no doubt about the redemption of those who emulate the example of the Lord and follow His commandments. And on realizing the excellences, glory, essence and mystery of His *Līlās* one attains final beatitude through the very sight of these *Līlās*.

In fact the Lord has no obligations. He is ever sated. He has no desire nor any craving; nevertheless His movements are all directed towards *Loka-Saṅgraha*, i.e., towards the supreme good of living beings and, having no tinge of self-interest about them, are absolutely motiveless. The Lord says to Arjuna:—

“Arjuna! there is nothing in all the three worlds for Me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me; yet I continue to work. Should I not engage in action scrupulously at any time, great harm will come to the world; for, Arjuna! men follow My course in all matters. If I cease to act, these worlds will perish; nay, I should prove to be the cause of confusion, and of the destruction of these people.”

(*Gītā* III. 22—24)

Thus it is proved that the Lord, who is supremely

compassionate without any motive, enacts all His *Līlās* only with a view to weaning the *Jīvas* from evil ways and putting them on the right track. Hence His descent into the world of matter is intended only for *Loka-Saṅgraha* in the form of driving away unrighteousness and reestablishing virtue on a firm footing. He Himself says—

“Though birthless and deathless and the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own *Yogamāyā* (divine energy), keeping My nature (*Prakṛti*) under control. Arjuna! whenever righteousness is on the decline, and unrighteousness in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of evil-doers, and for establishing *Dharma* (righteousness) on a firm footing, I am born from age to age.”

(*Gītā* VI. 6—8)

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* too Brahmā, Śiva and other gods and sages glorify the Lord in the following words:—

विभर्षि	रूपाण्यवबोध	आत्मा
क्षेमाय	लोकस्य	चराचरस्य ।
सत्त्वोपपन्नानि	सुखावहानि	
सतामभद्राणि	मुहुः	खलानाम् ॥

(X. 2. 29)

“Being the Spirit, which is consciousness itself, You repeatedly assume (reveal) for the welfare of the mobile and the immobile creation forms constituted of *Sattva* (unmixed with *Rajas* and *Tamas*), which bring delight to the righteous and are harmful (bring destruction) to the wicked.”

Again, Uddhava speaks of Him as follows:—

न चास्य कर्म वा लोके सदसन्मिश्रयोनिषु ।
क्रीडार्थः सोऽपि साधूनां परित्राणाय कल्पते ॥

(X. 46. 39)

“No action either can be attributed to Him. Even as

such He descends into high, low and mixed species (of life) in the world for the sake of sport with a view to the protection of the virtuous.”

To appear thus on the terrestrial plane and enact His *Līlās* is what constitutes His birth and deeds, His advent and exploits are divine. He who comes to realize the truth and inwardness of His birth and conduct attains final beatitude. The Lord says:—

“Arjuna, My birth and activities are divine. He who knows this in reality is not reborn on leaving his body, but comes to Me.”

(*Gītā* IV. 9)

What doubt can there be under such circumstances about the redemption of a man who emulates the example of the Lord?

Realizing the essential character and secret of the doings, of the nature of *Loka-Saṅgraha*, of strivers, perfect souls and the Lord Himself, we should therefore obey the commandments of the Lord and emulate His example.



Pleasure and pain are the necessary accompaniments of the body. The body is the resultant of one's past actions. So a man has to bear with it as long as the effects of his past actions are not exhausted. A blind man taking a bath in the holy water of the Gaṅgā gets all his sins washed away, but his blindness does not leave him on that account. But howsoever the body may be under the influence of pleasure and pain, the glory of knowledge and devotion never leaves a true devotee.

—*Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna*

What is Love?

—*Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar*

In reality Love is not something which can be expressed through words: that which can lend itself to description is the grossest and most external form of Love. The seat of Love is the heart; it transforms the lover into Love-itself.

Bhagavān Śrī Rāma sent the following message of Love to Śrī Sītā:—

“O dear, the truth about the Love between You and Me is known only to My mind and that mind constantly stays with You. Know You that herein lies the essence of Love.”

In Love there is no room for self-interest. Where there is any desire for return, there the purity of Love is stained by lust, or desire for self-gratification. In Love there is giving and giving alone: the thought of taking or receiving never occurs to the mind of the lover. Love, again, always tends to grow. A lover can never believe that his is a fully developed love: he always sees his own limitations, his imperfections, and keeps the needle of his heart directed exclusively towards the beloved. Love that hinges round some virtue or expects something in return diminishes or disappears as soon it notices a decline in the virtues of the beloved or apprehends loss of expectation. Love of this type is not love in the proper sense of the term. It is love of self or desire for self-gratification that masquerades as love in that case.

Kabīra says:—

छिनहिं चढ़ै छिन ऊतरै, सो तो प्रेम न होय।
अघट प्रेम पिंजर बसै, प्रेम कहावै सोय॥

“Now it swells and the very next moment ebbs low,
 is not Love,
 That alone which is firmly rooted in the heart and
 knows no ebb should be given the name of Love.”

Again, it is said:—

सर्वथा ध्वंसरहितं सत्यपि ध्वंसकारणे ।
 यद्भावबन्धनं यूनोः स प्रेमा परिकीर्तितः ॥

“An attraction between lovers which knows no extinction even in the presence of factors favourable to such extinction is called Love.”

For instance, suppose the object of our love loses his wealth, his beauty fades, his virtues give place to vices he ceases to reciprocate our love of show regard to us, snubs us at every step, offers insult to us and shows respect to others in our very presence or manifests thousands of evil tendencies. Under such circumstances our love for our beloved is sure to disappear. This is our experience of Love as it is known in the world. True love is that which does not diminish even in such conditions but goes on increasing everyday.

Says Rasakhāna:—

“That Love is the fountain of all sweetness which is not dependent on youth, virtue, beauty or wealth, nor tainted by self-interest or thoughts of personal gain, and which, is pure and free from desire (of self-gratification). Very subtle, very soft, very slender, very remote, Love is the hardest of all, constant, unvaried in sweetness brimful. All-sweetness, spontaneous, disinterested, unwavering, sublime, unvaried in sweetness, constantly growing, such is pure love, O Rasakhāna.” A poet says:—

प्रेम सदा बढ़िबो करे ज्यों ससि कला सुबेष ।
 मैं पूनो या में नहीं, तातें कबहुँ न सेष ॥

“Love constantly grows like the waxing moon,
Only there is no full-moon here, hence it never reaches
the point where it may be said to be full.”

This type of Love can grow only in the heart of the devotee in relation to God. Devarṣi Nārada while describing the nature of this Love says:—

“The nature of Love cannot be described in words, like the experiences of a dumb person. This Love manifests itself in some rarely fortunate and qualified medium (viz., a devotee who has developed supreme indifference to worldly enjoyments). This Love is beyond the range of the three *Guṇas*, is untainted by desire, constantly growing, ceaseless in flow, and very subtle; it can be understood only by experience. A devotee who attains this sees only this Love, hears only this, and thinks of this and this alone.”

(*Bhakti-Sūtras* 51—55)

There remains no distinction between the lover and the beloved in this state. For, as the poet says:—

प्रेम हरी को रूप है, त्यों हरि प्रेम सरूप।
एक होइ द्वै में लसै, ज्यों सूरज अरु धूप॥

“Love is the essence of God, and God is the embodiment of Love. Though one in essence, they appear as two, like the sun and the sunshine.”

It will not be out of place to reproduce below the utterances of some Hindi poets regarding the condition of the *Gopīs* who had attained this highest stage of Love.

Perfection of Human Life in the Awakening of Love

—*Brahmalina Swami Ramsukhdas*

Gītā says—‘नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।’ (II. 16) The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be; which means that the unreal (thing, individual, activity) does not exist and there is never the absence of the real. It means that there is always the absence of the unreal, viz., the unreal does not exist and there is always the existence of the real. When a man does not give importance to this discrimination and presumes his own body as the self viz., when he regards his body as ‘I’ and ‘mine’, then there arises deficiency in him. The reason being that the relationship with the deficient unreal creates shortages of all types. After the origin of deficiency and shortage a man becomes unhappy due to the feeling of some kind of shortage or deficiency. After being unhappy due to that deficiency, there arises a desire of removing that deficiency. After the origin of desire, the quantity of shortage and deficiency goes on increasing by which he does not remain independent but rather he becomes dependent. The reason being that after the fulfilment of one desire, a second desire also arises and this process continues. All the desires never get fulfilled of any person.

God is truth, consciousness and bliss solidified. But when the freedom which has been bestowed by God upon him for the exchange of pure love, the man by making misuse of this freedom presumes his relationship with the unreal, then arises in him the desire (eagerness) for truth,

consciousness and bliss as a necessity in him, for the fulfilment of which he desires for the unreal. 'I should survive (live) always, I should never die'—this is the necessity for the real. 'I should know every thing, I should never remain ignorant'—this is the necessity for consciousness. 'I should always remain happy, I should never live in sorrow'—this is the necessity for bliss. But by presuming one's relationship with the unreal, a man commits this mistake that he wants to fulfil the desire of the real, consciousness and bliss by the unreal—for example he wants to live through his body, he wishes to become wise through the intellect; and through senses and inner-sense (mind), he wishes to become happy. In this way the necessity in him is of the real but for the fulfilment of that necessity, he desires the unreal—this is his basic mistake. By desiring the unreal neither the necessity is fulfilled, nor does the desire end.

Therefore, the man has a disinclination for the real and by supposing the unreal as the real and by giving importance only to this mistaken belief, he gets attached to it. He supposes the unreal as the objective of his life; the result is this that he becomes dependent (slave), unhappy, (miserable), tired, defeated, poor and destitute. Not only this, when the attachment to the unreal is intensified, he supposes independence in dependence, pleasure in pain, rest in tiredness (fatigue), victory in defeat, prosperity in poverty and supportful feeling in supportlessness and goes from humanity to brutality.

A man may be degraded to any extent, in him the eagerness for the real, consciousness and bliss may be suppressed but it cannot completely be finished. His real necessity is never destroyed. Just as a man does not like even a little poverty, similiary he does not like his

destruction, his unconsciousness and his pain in the least. Sometimes by a holy book or by good company (noble *Satsaṅga*) or on facing some calamity, by the grace of God, his vision gets off from the unreal and goes toward the real self, he has disinclination for the unreal and an inclination to the real, and then the desire for the unreal does not stay in him and it transforms into the inquisitiveness for the real viz., the distinction between desire and the inquisitiveness for the real becomes clear. After this distinction being clear, the necessity is fulfilled and the desire is destroyed, viz., the supposed relationship with the unreal does not persist. By the elimination of the association with the unreal, the man attains peace. By not enjoying this peace, he attains constant peace (bliss) and if he is not satisfied with that constant bliss, he attains infinite bliss.

By detachment from the unreal (inertia), a striver attains peace and by getting established in the self he attains constant peace. In the *Yoga* of action (*Karmayoga*), peace is attained and in the *Yoga* of wisdom (*Jñānayoga*) constant peace is attained. The result of *Karmayoga* (*Yoga* of action) and *Yoga* of knowledge (*Jñānayoga*) is one and the same viz., the result of both is that a striver gets established in the self (salvation is attained). When salvation is accomplished, then the desire for salvation or eagerness does not remain but the thirst for love still remains. Therefore when the emancipated soul is not satisfied with constant bliss, then the Lord by His causeless grace provides him infinite bliss. This infinite bliss is called 'love'. The desire for salvation or eagerness to know the reality is fulfilled but this form of love never ends and never gets fulfilled. Just as by obtaining wealth,

its greed goes on increasing, similarly on getting the love viz., on the awakening of this love it goes on increasing every moment. Therefore this love has been called as increasing every moment 'प्रतिक्षणवर्धमानम्' (*Nāradabhakti*. 54).

On the accomplishment of salvation 'I am liberated' or 'I am *Yogī*' or 'I am wise (*Jñānī*)'—this kind of iota of ego persists. This ego does not become obstacle in attaining salvation but it is an obstacle in the awakening of love viz., in infinite bliss. Due to this slightest ego, there remain differences in philosophers with each other. After the rise of love, such type of differences do not persist. Therefore the complete accomplishment lies in the awakening of love.

The nature of God is full of reality, consciousness and bliss. There is limitless, infinite and endless beauty in 'reality', there is limitless, infinite and endless glory in consciousness and there is limitless, infinite and endless sweetness in bliss. There is beauty in the real due to the fact that each one possesses the attraction of one's own existence and he feels that he should always remain alive. There is never distaste in one's own existence. There is glory in consciousness because one is proud feeling "I am the knower of so many things", in this way one feels that he has a special knowledge (wisdom) in his own self. Truth, consciousness and bliss—these three being one in essence, appear different due to the angle of one's vision only. In fact where there exists the reality, there also exist consciousness and bliss. Where there exists consciousness, there also remain the reality and bliss. Where there is bliss, there also persist truth and consciousness. In God (the entire form of God) there exist realism, consciousness and bliss in complete form but in his fragment, the soul, they remain in their partial form.

The beauty, glory and attraction (sweetness) which are seen in this world, are perishable. But by supposing one's own relationship with this world, the vision of man is limited and fixed in the world only, it does not go beyond the world towards God (Supreme reality). Due to attachment to the world he assumes the perishable beauty, glamour and attraction (sweetness) of the world as permanent and real. Although the apparent beauty, glamour and attraction, visible in the world, is also a glimpse, a replica of that Supreme God, but the person does not presume it as God's and assumes, its independent existence and gives all the importance to it. By giving importance to worldly beauty, mineness arises; by giving importance to glamour, desire arises and by giving importance to sweetness, attachment arises. As a result of which his life becomes changeable (miserable), disquiet and dependent but when the supposed relationship with the world does not exist, then the attachment, desire and mineness are destroyed and the person becomes faultless, peaceful and independent which means that he becomes completely free from the bondage of this world. When the selfless grace of God makes that salvation tasteless, then the real love arises. For instance, due to the rise of the sun, the light of one thousand watt lamp of electricity does not finish, but in the light of the sun its importance does not get recognition, similarly when love is awakened, then flawlessness, quietude and independence don't disappear but they don't get recognition and don't have so much importance and then "I am without any defects, I am quiet, I am independent"—This subtle ego and all the philosophical differences, which arise from this ego, totally disappear which means, that non-dualism, qualified non-dualism, dualism, nondualistic-dualism etc., all such

differences are transformed into God's manifestation which is a Reality. Therefore the devout devotee who has realized "all is God" in his heart, there remains no insistence of any particular view but there remains equal respect for all sects and views. There being no insistence for any specific sect, he never has any disrespect for any sect or religion or opinion etc.



Why then do you say, "I, I, I,"? Why you say, "I, I, I," about is something that belongs to the realm of changeful and perishable things. But the constant unvarying Being who said ten years ago that all this is changeful, who said five years ago that all this is changeful, who even now says that all this is changeful, is continuously the One who affirms change. Fifty year ago He also said it is changeful. The day before yesterday, He says changeful; yesterday He says changeful; today He says changeful. And tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, He will affirm that all these things are changeful.

One alone abides that is changeless and is the support of all *Adhiṣṭhāna*, *Ādhāra*. Who is that Being? That Being is your true identity, your true Self. You are the unchanging witness of all changeful things. You are the unchanging cogniser of all change and changeful things. You are the unseen yet unchanging affirmer of all these changes, of the fact of change. And you alone can answer the question, Who are you? Who am I?

—Swami Chidananda

Benefits of Gāyatrī Japa

—Swami Sivananda

Gāyatrī is the mother of the *Vedas* and is the destroyer of sins. There is nothing more purifying, on the earth as well as in the heaven, than the *Gāyatrī*. The *Japa* of *Gāyatrī* brings the same fruit as the recitation of all the four *Vedas* together with the *Angas*. This single *Mantra* repeated three times a day brings great good (*Kalyāṇa* or *Mokṣa*). It is the supreme *Mantra* of the *Vedas*. It destroys all sins. It bestows splendid health, beauty, strength, vigour, vitality and magnetic aura in the face (Brahmic effulgence).

Gāyatrī destroys the three kinds of *Tāpa* or pain. *Gāyatrī* bestows on one the four kinds of *Puruṣārtha*, viz., *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (Wealth), *Kāma* (desired objects) and *Mokṣa* (Liberation or freedom). It destroys the three *Granthis* or knots of ignorance, *Avidyā*, *Kāma* and *Karma*. *Gāyatrī* purifies the mind. *Gāyatrī* bestows on the *Upāsaka Aṣṭa-Siddhis*. *Gāyatrī* makes a man powerful and highly intelligent. *Gāyatrī* eventually gives Liberation or emancipation from the wheel of birth and death.

The repetition of *Japa* of *Gāyatrī* brings the *Darśana* of *Gāyatrī* and finally leads to the realisation of the Advaitic Brahman of Unity of Consciousness (*Tanmayatā*, *Tallīnatā* *Tadrūpatā*, *Tadākāratā*) and the aspirant who asked for light from *Gāyatrī*, in the beginning, sings now in exuberant joy: “I am that Light of lights that gives light to the *Buddhi*.”

May *Gāyatrī*, the Blessed Mother of the *Vedas*, bestow on us right understanding, pure intellect, right conduct and

right thinking! May She guide us in all our actions! May She deliver us from the *Sāmsārika* wheel of birth and death! Glory! Glory unto *Gāyatrī*, the Creatress, the Generatrix of this Universe!



The path of devotion, or *Bhaktiyoga*, is easy for all to tread for the reason that this does not require the killing of the senses or uprooting the natural urges and desires; one needs only to give them a new turn. Their tendencies, drives and energies are to be directed along new channels. This can be done by line of least resistance. One has to withdraw the mind gently from sense-objects and point it God-ward. The way to do this is to get rid of desires by perceiving, with the help of discrimination and reason, the entirely evil character of lust, anger, greed and delusion, which are the causes of endless suffering and bondage; and also to realise that unless these passions are conquered, men have to be born and to die again and again, and their misery will not completely end, even in eternity. By these means the evil desires and proclivities not only lose their force gradually, but their irrepressible downward tendencies can, by the process of sublimation, be led upward, and be converted into such tremendous forces of good that they flood life with an inexhaustible feeling of supreme bliss. If you crave for pleasure, thirst for the ecstasy of being in the blessed company of the Lord, who is All-Love! If you must be avaricious, covet the possession of the imperishable Supreme Treasure, which is God! If you must be infatuated with beauty, be enamoured of the Eternally Beautiful! If you have to be angry, be angry with Him for not revealing Himself to you! And so on in regard to pride and envy also, which keep you down to the trifles of life.

—Swami Virajananda

Bhagawān Śrī Gaṇeśa

—Mohan Lal Mago

Gaṇeśa is widely worshipped as the god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune.

Goddess Pārvatī asked Gaṇeśa to guard the entrance while she took a bath. Lord Śiva returned home and was not allowed to enter. Śiva got angry, and in his divine fury severed Gaṇeśa's head, killing him instantly. Gaṇeśa died but did not give up his duty. When Pārvatī learnt of this, she was enraged and wanted to destroy the world. She was stopped by Śiva who realised his mistake and gave Gaṇeśa a new life by fixing an elephant head onto the body of Gaṇeśa. He also gave him the status of being foremost among the gods.

One night Gaṇeśa went for a ride on his mouse. The tiny mouse could not bear his weight and tripped. Seeing this the Moon started laughing. Gaṇeśa cursed the Moon saying that anyone who looks at the Moon on the night of Gaṇeśa Caturthī will be falsely accused. Later Gaṇeśa realised his mistake but he could not take the curse back.

Lesson: Donot act on impulse. Always think before you react because anger goes but actions remain.

Matsyāsura was a ferocious demon who worshipped Bhagawān Śiva and asked him for the boon of immortality. Śiva blessed Matsyāsura. Drunk with power, the demon started crushing the three worlds. Lord Gaṇeśa transformed into Vakratuṅḍa and captured Matsyāsura. However, when Matsyāsura begged for forgiveness, Vakratuṅḍa set him free and peace was restored.

Lesson: Learn to forgive and forget. Keeping scores, trying to get even and pulling down always make you less than what you are.

Once there was a major drought in the southern region. Sage Agastya took drops of the river Gaṅgā from Lord Śiva in his *Kamaṇḍalu* to create a river in the affected area. On the way, he decided to take rest and kept his *Kamaṇḍalu* on the ground. Curious to know what was in the vessel, Gaṇeśa disguised as a crow and sat on it. The *Kamaṇḍalu* fell on the ground and the river Kāverī started flowing out of it.

Lesson: It is good to be curious. People who are curious are able to see new worlds and possibilities which are normally not visible.

In the court of Lord Indra, there was a musician named Krauñca. One day, he accidentally stepped on the foot of Vāmadeva, who cursed Krauñca to become a mouse. However, Krauñca became a huge mouse and started destroying everything in his path. To teach Krauñca a lesson, Lord Gaṇeśa mounted him. Krauñca pleaded with Gaṇeśa to make him light weight.

Lesson: Modesty is the best virtue. Try not to become big for your boots.

Gaṇeśa promised *Guru Vedavyāsa* that he will write *Mahābhārata* as and how the sage narrates it. One day the quill he was using to script the epic broke down. As per his pledge, neither he could stop nor could he ask the sage to pause. So he broke his left tusk and wrote the remaining epic with it.

Lesson: Dedication is key to success. Without unreserved commitment to vision, it is difficult to soar in life's pursuit. Dedication helps in solving any difficult task.

King Kubera is the lord of wealth. He was very proud

of his wealth, and looked down on Lord Śiva for residing in the mountains like a sage. Kubera invited Śiva to his capital but Śiva sent Gaṇeśa instead. He not only ate all the food that was prepared for the feast but also ate everything available in Kubera's city. Kubera admitted his mistake and begged forgiveness for his pride.

Lesson: Be humble. Confidence is silent and insecurities are loud. Humility can help you build genuine and richer relationships with people you work with.

Once Pārvatī had a divine fruit wanted by both her sons Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya. Śiva decided that the one who circles the world three times and comes back first, would get it as a prize. Kārtikeya swiftly got on his peacock and embarked on his voyage. While Gaṇeśa, after a little thinking started walking around His parents. When inquired, he answered—My world is at my parent's feet. He won the fruit and also earned everyone's respect.

Lesson: Do not panic, make the best of the situation. Panic clouds your judgment so focus on how to utilise available resources to make the best out of the worst.



Change is always subjective. All through evolution you find that the conquest of nature comes by change in the subject. Apply this to religion and morality, and you will find that the conquest of evil comes by the change in the subjective alone. That is how the *Advaita* system gets its whole force, on the subjective side of man. To talk of evil and misery is nonsense, because they do not exist outside. If I am immune against all anger, I never feel angry. If I am proof against all hatred, I never feel hatred.

—*Teachings of Swami Vivekananda*

Developing Longing for God

—Swami Chidananda

Worshipful homage unto the omnipresent Divine from whom we are never apart, in whom we dwell and who dwells within us as the very life of our life, the eye of our eye, the ear of our ear, the breath of our breath, the *Prāṇa* of our *Prāṇa*, the mind of our mind, the very heart of our heart, the innermost essence of our being!

‘एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः....’ (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* VI. 11), ‘ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति...’ (*Gītā* XVIII. 61)—The Supreme Spirit is hidden in all beings. The Lord, *Īśvara*, dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna. Thus, variously, the scriptures again and again bring to our attention this truth, this fact, that we are never apart from, we are never in any way remote, distant or disconnected from, the Being whom we are seeking, the Being whom we refer to as the *Parama Lakṣya*, highest goal, of human existence.

When we say *Parama*, highest or supreme, we always think of it as something beyond, something distant or remote, something that requires a long journey to reach. We always think in terms of a long process, but they point out to us that it is an inner journey. We do not have to cover distances. We only have to remove obstacles—formidable obstacles within ourselves—the greatest obstacle being ourselves. And, metaphysically speaking the lesser obstacles are certain factors within our own personality that are contrary to the Divine Reality, which therefore, veil It. They stand in the way, they obscure It; they obstruct our perception of It, our experience of It.

Also, the inveterate tendency of our psychological self is to always move away from the inner centre and move outside to external objects, propelled by the desire for the possession and enjoyment of external things. It is the tendency of the mind to imagine that happiness, peace and the fulfilment of our lives lies in striving for, possessing and experiencing external things, and thus it moves outward in the wrong direction due to this wrong notion. Therefore, the most familiar, the most intimate appears to be remote. Not that it is, but we make it so.

To alter these outgoing tendencies—this deluded thinking of the mind that our happiness is in worldly possessions, contacts, and experiences—becomes an indispensable part of our *Sādhanā*. And it is an extraordinary quality of this delusion that it doesn't allow the deluded being to perceive that he is deluded. On the contrary, he will argue and fight and try to convince others that he is perfectly clear, rational and logical.

So, all the world is in the grip of this delusion that does not permit them to know their delusion; on the contrary, makes them convinced that they are right and that those who do not think like them are deluded. Thus it is that this *Bhrānti*, this delusion, being created by *Māyā* makes the being move in a direction contrary to his ultimate goal which is within. It is through *Satsaṅga* and *Svādhyāya* that this delusion is removed and ignorance is replaced by right understanding and knowledge. That marks the turning of our direction towards God.

We must come to the conviction, the continuous, unalterable conviction that God is present right here, nearest to me as my innermost being. God lives within me; we are never apart. And the next conviction is to know that this Being is the only source of true happiness, peace and satisfaction. There is no other source.

The third conviction is that this Being, who is ultimately the only source of true happiness, is, therefore, the highest value in life. There is nothing greater, nothing more valuable, nothing more important.

If we make seeking Him our most important task in life, if we develop for Him a great longing, a great desire and an overwhelming yearning: “In this life, before I pass away, I must attain God, I must experience that Supreme Being, I must,” if our whole being becomes filled with this urge, then there is absolutely no doubt, it is absolutely certain, that in this very life, in and through this very body, God will be experienced. There is no room for doubt or despair.

No matter how deluded the world outside may be, no matter how chaotic and absurd, no matter how outrageously human society in this world may be acting, it does not matter if your interior is all right. And it is in the firm conviction of God’s existence and in His most intimate and nearest presence, plus a great conviction that He is the one and only supreme value, the one and only thing worth attaining that you develop within you a great longing to attain and experience God; in fact you become of the nature of God.

Then you may be absolutely certain that nothing can deprive you of that experience. It may be a question of a little sooner or later, but the experience is certain. There is no doubt about it.

Let us, therefore, adore the Supreme by acknowledging His immediate, indwelling presence and by telling Him: “Thou art my all in all. Thou art everything for me. Thy attainment is my life’s only desire.”

Mind Your Behaviour

—*Balram Kumar Mani Tripathi*

You are immortal

You are pure.

You are noble

And you are unlimited.

A man does according to his nature.

Nature depends.....upon God's wish.

God is immortal, pure, noble and unlimited.

He has created this universe.

For the sake of all these creatures.

He entered the heart of all.

He is out side,

He is in,

All the things are within

As water is within ice

As water is in the vapours

If there is no water, what will be in ice or vapours?

Just think of god,

Just think of yourself,

You are the soul,

You are the whole.

You are in all

And you could not survive without all these—

The nature, the universe, the soul and all these business
stalls.

You need peace,

Give peace to others.

You need love,

Give love to others.
You want not to be beaten,
Don't beat others.
You do not like to be hated
Don't hate others.
You need respect,
Give respect to others.
You need help,
Give help to others.
Which you will give to others,
You will get the same.
These are the paths for Self-realizations also for
Earning name and fame
Your body will change,
At the time of death.
But your name will survive,
After every change on the earth.
Your name is symbol of yourself,
O my immortal king!
Give your whole to
That whole.
Which is known as
Whole the Almighty.



Precognition: A Spiritual Perspective

—Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande

On the periphery of consciousness, mind and ego manifest apparently just as waves and bubbles on the surface of the ocean. Nothing is permanent. Rather there are brief flashes of light which during their more briefer sojourn travel in variegated and bizarre forms. The equivocation how these material objects are formed perpetually and then dissolved quickly imparts only a rough practical approximation never an exact or faithful theorem. That is why the Persona in such an enquiry is never a doer but a silent spectator to witness evanescent hues and moves. It becomes a greater secret—an unfolding of amply debated physical as well as metaphysical enigma. In an indifferent and uninteresting span thoughts transpire and start gathering thin then thinner. There appears less traffic on the track. Slowly but steadily gaps begin to appear. Thoughts continue appearing till a big gap is created. Big becomes bigger till the mind is totally empty. This Emptiness in itself is a phenomena par-excellence. It is known by various names in various pantheons. Essentially it is the seat of truth and is literally known as the Beyond. It is a ladder to experience the omnipotent reality that is now known to physicists as Higgs Boson or God particle evidently existent behind and beyond the veil of material universe—The *Māyā*.

In the light of these recounting I am taking precognition as a mode of perception to perceive the reality which goes beyond the boundaries of both—time and space. To be more precise precognition, as defined by Websters Encyclopedia

of Dictionaries New American Edition, is a state of awareness in which an individual is able to perceive objects or remember ideas or takes cognizance of objects before hand. Nevertheless it is foreknowledge. Generally it serves two purposes. Perceiving the objects lurking in the realm of consciousness and determining their course of action and consequences. As absolute consciousness has no form, it is formless—*Nirākāra*. A study of briefer flashes, their form and period of occurrences in the realm of consciousness further raises questions like—Why? And how? All the objects on the surface of the earth appear fairly persistent or nearly stationary. Contrary to earth's rotation and periodic occurrences Atoms in different parts of the universe have an extraordinary similarity. Moreover the aggregation of stars into galaxies, galaxies into clusters and clusters into superclusters displays on sufficiently large scale that the universe is approximately uniform. Perhaps this is the reason the Jains believe that our physical body and this world both are a collection of Atoms. They use the word *Pudgala* for it.

What then actually limits the unbounded sphere of our consciousness? In this perspective our phycho-physical activity requires contextual mention. The functioning of five-sheaths *Pañcakośas*. of five vital forces *Pañcaprāṇas* impede the traffic on the track of consciousness. This unchecked flow of elemental forces is like committing adultery or infidelity subsequently leading to a state popularly known as psychosomatic.

Soma includes the body and its conditioning constituents such as—*Vāta* (wind), *Pitta* (bile), *Kapha* (phelm), while *Psyche* is the mind with conditioning constituents like—*Sattva* (Serenity), *Rajas* (Passion) and *Tamas* (Greed). Thus there are three Somatic and three Psychic constituents. The

disequilibrium state of these constituents give rise to different disorders. Therefore, optimal degree of equilibrium in above-mentioned constituents is a practical necessity. These are some outstanding features of holistic living and nature of human health. Besides balanced physical and mental constitution, perfection in inner and outer secretory functions, happy-hilarious spirit and mind constitute prerequisite for investigating further the objectives of precognition.

As mentioned above, precognition by the Vedantists has been designated as *Sakhijñāna*. Accordingly there exists besides the changing modes an internal organ which experience pure-awareness. This pure-awareness is an ever shining light. *Ācārya Śaṅkara* while making commentary on the *Upaniṣads* examines consciousness as *Cit* and further affirms reality as awareness. The basic datum of *Ācārya's* theory of knowledge is that pure-awareness apprehends reality or the reality is apprehended by pure-awareness. *Gītā* too affirms by quipping “*Prajñānam Brahma*”. This ontological thinking is basically different from assumption-based systems of Modern Psychology. Modern Psychology divides awareness into two—focal and subsidiary. Focal awareness at first displaces the configuration of events then takes cognitive process as objects disappearing to pass into the realm of pure-awareness. Subsidiary awareness sustains the restraining effects by engagement with events. In actual process the relationship between these two as a mode of apprehending reality is known to Psychologists as a better named typical phenomena-precognition.

The light of *Cit* illumines our experience of the objective world. Pure *Cit* is *Vijñānamaya*—an intelligence free from *Vṛttis*. The nature of *Vṛttis* necessitates a sort of translatory action and determines the cognizance of successive

events. Moreover, the psychic realities which are beyond cognitive processes seem to have a base on prior assumption concerning the basic datum of our mental existence. This basic datum arises logically out of mind's contact with internal particulars. Therefore, *Vṛttijñāna* when divorced from *Cit* ceases to be a human consciousness, rather assumes a proportionate similarity akin to animal consciousness—the subhuman. Those who have practically experienced this phenomena called precognition frequently report that in this periodic duration they sink into a state of unawareness wherein all cognitive functions come to stand still. *Yogīs* performing physical feats also report an experience akin to precognition. Actually in states of Meditative contemplation our subsidiary awareness tends to get disengaged from external particulars thereby suspending partially or wholly as per the individual endeavouring to apprehend the reality, all cognitive functions by cleaning the track for focal awareness which has to pass into pure duration—an ecstatic state of unbounded joy—*Ānanda*. This phenomena is also like as it has been amply compared with, Śiva's dance. The dance of atoms and the solar system that move in accordance with divine wish into respective patters. Thus precognition is something worth scrounging. In its indivisible form it has no temporal character, neither is it subjected to periodic occurrences. It cannot be visualized within the field of serially ordered time. Although consciousness cannot apprehend it, yet in enlightened moments of pure duration *Cit* can visualize its immaculate Icon within its fold.

To sum up the notion, I have undertaken the latest Neurophysiological upshots, signaling that nothing is as important as awareness. They rename it as mental space dedicated to innovation. Space is truly characterised by

undividedness so allows movement and vibration also participation to give awareness an abode. The key-compound of awareness is the discovery of deep divine patterns to our trial. We also have a tendency to weave vast tapestry of meaning inside us. Neurally speaking there is a network of advanced omnipurpose orb. This network is densely correlated and had an extraordinary homogeneity to combine multiple meanings and potentially structured information. These are connoted by ultra-fast brain rhythms. When brought into contact with spiritual practices such as—*Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra* etc., these ultra-fast brain rhythms give credence to the key-components which stand is good stead to apprehend this so-called inconspicuous phenomena known as Precognition.



We live in a magical universe filled with great forces of life and death, creation and destruction. Divine powers can be found everywhere to lift us into a greater peace and understanding. But undivine forces are also ever present, working to lure us down further into confusion and attachment. Truth and falsehood, ignorance and enlightenment, form the light and dark, the illumination and shadow of the world. In this basic duality of creation we struggle not merely to survive but to find meaning in our lives. We must learn to navigate through these contrary currents so that we can benefit by the ascending spiritual force and avoid the descending unspiritual inertia.

—*Pandit Vamandeva Shastri*

Love is Blind

—Swami Akhandananda

Q. They say love is blind. Please tell us whether we should love or not.

Ans. If love could be done at will, where was the problem? It first comes unnoticed and then we find out that it is there. That is why it is called “blind”. However, if your love is for God, then it will not be blind. Loving anyone other than God is blind love, because everything apart from God is transient. If it goes, it will leave you weeping; and if you are forced to leave it, you will weep too. “*Priyam tvām rodatsyati*”. The Divine *Śruti* (scriptures which speak of direct knowledge) state that whatever worldly object of love you may have, it will be the cause of your bondage, and sorrow. If it remains with you, you will be bound to it, and not be able to leave it, nor be free. If it leaves you, it will make you weep—“*Priyam tvām rodatsyati*”. The word “*Rodatsyati*” can be made from the root sounds of either “*Roda*” or “*Rud*”. Bondage and sorrow result when one has love for any worldly object. Loving anything in this world has the natural consequence of our being entrapped.

Exactly the reverse, however is the result of a love for God. Love for God never ties you down, and nor does He leave you. In God, there is no bondage and no sorrow. He is absolute Bliss. He is our own *Ātmā*. The truth of the matter is that this is the only true love. All other love is artificial you know!

It is discussed in the *Śrutis*—who is dearest to a

person—wealth, husband/wife, God or any other? The conclusion is, that more than wealth, spouse or child, or anything else, our own *Ātmā* is the dearest for each of us.

न वा अरे पत्युः कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवत्यात्मनस्तु कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति। न वा अरे जायायै कामाय जाया प्रिया भवत्यात्मनस्तु कामाय जाया प्रिया भवति। (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II. 4.5)

So, whatever love you have for all others, the love that surpasses them all, is your love for your own *Ātmā*, is it not? Even when we worship God, envisaging Him outside of us, what happens? We feel God is happy with us and we feel happy. So, at the end of it all, it results in our own happiness.

Why do we seek wealth? For our comfort and pleasure. Why do we want religion? For our welfare. Why do we want a life partner, children and home? So that we can be happy. The question is why do we want all those factors which, we believe, will make us happy? For the sake of happiness itself, neither for anything else, nor for any other person. Why do you go to the market? Why do you to meet your friend? To get money from him. What will you do with the money? Order jewellery for my wife. Why do you want to order jewellery for your wife? So that she will be happy. Why do you want her to be happy? If she is happy, I will be happy too. This question has no existence, as to why you want to be happy? The answer to the question—the ultimate seat of happiness, the epitome of the whole matter—is in your own *Ātmā*. Therefore love means fulfilment, deep satisfaction. Love means absolute bliss.

Love (*Prema*) is both active and inactive. Love means complete satisfaction. However, a thirst is needed too, lest love become stagnant. Therefore, love is never satiated.

What is this love? It is a thirst for Kṛṣṇa. It is a thirst for the beloved, and it is a godly thirst. If love were to

be satiated, all progress would be stilled, resulting in limitation. An unquenchable thirst is needed for love to grow. A little more, a little more, a little bit more.....a deep satisfaction is also needed in love. Who will desire love if there is no satisfaction in it? And, how will love grow, if there is no craving for more? So, both satisfaction and craving are necessary in love; and when our love is for God, then our existence, our knowledge and our joy—all three take on the form of the Lord, and we experience identification with that *Sat-Cid-Ānanda* essence of the Lord. If, however, realization takes place, then there is no need to feel that we are one with the Absolute Bliss. We become Absolute Bliss ourselves.



So many years are gone from our lives already. And only so many years, weeks, days and hours are left. Don't waste time. In your heart, tell Him night and day, "Lord, I want Thee," Never be insincere about that. Never reason, "Tomorrow I will seek God. Today let me have a good time. Always say, "Today my Lord, today I want Thee."

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

To live without understanding the purpose of life is foolish, a waste of time. The mystery of life surrounds us, we were given intelligence in order to solve it.

Finality in Karmayoga

—Sri Rama Devi

When the mental defilements and intellectual delusion are removed, and the *Citta* shines effulgent with the purity of *Sattwa*, spiritual illumination dawns and one enters the portals of what is known as '*Naiṣkarmya*'. *Naiṣkarmya* actionless poise, is not a state of equipoise in the midst of activity. Established in supreme wisdom, the *Yogī* becomes a vehicle of divine dynamism.

The finality in *Karmayoga* is that work itself becomes repose. That is to say, the distinction between action and actionlessness disappears. Activity becomes spontaneous, divinely rhythmic and lustrous. When agency and attachment go, leaving the mind free, you will feel the supreme relaxation even when you are intensely active. So also, when love for God possesses the heart, you will rejoice in your activity and the work will become communion with the Beloved. Look at the common example of people struggling and suffering for the sake of their family, their kith and kin. If attachment produced by *Māyā* has got such a power to goad man to incessant actions and make him willingly suffer and sacrifice, then imagine, what is impossible for him to do, what sacrifice he will not be capable of, when his heart is filled with pure love!

In its perfected state, *Karmayoga* is sublime service of the Supreme. It is the dynamic fulfilments of love, an outflow of total dedication. It is the power of wisdom in perpetual expression.

Read and Digest

Don't waste your opportunity in human life to seek worldly pleasures only.

* * *

Have that evenness of mind wherein you are absolutely calm, free from all anger. Don't let anyone or anything take away your peace from you.

* * *

Be in the world but not of it—not absorbed or lost in its materiality.

* * *

Health and sickness are dreams of the mind. You are spirit. You are above them both.

* * *

You are sympathize with yourself believing your deficiencies and weaknesses are inscapable. Change that kind of thinking.

* * *

Before this life is snatched away, make God visible to you now. Don't put off your search for God until your old age.

* * *

You cannot save others' souls unless you have saved your own soul.

* * *

To live for the false self (ego) is source of all misery.

My Confidence

—*Chilukuri Venkateswarlu*

I pray my Lord God in my heart,
I invite my Lord God in thy heart,
I wish to see Him in each heart.

Equality, He prefers;
Nobility, He infers;
Stability, He favours.

No thought in adverse He accepts,
No action for good He objects,
No refuges He rejects.

Faith and patience He observes,
Fair and clean minds He believes,
Firm and true devotees He loves.

That confidence I have had,
That He comes to me so glad
And that He hugs me like a lad.

Vision of Lord Rāma to Tulasīdāsa

—*Nabaji Siddha*

After Śrī Hanumān disappeared, Tulasīdāsa remained saturated in bliss, eagerly waiting for dawn. He thought to himself, “How fortunate I am; how blessed. What merits must I have gathered to be worthy of this priceless gift! Will I really get the vision of the supreme Lord? He has not granted His vision to those who perform severe austerities for long and who reside in wild forests. Will He really favour me, with His grace?”

“What service can I render to Śrī Hanumān for this precious blessing? Śrī Hanumān must mean what He said. Such great fortune is beyond one’s wildest fantasy but, exalted being that He is, Śrī Hanumān will only ever speak the truth. It is my worthlessness which makes me doubt His word.”

With his mind racing along, Tulasīdāsa paced to and fro, growing more restless as the night advanced.

In the meantime, Śrī Hanumān finished his morning bath and worship in the river Vraja in Vaikuṅṭha and reached the abode of the Lord. He went around the Lord in *Pradakṣiṇā* and, prostrating before Him, said, “O Lord! Your supreme devotee, Tulasīdāsa, the incarnation of Vālmīki, is pining for Your *Darśana*. There is none more eligible for Your vision. Of course, I don’t have to tell You all this. You know Your devotees!”

With a teasing smile, the Lord spoke to Śrī Hanumān, “O Āñjaneya! How did you have the heart to deal such hard knocks to the poor fellow?”

Śrī Hanumān pleaded, “O Lord, forgive me for my harsh treatment of Tulasīdāsa and bestow Your grace on him.”

But the Lord said impishly to Goddess Lakṣmī, “Do you know how Hanumān meted out skull-breaking blows on the innocent Tulasīdāsa and made him unconscious? The sage Vālmīki had composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* in twenty-four thousand *Ślokas*. Hanumān wrote My story with twice that number. As a result, people became indifferent to Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa* and Hanumān’s *Rāmāyaṇa* became more popular. Vālmīki was broken-hearted. I called Hanumān to my court and asked him to narrate *Sundara-Kāṇḍa* from his composition. He glorified himself while rendering it, and I teased him about it.

“Hanumān was mortified and tossed his version into the sea. Then he asked a boon of Me that at some point of time, Vālmīki should become his disciple. Now, by beating Tulasīdāsa black and blue, he has settled the score with Vālmīki. Does his behaviour befit him?”

The Lord laughed and the Divine Mother and everyone in the court joined in the merriment.

Śrī Hanumān said in a faint voice, “O Lord, if you take the lead in making fun of me, will others spare me? Will You not show compassion on Tulasīdāsa?”

“What is your interest in him?” asked the Lord, “I will give him *Darśana* as and when I please.”

Śrī Hanumān pleaded, “O Lord, I have assured him that You will grant him *Darśana* today. Please validate your servant’s assurance.”

The Lord said, “How can you make a promise on My behalf without knowing My mind? O son of Añjanā, Tulasīdāsa is tainted by lustful thoughts and evil acts. He has to perform penance for twelve year more to qualify for My *Darśana*.”

But the Goddess hastened to add with a smile, “Dear Āñjaneya, foremost among the immortals, don’t worry. Today we will present ourselves before the great devotee Tulasīdāsa, just as you have requested.” Śrī Hanumān was delighted to hear Devī’s assurance. He prostrated in farewell and left.

Śrī Lakṣmī assuming the form of Sītā, bowed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, Tulasīdāsa, has been doing rigorous *Tapas* for twelve years. Let us grant him Our *Darśana* and gladden his heart.”

The Lord assumed the forms of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata and beckoned the divine eagle Garuḍa. Astride on the bird in the three forms, but remaining invisible, He reached the street where Tulasīdāsa lived, and where he was waiting outside in the street for the arrival of the Lord. He was in a trance of rapture at the prospect of the anticipated vision.

He adored the Lord aloud, “O foremost among the gods, wielder of the bow *Kodaṇḍa*, blemishless Truth, faithful disciple of sage Vasiṣṭha, friend of sage Viśwāmitra, slayer of Tāṭaka, redeemer of Ahalyā, darling of Janaka, beloved of Jānakī, vanquisher of Paraśurāma! O dutiful and implicitly obedient son of Daśaratha, who renounced the kingdom like a trifle and surrendered cheerfully to the cruel dictates of fate! O Lord! You are the heart-beat of Kausalyā; always accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa; one who reveres elders and is glorified by great sages. You were the punisher of wicked Jayanta; nemesis of Khara-Dhūṣaṇa, Mārīca and Kabandha. Weren’t You grief-stricken like ordinary mortals at the abduction of Sītā! O omnipotent Lord, Who granted *Mokṣa* even to a bird, Jaṭāyu! How You relished the fruits offered by Śabarī and bestowed Your grace on her! You are ever-delighted with Śrī

Hanumān; how fondly You held him to Your bosom! You are humility personified. You deigned to please the monkey-chieftain Sugrīva and proved Your valour to him! O Destroyer of invincible Vāli! Playing the perfect human role, You sported to confess Your grief to Śrī Hanumān! You set fire to Lanka through Śrī Hanumān! O refuge of Vibhīṣaṇa, slayer of Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvaṇa! You attained great bliss on reunion with Śītā. O ideal king of Ayodhya!” Unmindful of the stares of passersby, Tulasīdāsa waited in the middle of the street eagerly singing the name. ‘Jai Sītārāma’ with folded palms.

Though pleased with his devotion, the Lord wanted to test him further. Assuming the disguise of a Muslim wearing a turban, long robe, beard and earrings, he appeared before Tulasīdāsa. However, Śrī Lakṣmī did not change her form. They stood before Tulasīdāsa for a while, but he ignored them and looked over their shoulders for the Lord’s arrival.

The Lord told His divine consort in exasperation, “O dear! Have you seen his stupidity? Even if he didn’t recognize Me, he should have taken notice of you! Let us not waste Our time on such a fool,” and disappeared.

Fooled by the Lord’s *Māyā*, and taking Them for Muslims, Tulasīdāsa had paid no attention to Them. He waited the whole day wondering about Śrī Hanumān’s promise that the Lord would appear. In the evening, he hastened to the Paurāṇika’s home where he found Śrī Hanumān. Falling at his feet, he wept loudly.

Śrī Hanumān exclaimed, “Dear friend! Didn’t you get the *Darśana* of the Lord today?”

Tulasīdāsa replied, “O Swāmī, I waited all day in the street. My eyes became sore with staring, but the Lord did not turn up for this wretch!”

“Alas! My friend, what a misfortune! Didn’t you recognize Him seated on the horse? He came in the guise of a Muslim. Since His presence elicited no response from you, He disappeared,” Śrī Hanumān explained.

Tulasīdāsa wailed, “Oh! How would I know? Why the disguise? Was the supreme Lord afraid to appear in His divine form? Is it fair to deceive me and wound my feelings with His masquerade? What a sinner I am that even when the Lord appeared before me, I could not recognize Him? How can I make amends?”

Śrī Hanumān spoke soothing words, “O noble servant of the Lord! Do not be so distraught. I myself will bring the Lord tomorrow to the *Āśrama*. I give you my word.”

He was comforted by this. Śrī Hanumān revealed his true form to the assembly and vanished. Beholding this wondrous scene, all prostrated before Tulasīdāsa. “You are indeed blessed! You are a rare devotee.” They praised Tulasīdāsa in glowing terms and carried news to Mamatā Devī and the king of Varanasi.

Now everyone was eager to have the Lord’s *Darśana*. The king got the city decorated beautifully with tender coconut fronds, fragrant jasmine canopies and colourful festoons. At the first sign of dawn, they carried Tulasīdāsa and Mamatā Devī in a palanquin to the Gaṅgā where the pair took ritual baths and adorned themselves in silks and perfumes. They were taken to the *Āśrama* accompanied by trumpets, devotional songs and Vedic chants. An unprecedented mixture of splendour, joy and bustle enveloped the city.

In the meantime, Śrī Hanumān hurried to Vaikuṅṭha and spoke the Lord in an aggrieved tone, “O Lord of the universe, Refuge of the helpless! Is it proper to play games with Your devotees? Please be gracious to this slave and grant Your vision to Tulasīdāsa.”

In annoyance the Lord said, “No. I will have nothing to do with that fool! Believing your words, I went to his place yesterday only to be humiliated. You want me to repeat the same today and suffer disgrace and pain! This is the result of granting favours to undeserving people. He should undergo penance for twelve more years. Only after he goes through the ordeal of fire will I consider your request. Is it a trifle to earn my *Darśana*?”

Śrī Hanumān implored, “If you are so resolved to decline Your *Darśana* to Tulasīdāsa, who has incarnated on the earth to propagate Your name and who has been pining for Your *Darśana*, who can persuade You? My Lord, I beg You, please deign to grant Your *Darśana* and endorse my promise to him.”

But the Lord was unrelenting. Śrī Hanumān was torn between the all-consuming devotion of Tulasīdāsa and the Lord’s rebuff. He supplicated repeatedly in a piteous tone. When his pleas bore no fruit, he resorted to coercion, “O Lord of lords! If you remain adamant, I will uproot Vaikuṅṭha and carry You with it to Varanasi.”

Laughing at these words, the Lord turned to His divine consort and said, “Did you hear Hanumān’s threat? Does it befit a devotee to talk like this?”

Śrī Lakṣmī replied, “The Droṇagiri where the *Sañjīvanī* herb grows is ten times heavier than Vaikuṅṭha, and Hanumān carried it easily, like a child’s ball, in one hand all the way from the Himalayas. It is but a small thing for him to lift this place.”

“Alright, let him do as he wishes. I am not going to budge from this place for the sake of appearing before the dim-witted Tulasīdāsa, replied the Lord.

Śrī Hanumān said, “For upholding their promise, Daśaratha lost his life and *Manmatha* got burnt to ashes.

Even if I have to meet my doom or give up my life, I will not fall back on my words to Tulasīdāsa. I am prepared for any eventuality.” He went round the Lord reverentially, and sought His permission to lift Vaikuṅṭha.

The Lord warned, “O Hanumān, recall the fate of Rāvaṇa when he undertook a similar action and how he got trapped under the big toe of Lord Śiva. Think well before you jump into action.”

Śrī Hanumān replied, “If I suffer a cruel fate under Your lotus feet for the sake of others, I will embrace it happily as blessed fortune.”

Then straightening his tail and assuming his divine, colossal form, Śrī Hanumān started to dig out Vaikuṅṭha. A terrible tremor coursed through the fourteen worlds, striking terror in all directions. The seven seas broke their shores and waves leapt up sky high; all beings trembled with fear. The celestials, frightened of a great calamity, prayed to the Lord for His intervention.

The Lord, amazed at Śrī Hanumān’s boldness, said, “What a grand display of valour, what immeasurable strength! It has struck terror in all! Stop. I will comply with your request and go to Tulasīdāsa.

Śrī Hanumān replied, “My Master, allow me to lift this supreme Abode with my tail, and I will carry Kailash in my hand and plant both in Varanasi. After this, I will prostrate before you in total submission.”

The Lord thought to Himself, “He may actually carry out this stupendous plan! His incredible audacity cannot be trifled with. What am I to do? I cannot clash with My devotees, for I am helpless before them, bound by the cord of their love. If I do not reconcile with him now, more trouble may ensue.” Speaking endearing words to Śrī Hanumān, He melted his heart and made him withdraw his cosmic form.

Then, in the company of Śrī Sītā, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna, thirty three crores of celestials, forty-eight thousand *Rṣis*, *Siddhas*, *Yidyādharas*, *Gandharvas* and celestial damsels, and accompanied by sweet melodies sung by Tumburu and Nārada, the sound of the *Vīṇā* and heavenly instruments, and showers of flowers and gold, the Lord sped on Garuḍa towards Varanasi and descended to Tulasīdāsa' abode led by Śrī Hanumān.

The entire city, consisting of the king, his retinue and all the citizens, was wonderstruck at the magnificent sight and overjoyed and awestruck by Tulasīdāsa immense good fortune.

Seeing the grandeur of the Lord's arrival, Tulasīdāsa almost swooned with delight and wonder. He exclaimed, "O! O! What a blessed sight! How can one ever perform enough austerities to be worthy of such a divine vision? Celestials fill the heavens in all directions. The eminent sages of yore are vying with each other to be in the forefront. Ah, Śrī Hanumān has arrived! And my Lord with His retinue! What language can do justice to His glory? The mind falls silent, words are unworthy of such grace." A thrill shook his frame, his hair stood on end, his eyes were filled with tears of joy and his heart melted with love for the Lord. An incomparable spiritual ecstasy permeated his being.

The Lord came forward with a bewitching smile and held Tulasīdāsa close to His chest, and spoke tenderly, "O my dearest devotee, how much you have suffered on my account? Your devotion and dispassion are incomparable. Now, let your eyes feast on My form as Rāma to your heart's content. Ask of Me whatever boon you wish. All your torments have come to an end, your impurities have been reduced to ashes. Enough of your austerities! You

and Mamatā will reside near me in my abode. The people of Varanasi are blessed with My *Darśana* on your account.”

The Lord ran his hands over Tulasīdasā frame, and his touch transported Tulasīdāsa to the realm of divine raptures. He repeatedly prostrated before the Lord, plunged in ecstatic adoration, “O Hari, Naraharī, Muraharī, Lotus-eyed One who reclines on Śeṣa! Wielder of *Kodaṇḍa*! Beloved of Jānakī! Delight of ascetics! You made up Your mind to shower Your grace on me at last! Why did You delay Your compassion this long? It took You so long to rouse Yourself from Your stupor! Why did You come to me in disguise yesterday?”

The Lord placed His lotus like hands gently on Tulasīdāsa head and said, “O jewel among devotees! You have brought great delight to my heart. Your supreme *Bhakti* has melted my heart and drawn me to you. Please ask of Me whatever you cherish.”

Tulasīdāsa placed his head on the feet of the green-hued Lord and said, “My Beloved Lord! The only desire I cherish in my heart is Your *Darśana*. Whenever this wretch thinks of You, O Lord, grace me with Your *Darśana* along with Mother Sītā. That will be the highest bliss for me.

“O benign Lord! Please bestow on me that means by which all sense clamour is silenced, the mind is tamed and attaining your lotus-feet becomes easy; and grant me attainment of that state in which the great sages like Nārada abide.”

The Lord cast His most gracious glance on Tulasīdāsa and said, “O exalted one! You are well-versed in all scriptures. Is there anything that has not been mastered by you? O wise king among ascetics! What can be beyond your grasp, for it is you, as Vālmīki in a previous life,

who expounded the path of *Jñāna* through the sage Vasiṣṭha!”

Through this utterance, the Lord awakened the germ of Knowledge in Tulasīdāsa and the memory of his past life. It was then that Tulasīdāsa remembered his mission on earth. He felt contrite about how he had lost himself in sense pleasures and become an object of scorn and ignominy when he had been entrusted with the mission of bringing light through *Bhakti* and *Jñāna* to humanity. He felt ashamed.

With his head bent in mortification, he went around the Lord and said in a penitent voice, “O Lord! I am mystified. How did I lead such an aberrant life even after having become the recipient of Your full grace? How did I come under the spell of sensual pleasures and evil attributes, losing myself in delusion, misery and pain, and turning away from devotion and divine remembrance? What was the reason for such a fall even after earning Your favour?”

The Lord said in a soothing voice, “You occupy a premier place among My devotees, My beloved child! I transcend all, yet when I incarnated in the world as Rāma in *Tretā Yuga*, I had to suffer untold miseries and wander about lamenting My fate like an ignorant man. It is through the teachings of sage Vasiṣṭha that my worldly impressions were extinguished and I recalled My mission to establish *Dharma* on earth. My *Māyā* holds sway over the entire universe. Therefore, know that even gods are not free from her clutches when they assume a material body. It is but natural that you also came under her spell and lost your balance. Therefore, please don’t lacerate yourself with remorse.”

An Honest Boy, the Son to the Hotel-Owner

A businessman was going to a foreign country. On his way at night he stayed in a hotel and the next morning he went away from there. Having reached his destination, he saw that his purse was missing. It contained three hundred rupees, the businessman lost hope to get his purse back and he forgot this incident.

When the businessman had gone away, the boy, who was the son to the hotel owner, saw the purse lying in the courtyard of the hotel. He instead of touching it, went straight way to his father and conveyed this message. The father said to him, "Put some leaves and branches of the tree on the purse and cover it," So the son covered it with leaves and branches.

After some days the same businessman, while returning, stayed in the same hotel at night. While he was talking to the owner of the hotel, he mentioned that he had lost his purse. Having listened to him, the owner, the father of the boy, who had found the purse, said to the businessman. "Please, go with my son. He will show you your purse. He has not even touched it. He had just covered it with leaves and branches."

That businessman went with the boy and he, having removed the leaves and branches, took out his purse. He praised the boy very much.

Thus such a boy, who does not want even to touch the money of others, is considered very honest.

Gītā and Karmayoga

—Balkrishna Pawar

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

(Gītā II. 47)

The word ‘*Karma*’ in Sanskrit means *Kṛ*, the do; all action is *Karma*. Also means effects of actions of *Sañcita Karma* of previous birth(s). We do *Karma* but ordinarily we do not know how to turn it into *Yoga*, a spiritual technique, a channel for divine realisation.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa started his sermon, the *Gītā*, with the exclusive purpose of inspiring Arjuna to overcome hypocrisy and cowardice and perform his legitimate Dharmic—Action/duty chivalrously without making an evasive plea that his adversaries being killed are friends, relations and *Gurus* whom he loved: just to obtain kingdom.

Gītā at II. 47-48 sets a mandate for action that “your right is to work only, but never to its fruits; let not the fruit of action be your motive, nor let your any attachment be to inaction. Here the main emphasis is on detaching the will from the result of action” the fruit. This is also called working without selfish motive, which demands tremendous will power. There is alternative and easier way of detaching oneself from the fruit i.e., to surrender the fruit itself at the feet of the Lord. *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* declares, “All that is changeable in this world is to be covered by God as the whole world belongs to God.” So abandon every form of desire. Swāmī Vivekānanda reveals

“When the mind gets purified through detachment and self-surrender, the *Ātman* within slowly begins to shine forth”.

Purity is the *sine quo non* of every spiritual path, particularly of *Karmayoga*. It is purity of body, senses, mind and heart. It also includes ethical disciplines of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing and non-hatred. Then alone work done becomes *Karmayoga* and the fruits belong to the Lord alone. They who have attained steadfastness of the mind by practice of the *Yoga* of discriminative knowledge remain contented with the self and have no duty to perform. Those knower of the Self who are freed from the false identification of the Self with the body have no duty to perform except to remain established in Self awareness.

Even Janaka and others after attaining the supreme, worked, lest people might go astray since their senses are engaged in activity (*Gītā*. III. 20). They attained *Mokṣa* by being devoted to their duties. Kṛṣṇa says there is nothing for him to do in three worlds still he is engaged in actions for public welfare. If he is not engaged in action men would follow his path resultantly the worlds will perish.

All actions are performed by the modes of nature, but whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks “I am the doer” (*Gītā* III. 27). In Greek mythology Narcissus a beautiful youth fell in love with his reflection in waters of pool. He pined away and died. Self-love is ego. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa used to say. “All trouble come to an end when the ego, dies.” Ego develops attachments demands fruits of *Karma*. Repeated contemplations quells the ego.

Desire and anger are two great enemies. Born out of passion. They are sinful. They are insatiable like flame. We should establish ourselves by being absorbed in the Self by controlling the mind and the senses. To annihilate these two enemies, we should take up complete refuge in the contemplation of the Self, which is the Supreme most.

Even the wise are bewildered as to: What is action? What is inaction? He who in action sees inaction and action in inaction is wise among men; he is a *Yogī* and a true performer of all actions, finds a channel for divine realisation. All actions are only inactions as they are devoid of attachment, otherwise they are forbidden 'desires'. A wise man is always aware that he is only the Self which is bereft of all actions.

He who is content with available circumstances, free from pair of opposites and envy, evenminded in success and failure, even when he acts, he is not bound. Whenever action is performed and dedicated to the Lord, such action takes the form of a sacrifice, *Yajña*, which is considered as inaction.

In the spiritual path there are two methods of approach: (1) *Karmayoga*: Performance of actions without attachment to the results and dedicating to God with sacrificial attitude. (2) *Sāṅkhyayoga*: Renunciation of all actions and taking up monkhood i.e. *Samnyāsa* or abandonment. *Karmayoga* is a grand synthesis of action and renunciation. He who is free from all likes and dislikes should be considered as in ceaseless renunciation. The final goal of both the paths stated above is one and the same i.e. of Supreme bliss. But *Gītā* (V. 2-3) declares that "of the two the unselfish performance of works is better than their renunciation. That apart *Karmayoga* is easier to practice.

Gītā (V. 10) requires a person who works, having given up his attachment is not touched by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains un-wetted or unsullied by the surrounding water.

One who is devoted to the path of action subdues his senses and body, whose mind is purified and releases the self as one's supreme goal by establishing himself in meditation (*Gītā* V. 7). A *Sāṅkhyayogī* knows the real and unreal and believes that he does nothing, and the senses are acting on sense objects.

By fulfilling the duties of life in the proper way one may attain spiritual progress. Quality and capacity of work are the basis of functional divisions. Every one must strive for spiritual perfection. In respect of *Karmayoga*, the central message of *Gītā* (XVIII. 46) states—

“Man attains the spiritual perfection by worshipping through his ‘work’ the Lord from whom all ‘work’ proceeds and who permeates all beings.”

Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan adoring work, says, “Work is worship of the Supreme being, man’s homage to God.”



God cannot be seen unless the mind becomes tranquil, pure and stainless. Unless the water of a lake remains calm and transparent, it does not reflect anything at all, or does so only indistinctly. If the mirror is covered with dust, it does not reflect an image or else makes it look blurred. For this reason repeated practice and renunciation are the only means or discipline for the purification of the mind. Even that which is felt to be difficult or impossible becomes easy of attainment by dint of constant practice. Whatever is regularly practised, gradually becomes part of one’s very nature. Along with this, the spirit of renunciation must be cultivated. “All is transient and insubstantial, God alone is real and eternal.” If, grasping this, one can fully surrender one’s whole heart and soul to Him alone, pure love will arise in the heart. If that comes, what else remains to seek after and to possess? “The Lord is of the nature of ineffable Love.” When that love, which is beyond speech or mind, deepens and abides in the heart, then it reveals itself as changed into the form of the Beloved One who is Love embodied.

—Swami Virajananda

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes

—*Methil Prabhakaran*

“Thou didst win over Indra again and again, over Varuṇa when didst rescue Nanda from him, over Yama when Thou didst bring Thy teacher's son from his realm, over *Agni* when Thou didst drink the forest fire, over Brahmā when he stole the calves and over Śiva in Thy fight with Bāṇa. Thus by these victories over all gods and deities, this incarnation of Thine as Kṛṣṇa shines Supreme in its glory.” (*Nārāyaṇīyam*, canto 82, verse 9)

Pradyumna, as stated earlier, had returned to Dwaraka with his wife, Rati. Pradyumna later attended the *Swayaṁvara* function of his uncle Rukmī's daughter, Rukmāvati, who chose to marry him. Later Aniruddha the son of Pradyumna, married Rukmī's granddaughter, Rocanā.

During a game of dice played by Balarāma and Rukmī, after the celebration of this wedding, the latter not only resorted to cheating but also insulted the opponent. The highly agitated Balarāma hit the head of Rukmī with his mace and mighty blow resulted in the death of Rukmī.

Bāṇa, son of Bali, was a mighty *Asura* king with a thousand arms, with which he could handle five hundred sets of bows and arrows simultaneously. After propitiating Lord Śiva as a result of long and intense *Tapas*, Bāṇa could manage to receive a strange boon, by which he had Lord Śiva guarding the entrance to his palace. His pretty daughter, Ūṣā, in one of her dreams saw herself happily living in the company of a handsome prince. Even after awakening from the dream, Ūṣā could not take her mind

away from the prince, whose charming form continued to haunt her. Fortunately for Ūṣā, her close companion, Citralekhā, had the divine gift of drawing any figure that she could imagine. She produced several pictures of handsome princes then living, out of which Aniruddha was recognized as the one Ūṣā saw in her dream. By utilizing her yogic power Citralekhā brought the sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka to the chamber of the princess Ūṣā. Aniruddha then spent several happy days in the company of the princess, till one day his very presence in the palace was noticed by the *Asura* king, Bāṇa, who tied him up in an isolated room in the palace.

The continued absence of Aniruddha at Dwaraka was worrying all the inmates of Kṛṣṇa's kingdom, till Devarṣi Nārada came to Dwaraka and gave detailed information about the happenings at Sonitapura, the capital of Bāṇa. Kṛṣṇa, losing no time further, rushed to Bāṇa's palace with a huge *Yādava* army. Lord Śiva guarding Bāṇa's kingdom, true to His boon granted to Bāṇa, was readying to defend against the attacking *Yādava* army. In the ensuing strange fight between the armies of two divine forces, Kṛṣṇa's soldiers routed the opponents, who were made to flee. The powerful *Asura* king, Bāṇa, then faced Kṛṣṇa for the ultimate fight, in which all the hands of the *Asura* except two were cut off by the arrows sent by the Lord. Bāṇa's life was spared by Kṛṣṇa on Śiva's request and Kṛṣṇa returned to Dwaraka, along with Aniruddha and his spouse Ūṣā.

King Nṛga, son of the great king Īkṣvāku, became very famous after his performance of regular charity, in which thousands of healthy cows were gifted to saintly Brahmins, along with gold and money for their expenses. Unfortunately even after such meritorious services to humanity for long periods, Nṛga retained his sense of pride of success in all

his activities whom God wants to bless with perfection and eternal bliss, He first cleanses his mind of all impurities. For effecting this transformation in the inner sphere of man, in some cases, He has to resort to some hard punishment, which to the layman may appear as cruel and unwarranted. The hidden hand operated in Nṛga's case in the following manner: one day, one of the cows already gifted by the king returned to the king's cattle farm without the knowledge of the recipient or the staff concerned of the king. This cow was gifted again to a new recipient and while the same was being taken out after the ceremonial function, the cow was recognized by the previous owner which resulted in a complaint to the king about the painful lapse in an otherwise pleasant act of pure goodwill. Because of this great sin, Nṛga after his demise had first to report to Yama Dharmarāja, who described to the king all his meritorious deeds and also the sin of gifting the cow without observing the purity of the *Dānakarma*, though done inadvertently. He was given the option of choosing to undergo first either the punishment or the reward. On his acceptance of the result of his sin first, he was immediately changed to become a big sized chameleon and pushed into a well in Dwaraka. One day Śāmba, Kṛṣṇa's son born of Jāmbavatī, Pradyumna and a few of their friends were playing in a garden near their residence and after a while they went to a nearby well for drinking water. They were surprised to see a big chameleon inside the well. When they could not rescue it, even after dropping long ropes inside the well, they requested Kṛṣṇa to come to the well and help them. Kṛṣṇa easily pulled the chameleon out of the well and lovingly patted the back of its body and lo, it took a form of a divine being like the inmate of the heaven. The godly figure of Nṛga bowed down to the Lord,

Who asked him to mount the vehicle, which arrived then to take him to heaven to enjoy all the benefits of the meritorious deeds performed by him as a kind and compassionate king.

The above poignant tale of the noble King Nṛga underlines the fact that pride overrides all the great virtues in man and is an important impediment in one's journey to perfection. Also the story indicates the never failing Law of *Karma* records eternally all the thoughts, feelings, words and actions of all living beings, with emphasis on the inner motives, duly neglecting the outward displays. If it is indeed true that the Supreme Lord has taken the form of the entire creation, then it should be equally true that His Divine Law controls every movement in the universe, both seen and unseen. All glory to Him.



In India there is a better word which means stupidity. People say, "O, he is in love." Well, this is not love at all, it is something diabolical. Rāma has more regard for Truth than for anything else. All personal attachment makes you finite and makes the object of love also finite; then both fall, you and the object of love. *Vedānta* wants you to give up cupidity, stupidity and all attachments, but does not want you to give up true Love. That you have not to give up.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

To do the highest good to the world, everyone down to the lowest—this is our vow. Welcome *Mukti* or hell, whichever comes of it.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Śānti or Peace

—*Swami Asangananda*

In his book on Pessimism, Prof. Sully writes as follows:—“In orthodox Brahmanism, as in Buddhism, a keen sense of human misery is the starting point.... According to the Brahmanic philosophy, though the created world is a regrettable accident, its effect can be neutralized. And this is effected by the absorption of the human soul in the Universal Soul or *Brahma*, the true source of being, thought and happiness. Thus a mode of a permanent and satisfying existence is secured and an optimistic *Weltanschauung* is finally substituted for a pessimistic one.”

It is really interesting to note that Prof. Sully’s view approximates to one of Vedantic approach to the complete cessation of all sorrows and miseries of the world. The unceasing attempts to annihilate one’s egoism and egotism through various processes result in the advent of Absolute consciousness and that completely resolves all ideas of pain and its concomitants.

The world is a wonderful place, where under peculiar circumstances exist side by side two opposite entities such as heat and cold, tears and smiles, pain and pleasure, appreciation and denunciation, praise and reproach, good and evil. In every moment of a man’s life he is coming into contact with these dual entities, and is having his life tossed between their surging waves, not knowing as to whether he is going to the fathomless depth of the ocean or to be crashed by the mountain-high waves, or he is taken to the other side of the ocean. He alone enjoys the

everlasting peace, who remains undisturbed at the appearance of the dualities off and on in his life. It is, no doubt, so difficult to keep up the equipoise of mind in the midst of systole and diastole of circumstances; but it is not impossible to do so. A sincere soul must try to understand the significance of the ideal in life and also the part he is to play during his sojourn in the world. He should also know the constituents he is made up of. Many saints and sages of India made investigations into these matters millenniums ago, and did succeed in their attempts, and their admirable realizations are found embodied in the various philosophical treatises, mainly in the six systems of Hindu philosophy. Besides there are other schools of thought belonging to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Jainism etc. Now what is the common objective of all these schools of philosophy? Complete cessation of all miseries and attainment of infinite bliss (दुःखस्यात्यन्तनिवृत्तिः परमानन्दप्राप्तिः). A time does arrive in everybody's life, when he aspires after *Śānti* and *Śānti* alone. He feels that in the midst of an abundance of joys there peeps in surreptitiously misery which slowly envelops his mental horizon.

There are certain philosophers who declare that this world is an "abode of extreme miseries", and as such it cannot bestow either joy or peace. They, therefore, turn out to be pessimists. The eminent philosopher, Schopenhauer, was the great exponent of this school of thought, and his contemporaries opined that they had never seen him smile, but that he was always morose and contemplative. Such is always the case with the followers of the doctrine of pessimism. There is another school of philosophy which opines that there is always an excess of pain over pleasure in this world. Mr. John Stuart Mill says, "We cannot avoid pain so long as we are in this world. We can canalize

all our thoughts and activities in such a way that their effects may be neutralized.” Easier said than done.

According to some other schools of philosophy, the attainment of Peace can be had by adoption of the method of hibernation, and also by violent sense-suppression. Hibernation signifies the state of self-satisfied, indolent, immobile, inactive do-nothingness in which neither the mind nor the senses, nor even the muscles of the body are to be brought into play, and a kind of vegetative and vacant meditation is to be practised and striven after, as the most desirable and enviable mode of existence. And secondly it is supposed to mean a violent suppression of the natural carvings of man and an attempt to deaden all human sensibility by voluntary exposure to, and endurance of, all the extremes of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and pain, and even self-mortification. A sincere seeker after Peace should be very cautious about the life of hibernation and that of extreme self-suppression. No doubt, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa advises us to withdraw all the senses from their objects.

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

(Gītā II. 58)

“When like a tortoise, which draws in its limbs from all directions, he withdraws his senses from their objects, his mind (understanding) should be regarded as stable.” Mere violent suppression and repression of the senses by coercive methods with thirst at heart does immeasurable harm brought in by the waves of irresistible reaction. These enemies in the form of the senses may be put down and kept under the heel for the time being; but as soon as any opportunity presents itself, they begin violently to storm the citadel of the aspirant from all possible directions, thus

making his stay in the fort impossible even for a moment till at last he is captured by them.

Śānti can never be achieved so long as a tinge of desire of *Kāma* persists in him. Desires arise in the mind and express themselves in the external sphere through the *Indriyas* (the senses of perception and the organs of action).

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥

(*Gītā* III. 40)

“The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its seats; obscuring knowledge through these it (desire) deludes the embodied soul.”

We, the Hindus, do believe in the Doctrine of Reincarnation and the Theory of *Karma*. The seeds of the past actions, mental and physical, remain imbedded in the subconscious mind, and at the opportune moment they come up on the conscious plane and have their full play in their respective spheres; and this state of things goes on in a never-ending process. Then how can the aspirant expect peace that passeth understanding? Baffled on all sides by constant attacks of fortune and misfortune, the so-called pleasure and pain, praise and reproach, tears and smiles, the aspirant yearns after *Śānti* and tries to remain unmoved and undisturbed, and at long last he achieves what he has been searching for so many years or births in this world. *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* says in the *Bhagavadagītā*.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं

समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

(II. 70)

“As the waters of different rivers enter the ocean, which

though full on all sides remains undisturbed, likewise he in whom all desires merge themselves, attains peace, not he who hankers after sense-enjoyments.”

Again the Lord says:—

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

(II. 71)

“He who having given up all desires moves free from attachment, egotism and thirst for enjoyment, attains peace.”

The human soul is divine. In the fullness of time each soul will attain God-Vision and soul-emancipation, wherein lie infinite bliss and peace. But then the *Prārabdha Karma*, good and bad, will have to be exhausted completely irrespective of our likes or dislikes. Ordinary souls are invariably attracted forcibly by the objects of worldly enjoyments, which prevent the seekers of peace from achieving it. Under the circumstances sincere aspirants must struggle hard for the attainment of true knowledge, no matter what price they have to pay for it. As there is lack of sufficient strength, mental and intellectual, common aspirants will have to submit themselves at the feet of the Divine Lord, accepting whatever comes to them in the usual course. This spirit of self-surrender and self-abnegation brings to the aspirants Ideal Peace that passeth understanding. You may live in the world, but should not be of the world, slaves of worldly enjoyments. Work you will have to do, but do not get involved in the meshes of attachment. An aspirant should try to remain free from all attachments and to maintain an equipoise of mind in the midst of trying and taxing circumstances, however painful and exacting they may be. This state of mind will slowly and steadily lead him to the haven of Peace or *Śānti*.

Human life is a continuous *Yajña* or sacrifice, and this

Yajña reaches its consummation in the fulness of time. Therefore let every act and every thought be an offering to the Lord and let this *Yajña* culminate with the invocation of the *Śānti-Vacana*—“*Om Śāntiḥ, Om Śāntiḥ, Om Śāntiḥ.*” May the Lord shower His benediction of *Śānti* on all the inhabitants of the world and may He convert it into a Paradise!



Upāsana means act of approaching God, through worship, prayers and Service; literally, to be seated in His proximity. Vain thoughts and vain actions, far from benefiting us, do us harm. Indulging in them, we lose ourselves and they take us away from God to a garbage pit, as it were—indeed, nobody knows where. The more we keep ourselves away from worthless thoughts and actions and from impermanent worldly objects, and devote ourselves to the remembrance and contemplation of God, to meditation, worship and repetition of His holy name, and to activities like doing good to others and serving humanity, the closer we approach God, the more we are transfigured into His likeness, and the more are our hearts filled with bliss. There is no other way than this to conquer the world and to be saved from misery and mental disquietude.

—*Swami Virajananda*