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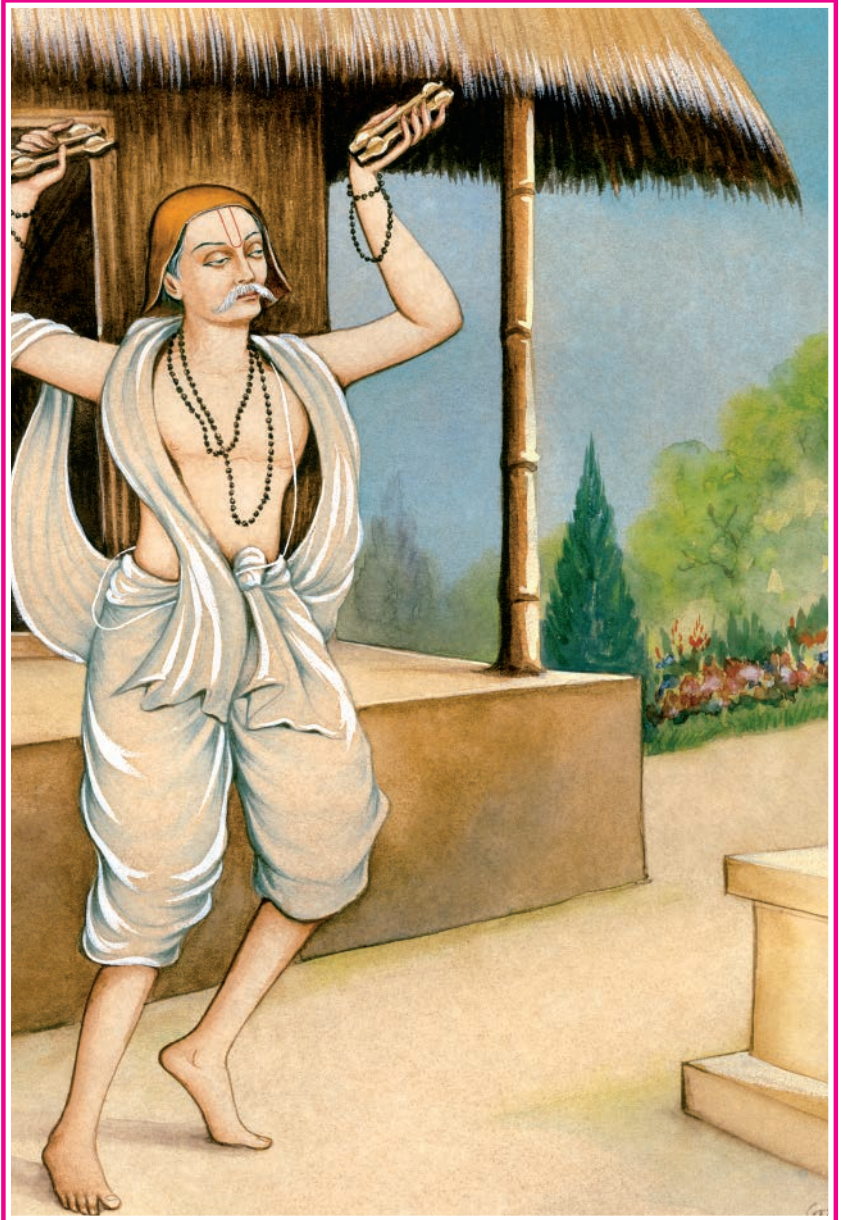


Mahālakṣmī—the Goddess of Prosperity

Vol. 62
No. 10

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2017



Saint Narasī Mehatā

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



KALYANA-KALPATARU

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

Vol. 62

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No. 10

Subhāṣitam

प्रियवाक्यप्रदानेन सर्वे तुष्यन्ति जन्तवः ।
तस्मात्तदेव वक्तव्यं वचने का दरिद्रता ॥

Everyone gets satisfaction and happiness with pleasing words. Hence one should always speak pleasantly. Why act miserly in speaking?

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Faith in Divine

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

On account of deficiency in faith in God, scriptures, saints, the other world, the soul and the fruits of good and evil actions, our conviction suffers from the canker of doubt and is weak; and, therefore, our effort also is weak. This is the reason why we cannot give up things, which are worthy of being abandoned, and adopt what is worthy of adoption. In reality, when we actually come to regard evil activities as exceptionally harmful, we can neither indulge in them, nor retain any evil thoughts in our mind. Similarly, when we actually begin to regard good activities worthy of adoption as exceptionally beneficial, how can it be possible for us to remain without the adoption of such activities and cultivation of such virtues?

Therefore, we should cultivate full faith in the words of God, the scriptures, the saints and sages, and in the other world, the soul and the fruits of good and evil deeds. After death when the body goes to destruction the soul is never destroyed—‘even though the body is slain, the soul is not’ (II. 20)—and the fruit of action is bound to accrue—when this faith becomes firmly established, the laxity in effort may disappear resulting in intensification of practice. But this firm faith is gained only when due to study of the noble scriptures and association of saints, the heart is purified through their grace. Therefore, in order to destroy all evils like dirt, inconstancy, and the obscuring power of the mind, we should take exclusive refuge in the Lord and practise wholehearted devotion to Him by taking

to the *Japa* of His name, meditation on His form and offering praises and prayers to Him. When we do this, we may naturally develop good conduct and good qualities and soon realize God, the embodiment of supreme joy, supreme peace, and Knowledge and Bliss solidified. In the *Gītā* also, the Lord says—

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
 साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥
 क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
 कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

(IX. 30-31)

“Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be considered a saint; for he has rightly resolved. (He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship). Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never falls.”

Question—God is omniscient, almighty, all-pervading, just, Lord of all, supremely compassionate and the best friend of all beings—this is stated by the scriptures and confirmed by saints, and we also come to the same conclusion with the help of our intellect, and yet what is the reason of our not developing Love of God, who is eternal Knowledge and Bliss solidified, and not carrying out His behests?

Answer—Only lack of faith in God is the cause of this defect. On account of this, we believe in the existence of God only with a doubting mind and in a nominal way. When we do not believe completely, and freed from doubt in the existence of God, there can be no question of our believing in the above virtues of God. But he who believes in the existence of God, as well as in God’s virtues, can

never disobey the instructions of God. When a man living in a State, due to his allegiance to the State, cannot do anything against its laws in the presence of an officer of the State; on the contrary, tries his very best in his own self-interest to please the ruler of the State; how can one who recognizes God as omniscient, almighty, all-pervading, just and supreme Lord of all disobey His laws in His very presence and commit acts like falsehood, hypocrisy, theft, adultery and violence, etc.? On the contrary, in order to please God, he will continue in a delighted spirit to carry out all the instructions of the Lord.

The scriptures embody the laws of God. Action following the instructions of the scriptures means showing obedience to the laws of God, and infringement of those instructions means disobedience of those laws. He who thus knows the secret of God and His laws, can never do anything disobeying in the least the instructions of the scriptures. And how can one, who comes to know the secret of all the virtues of God stated above, entertain Love for anyone but God? He at once becomes an exclusive devotee of God, and a repository of patience, courage, gravity, fearlessness, equanimity, peace and other infinite virtues.

Therefore, in order to obtain knowledge of the real truth and secret of God and develop supreme faith in and Love for Him, we should always remember the Lord and carry out His behests, and offer our prayers to Him and cultivate the association of saints, who have developed faith in and Love for Him.



Welcome All that Helps God-realization

—*Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar*

Remember: the supreme and ultimate end of human existence is to realize God or to attain God-love. Whatever living being, material object and opportunity has been secured by you here, should be directed solely towards this end in the form of God-realization or attainment of God-love.

Remember: the best use of the living beings, material objects and circumstances which balk your efforts for God-realization or attaining God-love is to cease owning or accumulating them, to renounce them, to get rid of your attachment and sense of possession with respect to them and to ignore them. It is because you have them that you should scrupulously reject them—recognize the stumbling-blocks and remove them.

Remember: God-realization or attainment of God-love is the summum bonum of your life, the sole personal end worth achieving. To make use of living beings, material objects and circumstances which hinder the realization of this summum bonum or personal end is to court and augment obstacles. These obstacles will only go to foster hindrances in your life—however attractive, welcome, charming and useful these obstacles in the form of living beings, material objects and circumstances may appear and bear a relation of the most loving affinity to you.

Remember: as regards living beings, material objects and circumstances which are helpful in realizing the

summum bonum or the sole personal end in the form of God-realization or the attainment of God-love, their utility lies in possessing, preserving and promoting them, recognizing them as most essential and useful, getting attached to them and regarding them as your own and remaining in contact with them every moment of your life, no matter if they outwardly appear as frightful, undesirable, conducive to ignominy or suffering or even harmful.

Remember: that possession, that good fortune, that privilege, that physical frame, that pursuit, that relative, that deity and that moral duty is never worth treasuring and making the most of, which stands in the way of your God-realization to the least extent; for such hindrance alone is prejudicial to your real interest.

Remember: that calamity, that misfortune, that degradation, that disqualification, that bodily injury, that inaction, that wicked fellow, that vile deity and that irreligion too, is worth treasuring and making the most of, which lends co-operation and help in the path of God-realization; for it is through this co-operation and help that your real interest is served.

Remember: forgetting this real interest of yours, if you get attached to objects of enjoyment—living beings, material objects and circumstances appearing attractive at first sight and possessing a glamour of their own, you will fail to realize your summum bonum and will have frittered away your human life.

Remember: to conceive a fondness for luxuries appearing attractive at first sight and to devote one's life to their pursuit, forgetting God, is just like partaking of a dainty dish contaminated with deadly poison as something delicious or setting one's house on fire and trying to get illumination from that conflagration.

Remember: there is no knowing when this human life may come to an end. Therefore, most scrupulously directing your life towards the attainment of the highest end of human pursuit, make it a point to realize it at the earliest date. Herein lies your wisdom; that constitutes your good fortune; that is the highest virtue and that is your paramount duty.



Remember this, O mind! Nobody is your own:
 Vain is your wandering in this world.
 Trapped in the subtle snare of *Māyā* as you are,
 Do not forget the Mother's name.
 Only a day or two men honour you on earth,
 As lord and master; all too soon
 That form, so honoured now, must needs be cast away.
 When death, the master seizes you.
 Even your beloved wife, for whom, while you yet
 lives,
 You freak yourself almost to death,
 Will not go with you then, she too will say farewell,
 And shun your corpse as an evil thing.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

Who is an Aspirant (Sādhaka)?

—*Brahmalina Swami Ramsukhdas*

An aspirant (*Sādhaka*) is one who earnestly dedicates himself to strive for God-realisation and one who does not follow wrong and adverse means and methods for his spiritual pursuit. Worldly pleasures with objectives of hoarding and desire are all negative aspects for a devotional undertaking. There can be no progress in a person's efforts until money, power, high status, comfort etc., and other desires and attractions co-exist in him; and he could not be called an aspirant.

Sometimes spiritual interest and other times, worldly attractions; sometimes virtuous conduct and other times bad behaviour—in effect, along with devotion to God, such contrary feelings are present in all common persons. In some persons spiritual conduct may be prominent while in others, contrary feelings might dominate. Being a fraction of God, there is none who does not possess an element of goodness inherent in him. The good aspects permanently persist, but the adverse ones are temporary. When one makes even minor efforts for good behaviour, he may think of himself as an aspirant, but he is mistaken. In fact, if a person has no bad or negative features in his conduct, nor is influenced by worldly pleasures, nor aims at hoarding, nor is influenced by desires, and is solely devoted to God, only such a person could, rightly be called an aspirant.

If one believes, that we are not ascetics but are

householders and live in the world for making money, we have to use falsehood, deceit and dishonesty without which, we may not earn money and succeed. Such a person could not be an aspirant, but is a 'worldly man'. On the other hand, if one believes that he is an aspirant and is solely interested in God-realisation, how he could act contrary to his spiritual discipline, such a person verily is an aspirant. He believes that in maintaining his life, he does not have to use untruth, deceit and dishonesty etc. God is responsible to run the lives of men and not they themselves. If one dies without food and drink, could he evade death with food and drink? Nobody can die, before death is due, so why worry about maintaining one's life?*

If a person is of worldly nature, his worldliness constantly persists and the way he acts in worldly matters, in the same way he performs spiritual practice (*Sādhana*). But for an aspirant, his devotion is constant viz., the way he attends to his godly aspiration; in the same manner he looks after his worldly responsibilities. A person enamoured by worldly matters, attends to these with deep involvement but practises spiritual discipline being detached (only as a matter of formality) but an aspirant undertakes his spiritual duties with deep involvement and carries out his worldly actions, without attachment but merely as a formality.

Carefulness by itself is the spiritual means (*Sāadhanā*). An aspirant is always careful, lest he should act contrarily. Despite distraction, malice, passion and anger, he does not

*प्रारब्ध पहले रचा, पीछे रचा शरीर।
तुलसी चिन्ता क्यों करे, भज ले श्री रघुबीर॥

“The fate was determined first and then came the body. Why should I worry, I should only worship Raghuvīra.”

take action under their influence.* If by habit or by mistake, an act is performed against the best interest of his aspiration, it is not by deliberate intention.

If a person makes money and from time to time spends it, he is really not greedy for money. If he were really greedy, he would not spend it, but instead face hardships. If it cost him a few paise to travel a short distance, he would prefer to walk. An aspirant must have the greed for God-realisation and he should not let his aspiration even in a minor manner, be harmed. If anything is done against his creed, he suffers pain, heart-burning and remorse. By such response, he overcomes all actions contrary to his devotion.

God is not realized either by a woman or a man, an ascetic or a householder, a *Brāhmaṇa* or a *Kṣatriya*. He is not realized by the distinction of class, caste, category or community, but only by a devotee. Therefore, an aspirant does not have the vanity of belonging to a special caste, class, community etc., nor gets influenced by these, nor has a feeling of superiority over the lowly.



*इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे
तयोर्नवशमागच्छेत्तौ

रागद्वेषौ
ह्यस्य

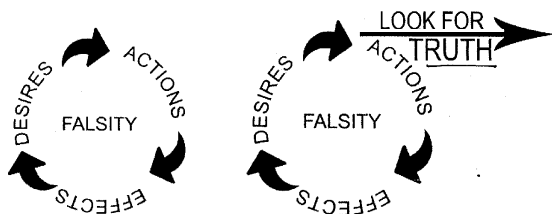
व्यवस्थितौ ।
परिपन्थिनौ ॥

(Gītā III. 34)

“Attraction and repulsion of man abide in each and every sense-object through the feeling of agreeableness and disagreeableness (towards the senses). Let no one come under their sway, for they are his waylayers and foes.”

Object of Human Life

—R. T. Nathan



The world and everything therein have a natural tendency to revolve by themselves and also move in a circular path. Human life also repeats in a circle passing through the stages, viz., desires, actions (*Karmas*) and results (Effects). (1) The effect may be good and bad, pleasing and sad, causing anxiety and happiness etc. Dualities agitate the mind. Oneness helps to make it quiet.

The effect creates more and more desires, resulting in the circular journey repeating life after life. The whole process though appears to be true, is actually false.

Human life of the *Jiva* is the super most elevated stage of its evolutionary journey through life after life. Hence it must be well utilized using the intelligence and conscience most usefully, realizing the falsehood in which we had been steeped for long and leave the circle diverting on to a path at a tangent in search of the truth, which is liberation and attaining Godhood. (2)

The worldly life though seems to be happy and tempting to continue enjoying it, under the influence of *Māyā*, it is really awful and harassing and it is to be escaped from during

the rare human life and it is the object of this blessed boon. “ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।” are the principal philosophic principles of spirituality. Let us therefore, seek not the unreal and temporary worldly pleasure but only the real and eternal bliss, the *Brahman*, the ultimate object of the *Jīva*.

1. Desire to be desireless.
2. Desire tempts action, action causes effects, and effects lead to fresh desires, resulting in further actions and so on. Thus, goes on the human life in the world.
3. True truth should be the aim of the *Jīva* in human life.
4. Abdicate affluence, adopt austerity.
5. More money makes man mad.
6. Illegal money leads to illegal acts with attendant ill-effects.
7. Attachment is good when detached.
8. Compassion should be without emotion.
9. Emotive attachment causes worry.
10. Compassionate attachment is superior to emotive attachment.
11. Superiority feeling is inferior. Feeling of humility is superior.
12. Either bloom or gloom, should be taken the same way.



A very high ideal is—love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. When you practise this ideal in life, you are very near to God-realization.

Oneness in All Beings

—*Basanta Kumar Chattopadhyaya*

It is only when we think that another being is different from us that we hate him or speak ill of him or fear him. If we realize that all beings are parts of the same *Brahma* of whom we are also part, if we realize that *Brahma* resides in all beings and controls their acts from within (अन्तर्यामी), we cannot hate or speak ill of or fear any being.

The next stage is the knowledge in which all beings lose their separate existence and merge in *Brahma*. We do not see different men—our friends, relatives, enemies; we do not see men, beasts and birds as separate entities. We feel *Brahma* everywhere. Then there can be no ignorance, no sorrow. We are ignorant of another man, when we do not know his nature, whether he will be friendly or hostile to us. But when we perceive that he is *Brahma*, that, in fact, *Brahma* has taken that form,—we know that he will behave to us exactly as *Brahma* desires or rather as we deserve to be treated because of acts—good or bad—done by us before. Ignorance and its consequence uncertainty go away. Sorrow also goes away. We are grieved when we lose our dear ones. We think our parents, brothers, wives and children have separate entities. We grieve when we lose any of them. But when we realize that they are all *Brahma*, that *Brahma* Himself took the shapes of our relatives, we cannot have sorrow for any of them. We have no doubt that they exist as *Brahma* and in *Brahma*, even as they existed when we could perceive them.

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद् विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

(*Īsopaniṣad*, 7)

“In that state in which to the wise man all beings become the Self, where can there be ignorance and where can there be sorrow for the person who has realized the oneness?”

In the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* (*Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā* X. 90. 2) it has been said, “All this is the *Puruṣa* (Supreme Being).” The *Ātmā* of the *Īsopaniṣad* 7 is the *Puruṣa* of *Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā* X. 90. 2, both the terms being used for *Brahma*. All this universe is part of one Supreme Being; to us steeped in ignorance there appear to be many independent beings, whereas to the wise who have realized *Brahma* all beings are mere parts of the same *Brahma* and have no independent existence apart from *Brahma*.

The *Manusmṛti* lays down the rules of conduct which should be followed and the method of social organization which should be adopted in order that the wisdom referred to in the *Upaniṣads* may be realized. The ideal of the *Upaniṣads* is the same as the ideal of Manu. That is why we find the following verse in the *Manusmṛti*—

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
समं पश्यन्नात्मयाजी स्वाराज्यमधिगच्छति ॥

(XII. 91)

“The man who sees *Ātmā* in all beings and all beings in *Ātmā*, who looks upon all beings as equal, worships *Ātmā* attains emancipation.”

In the eyes of the wise all beings are equal because the souls of all beings are equal, being parts of the same *Brahma*. The bodies are of course different. But the bodies, being perishable, are insignificant in comparison with the

everlasting souls. We cannot see the souls and attach too much importance to the bodies. But the wise can perceive the souls and do not attach any importance to the bodies as compared with the souls. Hence they look upon all beings as equal (समं पश्यन्). The *Gītā* says—

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

(V. 18)

Again we find the same ideal in the *Bhagavadgītā* almost in the same words:—

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

(VI. 29)

“The person whose soul is unified with *Brahma* through the process of *Yoga* sees the *Ātmā* in all beings and sees all beings in the *Ātmā*. He sees equality everywhere.”

The *Bible* says, “You should love thy neighbour as thy self,” but does not give the reason. The reason is found in Vedic philosophy. It is that all beings are parts of the same *Brahma*, and hence you cannot do harm to any being without doing harm to yourself. This is a new tenet not found in western philosophy and religion and may perhaps, if properly preached, furnish the key for the solution of the growing discord and hatred in the world.

□□

We can overcome undesirable traits. The human mind is elastic. If you pull it gradually, it will yield to your tugs, yet, you don't even try. God has given us more than enough power to overcome all the trials and shortcomings of our lives.

—*Man's Eternal Quest*

Yakṣa-Praśna—A Lesson in Ethics and Spirituality

—Dr. M. S. Manhas and Dr. C. D. Shastri

(Continued from June, page 36)

Yakṣa Revives the Pāṇḍava Brothers:

Yakṣa: Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, I am pleased with your answers. I have not seen one like you who is so well-versed in spirituality and general knowledge. I shall revive one of your brothers. Whom would you like to live?

Yudhiṣṭhira: In that case I would like Nakula to live.

Yakṣa: I am surprised at your answer! Why you did not choose Bhīma who is so dear to you or Arjuna on whom all of you depend to defeat the Kaurava's virtually invincible army headed by such stalwarts as Bhīṣma-Pitāmaha, Droṇācārya and Karṇa?

Yudhiṣṭhira: My Lord, I respect *Dharma* over everything else in life. I shall give up my life but not *Dharma*. My father had two wives, Kuntī and Mādrī. I equally love both of them. I am living and I would like Mādrī (my stepmother) to have her elder son to be alive too. Therefore, I have chosen Nakula.

Yakṣa was immensely pleased with the answer and gladly revived all the four brothers.

Yudhiṣṭhira's Inquiry:

Yudhiṣṭhira: Sir, who are you? No *Yakṣa* (heron) has the power to revive a dead person or take his life, which you have done. You may be one of the heavenly bodies someone dear to us, some of our departed relatives or our father Pāṇḍu. Please reveal yourself.

Yakṣa replied, I am Dharmarāja, your *Dharma-Pitā*. I wanted to see you in person and talk to you. Only those who have traits like non-violence, peace loving, charitable disposition, control on their sex impulses, without frivolous temperament, devoid of jealousy, love of mankind, endowed with ability, dexterity and talent and other such divine characteristics have the ability to see me. I am delighted to note that you possess all of them. I would like to confer some additional boons on you. Please ask what you desire!

Yakṣa's Boons:

Yudhiṣṭhira very humbly said that one of my requests is that the daily merit of the Agnihotra ceremony of the Brahmin, whose bundle of wood was carried away by the antelope, may be restored. Dharmarāja replied, Maharaja it was I who ran away with the bundle of wood. This was a trick that was contrived to get you here. You may take this bundle and return it to the Brahmin.

Yudhiṣṭhira further said that last year (13th year) of our exile shall begin soon. According to the terms of the exile we must spend this time incognito. Please see that no body can recognize us during this period. Duryodhana's spies must be desperately looking for us. Dharmarāja replied that you should spend this time in Virāṭanagarī, where nobody shall recognize you even in your present form.

Sir, the last boon that I seek is that I should conquer such frailties as greed, infatuation and anger. Besides this I may inculcate the characteristics of charity, daily prayer, and truth. Dharmarāja was delighted to accede to this request and said that you already possess all of them. You have conquered calmness, self-control, mind-control, forbearance, belief with conviction, and self settledness. These attributes are necessary for the seekers of absolute Reality. After this Dharmarāja suddenly disappeared. *Pāṇḍavas*

then started to prepare for their stay in Virāṭanagarī.

A Lesson in Morality and Spirituality:

During this conversation, Dharmarāja always addressed Yudhiṣṭhira as Maharaja. This epithet implies that all the questions by *Yakṣa* were aimed to elicit the knowledge of Yudhiṣṭhira on matters pertaining to a good and efficient ruler. A king or the head of a nation, irrespective of the nature of political norms of the times, has to be cognizant of the pulse of its citizens to be counted as successful. This also requires that the citizens should be prosperous, devoted to the country, respect for law and order and morally erudite. But to expect all this from the citizens, the head of the government has to possess an exemplary character, which can be emulated by everybody.

The nature of the questions by *Yakṣa* and Yudhiṣṭhira's answers are self explanatory. They pertain to *Dharma*, agriculture, astronomy, moral fabric of the citizens, and general knowledge. A healthy, knowledgeable and prosperous nation demands a good, honest, virtuous and benevolent government.

One of the basic principals enunciated in this conversation, which is fast disappearing in the present society, states: "What is heavier than earth," (Mother is the heaviest—most respectful). What is higher than heavens? (The father). "This is a reflection of the Upanishadic advice, which says; "मातृ देवो भव" Mother is the incarnation of God on earth. "पितृ देवो भव" Father is the incarnation of God on earth.....

In short *Yakṣa*—Yudhiṣṭhira conversation should not be considered an interpolation in the body of the text. It is an integral part of the main theme that was being discussed in the *Mahābhārata*. It is not only a guide for an enlightened ruler but also an advice for the common person to inculcate ideal, social, ethical and spiritual values. Well informed

citizens and a selfless authority are two essential segments of a progressive nation. This advice, which is presented in an easily understandable conversation form, is applicable to everyone for all times, irrespective of their caste, colour, creed, age, gender or status in life.



You cannot own anything. You are only given temporary use of things on this earth. Sometime you will have to part with them either by accident or theft or deterioration or death. So, when you try to hold on to or save anything just for the sake possessing, you are fooling yourself.

Even this bodily house that you have lived in for so many years, must one day be relinquished. So, it is wrong to impose on the soul a conviction that you own something, you cannot ever own, when something is given to you, know that it is yours only for a little while, and be willing to share it with others.

—*Journey to Self-realization*

When you possess the all-in-all, God-consciousness, even if you have nothing of material possession, yet you have all. People who really contact God, can never feel poor or left out; nor can they consider the riches more fortunate than themselves. Instead, the man who is intoxicated with God—happiness pities every body else.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

At the Lotus Feet of the Mother

None can help; all, all are lured
By Thy subtle force,
Thou callest the tune—concealed behind—
And all the universe sings.
Alas, for man! he does not know
He is a puppet-show!
A mere tool in Mother's hand,
Doing as She wants.

Thy power sublime, my mind so small?
Thy beauty divine, my vision dull,
Dazzled by Thy form and strength
I have lost my sense.
How then to weave in song my love
Is now a question tough.
Through Thy Grace, who gets a sip
Of Thy ravishing drink,
He is finished. No go for him
But to be wholly Thine.

If but an inch the mind is dragged
Towards Thy Lotus Feet,
No temptations sore can sway
The mind for long, tho' weak.
Restless, disturbed and ill-at-ease
It feels quite mad with grief,
Till it returns and drinks again

The honey of Thy Feet.
By subtle lures You call us back
And make us plunge in Thee.

See in any field of life
The man above the norm:
There Thou art in subtle form
Thy power moves that man.
Nothing exists or ever did
Where Thou art not or wert.
How can we with poor sense
Know Thy secret tricks
The countless ways which Thou dost take
To draw us back to Thee.

Go where you will, you see mankind
By longing e'er enticed,
"It's greed", they say, to me it seems
Thy mystic art of Love.
In various endless forms Thou art
In every place and time.
Wherever I go I therefore see
My darling Ma with me.

When once my Mother takes a hand,
That man is saved: assured;
Ordeals, though, bestrew the path
At every stage and step;
Though oft the hapless stray away
And miss the faithful trek;
Yet he who once has sought Thy path
Can never stray for long.
No power on earth, above, below,

Can stop his homeward march.

Why should you; unhappy man!
Stick fast in sorrow's mud?
Here She is! right in the heart!
Why Her do you not call?
Who in the midst of deepest griefs
Calls for Mother's help;
He shall arise and conquer all
And none can him withstand.
But what to do with those who won't
Seek Her help at all!

Who thinks of Mother prays to Her.
Through all his thoughts and acts,
Who holds the proper attitude,
Hails all his life's events,
Sees in the sphere in which he is
A chance to be devout
With kisses Mother covers him
And pours on him Her Grace.

—*Hemanta Kumar Nilkanth*



See God Alone Everywhere

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Try to see God and God alone everywhere. The world will, then, disappear from your sight! Nothing but God will remain before you. If you consider this world to be real, you are mistaken and will be committing suicide. Do not forget your real Self, *Ātmā* or God. Do not be misled by the apparent names and forms of the worldly objects or you will be deceived and harmed. Believe me. This is Law. No one can crush this Law. The python thought that by devouring Kṛṣṇa, he would destroy Him. But he could not do so. He himself was destroyed. God alone is Truth, Eternal and everlasting. He alone is Real, all else is unreal. Why not understand it today? If you realise this in your life, you will never die. *Gītā* will be of no use to you at the time of your death, if you do not practise its teachings in your daily life. Why not make your life, now and here, the Divine Song?

When a child sucks a mango, it bursts and the juice is spread over his mouth, hands and clothes. It is all juice everywhere. Similarly, if you enjoy the Truth of *Vedānta*, you will taste the sweet nectar of *Brahma*. Nothing but *Brahma* will remain. As a matter of fact, you yourself will then, become *Brahma*.

You should think of God in such a way that He may be permeated through your body, mind and soul. This is the real worship of God, you should be lost in God as a piece of sugar-candy is dissolved in the Ganges.

The process of Nature is working slowly, and continuously,

though you are not conscious of it. A man imprisons himself within the limitations of sense perceptions, and ultimately dies, while still absorbed in the worldly affairs. A real saint lives in the strong fortress built on the solid foundation of Truth. He sees God behind the multifarious names and forms of this world, and believes in the eternal Laws of Nature. If you care to realise that God is Truth, as much as you care for the favour and disfavour of the worldly men, no trouble can harm you. According to the *Vedas*, you are born of God. Why should you, then neglect Him?

In the Vedic period, the maidens, while going round the fire, used to sing a prayer which means, “We may be one with our husband (God). We may leave our father’s house (worldly temptations) as the cereals leave the husk. And, we may never come out of our husband’s houses”. This very song is coming out of Rāma. May this head be cut, this body destroyed and this heart broken, but let not any idea except that of Thee enter my mind. This is the prayer of Rāma. Whenever you have faith in or dependence on friends or relatives, (instead of God) you have got to be deceived and let down. Mohammed says, “*La Ila Illillah.*” i. e., there is nothing but God. Lord Christ and Lord Buddha also say the same thing in one form or the other. Our *Vedas* also say that ‘there is *Brahma* only and nothing else’. This version has been repeated from time to time through ages by different saints and philosophers. That is why this Truth could be preserved so far. This is Divine. This is *Brahma*. This is Rāma and this is real renunciation. This may be very difficult to practise, but surely, it is the gate to immortality. No nation can afford to ignore this Law. It is the hard Truth. He who sets his heart on any thing else will be deceived, deluded and destroyed. You may call this a firm conviction of Rāma

or just his blind faith. Be that as it may, Rāma is fully convinced of this Law. One who has realised the Self, is afraid neither of any disease nor of death. He is present everywhere because He is the *Ātmā* of all. To have faith in this seeming world is death. My dear! Your real Self is Eternal Bliss, Rāma Himself.

(1) If in the night of ignorance we did not see our Beloved, there is no use seeing Him in the light of the day.

What is the use of pouring water and growing grass on the grave of the dead?

(2) Anybody may say whatever he likes, good or bad. When this body has been left behind, there is no use having any fear or expectation.

(3) Good and bad, pain and pleasure etc., are the ladders to help you go up to the Beloved. But when we have reached Him, there is no use keeping this ladder. Burn it.

(4) Only a blind fool will love the worldly objects in place of God. It is pollution in the heart, the temple of God. Under such circumstances, there can remain no faithfulness to God.

(5) O world! I have had enough of thy considerations. Now get away. I am now openly dancing in God-intoxication with 'Rāma'! Why should I be ashamed of this world?

Dear ones, please listen to me attentively. This *Vedānta* is not only theoretical but also the practical Truth. The fact is that this seeming world is nothing but God. Believe it. He, who believes this mutable world to be Truth or Eternal, is wrong. He will suffer. Only God is Real. All else is unreal. Yes, yes. He alone is Truth, immutable and unchangeable. Believe it.

Swāmī Bhāskarānanda Saraswatī

—Akshaya Kumar Banerjea

Swāmī Bhāskarānanda Saraswatī was another famous saint of Banaras in the nineteenth century. He lived in the physical body only for sixty-six years from 1833 to 1899, of which the last thirty years he dwelt almost continuously in the holy city within the same *Āśrama*, known as *Ānandabāga* (The Garden of Bliss). He was a Northern Indian saint, being born in a small village, in the district of Kanpur (U. P.). Even in his childhood he was found to be an intellectual prodigy. Hardly had he reached the fulness of his youth, when he was reputed to be an erudite Sanskrit scholar with deep knowledge of *Vedānta* Philosophy. The spirit of *Vedānta* possessed his mind and heart. The world with all the prospects it presented before him appeared to be illusory in his eyes. The call from the beyond made him restless. Finding him averse to all physical comforts and worldly concerns, his father forced him to marry at a tender age, with the hope that the beauty of the young wife as well as his sense of duty and obligation would bind him down to household life. The fire that was kindled within his heart, was however not to be extinguished. On the very night on which his wife gave birth to a son, he thought himself relieved of his obligations to the family and renounced home once for all. The youthful wife, the charming face of the newborn baby, the deep affection of the mother and the father, the bright prospects of worldly life,—nothing could attract him. It was the eighteenth year of his age.

Impelled by spiritual aspiration Motīrāma (that was his family name) wandered about as a penniless mendicant hither and thither for some time to discover the path of peace and light. Having gone to Ujjaini of historical fame, he was attracted by *Mahākāla Śiva*, the presiding Deity of the place. He devoted all his energy to the worship of Śiva. Śiva was to him the Soul of his soul and the soul of the Universe. He surrendered himself to His mercy. Deep concentration made his whole being full of Śiva. But he was not fully satisfied. He thought of the systematic practice of *Yoga*. But where to find an expert *Guru*? By the grace of Śiva, a Southern Indian saint, Paramahansa Pūrṇānanda Saraswatī, happened to appear there in course of his pilgrimage. He was a great *Yogī*, thoroughly conversant with the science and art of *Yoga*. The old saint and the young aspirant were attracted towards each other. Motīrāmā was initiated into *Yoga* and with his characteristic ardour, engrossed himself with the most systematic practice of all the limbs (*Aṅga*) of *Yoga*. His intellect, his heart, his physique were specially fitted for it, Within a few years he made wonderful progress. Many powers were developed in him. He rose above them. His soul was released from the bondage of the body, the mind and the intellect, and was experienced as shining in its transcendent freedom. He realized his true self as distinct from and transcendent of the psycho-physical embodiment.

When he rose to a high spiritual plane through the practice of *Yoga*, the *Guru* took him formally into the monastic order and initiated him into the highest form of Vedantic meditation. It was now the twenty-seventh year of his age. He got from the *Guru*, the *Samnyāsa* name of Bhāskarānanda, by which name he was afterwards known to the world. His spiritual capacity was extraordinary. In

every form of *Sādhanā* he took up, he attained success in a wonderfully short time. He fully realized the identity of himself and the Truth of all the diversities of the world. When his consciousness came down from the supraconscious state to the normal plane, his whole mind was overflowed with pure love for all men, all creatures, all things of the world, since he saw *Brahma* in all of them, since he looked upon everyone as an embodiment of the Divine. The diversities of sense-experience, which he had renounced as sources of bondage and misery, and which he had previously disdained as illusory, assumed a new appearance to his enlightened consciousness, and now all of them were objects of love to him.

Having reached the goal of his *Sādhanā*, Swāmī Bhāskarānanda, in pursuance of the usual practice of the saints, travelled in all parts of India, mostly on foot and took the opportunity of the companionship of the renowned Vedantist, Anantarāma Śāstrī, to make a deeper and wider study of the system of philosophy he loved so much. Having finished his tour, he came to settle permanently at Banaras. Perhaps he had a Divine mission to fulfil here. He was destined to be a teacher of spirituality in the society. Without any plan or design on his part, he was drawn in that direction.

In the first stage of his stay at Banaras he would pass his days and nights in the open space, always immersed in deep meditation. The burning rays of the summer sun, the biting chill of winter, the torrents of rain in the rainy season, the blinding sands carried by mad winds and storms, could create no disturbance in his meditative mood. At times he would be maddened by emotional outbursts of love for the Divine and cry aloud,—Śiva, Śiva, Viśwanātha, Viśwanātha! He would not beg alms or seek for food

or drink. He gave up even his *Kaupīna* and loincloth and remained stark naked—a simple child of Mother Nature. He was unconcerned with everything around him. But people, moved by religious sentiments or by curiosity, were gradually attracted towards him. The number of visitors increased day after day. Many of them became his ardent admirers. In order to avoid the crowd, Swāmījī sometimes expressed an inclination to move to some solitary place. At the request of a pious Raja of Oudh, he consented to reside in his big lonely garden, known as Ānandabāga, within the holy city. The Raja made all arrangements for his comfort and for the preservation of the tranquillity of the atmosphere within the garden. He had no wants, no need for physical comforts. He required no services from others. He was filled with internal joy. His body, though at this time reduced to a skeleton, was fit to stand all the changes of external nature. He only wanted an atmosphere of calmness and tranquillity.

Though the saint outwardly seemed inclined to withdraw himself from the public gaze, he inwardly by virtue of his extraordinary spiritual magnetism drew towards himself all sorts of people without distinction of caste, creed, sex or nationality. For several years before his final merging of himself in the Infinite, he became the centre of attraction at Banaras. After Tailaṅga Swāmī, he came to be known as the “Holy Man of Banaras”. Maharajas, Rajas, Zamindars, merchants, high officials, streetbeggars, Sadhus, pilgrims, spiritual truth-seekers, people suffering from worldly distresses—all vied with one another to have his *Darśana* and blessings. Even Europeans and Americans were mysteriously attracted towards this naked Indian saint. Viceroys, commanders-in-chief, Lieutenant, Governors, Commissioners, Magistrates and other superior orders of

European officers became his admirers. Distinguished tourists from the different countries of Europe and America usually made it a point at that time to interview him. Stories about him were widely advertised not only in Indian and Anglo-Indian journals, but also in various cultural papers of Europe and America. Mark Twain, a well-known American writer, having toured round India, wrote elaborately about him. When asked what was the most remarkable thing he saw in India, he said—“Banaras and the saint I saw there,.....a man who is worshipped for his holiness from one end of India to another.” One English lady, who had become an admirer of him, thus wrote about him on learning the news of his ‘passing beyond this life’—“Swāmī Bhāskarānanda of middle stature, bald-headed, without a tooth, with every rib and every bone in his whole body showing through his skin, yet possessed an extraordinary dignity, a naturally majestic mien which would have done credit to any Royalty and which was inherent in the man, combined with an equally natural instinct of gracious courtesy and simple refinement. There was in him no trace of the arrogant pride or the false humility, which one might have suspected would be the case under such circumstances. Rather was there in his face a certain sublimity of expression, a benign influence, such as one has seen in the face of a Newman, Keble and others of that type. It is an expression of countenance wholly from within, which no outside influence can affect.....He was a living example of the power of mind over matter. His extreme asceticism did not repel.....on the contrary, it attracted in a peculiar degree.”

You are the Soul not Faults or Virtues

—*Sri Mrinalini Mata*

As we look at ourselves in the mirror of daily introspection, we should never identify with either our faults or our virtues. This is another principle that is very important in connection with the art of introspection: Remember always what you really are: a soul, absolutely perfect—an individualized spark of God; a spark of Spirit. The mortal limitations we have gathered around us in the form of habits, tendencies, moods and so forth are nothing but *Māyā* cosmic delusion.

This *Māyā* is everywhere. Without the delusion of *Māyā*, the universe could not exist. It is the influence of delusive ignorance that makes us imagine we have a separate existence apart from God and lose sight of the native perfection of our souls. But we are not this *Māyā*. We are not these faults, we are not these imperfections; they belong not to the soul but to the ego—the soul in its mortal state of identification with the little human body and mind and their limitations. We are already a perfect being. What we are trying to do on the spiritual path, is to restore that perfect nature, which God has already given to us as a part of His own being, and allow it to express itself.

Therefore, we should not in any way hamper this effort by identifying with our faults—or even with our virtues. If we become identified with our virtues we become egotistical. We begin to think: “Oh, I am making so much spiritual progress! I’m better than him or her. They lost their temper, but I used self-control in that circumstance.”

The ego begins to get puffed up, producing dangerous spiritual pride.

On the other hand, if you identify with your faults, that too is ego—because then you develop an inferiority complex. You get discouraged, and the will becomes paralyzed. Remember, your willpower is your saving grace on the spiritual path. That is the one thing that will take you to God: the exertion of your will to go in the right direction—the direction *Guru* guides you to go in.

If you identify with your faults and your imperfections, your willpower becomes incapacitated. When you easily become discouraged—“Oh, I’ve got so many faults” or “I spoke unkindly and showed lack of understanding when I determined that this day I was going to speak nothing but kindness. I tried so hard today to accomplish this; but, look, this is the way I am”—then the willpower becomes helpless. Just to think this kind of negative thoughts, whether you express them in speech or not, will paralyze the will.

Like a General Going into Battle—

Of course, some devotees take this the wrong way. They say, “Well, I don’t identify with my faults,” and therefore, they don’t even recognize the fact that they have faults! So this is why we must introspect honestly and justly with ourselves, because we want to know our faults. We have to be able to recognize them for what they are; and then, like a general going into battle, we can plan our strategy: “This is the force and the strength and the nature of my enemy. Now, what is the best way that I can do battle with and conquer this enemy?”

This is what we ought to do in the period of introspection that closes our day. Ask yourself, “How has my battle of Kurukshetra gone today? What has been the

outcome, and what should be my next steps in the fight?”

When you introspect in this way, you will see those points wherein you were a little weak. You recognize, “Well, now I see which of my enemies has won this day. So this is the one I must combat more effectively.” And you determine, through Master’s teachings and guidance, the way you will do battle with this enemy. This should go in your spiritual diary, indicating what opposite, positive quality you will wield as you begin the next day (your next “battle campaign”). Then from the moment you wake the next morning, take up that positive thought of how to act: “This is the way I will behave, this is the kind of devotee I will be, this is the kind of life I will lead, starting anew this day.”

If you begin and end your day with these strong thoughts and determinations, then you will find that automatically, little by little, you are overcoming—you are perfecting yourself. Master used to put it this way: you are scrubbing the mud off of the golden image of your ever-perfect soul. It is that pure gold. And any imperfections we have put on, they are not ours. This is merely the mud of *Māyā* that we are covered with. And when we come to the spiritual path, *Guru* shows us the way to clean it off.



We love any one who is useful to us, therefore, we should love God supremely, because He is useful as nobody else is. We love our parents and friends because of what they do for us. But no one can be as useful to us as God, for He can resurrect our souls and free us from human bondage.

—*Journey to Self-realization*

Read and Digest

If one loves the father of all (God), and if he has the slightest thought of revenge toward anyone or desire to punish anyone, he falls a millions away from God.

* * *

One who loves God, does not entertain thoughts of doing injury to anyone

* * *

To stand criticism is a very effective way of becoming a better individual.

* * *

What you are before God and your own conscience, that is what you are. Even if the whole world misunderstands you, nothing is lost; you are what you are.

* * *

Money becomes a curse to the miserly, but to those who have heart it is a blessing.

* * *

The ideal is to perform all duties with the sole desire to please God.

* * *

Spirituality and kindness are superior forces. Hate is destructive; love is the greatest constructive force.

The Student, Who Helped the Cart-driver

A student was going to a nearby school to study. A cart-driver said to him, "Please push this cart from the rear so that it may reach a higher level." "But it is time for school," having said so, the boy went away and began to play in the school.

The poor cart-driver, after sitting for a long time, got tired and he was also hungry, but no one came by that way. Only a boy passed by but he did not help him. "Now what should I do?" Having said so to himself, his eyes were filled with tears. In the meanwhile a youngster named John Wilson passed that way. Having seen tears in the eyes of the cart-driver, the small boy took pity on him and said to him, "O dear brother, cart-driver, don't weep. I'll help you by pushing your cart to a higher level. Please stand up."

Having heard so, the cartman went ahead and caught the yoke. Wilson pushed the cart. Thus, by pushing the cart to a higher level, he started going to school with a slate and books in his hands. Then he saw that the corn was falling from the bag in the cart and he said to the cart man; "Brother! Stop your cart. The corn is falling from your bag. Thrust something into the hole of the bag."

The cartman stopped the cart and seeing the hole in the bag, said, "I am very much thankful to you. May God bless you! If you had not told me, I, a poor man, would have sustained a great loss." Then the boy left for school.

The boy reached the school ten minutes late. He was always punctual. Therefore, the teacher said to him, "Why

are you late today? I pardon you today.”

After that in the interval, all the boys began to play. While playing, the boy, who came to school without helping the cartman, said to the late comer, “Why have you come late? I know that you must have pushed the cart of the cartman and must have been paid for that. Therefore, you did not disclose the fact to the teacher.”

The second boy said, “I did not help the cartman for money.” Hearing this, the first boy said, “I don’t do any work without payment. He also requested me to push his cart but he did not tell me that he would make any payment. So I refused to help him. You are a fool that you did not take any payment.”

The small boy said, “The poor cartman alone could not push his cart. It was my duty to help him. My parents have helped me, so I am alive. Therefore, I should also help others.”

The gist of the story is that if we render service to others for payment, it is just like a trade. Therefore, we should render service to others without expecting any fruit in return.



If God, if liberation, is your top priority and it fills your heart, mind and intellect—your entire being, and you are consumed by that longing and yearning—all other wishes come after it, they are secondary not primary—than nothing in this universe can prevent you from attaining liberation in this very life. This is for sure.

—Swami Chidananda

Death and Immortality

—S. Kothandaraman

Nobody would like to deal with or think about death when the going is good. One may wonder what is there to know about death, which we experience day in day out without any respite. Any way an attempt is now being made to know it differently which may be of some interest.

(a) Normally Death is natural, with wear and tear and decay and the *Prāṇa* just ebbs out on its own accord. However instances are that the *Prāṇa* is taken out by external acts. Every day we hear/read about deaths in large numbers, by natural causes, by unnatural causes, by accidents, by suicides, by negligence and so on. Majority of deaths, statistically and shockingly alarming to find are the unnatural deaths caused by homicides, accidents, suicides, negligence etc. The trend is disturbing. What is all the more alarming is the homicides like the infanticide, matricide, patricide and fratricide, and the loathsome burning of wives, and murders within the family. In most of these cases, the victims are invariably young ones. The reason is obviously either, wealth, women and or the land. Life is also taken out for personal reasons like enmity. Nonetheless life is snuffed out without qualms. We have heard of the extermination in a large scale and the holocaust that took place last millennium and the alarming increase of the mass murders in the name of religion that now take place all over the world. These are unacceptable and most unnatural.

(b) The only unwelcome event in one's life is death.

Everyone is scared of death, because there are unfinished works. We always grieve at someone's death. It will be welcome relief for some, when one dies after unduly prolonged illness. No normal human being ever willingly wants to die. We always try to extend our life span and postpone death if it is possible for several reasons. All including the doctors will vie with one another to keep death at bay for as long as possible. Everybody has an axe to grind in this. We all know that there is no escape from it. It is an inevitable and irreversible thing on earth. There is no house anywhere in the world in which death as such had not taken place. That was what Lord Buddha wanted to know and asked when he was a prince.

(c) Death is said to be the state of permanent end, the expiry, the extinguishment of a being, living and existing at a given time. The end of life-breath, *Prāṇa*, the state of being lifeless in a living being, is death. When birth is sure death is certain to follow. Death, *Mṛtyu* is also *Kāla*, a word used to denote that time has come for the life to depart from the body. Living beings come with an expiry date in an encaged body, which become lifeless and useless when breathed for the last time. The latest concept on death is brain death. It is clinical. It is the doctor's prescription for harvesting the organs of the deceased. When death occurs with life extinct, it is and every part of it, is lifeless. It may take some time for rigor mortis to set in.

(d) We all know that death is a continuous process of elimination of beings from the face of earth, as otherwise it will be chaotic. If every living being, stay put on the earth, not only there would not be enough space for movement for all, but each will have to fight for the survival. The fittest may survive. Death assumes importance in this, as leveler, the balancing factum on earth, as

equilibrium has to be maintained.

(e) Everybody is aware that life is a cycle, birth and death are concomitant events, as *Ādi Śaṅkara*, puts it “*Punarapi jananam*” and “*Punarapi maraṇam*”. Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavadgītā* tells us that just as a person casts off the worn out clothes and puts on new clothes, so also the Soul (Self) casts off the worn out body and takes on new bodies.

(f) We do not think of death every now and then. When it occurs we grieve for some time, then forget it, till another presents itself. If it is birth with no pain, decess and suffering, and only enjoyment, everyone would prefer to be born again and again, as there is nothing to worry. But that is not to be. Once birth takes place, it follows, a pattern, of which there is no exception, like the *Kaumāram* (childhood), *Yauvanam* (youth) and *Jarā* (old age), and ultimately death. Experience shows that it is more painful during the stage of “*Jarā*”. You cannot imagine a life without those stages. It is not just possible. In all these stages, one undergoes enormous ups and downs, pleasant and unpleasant things, the pairs of the opposites, trials tribulations, sufferings, hardships, including disease, depending on their own past *Karma*. You cannot have the life without the above attendant stages it is not envisaged.

(g) The birth and deaths are determined by your past conduct, good and/ or bad. You are born again after exhausting your fruits of your past action. We do not believe in the theory of eternal retribution in heaven or hell, which is repugnant to and disproportionate between cause and effect and militates against the very concept of “all compassionate God”. You cannot be in Heaven all the while or in the Hell eternally, it must be proportionate to your deeds and actions. Life is one mixed with good and

bad and your life is a cycle, determined directly in relation to the results of your good and bad actions.

(h) If you want to avoid these stages you better get yourself ready to take the spiritual path, the realization of the Self (Soul) which alone can give salvation from the cycle. Yes, only in the realm of immortality, there is absence of the attendant stages of hardship and suffering life.

(i) All beings, being mortals are destined to die in the normal course, as the expiry date is preordained, be it plants, animals, humans. We call it death only in relation to 'beings'. The absence of permanence is the hallmark of life and mortality is its essence. A living being cannot live forever and has to face Death sooner or later in its span. Though life span is said to be 120 years and nobody seems to have lived that long, the only known exception being the exponent of *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Śrī Rāmānujācārya.

(j) As we have Gods for every aspect of our life, we have one for death as well. And that is Yama *Dharma* also named *Kāla* (Timer). Death also comes sometimes suddenly unexpectedly, unheralded, any time at any place and at any moment and in any form, and it does not need to disclose a reason for or notice of its arrival beforehand. Death also does not discriminate, between people, it comes to all, young, old, rich, poor, strong, weak, powerful, influential king, beggar., male-female without exception.

(k) Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the *Pāṇḍavas*, when he was questioned as to what is the most astonishing thing in the world, answered that despite people dying day in and day out, still people seeing them dying think of living permanently on earth. That holds good even today.

(l) Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavadgītā* also tells Arjuna that both He and Arjuna had taken many births, obviously faced

deaths too. *Itihāsa-Purāṇas* tell us that both Lord Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, why all Gods and Goddesses for that matter taking human forms with a purpose and after accomplishment of that, had left the mortal coils and merged with Almighty. When Immortals faced death, what about ordinary mortals like us.

(To be continued)



That woman who though extremely noble and keenly devoted to sacred observances and fasts, does not serve her husband, is sure to attain the destiny of a sinner. Through service to one's husband on the other hand even that woman who does not offer salutation to anyone other than her husband and is averse to the worship of gods, secures the highest heaven. Intent on doing that which is pleasing and good to her husband, a married woman should, therefore, do service to him alone.

—*Valmiki Ramayana*

Flies do not discriminate between filth and honey; they flit from one to the other. But the bee is attracted only to the sweetness of honey. Similarly, there are indiscriminate human beings who, like flies are drawn to material desires, no matter how impure. Some way once in a while feel attracted to God; but as soon as another temptation comes, they are captivated again by material life. The devotee is like the honey bee. Devotees love only what is beautiful and pure. They see, hear, smell, taste and touch only what is good. They will ever seek God.

Man Himself is Responsible for His Evils

If a man sits in a room full of light, beholding beautiful objects, to him light exists. If another man sits in the same room with eyes closed, to him darkness exists—albeit self-created. Similarly, there are two kinds of people in this world. One kind have their spiritual eyes of wisdom open; they see God and His goodness existing everywhere, in everything. The second kind have their spiritual eyes closed; they experience creation as rife with Satan and his evils.

Man is responsible for harbouring the darkness of evil if he does not cultivate the true perception of wisdom. Devotees are those souls who obey the wishes of God to keep their eyes of wisdom open and focused only on good; and deluded persons are those who heed the voice of evil and keep their eyes of spirituality closed, thus, courting the darkness of misery, sickness, and the whole host of Satan's evils.

God is alluring His devotees by all good things to come unto Him; and Satan, by the allurements of false promises of happiness, is coaxing people deeper into his pit of ignorance and misery. Man should consider the whisperings of his conscience and good tendencies as the call of God within him. Conversely, he should recognize and resist the promptings of evil thoughts and urges as the lure of Satan.

If man continuously listens responsively to the whisperings of his conscience and nascent virtues and gets used to better ways of living, he ultimately discovers the eternal good

within the God-image of his soul, and through this Self-realization becomes liberated. Because Satan breaks his promises to give lasting happiness to his followers, they will all finally turn away from him to God.

Satan's devils, the originators and pioneers of evil working through evil tendencies in man, should therefore, be cast out from ignorance-haunted souls. Spiritualizing one's life through righteous behaviour and especially through God-communion in deep regular meditation is the way to expel the evil entities and open up the latent perceptions of heaven within. To rid the consciousness of obsessing evil forces is the real metaphysical way of freeing a soul forever from the influences of Satan's devils that have carried on their misery-dealing work through incarnations in one who chose to misuse his power of reason.

—*The Second Coming of Christ*



If there is a choice between speaking truthful, agreeable and wholesome words, on the one hand and uttering untruthful, harsh and harmful words, on the other, we shall on referring to our innerself get the reply that speaking truthful, agreeable and wholesome words is desirable and uttering untruthful, harsh and harmful words is highly deprecable. Hence we should always take care to speak truthful, agreeable and wholesome words alone and should never utter untruthful, unpalatable and harmful words.

—*Jayadayal Goyandka*

Ahalyā

—N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar

Ahalyā was the daughter of Brahmā. She excelled all other women in beauty. The father was naturally eager to get for her a suitable husband and had in his mind Indra. Ahalyā too was keen on marrying the chief of the gods. The meddling Nārada had other schemes on the subject, of course, for the fulfilment of divine ends. So, he advised a stratagem and made Sage Gautama the easy winner of a bet regarding Ahalyā. Brahmā was left with no option and had to give his girl in marriage to the old sage. Ahalyā's inward wishes were frustrated. She reconciled herself to the situation and lived with her husband in a forest *Āśrama* peacefully and resignedly.

She was a very faithful wife and did her best to please Gautama. But in the innermost recesses of her heart there was a lurking desire for Indra and she could not subdue it, however much she tried. On his part, Indra never lost sight of Ahalyā and had his eye on her. Once upon a time, in a fateful moment, when Gautama was absent from the hermitage, having gone to the river for his bath and ablutions, Indra, disguised as Gautama, walked in. Ahalyā recognized Indra and, in a transport of joy, the two spent together a clandestine hour. Thinking that it was the time for the sage's return, Ahalyā bade Indra a sad and loving farewell; and she specially asked him to remember her and take care of himself.

Fate ordained otherwise Gautama appeared on the scene in wet clothes and his *Kamaṇḍalu* and *Daṇḍa* (staff).

He saw Indra in flight and in a fright and he observed indications in Ahalyā's face of what had happened. Unable to restrain his rage, he cursed both of them. Ahalyā was forever to be deprived of her body and beauty. She was to become dust of the earth and was to remain invisible. Her salvation was to come when Śrī Rāma would tread that ground.

The curse took effect forthwith and Ahalyā was reduced to dust. She was stung with remorse and penitence. Thousands of years passed away in such penance by her. The all-knowing Viśwāmitra, who knew the curse and its end, took Śrī Rāma through Gautama's *Āśrama* and, when His holy feet touched the spot where Ahalyā lay, she rose up in radiant form, purified and hallowed and with a spiritual splendour which dazed the onlookers. She prostrated before Śrī Rāma as her Saviour. Śrī Rāma, in his turn, touched her feet in all reverence. Gautama joyfully took back the chastened wife.

Ahalyā is considered to be one of the five pre-eminently virtuous women of India. Śrī Rāmacandra worshipped her feet when He saw her. How is this? When even famous sages like Parāśara and Viśwāmitra fell victims to the charms of women, can it be considered an unforgivable sin for Ahalyā to have deviated for once from the inexorable path of womanly virtue, impelled by uncontrollable desire for him whom she had mentally chosen as her lord? It was no doubt a sin against the fidelity of the conjugal bed; but it was a sin for which there was redemption. The purificatory penance prescribed for her, through which she passed during ages of terrible suffering, unseen and without the form which proved her ultimate ruin, brought her back into sanctified life. Sincere repentance washes away guilt. The husband regarded the offence as expiated. Śrī Rāma

proved by His conduct that she was no longer a sinner. Can there be sin when the Lord Himself forgives and accepts?

The story is not quite in place in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and it looks as though Vālmīki brought it in with a purpose. His idea, apparently, was to postulate that there was nothing like irredeemable sin in this world and that the infinite mercy of God is capable of making the most depraved the most perfect. What is needed is heartfelt contrition and sincere prayer.



Live in the awareness that God is here and now. He abides within you and you ever abide in Him. This is the only truth. All others are figments. They are fancies and fantasies. The only truth is the here and now God and the fact that He abides in you and you abide in Him. Live in this truth. Glory be to each and everyone of you. Glory be to God who has thus graced you.

—Swami Chidananda

Man being thus, under the compulsion of work as duty, whatever it be, he rises above the meritorious and evil effects of duty, if he maintains the devotional attitude advocated by the *Gītā*—namely offering all the fruits of his action to the Lord, and being fully established in the attitude that he is a servant of God, discharging the duties He has entrusted him with.

—Swami Tapasyananda

Failure is an Amazing Teacher

—Prof. Sudesh Gogia

How do you define happiness?

You may sum up like this:

“A feeling of positive emotion engagement in your own environment, friends and family with a superb feeling that voyage of life’s journey is meaningful and beautiful.....”

While a sense of ‘Gratitude’ is one of the greatest contributing factors to overall happiness you may express. Always count your blessings, instead complaining about the scarcities of life.....”

कभी किसी को मुकम्मल जहां नहीं मिलता।

कभी जमीं तो कभी आसमां नहीं मिलता॥

A sense of expressing “Gratitude” to all those who’re concerned to you in life, makes you relaxed, peaceful and full of ecstasy.

“Elegance is an attitude and so gratitude is an expression of happiness in life.....”

Sometimes the success in life is not the direct result of your actions, it may just happen on its own by your attitude.

It’s not the absence of failure that make you a successful person in life, it’s your response to failure that actually helps to buffer the reverses you experience.....

I myself have two responses to failure. First is pragmatism. I believe that if one approach does not work, another might. The second response is fatalism.... I fool myself that it was bound to happen, and that I need to move on, and not

caught up in the oft-repeated question—“Oh God, why does it happen to me?” It happened, but move on.....Failure definitely gives you an ample incentive to greater exertion and harder work.

I am sure that will invariably lead you to greater success for time to come! Failure is an ‘amazing teacher’! If you don’t fail, you will never learn and if you don’t learn, you will never grow. Your mistakes, your wrong decisions will make you a better experienced person! But don’t be afraid of doing actions!

Mind, failure also gets you to find out who your ‘real friends’ are! The true strength of your relationships only gets tested in the face of strong adversity.

Overcoming some of my mistakes of failures would make me discover that I have a ‘strong will’ and I have become more disciplined than I suspected. It helped me to have confidence in my ability to service!

Life is not just a checklist of acquisitions, attainments and fulfilments. Your qualifications, your degrees and CVs don’t matter. Your post and position too don’t matter. Instead, life is difficult, complicated and complex beyond your control and to know that with humility and with a sense of gratitude respecting your failures will help you survive its vicissitudes. There’s the greatest practical benefit in making a few failure in life...I say making because I believe failure is not an exterior force. I too believe it happens due to own actions, our own reactions, in such convoluted ways sometimes that we may not understand! But we always find lame excuses for it!

So don’t be weighed down by it—relish it, cherish the experience and learn from it. By accepting it all and experiencing, you will experience success, not in isolation of life’s full offerings.....

‘साहिर’ बहुत खूबसूरत अंदाज में कहते हैं:

मैं जिन्दगी का साथ निभाता चला गया
हर फिक्र को धुएं में उड़ाता चला गया.....

After all learning is a continuous process. Create love for learning more and more. Be a student of learning always! Accept always creative, exciting and inspiring projects in life. Have dreams. Success is never final, just like failure is never fatal! Courage is, sometimes, ill-defined if you think it means doing something ‘macho’ ‘risky’ or ‘chancy’! If that happens at some else’s cost, it is even less courageous, rather it’s not any courage. Courage truly is defined in doing whatever you’re afraid to do—personally scared to do—in whichever capacity you work.



Bad habits are the worst enemies you can have. You are punished by those habits. They make you do things, you do not want to do and leave you to suffer the consequences. You must drop bad habits and leave them behind you as you move forward. Everyday should be a transition from old habits to better habits. Make a solemn resolution to keep only those habits that are for your highest good.

Animals have no freedom. God bound them by instinct. But in man, He has implanted wisdom. Human beings have the free choice to go up or down to become better or worse.

—*Journey to Self-realization*

The Value of Hindu Dharma

—*M. Hafiz Syed*

Ethics, according to the ancient Indian thought, is the science of right relations. It is meant for human beings who stand at various grades of evolution and who vary in ever so many ways, one from the other. Mentally, morally and spiritually they do not stand at one level of culture and development. Their thoughts, feelings, ideals and outlook on life are different and they, by no means coincide to need a uniform code of ethics.

As everything in this world is relative in its bearing with every other thing, so must the ethics be, otherwise it will lose its binding force. What is permissible for a child, cannot be sanctioned for an adult. What is tolerated in the life of an undeveloped savage, could not be connived at in a well-developed sage or a philosopher. Both stand at different levels of growth and development. In every age and every clime, the existence of mankind varying in their mentality and intelligence is historically proved, this fact of moral gradation and various stages of its development in the life of humanity, was fully recognized by the exponents of Indian thought. Its rational and ethical bearings are further explained.

All who are sharers of one Life must inevitably, as parts of the whole, find their natural development and their happiness in harmony with the Life of which they are parts. Disharmony is always productive of suffering. Only in harmony can peace and happiness be found: and the very moment we realize that there is but One life,—as Śrī Kṛṣṇa

said: "I established this universe with one fragment of Myself and I remain"—that moment we realize or are bound logically to realize, that the part can only find its perfection and its happiness by harmony with the whole to which it belongs. Over and over again, we will see it pointed out that only by harmony with the world around us is it possible for humanity to advance and to find true peace and happiness.

The law which is made by men can be changed by men. There is nothing unnatural in it. But a law of nature is not a command. It is an expression of the innermost essence of things according to which only they are able to show activity, according to which only they have various effects upon each other. What we have to do with the laws of nature, is to study nature and find out what they are; and in this study man has been greatly helped by the cumulative experience of Those whom we speak of as *R̥ṣis*, illumined Sages. Those illumined men, having unfolded the Divine Spirit within Them, were able to tell us of the fundamental laws of nature which we cannot break. We can break a man-made law, but we can only disregard a law of nature; and disregarding a law of nature means suffering.

That is our starting point. What is the next stage? The evolution of the world is a progression from a very simple to a very complex condition: in the words of Herbert Spencer, "from homogeneity to heterogeneity". That is the scientific way. From the standpoint of philosophy and religion, it is the gradual unfolding of the divine seed into the likeness of the Divinity who put it forth to unfold itself. This is the great circle of evolution, as it were, coming forth from one Life, and returning to that Life, enriched with the results of the pilgrimage. Now, the *R̥ṣis* divided

that circle into two halves; one half, they said, is the *Mārga* of *Pravṛtti*, of forthgoing. It is the path in which the germ goes out into the world of matter, constantly acquiring in order that it may grow, and evolving faculties that are unfolding within it. When that first half of the circle has been accomplished, when experience has been gathered, then, They say, we come to the time when the path of return must be begun.

Now, the Ethics of the path of going-forth are different from the Ethics of the path of returning: but our standard of Right or Wrong being in harmony with the Divine Will, remains untouched. For, although the actions will be different according to the path that the man is treading, he will be going in consonance with the Divine Will, whichever path he may be in,—the one path where he is acquiring or the other where he is throwing away the outer in order that the inner may develop into the divine form.

Now let us bear in mind the last beautiful order of the Hindu system; not the life of the *Jivātmā* any longer embodied in matter, but the life of the individual during a single experience from birth to death: that is, the system of the four *Āśramas*, which exactly corresponds with the caste system. The one is not complete without the other. It was a great dual system. We see at once that the caste of the *Śūdra*, is parallel to the order of the *Brahmacārī* or the student. He then has to develop obedience, service, dutifulness, he has to learn the lessons for that particular order. Then he goes on to the *Gṛhasthāśrama*, the household life; he is then the typical *Vaiśya*. All other orders depend upon him: he is the supporter and maintainer. And in that household life his virtues are quite different from the virtues of the *Brahmacārī*. After he had passed through the *Gṛhasthāśrama* and gained all his experience, then he was

to step out into the *Vānaprastha* stage where, himself free from worldly affairs, he would be able to counsel and advise the younger generation, no longer to take an active part in the business of the world, but to leave it to the younger people who are able to do it well. The duty of the *Kṣatriya* comes under this stage. Then came the last *Āśrama* which is the correlative of the *Brāhmaṇa* caste, where the *Samnyāsī*, having gained all his experience, renounced the outer world, and prepared himself for the life on the other side of death.

Thus well-conceived was evolution according to Hindu thought, and that is why it is said that it was the most comprehensive system that had ever been given to a Nation. There are no gaps in it. There is no ethical question that cannot find its right solution in one part or another of this great system of human evolution. If we realize this outline, then we will readily be able to see how *Dharmas* are relative, i.e., how the right thing for a man to do at any particular time depends on the place which he is occupying in evolution “Better one’s own duty (*Swadharmā*) though destitute of merit, than the duty (*Dharma*) of another, well-discharged. Better death in the discharge of one’s own duty, the duty of another is full of danger (*Gītā* III. 35).

The law of the past shows where a man is: the law by which he has to guide his conduct shows where he ought to be, and where he will be as he lives through life, if he carries out that *Dharma*. The double idea is there. Let us take then an average man: he begins his life as a student. What is the duty of the student according to Hindu *Dharma*? Let us remember that the great Lawgiver, Manu, divided the relations of people into three: We are surrounded, Manu said, by our elders, by our equals, and by those who are younger to us. Everyone with whom we come into

contact is either our elder, our equal or our younger. And according to that relation will be the virtues that we ought to practise towards them. Sometimes people say: “We ought to work without desire”. That is possible only on the *Nivṛtti-Mārga*. But nothing is more fatal to progress than to give up the desire for fruit until we have evolved within ourselves the power which will make us work as hard without the desire for fruit, as we could work when we are moved by that desire. Let us see how it works out. This view of *Dharma* is a view that has been very much misunderstood. It has often been criticised by some of the Western scholars, specially Christian divines who lay much stress on “Absolute morality”. The Indian Philosophers think that “Absolute *Dharma*” is too metaphysical to be followed. Indian Philosophy maintains that “Absolute *Dharma*” can have no existence except in the Absolute. We are all relative. We cannot go beyond that. All our relations to everything around us, our relations to human beings, our relations to the animal kingdom, to the vegetable and to the mineral kingdoms, our relations to everything that lives in the world of which we form a part,—nothing can be excluded from that. For we are only a part of the vast chain of evolution that stretches from world to world. Take the average man still on the *Pravṛtti-Mārga*. What is his law of evolution? It is to be found in what the Hindu books call *Dharma*. *Dharma* really shows the evolution through which a man has passed, which brings him to the position he occupies at the moment. If we fully grasp this sound conception of the relative value of Hindu *Dharma* we shall be able to save ourselves from much heart-burning and irritation when we deal with different types of people living in this world.

Develop Love for All No Jealousy

Jealousy, anger, fear, all the negative physical and mental impulses that impel human beings to do wrong—where do they come from? Many say, these are of psychological origin. But I say, they come from the Evil Force. There are two forces in this world—good and evil. Wherever there is good, there is also evil. Man, endowed with independence and free will, suffers the consequences of his wrong actions, but he is not the creator of the agents that influenced those errors. Plants commit no evil, and yet they succumb to diseases. The animals, which are governed by instinct with no consciousness of evil, similarly suffer. Side by side with every good there is a corresponding evil. God creates the sunshine and the Evil Force creates destructive storms and droughts. The beautiful flower blooms and is destroyed by insects. God says to love; the Evil Force says be jealous, you are justified to hurt and enfeeble an opponent. Don't listen to that dark power. It isn't you. Jealousy, anger, fear, are creations of the Evil Force. Recognizing this force as a conscious power, Jesus said, "Get Thee behind me, Satan."

Any time the voice of jealousy, fear or anger speaks, remember that it is not your voice, and command that it be gone. But you will not be able to expel that evil, no matter how you try, so long as you give that negative feeling a safe harbour in your mind. Eradicate jealousy, fear and anger from within, so that every time an evil impulse tells you to hate and to hurt, another stronger voice within tells you to love and to forgive. Listen to that voice.

Just imagine, if we could take away from the world selfishness, jealousy and anger, there would be no wars. But these destructive perpetrators are tenacious, and constantly fight with goodness for supremacy. God speaks of peace and the Evil Force urges restlessness and discord. God is trying to coax you into actions of love; the Evil Force is trying to lure you to fight. You are a free agent; you can choose as you please. Whenever you are jealous, you are in collusion with the cosmic delusion of Satan. Whenever you are angry, Satan is guiding you. The voice of fear is his evil voice. But whenever you are filled with love and forgiveness, God is with you. Help Him to work through you; He cannot do so unless you help Him.

Whereas the love of God unites, the negative impulses of the Evil Force divide and destroy. Great havoc is wrought by jealousy and its cohorts of fear, anger and hatred. Human relationships are devastated, homes are broken up, lives are destroyed. Jealousy foreshadows the end of happiness, first in the one who harbours it, and then in others who are objects of its vengeance—even innocent bystanders, such as the children of broken homes.

Jealousy exists everywhere, it is an ever present danger to all human relationships. I have so many times seen it at work in this world. Everybody wants the “good position,” but few want to make the effort to merit it or to assume the inherent responsibility. The divisive nature of jealousy transforms a heaven of harmony into a hades of discord. One jealous person can generate so much trouble! When possible, try to avoid giving anyone cause for jealousy. Go out of your way, if necessary, to create understanding.

Jealousy comes from an inferiority complex, and expresses itself through suspicion and fear. It signifies that a person

is afraid he cannot hold his own in his relationships with others, be they conjugal, filial, social. If you feel you have cause to be jealous of someone—for example, if you are afraid that the one you love is transferring his or her attention to another—first strive to understand if there is something lacking within yourself. Improve yourself; develop yourself. The only way to hold on to the affection or respect of another is to apply the law of love and to merit that recognition by self-improvement.

—*Journey to Self-realization*



God made you in His image; you are potentially equal to God since you are a part of Him. Each one of us has the ability to become godly, if he would cast off the eclipse of ignorance. You don't have to acquire anything; you have it already. The gold of the soul is right there within you, covered with the mud of delusion. All you have to do is scrape off the mud.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

O Lord! Whatever I have, whatever I am, all these verily are your own already. What then shall I offer you? O Mādhava! Being thus awakened to the consciousness that all these are your own inalienable property there is nothing left for me to offer.

—*Sri Yamunacharya*

Love Thy Neighbour as Thyself

—Swami Krishnananda

The well-known programme revolving round the dictum, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself, has far-reaching implications.' Why should one love one's neighbour? The *Vedānta* philosophy would give the answer: 'Because thy neighbour is thy own self. The responsibility of a person to another person, who is here called the neighbour, depends on the extent to which one recognises in the person of another the essence of one's own self.' Those who render the greatest service to mankind are people who do not merely behold in front of them a multitude of persons and feel a social obligation or a political necessity to be considerate and serviceful to them, but those in whom a deeper impulse is welling up to see their own selves in all. The spiritual leaders of mankind alone can render the greatest service to people in terms of their very souls, while the common social-welfare projects can touch only the fringe of humanity's needs. To serve the body with food, clothing, shelter and medical attention is indeed good, but a better service would be to educate people and make them confident in themselves with the recognition of the dignity of man as an emblem of divinity. To work for the salvation of the soul is the greatest of all services. The saints and sages, with their powerful thoughts and concentrated feelings, render a service which cannot be seen with the physical eyes. These masters descend on earth for a while, think a few thoughts that will vibrate for all time to come, and leave the world unnoticed. These are the greatest geniuses of the world,

not the kings, the wealthy magnates and marshals of war.

The civic duty of man is a basic common-sense consideration that one should have to the environment of people and the world, and it is good to be always friendly with the community around. Not only that; it would be better to be kind and serviceful to persons in the vicinity. If charity begins at home, love and service also start in the immediate neighbourhood. Goodness of behaviour is more a quality of outlook than a quantitative reach of one's actions to distant corners of the world. To be qualitatively good in respect of even one person would speak more gloriously of that source of service than to be just quantitatively philanthropic to a large number of individuals. Goodness does not require any announcement in public, it does not seek recognition, not even a word of thanks, for, "Is not the least one in this world going to be recognised as the first in the kingdom of God?"



Without practising the principles of religion consciously or unconsciously, in our daily life, it is impossible for us to achieve any success, prosperity, progress, peace, power, health, knowledge, art, grace or any blessing whatsoever.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Birds from the Lonely Land

—Y. Jagannatham

The divine sage Nārada tells us that one develops love for God only in the company of saints. He says also that in the matter of removing darkness, the rays of the material sun are powerful only to the extent of dispelling the outer darkness enveloping the world; but the inner darkness found in a man's heart is dispelled only by the rays of the Spiritual Sun, Kṛṣṇa, in the shape of holy discourses by saints. It is for this reason that a wise man should always associate with enlightened men. The constant company of *Mahā-Puruṣas* brings all kinds of happiness in its wake just as birds nestling on big trees, get not only delicious fruit in abundance to eat, but derive also great comfort from their cool and far-spreading shade. So, it is clear that the initial step towards spiritual progress lies in seeking the company of holy men. Such company is very seldom met with in the world, and no limits can be set to the advantage that a spiritual aspirant derives if he has the rare good fortune of coming into contact with such pure and noble souls. Man gets this rare privilege only through his good *Karma* that has been accumulating from birth to birth. When he is favoured with such a company, his whole nature undergoes a thorough and marvellous transformation. As Swāmī Vivekānanda says, "Five minutes in their company will change a whole life."

In the brotherhood of spiritual souls, the young aspirant comes across nothing but pure and ennobling ideas and associations. His heart melts and expands under the warmth

of their love and goodwill towards him. He observes that the hearts of them all are turned to the music of the Soul, namely, Love; and that all their thoughts, feelings and actions are but channels for the overflow of the Love that continually wells up within them. They therefore live and move in an atmosphere of perfect peace and harmony undisturbed by the scorching blasts of worldly passions and material thoughts. The novice in the Line of Love is very much impressed by their great virtues and sterling character and his heart goes forth to serve them to become eventually one of their own. As his service of saints gets more and more selfless and spontaneous, his heart throbs with a pleasure hitherto unknown and he is borne along by a current of joy unmatched in its purity and sweetness. Their music of the Soul is now treasured in his joy-lit heart and he pines for the day when they may lovingly lead him to his Sweet and Eternal Home. He sings now with the home-sick poet who says, “Your songs, like birds from the lonely land of snow, are winging to build their nests in my heart against the warmth of its April, and I am content to wait for the merry season.”

When the sun of Love has thus begun to shine in the firmament of his heart, the darkening clouds of terrestrial life that had created gloom in it, will roll away and the night-blizzard of worldly hankerings, worldly frettings and foamings that had damped the devotional enthusiasm of his heart, will clear up and vanish in no time. Through the pure and refreshing atmosphere which fills the heart after the storms and clouds had disappeared, the Light of Love enables him to catch in the far-off distance glimpses of his Home, his own sweet Home where Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his Beloved Lord is playing with the *Gopīs*, His ever-favourite and never-ending *Rāsa-Līlā*. He now feels that till this moment

in his life, he has been playing truant in utter oblivion of what is most near and dear to him, and so his whole heart and soul is now bent upon returning to this long-lost Home which has now so fortunately come upon his view. He now feels that having lost his way in the labyrinth of the world and its evanescent pleasures, he had forgotten his original Home and mistaken other homes for his own. In these other homes, he had been long and continually seeking for the permanent pleasures of His own Beloved One and met with disappointment at every turn. Now that he has caught sight of his long-lost Treasure, it becomes his sole object in life to regain it, and he directs his whole attention and all his faculties and powers towards the recovery of this Treasure for fear that the least inattention or carelessness on his part might cost him dear and might even cause him to begin the whole work over again.

It is only now that the seeds of spirituality in him begin to germinate and he becomes now a real devotee of the Lord. His entire being longs to lose itself in the one aim of realizing the Lord. What is transient and false in the world begins to have less and less attraction for him as he soars higher and higher in the pure regions of spirituality, “the lonely land of snow”, of the poet. The world, we know, is a reflex of the mind. The *Bhakta* has already tasted something of the sweetness and joy of Love and his only endeavour now is to render this sweetness and joy deeper and more enduring every moment of his life. He therefore, strives to project on all objects of creation the Love-creating Form of the Lord of which he has had glimpses already. Through strenuous and ceaseless practice he gradually succeeds in his task and begins to reap the fruit of his labours by seeing and experiencing the *Prema-Swarūpa*, Love-form of the Lord everywhere both in the macrocosm

and microcosm. To him, therefore, all created objects begin to lose by degrees the power they had of calling up associations which tend to distract on account of the gross worldliness permeating and poisoning them when looked at through the medium of *Māyā*. Such a *Bhakta* may live and move in the world and yet he is quite unaffected by any worldly thought or anxiety.

Everything that he sees, everything that he hears, everything that he does, nay, every feeling or impression that enters him now reminds him only of the Lord, and he ever remains ready like a true *Bhakta* to offer everything that he has at the Lotus Feet of his Beloved Lord. It is this *Bhāva* of the *Bhakta* that is known as *Ekānta Bhāva*, the “bird from the Lonely Land”.

Three distinctive steps are noticed in the *Bhakta*'s realization of this stage. He begins by perceiving objects around him as the worldly man perceives them in all the tinsel finery and evanescent nature which *Māyā* has bestowed upon them. The characteristic feature of the next step in the *Bhakta*'s perception lies in the fact that he has realized the hollow and transitory nature of their mundane significance and begun to think of them all as merely means to an end and that this end is the realization of the Divine that lies hidden deep in their essence. In all his relations with them, therefore, the *Bhakta* is reminded only of the Lord, and what is fleeting and false about them though they may knock and shock him at every step leaves him quite unmoved, even unconcerned. Lastly, he sees only the Spiritual Form of the Lord in all things in creation and their mundane aspect entirely dissolves and becomes a thing of the past to him. This final step marks the realization of *Ekānta Bhāva* in its plenitude.

God's Loving Voice

Jesus said that the small gift of two mites, presented with devotion by a poor widow, was more pleasing to God than the wealth that was ostentatiously proffered by irreligious men. The outpouring of heartfelt love is the only “sacrifice” the Lord desires from His creatures.

God says: “Great *Yogīs* are rare, so I seldom receive from earth-dwellers the most precious gift—complete soul surrender to Me. Therefore, I accept happily even a little flower, tear-sprinkled and devotionally fragrant, from those who have little time for Me, though I give My time and gifts to them....”

Man's most fleeting thought and most trifling action may be used as stepping-stones toward His presence. True devotees devoutly offer to Him the living leaves of their proliferating spiritual understanding and perceptions, the choicest blossoms of love from the secret garden of their hearts, the fruits of their selfless actions, and the sanctifying sacred waters of intuitive inner divine communion gathered reverently from the river of meditation.

Indeed, how compassionately indulgent and impartial the Lord is that He so readily recognizes not only the mighty ecstasy of lordly *Yogīs*, but also the “widow's mite” of those who can give little to Him, but do give all they have. *Yogīs* perceive God's response in glorious, even spectacular, ways; striving devotees are blessed with divine thoughts and aspirations, God's loving silent voice encouraging and coaxing them forward to His waiting presence.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

Medicine which Leads to Lasting Welfare

व्यामोहप्रशमौषधं मुनिमनोवृत्तिप्रवृत्त्यौषधं
 दैत्येन्द्रार्तिकरौषधं त्रिजगतां संजीवनैकौषधम् ।
 भक्तात्यन्तहितौषधं भवभयप्रध्वंसनैकौषधं
 श्रेयःप्राप्तिकरौषधं पिब मनः श्रीकृष्णदिव्यौषधम् ॥
 इदं शरीरं परिणामपेशलं पतत्यवश्यं श्लथसंधिजर्जरम् ।
 किमौषधैः क्लिश्यसि मूढः दुर्मते निरामयं कृष्णरसायनं पिब ॥

—*Mukundamālā*

O Mind! take the divine medicine called Kṛṣṇa, the medicine which removes delusion, stimulates the mental activities of sages, brings agony to the demon-chiefs, the one rejuvenating tonic of the three worlds, most beneficent to His devotees, the sole remedy for the fear of transmigration, the medicine which leads to (lasting) welfare.

This body, turning delicate with age, loose and worn out, perishes unavoidably. Ignorant fool! why trouble yourself with medicines? Drink the elixir of Kṛṣṇa, which rids you of all diseases.