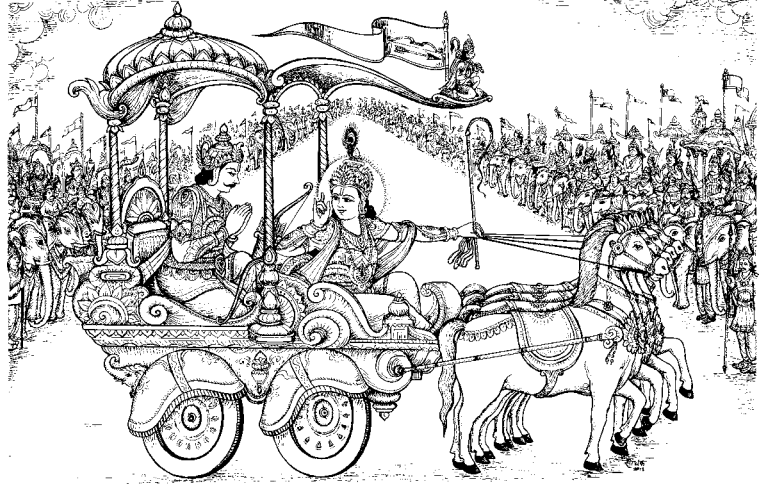


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KALYANA-KALPATARU

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

Vol. 59

May 2014

No. 8

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Gift of Pārijāta Tree

चोदितो भार्ययोत्पाद्य पारिजातं गरुत्मति ।
आरोप्य सेन्द्रान् विबुधान् निर्जित्योपानयत् पुरम् ॥

(*Bhāgavata* X. 59. 39)

Urged on by His consort, He pulled up Pārijāta tree from the garden of Indra and placing it on the back of Garuḍa and vanquishing the gods, Indra and all who opposed Him, He brought it down to His capital Dwaraka.

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Subscription

Inland—

Annual ₹ 120

Abroad—

Annual ₹ 1800

Air Mail US \$ 30

Bank collection charges US \$ 6 Extra

website: www.gitapress.org e-mail: booksales@gitapress.org

Editor—**Keshoram Aggarwal**

Co-Editor—**Dr. Prem P. Lakkar**

Printed and Published by **Jagdish Prasad Jalan** for Gobind Bhawan Karyalaya,

Gita Press, Gorakhpur (India)

How to Develop Love for God?

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

God, as a matter of fact, is the only object worthy of love. As regards saints they call for more of our reverence than love. God, however, claims both inasmuch as He is transcendental, ethereal and spiritual in substance. The body of a saint, on the other hand, is material, physical. The very sight of the Lord bestows beatitude; but such is not the case with a saint. Mere attachment or love for the physical body of a saint cannot ensure final redemption. What is required, therefore, is faith in him. What does faith denote? In short, faith consists in doing the bidding of a saint. One cannot be sure of one's redemption through mere bodily service of a saint or through worship offered to his physical frame. On the other hand, one is sure to attain liberation by carrying out the behests of a saint. Service rendered or worship offered to a saint will only make him ease-loving. That is the reason why saints generally do not accept any service or homage. They shun physical comforts as well as honour and praise.

One can be redeemed by developing love even for God's essential character, pastimes, divine Abode, Name or virtues. Hence God deserves our love. Love for anything other than God is risky. One should have faith in the scriptures, the other world, a saint and God; all of them deserve our faith. But no other object than God deserves our love. We spend most of our time with the object of our love. We cannot be redeemed even if we live with a saint for fifty years but never care to carry out his instructions. Both his example and precepts are conducive to blessedness. Pertaining to this the *Gītā* says:—

“For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follows the same.” (III. 21)

“Other dull-witted persons, however, not knowing thus, worship even as they have heard from others; and even those who are devoted to hearing, are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of death.” (XIII.25)

Listening attentively to the words of a saint, they who abide by his advice and strive accordingly are able to cross the ocean of worldly existence, devoted as they are to the process of hearing. How can one get devoted by hearing? Take the example of a deer who listens to the music of a flute and gets so enraptured with it that he is practically lost to the outer world and would offer little resistance even if you entrap it or even kill it. Similarly, one should drink in each and every word of a saint with rapt attention. One should then try to follow what one has heard and carry it into practice. There are many who listen to the discourse of a saint; but one is benefited only when one assimilates and translates his words into practice. Our inability to retain what we have heard is attributable to lack of faith. He who after listening to the words of a scripture or a saint puts implicit faith in them, and makes up his mind to abide by them even at the cost of his life, attains blessedness. “Even death in the performance of one’s own duty brings blessedness” (III.35), says the *Gītā*. Therefore, the *sine qua non* of blessedness is faith. The greater our faith, the speedier is the success. This is corroborated by the *Gītā*, which says:—“He who has mastered his senses, is exclusively devoted to his practice and is full of faith attains enlightenment; having had the revelation of Truth, he immediately attains supreme peace (in the form of God-realization)” (IV. 39).

The Soul does not Die

—*Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar*

There is one infinite expanse of ether; it never gets dissolved, nor does it assume a new shape. Essentially speaking, nothing happens in ether. But from the same ether have come into being any number of cities, towns and villages; numberless buildings have been erected in those cities, towns and villages; each building consists of separate rooms and apartments with different names and of different shapes. All the divisions of ether enclosed by the walls of those rooms and apartments are, when considered from the point of view of ether, nothing but ether at all times. But due to their being enclosed by walls they have acquired different names (such as a temple, a kitchen, a place of worship, a privy and so on) and a shape with dimensions—a form—and from time to time the aforesaid walls get broken and are replaced by new ones. The names of the apartments are changed. Notwithstanding all this, really speaking, the infinite expanse of ether ever remains unchanged and unaffected. Likewise, essentially speaking, one Spirit exists everywhere. It cannot be cut with weapons, burnt by fire, wetted by water or dried by air. It is ever invulnerable, proof against fire impervious to water and incapable of being dried up; it is eternal, all-pervading, compact, immobile and everlasting:—

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥
अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥

(*Gītā* II. 23-24)

The same, however, acquires diversity due to contact with Matter. And that ray of the Spirit which remains tied with Matter is known by the name of *Jiva* so long as it remains so tied and till then it enjoys the objects of the senses and appears to die and take birth in good and evil wombs.

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् ।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥

(*Ibid.*, XIII. 21)

Though essentially eternal, free from attachment, unaffected and devoid of birth and death, the Spirit appears to undergo birth and death due to its contact with Matter. But suppose the Spirit encased in a body comes to realize that “I am the infinite Spirit, all these limbs come into being in me alone, the old body perishes and is replaced by a new one. Being encased in a body I recognized myself till now to be a body and looked upon its name and form as my own, and as such felt happy and miserable. Having repudiated this assumed connection with Matter I have now given up my connection with these assumed name and form. Being no longer rooted in Matter I am now established in my own self—my spiritual essence. Therefore joy and sorrow are now alike to me. Gold, iron and stone are equal in value; for I am established in my own self (स्वस्थः).” The moment one realizes this—is established in the Universal Supreme Spirit, having transcended the individual ego-sense—self-identification with a petty name and form, one gets liberated. This is what goes by the name of *Jivanmukti* (Liberation in this very existence). Liberation was already there. False infatuation had obscured it. The same has now vanished—

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

(*Gītā* XIV. 24)

In this way the Spirit is one; it is free from birth and death and devoid of joy and sorrow. But due to contact with Matter the *Jivas* (embodied souls) are many. Though unreal, the experience of joy and sorrow, as well as of birth and death is perceptibly undergone by the embodied soul and will continue so long as it persists in the form of a *Jiva*. I hope this should suffice to resolve your doubts.



Remember the Lord and think of Him as much as you can. Know Him alone as your own, nearer and dearer than your own self. He who is your sole refuge and resource, here and hereafter, love Him alone, with all your heart and soul. One thinks of the beloved and, thinking, gets joy and happiness thereby; one desires to be always in the company of the beloved, resents other topics of conversation or distractions that take one away. Nevertheless, such earthly love, like everything else in the world, has separation and end. But there is no end to the love of God. It is an inexhaustible treasure! The more you drink of it the more thirsty you feel; and ultimately, losing yourself in bliss, you forget yourself and are merged in it. Then, this little individuality will melt away and divinity will take its place; in place of this corpse-like existence, the divine consciousness (Śivahood) will illumine the soul; the dance of death will cease for ever and you will attain to Immortality.

—Swami Virajananda

An Easy Way to Attain God-realization

—*Brahmalina Swami Ramsukhdas*

God has bestowed this human life upon us by showering His grace; we have to make it successful. If we waste it in eating, drinking and merry making etc., it means that our human life is not successful. Human life is successful only, if it is utilized in the worship to God. Without adoration a man is like a dead body—‘रामदास कहे जीव जगत में मुर्दा-सा फिरता!’ Life does not mean mere breathing. An ironsmith’s bellows also force air but it does not mean that they live a life. Our life is fruitful only, when we perform activities, which are worthy to be done by a man. Either call a man, a man; or call him the candidate qualified (eligible) for God-realization—both are one and the same. God can be realized only in human life and He can be attained very easily.

All of us are obviously the fragments of God. The Lord Himself declares ‘ममैवांशो जीवल्लोके’ (*Gītā* XV. 7), ‘सब मम प्रिय सब मम उपजाए’ (*Mānasa*, VII. 86. 2). All of us have emanated from God and are His loving fragments. There is not even a single person who is not loving to God. God has given us birth here. No one can say that he has taken birth of his own accord. God also sustains and nourishes us. He also protects us. No one has the courage to declare that he will live alive for so many years here. It means that we have come here by God’s will, we are living alive by God’s will and we’ll depart from this human body by God’s will. Therefore we are only God’s. Someone asked a saint, “Where will you go?” He replied, “A football does not know where it will go. It will go in the direction in

which the player kicks it. Similarly I'll go where God sends me; I'll do as God wills." By thinking so, we should be free from worry. We should have no will of our own, neither to live alive nor to die. Whether God sends us to hells or to heaven or to His own Abode or to this mortal world, we should be pleased with His will; depending on Him, we should be free from all worries. Without having any will of our own, we should be a yesman to His will. By doing so, our life will be successful—we need not indulge in tall talk. We are sitting here as God wills it, we go from here as God wills so. We have no grief, no remorse at all. If we die just now, what is the harm in it? We have to acquire nothing at all from the world. It is blissful, if we live alive; and equally blissful it is, if we die. If people want us to eat food, we should eat it; if they want to listen to spiritual discourses, we should deliver them; if they want to meet us, we should meet them. We have to do nothing of our own accord. While using eatables we should keep in mind that they should be sanctioned by the scriptures and should be wholesome. If anyone provides no food to us, or less food to us or more food to us, it is his wish, we are not worried. If any body asks us to remain silent because they don't want to listen to our discourse, we should keep silent. If any body doesn't want to meet us, we need not meet.

There was a holy man. A gentleman invited him to come to his house the next day and take alms (food) there. The holy man agreed. The next day he went to the gentleman's house. At the gate of the house, a person was standing. He said to the holy man, "Why have you come here? Get out or you will be thrashed." The saintly man went away. Next day the gentleman again went to the saint and said, "Sire, you did not come to my house?" The saint said, "I did come. But a man standing at the gate ordered me to get out,

so I came back,” The gentleman requested the saint to come to his house the next day certainly. Next day the saint went there. Having seen the saint again, the man standing at the gate became angry and said to the saint, “Are you not ashamed of yourself for coming here again, when I had turned you out the day before yesterday. Get out again.” The holy man went back. The gentleman again went to the saint and said, “Sire, why didn’t you come to my house?” The holy man said, “Dear brother, I did come. But when a man in your house asked me to get out, I came back.” The gentleman again said, “Sire, I was not present there. I am sorry for my mistake. Kindly visit my house tomorrow certainly.” The saint went to his house. The gentleman received the saint with open arms and said, “Sire, you have showered your grace by coming over here. Kindly take meal.” When the saint had taken meal, the gentleman said, “Sire, you are a great saint. You were so much humiliated, yet you have come.” The saint said, “What magnanimity is there in it? If you fondle a dog, it comes to you; but if you reprimand it, it runs away. This is the habit of a dog. Should a man also behave in this way?” We should also have such an attitude as the saint had.

We should deliver the divine discourse, if people want to listen to it. But if they ask us to remain silent, we should keep silent. If they want to listen to the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Gītā*, recite it to them. If they ask us to recite the Bible and the Koran, we should clearly admit that we don’t know how to recite them, so we are unable to recite them. If someone wants to meet us, we should meet him lovingly. If no one wants to meet us, it is good, we should remain sitting blissfully. What is the difficulty in it? In it we have not to undergo any penance, we have not to go anywhere, we have not to learn anything, we have not to study the

scriptures, we have not to make anyone a spiritual guide, we have not to be initiated. We have to do whatever is pleasing to others. Of our own accord we have neither to eat anything nor we have to deliver a discourse nor we have to meet anyone. We have to act as others will, without having any will of our own. How easy it is! Is there any expenditure on it?

A saint has written, “The world was not pleased with me. I thought why the world was not pleased. I found out the reason that I was of no use to the world. If I had been of any use to the world, the world would have been pleased with me. Only he, who has no desire, is useful for the world. He, who has a desire, can’t be useful for all. Having thought so, I renounced the desire. As soon as I renounced the desire, a thought came to my mind that if I was not useful to the world, the world was also not useful to me. Thus both of us became equal. Neither the world was at fault nor I was at fault. Now I’ll lead a life as God wills. I have not to insist on eating food or on delivering a discourse or on meeting anyone. If anybody asks me to eat, I should eat. If anybody asks me to deliver a discourse, I should deliver it. If anybody asks me to meet him, I should meet him. If no one is interested in providing food to me, well and good; if no one wants to listen to me, well and good; if no one wants to meet me, well and good. This decision will lead to God-realization. No other work is as easy as God-realization.



The Path

—*Jyoti Prakash Kalia*

To realize the highest ideal of life the gross self of man, the Ego, the *Aham* must be burnt out. But to burn it fire is needed which may burn it into ashes, and make the aspirant fit to reach the blessed feet of the Master. We need therefore some fire and that fire is the fire of Love, which must be kindled in our hearts, and Its Glorious Light will show us the face of our Beloved, Who Himself is nothing but Love. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Incarnation of Love and Rādhā is the lover. If we want to win over Śrī Kṛṣṇa we shall have to become Rādhā; for without that it is rather difficult to possess Him.

Ah! every body comes forward with the request that he wants to realize Him, the *Ātmā*, the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa. But where is the loving heart like that of Rādhā, like that of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu or like that of Prahlāda, which may induce the Beloved to shower His Divine Grace and thereafter to show His Divine face. Let us weep, weep for Him day and night; pray to Him incessantly so that by our cries and tears we may be able to draw Him towards us. This celestial wine of Love and Devotion you must drink. The Lord says, “By Devotion, the devotee knows Me in reality; and having known Me he forthwith enters in Me.” In the end the Lord proclaims “Hear thou My word supreme, the profoundest of all, because thou art dearly beloved of Me, therefore I will speak what is good to thee. Occupy thy mind with Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me, thou shalt reach Myself, truly

do I promise unto thee for thou art dear to Me. Here is the most profound secret disclosed to Arjuna. Devotion is therefore the most essential means for attaining Him. He can easily be enchained with the chain of Love.

The great and the mighty door of *Māyā* or illusion which hinders the man to enter on the "Path" can be swung open only by the golden key of Devotion. "Verily this Divine Illusion of Mine constituted of *Guṇas* is difficult to cross over, but those who devote themselves to Me cross over this Illusion." "Even if the very wicked worships Me with devotion, he should be regarded as good, for he has rightly resolved. Soon does he become righteous and attain to the Eternal, O, Son of Kuntī boldly do I proclaim that My devotee is never destroyed." "Therefore fill thy mind with Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, bow down unto Me, thus having made thy mind steadfast in Me, taking Me as the Supreme Goal, thou shalt come to Me.

It will not be out of place to add that whatever cannot be attained by the study of scriptures and by performing sacrifices can be had by devotion. When the Lord had shown to Arjuna His universal form at the sight of which he was terrified, he requested Him to assume the gentle and human form. The Lord granted his request and pacifying him who was thus terrified said unto him, "Very hard it is to see this form of Mine which thou hast seen. Even the *Devas* long to behold this form. Neither by *Vedas*, nor austerity nor by gifts can I be seen as thou hast seen Me. By single devotion I may in this form be known, O Arjuna, and seen in reality and entered into.

When the Divine Flame of Love is enkindled in the heart then only begins the process of purification and the devotee's mind begins to be uplifted into the higher superhuman spheres of Perfection. This is the shortest road

to reach at His lotus feet, and blessed are they who succeed in possessing it. Let us therefore pray unto Him always so that He may grant us His Love, “for more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of” so that we may be burnt in Him and there remain nothing of us but He. His light may shine and His will be done is always the prayer of His devotees. May He make us the instrument of His Divine play “*Līlā*” and make us dance to the tune of His flute and play out the parts allotted to us honestly and faithfully and it matters not whether the part to be played be some part of loveable *Līlā* of Vrindaban, or be the death dance of *Mahābhārata*. Since in the words of the poet:—

Ours not to reason why,
Our but to do and die.

He is the central figure round about in and out of whom we have to dance like the the *Gopikās* of Vrindaban. We have to renounce even the desire of salvation, for if He our Master, the Being of our beings in whom we all live, move and have our being, wishes us to be in the play and refuses salvation, we must then even be ready to forego even that. Because we have to love Him since He is loveable, since He is the most Beautiful, requiring us to surrender our little selves unto Him fully and completely. “If part of the being surrenders, but another part reserves itself, follows its own way or makes its own conditions, then each time that that happens, you are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you. If behind your devotion and surrender you make a cover for your desires, egoistic demands and vital instances, if you put these things in place of the true aspiration or mix them with it and try to impose them on the Divine *Śakti* (Power), then it is idle to invoke the divine Grace to transform you.

How to Root out Anger

—Swami Rama Tirtha

How is it that in this world anger exists? We hear loud preachings everyday that we should never give way to weakness, should never lose our temper. We hear preachings to that effect everyday, and still when the time comes, we give way to weakness. Why is it? Why anger, why animosity, why the thought of self-aggrandizement and why other sins? Why these animal passions? All these sins are explained by *Vedānta* on the same line and the same principle. Perhaps there is hardly any time to enter into the details of these sins. If you want to know more about it, you had better come to Rāma, and all these sins will be perfectly explained, their cause and their diagnosis. But there being little time now, Rāma simply sums up all that; and your attention is drawn to the fact that all these sins are due to ignorance, which makes you confound the real Self with the apparent body and mind. Give up this ignorance and these sins are no more. If you were to remove these sins by any other ways, the attempts will end in failure because nothing positive like matter can be destroyed. Of course, ignorance can be destroyed. Ignorance we can remove. Children when they are born are ignorant of many things in this world, but we see that gradually their ignorance about many subjects goes on diminishing and diminishing. Ignorance can only be removed.

That being the case, there is the power which leads you to anger, which leads you to desires and sins, and leads you to the accumulation. This energy you cannot

destroy by your teachings or preachings in any way. You cannot repress; you can never suppress it—energy is there. *Vedānta* says we can spiritualise this energy. Let it not be misapplied. Let it be applied properly. This is the energy of the true Spirit in you, the energy of the true *Ātman* in you, which is the master of the whole world, which is rivalless.

Everybody wants to be free, and the idea of freedom—what is its essential character, the fundamental feature of the desire for freedom? It is rising to a height where we have no rival. The energy of the true *Ātman* wants you to realize the state where you are perfectly free, that is to say, where you have no equal, where you have no rival. The *Ātman*, the true spirit is rivalless. If you want to get rid of worldly selfishness or the thought of self-aggrandizement, you cannot push down and destroy the real energy. No energy can be destroyed; nor can the eternal *Ātman* be destroyed. How can the eternal *Ātman* be destroyed? The improper use you can make of everything and turn heaven into hell.

There is a story about a priest, a Christian priest in England. He read about the deaths of some great men, great scientists, Darwin and Huxley. He began to think in his mind whether they had gone to hell or heaven. He was thinking and thinking and thinking. He said to himself, “These people did not commit any crimes, and yet they did not believe in the Bible, they did not believe in Christ, they were no Christians in the proper sense of the word. They must have gone to hell.” But he could not make up his own mind to think that way. He thought: “They were good men, they had done some good work in the world, they did not deserve hell. Where did they go?” He fell asleep and dreamt a most wonderful dream. He saw that

he himself had died and was taken to the highest heaven. He found there all the people whom he had expected to find; he found all his Christian brothers who used to come to his Church. He found them all there. Then he asked about these scientists, Huxley and Darwin. The doorkeeper of heaven or some other steward told him that these people were in the lowest hell.

Now this priest asked if he could be allowed to go to the lowest hell on a flying visit simply to see them, and there to go and preach to them the Holy Bible and show them that they had perpetrated a most heinous crime in not believing in the letter of the Bible. After some fuss and trouble the steward yielded and consented to get for him a ticket to the lowest hell. You will be astonished that even in hell and heaven, you come and go in your railway cars, but so it was. The man had been bred in the midst of surroundings overflowing with railway traffic and telegraphs. So in his thoughts, in his dreams, it is no wonder if the railways got mixed up with hell and heaven.

Well, this priest got a first class ticket. The railway train went on and on and on. There were some intermediate stations, because he came from the highest heaven to the lowest hell. He stopped at the intermediate stations and found that there was a change for the worse as he went on down and down. When he came to the lowest hell but one, he could not keep himself in senses. Such a stench was coming out that he had to put all his napkins and handkerchiefs before his nose, and yet he could not but be senseless; he had to fall into a swoon. There were so many crying voices, weeping and crying and gnashing of teeth down there, he could not bear it. He could not keep his eyes open because of those sights. He repented of his persistence to come to see the lowest hell.

In a few minutes the people on the railway platform were crying, "The lowest hell, the lowest hell" for the convenience of the passengers. There was engraved on the walls of the station, "The lowest hell." But the priest was astonished. He asked everybody, "This cannot be the lowest hell? It must be about the highest heaven. No, no, it cannot be. This is not the lowest, this is not the lowest hell; it must be heaven." The railway guard or conductor told him that this was the place, and there came a man who said, "Just get down, sir, this is your destination."

He got down—poor fellow, but was surprised. He expected the lowest hell to be worse than the lowest hell but one. But this well-nigh rivalled his highest heaven. He got out of the railway station and found there magnificent gardens, sweet-scented flowers, and fragrant breezes blowing into his face. He met one tall gentleman. He asked his name and he thought he saw in him something or somebody whom he had seen before. The man was walking before him, and he followed after him; and when the man stopped, the priest was delighted. They shook hands, and the priest recognized him. Who was he? That was Huxley. He asked, "What is it, is it the lowest hell?" Huxley said, "Yes, doubtless it is." And he said, "I came to preach to you, but first of all, answer how is it that I find such a strange phenomenon before me?" Huxley said, "You were not wrong in your expectations for the worst. Indeed, when we came here, it was the worst possible hell in the universe. It was the most undesirable that could be conceived." And here he pointed out certain places—"There were dirty ditches." And he pointed out another spot—"There was burning iron." And he pointed out another spot—"There was hot sand and there was steaming dung."

He said, "We were first of all placed in the most dirty

ditches, but while there, with our hands we were throwing water to the next adjoining hot burning iron; and we went on with that work of throwing that dirty water out of the ditches on the hot burning iron that was on the banks. Then the stewards of the lowest hell had to take us to those places where there was burning liquid iron but by the time they took us to that place most of the iron had become wholly cooled, most of the iron could be handled, and still a great deal of iron was in its liquid burning condition, fiery condition. Then, with the aid of that iron which had cooled down, and holding it before the fire, we succeeded in making some machines and some other instruments. After that we were to be taken to the third place where there was the dung. We were taken to that place and with the help of our instruments, iron spades and machines, we began the digging work. After that we were taken to the other kind of soil, and there by means of machines and other instruments that we had got then ready, we threw some of those things into the soil to which we were taken; that served as manure, and thus we succeeded by and by in turning this hell into a veritable heaven.”

Now the thing is that in that lowest hell, there were present all the materials which being simply placed in their right positions, might make the highest heaven. So it is, *Vedānta* says, in you is present the divine God, and in you is present the worthless body; but you have misplaced the things. You have done things upside down; in a topsy-turvy way you have put them. You have put the cart before the horse; and that is how you make this world a hell for you. You have simply not to destroy anything, not to dig up anything. This ambitious spirit of yours, or this selfishness of yours, or this angry nature of yours, or any other sin of yours, which is just like a hell you cannot destroy, but

you can rearrange. No energy can be destroyed, but you can rearrange this hell and convert it into the highest heaven.

Vedānta says, the only open sesame, the only way to really stamp out all misery from the world—long faces and gloomy, sad tempers, will not mend matters—the only way to escape from all sins, the only way to stand above all temptations is to realize the true Self. “You will never be able to withstand animal passions unless you do away with all this splendour and glory that bewitches you, do away with all that attracts you. When you realize that, you stand above all the passions, and at the same time be perfectly free, be perfectly free, be perfectly full of bliss, and that is Heaven.



Our bodies are nothing but the instruments, or the garments of the soul. *Vedānta* tells us that when a person dies, he is not really dead, but he changes his old garment of the physical body and takes a new one. *Vedānta* says that death means a change i.e. a change from one state of consciousness to another state of consciousness, and the soul throws away the physical body at the time of death just as we throw away our old worn-out garments. This idea is beautifully expressed in the *Bhagavadgītā*:

As we throw away our old worn-out garments and put on new ones, so the living soul, after using the body which is the gross physical garment, throws it away when it is worn-out, and manufactures a new one.

—*Swami Abhedananda*

Significance of Akṣaya Tṛtīyā

—Mohan Lal Mago

This is the only day you can see Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. It is called *Carāṇa Darśana*.

Akṣaya Tṛtīyā or *Akha Tija* is when the sun and moon are equally radiant and bright.

Kilos of *Candana* are prepared days in advance and applied decoratively over the deity, thus earning him the name of *Candana Darśana*. In the evening a *Dhoṭī* is tied around His waist so that one can enjoy *Sarvāṅga Darśana*—that is see Bāṅke Bihārī in his whole body.

There is no *Maṅgalā Āraṭī*. All the temples are decorated with fragrant flowers like jasmine.

Akṣaya means never diminishing. Many things happened on this day: Draupadī was given *Akṣaya Pātra* by Kṛṣṇa which supplied unlimited food; Kubera, treasurer of gods, prayed to Lakṣmī, goddess of wealth, to fill his treasury.

Paraśurāma, the sixth incarnation of Viṣṇu was born: *Satyayuga* ended and *Tretayuga* began; the Gaṅgā descended from Heaven; Veda Vyāsa and Gaṇeśa began writing the epic *Mahābhārata*; and Sudāmā, the poor friend of Kṛṣṇa, came to Dwaraka to ask for help. In return for a handful of beaten rice, Kṛṣṇa gave immense wealth to Sudāmā. Gates of the Badrīnārāyaṇa temple open on this day. Construction of chariots for the *Jagannātha Ratha Yātrā* at Puri commences. Jains observe fast and break it with sugarcane juice as king turned monk Ṛṣabhadeva was offered sugarcane juice after a year long fast. So the belief is that worshipping Lakṣmī and Kubera, buying gold and silver ornament, buying household things, ploughing land, writing new account books—will all bring prosperity.

Mahātmā Gāndhī on God

—*T. K. Mukundan*

It is an unbroken torture to me that I am still far from Him, who as I fully know governs every breath of my life and whose offspring I am. I know that it is the evil passions within that keeps me so far from Him and yet I cannot get away from them.

We are merely the instruments of the Almighty's will and are therefore ignorant of what helps us forward and what acts as an impediment.

Man's ultimate aim is the realisation of God and all his activities, social, political, religious, 'have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God'. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it.

Truth is God and untruth a denial of Him. God only is our infallible and eternal guide.

God lets the tyrant dig his own grave, only issuing grave warnings at stated intervals. God will hold each of us responsible for his own actions and not for his neighbours. God chooses as His instruments the humblest and weakest of His creatures to fulfil Himself.

God has a thousand names or rather, He is nameless. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. Man does not and can never know God's law fully. God keeps an accurate record of all things good and bad. God is the source of light and life and yet He is above and beyond all these.

How can we measure the greatness of God, who is so forgiving, so divine? We are all but straws in the hands of God.

God is not in Kaba or Kashi. He is within everyone of us. God is even though the whole world deny Him. Though we may know Him by a thousand names, God is one and the same to us all. If one wishes to work in the fear of God, one should be indifferent about popular praise or blame.

“He never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. You may say God, Allah, or whatever other name you may like, but the moment you trust naught but Him, you are strong, all disappointment disappears.

I know too, that I shall never know God, if I do not wrestle with and against evil, even at the cost of life itself.

“God, to be God, is there to teach us that we do nothing, that we can do nothing. We are only instruments of God’s will.

What is the difference between a watch and a human being? A watch does not work by itself, it is set going by man. In the same way, we do not move, we do not act by ourselves. The power that moves us is God. Just as a watch stops when its wound-up spring has run out, so also when our spring is done our cart comes to a dead halt. While that freedom cart is still on the move, we feel that a certain freedom of action is granted to us. Let us use that to learn and to do the will of the great carpenter.

God is a searcher of hearts only. If our hearts are pure we will get full marks, even if we stutter in our speech. Thoughts which turn us away from God or do not turn us towards Him constitute the impediments on our way.

God makes crooked straight for us, and sets things right when they go dead wrong.

The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of the Christians and *Īśvara* of the Hindus.

I recognise no God, except the God that is to be found in the hearts of dumb millions.

God alone reads our hearts.

God alone is absolutely perfect, but we limited beings fancy all kinds of things and impute limitations to God. God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separate from God Himself. God makes no distinction between His worshippers. He accepts the worship of the untouchables, just as well and as much as that of the so-called touchables, provided it comes from the bottom of the heart.

There is no separate species called Gods in the universe, but all who have the power of production and will work for the community using that power are God's labourers no less than the capitalists.

Even as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, so will not any denial of God and His law liberate me from its operation. Whereas humble and mute acceptance of the divine authority makes life's journey easier, even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier.

It is easy enough to say, 'I do not believe in God', for God permits all things to be said of Him with impunity. He looks at our acts, and any breach of His law carries with it, not its vindictive, but its purifying compelling punishment. God's existence cannot be, does not need to be proved. God is. If He is not felt, so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease, which we shall some day throw off.

It may be said that God has never allowed any of my plans to stand. He has disposed them in His own way.

God is witness above and He is just enough to chastise

every double dealing.

There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as truth only. I have not found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. Even if the sacrifice demanded my very life, I hope, I may be prepared to give it. I pray like every Good Hindu. I believe that we can all be messengers of God, if we cease to fear man and seek only God's truth.

My firm belief is that He reveals Himself daily to every human being, but we shut our ears to the "still small voice". We shut our eyes to the pillar of fire in front of us. I realise His omnipresence.

All the power I may have comes from God. But He does not work directly. He works through His numberless agencies.

To me, God is Truth and Love, God is ethics and morality, God is fearlessness. God is the source of all light and life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love, God permits the atheist to live.



Never mind which part you have to play, always strive to act it well, in harmony with the Divine will, so that your little role will enlighten others. Realize that an aspect of the infinite power of spirit is performing through you on the stage of the world.

A Sordid Boon

—R. P. Dwivedi

Wordsworth laments the loss we have suffered
By giving our hearts away for a 'sordid boon.'
Of crass materialistic pursuit of power and pelf
And wasting our powers in getting and spending
For, by keeping ourselves shut out from Nature
We sorely miss her sights, sounds and workings
Which impart us practical moral lessons of life.
Nature—the nurse, guide and guardian of man
Lays the foundations of our piety and virtue.
Her open book offers infinite knowledge and wisdom
And enkindles our aesthetic, ethical and spiritual values
Which are integral to the success and greatness of life.
Nature's benign grace looks upon the vast world.
Smiles in sunshine, laughs in flowers and radiates joy,
In her field (world) are sown the seeds of good deeds
Which grow into the flowering trees of virtue and beauty
And truth, love, kindness and service to man kind.
But the imbalance between Nature and Man
Has made him perpetually hungry after happiness.
He forgets that all mundane, material glories fade
And all proud titles vanish, all physical power fails.
Nature's spirit manifests itself in various ways
And reflects itself in the sublime cosmic order.
Our Self's true relation to the transient world
Is like the glistening dew-drop on a lotus leaf
Which touches it, but, in no way, adheres to it.
The Soul—our life's essence and anchor of faith

Summons us to the ineffable, empyrean realm
 Which is our cherished goal, haven and home
 And lies beyond the flux of phenomenal world.
 Our Soul calls us to the boundless, divine bliss
 That ever was, is, and shall ever be in existence.
 For Time's wheel may be slow or fast, may move or
 stop
 But the Potter (God) and clay (soul) shall always
 endure.
 And the supreme fulfilment of human destiny is
 attainable
 By the perfect union of the Ephemeral and the Eternal.



The essential point for all of you to ponder is that time is flying away. Days turn into weeks, weeks into months, months into years. Day by day our lifespan decreases; various distractions take our mind away from the Goal. How do you expect or hope that your life will be crowned with God-realisation, illumination, liberation, bliss, peace, perfection? How do you expect?

It is only possible when one thinks ceaselessly of God and God alone, when one thinks of God alone to the exclusion of all other thoughts other than God. To such a person there is not only the possibility, we may almost say (taking into consideration the factor of God's grace) that there is the certainty of attaining God-experience in this very life, even now and here.

—Swami Chidananda

Happiness will come only by spiritual co-operation, when all men begin to feel for other's necessities as for their own and to work for others as earnestly as for self.

It is Always Good to Give

—Swami Akhandananda

To give food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, medicine to the sick, homes for the homeless—this is the duty of the wealthy.

However, some people prefer to give neither food, nor anything else, to anyone. Therefore, they begin to hoard their wealth, fearing they may become beggars themselves. The wealth they hoard does not help them. In addition, my brother, it is simply a false vanity to believe that we are giving. The truth is, that He who gave us this body, is the one who gives the food, too. Do not waste time thinking about their future; think about your own future. Think about who you hoard your wealth for. It will serve neither you nor your children, because they, too, will learn to hoard wealth the way you do. Oh-yes! Here, in Bombay, there was a *Setha* (a rich man). He never gave away anything, saying that he would do charity when he grew old. He never gave anything when he was middle aged. Then he became too old to do anything at all. As he lay dying, he told his son, “Son, I couldn’t do charity while I was alive, but you please do charity on my behalf”. Now, the son inherited the wealth. He got ten lakhs but did not give away even one paisa in charity.

Actually,

श्रद्धया देयम्। अश्रद्धया देयम्। श्रिया देयम्। हिया देयम्। भिया देयम्। संविदा देयम्।

“Give if you have faith, give even if you do not have faith. Give out of shame, give out of fear, give knowingly, give unknowingly, but give anyhow.”

Give without fail. If you do not give, the accumulated wealth will bring gambling into your home. Those sitting here, who think they are great people, may make a note of this in their diaries. Those who believe only in hoarding wealth will begin to gamble, drink, and die mentally unbalanced. Women of loose morals will enter their homes, immoral menfolk will enter their homes, lawyers will come into their lives, and there will be lawsuits. Someone told me that they spend Rs. 30 Lakhs annually on lawyers! Dear God! Reflect a little, and calculate how much you spend on doctors, on going to the club, and the cinema. Calculate the total. Those who merely accumulate wealth will have gambling, drinking, womanizing, quarrels, lawsuits and doctors. There would be many millionaires present here today, even multimillionaires. I ask you this question in full view of the public. You may have ten million rupees in your house, but do you have peace in your heart? Alternatively, do you feel a lack of peace and satisfaction? If your lives are full of sorrow and unrest, if you are burning with anguish and tensions, if you are seething with frustrated rage, then what is all your wealth worth? Oh—give in charity, and enjoy the joy of using this wealth for doing good.

Nārāyaṇa, I saw in one home that the man drank a lot, and the day came when he drank so much that he became unconscious. The Doctor came and examined him. Then he phoned me and said, “Swāmījī, please come and convince him that if he doesn’t listen to us, and continues to drink, he will die.” He did not listen. He had to be admitted to Bombay Hospital. His liver was enlarged and the stomach was bloated. He died in the hospital. He had two sons. Both died due to too much alcohol. What was the use of their wealth? I can even tell you their name, but their family members would not like it.

Therefore, my brother, if you do not give a beneficial outlet to your wealth when your wealth increases, well then, only gambling, drinking, doctors, quarrels, sorrow and lack of peace will increase in your home. I know of not one, but thousands of examples. You may not admit it to me, but place your hand on your heart, and examine truthfully, whether you are really at peace. There is so much of wealth, cars, luxurious homes, and ostentation in your life outwardly. So much of false appearances, yet so much sorrow within. The son is disobedient—says he will marry a prostitute. Such is the true condition. So, do not find fault with those who give. Find fault where people refuse to give. If you are determined to be critical, be critical of those who wish to spend only on themselves, and give nothing to others. Do not criticise those who give! Even if they give to beggars, at least they have the habit of giving! They are good people.



Though all exalted beings belong to God, there is one thing God hasn't—our love. When He created us, He did have something to attain, and that is our love. We can withhold that love, or give it to Him. And He will wail endlessly until we are ready to offer our love to Him.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

Those who don't exercise their discriminative faculty are blind, the native wisdom of the same has been eclipsed by ignorance. This is why people suffer.

—*Divine Romance*

Selflessness can Transform Our Life

—Dr. Girish Goyal

(Continued from 777)

Action as Duty—

The other component of selfless action is action itself, which derives from the imperative of duty. This imperative does not derive from selfish considerations, but is disinterested and categorical. It eliminates the influence of personal inclination and implies respect for practical reason, which excludes all motives of the senses, just as it rejects the impetuous claims of egoism.

Niškāma Karma is the dynamic power of duty exalted by inner detachment. It is freedom in action, not freedom from action. As such, it is an expression of deepest religiosity. But whereas the inducements of punishment and reward are indispensable in the Judeo-Christian moral scheme, Aryan spirituality rejects such selfish considerations as something alien to the instincts of our race.

Everyone has a station in life—actually, a core identity—set by birth and blood, and one is called to perform the duties of that station in a disinterested spirit of detachment.

It must be emphasized that selfless action does not suggest unconcern for a given goal or purpose. Indeed, implicit in the very concept is the idea of a cause, or purpose, beyond the interests of the individual, which provides the necessary field for action.

And there can be no higher cause than that embodying the ultimate Will of this universe, which was disclosed anew in modern time by a most extraordinary figure. His

was the highest moral mission; and by his very appearance, he has summoned us to action—to duty.

Sāvitrī Devī referred to the doctrine/practice of selfless action as *Karmayoga*, which she defined in this way:

“*Karmayoga* is one of the teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* not only of the *Gītā*; you get it in National Socialism. I’ll tell you what *Karmayoga* is. *Karmayoga* is: Act with your body for the interest of the universe, according to the scheme of the universe, the divine scheme, and without passion, without any personal attachment or disgust or enthusiasm or anything. Just do it because it’s your duty. Act in the name of duty alone. That’s *Karmayoga*.” (*And Time Rolls On*, Black Sun, Atlanta, 2005, p. 124)

Quoting a Brahmin sage, Sāvitrī Devī went on to remark:

“.....Work for your cause, work for whatever you love. But work in detachment. Try not to feel upset if you are unsuccessful. Try not to feel pride if you are successful. If people blame you or insult you, be indifferent. If they praise you, don’t feel pleased. Feel indifferent. ‘All right, they praised me. ‘Don’t feel exalted if people are praising you.’” (*Ibid.*, 125-126)

Selfish Selflessness—

Is altruism/selflessness possible? Or is everything we choose to do selfish by definition? I think the only plausible answers are: yes and no, respectively. To suggest otherwise would be to rob the words of all meaning.

People sometimes suggest that because we do what we choose, and choose what we want, it follows that we’re ‘selfish’—after all, we’re merely doing what we want to do. But I think what this argument really shows is that ‘doing what you want’ is a poor definition of selfishness. If you want to help others, that isn’t selfish—not according to what I mean by the world, anyway.

Common usage suggests that there is a meaningful distinction to draw here: some acts are selfish and others aren't. When the egoist denies this, it makes me suspect that he is talking about some other concept altogether, and mistakenly using the same word 'selfish' to refer to it. Further, since every act is vacuously 'selfish' (by his definition), I can only think that the concept he has in mind is not a very interesting or useful one.

Benefits of Selflessness—

Conquers Pride—In a true selfless action we are not acting to feed our ego and receive the flattery of the world; we are not acting out of competition or desire to prove our self to others. Selflessness means we act out of a motivation to do the right thing and help others. By definition, selflessness cannot involve inflating our ego, it does exactly the opposite.

Expands our Mind—

When we act only out of selfish motives we bind and limit ourselves. Every action, we calculate how we might benefit; this attitude hinders the intuitive and spontaneous feelings of the heart. When we act through selfless motives we are helping to expand our sense of self and sense of identity. This enables us to get joy from the achievements of others; it enables to get joy from serving others. This outlook on life is the best guard against, jealousy, meanness and vanity.

Your mind's selfishness

Is your all-exclusive individuality.

Your heart's selflessness

Is your all-inclusive universality.

—Śrī Cinmoy

True Friendship—

Friendship and love is not like a bartering service at

an auction. If we wish to love in a selfless way it means we need to identify with others. This is very different love to the human love that demands and expects things in return. Real love and friendship must involve a forgetting of self and a willingness to put others first.

Selflessness is Attractive—

It is ironical that when we work for praise and outer recognition, it proves fleeting and elusive. But, if we are really selfless, our sympathetic actions will definitely be appreciated by others. True selflessness is a quality that we instinctively appreciate in others.

At Last—

For the individual Aryan warrior there can be no promise of success. That, by definition, would rob him of the opportunity for the heroic deed. Without selfless action and the moral freedom it bestows, however, no Aryan victory can be achieved.

What we fight for is the holiest of causes. It is this alone, and the moral obligation which it compels, that should inspire our thoughts and actions. Let us, therefore, heed these words from Chapter 2, Verse 31, of the ancient *Gītā*: “Look to your own duty; do not tremble before it; nothing is better for a warrior than a battle of sacred duty.”

Today our race faces the supreme challenge of the ages, beside which our own mortal existence and all selfish pursuits are of no consequence.

The issue is a simple one: To be or Not to be. Life or death for our kind? Are we worthy of life on this Earth, or do we deserve extinction and oblivion?

The subjective means given to us for deciding the issue and determining our worthiness is struggle. Struggle does not necessarily guarantee success; but without it, no victory is possible. And the summons to struggle is called—duty.

The struggle before us is one of protraction extending over decades and generations. It cannot be sustained by ephemeral passions or the whims of the moment, but only by focused and unrelenting Will which is unaffected by the vagaries of success and setback.

Therefore, let us cultivate the *Yoga* of struggle. Through the practice of selfless action, we achieve what Sāvitrī Devī spoke of fondly as efficiency. It is this efficiency of all those working in concert for the common cause which is the prerequisite for victory.

It shall be. The Will shall triumph. It shall triumph, because it is eternal and all-powerful. The only question is whether we ourselves—as individuals—choose to become instruments of this Will, and so become part of a higher destiny.

A New order awaits. Therefore, obey the inner law. Do your duty. Let your life become one with the Cause of the greater whole. That, and that alone.



People talk a great deal about making themselves healthy, about healing others etc., but please waive aside all selfish methods and motives which keep you finite. All desire is love, all desire is personal love, all desire is attachment. Throw it off and you are Purity itself. If you gain Purity then your body is bound to be healthy. Your intellect is bound to be perfection itself, if you realize this Purity which *Vedānta* preaches. This Purity is the real, true renunciation so frequently preached by *Vedānta*.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Equanimity about People

—*Swami Tejomayananda*

We need equanimity to live with people. The *Gītā* says (VI. 9), “He, who is same to the good-hearted, friends, enemies, the indifferent, the neutral, the hateful, relatives, the righteous and the unrighteous excels.”

We categorise people based on their relationship with us, and our relationship with them. A person may be our well-wisher, another may be our intimate friend, yet another an enemy. One may be neutral or indifferent, another hateful for no reason, yet another an enemy. Remember, a person may be friendly to me, but inimical to someone else. I may also be friendly to someone and neutral with respect to someone else. Taking myself as the reference point, I need to live with all types of people. They may be close relatives or mere acquaintances. Living with near and dear ones is the most difficult. Initially, when I heard Jesus Christ’s saying ‘Love thy neighbour’, I thought that it was a limited vision and should have said ‘Love all beings’ but later, I realized that he was right, because loving all beings is easy, but loving our neighbour or a person close to us is indeed difficult. If someone tells me that a man in Timbuctoo has been criticizing me, it does not affect me at all, but if someone tells me that a disciple of mine is saying negative things about me, I will be keen to know who it is, and it will affect me.

The *Gītā* advises us to have equanimity (*Samatā*) with respect to people. There are two kinds of people—those who have difficulties and those who are difficult. We have to

live with them, learn to accept every individual per se, without agonising over why that person is the way he or she is. For instance, we see various types of trees, plants, flowers and fruits in a garden and accept them as they are. We do not say that the apple should be like a mango, a mango like an orange and so on. We accept the mango as it is, the orange as it is and the lemon as it is. We do not complain about the sourness of the lemon and insist that it should be sweet like a mango. Similarly with vegetables—the bitter gourd is bitter and that is its speciality. We visit a zoo and enjoy seeing all the animals, without saying that a lion should be like a tiger, a tiger should be like a deer and so on. We do not want to see a lion that is tame like a cow. We want the lion to be like a lion, true to its nature. We also know that we can go near a deer, but we can't go near or play with a tiger, a lion or a snake. We don't hate those animals; we just accept them as they are.

We do not complain that fire is hot. Being fire, it is hot; we accept the fact and learn to use it. If we have to live with different types of people, we should know their nature. We will have to understand who is inimical to us and which person is friendly towards us. We should understand it, without beginning to categorise each one as good or bad, or wondering why that person is what he/she is. Based on our knowledge of the persons, we should modulate our relationship with them. If I know that a particular person is dependable, I can entrust him with responsible work, but if I know that he is not dependable, then I should avoid giving him any major work. However, we often entrust such undependable people with our work and set ourselves up for disappointment and frustration. The fault is entirely ours. When a person is rude to us, we react in dismay, 'How can that man be so rude?' But he has

already shown how rude he can be. If we ask him how he could say such a thing, he may well respond, 'I have already said it!'

There is no point in constantly complaining about people. The first step is to accept them as they are. The next step is to learn to relate with them in an appropriate manner. You can scold or correct your child, but not the elders in the family or your boss in the workplace. You can lay rules for the maid in your house, but not in someone else's house.

In one of the houses I visited, I found a poster saying, 'Accept me as I am, do not try to change me.' We want to be accepted by everyone as we are, but we are unable to accept others as they are! There is an oft quote incident in the life of Socrates. His wife was very short-tempered and she never understood his greatness. One day, when he was in the midst of a serious philosophical discussion with a group of people, she rushed in, abused him in a terrible manner and finally brought a bucket of water and poured it over him! He remained quiet and calm. When someone asked him why he did not protest or scold his wife, he smiled and said, "It is nature's law that thunder is followed by a shower." He knew her nature and also knew that she did not understand. He simply accepted her as she was and learnt to put up with her.

In our relationship with people, equanimity (*Samabuddhi*) means acceptance of all. With respect to experiences, it means maintaining our balance of our mind. With respect to objects, it means looking at things as they are, understanding their value and dealing with them accordingly.

Reflect deeply on these thoughts and assimilate them, so that they became useful in your daily life.

Source: *Gītā in Daily Life*

Read and Digest

Evil promises happiness and gives sorrow.

* * *

The human love goes away in a little while, but your romance with God is eternal.

* * *

There are so many imperfections within us to be surmounted! He who becomes master of himself is a real conqueror.

* * *

The conquest of self is the greatest victory.

* * *

You have nothing if you have not God, you have everything if you have God; for He is the Master of the universe.

* * *

Never try to deceive others. A fake rose can never be a real rose. And a rose will shed its fragrance no matter how much it is crushed. So never pretend to be what you are not.

* * *

Unfulfilled desires are the root cause of reincarnation.

* * *

God is for all who will seek Him.

* * *

Good thoughts can be more effective than words.

* * *

Everyday, do something to help another person materially, mentally and spiritually and try to awaken some love to follow the path to God.

Cow: an American View

From time immemorial the Hindus have been vegetarians. From time immemorial the cow has symbolized a religious and moral principle. Is this hard to understand: perhaps it is difficult in these atheistic days to understand how there can be men with religious principles, men who are devoted to God and the higher principles leading to union with Him.

The Hindus consider the cow as a mother. The cow has always symbolized placidity, and Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Supreme Lord, is well known as a Cowherd Boy and a lover of cows. Should all these sentiments be sacrificed? These sentiments have been with the Hindu people over the ages. The Śāstric (Vedic) injunctions, not less than 5,000 years ago, explicitly condemned killing “*Gau Mātā*”, who gives milk to man. In the Śāstras it is stated that there are seven kinds of mothers: (1) the familiar mother, (2) the wife of the *Guru* (teacher), (3) the wife of a Brahman. (4) the queen. (5) the cow. (6) the nurse and (7) the earth. Rather than sacrifice the *Vedas* and religious principles, why not appeal to other countries—such as the United states—that are throwing surplus food away? Why should the people follow the injunctions of people like Mr. Singh, who considers himself a dashing ‘defier’ of traditions? Our duty lies rather in following the scriptures graciously given us by the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees—not following the morally blind and demoniac.

Now that the Britishers are gone, the Indian Government claims to represent the people. Eighty-five per cent of the Indian population is Hindu and considers (or should consider) the cow sacred. How can be Government be said

to represent the people when it sacrifices these important sentiments? It cannot be argued that the cow's meat is needed to keep the people from starving. That argument is fallacious because it does not stand to reason that cow flesh should be offered in place of grains and vegetables and fruits to a hungry vegetarian. When a man asks for bread, you do not offer him a stone. As far as flesh-eaters are concerned, they can eat the flesh of other animals. The meat is not being used to feed hungry people—rather, the cows are being slaughtered to exchange their skins with the Russians for machinery.

Why does the Indian Government, which is supposed to represent the Hindu people, follow the whims of the atheists and the demoniac? Why doesn't it follow instead the example of the great saint and king, Maharaja Parīkṣit. It is related in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* that King Parīkṣit came to the defence of a cow that was being mercilessly beaten by a lower-class man. The Maharaja nearly killed the beater of the cow and chastised him in this way, “You rogue, do you dare beat the innocent cow just because Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are out of sight? You are beating the innocent and therefore deserve to be killed. Oh mother cow, as long as I am living as the ruler and subduer of all envious and cruel men, there is no cause for your crying—any upstart who commits offence by torturing offenceless living beings, even though he be a denizen of heavenly planets, shall be uprooted by me directly.” (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, first canto, 17th chapter).

Why can't the Indian Government follow in the footsteps of Maharaja Parīkṣit?

As an American, I look to Mother India for spiritual inspiration and guidance. I feel that America is sufficiently irreligious and materialistic to commit all offences necessary

in one world. Why should India join it? It saddens me to read about the slaughter of the religious principle in India and I can only take this as a symptom of the general disintegration of God-consciousness in the world. I fear Lord Kṛṣṇa displeasure with India and her Government.

— Howard M. Wheeler, New York (USA)



The central fact of Hinduism, however, is cow-protection. Cow-protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire subhuman world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow-protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow. The way to protect her is to die for her.

—Mahatma Gandhi

The Self is the unassociated pure reality, in whose light the body and the ego shine. On stilling all thoughts the pure consciousness remains.

—Sri Ramana Maharshi

The Goal of Life

—Swami Krishnananda

The purpose of life on earth is the realisation of this stupendous depth of the Being of all beings, without which life becomes a failure. “If one would know it here, then there is the true end of all aspirations. If one would not know it here, then great is the loss for such a person. Knowing it in every particular being, the wise, on departing from this world, become immortal” (*Kena Up.*, II. 5). There is a severe reproach to those who do not attempt at and succeed in the realisation of Truth.

“Godless are those worlds called, with blind darkness covered over, to which, on death, those who are the slayers of the Self go.”

(*Īśa Up.*, 3.)

“He, who departs from this world without knowing that Imperishable Being, is wretched.”

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, III. 8. 10)

The teacher of the *Brahmavidyā* is praised in glowing terms.

“You, truly, are our father, who take us across to the blessed other shore of ignorance.”

(*Praśna Up.* VI. 8.)

The love for the Eternal is the essential passion that burns in the heart of all things. Beings know it not, and so they suffer. When we turn our face away from this one Reality, we open the door to self-imprisonment. No achievement, either on earth or in heaven, no greatness pertaining to the world of name and form, is worth

considering. The love of life is based on the love of the Self.

“Not, verily, for the love of the all is the all dear, but for the love of the Self is the all dear.”

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, II. 4. 5)

All actions are done for the sake of the Self, not for external persons and things. It is not the existence of joy in the object as such that brings pleasure to the individual enjoying it, but the cooling of the fire of craving that is brought about by its contact with a particular object which is specially demanded by that special mode of desire generated in the ego-consciousness. The satiation is caused by a temporary turning back of the mind to the Self. The whole of the happiness of the world is, thus, purely negative, an avoiding of the unpleasant, and not the acquirement of any real, positive joy. This positive bliss is found only in the Self, the root of existence. The bustle of life's activity is a struggle to respond to the cry of the anxious ego which has lost itself in the wilderness of its separation from the Eternal Principle. The grieving self bound by fetters in the prison of life is ransomed by the knowledge of the non-dual nature of Existence.



Karmayoga (the discipline of Action) consists in performing one's duty according to one's caste, stage of life, nature, circumstances according to the ordinance of the scriptures, renouncing attachment to it and desire for its fruit, and remaining equanimous in success and failure.

—*Swami Ramsukhdas*

Gopīs's Sermon to Uddhava

ऊधौ! जोग जोग हम नहीं।

अबला ग्यानसार कहा जानै, कैसे ध्यान धराहीं ॥

ते ये मूँदन नैन कहत हौ, हरिमूरति जिन माहीं।

ऐसी कथा कपटकी मधुकर, हम ते सुनी न जाहीं ॥

स्रवन चीर अरु जटा बँधावहु, ये दुख कौन समाहीं।

चंदन तजि अँग भसम बतावत, बिरह-अनल अति दाहीं ॥

जोगी भरमत जेहि लगि भूले, सो ता है हम पाहीं।

'सूरदास' सो न्यारो न पल-छिल, ज्यों घट ते परछाहीं ॥

O Uddhava, we are not fit to practise *Yoga*. Being women, what do we know of the essence of wisdom; how shall we practise meditation? You ask us to close these eyes—the eyes wherein stays the Form of Hari: Such deceitful talk we are not going to hear, O honey tongued messenger! You ask us to get our ears cleft and twist our locks into clotted hair: who will bear all this pain? You advise us to give up the use of sandal paste and besmear our bodies with ashes, but don't you know we are burning with the fire of separation? He in whose quest the *Yogīs* have strayed and wander still stays with us, says Sūrādāsa, He is never disunited from us, not even for a moment, just as the shadow never leaves the substance.

The Qualities of God

—Dr. V. V. Rampal

Vedānta defines the supreme reality as *Nirguṇa Brahma*, the qualityless Absolute. But most religions and their followers see the reality as the supreme being with qualities like mercy, justice, equality, forgiveness and so on. The reason of these different approaches to Reality lies in intellectual appreciation and emotional attachment. It is easy to consider qualityless Absolute on intellectual terms but it is not possible to attach emotionally with such a reality. For most people, emotional attachment is necessary in order to have devotion to and worship of this reality. One feels grateful to the supreme power for all that it gives to us; to feel obliged for its favours, and for all the help and solace it gives to us in times of difficulty. The *Sākāra* form of reality therefore, is an emotional necessity in order to relate to and feel obliged to the supreme who is seen to be omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. It is the qualities associated with the *Sākāra* form that drive a person to go for devotion and worship and derive solace from being in proximity to that kind and merciful power. One sees that power as an extension of oneself, though at levels that are limitless and infinite in comparison to human qualities.

Most persons do not relate to God at intellectual level, though the path of knowledge is a recognised way of approaching that reality. A large majority likes to be at the receiving end of limitless mercy, kindness, grace and patronage of that reality. *Nirguṇa Brahma* appeals to the

intellectual but it is the *Sākāra Brahma* that is the object of devotion and worship. We like to see a super being helping us, guiding us and providing us the all the amenities that we need for our survival and growth. It is a human trait and there is nothing good or bad about it.

It is often asserted that both intellectual and emotional routes to realisation of God are effective in their own way. Both *Jñāna* and *Bhakti* are recognised paths of self improvement and God-realisation. The requirements for the two paths however, are different; intellect in one and emotion in the other. It is also stated that both paths lead ultimately to the knowledge of self through meditation and concentration on the supreme reality. It is the *Brahma Jñāna*, either through *Brahma Vidyā* or *Bhakti*, which gives salvation to the separated soul. Creating a *Sākāra* form with qualities therefore, serves a great purpose. It enables large masses of emotional nature to reach the same goal that others with high intellect aim at.

It is the qualities of the *Saguna Swarūpa* of Reality that generate *Śraddhā* in the minds of devotees. The qualities assigned to the *Saguna Swarūpa* at once generate deep emotions of respect, wonderment and devotion. The *Saguna* form of *Brahma* is just another side of the *Nirguna Brahma*, but this dual aspect of the same reality is known only to the learned and knowledgeable. For the simple minded emotional being, the *Saguna* and *Sākāra* form of the Almighty is a reality that cannot be shaken off. All the hymns, prayers, invocations and other forms of respectful pleadings arise out of firm faith in the reality of *Saguna* and *Sākāra* form of the 'Infinite and Eternal'.

For the purely intellectual *Brahmavādī*, assigning human-like qualities of mercy, kindness, justice, equality and

forgiveness may seem odd and strange. But in practice, it is a very useful concept to see God as the supreme being endowed with these qualities, a God that is very much part of our life, a God to which we can intimately relate to as human beings.



Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa came for the good of the world. Call him a man, or God, or an Incarnation, just as you please. Accept him each in your own light.

He who will bow before him will be converted into purest gold that very moment. Go with this message from door to door, if you can, my boy, and all your disquietude will be at an end. Never fear—where's the room for fear?—Caring for nothing whatsoever is a part of your life. You have so long spread his name and your character all around, well and good. Now spread them in an organised way. The Lord is with you. Take heart!

Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, you go on spreading love, love that knows no bounds.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

A true seeker is essentially a brother. Brotherhood is hard in the beginning, but sweet later. Brotherhood entails sacrifice on all levels of our being. It also entails graciousness and nobility and, above all, the genuine wish to understand. Understanding is a rare thing in the world. Rarer still is the sincere desire to understand. But all this must be cultivated in one's heart if one is to be a seeker after Divine Love.

—*Swami Chidananda*

Claim Your Birthright

—Swami Chidananda

Homage unto Thee, Thou Infinite One, who has manifested Thyself into the countless names and forms that constitute Your temporary outer appearance! Thou art also the hidden, inner divine essence of all things; the world is pervaded by Thy divinity. Within these innumerable names and forms that Thou hast manifested as Thy outer *Darśana*, Thou abidest as the hidden, inner reality, the one common consciousness uniting all existence into a homogeneous, inner spiritual unity.

The innumerable and diverse forms in which Thou hast manifested Thyself constitute Thy grandeur, Thy beauty, Thy endlessness. We pay homage, we offer worshipful adorations both to Thy manifestation as well as to Thy inner reality, the hidden, one, universal inner essence. We worship Thee as 'सहस्रमूर्तये सहस्रपादाक्षिशिरोरुबाहवे' (innumerable forms, innumerable feet, eyes, heads and hands). We worship Thee also as 'एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः' (God, who is one only, hidden in all beings).

Grant us the supreme privilege and blessedness of recognising Thee in both Thy manifestation as well as the unmanifest essential presence within all Thy diverse and multifarious manifestations. Thus granting us this boon and blessing us, enable us to abide in Thee at all times, either when we contemplate Thee with closed eyes, inturned gaze and inward spiritual vision seeing Thy inner oneness, or when we open our eyes and gaze at Thee in Thy multifarious manifestation.

Either way, help and enable us to ever abide in the consciousness and awareness of Thy being and in the awareness of You being our all-in-all, in whom we live, move and have our being. There is no greater blessedness, for with this recognition, this vision, this awareness, this approach, this view of life, we shall ever abide in Thee. We shall never be away from Thee at any time, at any moment.

This we ask of Thee at this moment: the living of Thy truth that Thou art the one as well as the many, that Thou art the all-pervading, indwelling hidden reality as well as the multifarious, infinite appearances. May we be found worthy of receiving from Thee the gift of this awareness of Thy non-dual absolute form as well as Thy cosmic manifest form. Help us to be worthy of this vision, even as Thou didst help Arjuna to be worthy of Thy vision of the cosmic form by granting him the boon of a divine sight.

Radiant *Ātman*! Prompted by the indwelling Being and induced by *Gurudeva*, we had occasion to mention *Gurudeva*'s oft-repeated concept: "Supreme blessedness is your birthright; divine perfection is your birthright; peace profound, eternal bliss is your birthright; fearlessness and freedom—*Mokṣa*—is your birthright. Why unnecessarily prolong your bondage? Come, come, be a *Yogī*! Strive upon the path of spiritual perfection. Claim your birthright, not in the distant future but today, right now, at this moment!"

It is in this context that we are led to dwell further upon this assertion of *Gurudeva* that Divinity, freedom, liberation and fearlessness, peace and joy are your birthright, not bondage and sorrow, nor restlessness and weeping and wailing. They are superficial, avoidable and unnecessary. It is not what you are meant for; this is not why you have come here.

But then, even though he declared this supreme blessedness to be your birthright, he also asked you to claim it. Even as the divine Master Jesus gave the admonition: “Ask and it shall be given; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you,” so *Gurudeva Swāmī Śivānandajī* said:” Claim your birthright.” We have to claim!

All that is necessary to have this supreme blessedness is already within you. We have to invoke it from within; we have to invoke it, activate it and apply it. Then that which is our birthright will be obtained by us. We shall find it. We shall be given it. And the portals to that blessed state will be thrown wide open to us.

But we should claim. This constitutes spiritual life. This asking, this seeking, this knocking, this claiming, this striving and deserving it, constitutes *Sādhana*, constitutes *Yogābhyāsa*, constitutes practical spiritual life. This constitutes the quintessence of what you are as seekers and *Sādhakas*.

Lord Rāma was Divinity incarnate. The Divine, as all scriptures declare and as all saints reaffirm, is omnipotent, capable of doing anything and everything. Not merely doing, He is also capable of knowing what to do because He is omniscient. And whatever He wants to do anywhere, He can do it because He is everywhere present, omnipresent. As Divinity incarnate, Lord Rāma was present in Lanka by the side of Sītā. He knew exactly what to do if He wanted to bring Her back. He also had the power of transporting Her back in the twinkle of an eye to where He wanted Her. Yet, having come into manifestation, He voluntarily observed the laws of this manifest plane of human existence and strove.

He did *Sāadhanā*. He searched for divine Mother Sītā and kept asking: Did you see Her? Did She come this way?

Will you tell me where I can find Her, Where She is?” With the help of His brother, He searched throughout the jungle regions where He was then living. Then He actively sought the help of the jungle dwellers. He was humble enough to seek their help, and then with great labour He built a bridge, enlisting the help of monkeys, bears and other types of forest dwelling beings. They all exerted together as one, intent upon this one attainment: “We must find Sītā. We must help Rāma to regain Her.” There was a concentrated focusing of all energy towards the one objective and fulfilment of finding Sītā and bringing Her back.

This whole process has to be recreated within the personality and the life of the *Sādhaka* and the seeker. All of our forces—physical, biological, vital, mental, intellectual, moral—should be geared up and brought together and focused upon this one attainment. Our entire, total personality should become completely focused upon this supreme attainment. We should not disdain anything. All our powers—our will, our soul, our heart, our entire spiritual being—must be geared to the great quest and attainment. Harness and bring to bear your total personality potential in this supreme endeavour of *Sādhanā*, *Yoga*, spiritual life, *Abhyāsa*. Then you will be able once again to be enthroned in the palace in Ayodhya. Your quest will be crowned with total success because you brought into active use all the forces at your disposal.

Our individual consciousness has been totally dominated by the five *Karmendriyas* and the five *Jñānendriyas* represented by the ten heads of Rāvaṇa, who has forcibly abducted and taken possession of the individual personality consciousness. You are under the domination of this complex constituted by the ten organs—the senses of action

and the senses of perception of knowledge. That is the Rāvaṇa, and it has to be overcome. We have to harness the energies of our total personality in this overcoming, in this confrontation, in this victory. Contemplate this!

And the harnessing of the total personality is the essence of divine life, for it is an integrated approach of orienting all our physical activities, our mental faculties, our emotional potential and our intellect towards this divine goal, towards Vedantic-realisation, *Ātmajñāna*, *Brahma-Sākṣātkāra*.

And by happy coincidence, the imminent visit of the President of India to this *Āśrama* has brought into focus this nature of your life here. For each of you has been given a badge to wear which has at its centre *Om* the supreme Goal. The whole of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* is centred upon the exposition of the supreme, central Reality as symbolised and indicated by *Om*. And this central, supreme goal and objective, which is your birthright, which you are in your essential nature, and whose divine perfection and wholeness is already within you, inherent in you, has to be attained.

This badge also makes you aware of the manner in which you should utilise your life and everything that constitutes life, in order to attain this goal. For the badge also has on it *Gurudeva's* admonitions Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise. Give up selfishness and focus all the body's activities in *Niṣkāma-Karmayoga*, selfless service of the *Virāṭa*, God in manifestation. Bring to bear all the power, all the potential of your feelings, emotions, sentiments in devotion directed towards the Supreme Reality as *Sākāra Saḡuṇa* Brahma, God who is your father, mother, friend, relative, your wealth and wisdom, your all-in-all, who is your very own. *Tvameva sarvaṁ mama deva deva*—O my

Lord of lords, God of gods, Thou art everything to me. And daily focus your thoughts, your entire vision, your awareness, upon that Great Reality through concentration and meditation. Thus harnessing all your powers—physical, emotional, mental and intellectual—seek to realise. This integrated approach is *Gurudeva's* gift to you—divine life.

Live the divine life. This is what you are expected to do. Let it be etched in your heart. What am I? I am a centre of selflessness and service, of devotion and worship, of concentration and meditation, of aspiration and realisation. This is what my life should be. This is what I constitute. I should apply all the energies of my entire human potential, my human personality complex, in that great direction, to realise and be free.

So, your new badges remind you of your birthright. They draw your mind towards this great truth. God-realisation and divine perfection are your birthright. Fearlessness and freedom are your birthright. Supreme, profound, eternal peace and infinite joy are your birthright. Thus, by diverse ways, the Supreme Being seeks to forcibly attract your attention towards the central purpose of your life, the supreme, spiritual, divine goal of your life. How kind, how gracious, how compassionate, how full of infinite love is the Lord, that *Yena kena prakāreṇa* (by diverse means) He seeks to bring us back into Self-awareness, to wake us up from forgetfulness, to focus our attention upon the purpose of our human existence, to urge us to lead the divine life and attain liberation in this very body, here and now. How compassionate!

How can we say that God has forgotten us, or He has not done His duty towards us? More than duty He has done. He has filled our lives to fullness and overflowing. Our vessel is overflowing with so much grace, compassionate

love, and supreme, divine mercy. He has blessed us. He thus forcibly reminds us: that we are all manifestations; to lead the divine life; to serve, love, meditate and realise; to awake, arise and attain the Goal—to become illumined.

So, even if we forget God, God does not forget us. Even if we turn in another direction and pursue lesser goals, He will not allow us. He forcibly draws our attention towards our supreme goal, our own greatest blessedness. That is God for you. May we recognise His grace and clearly see His love. May we clearly understand how much He is calling: Come, come, *Uttiṣṭhata, Jāgrata, Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ*—O ye children of Immortality, listen, listen, hear, hearken to My call. Arise and come unto Me. Attain the goal and become blessed.

God calls us today as always. If we have eyes to see and ears to hear, we can see that God is calling us every day to the attainment of our highest goal, which is our birthright. Claiming it is the life spiritual. We should apply our time, energy and life towards this great attainment. Then we are wise. Then no one can prevent us from attaining supreme blessedness. For we have lived wisely, acted wisely. We have claimed!



There is no real distinction between the way of renunciation and the way of duty performed. True renunciation and true performance of work are identical, the essence of both being the giving up personal desire.

—C. Rajagopalachari

The ideal of every human life should be to be good, to be happy and to find God. You will never be happy unless you do find God.

Love all Man, Bird and Beast

—*Om Toofani*

Whenever I am in the jungle of loneliness, I am tempted to remember the above immortal words of Coleridge because I have realized within the very short span of my life that it is Love which is the bedrock of the entire edifice of life. It is the fountain of happiness and the spring of pleasure in this strifetorn world. But this love should not be lopsided and only confined to human beings. Instead, it should stand for all the beings on our planet; and, therefore, it follows that the best prayer in the world is to love both man and bird and beast. Merely to pray God without any tinge of love is like a hollow pot or throwing dust in the eyes of God. Shakespeare in Troilus and Cressida says:—

“For ever it was, ever it shall befall,
That love is that all things may mind.”

Colloquially speaking, the popular conception of prayer is somewhat linked up with the ideas of prayer performed in the temple, mosque or in the church. Prayer, according to the general feeling of the people, is a matter of folding hands and bending knees before the gods. People think that when we sit on our *Āsana* and place before us the lovely image of God, whether it is Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva or anyone else, and mutter a few words, we are offering the best of prayers. In this sense prayer consists in reading the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhagavadgītā*, the Bible or the Holy Kuran. There can be no gainsaying the fact that this is not the true kind of prayer. The reason is simple and plain. These

worshippers of God who offer prayers to God in one way and act in a quite different way are doing nothing else but hoodwinking God and themselves. It is about these worshippers and devotees that Arther Helps points out in one of his essays that they discount the value of prayer. To pray for one thing which one does not really need is nothing but a hollow mockery of prayer.

Naturally, the question crops up what is true prayer. The answer comes from Coleridge, who in his 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' points out that the true basis of prayer is love and love is the corner-stone of all that exists in the world. It is honey that can be squeezed from the flower of life by persons who are able to do that. We must love our fellow men as well as birds and beasts. True prayer to God consists in loving the whole creation of God. We can only offer true prayer to God if we have the feeling of love for humanity as well as for animals and birds. That man is the real worshipper of God whose heart goes out in sympathy and devotion, service and love for all forms of life. True prayer consists in the service of humanity and the mute creation of God.

If we study the works of poets, philosophers and great authors, we will find that in one way or other they have revolved round the fact that it is the service of humanity which is the true foundation of life and which is the real fountain of happiness in this world of feuds and vendettas, conflict and passion today. I still remember the poem "Abu Ben Adham", that I happened to read about eight years ago, but which is still as fresh in my garden of mind as a daisy. I admit it carved out a deep impression on the plank of my life and undoubtedly has shaped the path of my life to a great extent. In this poem the poet points out that those who love humanity are loved and liked by God

more than those persons who have no consideration and regard for the sorrows and sufferings of their fellow men. Abu's name headed the list of true devotees of God because he loved men. Similarly we have been taught by all the great religions of the world that true service of God lies in serving humanity. In Christianity we have one of the commandments of the Lord: "Love thy neighbour as thyself". Christ was never tired of preaching that the food and drink offered to the needy were but offered to God. He himself sacrificed his life for the service of the poor and the afflicted. Service of humanity can be performed in several ways. First of all we must have feelings of sympathy and pity for all human beings. Secondly we should give charity to the crippled and maimed in society. Thirdly, if we are opulent, we can open hospitals, where the maimed and crippled, the diseased and sufferers may be given free treatment. Fourthly, if we could save people from the traps of the cunning and hypocrites in society, we shall be rendering them great service. Fifthly, we can serve humanity by educating illiterate people, i.e., we can bring them to the path of light from the darkness that envelops their souls. Last but not the least, we can point out that all social reformers, who have dedicated their lives to the cause of reforming society and freeing it from sins and vices, persons like Mahātmā Gāndhī, Swāmī Vivekānanda, Swāmī Dayānanda etc., are the true servants of humanity. These are some of the ways in which we can hold out our hand for the service of humanity though in any case these cannot be confined in a water-tight compartment. Every man has his own angle of serving, humanity and he is fully justified in doing so. I have only endeavoured to give out my own ideas about it.

Now, next to the service of humanity, comes the

question of service to animal—birds and beasts. To love animals and beasts has no less importance than to love humanity. It is as great a form of worship and prayer as service to and love for human beings. We should recognize that birds, beasts and men are the creation of one mighty God. As Browning says,

“We and they are one family here.”

We should have a tender and soft heart for animals and their sufferings. We should save them from tyranny and cruelty. We should not tolerate the sight of birds and animals being ill-treated by human beings. As far as possible we should feed birds and beasts and provide them shelter where they stand in need of shelter. And then those who are able to extend a sympathetic treatment to birds and animals are the true worshippers of God. They perform the right kind of prayer to the Almighty God.



Strike the iron while it is hot. Idleness won't do. Throw overboard all idea of jealousy and egotism, once for all. Come on to the practical field with tremendous energy; to work, in the fullness of strength! As to the rest, the Lord will point out the way. The whole world will be deluged by a tidal wave. Work, work, work—let this be your motto. I cannot see anything else. There is no end of work here—I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will find its way, there it will fructify—“अद्य वा अब्दशतान्ते वा—be it today, or in a hundred years.” You must work in sympathy with all, then only it will lead to quick results.

—Swami Vivekananda

Pride is the Greatest Barrier to Wisdom

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

The experiences of my life have intensified my conviction that human pride is the greatest barrier to wisdom. Egotistical pride must go. It is a blind that prevents our seeing God as the sole Doer, the Director of the Cosmic Drama. You are playing different parts in this cosmic movie-house, and you may not foresee what part will be assigned to you tomorrow. You should be prepared for anything. Such is the law of life. Why sorrow, then, over life's experiences? If you take every happening as you would if you were seeing someone else playing it in a motion picture, you will not grieve. Play your 365 roles each year with an inward smile and with the remembrance that you are only dreaming. Then you will never again be hurt by life.

You have played many roles through many incarnations. But they were all given to entertain you—not to frighten you. Your immortal soul cannot be touched. In the motion picture of life you may cry, you may laugh, you may play many parts, but inwardly you should ever say, "I am Spirit." Great consolation comes from realization of that wisdom.

You cannot expect to wake up from the delusion that earth life is real merely by running away into the forest. You have to play out to the end the part that is given you. Each human being is contributing to the enactment of the motion picture of the cosmos. If you want to be happy you should play out your part with dignity, assurance, and happiness. When you are awake in God He will show you

that you are unchanged, even though you have played countless parts in His earth drama.

Dissociate Yourself from Your Experiences—

Think of it! Of the fifteen hundred million people who have died every hundred years, each one has played a definite part in this cosmic motion picture. In fact, human being has played in addition a separate “home movie,” has own private motion picture. If you were to multiply all the motion picture lives portrayed by those millions of beings, you would not be able to count them. But this show has a purpose: that you learn how to play the various parts of the life movie without identifying your Self with your role. It is important to avoid identification with pain or anger or any kind of mental or physical suffering that comes. The best way to dissociate yourself from your difficulty is to be mentally detached, as if you were merely a spectator, while at the same time seeing a remedy.

Don't expect to attain unalloyed peace and happiness from earthly life. This should be your new attitude: no matter what your experiences are, enjoy them in an objective way, as you would a movie. You have to find true peace and happiness within yourself. Your outer experiences should be only fun. You can convert all of them into miserable ones if you allow your mind to do so. You may have good health and not appreciate it at all. But if you become unwell, then you will appreciate what it is to have health. Show gratitude to God for what He bestows on you, without waiting for reverses to make you grateful.

You are a child immortal. You have come on earth to entertain and to be entertained. This is why life should be a combination of both meditation and activity. If you lose your inner balance, that is just the time when you are vulnerable to worldly suffering. Do not disgrace the

name of God, the One in whose image you are made. Awaken the innate fortitude of the mind by affirming, “No matter what experiences come, they cannot touch me. I am always happy.”

When I look back and compare, I find that life was much simpler at the time we started our first hermitage (in a little mud hut in India that we had rented for one rupee) than it is now, when we have the responsibility of maintaining this large institution. Yet I preserve my mental balance no matter what trials come. Learn to laugh at difficulties by remembering that you are immortal: “Killed many times, I yet live; born many times, I am yet changeless.” Whether you are suffering in this life, or smiling with opulence and power, your consciousness should remain unchanged. If you can accomplish evenmindedness, nothing can ever hurt you. The lives of all great masters show that they have achieved this blessed state.

In order to be able to say with realization that all things are in the mind, you must first develop an inner consciousness of divine peace that remains unruffled by the experiences of this earth. Accept them as you would dreams, and the time will come when you will find that, just by the power of your strong thought, whatever you think will materialize. This is very difficult to do, but it can be done.

A scientist must busy himself with going through several experiments in order to arrive at one fact. But the spiritually developed man is able to perceive the fact without going through a physical process. If you first become one with God, then whatever you think can be materialized. This truth was demonstrated many times by Jesus. He had realized his unity with God.

Noble Advice for Graduates

—V. Anand

In ancient times when celibates (*Brahmacārīs*) after completing their Vedic studies, wished to return to their home, then the *Ācārya* used to give them the following advice.

“Speak the truth. Adhere to and practise *Dharma*. Never forsake *Svādhyāya*. After offering the *Gurudakṣiṇā* to the *Ācārya* enter into the bond of marriage and raise righteous progeny. (Do not cut off the line of progeny). Never deviate from truth at any cost. Never forsake *Dharma*. Never give up noble and auspicious actions. Do not neglect the means of prosperity. Do not neglect the learning and teaching of the *Vedas*. Never relinquish actions (rituals) for propitiating gods and ancestors (manes) like *Yajñas*, *Śrāddha*, *Tarpaṇa* etc. Venerate your mother as a deity; treat your father as a deity. Respect your *Ācārya* as a god. Let your guest be a god unto you. Always do those actions which are faultless. Never commit any despicable deed. Always follow and adopt those conducts of our *Guru* which are noble, good and auspicious.

If and when you meet a *Brāhmaṇa* superior to you entertain him by offering a seat. Whatever you give in charity, always do it with *Śraddhā* and never with *Aśraddhā*. Donate for prosperity (as Lakṣmī, the Goddess of wealth is fickle, she will desert you if you do not dedicate her (wealth) in the service of the Lord). Regarding the gifts to be given as petty donate with a feeling of fear and awe towards God and scriptures. It is proper and good

to donate—endowed with such discrimination do charity. Whenever a doubt crops up in your mind regarding any religious or mundane action, follow the footprints of those high-souled *Brāhmaṇas* (available there) who perform actions sanctioned by the *Vedas*, are even-minded, independent and unbiased (free from compulsion of others), free from anger and of tranquil disposition and who fulfil their duties for the sake of *Dharma* alone. This is the injunction of the *Vedas*, this indeed is their advice. This is their purport and their command. The above-mentioned code of conduct alone should be adopted, adhered to and practised.



Your mental condition may change, you may be in anger, you may have another passion, you may have certain desire, you may think of the body, and you may think of yourself as wicked or spiritual, but all the time you know that these feelings are nothing but different states of your consciousness. It is the background of the spirit or of your personality like the background of the canvas, upon which your personality is painted by the divine hand, you may change the picture, but the canvas will remain always the same. We can realize our true Self which will be more everlasting than the celestial pleasure, and which will be as eternal as Divinity itself.

—*Swami Abhedananda*

“Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven.”

“What availeth it a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul.”

—*Jesus Christ*