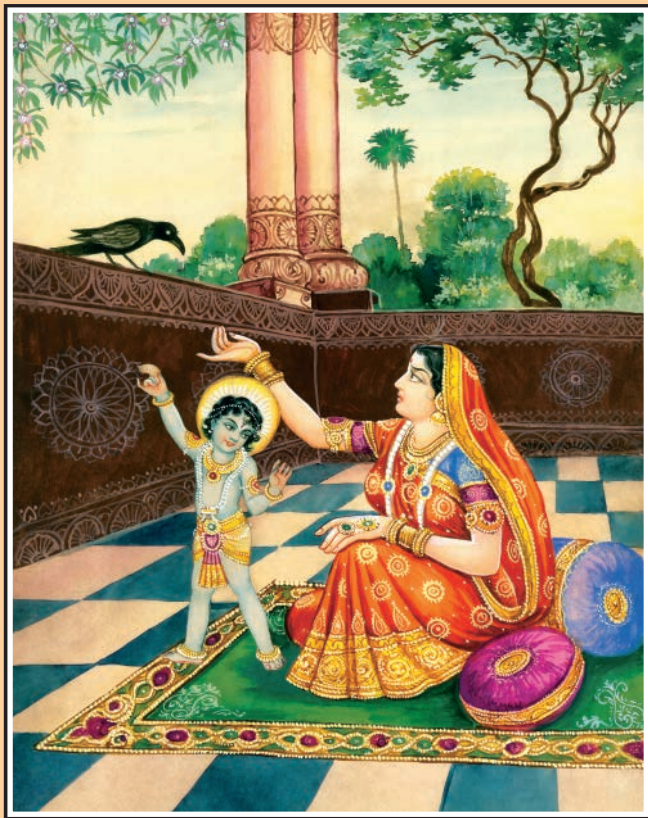


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Sport of Śrī Rāma

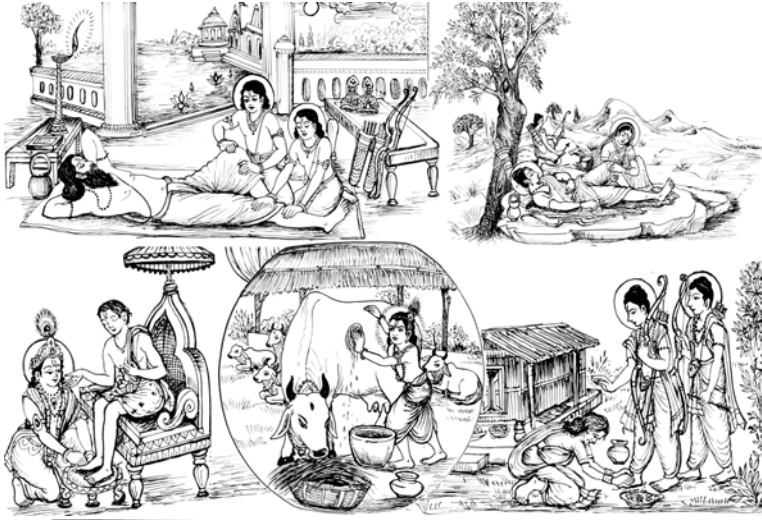
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ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



KALYANA-KALPATARU

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

Vol. 63

May 2018

No. 8

Subhāṣitam

शतं विहाय भोक्तव्यं सहस्रं स्नानमाचरेत् ।

लक्षं विहाय दातव्यं कोटिं त्यक्त्वा हरिं भजेत् ॥

Leaving aside a hundred things one should take his meals, leaving aside a thousand things one must have his bath, letting go a hundred thousand things one must do charity and foregoing a crore of things one must worship God.

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Company Builds Character

—*Brahmalina Sri Jayadayal Goyandka*

Once there was a king. A learned *Brāhmaṇa* visited him. He daily related to the king some stories. That way a number of years passed. One day the king said to the *Brāhmaṇa*—“Sire, a number of years have elapsed since you started relating such stories. Today you related me a story, similar ones you daily relate to me. Resorting to this practice both of us have grown up old. But even today I am what I used to be many years ago. Three to four thousand rupees are spent for this purpose every year. This adversely affects the government treasury. Should this expenditure go waste or it should be of some benefit to me. Both of us waste our time besides the money that is spent for the purpose. Tell me why no spiritual elevation is there? I listen to what you say. You talk of dispassion, devotion and knowledge but in spite of listening to you I neither became a devotee nor an enlightened one, nor virtuous, nor a *Yogī*. Answer decisively within a month. If you fail to give the answer, the recitation of ‘*Kathā*’ will come to a close and the payment of your wages will be stopped, you will have to find out some other means to earning your livelihood. The *Brāhmaṇa* was stunned to hear this. The learned *Brāhmaṇa* began to reflect what reply he should give to the king. When the learned *Brāhmaṇa* was lost in anxious thoughts he met on the way a *Mahātmā*—a great soul in the true sense. He practised dispassion and self-denial and had sense of renunciation at heart. He was indeed a great man of a very high order.

Seeing the sadness on the *Brāhmaṇa*'s face he asked the *Brāhmaṇa* what the matter with him was. The learned *Brāhmaṇa* said—"The fact is that I am going to lose my livelihood after a month. When the *Mahātmā* enquired the reason thereof, he told him that he could not answer the question asked by the king. The question is "Why is it so that no trace of dispassion, knowledge and devotion is visible in him in spite of the fact that I preach to him daily on matters of knowledge, devotion and dispassion and he listens to me." He has warned to stop the expenditure incurred by him in this respect in case I fail to answer his question satisfactorily. The *Mahātmā* said—"Why are you worried about it? I shall answer the question asked for." The learned *Brāhmaṇa* said—"I shall be rather loser if you answer the question. I mean it will be humiliating for me in the sense that I myself could not answer the question; it is answered by this sage. (They would say). The *Mahātmā* said—"No, it won't be humiliating for you. You should inform the king that it was an ordinary matter and even my disciples could answer the question and I shall become one. Since I shall appear as your disciple and answer the question it will not be against your interest, I suppose. The *Brāhmaṇa* accepted that such arrangement will not be prejudicial to his interest. The learned *Brāhmaṇa* approached the king the next day. The king then asked—Sire, are you ready to answer the question? The *Brāhmaṇa* said—"Your Majesty, it is but an ordinary matter, I have a number of disciples and any one can answer the question. The king said—"I want the answer, it matters little whether you answer the question or your disciple. You can bring your disciple tomorrow, if you please." The next day the *Brāhmaṇa* approached the king with the sage and the sage following the *Brāhmaṇa* like a disciple. The king asked

him if he (the sage) was his disciple. He replied politely in the affirmative. The king enquired if he knew what his question was, the *Mahātmā* said—“Yes, I know it. Your question is why is it that although about thirty years have passed in listening to the discourses on the subjects of knowledge, dispassion and devotion, still it had no effect on you? The king said—“That’s it.” The disciple said— I can answer your question provided you hand over to me the entire power and authority for an hour and instruct them to carry out my orders. Just after ascending the throne he ordered that the *Brāhmaṇa* should be tied up with strings. He further ordered that the king too should be tied with strings. In compliance with the order the king was also tied. Both were at a loss to know what was being done to them. Then the *Mahātmā* said to the *Brāhmaṇa* that he had been telling the king legendary stories for a very long time and on its basis he should request the king to get the strings unfastened. The *Brāhmaṇa* requested the king to get his strings unfastened but the king expressed his inability to do so. The *Brāhmaṇa* said that in such a state he himself should do the job. The king said that as he himself was tied he could not unfasten him. Then he requested the king to get the work done through some other means but the king replied that he could not get him unfastened for his order carried no weight and added that his orders are not carried out nor his hands were free to do the job. The *Mahātmā* said to the king that you have listened to the discourses from the *Brāhmaṇa* for so many years, you request the *Brāhmaṇa* to unfasten you. *Brāhmaṇa* replied that he himself was bound. How can he unfasten him? Now the *Mahātmā* asks the king whether his question has been answered or not. The king replied that he did not follow him. He further asked—“Don’t you follow me,

even now? How can one who himself is tied, make others free? If you can't break your own bondage how can you set others free?" The king said—"I do understand you now." Then he asked the *Brāhmaṇa* if he could follow what he had stated and whether he could make others free, when he himself was tied. And when he replied that he could not do so. *Mahātmā* said to the king your Majesty, this *Brāhmaṇa* certainly narrates to you, gives you discourses everyday, but he himself is under bondage. Though he himself is enmeshed in worldly coils and you expect him to set you free from bondage. Had the *Brāhmaṇa* himself attained deliverance he could help you attain deliverance. One cannot attain deliverance only through narrating mythological stories. The parrots and the Mainās go on repeating 'Rādhe Kṛṣṇa'. They do not understand why they repeat 'Rādhe Kṛṣṇa'. When the cat comes up and tries to catch them instead of saying 'Rādhe Kṛṣṇa', as usual they talk like birds. The same is the case with the *Brāhmaṇa*. How can then the *Brāhmaṇa* help you attain deliverance. A person who himself has lost attachment with the world, can bring about a change in others and those who are attached to the world and crave for comforts, luxuries and enjoyments can never be able to bring about deliverance for others. Only such a person can do so who has developed keen dispassion from the world—a person of exalted soul who has developed not only dispassion but also unconcernedness and is possessed of the knowledge of the Supreme Being.



True Humility and Devotion

—*Nityalilalina Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar*

This world is a show full of both good things and bad. The customer gets here whatever he seeks to purchase. Leaving what is bad, be you a customer only for what is good. You will then find only good things exhibited before you. In a mart only such commodities are put on sale for which there may be a demand.

Bear in mind the maxim—the greatest of gain lies in remembrance of God and the greatest of loss lies in forgetting Him. According to this maxim, try as far as possible to carry on all activities of the world simultaneously with the practice of Divine remembrance.

* * *

Do not allow your faith in God to be shaken; on the other hand, let it grow as much as it can. Faith is a great source of strength. Men of faith alone can attain victory over all internal elements and become wholly fearless.

* * *

Do not be afraid of any man; be afraid of your own evil conduct, of the impurities of the heart and of lack of Faith in God. He who has lost Faith in God, know him to have met with his spiritual death.

* * *

When you have rendered any service to anybody, forget it; but when you have received any service from anybody, remember it. Forget when you go through any suffering yourself; but remember when you are yourself the cause of suffering to another. Forget whenever you do any good;

but remember when you are the recipient of good. Forget when any evil is inflicted on you; but remember when you do any evil yourself.

*

*

*

Do not advertise the evils of another and neither discuss them nor remember them. Your supreme welfare lies in this. God is the knower of all hearts. He knows why and under what circumstances, an individual has performed a certain act and it is He who will deal out the fruit of that action. Why do you interfere in the middle and give an exhibition of the bankruptcy of your intellect and through your fancies, whether true or false go on gathering evils in your heart.

□□

The whole *Yoga* of the *Gītā* is that wonderful attitude of oneness with all. And whatever fruits come from the works I do, that will go for the good of all, and not only for my own petty little self.

—*Swami Ranganathananda*

“Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might.”

“Give me the strength to lift my mind above the daily trifles.”

“Give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy will.”

—*Gitanjali by Tagore*

Godly Ego

—*Brahmalina Swami Ramsukhadas*

When it is man's objective to realise the truly divine essence, he practises spiritual discipline with the spiritual ego 'I am an aspirant.' This ego leads him to salvation (*Mukti*). Anything planted in such an ego, stays there always. Therefore, 'I am an aspirant,' such an ego firmly embedded, enables an aspirant to strive regularly to achieve his goal. At the time of practising spiritual discipline he remains an aspirant and he continues to remain so even when he takes worldly actions. Therefore, if he undertakes worldly actions, he does so only as an aspirant. As a greedy person does not waste his money, so does an aspirant not act against his objective.

An aspirant is identified with his spiritual practice and the spiritual practice is identified with the aspirant. Therefore, so long as an aspirant is not deeply absorbed in his spiritual practice, he cannot achieve his goal (God-realisation). So long as a devotee suffers from egoism, he does not get engrossed in his spiritual practice. Only when his ego is destroyed, he gets deeply absorbed in his devotion and ceases to be an aspirant and becomes mere spiritual practice. This spiritual practice is transformed into salvation viz., salvation is attained.

Differences in *Karmayoga*, *Jñānayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga* are also owing to ego. As a devotee progresses in his efforts, so does his ego get eliminated and in turn, any difference in the above three forms of *Yoga* get obliterated. In *Karmayoga*, even with ego, one can practise spiritual

discipline and it gets wiped out on attaining perfection. In *Jñānayoga*, ego gets absorbed in the universal soul (*Brahma*). In *Bhaktiyoga*, the ego is dedicated to God. This means that in *Karmayoga*, the ego is purified, in *Jñānayoga*, it is wiped out and in *Bhaktiyoga*, it is changed. However, the purification of ego, its elimination and its change—these three lead to the same goal.

Karmayoga is the worldly discipline, *Jñānayoga* is spiritual discipline and *Bhaktiyoga* is theistic discipline. In worldly discipline, actionlessness predominates, in the spiritual, the soul predominates and in the theistic form, it is God Who holds dominion. A *Karmayogī*, therefore, sees inaction in his actions. As the *Gītā* says :‘कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः।’ (IV. 18); “He sees inaction in action and action in inaction.” The *Jñānayogī* sees one soul in all living beings :‘सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि।’ (*Gītā* VI. 29); “The *Jñānayogī* sees himself in all beings and all beings within himself.” The *Bhaktiyogī* sees one God in everything and experiences so; ‘यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति।’ (*Gītā* VI. 30); “He sees Me everywhere and sees everything within Me”. “Inaction, soul (*Ātmā*) and God (*Paramātmā*), all the three are the same in reality. In ‘non-action’, there are both—soul and *Paramātmā*, while in ‘soul’ there are non-action and God (*Paramātmā*). In ‘*Paramātmā*’ there are non-action and soul (*Ātmā*). In effect, because of ego, non-action, soul and God appear disparate, but in reality these three are not different.

Having realized non-action, a *Karmayogī* has nothing to do. Having realized the self (*Ātmā*), for a *Jñānayogī*, there remains nothing to be known. On realising God, for a *Bhaktiyogī* nothing remains to be attained.

When for a *Karmayogī* nothing remains to be done, then for him nothing remains to be known and to be attained.

Similarly when for a *Jñānayogī*, nothing remains to be known, then for him nothing remains to be done and to be attained. Similarly having attained God, for a *Bhaktiyogī* nothing remains to be done and to be known. On achieving the goal by these three *Yogas*, the aspirant's self-conscious ego is completely destroyed and the essential element remains which is realized. Then there remain no differences in the practices of these aspirants. An aspirant, having become the spiritual practice, is transformed into the spiritual goal.

Question : Our self is free from ego ('I'ness), how to realize it?

Answer : The self is an entity and there is nothing else besides this entity. Whatever can be seen, heard or understood or the instruments (body, senses, mind and intelligence) by which we sense and understand—all these are perishable and these don't really exist even for a second. All the same, the axiomatic entity never ceases to be nor will be, nor has ever been, nor can be.

In our existence, (in our entity) there is no 'I' and in 'I' there is no existence. 'I'ness undergoes all modifications, while the self is totally free from modifications. The self is naturally untainted. No modifications are at all possible in it. 'I'ness' has a habit of undergoing constant change, while the self ever remains without any change and is eternal. 'न करोति न लिप्यते' (*Gītā* XIII. 31); "It neither acts nor is tainted", 'नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन्' (*Gītā* V. 13); "It neither acts nor causes others to act."

In the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa says :

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

(VII. 4)

"The earth, water, fire, air and ether, the five subtle

elements and mind, intelligence and ego, all eight belong to My inferior (*Aparā*) Nature (*Prakṛti*).” It means all the above eight elements belong to the same class of inferior quality; in other words, whatever is the class of earth, the ego (‘I’ness) also belongs to the same class; like a block of earth, the ego is inert. Just as gross material it is also knowable like matter. Thus the self is separate from our ego.

After awakening from sound sleep one says, ‘I’ had such a comfortable and sound sleep that ‘I’ knew nothing. He did not know anything because his ego was not there, it had become absorbed in ignorance, while the self was there. If the self was not there, then there could be no knowing and who could know? And who could say that after awakening, he did not know anything. The ego was not there, but the self was there. For example, if somebody calls from outside of a house to know if there is a person in and the response may be : ‘there is nobody in.’ It is not true that there was nobody in, as obviously somebody answered the person, so the man who responded was, in any case, there. Similarly in deep (sound) sleep there is some knower, who acknowledges that he slept so soundly that he knew nothing. In effect, in deep sleep, the ego does not persist but the entity of the self persists.

We are the knower of both the presence and absence of ‘I’ness (ego). The ego is lost, but not the soul. Even if the whole world ends, still the self persists. In other words, the self (Existence or Divinity) is our nature, ego (‘I’ness) is not our nature.



The Worship of Devī Bhagavatī

—Swami Sivananda

Devī is synonymous with *Śakti* or the Divine Power that manifests, sustains and transforms the universe as the one unifying force of existence. By *Śakti* or drive we mean all forms of existential power, the power of knowledge, of omniscience. These powers are the glorious attributes of God—you may call Him Viṣṇu or Śiva or as you like. In other words, *Śakti* is the very possibility of the Absolute appearing as many, of God's causing this universe. *Śakti* and *Śākta* are one; the power and the one who possesses the power cannot be separated; God and *Śakti* are like fire and heat of fire.

Devī-worship or *Śakti*-worship is therefore, worship of God's glory, of God's greatness and supremacy. It is adoration of the Almighty. *Devī* is the conscious power of the *Deva*. Let this never be forgotten. The words *Devī Śakti*, etc., and the ideas of the different forms connected with these names are concessions given to the limitations of human knowledge, human comprehension. *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* says in the *Gītā*, "This is only my lower nature, *Śakti*, beyond this is my higher nature, the original *Śakti*, the life principle which sustains this entire universe." The *Upaniṣad* says, "The *Parā Śakti*, the supreme power of this God is heard of in various ways, this power is the nature of God manifesting as knowledge, strength and activity." Truly speaking, all beings of the universe are *Śakti* worshippers, for there is none who does not love and long for power in some form or other. Physicists and

scientists have proved now that everything is pure imperishable energy. This energy is only a form of the divine *Śakti* which exists in every form.

Since *Śakti* cannot be worshipped in its essential nature, it is worshipped as creation, preservation and destruction. *Śakti* in relation to these three functions is Saraswatī, Lakṣmī and *Kālī*. These, as is evident, are not three distinct *Devīs*, but the one formless *Devī* worshipped in three different forms. *Navarātrī* is the festive occasion of the nine-day-worship of Mahā-Kālī, Mahā-Lakṣmī and Mahā-Saraswatī, the Divinity of the universe adored in three ways.

Saraswatī is cosmic intelligence, cosmic consciousness, cosmic knowledge. Worship of Saraswatī is necessary for *Buddhi-Śuddhi* (purity of intellect), *Viveka-Udaya* (dawn of discrimination), *Vicāra-Śakti* (power of enquiry), for *Jñāna* (knowledge), for Self-illumination, Lakṣmī does not mean mere material wealth like gold, cattle, etc. All kinds of prosperity, glory, magnificence, joy, exaltation or greatness come under the grace of Goddess Lakṣmī. Śrī Appaya Dikṣitar calls even final liberation as *Mokṣa Samrājya Lakṣmī*. Hence worship of Lakṣmī means the worship of Divinity, the power that dissolves multiplicity in unity. The worship of *Devī* is therefore, the explanation of the entire process of spiritual *Sādhanā* in all its aspects.



What is Bhakti?

—Dr. Subhas Chandra Mahajan

(Continued from April, page 18)

Six streams of Bhakti: There are six streams of *Bhakti*, all flowing towards the Lord and characteristic of six different types of spiritual attitudes. They are—

1. Śānta Bhakti: In *Śānta Bhakti*, the aspirant practices equanimity and considers all that happens to him, a gift of the Grace of God. Therefore, he is unaffected by success or failure; he is ever grateful for whatever God grants him.

2. Sākhya Bhakti: In *Sākhya Bhakti*, the aspirant takes God as his constant counsellor, confidant companion and mate. He feels the constant presence of the Lord and is never unaware of Him.

3. Dāsya Bhakti: In *Dāsya Bhakti*, the aspirant feels that he is the servant, the instrument of the Lord and revels in the role that God gives him on the stage of life.

4. Vātsalya Bhakti: In *Vātsalya Bhakti*, the aspirant loves the Lord as the mother loves her child with tenderness, anxiety, compassion, vigilance etc.

5. Anurāga Bhakti: In *Anurāga Bhakti*, the aspirant is deeply attached to the manifestation of the Lord, to all emanations of Divinity and he is highly pleased when he gets a chance to serve them.

6. Madhura Bhakti: Since man has as his essential characteristic the quality of Love, he has only to foster it and tend to it so that he might love the Lord to the fullest, that is to say love the Lord's Creation as much as the Lord Himself. Then the tree of life will yield the sweet fruit of *Madhura-Bhakti*. The fruit will have the bitter skin of I-ness

and My-ness, which has to be removed. Certain egoistic desires and attributes might persist as ‘seeds’ which too, have to be removed before the sweet pulp of Love is offered to the Lord. When Rādhā said that she had the vesture of desire and anger, she meant that she was unaffected by them. When she said that she was wearing the five elements contacted by the five senses in five distinct ways—sight, smell, taste, touch and sound—as ‘garland’ round her neck, she meant that she was not contaminated by their contact. Naturally, the Lord knew that she was completely dedicated to Divinity, that hers was *Madhurā Bhakti*, that her *Prema* had no blemish. So, He granted the final consummation of *Bhakti* to *Rādhā*.

Navavidhā Bhakti or Nine Forms of Devotion: There are nine paths of devotion to God set before man in the scriptures. Nine ways of expressing devotion to God and attaining Him have been described by the sages. They are: *Sravaṇam* (listening to God’s glories), *Kīrtanam* (Singing the glories of God), *Viṣṇu Smaraṇam* (ever remembering or contemplating on Viṣṇu), *Pādasevanam* (worshipping Lord’s lotus feet), *Arcanam* (offering daily worship), *Vandanam* (salutation or prostration), *Dāsyam* (servitude or dedicated service), *Sneham* or *Maitrī* of *Sakhyatvam* (friendship) and *Ātmanivedanam* or *Ātmārpaṇam* (total self-surrender). Paths may be different but Goal is one and the same. Follow any path and reach the Goal. Follow at least one form of devotion with pure feelings. Whatever be the form of devotion, the inner feelings or the motive behind devotion is very important. Your inner feelings must always be pure. Of all the nine forms of devotion, *Sneham* or *Sakhyatvam* (friendship) is the most important. When you cultivate this feeling of friendship with God, only then can you reach the last stage of *Ātmanivedanam* (total self-surrender). For this purpose, you

must have a pure heart full of love and devotion. You must have pure and selfless love towards one and all. Such love is not a one-way traffic. Today we are prepared to receive love from all people but are hesitant to share our love with others. It should be a give and take policy. Love begets love. You must also be prepared to share love with others. Love is the gift of God. Immortal *Bhaktas* who have pursued one or other of these forms of devotion have been high-souled persons, some of whom have been great emperors. **Śravaṇam:** King Parikṣit exemplifies how devotion can find the highest expression in merely listening to the glories of the Lord. **Kīrtanam:** Sage Śuka taught how by listening to the exploits of the Lord, singing His glories and constantly reciting His name, the supreme goal of God-realisation can be achieved. Śuka experienced the bliss of union with the *Brahman* by reveling in singing His glories. **Viṣṇusmaraṇam:** Prahlāda is the supreme example of the devotee who always centred his thoughts on Viṣṇu regardless of whether he was subject to pain or pleasure. “*Om Namo Nārāyaṇāya*” was his response to every ordeal. He was ceaselessly repeating the names of the Lord without any concern for the tortures to which he was subjected by the demons deputed by Hiranyakaśipu. He was neither afraid nor distressed. Prahlāda was fully conscious that the body made up of the five elements was perishable while the Indweller was eternal. Hence, he did not care what happened to the body. All his thoughts were ever concentrated on God. **Pādasevanam:** Not all devotees get the opportunity to worship the feet of the Lord. Even when the opportunity is available, most people use it for material purposes. Goddess Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu, is the supreme example of one who dedicated herself totally to the worship of the Lord’s feet, regarding the Feet as the source of the entire creation, holding

them supremely sacred owing to their being washed by *Brahmā* himself, wondering at them as feet which had measured the whole cosmos, and venerating them as all-pervading. **Arcanam**: Emperor Pṛthu stands out as the exemplar of this type of devotion. In all circumstances, Pṛthu adhered to the worship of Hari as his primary occupation. He saw Lord in everything in the universe. Hence, he dedicated every thought, word and deed to the Divine. **Vandanam**: Akrura is an illustrious example of a devotee who sanctified his life by constantly prostrating before the Lord and offering obeisance to Him with humility and purity. “*Vandanam*” does not mean merely folding the palms together and offering salutations. It means offering to the Lord all that the *Jñānendriyas* and *Karmendriyas* (the sense organs of perception and organs of action) do in a spirit of total surrender. Akrura worshipped the Lord in this spirit of total submission to the Divine will. Hence he could get a vision of Viṣṇu everywhere. **Dāsyam**: Hanumān is the great exemplar of this type of devotion. Concentrating on the name of Rāma and rendering service to Rāma were Hanumān’s sole preoccupations all the time. He was no ordinary being. He was a master of the 64 sciences and arts. Rāma described him as a hero of peace, who possessed immense strength and wisdom. In everything he handled, he would examine whether it had Rāma’s name on it. If it was not there, he would discard even a precious gem as a useless piece of stone. While building the bridge to Lanka, Hanumān hurled rocks into the sea uttering the name of Rāma and they rose to the surface. The letters “Rā” and “Ma” were written on separate stones and when they were thrown into the sea they joined together on the surface and thus the bridge was formed. Each hair of Hanumān was echoing the name of Rāma. He was a devotee who

remembered Rāma at all times, whether in joy or sorrow. He had no sense of ego. He had given up all feelings of “Mine” and “Thine.” When the *Rākṣasas* asked him in Lanka who he was, he firmly declared: “I am a *Dāsa* (servant) of the Lord of Kośala (Rāma).” In all situations he described himself as a servant of Rāma. **Sakhyatvam** or **Maitrī**: The great exemplar of this kind of devotion is Arjuna. Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa lived together closely. Arjuna accompanied Kṛṣṇa like a shadow. He experienced innumerable troubles and was subjected to calumny and abuse. But through all these experiences, he did not allow his faith in Kṛṣṇa to waver. He always prayed: “Kṛṣṇa! You are my sole hope and refuge. There is none other to protect me. In this way, looking upon Kṛṣṇa as friend and kinsman, Arjuna relied on Kṛṣṇa for everything Kṛṣṇa, for His part, was even ready to act as Arjuna’s charioteer in battle. Arjuna made Kṛṣṇa the charioteer of his life. Kṛṣṇa thereby acquired the appellation *Pārthasārathī*—the charioteer of *Pārtha* (Arjuna). **Ātmanivedanam**: Emperor Bali, the grandson of *Prahlāda*, was an example of a devotee who completely surrendered to the Lord, offered everything he possessed to Lord and thereby sanctified his life. He was totally dedicated in his devotion to Lord. He was prepared to offer his head and go down to the nether-world. No sacrifice was too great for him to win the Lord’s grace. When his *Guru*, Śukrācārya, advised him to go back on the gift he had promised to *Vāmana*, Bāli rejected the advice, declaring that his life, his body and all that he had, belonged to the Lord. Many high-souled men and great rulers practised these different types of devotion in past and held themselves forth as examples to world. **Nāmasmaraṇa Bhakti is the Best in Kaliyuga**: *Nāma* is the path for saving oneself. *Jayadeva*, *Gaurāṅga*, *Tyāgarāja*, *Tukārāma*, *Kabīra*, *Rāmadāsa*, all these great

Bhaktas attained the Lord through just this one *Nāma*. Even Prahlāda and Dhruva were able to enjoy the *Darśana*, *Sparśana* and *Sambhāṣaṇa* of the Lord through *Nāma* only. **Bhakti is Service to God:** “*Bhakti* is service to Hṛṣikeśa,” it has been said. Service to God has been described as *Bhakti*. The heart of the devotee flows with love of the Lord through constant remembrance and recitation of His name. Out of this stream of love, devotion emerges. One who is nourished by the nectar of *Bhakti* will have no desire for anything else. To be unaffected by joy or sorrow, gain or loss, praise or blame, to remain steadfast and unwavering in faith, is the hallmark of true devotion. Affection, attachment, desire are natural qualities in man. When these qualities are directed towards God and when one is continuously engaged in good deeds, these qualities acquire purity and sacredness. Then a man becomes not only great soul but can become divine. The devotee is ever conscious that the universe is a manifestation of the Divine and is permeated by the Divine. His life is based on the recognition of the immanence of God in everything. This state of mind is called “*Prema Advaitam*” (unity in love). Through this love the devotee experiences his oneness with the Divine. Enjoying the bliss of this experience, the devotee does not even desire *Mokṣa*. Unremitting love of Lord is everything for him. Such devotion is known as “*Ananya Bhakti*” (Total devotion to one and one only).

Bhakti is Fifth Puruṣārtha: *Bhakti* indicates that man needs, in addition to the four *Puruṣārthas* (*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*)—a fifth object, devotion to God. There is no need to bemoan the fact that one has not been able to perform the prescribed rites or forms of worship. “*Parama Bhakti*” (supreme devotion to the Divine) encompasses within itself all meritorious qualities.

Contemplating Incessantly Upon God is True Bhakti: *Bhakti* does not consist in wearing *Kasāya* cloth, the organisation of *Utsavas*, the performance of *Yajñas*, the shaving of hair, the carrying of *Kamaṇḍalu* or *Daṇḍa*, the matting of the hair etc. With a pure *Anthah-Karaṇa*, uninterruptedly contemplating on God, feeling that everything is the Lord's creation. Developing attachment to persons and possessions is the cause of all sorrow. By reducing attachments and developing love for God, one can reduce misery and experience more happiness. The more one loves God, the more the bliss one experiences. Men are plunged in misery because they hanker after the physical instead of yearning for God. If men transform their desire for material objects into the desire for the Supreme, they will enjoy immense happiness. All that is necessary is to see the Divine in everything. This is true devotion. Work will then turn into worship and every act rendered holy.

Impossible to Demarcate what Exactly Bhakti is and what is not: It is impossible for anyone to demarcate what exactly *Bhakti* is and what is not. *Bhakti* has infinite facets. Only pure, tender, tolerant, calm and loving souls, the very cream of *Sadhus* (holy men), the *Hamsas* (realised persons) sporting ever in the company of kindred *Bhaktas*, can understand its purity and depth. Others will find it as difficult to discover *Bhakti* in a person as discovering softness in a rock or coldness in fire or sweetness in *Nīma*. *Bhakta* holds Lord dearer to him than life; and Lord too is attached to him in equal measure.

Man should turn Godwards from His Early Age: Today man is wasting his youth by misusing his senses. He is seeing and listening to unsacred things and indulging in talking ill of others. Right from early age you should develop devotion to God. It will be of immense help in

old age if you undertake spiritual *Sāadhanā* right from your childhood—It is impossible to think of God in your old age, if you squander your precious time in worldly matters in the early stages of your life. In old age, when you cannot see properly, when there are wrinkles on your face, when your hair turns grey, when children start making fun of you calling you a decrepit monkey and when your limbs start shivering, how do you expect to think of God? From early age, man should contemplate on God and win Divine grace.



So many doubt heaven because they do not see it. Yet they do not doubt the breeze simply because it is unseen. It is known by its sound and sensation on the skin and the motion in the leaves and other objects. The whole universe lives, moves, breathes because of the invisible presence of God in the heavenly forces behind matter.

—*The Second Coming of Christ*

The human life is a rare opportunity bestowed upon the human being by the merciful God. This is not for sense-enjoyments. This is blessed only to free oneself from the cycle of deaths and rebirths and attain God-realization.

—*Editor*

Tantra Sādhanā

—Swami Krishnananda

There is a technique of meditation prescribed in another section of the scripture known as *Tantra Śāstra*, a technology of approaching divinity in a different manner than the way generally known to people. It is not necessary to look at an object in order to concentrate upon it. The need to have a physically visual object in front is the lowest kind of requirement. You can be immensely happy by the very thought of the object, mentally and generate the same sensations inside, even when the object is not present physically.

What happens to you is that even when you look at an object physically, the sensations that you feel inside are psychological; physically you are getting nothing from the object. The beloved object that is physically in front of the eye does not enter one's body. It is standing outside. The object of affection, even if it is sitting on one's lap, is really outside oneself. It has not entered one's being. How, then, can one feel happy?

The happiness is a reaction set up by the nervous system inside. It is purely internal, to bring about which situation, the object outside acts as an instrument. The object of affection, physically, is just an instrument. It cannot bring satisfaction, really. The satisfaction is in the nervous titillation, mental operation, psychological acceptance.

If this is the case borne in mind, you do not need any physical object in front of you to be happy inside. Even if you want an object of that kind, you can close your eyes and feel its presence and the same situation will be

summoned from within. You will burst forth through your nervous system, in your mind and you will feel the same sensations as you felt apparently by the perception of the physical object, externally.

Later on, even the thought of the object will not be necessary. There is a higher kind of concentration, namely, that the substantiality of that object is inseparable from the substantiality of oneself. The happiness that you feel in the presence of a beloved object is due to the *Ātmā* manifesting itself thereby. We are confused in our mind when we feel that an object of sense is giving us satisfaction. What is actually happening is that when you are desiring an object, the mind goes out of the Self. You are out of yourself at the time of your love for anything outside. You have transferred yourself into the object. As you are out of yourself, you are unhappy: you have lost yourself. The identity of yourself has been broken by the separation of your so-called self a transferring it to the object outside. Then you are not in you; you are somewhere else, in that object. You can be even in London, though physically you are sitting in India, by the transference of mind to that object which is there.

The unhappiness of the mind is caused by the separation of the object from the *Ātmā*. When you obtain the object, when the object comes near, the desire diminishes due to the prospect of having it. When it is nearer and nearer, the joy goes on increasing further and further—“Oh I am getting it!” When it is actually under one’s possession, physically, it is immense joy. The mind ceases to go outside itself at that time. It settles in its own root. You plant yourself in yourself due to the feeling of the mind that it need not any more think of the object and it need not go out of itself. That is why you are feeling happiness when

the object seems to be under your possession. The happiness has not come from the object, it has come from yourself only!

So, be careful in the choice of your object. This object of your meditation should be satisfying to you in every way, not merely as a titillating medium as a sense object, but as a total blessing that is going to be poured upon you.

Don't you think that you are meditating on the object because it is representing God Himself? Do you consider God as a sense object? He is the All. Everywhere He is legs and feet. everywhere eyes, everywhere *Viśvarūpa*, the Universal. How will you consider Him as a sense object? That great Being, the cosmic inclusiveness, was concentrated in one person called Kṛṣṇa, which the *Gopīs* were chasing. Why were they after this one person? He was capable of manifesting himself as all persons because the concentrated whole was charged with the force of the whole, which attracted their attention. When anybody loves you, they feel for the time being that you are all things; otherwise, nobody can really love. If you are only 'something', the love also will be 'something' only. It cannot be the all-consuming thing that it really is.

When you choose the object of your meditation, be sure that you can persuade yourself to pour your affection on it. Don't be under the impression that you are only concocting some feeling which is not genuine. You can summon anything if your mind is really concentrated on it. Jñāneśvara Mahārāja concentrated on a wall; he just touched it and it started moving. The great Bharadvāja *Ṛṣi*, who gave a grand reception to Bharata when he went to the forest in search of Rāma, summoned the gods in heaven by uttering *Mantras* in his *Yajñśālā* and the divinities started raining down on earth.

Your feeling, your love, your longing for God in the form of the object that you have chosen, is not an imagination of your mind. It is a truth that has been manifested before you in the form of this little ‘occasion’ of the cosmic power. Your heart is meditating, not merely your brain or sense organs. The meditating consciousness is the soul of yourself. If you want the soul of the object to speak to you and delight you, then your soul has to rise up to the occasion and concentrate itself on the soul of the thing looking like an object.

Who is meditating? Your soul is meditating on the soul of the object. When I love you, I love your soul, the greatness, grandeur, beauty of your depth of personality and not your physical feature. And when I love you, it is not my body that loves you, nor my mind. My whole being, the root, itself, is poured forth on your centrality. The deepest root of mine is loving the deepest root in you. Soul loves soul. “Nobody loves anything except the soul,” says Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

The soul of the meditator is pouring itself forth upon the soul of the object, so that it may become united with the All-Soul of the universe. Such is the background which you need in your mind before you take to *Yoga* practice in the form of meditation.



Of course, it is better to suppress the desire to kill than to commit the actual act; but the greater achievement is to remain free from evil thoughts, which are the basic cause of evil actions.

Be Grateful to God

—*Chilukuri Venkateswarlu*

The creation of God is wonderful,
His architecture is skilful,
His anticipation is graceful.

Each one of His creations is purposeful,
Each one is, to others, helpful,
Each one is for one and all, resourceful.

Human beings are thoughtful,
The nature keeps them blissful,
The whole universe moulds them truthful.

God's grace is delightful,
His creations are meaningful,
His expectations are to be fruitful.

Human beings must be grateful,
To the creator who guides to be successful,
In leading life, in the universe, trustful.



Freedom from Evil Impulses

—Swami Akhandananda

Look, now, don't ever get caught in the lies of any 'miracle man.' The Lord does not drop ashes or honey. All these miracles, where things appear, are done by ghosts and spirits, not by God. And anyone who gets entangled in the *Riddhi-Siddhi* (super-natural powers) miracles, turns his back to God.

प्रसङ्गमजरं पाशमात्मनः कवयो विदुः ।
स एव साधुषु कृतो मोक्षद्वारमपावृतम् ॥

(*Bhāgavata* III. 25. 20)

This means that attachments are bonds from which you can never free yourself. But, if you get attached to a *Mahātmā*, your attachments will become an open gateway to liberation. So, if there is any attachment in this world, it should be for *Satsaṅga*, is the company of the Saints, the Enlightened Masters, who take us closer to God.

Imagine there is a man who looks only at the car, not its machinery; and there is another man who notices the owner and the driver, but not the machinery and there is a third man who sees both the machinery and the car, but not the driver. The body, too, is a car, made up of many parts.

Whatever is made up of several parts, is for somebody else's use. For instance, a bullock-cart, a railway, an automobile and an airplane; all these are for others to ride upon. Similarly your body is your cradle, your suit and your car, in which you sit and ride. So see, sometimes it happens that the hands can't move, but you exist. Your

legs can't move, but you exist. Your eyes can't see, but you exist. You may get paralyzed, but you exist. Utilize your ability to analyze and discriminate. Take the support of your thinking abilities.

You have, at present, lost your ability to think analytically. You take the support of God knows who—at times, a deity or you shut your eyes and try *Yoga* (meditation) and sometimes, something altogether different. Your identification with your body will be increased even if you stay stark naked, if you lack proper thoughts and discrimination and even if you dress very gorgeously. Whether you roll in the dust or sit on a throne, this identification persists, whatever you do, unless and until you have the correct perspective, which comes from *Viveka* (analytic thought).

Viveka means to separate whatever has got mixed up. When grains of gold are found in sand, they are sifted and separated. Your mixing up of your real Self, with your body, needs to be sifted and separated by the process of analytic thinking and discrimination. This ability is obtained by keeping the company of the great thinkers who have cultivated this ability. So—you may undertake severe penance or rituals of worship or close your eyes in meditation or do the breathing exercises of *Prāṇāyāma*—you will be unable to develop *Vicāra* (analytic thought) or *Viveka* (discrimination) till you get *Satsaṅga* (listening to discourses by enlightened sages).

Just yesterday, a gentleman was speaking about how we are instinctively revolted when someone asks us to speak an untruth. Why does that happen? This happens because our nature, the nature of our real Self, our soul, is Truth. It is natural to accept only that, which is true to our nature, true to our real Self. So, our conscience instantly rejects anything alien to our nature. The *Ātmā* (soul), has

tremendous forbearance. Whether it is called the *Kartā* (doer), *Bhoktā* (enjoyer), *Pāpī* (sinner), *Puṇyātmā* (pious), the *Ātmā* says nothing. It never abandons anyone, not even the worst sinner. The *Ātman* stays with them in the form of their *Ātman* (individual soul). This is why the *Ātman* is called '*Kāruṇika*' (the compassionate).

So, Nārāyaṇa give *Viveka* and *Vicāra* a place in your life and keep the company of those who possess these qualities. The effect of this will be a gradual reduction of your attachment to your body and your tendency to identify with it. The other part is to avoid succumbing to impulsive action. That means, don't just speak impulsively, don't just do whatever you feel like doing, worship any Deity you suddenly fancy or undertake work which appears attractive. Succumbing to ill-considered impulses will only reduce your strength of mind and your weakness will overcome you one day and destroy you. A person should never, therefore, submit to ill-considered inclinations.

I was telling you, yesterday, how Rāmājī told Vaśiṣṭha, that people had not eaten for the past two days and that the third day, too, was coming to a close without their having had even water. So, you see, Rāmājī's purport was left incomplete. He placed his problem before his *Guru* Vaśiṣṭha, but refrained from making any suggestions. He did not suggest that Vaśiṣṭha should tell the people to eat and drink. And so—Sumitrājī looked at Kauśalyājī. Kauśalyājī was talking to the Queen of Mithila, at Citrakoot, but she did not say outright, that it was very late. She said that two hours of the night had already passed. So, these are the ways of goodwill, cultured ways of speaking.

So, don't load others with your ideas, don't let your preferences be paramount. Make your heart obedient to your better sense. Don't consider yourself superior to the

other, but let your behaviour indicate that you consider yourself the junior. Our culture is of a high level. If it enters our lives, it can detach us from the impression of being merely a physical body. Do *Satsaṅga*. It is impossible to stop being *Manomukhī*, without having *Satsaṅga* and nor can we rise above the attachment to our body.



God is your own; dearer than the dearest, nearer than the nearest, more loving than all things that we love. If you would but treat Him that way! If you would but lift one hand, He would drop two hands to lift you up. If you are unceasing in grasping for the hand of spirit, He will come without fail.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

O God! We are Thine. Naughty or good, we are Thy children. Thou art bound by this love to manifest and express Thyself unto us. Than must come to us. We are ever free in Thee.

Fate—What it is

—S. Kothandaraman

(Continued from April, page 59)

With certain amount of firmness many are of the view that the events are not created by God or by Fate. Neither of them causes the events to happen. Events invariably are self made, mostly involuntarily by us. Situations are created by us leading to the events and we fall in to it and lament. But then why and by what, are we forced to create such situations? As many believe, may be the situations for causing the events are created by Fate and the events eventually happen, as prewritten. It is merely a conjecture, but there is some force in it and it appears to be the plausible alternative answer to the vexed question.

We all fervently pray God for our wellness and when certain events happen to our detriment, we are left to feel baffled that God did not do anything to prevent such events from happening, but ironically only watching and remaining unconcerned. In such an event we are left with no alternative except to say what is the use of all our prayers, deep faith and devotion? We again have to face the same question, but then why such things are happening to such a devout person? Are we to take it that devoutness, *Bhakti* and faith have nothing to do with the events that happen? Then what determines the events? Are we to understand that God is witnessing the events only because such events are bound to happen as ordained! Or is it that the course of events that occur in ones life, the will of God and Fate has nothing to do with it. If it is prewritten that an event has to happen in one's life, then it will happen, it looks

as though no prayers can undo it. Can this still be called the Fate/*Vidhi*? It boils down to this, may be, prewritten events in one's life, as ordained by God, are faithfully implemented by fate as the controller of events Or may be that what was prewritten by God is Fate/*Karma* itself and get unfolded as events. There is no other way, then how else, to explain this paradoxical situation.

We may look at it from another angle. *Upaniṣads* uniformly rule that *Brahman* (God) is not outside but within you and you have to acquire that knowledge to realize it and when you acquire that knowledge, that you yourself is *Brahman* then your perception of men matters and events will undergo a vast change and thereafter your own mindset that determines good or bad, unconcerned with the events that happen around you. That *Brahman* (God) is only a spectator and a witness to the events in your life. Are we also to be a witness to events that happen around us? Yes if you have reached that level.

Events had happened and will continue to happen not with standing the deep devotion and faith in God. Despite our fervent prayers, when certain events happen, we feel so dejected and blame God for what had happened. Fateful events appear to be much more powerful while affecting the life's of individuals, to the extent of negating even benevolence of God. Many may be right in calling it *Karma*, whatever happens it is the result of one's own *Karma*, may be the past *Janma Karma*. It is one way of explaining the eventful happenings around us. Events always overtake, God's will, caution, safety and security and happen.

It is inexplicable that certain events destined to happen did appear to happen but thwarted by the unseen hand of God by deep faith and *Bhakti*. There are instances abound in the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. We also see the unseen hand

of God in certain events, and certain other the proven events to show the hand of Fate as well. Fate had overtaken even *Avatāras*, when born as humans, though they were free from the cycle of *Karma* based births and deaths. But then, look at the instances that stare at us, acknowledged as Fate by the very *Avatāras*. It looks as though *Karma* is only meant for ordinary people, like us.

(a) When Lord Rāma was about to be crowned as the Crown Prince of Ayodhya, the next morning, little any one much less Rāma knew the impending fatelul events that happened the next morning, a forced unforeseen event; when Vāli, the Vānara king took the second time challenge of his brother Sugrīva, despite the warnings of his wife, Tārā, little he knew the impending danger to his life through an unseen person, another forced unforeseen event; when Sītā was elated at the victory of Rāma and her instant thought of reunion with Him little she knew the ordeal by fire she had to undergo at the command of her long awaited husband, a forced unforeseen event; when Karṇa was brought up by a Charioteer, little he knew that he was born to and abandoned by a Royal princess, again a forced event; when the Dharmic soul Yudhiṣṭhira accepted the challenge of Adharmic Duryodhana, for a game of dice, knowing full well that, in which he is not proficient, little he knew that he would lose everything under the sun including his Self, despite Lord Kṛṣṇa was on his side; all stand out and admitted and acknowledged as the hand work of Fate.

(b) When a Sūtasayer warned Roman Ruler Julius Caesar “Beware of ides of March” and his wife Kulpurnia, warned him not to attend the Senate meeting as she had forewarnings through dreams, he scorned them all and was dragged to the Senate, obviously by Fate, little he knew that, that day

will be the last day in this world, a forced event; the tyrant Hitler invaded St. Petersburg, despite warnings, little he knew that that was his doomsday and his Deutschland dream; Little Mahātmā Gāndhī knew when he left for his 6. p.m. prayer that would not be able to pray but would be felled by an assassins bullet? History is replete with several instances, all of them were acknowledged as the hand work of Fate. Fate had overpowered them all.

(c) There are some instances of course in the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* that despite the events as ordained and prewritten, happening, the same were reversed, because of *Bhakti* and devotion. The episodes of Satyavān and Sāvitrī, Nala and Damayantī and the episode of death-destined 16 year old Mārkaṇḍeya and the Yamadharmā are cases where events happened but were reversed by God. There are several other episodes all relate to *Itihāsa Puruṣas/* saints godly persons. Ordinary devout and pious people in real life do not appear that luckier.

(d) Even Saints and Seers have suffered on account of certain events in their life, because of *Prārabdha*, instances are aplenty.

The result is that Life from birth to death is nothing but experiencing the happening of series of events. Eventless life is not envisaged and there can be no life without events. Events do not just happen; they happen with a cause, every one of them and the cause for such events is one's own *Karma Phalam*, written at the time of birth. When events are prewritten, it is God's Will and when it really happens it is named Fate. Stated differently, the affected individuals look at events as Fate while others as *Prārabdha*. For certain, the cause for the events that affect our life is the *Karma Phalam* and nothing else. To all us, it is the fateful events alone that matters and we are

concerned with. We are governed by the law of *Karma*. It is not Gods Will but *Karma* named as Fate; and *Karma* alone and that is the cause that determines the events in one's life.

In order to avoid fateful events in life, the *Prārabdha* has to be exhausted. It is for the expiation of the *Prārabdha* we have to strive hard. It is said that it is very difficult to exhaust all the *Prārabdhas* in one *Janma*, but there are ways to get them reduced to a large extent in this life itself and certainly by not adding to it by our 'Sañcita' or 'Āgamī' *Karmas*.



If you are tempted by greed, argue with yourself and feel that you are essentially full and all-sufficient, that you do not covet another's wealth. Nothing in this world can allure you. Realize that you are free from all desire, all craving, how then can you entertain greed for worldly possession?

—*Hanumanprasad Poddar*

If you think success, attainment, fulfilment and achievement, you will succeed. Your life will culminate in fulfilment, in glorious achievement, for you have invited it. That is what you deserve and that is what you will receive.

—*Swami Chidananda*

The Great Search for Happiness

—*Swami Chidananda*

Let us make an observation of life. What significant point emerges out of our observation? It is that wherever man exists, activity is also evident. People are running about, everyone bursting with activity! There never seems to be a moment just to pause and reflect. And what is this activity? Let us try to analyse it. Most of this activity is a furious search for happiness, for enjoyment, for pleasure, of different degrees and shades of experience. Simultaneously, man is ceaselessly trying to rid himself of sorrow, pain and suffering. He is trying to avoid all that is unpleasant, painful, sorrowful and grievous and to attain all that is joyous, pleasant, happy and enjoyable. It may be argued that man willingly endures much hardship and discomfort and even makes a great deal of effort to work hard during all the five days of the business week. He accomplishes many difficult tasks, so how could it be right to say that he was trying to avoid unpleasant and painful experience? But then, go deeper and discover the motive of his voluntary struggle! Through all this effort and exertion, man aims to take it easy later on, to cushion himself with comforts and to pension his life with pleasures. All these efforts are directed at the earning of money, for money enables one to obtain greater pleasures.

This should give us an inkling that the true nature of the human soul is bliss. In the state of embodied existence, this true nature of bliss is hampered. There are limitations of the body, limitations of the senses. There are defects

imposed upon us, such as heat and cold, hunger and thirst, discomfort and disease. There are mental afflictions such as sorrow, bereavement and dejection, separation from those whom we love, contact of those whom we dislike or fear, anxiety, disillusionment, jealousy, frustration, etc. All these factors in this embodied state veil our true nature—we are ourselves all-bliss. But, despite all this, we ever seek unconsciously to assert our true hidden higher nature. Thus, the individual exercises his faculties in order to obtain things which are calculated to promote the experience of happiness. Unfortunately he does not get happiness. Why? For a very simple reason. He is searching for something where it is not. He is looking for happiness amidst objects of this universe, which are imperfect, changeful and impermanent. Since imperfection and changeability are the very nature of external objects, they cause in the mind mixed experiences to ensue from their contact. This is the reason why man's efforts invariably end in disillusionment, disappointment and total dissatisfaction. Whenever one object fails to satisfy, man will try another and then another and yet another. Thus, during an entire life, man ceaselessly searches to find happiness in objects, changing from one to another in quick succession in order to find the experience of happiness which will put an end to all sorrow. His life is wasted away. All too soon, he finds that his temporary existence has come to an end. The true purpose of his life has been missed.

The Great ones who have pondered over life and who have delved right into the very depths of outer as well as inner nature have realised through their intense inner effort the nature of the Ultimate Reality—God, that Essence out of which all life has come forth. They have stated in clear and unmistakable terms, “Oh mortals, you cannot find unalloyed perfect happiness and bliss in this imperfect and

limited phenomenal universe. By its very nature it cannot contain that ultimate, transcendental experience. The ultimate state of joy and bliss can be had only within your own self which has as its source the permanent and eternal Self. All the bliss and joy lies within you.” Even this statement could be corrected. Let us say, “This is your very nature.” This does not lie “within you;” but, you are yourself that bliss. Your innermost being, your true self, is essentially ineffable bliss and peace. The rediscovery of that living awareness of bliss is life’s great task. It is the great purpose of your life. This is the goal of life for which we have taken birth on this earth-plane.



Even if everyone were to pray day and night to become as rich as Henry Ford, their prayers cannot be granted because earth is not a place where every body can be a Henry Ford. But everyone can be rich in spirit, for God has given everyone equal power to become like Him.

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

Resolve that you are going to do just what you think you should do and that under no circumstances, are you going to be cowed into doing otherwise by your old bad habits.

—*Man’s Eternal Quest*

Read and Digest

Religion is far more than morality; it is communion with God. If religion loses sight of communion with God, it has failed its duty.

* * *

We must cultivate wisdom and learn through our wisdom to love the beauty of God in all souls and in all things.

* * *

He who is mentally undejected finds God.

* * *

Example speaks louder than words.

* * *

If you better your own life, you will have helped to solve the enigma of this existence for others.

* * *

See the love of God behind all that happens to us.

* * *

The bee seeks only those flowers that yield pure honey. You must be a divine bee, tasting nothing but the sweetness, the goodness of the honey of God.

* * *

He looks for evil, sees evil everywhere. He looks for goodness sees goodness everywhere.

The Student, Who Helped the Cart-Driver

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

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

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

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

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

are you late today? I pardon you today.”

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

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

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

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



Bhaktiyoga is more easy than *Kuṇḍalinīyoga*, *Rājayoga* or *Jñānayoga*. Anyone can practise *Bhaktiyoga*. Anyone can sing the names and glory of the Lord.

—Swami Sivananda

The Essence of Sufi Path of Love: Fragrant, Fresh and Delightful

—*Balkrishna Pawar*

(Continued from April, page 50)

Saint Rabiā- Basrai (717-801)—One earliest Islamic mystics was a woman, Saint Rabiā of Basara, Iraq. As she was orphaned at an early age, she was kidnapped and sold as a slave girl by a wicked man. Her master was cruel, but one night he saw a strong light surrounding the girl like crescent moon and getting frightened, he set her free. She was then living in “*Tajurrud*,” means she preferred solitude without marriage as she was wholly and completely busy in Allah’s meditation graciously, without any hindrance, which she maintained till her end. She has complete faith and followed her all obligatory religious duties called “Farz” and all other religious duties called “Sunnat.” But, she concentrated on her one most divine spiritual aspect i.e. “Her devout love of God.”

She speaks in spiritual witty-repartee supported by mythological humour. While explaining *Gītā* (IX. 22) Dr. S. Rādhākṛṣṇan says “God takes up all the burden and the cases of His devotees.” In his Note 3 of this Verse he says “Rabiā was once asked “Do you love God Almighty?” “Yes” “Do you hate the Devil?” “My Love of God” she replied, “leaves me no leisure to hate the Devil. I saw the Prophet in a dream. He said, “O Rabiā, do you love me? I said O Apostal of God, who does not love Thee, but love of God hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of any other thing remains in my heart.”

In Ramzan Rabiā fasted for seven days without food,

but on 8th days a neighbour brought food to her. While going to fetch water, on return she found that a cat had eaten it all. Now she contending herself with taking water out of tumbler. As she was weak her hand trembled and the tumbler fell and broken. In great discomfort, She said in distress, “What is Thy will?” Divine reply came. “Rabiā, if Thou desire for ephemeral world by possessions and comforts, there is enough to offer you. But remember our one-pointed love and devotion cannot dwell side by side. Decide immediately?” She answered, “I want Love’s pain and yearning for Thee.”

On the eve of death *Munker* and *Nakir*, divine angels, appeared in Rabiā’s dream and asked her “God, who is He for you.” She replied that to tell Him that He has not forgotten infirm and old woman by deputing you. That so far I divinely Loved God and will be loving devotedly forever immaculately holy. She died in 801 and buried in Basara, Iraq.

Amīra Khusru (1254-1325)—The poetry of Amīra Khusru Straddles Hindi, Braj and Persian unravelling layers of meaning and delicate difference in shade of meaning and fleings. His poetry provides to rejoice and meditate on the mystery of life. He composed divine musical poetry with the ulterior reach to ‘truth’. His interest in Indian *Rāgas* hypnotized the blends of Arabic and Persian compositions.

Persian Sufism found India productive area, which they moulded in the philosophy of *Upaniṣads* and *Patañjali Yoga*. The Chisti Sufis in their poems that are ecstatic, observed the *Bhakti* cult along with singing and dancing that developed into Qawwali.

Whether in Sufi riddles, couplets or music, his compositions are deeply rooted in the theme of separation from the Beloved—a metaphor for the divinity within.

‘Tarānā’ of the Hindustani classical music, is a living tribute to his musical genius. As Ṭūṭī-Hind, Song-bird of India, Amīra Khusru’s compositions reflect, the Hindustanī way of life in its infinite variety. Khusru reached out one and all through his poetry and music; inspired by his preceptor Hazrat Nizāmuddīn Auliya (1244-1325), which spread the Sufi message of reaching the divine through love of all. On his Murshad/ Guru’s passing away, he penned one of his most renowned mystical lyrics; “The lovely maiden finally lies on a wreath of flowers, her tresses covering her face/ O Khusru turn back home now, dusk has set in everywhere.” Soon thereafter he passed away.

Mohammad Dārā Śhikoh: was the eldest son of Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal born in Ajmer on 20th March, 1615. When grew up, he got enamoured by reading religious books, spiritualism or delighted poetic profundity of great Sufi Saints: Often hummed: “The moment my being became an ocean/Every bit of me shines. The entire journey of my life became a moment.” Finally he could become a Sufi Saint but not Emperor.

He studied religious books written not only by Islamic thinkers but also by great philosophers of other religions. From *Bhagavadgītā* and *Upaniṣads* including ancient philosophers like Aristotle and Plato and such others of Turkey, Greece and Egypt. Generally, his approach was towards mixture of *Vedānta* and Islam. Incidentally he was influenced by Mian Mir of Qadariya Order, made him his spiritual *Guru*. Incidentally, he also translated *Bhagavadgītā*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Vedas* in Sanskrit into Persian and wrote interesting Forewords.

Initiated into the Qudiriya Order of Sufis, Dārā Śhikoh’s work reflected sensitivity towards esoteric dimensions of faith persuaded him to believe that the Dhat-i-bhat, the

supreme Self, is the common approach of all faiths that is accomplished by complete fana or annihilations of the ego.

He conveyed his message in local language not in Persian. He recognized that there are several paths to God. Love of God; services to mankind are important areas.

His spiritual longing and quest for Haqiqat/Reality and Tawhid/Unity took him to deep study of *Upaniṣads*. 52 of which he translated from Sanskrit to Persian in his *Sirr-i-Akbari*. The Great Secret. Drawing attention to the treasure of monotheism found in *Upaniṣads*. Dārā Śīkoh draws parallels similarities between concepts of the Holy Quran and *Upaniṣads* in respect of Tawhid and that may have cost him his life. The common thread between *Vedānta* and the Sufi thought gives elaborate discourse in his *Majma-Ul-Basrain/ Mingling of two Oceans* as formed in Hinduism and Islam. The Hindu *Pañcabhūtas* or five elements are shown corresponding and matching to elements of Islamic thought “*Unsur-I-Azim*.”

In his comparison of a very large number of mystic terminologies in two apparently different cultures, Dārā Śīkoh made stupendous efforts and drawing on his own personal experience with great dignified *Sufis* and *Yogīs*, he strove to underline the common vision of two great traditions, through his passionate analysis of similar mystic language and concepts. As Dārā would say, “Kingship is easy, acquaint Thyself with poverty/Why should a drop become a pearl when it can transform itself into an ocean.” Dārā Śīkoh himself became the *Pir-i-kamil* or perfect Guide that he so eagerly sought all his life.

Very briefly, Prince Muhammad Dārā Śīkoh: *Pir-i-Kamil Soul with Vedantic Heart*.

Avatāra Mahar Bābā at Ahmadnagar—Discourse

on Sufism presented is synopsis. He says Sufi poets, often compare love with wine because both are intoxicate. However, wine causes self forgetfulness, love leads to Self-realization. Each is indifferent. But there is world of difference. One leads to subterranean darkness, the other gives wings to the soul for its flight in freedom. The drunkard begins with a glass of wine that elates his spirit, gives forgetfulness from his daily worries and from forgetfulness to oblivion and empty stupor. The lover drunkenness begins with a drop of God's love which makes him forget the world. The more he drinks the closer he draws to the Beloved God. He longs to sacrifice his very life but he rests in bliss under His care. The longing increases in Union. Hence, his love, obedience and surrender remain contained in the ocean of "Divine Love."

The Sufi Philosophy is based on seven cardinal Principles:—

1. '*Talaba*' (Yearning) for Union with God, which comes after complete renunciation of all possessions and relationships.

2. *Īska* (Love) pure and unconditional love after bidding goodbye to learning, knowledge, name and fame, faith and virtue, which will come only after practising extreme humility.

3. *Mārfata* (Enlightenment) seeing effulgence in every particle of creation.

4. *Istaghrah* or fana (absorption): This have been elucidated in detail exclusively in para 7.1 above.

5. *Tauhid* (unity of consciousness) experiencing God's permeating unity among multiplicity. Rūmī says What is *Tauhid*? Consume they identity in the 'Fire' of Supreme consciousness. If ye wants to shine bright in that Unity, burn Thyself as the candle does in the night.

6. *Hairata* (Amazement) at glorious sight of enlightenment.

7. '*Fuqr Wa Fana*' (Annihilation) of ego, which is the lower self and total effacement of body consciousness. Rūmī says, "If love were only spiritual, the practices of fasting and prayer would not exist. The gifts of loves to one other are, in respect to love, nothing, but forms, yet, they testify to invisible love."

Subtle references of beauty, love, truth and taste has no reason or rationality to approach, to define and to explain them, as their experience really happen through the heart. The totality of this experience is called God. That there is One God, the Eternal, the only being; none exists save He.

The basic responsibility of every individual to uplift himself spiritually and realise the creator and then lead his divine life with God's creation plain and give up their obsession with mundane luxurious pursuits.



Following the path of *Bhakti*, I shall through Lord's grace, attain to deep-rooted God-love, dispassion and knowledge of Thy true nature simultaneously, just as by swallowing a morsel of food one gets satisfaction of hunger, enjoyments of taste and bodily strength all at once.

—*Nārāyaṇīyam*

Sītā Sādhvī's Words of Warning

—*Ramakrishna Rao Gandikota*

Tossing a blade of grass in front
Respecting the code of chastity
Spake Sītā to Rāvaṇa thus
“Dastard Thou art Rāvaṇa!
How wicked Thou art!
Stick to your wives galore
Leave me, chaste woman am I
Not to yield to you-never.
Aren't there wise men to counsel you?
O! Sinner! Promising rewards of
Pomp and prosperity, can't lead me astray
Bereft of the Sun and the Moon
Will there be their effulgence!
Sītā without Rāma can't subsist,
So also Rāma without Sītā
Stupidity to think, you can separate.
Send me back to Rāma and get saved
From the wrath of Rāma's
Fire-breathing and death-bringing arrows
Coward are you to boast of your valour,
Where were you, When Rāma killed
Your mighty men millions in 'Jana stanam'?
Abducted me in absence of Rāma
And 'Rāmānuja,' the mightiest
Certify your dastardly act..
No salvation to you, the evil doer!
Rabbit you are Rāvaṇa, to lion Rāma

Eyes will come out of the socket, tongue cut to shreds
For Thy crime; beware! Rāvaṇa!”

Sītā’s words pricked Rāvaṇa like thorns. He roared in anger and gave two months time to relent and come to his bed, else she would be torn to pieces and her flesh and blood partaken as break fast.

Vexed with the wile words of Rāvaṇa, Sītā gave this ultimatum.

असंदेशात्तु रामस्य तपसश्चानुपालनात् ।

न त्वां कुर्मि दशग्रीव भस्म भस्मार्हतेजसा ॥

(V. R. V. 22.20)

“Although I could curse you to become ashes, right now, I refrain from doing so in accordance with the code of chastity, which enjoins on me my husband’s prior permission.”

Rāvaṇa’s eyes were burning like flames. He shouted and threatened with dire consequences. He instructed the guarding ‘Rākṣasa women,’ to try all the means to persuade Sītā, to fall in line and accept him.



God is attracted to the compassionate heart. He comes to that pure-sighted devotee who relates to Him as the one hidden within every form. Think of each person as none other than the Lord Himself, wearing a disguise to see how you will react.

God has no favourites, He loves each one of us as He loves His greatest saints.

—Sri Daya Mata

True Devotee

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Brother, to tell you the truth, I have not as yet been fortunate enough to be a true devoted lover. I have seen so far only one true lover or *Upāsaka* in the whole world. Otherwise, it is for name sake only to call the rest of the devotees, *Rṣis*, *Munis*, preceptors or prophets, as the loving *Upāsakas*. But who is that true *Upāsaka*, devotee or lover who may be called the Beloved of all? It is God alone. Do you know how He teases you in disguise like a true lover? Slowly but imperceptibly he draws your attention. In a variety of disguise under different masks and under various names and forms. He wins your heart from behind the curtain. Whenever you give your heart to unreality, He gives Himself to strange and monstrous airs. He expresses His anger in various ways. Whenever you are deviated from His path, He gives you a rub. He does not let you rest even for a moment, unless you are made to rest in Him and Him alone.

Dear God! If you really are my Lover, why should You give yourself to such airs? Why should You now deny me, after once giving me the blissful taste of Your sublime love? O my Lord! Look here. The demon Śiśupāla (egoism) is snatching away virtuousness and godliness from us. Are You not annoyed at it? Have you no shame left in You? Come to our rescue. It is no occasion for You to show indifference. Come my Lord. Come immediately.

Jai Deva, a great Sanskrit poet says:—

“O Lord! you are my ornament and decoration. You are my very life. You are my jewels churned out of the

ocean. You have always been kind to me. I pray that my heart may be studiously devoted to you.

You have bestowed light on the Sun for nothing. You would not be poor, if you grant me also Divine bliss for all time.

O Lord! I cannot now afford to perform two duties simultaneously. I cannot manage my food, shelter and clothing and at the same time look to the pleasure of my Beloved. I do not care about my food, clothing, life and even death. You are my all, my food, my blanket, my support my medicine, my body, my soul and everything, I do not mind, if you want to keep my body and soul together. But why are you so inactive? Why should You sit idle in this way? Do some service unto me and grant me oneness with You.

Out of love, a Hindi poet addresses Him thus— “I will not close my eyes, if I see you eye to eye, I will see the game and make you dance before me.”

Another poet says:—

“It is for you alone that I Keep my soul in my body.”

Keep back your things. Throw them away as charity in the name of your nameless Self. Dishes full of diamonds, jewels and precious stones have been thrown away in this way. People call them stars, satellites, moon, sun and planets etc. Take them, you astronomers, metaphysicians, traders and merchants. Take them, you kings and Emperors. But alas, it is not for Rāma to accept the money thrown over the palanquin of the beloved even under coercion. Let others take it, but not Rāma. Rāma does not accept such money. He will like to have only the beautiful and charming Beloved inside the palanquin, behind the rainbow curtains (of colourful clouds, dawn, dusk, rainbow and star studded blue sky).

Overeating

—D. S. Bhagani

The habit of overeating is more prevalent than it is realized. It leads to lot of discomfort and ill health, mental and physical lassitude, clouding and dulling of intellect, disruption of mental poise and hampering of spiritual progress.

Almost all of us would emerge more vigorous and active, both, in body and mind after a short fast of a day or two every fortnight specially after the age of 35 years.

The notion that the rich alone suffer from this unnatural phenomenon, is incorrect and deserves to be dismissed forthwith. A careful consideration of the diverse causes leading to this habit (as detailed hereunder) will clearly show that some are more and others are equally operative in the case of men of limited means.

1. It is generally believed that our strength and efficiency increase in proportion to the quantity of food we eat. Yet it is the quantity of food we digest and assimilate that sustains and energizes us. The undigested food acts as poison "*Ajīrṇam bhojanam Viṣam.*"

2. A growing child needs more food. But when growth ceases, instead of effecting necessary adjustment, the same large quantity of foods is continues to be taken as of habit.

3. Young men leading as active life and persons engaged in physical labour perforce consume more food. But with the slowing of the tempo, corresponding reduction in the intake of the food is not effected. Often the natural

diminution in appetite is considered a sign of ill health calling for tonics and medicines.

4. Partial assimilation of food by the body leads to overeating. Proper mastication of food helps digestion; so also does the drinking of an adequate quantity of water.

5. Craving for more food springs up naturally when diet is deficient in some of the ingredients, needed by the body. The “want” is registered, though we may, instead of satisfying the specific “want”, go on eating more and more. The refining of food robs these of vital elements like vitamins etc., and thereby encourages overeating. It was proved that a man living exclusively on meat and white, bread, collapsed earlier than one on total fast. Our faulty cooking habits like throwing away water in which rice or vegetables have been boiled, lead to loss of vital elements like minerals, vitamins etc. Correct knowledge about balanced diet must be dinned into the ears of citizens. Such protective supplementary foods as milk and multipurpose food tablets should be made easily available at economical rates to encourage their use.

6. Responding to false appetite and meal time ‘call’ when there is no natural hunger is overeating. Drinking a glass of water at such times exposes the unreality of the call.

7. Stomach is a muscular bag that stretches when food gets pushed into it. As a result of constant overeating by one, a particular degree of stretch of the stomach comes to be associated with the satisfaction of having had the needed ‘fill’ Fasting is helpful in restoring the natural size of the bag and so eliminates false cravings. Meanwhile, eating bulky foods like salads, fruits, vegetables renders psychological satisfaction of having had a ‘fill’. Concentrated foods like nuts, etc., eggs, flesh etc., must be avoided so long as the distended stomach bag has not assumed its natural size.

8. Tongue, the sentinel posted by God to prevent overeating is bribed through our culinary arts. Tasty, spicy, sweet dishes are prepared and overeating follows.

9. Unoccupied moments employ themselves in eating.

10. Liquor and other intoxicants so lull our "censor" that we do not realize when we have had enough and go on eating. The improvement in appetite claimed by the addicts and exponents is a dangerous deception.

11. Frequency of feedings also determines the quantities of food taken. By reducing 4 eatings to 2, the quantity of food taken is assuredly less though it is true it shall not be halved. Some people go on eating all the day. This certainly constitutes overeating.

12. When there is uncertainty about supply during shortages, floods, famines, poverty, the unconscious mind reacts into overeating. It is not realized that a well fed person can bear privation for a longer period; to overeat is not to be well fed. Balanced diet prepares best for emergencies.

13. Some overeat when they find food that would deteriorate if not used forthwith. Instead of using one's stomach as a dump and thereby poisoning oneself, better utilize such surplus food in feeding some needy person. In any case allow the food to waste rather than overeat.

14. Feasts, group feedings, picnics, dinners at hotels or hostels, where extra eating entails no cost, encourage overeating.

15. Ignorance of full menu leads many to eat profusely in the beginning and then fail to resist delicious favourite dishes that follow.

16. Conviviality, absorbing conversation, hilarity and urbanity at dinner table lead to overeating. A little conscious effort needs to be exercised to control overeating.

In the end let me cite the social aspect of the problem. There is acute general shortage of food and overeating by some robs others of their life-saving rations.

Besides, import of foodgrains strains our already depleted foreign exchange.

So why overeat?



In spite of the assumption of the other entity, a striver depends on God and none else but God is his beloved, therefore, he is exceedingly dear to God. Until he realizes all is God, God Himself feels indebted to Him.

—*Swami Ramsukhdas*

O All-merciful and All-effulgent Lord, O mine of noble virtues Śrī Rāma! This is the boon we ask of you; May we love your feet casting off all aberrations of thought, word and deed.

—*Eulogy by Vedas in Rāmāyaṇa*

Love Divine

—*Dr. M. Hafiz Syed*

It is said God is love and love is God and that the same love which binds man to man leads him on to the source of his being. What upholds human society, what sustains human relation is love, pure and simple. If humanity were not actuated with this motive and endowed with this quality there would be no progress in the moral sphere. The meanest of men, the lowest of creatures in the scale of evolution, would make no headway in moral growth if he were not guided by this feeling. The noblest and the highest form of human love is seen in a mother's affection for her babe. As a result of pure affection for her child she forgets herself completely: her ease and her comfort, her sleep and her food.

Almost all the human virtues of sacrifice, sympathy, unselfishness and service are the direct outcome of human love. Unselfish human love is a great moral force. But for this the world would have been the poorer. In its absence there would be no great deed, no social service, no political achievement. Almost all the heroes of the world were more or less, fired by this noble emotion and achieved great things.

It is the cultivation and gradual expansion of human love that leads an aspirant on to Divine love. In the school of human relation we are prepared for this glorious experience. If a person has never learnt to love in ordinary human life, he can never understand what Divine love is and how this path is to be trodden. Those whose emotion is not purified and who have never known what the feeling

of love is, can hardly have any conception of higher, purer and unselfish love. Thus, human love is a step to Divine love.

We find in the Hindu faith that the Supreme manifests Himself not only as the Lord of the Universe, but also in the form of man and that in that human form He especially arouses devotion, worship, love; presenting all the beauty which captivates human imagination. Out of pure compassion for His creatures, He comes, as it were, within the reach of their limited intelligence and presents Himself as an *Avatāra*, manifesting in human form some of the perfection of the Supreme. “Because the difficulty of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifested is greater; for the path of the Unmanifested is hard for the embodied to reach” (*Gītā* XVI. 5). According to the ancient spiritual tradition it is not possible for an average human being to have any conception of that limitless, formless, unknown and unknowable Reality called *Nirguṇa Brahma*. It is only when this all-pervasive, universal Reality limits Itself in a human form, that it becomes possible for an average man who is “cribbed, cabined and confined” in a physical form to understand it.

Whether it be under the sacred name of Śrī Rāmacandra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa or a Buddha, we find that humanity specially craves to worship a Being and seeks in devotional emotion that satisfaction which no abstract conception of infinity can afford. To those who tread the Path of *Bhakti* this object of worship must be the goal of the Path. Along this Path of Love we always find the *Bhakta* seeking for his Lord.

What is this love that inspires him? In the words of Devarṣi Nārada. *Bhakti* is “extreme devotion in some one.” Further he says, “It is surrendering all actions to God and feeling the greatest misery in forgetting Him.” Now the

natural question that arises is, why should one turn one's attention from human to Divine Love and what would be achieved if he attains perfection in this path? Once again in the words of *Rṣi Nārada* he, who treads this path of Love and reaches his goal, attains union with his Beloved, "he becomes perfect immortal, and satisfied, he desires nothing, grieves not, hates not, does not delight in sensuous objects, makes no effort for selfish ends, he becomes intoxicated (with joy), transfixed and rejoices in the Self."

It should be borne in mind that those who appear to us as full-fledged *Bhaktas* today have not become so in a day but have reached their goal after long and persistent effort in many past lives. No effort is lost. Every longing for Divine nearness must bear its fruit in course of time. Therefore one should not be disheartened if one does not achieve one's heart's desire all at once.

For the gradual development of Divine love certain conditions are laid down and they must be fulfilled to a great extent before Divine vision is vouchsafed to us. The first condition is intense and unquenchable desire for union with one's *Iṣṭadeva*. Human love may serve to give us at first a faint idea of love for the Divine. Let us think of the strongest, purest, intensest love that we may have ever felt for a human being. Let us analyse and see within ourselves how all other things become less attractive under its light. Whatever we care for, wealth or learning, name or fame, loses all its attraction for us when we long for nothing but the face of our Beloved. The whole attitude of our mind suddenly changes under the influence of His presence. Wealth or literature seem to be worthless as compared with the treasure of His love. Only when this one-pointed love is developed, that Divine Knowledge and spiritual realization are said to be attained.

Some of the qualifications necessary for the aspirant on this path, may be summed up in the following words: Pure food, pure thought and in constant memory of God. We must try to be pure in thought, in word and in action before we can be privileged to attain our nearness to that Purity Itself. Therefore it is the sine qua non of spiritual progress that we should abstain from coarse and impure food. We should make every possible effort to control our wandering mind and fill it with pure and noble thoughts. Similarly, we should cease from evil ways and renounce all earthly desire.

Our next endeavour should be to love and serve our fellowmen as much as it lies in our power. By doing so we shall overcome our feeling of separateness and egoism and make ourselves a fit receptacle of Divine love.

There is another advantage of supreme value in implanting in one's heart this love of the Divine. We spend years in moral struggle in trying to overcome our vicious tendencies, greed, anger, passion, fear and attachment and we seldom fully succeed in our endeavour. Sooner or later we lose our moral balance and yield to some kind of temptation. At that time we hopelessly feel that there is no care for the ills of life. But those who are endowed with Divine love and get themselves fully established in it are known to overcome all their human frailties. They do not fall a prey to greed or passion. Their individual self being merged in the Divine self they have no desire for any earthly enjoyment. Jalāluddīn Rūmī says "that Divine love is a physician that heals all our mental and moral maladies."

How is all this to be achieved? A soul can receive impulses only from another soul and from nothing else. Hence the need of an enlightened *Guru*, guide. In the words of Swāmī Vivekānanda "every soul is destined to

be perfect and every being, in the end, will attain the state of perfection. Whatever we are now, is the result of our acts and thoughts in the past; and whatever we shall be in the future, will be the result of what we think and do now. But this, the shaping of our own destinies, does not preclude our receiving help from outside; nay, in the vast majority of cases such help is absolutely necessary. When it comes, the higher powers and possibilities of the soul are quickened, spiritual life is awakened, growth is animated and man becomes holy and perfect in the end.”



Woe unto those who are content with material offerings and earthly pleasures, feeling no real hunger for God and Truth. Some day with the approach of death or through loss before death, there will be pangs of hunger for security and for alleviation of helplessness or innumerable wants.

—*The Second Coming of Christ*

How thoughtlessly people give up the kingdom of immortal bliss for their material desires, for name, fame, blissful gratification, possession, money.

People who marry and divorce time and again, never give the seeds of divine love a chance to grow on the soil of faithful commitment.

Recognition of God

—*Sri Paramahansa Yogananda*

We don't want the praise of man; the recognition of God is what we are seeking. "For what everyone is in Thy sight, so much is he and no more," said St. Francis. If before Him we are immaculate, nothing else matters. In doing good we must sometimes suffer. To find the Lord we must be willing to suffer. What is it to endure discomfort of the flesh and discipline of the mind to gain the eternal solace of Spirit? Christ's joy in God was so great he was willing to give up the body for Him. The purpose of life is to attain that tremendous happiness—to find God.

Renunciation is not an end, it is the means to an end. The real renunciant is he who lives for God first, regardless of his outer mode of existence. To love God and conduct your life to please Him—that is what matters. When you will do that, you will know the Lord. Every noble thought in your mind brings you closer to Him. Those thoughts are like a river leading to the ocean of Spirit.

Devotion is the one offering that tempts God. He is not moved by all the rich gifts and promises that are made to Him. But into the garden of a life redolent with sweet devotion God is tempted to come. When the fragrance of your devotion oozes forth unceasingly from the rose of your heart, the mighty Deity must come to you.

No matter how our thoughts run away from the Lord or how forlorn we feel, still the footsteps of our devotion lead us to the haven of Spirit. No matter how far we have strayed away, through devotion we can still reach Him, our lives need not be spent in vain.

Although you have regular duties, they are no excuse for saying you cannot seek God. While others sleep, you concentrate on Him. You will find you are a hundred times more happy and rested. Do this night after night, without thinking of time. When you are meditating, just remind yourself, "I am with Him and that is all that matters."

When you plant a seed in the ground, you must not take it out every day to see if it is germinating, you will only hamper its growth. So with the seeds of your spiritual efforts. Once they are planted, leave them there and tend them carefully.

I hope you will make a greater spiritual effort from tonight on. Don't lose sight of Him. The world will go on without you. You are not as important as you think. Countless men have been thrown into the dustbin of the centuries. Do not let your life pass uselessly. If in your heart you love God, you are greater than the most materially accomplished man. When you please God, you come closest to pleasing everybody. So learn to love Him. Don't feel that you have to mix with people all the time. When you do mix, do everything you can to help others; but when you are alone, be alone with God. When you attain Him, all things else will be added unto you.

It is not what you hear that redeems you, but what you do with what you hear. Many hear what they should do, but few act upon it. Don't paralyse your determination. When you know a thing is right, why should not you go after it? Why should not you cry for the Lord until the skies are shaken with your prayers? Surrender to Him completely. And never doubt Him.

Dive deep in the ocean of meditation. If you don't find the pearls of His presence, don't blame the ocean, blame

your diving. Dive again and again until you find Him. “Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Remember, it is the naughty baby who gets the mother’s attention. The easily pacified infant is soon satisfied with toys. But the naughty baby wants the mother only and goes on crying until she comes. Cry until the Divine Mother comes!

God is so real to His devotees! Every word they have said about Him is true, but His play is shrouded in mystery. Your seeking must be continuous. You cannot summon God by a little cry; it must be unceasing and not quelled by toys of money, fame and human love. When your desire is only for Him, He will come. Then your lessons in the world are finished. You are filled evermore with the joy of the Infinite. “He who works for Me alone, who makes Me his goal, who lovingly surrenders himself to Me, who is nonattached (to My delusive cosmic dream worlds), who bears ill will toward none (beholding Me in all)—he enters My being.”

—*Bhagavadgītā* (XI. 55).



Be satisfied with nothing less than God. To love the gifts of creation more than the giver is folly. Within your heart renounce everything, seek God, give yourself completely to Him.

Pure Mind

The pure mind is one that is completely freed from desire and therefore, enjoys freedom from thoughts between any two actions. That poise is a state of *Yoga*.

When our feelings, actions and the goal differ from one another, it makes the mind impure. When they are harmonised, the mind is pure.

Pure awareness shines in the purified mind. The pure mind is a state wherein the clouds of desire and all that desire breeds, are dissipated by the dawning of the Sun of the Self.

Yoga, *Jñāna* and love are not the products of any action or practice; they come naturally to the aspirant whose mind is purified.

The mind of one who has not redeemed one's debts to all concerned, has not yet earned its freedom. One must discharge one's obligations before one can attain pure mind. He who is still in the grip of a sense of his own rights, is far from being pure of mind.

The master key for attaining purity of mind is dissociating oneself from body consciousness, which is the root of all desires that pollute the mind.

—A Saints Call to Mankind

The Foremost among Devotees

He who does not feel any pride on account of high birth and noble actions (such as austerities, etc.) nor on account of caste, social rank or order of life, is a devotee specially dear to the Lord.

He who does not cherish any idea of ‘Mine’ or ‘Thine’ in respect of wealth and the body and looking upon all creatures with an equal eye maintains tranquility of the mind, should be regarded as a supreme devotee.

A devotee who refuses to withdraw his mind from the sacred feet of the Lord for a single moment even in exchange for all the wealth of the three worlds—the feet which are eagerly sought for even by gods, who have their hearts constantly fixed in Him—but goes on remembering Him without any break, is the foremost among Vaiṣṇavas.

He who by force of his love has captivated Śrī Hari in his heart for all time to come—Śrī Hari, whose Name, taken even when one has no control over his senses, destroys heaps of sin—that devotee has been described in the *Śāstras* as the foremost among devotees.

—*Śrīmad Bhāgavata*

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