

Highest Goal of Existence.

BY JAYADAYAL GOYANDKA.

A friend poses two questions—

Question 1—Through all your experiences of life—through study, hearing of and reflection on the teachings of the scriptures, through travel, observation, association of saints, service of the Sadguru and your direct spiritual experiences, what goal has up to now appeared to you to be the highest goal of existence, the pursuit of which will satisfy all the requirements of a good life on earth, *viz.*, pure conduct, performance of duties as man, attainment of Bliss, Yoga and liberation, advancement in every sphere of life, spiritual and worldly, the last including advancement of the family, community, nation, the world in general as well as the cause of social reform—the goal, which every man on earth can realize in life through a course of discipline which is easy to follow?

Answer 1—The goal about which you ask can be properly described by one who has himself realized it in life. Being an ordinary man of the world, I do not possess the knowledge that I may satisfy you with an answer. Neither have I made any deep study of the scriptures nor practised special hearing and reflection on them. Nor did I possess the privilege of Satsanga or of doing personal service to the Sadguru or any other saint, and of disciplining life according to his instructions to

the extent one should do. Nor have I practised any deep meditation. I make a short attempt below to place before you what appears to me good and agreeable and what I hold to be the best ideal, according to my own poor light.

The highest truth, highest goal, highest Dharma and highest duty of man is to surrender himself wholly and exclusively to God, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss. Through practice of this as the supreme duty of life, he will easily become virtuous in conduct and possessing all the high qualities will attain peace and finally even the Bliss of Mokṣa. Good of the family, society, nation, the world at large and all forms of reform and advancement are possible of being secured through this, and all men throughout the world can easily practise it; in fact, all men are qualified to practise it. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*:—

“O Pārtha, women, Vaiśyas, Śūdras or products of the womb of sin, whoever among these takes refuge in Me attains the supreme state.”*

That is why Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa laid down this as His final instruction to Arjuna:—

* मां हि पार्थ न्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापघोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

“Abandoning all other duties, *i. e.*, all dependence on Karma, come to Me alone for shelter; grieve not, I will liberate thee from all sins.”*

Bhagavān Śrī Rāmachandra also made a similar declaration:—

“He who approaching Me once says ‘Oh Lord, I am Thine’ and thus seeks My shelter, I make him fearless about injury from any being whatsoever. This is My solemn promise.”†

The Śrutis also say:—

“This Word (Om) is Brahma, this is the highest object, knowing this Word, whatever one desires, he attains. This Word is the best shelter, highest good lies in taking refuge under It; knowing the secret of this surrender, one receives homage and worship in Brahmaloaka.”‡

Therefore, renouncing all false shame, fear, attachment, honour, prestige, egoism, senses of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and regarding God alone to be the supreme goal, supreme refuge, one should try to throw oneself wholly, with complete faith and reverence, through body, senses, mind and

intellect at the mercy of the Lord, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, who is present everywhere in His manifest and unmanifest Forms.

CHARACTER OF EXCLUSIVE SURRENDER

(A) Practice of Japa of the Lord’s Name and meditation on His Form with full consciousness about its glory and secrets should be constantly carried on disinterestedly, with a heart full of love and reverence. There are many Names of God, such as, Hari, Om, Tatsat, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, Śiva, etc. The practicant should choose a Name according to his liking and taste, the Japa of which will become particularly helpful to him. There are two aspects of God—(1) beyond attributes (Nirguṇa), and (2) with attributes (Saguṇa). Between them meditation on the Nirguṇa (transcendent aspect) is not possible. Whatever meditation is made is made only of the Saguṇa aspect of God. Saguṇa, again, may be divided into two aspects—(1) Unmanifest, and (2) Manifest. In other words, one is without Form, and the other is with Form. He from whom creation begins and in whom it finally dissolves when there is universal destruction, who exists everywhere equally pervading everything, who is not destroyed when the whole creation is destroyed—this aspect of the Paramātmā, unmanifest, all-pervading, eternal, embodiment of Consciousness and Bliss, is called Formless Brahma. That very Paramātmā when He incarnates Himself in the form of a human or celestial being for the redemption of the world,

* सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥
(Gita XVIII. 66)

† सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्गतं मम ॥
(Valmiki-Ramayana VI. xviii. 33)

‡ एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम् ।
एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥
एतदालम्बनं श्रेष्ठमेतदालम्बनं परम् ।
एतदालम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥

and propagates ideas of knowledge, dispassion, devotion, virtuous conduct, etc., that Form of the Lord, the very embodiment of Love, Compassion and Bliss, is called Brahma with a Form. Among the various Forms manifested by the Lord, the meditation of one for which the aspirant possesses reverence and love will be particularly helpful to him.

(B) One should constantly try to mould his conduct according to the instructions and will of the Lord. That is to say, he should promptly carry out whatever is favourable and dear to the Lord. He should regard the scriptures and teachings of saints as authoritative as the teachings of God, and try always to follow as the will of God and as his most sacred duty whatever appears to his dispassionate mind to be true through a careful reflection on such teachings. The saint, whether ancient or modern, whether dead or living, who stands highest in his estimation and whose physical marks and conduct satisfy the scriptural tests, is the real Mahātmā or saint for him. The Śrutis, Smṛtis, Itihāsas, Purāṇas and other books composed by the Ṛṣis constitute true scriptures. Besides these, books and teachings left by saints for whom one cherishes reverence and devotion will also be regarded as true scripture for him. In the present age, the *Bhagavadgītā*, which contains the essence of the Śrutis, Smṛtis, Itihāsas, Purāṇas and other scriptures, may be taken as the most non-sectarian and universal book of religion. That is why it

has been said with reference to the *Gītā*:—

“The study of the *Gītā*, which has come out of the lotus-like face of Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself, closely and with careful reflection on its meanings, is a sacred duty. What is the use of taking pains on many other scriptures ?”*

Therefore, if it not possible to study the scriptures, one should make it a point to study at least the *Gītā*.

(C) One should constantly maintain joy in his heart through all experiences of happiness and misery, or acquirement of objects which contribute to happiness or misery, and through every gain and loss, regarding that to have taken place according to the dispensation of the Lord, who is supremely compassionate, almighty and just. That is to say, he should be constantly absorbed in joy through realization at every step of the compassion of that sole object of Love, that ocean of compassion, whatever the circumstances he may find himself face to face with according to his Prārabdha, *i. e.*, circumstances brought about through the initiative of another, without any inclination or desire of his own.

(D) One should not regard any object of the world as his own property or as an object of enjoyment. For the fact of the matter is that as all objects proceed from Nārāyaṇa,

* गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः ।

या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्भिनिःसृता ॥

(*Bhishma-Parva* 48. 1)

they belong to Nārāyaṇa Himself. Therefore withdrawing the attachment of the heart from them, all objects should be offered to Nārāyaṇa. That is to say, according to the instruction of Nārāyaṇa, they should be all employed in the service of Nārāyaṇa.

In short, understanding of the mystery, glory and truth of God through the intellect; meditation on the Lord's Form with a heart full of reverence and love; practice of Japa of the Divine Name with the rhythm of respiration; engaging the ears to the hearing of the virtues, power and transcendent glory of the Form of the Lord; employing the eyes to see the images of the Lord or His devotees or to the study of noble scriptures; engaging the speech in Kirtana of His glories; engaging the body to the service of God and His devotees, to worship, salutation and performance of action surrendering one's personal will to the will of the Lord, in the spirit of only carrying out His wishes, without desire for fruit and renouncing idleness—this is what is called practice of exclusive surrender to God.

The more there is progress in the practice as stated above, the more will man develop fortitude, heroism, gravity, fearlessness, forgiveness, compassion, contentment, equanimity and similar other virtues like tranquillity, self-control, austerity, charity, renunciation, service of others, Truth, Brahmacharya, etc., and the more he will gain Peace and Supreme Bliss. Thus rising higher and higher, he will ultimately reach through Divine Grace the highest limit of growth,

which is the same as attainment of the Supreme Abode, the Supreme State, the Supreme Goal, or God-Realization. When he reaches that state, there remains no duty for him left undone.

Question 2—How should a man divide the hours of the day and employ them in various activities like service of the soul, family, community, nation, the world at large and earning of livelihood, etc., so that he may serve both worldly and spiritual interests? How much time and wealth should he spend for his physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual growth so that he may have an all-round development and his labour and expenses may become really fruitful?

Answer 2—The value of time is extremely great. A moment of life already spent cannot be called back even if you spend lakhs and lakhs of rupees for it. Not a single moment of this valuable human life should be wasted through careless living, lethargy, in the commission of sin, and in pursuit of the worthless enjoyments of life. He who idly wastes this life without proper consideration of its value is bound to repent for it in future. Goswami Tulasidasji said:—

“He will suffer in the other world and will repent striking his forehead repeatedly with the palm of his hand, falsely accusing Time, Karma and God for his sufferings.”*

* सो परत्र दुख पावई सिर धुनि धुनि पछिताइ ।
कालहि कर्महि ईस्वरहि मिथ्या दोष लगाइ ॥

Poet Girdharji also said:—

“He who acts without thought has to repent subsequently for his action; He spoils his own future and becomes a laughing-stock of the world. Becoming the laughing-stock of others, he feels restless in mind and loses taste for food, drink, honour and joys and pleasures of the world. Says Poet Girdhar, man cannot avoid the effect of action, however much he may try to do so. His heart will always pinch, remembering every action done without proper thought.”*

Therefore, man should spend every moment of life in the practice of the duty of self-surrender as set forth above. Before deciding to do anything, let him carefully scrutinize whether the action he contemplates will serve his best interests. He should rectify his error the moment he detects it.

Through such careful use of time even his ordinary interests will be transformed into spiritual interests, and all his actions will meet with success. In other words, he will gain the object of life.

In the division of time for the performance of duties there is likely

* बिना बिचारे जो करै, सो पाछे पछिताय ।
काम बिगारै आपनो, जग में होत हँसाय ॥
जग में होत हँसाय चित्त में चैन न पावै ।
खान-पान, सनमान, राग-रँग मन नहिं भावै ॥
कह गिरधर कविराय करमगति दरत न टारे ।
खटकत है जिय माँहि कियौ जो बिना बिचारे ॥

to be difference owing to the position of a man according to Varnāśrama or to difference in the inherent nature of every individual. Therefore, it is not possible to make a uniform time-table for all. Everyone should exercise his intellect and make a time-table suited to his own convenience keeping the above facts and ideals in view. For the satisfaction of the questioner, however, a few suggestions are made below about the division of the day's hours for the performance of different types of duties.

The Lord said in the *Gītā*:—

“Yoga, which puts an end to all sorrows, becomes successful in the case of one who is temperate in his food and recreation, who is restrained in all his actions, and who is regulated in sleep and waking.”*

Careful thought on the above verse of the *Gītā* will bring us to the following conclusion. Everyone can generally divide the twenty-four hours of the day into four equal parts. Thus he may devote six hours to service of others and to taking of food and rest, etc., in order to keep the body in health; six hours to earning of livelihood; six hours to sleep and six hours to practice of Yoga for Self-realization. In other words, he should devote six hours to service including service to his body, service to family members and service to the public at large. On special occasions, time

* युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥

(VI. 17)

allotted to other work may be devoted to public service or the service of family members. Six hours should be devoted to work, without any desire for fruit and without any attachment, in the spirit of performance of duty, according to the injunctions of Varṇāśrama with a view to please God thereby, and thus earn one's livelihood by lawful means. Six hours should be spent in sleep and six hours to practices for Self-realization. These last six hours, he should spend alone withdrawing his senses, mind and intellect from all worldly contacts. He should devote the time only to practice of Japa, meditation on the Divine Form, hearing of spiritual discourses in Satsanga, or the study of scriptures. The above four divisions of time may be arranged according to the following daily routine of life.

DAILY ROUTINE

One should leave the bed at least an hour and a half before sunrise. If one gets up at 4 in the morning, he will be ready by 5 A. M. after a short of meditation and the performance of necessary ablutions and bath, etc. From 5 to 8 A. M. he should retire to his room of worship and devote the time entirely to Bhajana and meditation. From 8 to 10 A. M. he may do some public work and then take his food and look after the requirements of his health. From 10 A. M. to 4 P. M. he may devote the time to earning of livelihood by just and lawful means according to the injunctions of the Varṇāśrama. From 4 to 6 P. M.

he may devote, again, to public service according to his capacity. From 6 to 9 P. M. he may retire to the room of worship and spend the time, again, in Bhajana, meditation or the hearing and the study of the scriptures, or generally in the practices of worship. 9 P. M. to 10 P. M. he may take his last meal and look to the requirements of the body. 10 P. M. to 4 P. M. he may spend in sleep.

This time-table may be altered according to the taste and convenience of every individual. Owing to the differences of country, race, habits of life, etc., it is not possible to frame a common time-table for all.

For the maintenance of the body and members of the family, the budget of expenditure should be as low as possible. Care should be taken that the budget may not unnecessarily grow. The savings effected thereby should be spent for the service of Devas, Piṭṛs, men and other creatures according to the injunction of the scriptures and dictates of the Varṇāśrama Dharma, without any thought of self interest.

It should be specially borne in mind that the practice of Japa of the Divine Name and the meditation on the Divine Form should be carried on constantly; that is to say, all other activities of life, personal, social, public, etc., should be pursued, together with the constant practice of Japa and meditation on the Divine Form.

The Lord said in the *Gītā*:—

"Therefore, O Arjuna, constantly remember Me and fight. With your mind and intellect thus offered to Me, you will certainly come to Me."*

Again:—

"Thus mentally offering all action to Me, and devoting yourself wholly to Me, and resorting to Karmayoga in the form of equanimity of mind, have your thought constantly fixed on Me."†

He who follows these injunctions will find that all his activities—physical, mental and intellectual, etc.—have got reformed, that all his time, labour and money have been well spent, and through the grace of God he will soon easily attain supreme peace and supreme joy; in other words, realize the Supreme State.
