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From *Kaivalyopanishat*

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थास्सत्र्यासयोगाद्यतयश्शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।

ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥

*vedāntavijñānasuniścītārthāssannyāsa
yogādyatayaśśuddhasattvāḥ,*

te brahmalokeṣu parāntakāle

parāmṛtātparimucyanti sarve..

The pure-hearted strivers gain a well ascertained understanding of Atman as the essential wisdom of Vedanta due to their practice of renunciation. They are immortal as the Supreme Self as they are totally liberated (from the bondage of the worldliness). They all gain the abode of the Brahman as the body falls for the last time.

Vedanta is Upanishad, which is the culmination of the wisdom of the Vedas. It prepares the seeker for *Jñāna*, Self-realization, employing *karma*, the life of activity, *upāsana*, contemplation, etc. The primary means of gaining this knowledge is listening to the exposition of Vedatanta by a competent teacher. Reflection and contemplation add to the effort.

The Detailed explanation of this Mantra can be had from Kaivalyopanishad (mantra 4). The Sankara Bhashya of Mundaka Upanishad (3-2-6) may also be referred to for further explanation.

(Tattva Prakāśikā by Swami Tattva Vidananda Sarswati)

Prayer

VERSE 1

निरुपमनित्यनिरंशकेऽप्यखण्डे

मयि चित्ति सर्वविकल्पनाऽऽदिशून्ये ।

घटयति जगदीशजीवभेदं

त्वघटितघटनापटीयसी माया ॥ १

*nirupamanityaniraṃśakespyakhaṇḍe
mayi citi sarvavikalpanāḥḥdiśūnye,
ghatayati jagadīśajīvabhedaṃ
tvaghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā.* 1

अपि api = even though; मयि mayi = I am; निरुपमनित्यनिरंशके nirupamanityaniraṃśake = beyond comparison, timeless, and without parts; अखण्डे akhaṇḍe = undivided, divisionless; सर्वविकल्पना-आदिशून्ये sarvavikalpanā-ādiśūnye = free from all kinds of imaginations etc.; चित्ति citi = awareness; तु tu = but; अघटितघटनापटीयसी aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī = capable of making the impossible possible; माया māyā = illusion; जगदीशजीवभेदम् jagadīśajīvabhedaṃ = the division of universe, God, and individual; घटयति ghatayati = creates.

I am the timeless, partless, divisionless Awareness Absolute-without-a-second. In me are absent all kinds of imaginations (super-impositions) etc. Yet the illusion, which is capable of making the impossible possible, creates in me the division of universe, God, and individual.

(Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Māyā Pañcakam)

MEDITATION

उदरमुपासते य ऋषिवर्त्मसु कूर्पदृशः

परिसरपद्धतिं हृदयमारूणयो दहरम् ।

तत उदगादनन्त तव धाम शिरः परमं

पुनरिह यत्समेत्य न पतन्ति कृतान्तमुखे ॥

*udaramupāsate ya ṛṣivartmasu kūrpadrśaḥ
parisarapaddhatiṃ hṛdayamāruṇayo daharam
tata udagādananta tava dhāma śiraḥ paramaṃ
punariha yatsametya na patanti kṛtāntamukhe.*

The aspirants of poor understanding, who conceive a gross manifestation of the Deity, meditate on the Divine as seated on centres* like the *maṇipūra* or the navel. But those of sharper intellect, coming in the line of the sage *āruṇi*, meditate on the presence near the *anāhata*, the cave of the heart. And there are still others of higher intuition, whose meditation centres on the *sahasrāra*, the seat of the consciousness in the head. The last category of aspirants attain to the highest reaches of realization and thereby transcend life and death and are freed from the jaws of death even in this life.

(* The six centres or *cakras* mentioned in yoga *sāstras* in which the spiritual aspirants feel the presence of the *ātman* is in accordance with his spiritual development. Ordinarily, men, as Sri Ramakrishna used to say, live in the three lower centres, *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhana*, and *maṇipūra*, representing the organs of the evacuation, generation, and digestion. But those who have started on their spiritual life, and whose *kundalini* (spiritual power) is awakened feel the presence of the *ātman* in the three higher centres, *anāhata*, *viśuddha* and *ājñā*, representing the heart, throat, and the centre of the eyebrows. And the highest aspirant who has realized, through *nirvikalpa samādhi*, the true nature of the *ātman*, feels its presence in the *sahasrāra* in the head.)

- from *Sṛtigīta* by Swami Gabhirananda

FEEDING THE SOUL

Swami Omkar

The Critic:

At the very outset, the learned critic comes out with the query, *"How can you feed the Soul, which is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient, above all which is One without a second?"*

No doubt the critic is right, yet so long as man feels or remains separate from the Soul, so long as the Soul Force remains a myth in the practical daily life of man and so long as man feels lifeless, soulless, weak and what not, man has to feed the soul not only both in the morning and evening, but ceaselessly until he becomes one with the Soul.

Feeding the Body :

Look at people everywhere, in the East and West, North and South, all over the world, how people are busily engaged both day and night only in feeding the perishable body that has a beginning and end. That which comes, goes too. Whereas the Soul, that which neither comes nor goes, which is without beginning and end, which is the only eternal reality, is ignored and neglected. No one cares to feed it. There is hardly one in a million who is feeding the Soul, ceaselessly. All others, all the other millions are voraciously engaged in feeding the body of flesh and blood, sacrificing the Soul of Light, Life and Love.

The Pessimist:

Here pops out the pessimist with the question, *"How can you feed the Soul, which does not have any mouth or hole? Since the body has the big mouth, the perennial hole, one can feed it constantly."*

The question of the pessimist seems plausible, yet, with a little intuitive thought, we come to know that there are natural avenues, the mediums of feeding the Soul, in the vehicle of the body alone, through the centres of feeling or consciousness.

1. The centre of the heart- *Manipuraka*.
2. The centre of the mind- *Ajna*.
3. The centre of the brain - *Sahasrara*

Let us take these, one by one and discuss the same briefly, only to understand the present theme.

The centre of the Heart is the easiest one through which the Soul can be fed in the beginning. Blessed are the Pure in heart for they shall see God. Where there is purity, the soul shines in all Glory. This is the rocky foundation of all spiritual life. This is the babyhood of weaning or feeding the baby. Purity in thought, word and deed is the essential requisite to feed the Soul. The heart of the devotee lives and throbs only for feeding the Soul.

The centre of the Mind is the second stage of discrimination, where the mind discriminates the unreal from the real. What to feed and what is not to be fed to the Soul, is the problem now. This is the wavering stage of the youth, when mind gets fickle and restless and sometimes turbulent and tempestuous too. Yet with proper and persistent practise, the very unruly mind becomes steady, one-pointed and concentrated. Be still and know that I am God. In the stillness the neophyte keeps on feeding the Soul.

The *Sahasrara*, the highest centre is the last stage of feeding the soul in silence. Hence the feeding is done automatically both day and night, in each and every moment of one's life. This is the natural feeding of the highest- the Lord Himself- the Holy of Holies. The Lord in His Holy Temple - Let the whole world be silent. Silence within and without; unutterable silence above and below, inaudible silence all around, this is the climax of feeding the Soul of the ripe and advanced in wise silence.

Sublime silence, the Soul of feeding, as a baby when it weans or suckles the milk is not to be disturbed, let nothing disturb the feeding of the Soul. Let none of the things of the world dare to disturb the feeding of the Soul. For the kingdom of God is not in eating and drinking but in righteousness, peace and joy in the holy ghost.

As is the sight of the sweetest honey to the traveller in the deserts, so is the perception of the ever-effulgent, the feeding of the Soul. When all desires infesting the heart are easily given up, the mortal becomes immortal and lives in Soul even here. The slough cast off by the servant lies dead and life-less on the out-hill, so even lies this body, and the mortal who is thus disembodied, while yet here, becomes immortal, all life, all Light, all Soul.

May all Homage be unto the Soul, the Universal and the all-embracing the infinite and the immortal.

May Peace be unto all!

HINTS TO ASPIRANTS

The inspiring songs composed by saints, when heard or sung, sink into the heart and relieve it of its burdens. They verily prove to be a soothing balm to the heart agitated with doubt, fear and sorrow. The sweet music combined with the healing message they convey, create harmony and peace. Mere reflexion, or an attempt to understand and adjust our thoughts and feelings, do not help. We need a tonic to the soul and this tonic is provided by the sweet strains, imbued with spiritual light, coming from the ecstatic utterances of great souls when they were under the divine intoxication. The whirling mind is now bathed in a flood of divine joy leading it to the heaven of the indwelling peace and equanimity. Life has to be turned to the eternal symphony of the divine music that is always going on with us. The words of the saints strung together in a harmonious rhythm dispel all darkness and bring in a state of divine illumination. The ecstasy resulting from this experience raises us to the level of consciousness in which we realise our absolute identity with all that exists resolving the diversity with which the soul is obsessed, into a unity which is, in itself, the Reality.

- Swami Ramdas

ARE YOU CONSCIOUS OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS?

Swami Omkar

Every morning before I leave my bed, with the first glimpse of the dawn I reflect:

“O Lord, here is another blessed day of sunshine, given to me by You,

Bless me to make best use of it in every way.

Let me glimpse thy Glory thus making this day a better day than yesterday, centering myself ever within.”

Often I find myself murmuring another prayer:

“Father, I am not asking Thee for health or strength but just bless me with Thy ceaseless flow of Glory, with Thy Presence and Love not now and then but in every moment of my life.”

I am sharing these words hoping that they may help you as they are helping me.

Is not the goal of all our prayers, worship, studies and meditation is to attain this blessed state of Atonement with the Indwelling Presence in every moment of our lives? It is easy to remember Him when we are in the prayer room, when delivering or listening to lectures, but we need to remember Him at all times and under all conditions even when engaged in the daily duties of our lives.

How to remember God always, never confining Him to time or place, name or form, creed or teaching?

Ramakrishna's words solve this intricate problem: “So long as you keep an iron piece in the fire, it becomes red hot, but the moment you take it from the fire it becomes black again.” So how to keep it hot? By keeping the fire ever burning and never taking the iron out.

Similarly if we want to live in that continuous Glory of Ceaseless Divine flow, the only way is ever to be centered in Him, knowing that He is pervading and permeating our very beings.

Those who have the true conception of God as the all pervading and interpenetrating Spirit of the Universe, One without a second, alone can live in Him never forgetting Truth even for a moment.

They are always in Him and whatever they are doing they are doing it in and for Him alone.

My life's ambition and goal has always been to realize this Glorious state of God where there is no more forgetfulness which is Spiritual death, but there is perpetual recognition of His Presence which alone is Life and Light.

Feeling the Indwelling Presence let us chant Om.. Om.. Om...

-from the Divine Voice of Omkar

HINTS TO ASPIRANTS

The crown of spiritual experience is the attainment of divine love- a love that overflows the bounds of all human calculations and standards and inundates all the worlds. This love is founded upon the highest realization of the Truth in all its aspects. It is imbued with wisdom eternal and a vision that envelops everything that exists. No words can describe the sublime glory of this love. Saints are indeed embodiments of divine love. To serve and commune with them is to contact the eternal, to bask in Its radiance, to enjoy a bliss and peace which is simply ineffable. Where divine love is, there is immortal joy. Blessed is the soul that aspires to be a saint of this rare realization. the saint, who is a manifestation of God, showers his beneficence on all mankind.

- Swami Ramdas

ON LIBERATION

Swami Sivananda

THE STORY OF SIKHIDHWAJA

Vasishtha said, "King Sikhidhwaja was born in the country of Malva in Dwapara Yuga. He was very just, generous, patient, magnanimous, firm and virtuous. Chudala, the daughter of the Queen of Saurashtra, was his wife. Chudala was endowed with discrimination and Vichara. She did Vichara (enquiry) in the following manner: What is this I? Who am I? What is my real nature? Whence is the delusion in the mind? To whom is it due? How and whence did it arise? How to destroy this little self-arrogating I? Is there any ultimate reality that is independent of the body and mind and which is immortal and unchanging? How to attain this ultimate Reality? What is freedom? what is bondage? What is Vidya (true knowledge)? What is Avidya (ignorance)? What is Maya? What is this Samsara? How to get rid of bondage and Avidya? How to attain eternal bliss, immortality and supreme peace?

This body is inert. It is composed of five elements. It is perishable. It has a beginning and an end. The term 'I' cannot therefore be applied to it. The term I cannot be applied to the ten organs. The organs are moved by the mind. They are also inert. It has come out of Rajas. The term I cannot be applied to the mind also. Mind also is inert. It has the beginning and end. It is not self-luminous. It is made up of Sattvic portion of the Tanmatras or root-elements. It is goaded on to action by the intellect. The intellect also is energised by Ahamkara. Therefore it cannot be the 'I'. Ahamkara or egoism is moved by the Jiva. Therefore the Jiva, too, cannot be the 'I'; it is only a reflection. Just as the reflection of the Sun in the water vanishes when the water dries up, so also this reflection (the Jiva) disappears when the mind-lake dries up, that is, when the mind is annihilated. The Satchidananda Atman or Brahman, the source,

the substratum for the body, senses, prana, mind, intellect and Jiva, is the real, limitless “I”. I am identical with this Atman or the immortal Self. Satchidananda is my real nature.

Thus did Queen Chudula practise meditation on the pure, all pervading immortal Self and she attained Self-realization. She was a Jnani and a Yogini, too. She had Yogic powers. She could walk in the skies. She had the eight Siddhis or supernatural powers.

Sikhidhwaja did not believe that his wife was a Jnani and Yogini. Chudala tried to give her husband some idea of Atma Jnana but he was not benefited by her instructions.

Sikhidhwaja led a life of discontentment. He had no peace of mind. One day he said to Chudala “I derive no pleasure from this mundane life. I am afflicted at heart. I wish to enter the forest life and practise Tapas and meditation. Give me permission.”

Chudala said, “My venerable Lord, you should not retire at this period of your life.”

Sikhidhwaja did not pay heed to Chudala's words. He left the palace at dead of night, walked for twelve days and entered the forests on the slopes of Mandara hills. He did severe Tapas, recited mantras and lived on fruits. His body gradually became emaciated.

Chudala, when she woke up, did not find her lord who was sleeping by her side. She deduced that he had gone to the forest. She was very greatly afflicted at heart. She herself reigned over the kingdom for eighteen years.

Now she wants to see the condition of her husband. One night she walked in the skies through her Yogic power and alighted on the Mandara hills. She changed her form and appeared before her husband in the form of the son of a great Brahmin as Kumbha Muni (born of a *kumbha* or pot). Sikhidhwaja at once got up and saluted the Brahmin youth who stood in the air without touching the ground.

Chudala showed this Yogic power of standing in the air in order to convince Sikhidhwaja of her high attainments in Yoga.

Sikhidhwaja said, “O Kumbha Muni! I did severe Tapas but I have not attained knowledge of the Self. Instead, I have only increased the pains.”

Kumbha Muni replied, “One can enjoy the eternal bliss of the Atman when one sits at the feet of Guru, hears the Srutis, reflects and meditates on the Mahavakyas or great sentences of the Upanishads. The disciple can enjoy eternal bliss when the Jnana imparted to him by the preceptor ripens in him. Why don't you discuss the nature of bondage and liberation in the company of sages? Why don't you enquire into the question such as ‘What art thou? How has this world come into existence? How and when will it cease to exist?’ Why is it that you remain in a state of ignorance and delight in these false playthings of fools and dwell here as an insect in a hole under the ground? Jnana alone is the most excellent of all things. Jnana alone destroys the dire malady of births and deaths with its concomitant evils. How is it you do not long for it? Do you wish, O prince, to spend your whole life in doing painful austerities only, as some insects finish their days in boring the wood in which they live? Don't you wish to attain the Jnana that bestows immortality and supreme, eternal peace? Destroy the impure Vasanas, Avidya and its effects by attaining knowledge of the self and become a Jivanmukta. Virtuous actions will remove the impure Vasanas. If the impure Vasanas are destroyed, the mind will be annihilated and knowledge of the Self will dawn in you.”

Sikhidhwaja then prostrated before Kumbha Muni and said, “Please accept me as your disciple. Initiate me into the mysteries of Atma Jnana. Thou art my venerable Guru.”

Kumbha Muni said, “O King! Please hear from me two stories, the story of a learned man and the Chintamani, and the story of the

elephant.” Once there lived a rich man well versed in the Shastras. He performed puja, prayers and other sacred rites to obtain the Chintamani - the crystal gem that bestows anything which one thinks of. He went in search of this Chintamani gem. He saw the brilliant gem before him. He thought within himself, “This cannot be Chintamani. Chintamani can be obtained only through severe Tapas. I have not done much Tapas.” He lost this golden opportunity and roamed about in search of the gem. A siddha wanted to fool the learned man. He placed a small piece of glass in his way. The learned fool took this brittle thing to be the real gem. He picked it up and thought that this would give him what ever he wanted. With this belief he gave in charity all he had. He took this false gem and retired into the forest. The deceptive gem was of no use at all to him. He underwent a great deal of suffering on account of his profound ignorance.

Now listen to the second story. There lived a huge elephant in the Vindhya ranges. It was entrapped by an elephant hunter. He fettered it with strong, iron chains. It had long, sharp tusks. The elephant broke the hard fetters and ran away. The man fell on the ground. He dug a big trench and covered it with leaves and grass. The elephant was again entrapped in the trench. He was again tortured by the hunter. If the elephant had killed the man when he was lying on the ground, it would not have fallen into the trench. Even so, all foolish people who have no foresight to prevent their future mishaps and provide against the coming mishaps by taking precautions, will undoubtedly come to grief like the elephant of the Vindhyas.

Sikhidhwaja said, “O divine boy, Kumbha Muni! please explain to me the significance of the parables of the Chintamani and the elephant.”

Kumbha Muni replied, “That searcher after the Chintamani had merely theoretical knowledge of the Shastra, but no experience of

the Truth (Tattva Jnana). He searched for the gem but knew not what it was. The same man is thyself. You have no peace of mind although you are versed in all sacred scriptures. You have renounced your kingdom, your wife and other relatives, wherein there was true Chintamani. You have no idea of true renunciation. Know that it is only by the destruction of egoism and desires that one gets perfection and peace. It is not the abandonment of the world but the desires and egoism that gives everlasting peace and eternal bliss. You have lost the gem of true renunciation; you have chosen the false broken glass piece of painful austerities through your faulty vision. Therefore, you have no peace of mind. You falsely imagined that you could get peace through Tapas although the priceless Chintamani was before you. You thought in vain that you had obtained the Chintamani only to discover at last that your gain was not worth even a broken piece of glass.”

Kumbha Muni continued, “Hear me, O great King! Now I will explain to you the meaning of the story of the elephant in the Vindhya hills. That elephant is thy very self in this forest. The two long tusks are vairagya (dispassion) and Viveka (discrimination). The elephant hunter is Ajnana (ignorance). You are suffering from the pains inflicted by Ajnana, just as the elephant underwent a lot of suffering when it was bound by the man. Just as the mighty elephant was bound by the iron chain, so also you are bound by the iron chain of desire. In fact, desires are stronger than iron. Iron rusts and wastes away in course of time, but the desires grow more and more and hold you faster.

Just as the elephant broke the bond of the iron chains, so also you have broken asunder the ties of your kingdom, sensual enjoyment, wife, relatives, friends, etc. It is possible, O King, to break down the bonds of the iron fetters; but it is extremely difficult to break the bonds of desires, hopes and expectations. The elephant hunter fell down from the *howdah*. This represents the destruction of your

ignorance through your indifference or dispassion towards sensual enjoyments. But your renunciation is not a true one. You have not understood the secret of true renunciation. You have not yet abandoned everything.”

Sikhidhwaja said, “How do you say that I have not abandoned my all when I have given up my kingdom, my palace, my whole wealth and even my dear wife? Have I not relinquished everything? Do not all these actions constitute perfect and real renunciation? What more would you have me to relinquish?”

Kumbha Muni replied, “Though you have abandoned your kingdom, Palace, friends, relatives and even your wife, that does not constitute true renunciation. None of these truly belong to you. They come of themselves and go away from you. You have not renounced your egoism and desires. You can get rid of your sorrows and can attain eternal bliss and everlasting peace only by abandoning desires and egoism.”

Then Sikhidhwaja said, “The forest forms my all at present. Those rocks, trees and shrubs form my present possessions. I am quite prepared to abandon all these even, if that would constitute true renunciation.”

Kumbha Muni said, “Abandoning of the forest will not constitute true renunciation. You would still have desire and egoism.”

.... to be continued

- from the *Stories from the Yoga Vasishtha*, DLS Publication.

OBSTACLES ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH

Swami Chidananda

(Continued from June 2014)

Be a Dhira. Take courage. Do not despair. Develop a strong and iron will. Read Gurudev Sivanandaji's books, viz., “Thought Power”, “Sure Ways to Success in Life and God-realization.” You shall immensely be benefited. Get up in Brahma Muhurta at 4 a.m. Take bath or wash your hands, feet and face. Dash cold water on your face. Take the name of the Lord. Chant a few hymns in His praise. Offer prayers to the Lord. Then remember the Divine Attributes of the Lord. Meditate on them. Forget the past. Forget your weakness. You are now a spiritual personality. Ever engage in reading spiritual literature, remembering the Lord's Divine Name and doing something good and useful. Never be idle. Do not waste life in sensual pleasures. Avoid company of friends. Look upon women as Divine Mothers – Para Sakti.

Beloved Self, doubt not the mercy of God. God is merciful and kind. Take shelter in Him. Pray to Him. Sing the Name of the Lord. This will bring you peace.

“Om Shri Hanumate Namah” is the correct wording of the mantra. You may kindly do 108 malas of this sacred mantra daily. It will bring you peace of mind. Even when you are on duty as worship of the Lord, dedicate all your actions unto Him. Have trust in Him. Remember, even this will pass away.

You are a man, a young energetic youth. It is expected of you to be manly; to be bold; to be courageous. Take up courage. Try to understand life. Read Gurudev's books. Do not depend on others for your own happiness. Happiness lies in self-control, self-reliance, in selfless service and in leading an ideal life. Forget the past. Mould your life with new ideals, new thoughts. Be a hero. Thus you will be happy.

Thy kind letter has brought me a great deal of delight. The four difficulties you have listed therein concerning your Sadhana are very

common and the way out lies in your palms. It is easy. Despair or impatience can itself act as a great obstacle; therefore, preserve patience and explore new ways and fresh paths for progress.

Like the mind itself, faith does indeed flicker and waver. Faith is tried and tested even in those who have already made remarkable progress on the path. One grand way of sustaining and also helping the growth of faith is the study of inspiring literature of saints and sages and other religious and philosophical literature.

Japa will cease to be tiresome and mechanical only after a good deal of practice; only when the mind is adequately purified by Japa, BHAVANA should be developed. The Deity of the Mantra should be approached in various ways – perhaps when tiresome, the mind will take in with enthusiasm loud chanting or Kirtans. With fervor and zest and enthusiasm Japa should be taken to. Remember the essence lessness of Samsara, of worldly pleasures; and constantly bring before the mind the picture of the endless blessings that are yours for a contact with and realization of God. The third and fourth of your difficulties are identical. This difficulty disappears by gradual and persistent practice. You must have before your eyes that very best and the most pleasing image or picture of your Isthā-Devatā. It must absorb your interest, engage your attention and quicken the highest sentiments in your heart. It must be very fascinating and you must be in a position to see it when you close your eyes. You must know that it is everywhere; it is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient; that it will talk to you, smile at you. Auspiciousness, peacefulness, blissfulness, immortality or triumph over death and ignorance, are some of the Kalyana-gunas of Lord Siva. **KINDLY MARCH FORWARD with a SWIFTER PACE.**

But one thing you must always remember, that you are never alone. God is always with you. He is your *Antaryāmin*. Therefore feel His presence within and do all your work with *Atma-samarpana Bhava*. This is divine life.

Your soul is pure. Take courage. Do not lose heart. God will protect you. Forget what is past. Pray to God. He will give you strength.

If God wants to protect you nobody will do any harm. God protects His devotees. Therefore, surrender to God. Pray to Him for His mercy.

You are very dear to the Lord. Those who are dear to the Lord sometimes have to suffer for God's sake. God puts them in difficult circumstances in order to strengthen them, in order to make them perfect. Do not hate anyone. Pray to those who harm you. Pray to the Lord to give them better understanding. This is the way of any aspirant who devotes his life to attain Him.

Blessed self, suffering is part and parcel of our life. Everyone of us, at some stage or the other has to encounter it. It comes to strengthen us. It paves the way for the onward march in the spiritual path. Therefore, face it bravely. It is a blessing in disguise. Not only in times of stress but at all times an aspirant should remember God. He or she should always practice the presence of God. One should feel his presence everywhere. Do all your duties as the worship of God and offer them to the Lord at the close of the day.

Prayer is an unfailing remedy for all situations. Prayer is the trusty companion along the very path to *Mōkṣa*. Prayers bring you near to God and make you feel the Divine consciousness and your essential immortal, blissful nature.

Your attitude towards suffering is quite right, it is the attitude of a sincere seeker after Truth. Even the very Lord Christ had to undergo a lot of suffering. God sometimes puts His devotees in difficult situations in order to strengthen them spiritually. We cannot understand His ways unless we move towards Him.

Kindly take it to heart and face every situation in life calmly. Troubles and tribulations are common in everyone's life. Life is not a bed of roses. Such trying situations will strengthen you. Smile at such situations. Be witness of all these circumstances.

The Lord is everywhere. Feel His presence everywhere. His eyes behold everything. His hands protect all. Trust in Him. Take refuge in his sweet name. You need not despair. You need not be afraid of anything.

Ever live in the awareness of God. Feel His presence wherever you go. God is merciful and kind. See His mercy. He means always well. Let His Divine Name ever be upon thy lips.

Regret to learn that once again the peaceful atmosphere in your life was disturbed. This is the nature of the world. Be a mere witness of all that happens in this passing world. Grow inward. You are undisturbed Peace within. Our essential nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Do not forget this. Gurudev again and again reminded us of this by his songs and writings. Dwell within. Everything will pass away. Peace will prevail again.

God's ways are mysterious. He gives and takes. The world is the play of God. Be a witness in the world's play. There is nothing permanent in this world. God alone is real. Therefore, cling to Him with all your might and strength. Refuge in God promotes all happiness and peace.

Always remember God. Feel His presence wherever you go, for God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not present.

.... to be continued

From Eternal messages, a DLS publication

THE EGO IS THE CAUSE AND SOURCE OF THE WORLD

In the hours of silence, the ego disappears and with the disappearance of the ego, the world with all its big dimensions also disappears. Again with the rising of the ego, the world slowly assumes its manifold forms and names with all its bustle, hustle and restlessness.

Thus the ego is the cause and source of the world. The ego disappears only at the dawn of wisdom - the Light of Sun of Suns. What a havoc the little ego makes of the Divine Life of the Infinite Bliss! May silence burn away root and branch, the very consciousness of the ego !

-from the hours of silence, by Swami Omkar

THE FOREST OF BRAHMA SUTRA

Swami Krishnananda

(Continued from June 14)

Sankaracharya's commentary was commented on by Vachaspati Mishra in his exposition called 'Bhamati'. One of the disciples of Sankara, Padmapada, wrote another commentary, in his own way. They approached this subject from three view points. Together they present three angles of vision of Sankara's commentary. Of these Sureswaracharya treats the entire creation as a cosmic illusion, whose nature cannot be described by a person involved in that illusion. You cannot say Brahman creates the universe because Brahman is eternity, complete, indefinable, infinite, perfect existence par excellence. It has no necessity to create. The appearance of something being created is the result of a peculiar admixture of confusion cosmically called Maya, and individually Avidya.

Vachaspati Mishra's position is that your mind which is conditioned by what is known as Avidya or ignorance distorts correct perception and the world does not exist as it is; it appears to be existing according to the particular form of Avidya or ignorance in which you are involved.

Padmapadacharya is more realistic in his nature. He has written a commentary on the first four Sutras, called Panchapadika. Generally people follow the trend of Panchapadika only, with its great commentary called Vivarana.

Vedantacharyas and people who teach Vedanta generally do not follow Bhamati's view or Sureswaracharya's. Panchapadika's view is taken usually, with its commentary known as Vivarana. The whole text of Panchadasi written by Swami Vidyaranya follows the

line of Panchapadika of Padmapada. What is its specialty? The objective world must be existing. You cannot simply say your mind is creating the world of trees and mountains and all that. Such fantastic statements should not be made. Supposing it is accepted that your mind is creating things by Avidya operation inside, then you have to agree that the trees in the forest are created by your mind; the cows and the pigs and the dogs that are moving in the streets-they are created by you only; the mountains, the Sun and the Moon and the stars are created by your mind. You cannot accept this view and you will be expelled by the very idea that your mind is creating the Sun and the Moon and the stars. You have to follow the dictum of the Upanishads that originally the creation was effected by a Cosmic Being and not by any individual human being. In the process of creation, man is a late-comer. There were the space-time manifestation, the five Mahabhutas-earth, water, fire, air and ether, then the plantation, trees etc. man came later on. How can the late-comer, man, be regarded as the originator of the universe? An objective creator, Ishwara, is to be accepted and it is futile to say that the human mind created the universe. This is Padmapada's school of thoughts: '*Srishti-Drishti*'-creation first, seeing afterwards.

One of the subjects or themes of philosophy which Brahma Sutra refutes vehemently is Sankhya, duality of consciousness and matter, known as *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. We are usually prone to accept the Sankhya doctrine since we ourselves feel that consciousness is inside us and the world is outside. So, there is a duality. Then, what is wrong with Sankhya? Don't you believe that the world is material in its nature and you are conscious inside? This is what exactly the Sankhya doctrine proclaim. There are only two things in this universe, consciousness and matter.

What is the trouble with Sankhya, now? Why are you objecting to its doctrine? The problem is this. Consciousness can never become matter; matter can never become consciousness. They are totally

distinct things. If that is the case, how would consciousness know matter? How would consciousness come in contact with the material world, and know that it exists at all? Contact of dissimilar things is not possible. Only similar things will come in contact with each other. There is complete disparity between consciousness and matter. Your capacity to be conscious is different in nature from the objects that you see in the form of the world. How could Sankhya explain this problem? Who brings consciousness and matter together? There is no answer. This is a great defect in Sankhya. For that, to save its own skin, the Sankhya says they can come in contact with each other in another way. How?

Suppose there is pure crystal which is radiating from all sides. You bring a red rose flower near this crystal. You will see the whole crystal is red because of the reflection of the rose flower in the crystal. You may say this is a form of contact of the rose flower with the crystal. Crystal may be compared to consciousness, rose flower to matter. Don't you agree that they have come in contact with each other? The fact that the crystal has not become the rose, but imagines that it is the rose, is the bondage of the crystal.

That the matter of the world outside cannot touch you and you are pure consciousness and yet it appears as if the objects have entered your mind and tempt you and repel you, is the tragedy of the whole of life. This is one explanation the Sankhya gives. Two things do not really meet each other. They appear to meet so. If that is the case bondage would be an appearance only. There will be no real bondage. Here again a contradiction in the Sankhya. If bondage is not real, then liberation also will not be real.

What is all this great effort of Sankhya to attain liberation? What is liberation? The freedom of the crystal from having any contact with the red flower-that is Moksha. That the red flower exists even when it is taken away, far away from the crystal so that the crystal

does not appear any more red. Can you say that it is the freedom or the emancipation of the crystal? Now, what is emancipation? It is the establishment of oneself in oneself, the establishment of consciousness in consciousness. What is consciousness? The Sankhya establishes the truth that it is infinite in its nature. Consciousness cannot be divided into parts, something here and something there. Because even to imagine a sub-division in consciousness, consciousness has to be present in the division itself. So nobody can conceive a division of consciousness. That would be a self-contradiction. Then, in that case, when the infinite consciousness establishes itself in itself, as the crystal would remain pure and shining as it was, the question arises: 'where is the rose at that time?' as consciousness is infinite, it is omniscient, it knows everything, and there is no rose outside it.

If this state of omniscience of consciousness is *Mōkṣa* as the Sankhya says, does that omniscient consciousness know that there is a rose flower outside it? The rose flower is an example of matter, world, *Prakriti*. If due to the omniscience of consciousness, *Purusha*, it has to know everything, then it has to know *Prakriti* also, and even in emancipation it will come in contact with *Prakriti*. The bondage will be once again there. *Prakriti* is eternally existing according to Sankhya; it does not vanish in the liberation of a particular centre of consciousness. What does all this mean, then?

Vyasa, in the Sutras connected with this subject, refutes Sankhya philosophy vehemently and takes special pains to see that nobody gets contaminated by Sankhya dualism.

You should not imagine that Brahma Sutra is as simple as I am explaining! I have sugar-coated it and made it halva-like. Otherwise, as it is, you will not go near it. It is a very long subject.

-from *the analysis of the Brahma Sutra*, a DLS publication.

THE ASPIRANT MUST STRUGGLE

Swami Ramdas

A monkey was tied up to a peg fixed on the floor near the wall of a small room. A few feet above this peg there was a small niche like hole on the wall. The monkey was so much neglected that it had to remain at the same place for days together. So it was feeling uncomfortable not only on account of loss of liberty, but also because of having to lie and sit in the dirt and urine passed by it. Its condition was very miserable. Besides, a big stone was hanging down its back from a rope tied round its waist. It was seeking some relief. It looked up and saw the niche-hole on the wall. Suddenly it took a leap to the hole, even though the stone offered some resistance. But it could find a small space in the hole for sitting. The big stone was hanging down its waist. The down pulling force of the stone soon brought the monkey back to its place on the floor. Again it took a leap to the hole but with the same result. After a long struggle in going up and down, the rope tied round the stone got loosened gradually until at last the stone fell down. Thereafter, the monkey could securely sit in the hole without the risk of falling again.

The above story illustrates the struggle of the aspirant to concentrate his mind on God during meditation. The attachment to worldly things is the stone that exerts a force to drag down the mind again and again from a state of communion with God to the desires of the world. The mind, before meditation, is weltering in the various low and groveling desires which make it perfectly restless and unhappy. But, by constant effort at concentration and meditation, attachment to worldly pleasures, which are accompanied by pain and sorrow, gets loosened and eventually having become free from its clutches, the mind gets settled in a calm and steady meditation which leads to the realization of the divine Self.

-from *the stories as told by Swami Ramdas*,

REAL DEVOTEE SEES ONLY PURITY

- Swami Satchidananda

You are all form of Divinity. It is clear that man's purpose in life is to realize the Supreme being and enjoy eternal happiness. Sri Sivananda Maharaj called this the Divine Life Society. I am sure by that he meant that the society should help all to realize their divinity and see the divinity in every body. So all those who are members of DLS and those who call themselves devotees of other saints should feel that the only purpose of life is to realize Divinity, see Divinity in others and thus enjoy supreme happiness. How do we see Divinity in others? We cannot see God because God is invisible. But His manifestation is visible. We see Him in His manifestations. The entire Universe is His manifestation. As He is all pervading, He is seated in every atom of His manifestation. We must be conscious of His eternal presence in everything that we see – every form, every human being, every man, every woman, every animal, every creature. If we maintain that attitude we will be progressing very fast on the spiritual path and will realize our divinity.

Our *Gurudev* Papa was fond of telling the following story. Not long ago there was a *Maharaj* in India who was a very pious man. He was so devoted to God that he could feel the God's presence in everybody specially the *Sadhus* and *Sanyasis* who were wandering in those days living only on alms. This *Raja* was fond of serving such *Sadhus*. These *Sadhus* had therefore free entry into his palace. So from morning till evening many *Sadhus* and *Sanyasis* went to his palace, received right royal *Pujas* from the *Raja*. The *Raja* used to forget himself in such worship. He would offer sandal paste, flowers and *Naivedyam* to the *Sadhu* and also give him lot of valuable presents. This was a daily affair. After the *Puja* was over he would drink the *Padatirtha* with all devotion. His ministers and others in the

palace knew that some of the *Sadhus* were not genuine and were only pretending to be *Sadhus*. But they could not do anything or say anything about the *Sadhus* to the *Raja* because he would not listen to what others said about them.

One day a *Sadhu* was received right royally and was being worshipped and the *Maharaja* was fully absorbed in such worship. One of the members of the palace who knew that *Sadhu* called the Chief Minister and told him that he was bogus. But looking at the *Maharaja* fully absorbed in the worship, nobody dared to go near him and tell him the fact. So they waited for some time. After the *Puja* was over, the *Sadhu* got a number of presents by way of clothes, food items and also cash and left the palace. The Chief Minister did not tell anything to the *Raja* but waited for an opportune time. The same evening in the town, that *Sadhu*, a professional magician, was having a performance. The Ministers came to know about it and informed the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister thought that was the right opportunity to expose the magician who came as a *Sadhu*. He suggested to the *Raja* that they might go for a ride in the evening. The *Raja* agreed and they went out. After going out to different places, they came to the ground where the performance of the magician was going on. When they were near the stage the Minister asked the *Raja*, "Do you recognize that magician?" *Maharaja* looked at the magician, immediately got down from the carriage and straight went to the platform and did a *Dandavat Namaskar* to the magician. You can imagine a *Maharaja* doing a *Dandavat Namaskar* in public to a bogus *Sadhu*, a magician, who came as a *Sadhu* and received worship from him. When he got up he said, "Oh Lord, what wonderful *Lila* you play; only this morning you came to me in the form of a *Sadhu*, now you are playing the part of a magician – what all parts you can take I cannot understand. Your ways are mysterious." That was the real feeling he had. He never took Him to be a *Sadhu* or a magician. He took him to be God himself playing different parts.

This vision is however possible only for a devotee who practices seeing God in everybody. When this story was being told, one Maharaja was sitting in front of *Gurudev* when he heard that the other Maharaj in the story did *Dandavat Namaskar* to the *Sadhu*, he just jumped from his seat. He was so excited as he himself was very devoted. That much devotion we must have so as to see the divine in everybody. That is what our Masters have been teaching us and want us to put into practice. Let us pray to God to give us the vision of seeing Him alone in everybody and the awareness of His presence everywhere – seeing His hand alone working in this universe at all times and in all places. May He bless us all with this supreme vision and grant us eternal happiness.

-from the book Points to Ponder, Anandashram Publication, Kanhangad, Kerala,

HINTS TO ASPIRANTS

Just as a herd of sheep, scattered here and there, is frantically searching for water to quench its thirst, so human beings are seeking for a heaven of enlightenment, relief and tranquillity. The waters of eternal life which the thirsting humanity long for are in their own hearts. It is these waters that quench the thirst and create contentment and security. To make this nectar available to everyone, there is only one easy way and that is to take complete refuge in God's sweet and glorious Name. The power of God's Name is infallible. It can destroy the veil that separates the soul from God. It can raise human consciousness to such a height that the soul realises that it is God itself. It takes the soul to a state of utmost magnificence in which God, soul and world are resolved into one divine entity.

-Swamy Ramdas

MEDITATION

-Edited by Sista Subbarao

When a man intensely desires to reach and realise a higher, purer and more radiant life than the merely worldly and pleasure-loving life, he engages in aspiration; and when he earnestly concentrates his thoughts upon the finding of that life, he practises meditation.

Without intense aspiration there can be no meditation. Lethargy and indifference are fatal to its practice. The more intense the nature of the man, the more readily will he find meditation and the more successfully will he practice it. A fiery nature will most rapidly scale the heights of Truth in meditation when its aspirations have become sufficiently awakened.

By concentration a man can scale the highest heights of genius, but he cannot scale the heavenly heights of Truth; to accomplish this he must meditate. By concentration a man may acquire the wonderful comprehension and vast power of a Caesar; by meditation he may reach the Divine wisdom and perfect peace of a Budha. The perfection of concentration is power; the perfection of meditation is wisdom. By concentration men acquire skill in the doing of the things of life, in science, art, trade etc., but by meditation they acquire skill in life itself, in right living, enlightenment, wisdom etc., Saints, Sages, Saviours-wisemen and divine teachers are the finished products of holy meditation.

While, at first, the time spent in actual meditation is short-perhaps only half an hour in the early morning the knowledge gained in that half-hour of vivid aspiration and concentrated thought is embodied in practice during the whole day. In meditation, therefore, the entire life of a man is involved and as he advances in its practice he becomes more and more fitted to perform the duties of life in the

circumstances in which he may be placed, for, he becomes stronger, holier, calmer and wiser.

The principle of meditation is two-fold, viz.,

(1) Purification of the heart by repetitive thought on pure things.

(2) Attainment of Divine knowledge by embodying such purity in practical life.

By daily dwelling upon pure thoughts, the man of meditation forms the habit of pure and enlightened thinking which leads to pure and enlightened actions and well-performed duties. By the ceaseless repetition of pure thoughts, he at last becomes one with those thoughts and is a purified being manifesting his attainment in pure actions, in a serene and wise life.

The majority of men live in a series of conflicting desires, passions, emotions and speculations and there are restlessness, uncertainty and sorrow but when a man begins to train his mind in meditation, he gradually gains control over this inward conflict by bringing his thoughts to a focus upon a central principle.

Tell me that is upon which you must frequently and intensely think, that to which, in your silent hours, your soul most naturally turns and I will tell you to what place of pain or peace you are travelling and whether you are growing into the likeness of the Divine or the bestial. There is an unavoidable tendency to become literally the embodiment of that quality upon which one most constantly thinks. Let, therefore the object of your meditation be above and not below, so that every time that you revert to it in thought you will be lifted up. Let it be pure and unmixed with any selfish element, so shall your heart become purified and drawn nearer to Truth and not defiled and dragged more hopelessly into error.

If you are daily praying for wisdom, for peace, for loftier purity and fuller realisation of Truth and that for which you pray still far

from you, it means that you are praying for one thing whilst living out in thought and act another. If you will cease from such waywardness, **TAKING YOUR MIND OFF THOSE THINGS THE SELFISH CLINGING TO** which debars you from the possession of the stainless realities for which you pray, if you will no longer ask God to grant you that which you do not deserve or to bestow upon you that love and compassion which you refuse to bestow upon others but will commence to think and act in the spirit of Truth, you will day by day be growing into those realities, so that ultimately you will become one with them.

At the outset, meditation must be distinguished from idle reverie. There is nothing dreamy and unpractical about it. It is a process of searching and uncompromising thought which allows nothing to remain but the simple and naked Truth. Thus mediating, you will no longer strive to build yourself up in your prejudices, but forgetting self, you will remember only that you are seeking the Truth. And so you will remove, one by one, the errors which you have built around yourself in the past and will patiently wait for the revelation of Truth which comes when your errors have been sufficiently removed.

Spiritual meditation and self-discipline are inseparable. You will, therefore commence to meditate upon yourself so as to try and understand yourself. To remember the great object you will have in view will be the complete removal of all your errors in order that you may realise Truth. You will begin to question your motives, thoughts and acts, comparing them with your ideal and endeavouring to look upon them with a calm and impartial eye. In this manner you will be continually gaining more of that mental and spiritual equilibrium without which men are but helpless straws upon the Ocean of life.

Take the principle of Divine Love and quietly and diligently meditate upon it with the object of arriving at a thorough understanding of it. Bring its searching light to bear upon all your habits, your actions, your speech and intercourse with others, your every secret thought

and desire. As you persevere in this course, the Divine love will become more and more perfectly revealed to you and your own shortcomings will stand out in more and more vivid contrast, spurring you on to renewed endeavour and having once caught a glimpse of the incomparable majesty of that imperishable, Principle, you will never again rest in your weakness, your selfishness, your imperfection but will pursue that Love until you have relinquished every discordant element and have brought yourself into perfect harmony with it.

Men clinging to self and to the comfortless shadows of evil, are in the habit of thinking of Divine-Love as something belonging to a god who is out of reach, as something outside themselves and that must for ever remain outside. Truly the love of GOD is ever beyond the reach of self but when the heart and mind are emptied of self, then the selfless love, the supreme love, the love that is of GOD or Good becomes an inward and abiding reality.

And this inward realisation of holy love is none other than the love of Christ, that is so much talked about and so little comprehended, the love that not only saves the soul from sin but lifts it also above the power of temptation.

Spiritual meditation is the path-way to Divinity. It is the mystic ladder which reaches from earth to heaven, from error to Truth, from pain to peace. Every Saint has climbed it; every sinner must sooner or later come to it and every weary pilgrim that turns his back upon self and the world and sets his face resolutely towards the father's Home must plant his feet upon its golden rounds. Without its aid you cannot grow into the Divine state, the Divine likeness, the Divine peace and the fadeless glories and unpolluting joys of truth will remain hidden from you.

Select some portion of the day in which to meditate and keep that period sacred to your purpose. The best time is the very early morning when the spirit of repose is upon everything. All natural conditions will then be in your favour; the passions after the long

bodily fast of the night will be subdued, the excitements and worries of the previous day will have died away and the mind, strong and yet restful will be receptive to spiritual instruction. Indeed one of the first efforts you will be called upon to make will be to shake off lethargy and indulgence and if you refuse you will be unable to advance, for the demands of the spirit are imperative.

If you are given to hatred or anger you will meditate upon gentleness and forgiveness, so as to become acutely alive to a sense of your harsh and foolish conduct. You will then begin to dwell in thoughts of love, of gentleness, of abounding forgiveness and as you overcome the lower by the higher there will, gradually, silently steal into your heart a knowledge of the divine law of love with an understanding of its bearing upon all the intricacies of life and conduct. And in applying this knowledge to your every thought, work and act you will grow more and more gentle, more and more loving, more and more divine. And thus with every error, every selfish desire, every human weakness by the power of meditation is overcome; and as each sin, each error is thrust out, a fuller and clearer measure of the height of Truth illumines the pilgrim's soul.

As by the power of meditation you grow in wisdom you will relinquish more and more your selfish desires which are fickle, impermanent and productive of sorrow and pain and will take your stand with increasing stead-fastness and trust, upon unchangeable principles and will realise heavenly rest.

The use of meditation is the requirement of a knowledge of eternal principles and the power which results from meditation is the ability to rest upon and trust those principles and so become one with the Eternal. The end of meditation is therefore direct knowledge of Truth, God and the realisation of divine and profound peace. Strive to rise, by the power of meditation, above all selfish clinging to partial Gods or party creeds, above dead formalities and lifeless ignorance.

So believing, so aspiring, so meditating, divinely sweet and

beautiful will be your spiritual experiences and glorious the revelations that will enrapture your inward Vision. As you realise the divine love, the divine justice, the perfect law of Good or God, great will be your bliss and deep your peace. Old things will pass away and all things will become new. The veil of the material universe, so dense and impenetrable to the eye of error, so thin and gauzy to the eye of Truth, will be lifted and the spiritual universe will be revealed. Time will cease and you will live only in Eternity; change and mortality will no more cause you anxiety and sorrow, for you will become established in the unchangeable and will dwell in the very heart of immortality.

A man must pass through three gateways of surrender. The first is the surrender of desire, the second is the surrender of opinion, the third is the surrender of self. Entering into meditation he will commence to examine his desires tracing them out in his mind and following up their effects in his life and upon his character and he will quickly perceive that without the renunciation of desire, a man remains a slave both to himself and to his surroundings and circumstances. Having discovered this, the first gate, that of the surrender of Desire is entered. Passing through this gate, he adopts a process of self discipline which is the first step in the purification of the soul.

Clothing his soul with the colourless garments of Humility, a man bends all his energies to the uprooting of those opinions which he has hitherto loved and cherished. He now learns to distinguish between Truth, which is one and unchangeable and his own and others, opinions about Truth which are many and changeable. He sees that his opinions about goodness, purity, compassion and love are very distinct from those qualities themselves and that he must stand upon those divine principles and not on his own opinions. Hitherto he has regarded his own opinions as of great value, but now he ceases to elevate his own opinions and to defend them against those of others and comes to regard them as utterly worthless.

All strength and wisdom and power and knowledge a man will

find within himself but he will not find it in egotism, he will only find it in obedience, submission and willingness to learn. He must obey the Higher and not glorify himself in the lower. He who stands upon egotism rejecting reproof, instruction and the lessons of experience will surely fall, yea, he is already fallen. Said a great Teacher to his disciples "Those who shall be a lamp unto themselves, relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help, uphold fast to the Truth as their lamp and seeking their salvation in the Truth alone, shall not look for assistance to any beside themselves; they are among my disciples who shall reach the very topmost height! But they must be willing to learn".

If you would acquire overcoming power you must cultivate poise and passivity. You must be able to stand alone. All power is associated with immovability. The mountain, the massive rock, the storm tried oak, all speak to us of power, because of their combined solitary grandeur and defiant fixity; while the shifting sand, the yielding twig and the waving reed speak to us of weakness because they are movable and non-resistant and are utterly useless when detached from their fellows. He is the man of power who, when all his fellows are swayed by some emotion or passion, remains calm and unmoved. The hysterical, the fearful, the thought less, and frivolous, let such seek company, or they will fall for lack of support; but the calm, the fearless, the thoughtful and grave, let such seek solitude and to their power more power will be added.

Just as the body requires rest for the recuperation of its forces, so the spirit requires solitude for the renewal of its energies. Solitude is as indispensable to man's spiritual welfare, as sleep is to his bodily well-being; and pure thought or meditation, which is evoked in solitude is to the spirit what activity is to the body. As the body breaks down when deprived of the needful rest and sleep so do the spirits of men break down when deprived of the necessary silence and solitude. Man, as a spiritual being cannot be maintained in strength, uprightness

and peace except he periodically with-draws himself from the outer world of perishable things and reach inwardly towards the abiding and imperishable realities.

If man can find no peace within himself, where shall he find it? If he dreads to be alone with himself, what stead fastness shall he find in company? If he can find no joy in communion with his own thoughts, how shall he escape misery in his contact with others? The man who has yet found nothing within himself upon which to stand will nowhere find a place of constant rest. Without is change and decay and insecurity; within is all surety and blessedness. The soul is sufficient of itself; where the need is, there is the abundant supply. Your eternal dwelling place is within.

-from *Book of Meditation for Everyday in Life* by James Allen., published by Geeta Pracharak Sangham, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India.

HE IS THE LIGHT HIMSELF

In the hours of silence, strange as it may sound, one feels in certain ecstatic moments, that he does not need even to meditate on the Light, for he is the light himself. If he meditates on any other light or form, there is the possibility of forgetting it, for whatever there is remembrance, there is forgetfulness.

The Light divine is above remembrance and forgetfulness. All that one has to do is to allow the mortal to die. How nicely this thought is expressed in the following words. "The Omnipotence is working, let the mortal retire."

-from the hours of silence, Swami Omkar

श्रीगणेशाय नमः
श्रीशङ्कराचार्य विरचितं
काशी पञ्चकम्
Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's
Kāśī pañcakam

-Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

VERSE 5

काशीक्षेत्रं शरीरं त्रिभुवनजननी व्यापिनी ज्ञानगङ्गा
भक्तिः श्रद्धा गयेयं निजगुरुचरणध्यानयोगः प्रयागः ।
विश्वेशोऽयं तुरीयस्सकलजनमनस्साक्षिभूतोऽन्तरात्मा
देहे सर्वं मदीये यदि वसति पुनस्तीर्थमन्यत्किमस्ति ॥

kāśīkṣetram śarīram tribhuvanajanani
vyāpinī jñānagaṅgā
bhaktiśśraddhā gayeyam
nijagurucaraṇadhyānayogaḥ prayāgaḥ,
viśveśo'yaṁ tūrīyassakalajanamana
ssākṣibhūto'ntarātmā
dehe sarvaṁ madīye yadi vasati
punastīrthamanyatkimasti.

शरीरम् *śarīram* - body, काशीक्षेत्रम् *kāśīkṣetram* - the pilgrim-age center of *Kāśī*, त्रिभुवनजननी *tribhuvanajanani* - the mother of the three worlds, व्यापिनी *vyāpinī* - all-pervading, ज्ञानगङ्गा *jñānagaṅgā* - the Ganges of knowledge, भक्तिः *bhaktiḥ* - devotion, श्रद्धा *śraddhā* - faith, इयम् *iyam* - this, गया *gayā* - *Gayā*, निजगुरुचरणध्यानयोगः *nijagurucaraṇadhyānayogaḥ* - the communion of meditation on

the feet of one's preceptor, प्रयागः *prayāgaḥ* - *Prayāga*, अयम् *ayam* - this, विश्वेशः *viśveśaḥ* - Lord of the Universe, तुरीयः *turīyaḥ* - the fourth, सकलजनमनस्साक्षिभूतः *sakalajanamanassākṣibhūtaḥ* - obtaining as the witness of the mind in all living beings, अन्तरात्मा *antarātmā* - the inner ruler, यदि *yadi* - if, मदीये *madiye* - belonging to me, देहे *dehe* - in the body, सर्वम् *sarvam* - everything, वसति *vasati* - abides, पुनः *punaḥ* - so, अन्यत् *anyat* - other, तीर्थम् *tīrtham* - pilgrimage center, किम् *kim* - which one, अस्ति *asti* - is?

Body is the pilgrimage center of *Kāśī*. The all-pervading flow of knowledge is the Ganges, the mother of the three worlds. Devotion and faith are this city of Gaya. The communion of meditation on the feet of one's preceptor is the city of Prayaga. Atman, the fourth, is this Lord of the universe. It obtains in all living beings as the witness to the mind and the inner ruler. As everything exists in my body, where is the need for any other pilgrimage center?

This verse is in the metre called *sragdharā*. In Vedanta, there is a *nyāya* called *nahī nindā nyāya*, the logic of non-censure: *nahī nindā nindyam ninditum, api tu stutyam stotum*; the intent of the censure is not to censure one, but to glorify the other. Superficially, the poet seems to censure something, but his intent is to highlight the glory of the thing under consideration. The intent is to glorify the higher, not to censure the lower. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was once asked if he would go on pilgrimage to *Kāśī*. He replied that he was not interested because he sees *Śiva* in his own heart. He urged his disciples to have motiveless devotion in the heart, rather than visiting places. He was highlighting what is important rather than putting down pilgrimage.

Pilgrims usually visit *Prayāga* and *Gayā* in addition to visiting *Kāśī*. *Śrī Śaṅkara* included all the three places in the symbolism. The sacred city of *Kāśī* is body. Just as the Ganges flows in *Kāśī*, so also the manifest consciousness flows in this body. According to mythology, Ganges is called *triloka sarit*, the river of three worlds, as it flows in heaven as well as the nether world also. It is called

Mandākinī as it flows in heaven. Atman, the Awareness Absolute, manifests in the body-mind as the witness of the three states of waking, dream, and sleep.

Śraddhā, the love for knowledge is *Gayā*. In *Gayā*, people perform *śrāddha*, the ritual propitiating the manes. *Śraddhayā kūtam śrāddham*, the ritual is called *śrāddha* because it is performed with love and devotion. Generally people perform this ritual without fail, but there is a misconception that it is inauspicious, unlike temple worship. The origin of this misconception could be the general fear that people have for death. Anything connected with death is abhorred. But death is as real as life. Once a bereaving woman, prayed to Lord Buddha to revive her son. He told her that he would indeed bring the dead body to life if she could get a fistful of rice from a home that had no experience of death. *Śrāddha* is as auspicious as any prayer. In it, we worship God in the form of manes.

Meditation is *Prayāga*. *Prayāga* is the confluence of the three sacred rivers *Gaṅgā*, *Yamunā*, and *Sarasvatī* the unseen. Similarly, in meditation, as one contemplates upon *Īśvara*'s feet, the body, mind and ego resolve in *Śiva*, the Awareness of Being. *Īśvara* alone appears in the form of the preceptor and then as Atman, the sadguru, the preceptor in the form of the inner Being. Ultimately, *Īśvara* and guru resolve in Atman. Meditation on the feet is symbolic of *śaraṇāgati*, self-surrender. The seeker surrenders to the awareness of being and abides in inner silence. It is *dhyāna* yoga. It is yoga because it is the communion of the body-identified persona with the Reality that reflects in the body-mind. This communion is *Prayāga*.

Atman is *turīya*, the fourth. It lights up the entire content of the waking, dream, and sleep, and yet transcends them. The content of the waking consciousness does not affect Atman. Atman is never ever attached to the content. These states happen; they do not happen to Atman. Nothing ever happens to Atman just as the day and night do not happen to the Sun. That *turīya* is *Śiva*. The moment you watch the mind, you become the witnessing awareness. Already, you are not the persona any more; you are the impersonal intelligence

which is *Śiva*.

Śiva is *Viśveśvara*, the overlord of *Viśva*, the universe. *Viśva* is also the one who identifies with the content of the waking consciousness. *Vividha pratyaya gamyaṃ viśvam*. What we taste, touch, smell, see and hear is the *Viśva*. Who is the master of this *Viśva*? The Awareness Absolute is the master. That *Kāśī*, *Śiva*, is you. *Śiva* is obtaining in our hearts as *antarātmā*, the innermost reality.

How does one realize the *antarātmā*, the inner Reality? By realizing, “I am not the body, I am not the organs of action, I am not the sense organs, I am not the mind (emotions), I am not the intellect, I am not the ego”. Abide as pure ‘I am.’ That is the gateway to the truth. As we abide in the pure ‘I am,’ we would resolve into the pure awareness of the being, which is the *antarātmā*. That *antarātmā* is the *sākṣī* of the entire movement of the mind, not only in one’s heart but also in the hearts of every living being. It is the same Atman that reflects in the body-minds of all the living beings, like one sun reflecting in a billion dewdrops or one electrical energy shining in a million bulbs.

Śiva, *Bhavānī*, *Gaṅgā*, *Kāśī*, *Prayāga*, *Gayā* – all are here in this body. What else is needed to purify it? *Tīrtham* is that which sanctifies. There is no other place that is supposed to purify us. *Atma tīrthaṃ param tīrtham*, says the *Sūta saṃhitā*. People roam all around in search of a shrine or river that could purify them. But, they do not realize that the greatest shrine of all is *Kāśī* shining in the heart as Atman. Taking a tourist bus and visiting various pilgrimage centers with a group of people is not an end in itself. It is good for national integration, but not enough for Self-realization. The striver should discover silence, peace, and happiness, in oneself by yoga or by assimilating the truths enunciated in this encomium. That is the real pilgrimage.

hariḥ om, tat sat, śrīkūṣṇārpaṇamastu.

HOW TO BE AN IDEAL DISCIPLE

Swami Jyotirmayananda

(Continued from June 2014)

Spiritual movement is not just a question-answer process, but a process of life. You must show you are eager for Self-realization, not just talk about it. If that were not the case, anyone who has read a lot of literature could come with fabulous figurative and poetic language, saying, “O Guru, you shine greater than the Sun, and no one have I seen who is like you. Since you are omnipotent and I am the least, it would be a challenge for you to enlighten me. The least must be worked on by the best.” Thereby, one would think his point was made.

There are many people who, in the beginning, say so many wonderful things. However, within three days of staying at an ashram, if their breakfast was served cold or the other disciples did not show enough courtesy, they come forth and denounce the Guru and His ashram. Therefore, learn to be self-effacing through understanding and insight into the law of karma.

As an ideal disciple, you must develop practical action in your day-to-day life. Adapt and adjust. Be consistent in performing your duties, but not overly enthusiastic. If you take up a work, do it responsibly, not carelessly. Furthermore, be eager to learn and unfold your practical talents. The more ability you have, the more helpful you are in disseminating the Guru’s work.

A disciple is not composed of ordinary stuff. He is made of stern, stainless steel not easily corroded by a little humidity of adversity. Therefore, when you are able to cooperate with difficult people with endurance and patience, you know you are after Self-realization.

Furthermore, a disciple has a personality that does not look for

or complain about others' defects. In becoming a disciple, you discover a different pattern in relating to others – you do not become jealous when you see them progressing. In the world of discipleship, there is no room for jealousy. Success in spiritual movement does not allow a person to develop egocentricity. Greater the success, greater the humility and self-effacement.

If you turn yourself into the least of persons from an egoistic point of view, you become the best from the spiritual point of view. A disciple does not hanker for egoistic pride and acclaim. You do not expect to be served, but exist to serve the Divine Self in all. You are not greedy for worldly wealth but continue to aspire for spiritual treasures of excellent qualities.

Self-realization requires you to become the supreme monarch of heaven and earth. Keep the ideal before your mind, because you are not after an ordinary achievement. Your personality is bound to develop rare qualities of head and heart that must be constantly before your mind.

Read about these lofty qualities from the books of great sages and saints. Read the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi. Read the scriptures. See how people have struggled to make themselves perfect and what methods you can adopt to make yourself perfect. Every day is a challenge. Every day you can look within your mind and see what there is to achieve. What can you do when you feel lonely? What can you do when you feel dejected? Why do you become dejected? What can you do when your ego begins to hiss and react to others when you become moody and sentimental? How can you conquer these limitations?

By developing virtuous qualities and learning to adapt and adjust, a disciple becomes serviceable to the world through his Guru. This speaks of his love for Guru. If these qualities do not arise and simply words remain, it is not real love. Anybody can say a lot about love and devotion, but if it is not expressed, the words are of little

significance. An aspirant must love God through his life, not through his words. In that process, he must liken himself to Guru.

Discipleship- A Universal Perspective

Be a disciple and learn the lessons of life. God is teaching you through various names and forms. In the guise of adversity, God teaches the lesson of endurance and inner strength. In the guise of prosperity, he teaches humility and nobility. In the guise of sinful people, he teaches the ideal of abhorring all sins and vices. In the guise of the sick and suffering, he teaches you to develop compassion and tread the path of righteousness.

Let the sky be your Guru, teaching the lesson of expansion. Let the breeze be your Guru, teaching detachment and freedom. Let the mountains be your Guru, teaching the art of sublimity and loftiness.

When you perfect yourself as a disciple, you become a Guru elevating countless souls. A Guru lights a disciple with the flame of wisdom. In turn, a disciple becomes a Guru and kindles others. Thus, through the Guru-disciple tradition, wisdom sustains on this earth.

The Sublimity of the Guru-Disciple Relationship

All human relationships are based on external aspects and sustained by egoistic karmas of the past. However, the relationship between Guru and disciple is sustained by spiritual aspiration. It is a process of relating the soul to the Divine Self. It is a bond of spiritual relationship- a relationship of souls. A disciple does not consider Guru an external prop, but rather a symbol of God. Therefore, your movement on the spiritual path frees you from the lures of the lower self. It leads you towards detachment from the objects of the world and increasing attachment of God.

A disciple is guided by Guru in three ways: 1) by verbal instruction, 2) by example and 3) by subtle spiritual influence. If you hold the erroneous concept that Guru will simply carry you across the world process, you are like a person who expects to be nourished

by the mere presence of food. Guru serves you a dish of spiritual wisdom – it is up to you to assimilate and digest it.

An aspirant who runs from one teacher to another with the idea of gaining quick wisdom is like a thirsty person who continues to dig a well in several places. You dig a few feet here, a few feet there, but are unable to find water anywhere. If you were to persist on one place with one spiritual preceptor, you would accomplish a great deal in a short time.

A disciple must develop a deep fidelity towards Guru and His mission. You should continue to reverence all teachers and Gurus, but not allow yourself to be distracted by different teachings. There is a popular saying by Saint Kabir: "*Ekahi Sadhe sab sadhai, Sab Sadhe sab jai*" – "When you perfect one (approach) you have perfected all, but when you try to perfect all approaches (presented by many Gurus) you are unable to perfect a single one".

When your vision grows healthier, you will not be drawn to false Gurus who promise Liberation within minutes or give wrong interpretations of scriptures. You will not be tempted by miracles and magic shows.

Acquire the qualities of a disciple to the extent you can. Be guided by a spiritual preceptor. Serve your Guru wholeheartedly. Allow yourself to be moulded into a spiritual personality under the benign guidance of your Guru. Be initiated into a mantra and the mystic process of spiritual meditation. Become like Swami Vivekananda, who spread the gospel of his master in a spirit of self-effacement and humility.

If these qualities are promoted in your day-to-day life, you become a disciple. And when you do, you begin to receive inspiration from Guru. But Guru is a subtle reality, encompassing everything you encounter in the world. Therefore, as a student of life, you begin to receive guidance from everything in the world – the whole world becomes your Guru.

A disciple should always consider himself a disciple even though he may rise to lofty heights. There is a humorous instance where a disciple comes to a Guru and asks, "Tell me, who is greater, Guru or disciple?" The Guru said, "Surely, the Guru is greater". The disciple retorted, "Then make me Guru, I don't want to be a disciple anymore". Never be satisfied with any degree of perfection or allow any feeling of greatness. Always practice self-effacement.

It is a great privilege to be born a human being, yet more so to be a disciple. Of billions of striving people, a few develop aspiration to tread the path leading to the cessation of misery and the world-process. Of these thousands, a few happen to be true disciples who are guided by able teachers or Gurus.

All human relationships are backed up by illusion. Relationships with family and friends depend on your body, your youthfulness and your talents. But your relationship with Guru is based upon your soul and its movement. This relationship, therefore, brings about a different type of fulfillment.

You are a child of Immortality. You are related to God through the medium of Guru. Realize this sublime relationship through service and dedication, through sacrifice and sublimation.

Adopt a wider understanding of discipleship. God is your Guru. The world is a University of Wisdom. The soul is an eternal student. Through the Guru-disciple relationship, the soul learns to commune with God and receives higher and higher aspects of Guru. You become the Soul and Guru becomes God within you. You become Arjuna and Guru becomes Krishna. When you attain Self-realization, this relationship blends into the experience of stupendous unity, one Reality – Brahman, the Absolute. This is the final goal of the Guru-disciple relationship.

-from *International Yoga Guide*, July 2012.

WAY TO SRI KRISHNA

Dr. Mohamad Hafiz Syed

It is the innermost desire of every aspirant and devotee of God to attain His nearness and, in due course, be united with Him. Every religion, ancient and modern, has laid down certain methods of approach to Him. Some religions have enjoined the need of a mediator, a link between God and man, and in order to attain Him, one has to surrender oneself heart and soul to the mediator before one is blessed with direct contact with the Divine.

Lord Krishna, the highest manifestation of the Divine, according to Hindu tradition, is directly accessible to all earnest devotees. The only condition laid down by Him is complete self-surrender and utter devotion to Him. He says, "He who constantly thinketh of Me, not thinking ever of another, to him, the ever-steadfast Yogi, I am easily reached." (Gita – VIII, 14).

Knowing full well as he does, He knows our limitations, drawbacks and shortcomings. For a large number of people, who used the path of 'forthgoing' (Pravritti Marga), it takes time to become familiar with the laws and conditions of the path of return (Nivritti Marga).

The Blessed Lord has advised them to march forward on their adventure, step by step. The aspiration is expected to do everything as an offering unto Him. The Lord says, "Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou performest as austerity, do that as an offering unto Me." (Gita –IX, 27)

Thus the devotee is gradually accustomed to bear the Lord in mind and develop devotion to Him by means of dedication and service. Further, the Lord says, He who offereth to Me, with devotion,

a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that I accept from the striving self, offered as it is with devotion." (Gita – IX, 26)

The easiest and the best way to reach the Lord, as assured by Himself, is through sheer giving, of complete self surrender to His feet, unreservedly and unconditionally - not through any complicated rites or ceremonies. The disciple must reverse the process of grasping, which builds up a personal self, and strive to give away all that he has, including his petty self, instead of expecting to get anything from the Lord in the form of earthly gifts. He should desire God Himself and not anything that he can give him.

The first step in this process of self-elimination is the symbolic gifts of leaves and flowers and fruits, but, afterwards, the gift of self, the consecration of all acts to Him. Nor should anyone think that his gifts are not accepted by the Lord. As a matter of fact, all gifts, however small and insignificant, if offered with love and devotion are acceptable to Him, because all whole-hearted giving is a breaking down and weakening of the barrier which cuts off the soul from the wide life outside.

The smallest act of giving is a step upon that path, and leads the aspirant by easy stages to that sublime state where the whole personal life, with all its acts and thoughts and feelings, is dedicated to the service of the one in all, where acts can trammel one no more, since personal self is eliminated and nothing remains that can be bound by them.

The way to the Lord is clearly pointed out by Himself, but each has to tread it individually, by himself, no special privilege can be found upon this path. He who seems to climb with glorious ease today is not a favoured darling of the Lord, but one who is now reaping the fruits of the arduous struggle of yesterday.

There is no other way to Lord Krishna than giving of the self to

him in service. By one's own efforts each must climb the path, as the Blessed Lord dwells equally in every human heart. None who seeks to offer up himself can be refused. Though one must climb the weary loneliness, striving alone with one's own heart, yet that loneliness is a mere illusion, for there stands unseen the eternal Friend and inmost self.

Therefore, it is said that even if the most sinful of men turns to God and serves Him with undivided heart, he, too, must be accounted righteous, for he, too, has entered on Homeward Path.

Once the resolve is made and solemnly kept to act in future for the higher, not the lower, Self, progress on the path is certain. It should be borne in mind while treading this path the aspirant will have to face many failures; yet once the link with the Divine Self has been established, he cannot fall again into utter darkness, because something has been awakened within him which will never let him rest again in matter and though at times he may even fight against it, the inner pull will repeatedly be felt and fulfilled will be the words of the Blessed Lord who says, "Know, then, for certain, that my devotee perishes never."

It should be remembered that the Atman dwells within the hearts of all without the distinction of race, caste, or sect, the vedic path needed a wealth of learning and therefore, was inevitably restricted. But this path which calls only for sincere self-giving needs no scriptural or philosophic learning and so is open to all.

In conclusion, the most merciful Lord teaches us, "On Me fix thy mind, give thyself in love to Me, prostrate thyself before Me, having thus united thy whole self to Me, thou shalt come unto Me, thy Goal." (Gita – IX, 34)

-from *the Divine Life, August 2001*, a DLS publication

ASHRAM NEWS

Guru purnima was celebrated in the presence of Pujya Mataji on 17th July 2014 at Thotapalli Ashram. The importance and the significance of a Guru was explained to the Ashramites. The saying of Pujya Omkar Swami that "Atma which is present in every individual is the real Guru to oneself" was remembered on the occasion. In the memory of late Sri M Subbarayudu two gold medals were presented to two students Kundeti Durga and Sreenu. A cash prize of Rs. 1116/- was presented to them by Pujya Mataji. Sri K Satyanarayana and Sri N Satyanarayana have presented 500 rupees each to Chy Dhanalakshmi. Pujya Mataji distributed prasada to all the participants.

Monthly distribution of essential commodities to old people was done at the main Thotapalli Ashram and at its branches Visakhapatnam, Kakinada and Kotagiri during June, July and August 2014.

Your contributions and support:

1. Annadanam : a) Permanent- Rs. 5,000/-, Rs. 10,000/-, Rs. 20,000/-, 25,000/-
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