



PEACE

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Founder : H.H. Sri Swami Omkar

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Kaivalyopaniṣat

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

सम्पश्यन् ब्रह्म परमं याति नान्येन हेतुना ॥

saravabhūtasthamātmānaṃ

sarvabhūtāni cātmani,

sampaśyan brahma paramaṃ

yāti nānyena hetunā.

One attains the Supreme Brahman by seeing one's Self as abiding in all life forms, and also all life forms in one's self; not in any other way.

In an enlightened soul's vision, the Self includes all living beings. He sees all living beings as himself. In this context Swami Ramatirtha describes a process of expansion of the Self. A person is totally selfish. He works entirely for personal gain; even the family and the society are exploited for self-gratification. Such a person's activity can be compared to a spindle that rotates around itself. His petty body identified self is concave to all; it includes none. Now consider a family person whose self includes all members of the family, but yet concave to the rest of the humanity. He can say "I am all", with reference to the family. His life of activity resembles that of a horse going round the race course. The idea of the Self can further expand to include the community, nationality, humanity and ultimately all life forms. The expansion of the Self is complete when one knows oneself as Atman, the timeless and spaceless Reality. All inhibitions, concavities, crudities of mind, definitions and categorizations, which divide, will be shed in the wake of Self-knowledge.

(The detailed explanation of this Mantra can be had from *Kaivalyopaniṣat* (mantra 10) Published by Brahma Vidya Kuteer, #501, Deccan Corner Building, Diamond Point, Sikh Village, Secunderabad - 500 009, Telangana, India, Ph. 040- 2750 2035).

(*Tattva Prakāṣikā* by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati)

Prayer

मेधा देवी जुषमाणा न आगाद्विश्वाची भद्रा सुमनस्यमाना ।
त्वया जुष्टा नुदमाना दुरुक्तान् बृहद्वदेम विदथे सुवीराः ॥ १

*medhā devī juṣamāṇā na āgādviśvācī
bhadrā sumanasyamānā,
tvayā juṣṭā nudamānā durukṭān bṛhadvadema
vidathe suvīrāḥ.* 1

विश्वाची *viśvācī* - all-knowing; भद्रा *bhadrā* - all auspicious (the source of welfare); सुमनस्यमाना *sumanasyamānā* - with a mind that is pleased with us; मेधा देवी *medhā devī* - the goddess Medha; जुषमाणा *juṣamāṇā* - blessing; नः *naḥ* - us; आगात् *āgāt* - may come; दुरुक्तान् *durukṭān* - vile words; नुदमानाः *nudamānāḥ* - rejecting; त्वया *tvayā* - by you; जुष्टाः *juṣṭāḥ* - blessed; सुवीराः *suvīrāḥ* - having good offspring; विदथे *vidathe* - having gained knowledge; बृहत् *bṛhat* - about Brahman; वदेम *vadema* - may we speak.

May the all-knowing, all-auspicious Goddess Medha (the intellect personified) have pleasing thoughts about us (be pleased with us). May She come to us and bless us. O! Goddess, may we give up vile speech and by your grace, be blessed with good offspring. May we gain the knowledge (with your blessings) and extol Brahman.

- from *Medha Sūktam, Vaidika Sūkta Manjari*; Tattva Prakashika by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati.

MEDITATION

क इह नु वेद बतावरजन्मलयोग्रसरं
यत उदगादृषिर्यमनु देवगणा उभये ।
तर्हि न सन्न चासदुभयं न च कालजवः
किमपि न तत्र शास्त्रमवकृष्य शयीत यदा ॥

*ka iha nu veda batāvarajanmalayograsaram
yata udagādrṣiryamanu devagaṇā ubhaye,
tarhi na sanna cāsadubhayam na ca kālajavaḥ
kimapi na tatra śāstramavakṛṣya śayita yadā .*

In this world of later origin, can anyone comprehend You, the ancient One, the First-born and Self-created, from whom sprang forth Brahma, the Creator of the worlds, together with His divine associates presiding over the mind, the senses, and the other parts of the body and corresponding elements in Nature?

It is, therefore, stated in the Vedas that when the supreme Person withdraws the universe into Him-self, there exists neither the beings born under the range of cause and effect, nor the awareness of Time. Even the scriptures stand mute, for, although they indicate the supreme Knowledge, they are unable to reveal Your supreme State.

- from *Sṛtigīta* by Swami Gabhirananda,
Advaita Ashram Publication

A SONG OF PEACE

Swami Omkar

My only first and last wish, 9-12-1951, KAILAS

This is one of my stray thoughts, a mere musing in Kailas.

Question: If you have only a few moments, not even minutes, to live on the earth plane, if you were asked to express your last wish by the Almighty the All-intelligence, what would be your only last wish?

Answer: My only first, last and final wish, without the least hesitation or choosing among other wishes or thoughts, would be Peace. Peace within, Peace without, Peace above, Peace below, Peace around, Peace on earth, Peace in heaven, Peace in the past, present and future. Peace unto the minerals, plants, animals, humans and to the celestial beings in the unknown regions. Peace unto the dead and living.

My wish is to see that Peace is established in the heart, then in the home; then Peace in the community, Peace in the nation and Peace in the world at large.

Peace has been my one thought or wish not only now, but in the past and it will be the same wish until the last breath dissolves in the Universal whole.

I wish to close my eyes with this one thought of Peace, allowing Peace to pervade and permeate the whole universe from the tiniest atom to the biggest planet, for Peace is the basis and foundation of both the manifested and unmanifested worlds.

"My peace I leave with thee", were the words of blessed Christ. Buddha, the Lord of compassion, left his Nirvana as his legacy in the world of humanity. Sri Krishna, the Lord of wisdom, bequeathed his immortal Gita, the Celestial song of Peace, to the world and seekers of Truth .. Thus many Saviours, the forms of different religions

and various sects, contributed Peace to the world of strife and struggle to establish Peace on earth and goodwill among Nations.

May Peace abide in the North and South, in the East and West and may all the creatures on land, sea and sky and heaven be full of Peace, Infinite Peace, Eternal Peace, Universal Peace, Indivisible Peace, everlasting Peace, All-embracing Peace, which is the Soul and goal of the Individual as well as humanity! This is the first thought and last wish and prayer of Omkar.

OFFERING:

My Loving Reader, I take joy in offering this Song of Peace to you, as my personal offering, wishing you Peace, for the Peace of all!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

CHARGE YOUR BATTERY WITH GOD-HOOD

Open your eyes and see

Light and eternal love !

Open your eyes and feel

Eternal Bliss from above !

Man is like a battery. If he is aware of God, the battery is charged; if not, like the discharged battery, he is lifeless. But the metaphor is not capable of complete application. While the battery requires the power to charge it from outside, the power that is to animate man is within himself. All that he has to do, is to become aware of his eternal possession. He should only open his eyes and see that he is ever full of light, life and love.

OM TAT SAT OM !

Swami Omkar - from Cosmic Flashes

DANGER ZONE OF TOO MUCH TALKING

Swami Omkar

Question: Is too much talking more harmful than drinking coffee and tea?

Answer : Certainly, over talking and needless talking is really more harmful than drinking of tea or coffee.

Question: Why?

Answer: Coffee and Tea only poison one's system whereas talking too much wastes one's life as well as the life of others.

One begins drinking of mild tea or coffee in the company of friends, to satisfy them. This slowly makes him a slave of stimulants and it leads into smoking etc. Fortunate are they who can be careful in the little beginnings as one thing leads to another and words, too many words, create confusion and trouble in the long run.

Time is too precious to be wasted in empty words, useless words and especially harmful words. One reaches the Danger Zone in talking when one begins to talk ill of others. Every word should be helpful and constructive but not destructive and discouraging. Some words, words of sympathy and love are very encouraging and helpful to the weak, sickly and helpless, giving hope and added strength. Some negative words are very depressive, taking away the strength and joy from one's life. The most dangerous words are the thoughtless words that create ingratitude and suspicion.

Do not cut the tree under which you are sitting, enjoying its cool shade. Rather try to water it with your love, understanding and sympathy. Let every word that comes from you be a word of God, for you are a child of God. Verily, you are the Living Image of God. God has no other body on earth now than yours. So let your words be the words of God, leading towards Light, Life and Love. Love of man is love of God. Let us face God in all His manifested forms. How blessed it is to see Him in all of you!

Let our words be of God. Let our thoughts be of God. Let our deeds be to glorify God and His children. Let not poisonous drugs and harmful stimulants ruin our system within. Similarly, let not useless and needless words create trouble and misunderstanding, making us and others lifeless and soul-less. If we cannot speak words of hope, joy and strength, let us leave to be silent at least, for Silence is God and God is Silence.

May all homage be unto the worshippers of Silence, Supreme Silence, Waveless Silence!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

THE RICHEST TREASURE - MYSELF

The Inner self is my richest treasure.

I cannot lose it; it is my soul.

The Inner self is the Highest treasure,

To find it, to keep it - my only goal.

I am fortunate, for I have found the richest treasure. My treasure consists not in lands or buildings, in pounds or in any articles. My treasure lies in myself. I have found my Soul, in that I have acquired everything. The Self is the richest treasure in heaven or earth. Everything is desired for the sake of the Self - *Atmanah Kamaya*. Self comes first, and last, and final. Having found It, verily have I found everything.

OM TAT SAT OMI

Swami Omkar - from Cosmic Flashes

FEVER OF DOING GOOD

Swami Omkar

11-9-1948, 4 AM, KAILAS

There are fevers of different kinds and of different degrees too. There is the ordinary fever, then there is the shivering malaria and the dangerous typhoid. These fevers are low, medium or high, varying in the degrees of temperature.

Similarly, there are different kinds and degrees of fevers in doing good also. There are mild fevers that have come today or yesterday or recently and there are fevers of long standing, chronic type.

BE GOOD AND DO GOOD is a wonderful aspiration and ideal. For the man who is centred in goodness, service flows from him freely and spontaneously. He is not even conscious that he is doing good. His is like that of a shining dew drop or of a fragrant flower, or a twinkling star, or an innocent laughing child.

Such a one is free of all fevers. As quinine or some other medicine quells and suppresses fevers of every kind, so also the fever of doing good is checked or eradicated by the best medicine--the infallible remedy of GNOSIS--WISDOM. In wisdom, in the consciousness that all is God, when one is blessed with the PERSONAL EXPERIENCE of the one interpenetrating Presence, all fevers of doing good cease, the temperature comes down to normal degree. Man becomes sane, humble and natural. He is no longer naughty and arrogant with the thought of saving the world.

It is the stark ignorance of his Higher Self that makes a man restless and run after shadows, with the fever of doing things and getting fame and name for the perishable body and thus suffers from the different fevers of every type.

When a man is blessed with WISE SILENCE, the wisdom of his SOUL, he is happy, contented, restful and free, from all mild or chronic fevers.

Behold! He is like the SUN, flooding the world with light, without the least consciousness that he is doing good or saving lost souls. Fever makes a man delirious: So also ignorance makes a man restless and selfish, making him to bustle and hustle, disturbing his Peace and of others, in the name of doing good.

The least good, the little good that we can do to our fellow men and to the world of humanity and to the Almighty God, is to be free from all fevers of selfishness and ignorance and to abide forever in the LIGHT of lights, restfully and peacefully, glorifying God both in work and silence.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM! OM! OM!

VITALITY OF THREE KINDS

Be active as much as you can.

In Vitality centered in Peace,

Serene and immersed in it,

You 'll win divinest bliss.

From every side you are asked not to be idle, to be doing something, to be active. You have to be active, vital. Yes, but what sort of activity, what kind of vitality? Is it the ever bustling activity of the modern industrial age, or is it the slow but startling vitality of the panther or the cave-man? Neither; for the one is *rajasic* and the other *tamasic*. It is activity founded on calm, vitality centred in Peace, that you should cultivate. "*Karmani akarma-yah pasyeth, akarmani-cha karma-yah.*" Serene and immersed in inner Peace, you should ever be. Active you should be also, but not for the sake of the ego. For the Divine and in the Divine should you be active. From there should your vitality be derived.

OM TAT SAT OM !

Swami Omkar - from Cosmic Flashes

PRACTISE SADHANA AS IN THE PRASTHANATRAYI

Swami Sivananda

Sri Veda Vyasa has done unforgettable service to all humanity for all times by editing the four Vedas, writing the Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Brahma Sutras. We can attempt to repay this debt of gratitude we owe him only by constant study of his works and practice of his teachings imparted for the regeneration of humanity in this Iron Age or Kali Yuga. In honour of this divine personage all Sadhakas and devotees perform Vyasa Puja on the full-moon day in the month of Ashadha (July-August). Hence the day is called Vyasa Purnima or Gurupurnima. Mark fully the deep significance of this great day. Ashadha Purnima heralds the Chaturmas and the setting in of the eagerly awaited rains. The water drawn up and stored as clouds in the hot summer now manifests in plentiful showers that usher in the advent of fresh life everywhere. Even so, do you all begin seriously to get into actual working all the theory and philosophy that you have stored up in you through patient study. Commence practical spiritual Sadhana right from this day as described in the Prasthanatrayi, viz., the Bhagavadgita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras.

The Bhagavadgita: The Bhagavadgita is a textbook of practical Sadhana for one and all down from the peasant ploughing his fields right up to the philosopher of the Advaita Vedanta. It discards no aspect of man. It takes into consideration the different aspects of action, emotion, will and understanding of which man is an embodiment. It is Brahmanavidya and Yoga Sastra theory as well as its practice. It is Krishnarjuna Samvada, the meeting of the individual and the Supreme. The Gita is not a book of metaphysical theory, but is a guide for the spiritual man in his daily life of conscious self-effort for attaining Perfection. While the path of pure knowledge is possible only for the highly cultured man, the method of the Gita is simple, which is within the reach of all, i.e., devotion to God.

The Gita aims at the perfection of man in order to become the

Divine. The life of Krishna Himself is the best example of the Gita Ideal of Life. His life itself is the best and the most satisfactory commentary on the Gita. To be like Krishna is to be a perfect man of the Gita ideal. To be like Him, one has not got to choose to be a devotee, a philosopher, a mystic or a man of action. One has to be all these at once. He may start by becoming any one of them in accordance with his predominant nature, but after sometime he will realise that advancement on any one of the so-called paths needs a parallel advancement along all others. There cannot be a one-sided expansion of the individual. Perfection in order to be real and lasting should be all-round. To realise the Absolute is to become the Absolute which is the All. One has to be Infinite, for which he has to develop the entire being.

Our minds are the arenas, the inner battlefields of the daily Mahabharata war, where at every moment we are in a war situation where one set of ideas fights against the other. We all, therefore, need the Light, the wisdom and the advice which Lord Krishna bestowed on Arjuna. The Supreme Lord, while discussing with Arjuna the vital issues of life, went to the very root of the riddle of the universe, and revealed such truths as are of universal application. Krishna spoke to the whole of humanity through Arjuna on the eternal verities of existence. Krishna typifies the Eternal and Arjuna typifies man with his imperfections. The instructions of the Gita are meant for man in general and not to a particular individual.

Be in the world. Serve humanity. Love all equally. But be not attached to it. Be detached. Live in the Self. Rest contented in the Self. Have no binding ambitions in life. Serve, love, give, purify, meditate and realise. Surrender yourself to God. This is the gist of the Gita.

Act with the consciousness that all is the Self, all is God. God is man and woman, and the old man tottering on the road. There is no reason for attachment to objects. All is merely the Self. See yourself in every being. Love others as you love your own self. Do not see differences of body. See the common essence inside. Have Akartri-Bhava, Narayana-Bhava when you do actions. Action has to

be done so long as you know that you possess a body. It is the very nature of the body to act. Mind will compel you to act. Nature is powerful. Even intelligent men are her victims. Surrender to the Lord is the only way to get rid of the bondage of Prakriti (Nature) or Maya (illusion).

Be a witness to all events in life. Do your own prescribed duty. Serve without expectation of fruits. This is the essence of Karma Yoga.

The Lord is seated in the hearts of all beings. He is the Inner Ruler, the Immortal. Run to Him alone and take shelter in Him. There is no other way for liberation. All your duties will perish, all sins will be burnt and all doubts will be cleared when you have unselfish surrender to the Lord.

Control the fluctuations of the mind. Sit in a secluded place and concentrate on the Self. Wisdom will then dawn and destroy all ignorance. The effect is Immortality. Supreme Bliss without decay is the fruit. Eternal satisfaction is the Goal of all aspirations. This is achieved through the Yoga of Synthesis explained above. This is what the Gita has to say to the human world.

The Upanishads: The Upanishads constitute the central basis of Hindu Religion and Philosophy. They are the Vedanta or the end of the Vedas, the culmination of Knowledge. Nothing can be a match to the wondrous suggestiveness of the Upanishads. They have satisfied the greatest thinkers of the world, and they have pacified the greatest spiritual men here. Nothing that went before or after has been able to surpass the Upanishads in the depth of Wisdom and the message of Satisfaction and Peace. Dadhyanch, Uddalaka, Sanatkumara, Sandilya and Yajnavalkya are some of the outstanding philosophers and sages of the Upanishads, who have lit up the torch to the path of Perfection. The Upanishads mainly preach Knowledge through philosophising. They are the textbooks for the seeker after the Self. They are styled by different names: Brahma-Vidya, Adhyatma-Sastra, Vedanta, Jnana. One who practises the teachings of the Upanishads attains the Supreme. Let us see some of the essential teachings of the Upanishads:

Life is not a misery. One should live for hundred years by performing action without attachment. Life is not a bondage when it is looked with the proper light. Such a man of proper knowledge looks on all beings as his own Self and his Self as all beings. To him everything is his own Self, and he is not affected by grief, delusion or sorrow of any kind.

Mortal things are ephemeral and so are not worth pursuing. Even a whole life of many years is only very slight. It is nothing. There is no use of enjoying objects. Man is not satisfied with wealth. He craves to become Immortal even against his own conscience. Unfortunately he pursues after the pleasant as against the really good. The good is one thing and the pleasant another. The one liberates and the other binds. One should not catch the pleasant though it is tempting for a moment.

The mind and the senses always run outwards. Only the man of self-discipline and perseverance can gaze inward and experience the State of the Atman as it really is. The childish ones who have no knowledge of the Truth, run after external pleasures and they fall into the widespread net of Death. Only the wise, knowing the state of Immortality, seek the Stable Brahman among things which are impermanent here.

The Atman or the Brahman has no connection with the world of change. As the sun is not sullied by the faults of the eyes, the Antaratman is not sullied by the defects of the world. As one fire has entered the world and becomes corresponding in form to every form, so the one Antaratman of all things corresponds in form to every form and yet is outside all these.

One need not be anxious to possess things of the world. Whatever is here, that is there, whatever is there, that is here. He obtains death after death who perceives diversity in the world. There are not many things here actually. The One Supreme Substance appears as many things, clothed in different names, forms and actions.

The goodness, the light, the pleasure and the beauty of

the world are not to be found there even in name. Even the splendour of the Sun and the grandeur of the creator is superseded by the Absolute. That State is experienced when the senses cease to work together with the mind, when the intellect does not move and when there is mere consciousness. When all desires that are lodged in the heart fall off, then the mortal becomes Immortal. Herein he attains Brahman .

The state of becoming the Absolute is not a loss of all that we love, but is the perfect fulfilment of all our aspirations. Our finitude is broken, imperfections destroyed and we are installed in the blessed State of Eternal Satisfaction. All our desires are fulfilled at once and at the same time. We become the Source of Infinite Joy and Bliss. We experience birthlessness and deathlessness. None is superior to us.

The Infinite Fullness (Plenum) alone is Bliss. There is no Bliss in the small finite things. Only the Infinite is Bliss. Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else - That is the Infinite. But when one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else - that is the small finite. The Infinite Fullness is the Immortal and the small finite is mortal. That Infinite Fullness alone is everywhere. It is all this.

The Self is an ocean without a shore and a surface. It is mere Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Where there is duality, as it were, one can speak to the other, see the other and understand the other, but where everything is just one's own Self, then who can speak to whom, who can see whom, who can understand whom? That is the Supreme End. That is the Supreme Blessing. That is the Supreme Bliss. On a part of this Bliss other creatures are living.

Feel that the whole world is your body, your own home. Melt or destroy all barriers that separate man from man. Idea of superiority is ignorance or delusion. Develop Visvaprema - all embracing love. Unite with all. Separation is death. Unity is eternal life. Feel that the whole world is *Visvavrindavan*. Feel that this body is a moving temple of God. Wherever you are, whether at home, office, railway station or market, feel that you are in the temple. Consecrate every act as

an offering unto the Lord. Transmute every work into Yoga by offering its fruits to God. Have *Akarta*, *Sakshi Bhava*, (attitude of non-doership and of being a mere witness) if you are a student of Vedanta. Have *Nimitta Bhava*, if you are a student of *Bhakti Marga*. Feel that all beings are images of God. *Isavasyamidam Sarvam* - this world is indwelt by the Lord. Feel that one power of God works through all hands, sees through all eyes, hears through all ears. You will become a changed being. You will enjoy the highest peace and bliss.

The Brahma-Sutras: The Brahma Sutras deal with the enquiry into the nature of Brahman. Why should you enquire about Brahman? Because the fruits obtained by sacrifices, etc., are ephemeral, whereas the knowledge of Brahman is eternal. Life in this earth and life in heaven which you will attain on account of your virtuous deeds are transient. If you know Brahman you will enjoy everlasting Bliss and Immortality. That is the reason why you must start the quest of Brahman- the Absolute Truth or the Ultimate Reality.

A time comes when a person becomes indifferent to *Karmas*. He knows that *Karmas* cannot give him everlasting, unalloyed happiness which is nor mixed with pain, sorrow and fear. Therefore naturally a desire arises in him for the knowledge of Brahman - the all pervading, eternal Soul - which is above *Karmas*, which is the source of eternal happiness.

The third chapter of the Brahma Sutras, entitled *Sadhana-Adhyaya*, deals with practical methods for attaining the realisation of Brahman. This chapter determines those methods or *Sadhanas* which are the means for attaining the highest Reality or the Infinite. In the first and the second Padas of this chapter are taught two things, viz., a strong yearning or burning desire (*Mumukshutva*) to realise Brahman or the Final Emancipation and an equally strong disgust (*Vairagya*) towards all objects other than Brahman; because these are the two fundamental things among all *Sadhanas*.

In order to induce *Vairagya* or dispassion, the Sutras show in the first Pada the imperfections of all mundane existence. This they base on the *Panchagni Vidya* or the doctrine of five fires of the Chandogya Upanishad in which is taught how the soul passes after

death from one condition to another. This is done in order to create Vairagya or indifference to sensual enjoyments herein and hereafter. In the second Pada are described all the glorious attributes of the Supreme Brahman - His Omniscience, Omnipotence, Loveliness, etc., in order to attract the soul towards Him, so that He may be the sole object of quest. In the third Pada, the author of the Brahma Sutras sets himself the task of ascertaining the end and aim of the *Vidyas* or *Upasanas* -. Meditations as prescribed in the *Srutis*. *Sruti* teaches us to meditate on Brahman either directly or through the medium of some *Pratikas* or symbols, such as the sun, ether, food, mind, vital force, the Purusha residing in the eye, the empty space (*Daharakasha*) within the heart, *Om* or *Pranava* and the like. These different methods of approaching the Impersonal Absolute are known as *Vidyas* or *Upasanas*. This section discusses these various *Vidyas* by means of which the Supreme Soul is attained by the individual. The aim of all these *Vidyas* is the realisation of Brahman. The *Vidyas* appear to be different only from the viewpoint of difference in the symbols, but the goal everywhere is the same. Remember this point always. Bear this in mind constantly. You will have to search Brahman and adore Him in and through the symbols; but these symbols must not usurp His place. You must concentrate and fix the mind on these symbols and think of His attributes such as Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Purity, Perfection, Freedom, etc. Some attributes of Brahman are found common in some of the *Vidyas*. You should not consider yourself as an entity distinct from Brahman. This is a fundamental or vital point.

A proper understanding of the Vedantic texts leads to the final emancipation of man. It is not necessary for him to exert or do any superhuman feat or action. It is only mere understanding that it is a rope and not a snake that helps to destroy one's fear of the snake in the rope-sanke analogy. Knowledge of Brahman cannot come through mere reasoning. You can attain this knowledge through intuition or revelation. Intuition is the final result of the enquiry into Brahman. The object of enquiry is an existing substance. You will have to know this only through intuition or direct cognition (*Aparoksha-anubhiti* or *Anubhava* - experience). *Sravana* (hearing

of the *Srutis*), *Manana* (reflection on what you have heard) and *Nididhyasana* (profound meditation on Brahman) lead to *Brahmakara-Vritti* (continuous flow of the thought of Brahman) which destroys the *Mula Avidya* or primitive ignorance - the root cause of all bondage, births and deaths. When the ignorance or veil is removed, Brahman which is self effulgence reveals Itself or shines by itself in its pristine glory and ineffable splendour.

May the blessings of Sage Vyasa and all the preceptors of the world be ever upon you all!

- from the *Divine Life Society Magazine* July 1995, Sivanandanagar, Tehri-Garhwal, Uttaranchal, India

THOUGHTS ARE ABSENT IN THE MAN OF REALIZATION

In the Hours of Silence, one is free from the finite thoughts of : I, you and he etc. The thought 'I' have done this in the past, or doing this now, or going to do that in the future, all such thoughts, which are bound and limited by time, are absent in the Man of Realization for he has risen above past, present and future.

He is no longer in the grip of time, space or causation. He revels in a world of his own, where time is nothing and Perpetual. Light alone exists , within, without, above, below and all around.

OM! OM! OM!

- from the Hours of Silence, by Swami Omkar

AN AWAKENING MUST BE FOLLOWED BY PURPOSEFUL ACTION

Swami Chidananda

Homage unto the all-pervading Cosmic Being, the Universal Spirit, *Visvatma*, the Eternal Reality! And worshipful adorations to Gurudev, that very Cosmic Being manifest as a world awakener, a world spiritual teacher and a pathpointer!

A Guru is a Guru because he brings into our life the light of wisdom, an awakening impulse. He points out to us the path that leads to life's fulfilment - to the *jivatma* attaining *paramatma*. He points out the means and the methods, the direction and the path. He awakens the *jivatma* from the slumber of Self-forgetfulness, the slumber of ignorance, *ajnana*, the slumber of *avidya*, *dehadhyasa* (identification with the body).

The Guru is not only an awakener, he inspires us to make use of our wakefulness in purposeful action. If one, who is awakened from his Self-forgetfulness, his ignorance of his destiny, does not engage in purposeful and proper action, does not put this wakefulness into highest use, the awakening, though better than slumber, proves infertile, proves fruitless. Therefore, the ending note of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the most important utterance of Arjuna, is: "karishye - I shall act, I shall do." Arjuna, who said, "No, I shall not do, I shall not fight," in the beginning, ends up by saying: "I shall do your bidding." It is almost an answer to the Upanishadic call of *uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata* (Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached). The fallen Arjuna is now not only awakened from his ignorance but, he stands up ready to fight.

Wakefulness with action is called *sadhana*. It is called *abhyasa*. Yoga is primarily engaging in a self-determined and self-directed activity which propels the jiva ever higher, upward and Godward, towards God-realisation - thus the significant term *yoga abhyasa*.

The Guru, therefore, is an awakener and an inspirer. He is a path-*pradarsaka* - he is one who throws light upon the path, who

shows the path. But the treading of the path must be determinedly undertaken and engaged in by the fortunate disciple. Discipleship is in obedience and in action, in being and doing. "Be what I want you to be. Do what I want you to do." Thus says the Guru.

All Yoga is, therefore, the response of the seeking soul, the *sadhaka*, the *Jijnasu*, to the call of the *Guru*, in the same manner as Arjuna responded by *karishye* (I will do), and followed it up by standing and picking up the bow once again in his hand. Thus he engaged in the action that was called for at that time and attained victory in the war. Eighteen days of ceaseless activity brought about victory.

Therefore, diligently the sincere seeking soul must engage in spiritual *sadhana*, knowing that the source of all power and energy is God Himself. "Thy will be done, and let me have the insight and the power to engage in action for the due fulfilment of Thy will." Even so, the disciple should engage in spiritual *sadhana*, but without a sense of *abhimana*, ego. "Yes, even this I am enabled to do by Your supreme mercy and grace. *Naham karta harih karta tvatpuja karma chakhilam* (I am not the doer; Lord Hari is the doer. All work is Thy worship)."

A mother, with great love, prepares food for her slumbering child. She wakes it up, places the food before the child and urges it to eat. But the eating has to be done by the child. There is an old saying: "Two men can take a horse to a river, but twenty men cannot make it drink." That has to be done by the horse.

Therefore, *sadhana* is the hallmark of the *sadhaka*; *yoga-abhyasa* is the hallmark of the Yogi; prayer, worship, is the hallmark of the devotion of the devotee. Discipline, self-control, ceaseless effort to ingather the mind and to check its wandering, to centralise it, to focus it towards the great ideal - this is the hallmark of the dhyana-yogi. Worshipfully engaging in one's duties and activities, remembering the Divine Being throughout the activity itself, in the midst of the activity, and offering up the activity at the feet of the supreme, ever-present Reality is the hallmark of a true *karma-yogi*.

Thus, in the ultimate context, all spiritual life, all Yoga, all

sadhana is the devout engaging in the right and appropriate kind of spiritual activity by the seeker, the *sadhaka*, the *Yogi*, the devotee. It is, therefore, upon this plane of action and reaction, action and the fruit of action, this outer plane, that the law is fulfilled. Significantly, in the Gita, the Lord says that whether you wish it or not, the Cosmic Nature, which resides in you as your own human nature with its outgoing tendency of the mind, will impel you, compel you, oblige you, to engage in numerous and various activities. When this is inevitable, why not be wise and direct it towards your divine destiny? Why not be wise and spiritualise it? Why not be wise and make it a means of connecting yourself with the Divine, linking yourself with the cosmic source of your being? Why not be wise?

Such wisdom in action is called Yoga- *yogah karmasu kausalam*. "If I have to engage in action, let me not be foolish and make it my problem. Let me not allow it to take me into further bondage, greater self forgetfulness. Let me not allow action to be a breaking up of my connection with the Divine. On the contrary, let me be wise, let me have wakefulness and an inner awareness so that my activity is done with an attitude and an approach that makes it a means of moving towards the Goal."

Thus acting, the actor becomes not merely a karma-yogi, he also becomes a *jnani-yogi*. Action is based on wisdom, infilled with *jnana*. And he desires to elevate his activity to such sublime heights because of his great desire, his love for attaining the Lord. There is in it a keen longing to attain the Supreme. There is *bhakti*. *Bhakti* and *jnana* automatically become the moving, forces infilling all activity.

So, the true Yogi cannot help being a *jnani*, a *bhakta*, a Yogi even in the midst of activity. Therefore, the activity of people who have adopted the spiritual life, who have entered the path of Yoga, who are engaged in *sadhana*, is not the mere activity of the man of the world, the bound soul who is in love with the world and its things, a *samsari* - one who is impelled by desire, by attachment, by craving, the urge to taste the transitory pleasures of the petty objects of this universe. That action leads to greater darkness and bondage. The activity of one who is awakened, one who is wise, is a spiritual activity in every sense of the term; in which the ingredients constitute *jnana*,

bhakti, *Yoga*, and it is filled with *vairagya*, dispassion.

It is a totally different kind of activity a liberating activity, a spiritual activity, a God-oriented activity, a wisdom-based activity, an activity at the centre of which there is wakefulness, an awareness, and a lofty and sublime purpose. So, the inner *svarupa* of this activity is purely spiritual; it is Yogic, This is the inner content of those who have adopted the life spiritual, who have entered into the path of Yoga, who are engaging themselves in spiritual *sadhana*.

Therefore, may your life be a confluence of *bhakti*, *jnana* and *Yoga*, and may all your activity be a *sadhana* for God-realization. May it be God-oriented directed towards the supreme Goal, thus helping you to connect yourself with God at every step, at every moment. May the grace of the Divine and the choicest blessings of the Holy Master enable you to understand this aspect of your life, to reflect upon it and to elevate your so-called ordinary day-to-day life to a lofty height of higher awareness, purposefulness and direction.

Thus may all of your life be to you a fulfilment of this central aspiration, not part of your life but all of your life. May your entire life be a divine life.

Towards this end, strive with diligence and wisdom, unaffected by the outer factors that constitute the passing scene around you. That will continue to be what it is. The transformation is within yourself. You cannot change the outer world, but there is every need for you to be a changed being inwardly. That is the secret of a successful spiritual life.

May you abide in God. May you live, move and have your being in Him. All this and more has been put into the Universal Prayer of Gurudev for our guidance. May its rich contents and its revealing wisdom be to you a daily new beginning in your spiritual life. "Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever." May it remind you and help to enable you to ever abide in the Eternal, the Supreme, the Divine. God bless you all!

- from the *Divine Life Society Magazine* July 1995, Sivanandanagar, Tehri-Garhwal, Uttaranchal, India

RESURGENT CULTURE

- Swami Krishnananda

(Continued from March 2016)

SURE WAYS OF SUCCESS IN LIFE

Yoga an Art and Science

The Yoga system, especially that propounded by the sage Patanjali, is a masterly science of psychology. We are asked to control the modifications of the mind-stuff in order to be able to have clear perception and true insight. Patanjali points out that we become normal only when we cease from thinking in terms of forms of the mental modification and begin to adopt quite a different way of perception. In other words, we have to rest in our own selves, first, in order that we may be healthy and also have a healthy perception of things. All types of objective thinking are considered in our system of Yoga as certain diseased conditions of consciousness, for in these states the consciousness is not-in-itself. Whenever it is not in a state of rest in itself it gets identified with the forms of the mind, and assumes for the time being their spatio-temporal shape. In this empirical process the individual consciousness often comes in conflict with other such centres in the forms of other persons who have their own special modes of self-identification with other types of mental transformations. Human misery has its roots in this self-contradiction born of ignorance of the structure of the perceptible diversity and its basis in the One.

A successful life, and a happy life, is possible only when one is able to adjust and adapt the different sides of the personality in a harmonious way and the entire personality with the others that form the constituents of the world. In this sense, life is an art. What does an artist do? He has a definite idea of an end to be executed and achieved, he collects the necessary material as means for the purpose, and arranges the material in a methodical and harmonious manner. He selects the proper requisites, removes what is unshapely,

adds what is necessary, and brings about a system and completeness in his work in consonance with the nature of the purpose in view. This is the case with great works of art, whether architecture and sculpture, painting and drawing, or music and literature. The essence of art is the arrangement of material to produce rhythm, symmetry, order, fullness, and a sense of perfection so far as the mind can conceive of it. We have to arrange the pattern of life, with its forces of the outward Nature and inward impulses, so that there may not be any jarring element or inharmonious appearance unsuited to the purpose of realising the equilibrium of the universe as reflected in our personal lives, in the life of society, the community, the nation and the world. We do not belong merely to ourselves, not even merely to any particular society or country, but we are citizens of the universe to which we owe a tremendous duty. And this duty is nothing but feeling and acting in a way that may not negate or violate the truth that the essence of the universe is an indivisible fullness. This art of self-adjustment with the entire creation is called Yoga. It is an art that appeals to the being within, which is also without, at the same time. Yoga is an art insofar as any successful practice of it demands of us a sort of genius and uncommon insight which cannot be expressed in mathematical or logical terms. But Yoga is also a science in the sense that it follows certain fixed laws and its principles are eternal, irrespective of class, creed, place and time. It is the knitting together, as it were, of the various springs of thought and action to form a connected and beautiful fabric in the universal scheme. It is the science of peace, of inner delight, and it requires that at one and the same moment we have to be at peace not only with the different levels of our being but also with the various strata of external life. A happy man who has been able to lead a successful life is one who is thoroughly friendly not only with the structural demands of his own body, mind, emotions, and intellect but also with the different elements that go to form the world outside. The Yoga system, by its technical terms, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*, expresses in a highly mystic way the need for perfect discipline of the body, the vital forces, the senses of perception, the functions of the mind, the intellect and the reason from the standpoint of the universe taken as a whole. Life is a preparation for self-

accusation, a training ground for the individual to transfigure itself in a self-dedication to the Absolute Reality. Some have compared this earthly life to a temporary halting of pilgrims in an inn, which is not the destination but only a means of help in the journey. We are not to take the experiences of this life as ends in themselves but as processes of self-advancement and chastening of the inner spirit for a higher fulfilment. Our joys and sufferings, our exhilarations and griefs, our prejudices and ideals are not to be valued as realities in themselves but as certain conditions which we have to overstep, and which will mean nothing to us when transcend in a deeper wisdom. Our present life is a flow of events, and nothing that changes can be called the real.

SACRIFICE AND DEDICATION IN LIFE

Herein comes into high relief the significance of the teaching that we have to perform actions without regard for their fruits, because the fruits are not in our hands, they are determined by the ultimate law of the universe, which, in the present condition of our minds, we can neither understand nor follow. Our duty is to act, act in the right way, bearing in mind that we are fulfilling an inviolable and unavoidable imperative, not forced upon us by any outward mandate, but by the law of our own being, to ignore which would be nothing short of folly. To work with any fixed ulterior motive beforehand would be like naming a child before it is born. The position is that no one can clearly envisage or understand the nature of an effect which would follow a particular action. That we glibly talk of fixed results of visible causes and hope for desired ends of our actions only shows that we have a very narrow outlook and forget the fact that nothing in this interrelated universe is absolutely self-dependent but requires the co-operation of infinite centres of force for it to come into being at all. Just take a concrete example. I say that a book placed on a table has the table as its support. Am I right? Perhaps you would say I am. But we do not stoop to think here that the table itself is supported by the floor. And where is the support for the floor? It is perhaps kept fixed by certain beams placed crosswise beneath it, which again are supported by walls, the walls being supported by the foundation, and the foundation by the earth. Is the position of the earth self-dependent? No. The

earth's position and motion are governed by the attraction of other planets in relation to itself, and we should not forget here that the planets are held in position by the terrible gravitational force of the sun. The whole solar system is said to be rushing with a great velocity to another destination in the vast ocean of Milky Way. Where are we, and where is the book placed on the table? The existence of things is really marvellous, and, surely, our life is precarious. What right have we, then, under these circumstances, to expect what we have in our minds? We can be justified in hoping only for that thing which is sanctioned by the unitary law of the universe taken as a single whole.

The Bhagavad-Gita, for example, exhorts us not to have attachment to things. Obviously, any outward attachment is not permissible in the scheme of things as they truly are. To which object am I to be attached, when everything outside me is inseparably related to me, and we all mutually inclusive and determined in this magnificent home of God's creation? Where is that special endowment of reason, of which man so much boasts, when he acts as an animal in thinking that he can have special attitudes to particular objects and yet hope to be let off scot-free? Every action has a reaction which comes with an equal force of nemesis and retribution, for every action is a sort of disturbance produced in the equilibrium of the universe, and the universe shall ever maintain its balance by rebutting the force of disturbance created in its being in the form of an action of thought. How marvellous is life, how grand, how just, and yet how relentless!

The correct spirit with which we have to work in this world is one of self-sacrifice and surrender to the Supreme Cause of all things. As a famous verse has it, whatever there is as this vast world, visible or heard of,—all this is pervaded inside and outside, throughout, by the Eternal Spirit.* Another verse tells us that we have to see the immanent Divine in earth and water, in the mountains and the flame

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यच्च किञ्चज्जगत्सर्वं दृष्यते श्रूयतेपि वा ।

अन्तर्बहिश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायण स्थितः ।।

of fire, and that the whole world is nothing but the appearance of God.** The correct perception is designated as Ishvaradrishti, the practice of the presence of God in each and everything, in every quarter and cranny, everywhere, and at all times. The essence of the Gita teaching is this, that the universe is the body of God, nay, it is God Himself appearing to us through our senses, the mind and the intellect, that there is nothing outside of God ever existent, that man is bound to have prosperity, victory, happiness and lawful polity when he acts with this consciousness,—with the deep feeling that he is an instrument in the hands of the Absolute, that his actions are really not his but Its, and that suffering is inevitable the moment he cuts his consciousness off from the Divine. The happy and the normal life is, therefore, the Divine life.

INNER DISCIPLINE

This is a grand concept, and this the goal. But there are certain lesser aspects in our life which we cannot ignore if we are to be successful in our different endeavours for perfection. First, we have to use our emotions properly and adjust them in such a way that they do not create any discord in life's harmonious process. Second, we have always to attempt to make a fuller use of our personalities than we actually do in states of misconception, prejudice and ignorance. There has to be brought about a complete reorientation of our ways of thinking, in the light of eternal facts amidst which we exist. There is that absolute necessity to bring about in ourselves those necessary changes, now and then, to attune ourselves to the vast universal environment. Think properly about yourselves, and understand your position in the expanse of the environment around you,—whether it is family, the community, the country, or the world. Face your weaknesses with an adamant will, but know also your strengths, and use them to adapt yourselves to the circumstances in which you find yourselves at any given moment of time. In this you have to be

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जले विष्णुः स्थले विष्णुर्विष्णुः पर्वतमस्तके ।

ज्वालमालाकुले विष्णुः सर्वं विष्णुमयं जगत् ।।

very diligent, sincere and honest. Remember, always, that what is important is not so much what you are, as to what extent you know why you are what you are, and how much you endeavour to improve yourselves in the right direction. Of course, do not be in a hurry. Understand well before you take a step. There cannot be a right attempt without a clear-cut ideal before it, and directing it. A race horse put to a plough or a plough horse put to race will not lead to any substantial result. We have to know our powers, our knowledge, and go only so far, not further.

If you are emotionally healthy, you will find that you will be comfortable with yourselves, and would not need the company of a crowd, or even of other persons related to you. No doubt, this is only one aspect of the question, because the most well adjusted person should be comfortable and perfectly at ease either way. Watch yourselves in a crisis, and detect what you are. You can know your weaknesses when you are thwarted, opposed, threatened or when you find yourselves in danger. You can also know your buried desires and urges, your cravings and fears, when you are put to such a test. The training of the emotions and the development of strength within, however, is not difficult for one who has a genuine conviction that he is backed up at all times by a mighty Power that works everywhere in the cosmos, and that he has nothing to fear. This faith should be born of conviction, enlightened understanding, and a real love for the Supreme Being. This is self-mystery, by which one can invoke incredible powers to function at any time in one's life.

Do not have inner conflicts. Such conflicts are mostly results of the inability to fulfil the basic instinctive urges, which, again, is due to ignorance of one's hidden capacities and of the way by which to utilise properly the facilities provided under the conditions in which one is placed. You have to know clearly (1) what ought to be done, (2) what is capable of being done, (3) what has been done already, (4) why something has not been done yet, and (5) how to overcome the obstacles in a reasonable manner. This means that you have to be master of your own psychology. A successful life includes physical, emotional, intellectual and moral fitness based on an integration of being in all its degrees, inwardly as well as outwardly. Know yourselves

as higher than you now are. Summon the reserve forces which lie latent within, and use them for the constructive work of building the structure of life which is not merely yours, but of everyone, equally. When the diversity of beings is beheld as rooted in the One, and as having proceeded from the One, then does one attain to Perfection, says the Bhagavad-Gita. But the achievement of this end is hard, though possible for everyone. It demands inner toughness born of a perfect moral nature. A capacity to love and to serve all with the feeling of the presence of a common element behind everyone, to be truthful and honest and straightforward at any cost, to be able to feel for others as one does for oneself, not to do to others what would not be desirable for oneself, to have always a concern for the good of the whole world and not merely of a restricted group of persons, not to attempt at appropriating things which do not lawfully belong to one self, to be perfectly continent and restrained in thought, word and deed, to be able to look at the world with a cosmic vision, and to act at all times with this consciousness, is the requisite qualification demanded of a truly cultured person and a seeker of Truth. We are neither wise nor right when we lose sight of this meaning of the educational process and act in a way that is not warranted by this vision of perfection. But success is near at hand, if only we would have a rightly directed will. And it is for our own good. Let us pray in the sublime words of the Upanishad:

Lead us from the unreal to the Real,

Lead us from darkness to Light,

Lead us from death to Immortality

-from the book Resurgent Culture, a Divine Life Society Publication, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, Himalayas.

OUR DUTY

- Jnaneswari Mataji

Every member of Sri Shanti Ashram should ponder over the idea “what is our duty/responsibility after Pujya Swamiji’s Mahasamadhi?” Swamiji life’s mission was to remind everyone that the whole universe is one family and all the individuals are brothers and sisters and they should lead a selfless life of love and unity – which is the basis for Universal Peace.

God is love and love is God. If this ideal is practised where then is the place for strife and unrighteousness in the world? Upsurge in corruption and degeneration of moral standards are the root cause for the disturbance of peace and disharmony in the country. Shanti Ashram was established with the sole aim to inculcate the habit of living in the presence of the divine and recognizing the divinity in all other human beings. According to Swamiji this is true service. At this juncture each one of us will have to question oneself regarding one’s duty. Like Mahatma Gandhi, if we also desire “Rama rajya” a peaceful and prosperous country – we have but only one option viz., that we should leave the life of selfishness and lead a life of universal love. To quote Swamiji “a heart devoid of love is a crematorium”. This statement of Swamiji we should always remember. If the teachings of saints like Swamiji are properly heard and put into actual practice each one would be extending his/her help in the development of Shanti Ashram, its branches and other Ashrams of similar objectives.

Though Shanti Ashram in Totapalli hills has been ceaselessly striving for the past 65 years to sow the seeds of spirituality to bring about peace and harmony in the world, Swamiji was not satisfied as the ideals he propogated did not spread throughout the country. Therefore, he wanted to establish branches of Shanti Ashram in all the district headquarters. He believed that through these branches and the devotees belonging to these places, peace and righteousness will be established and immediately unrighteousness will be wiped out. Therefore it is the bounden duty of all the devotees

and well wishers of the Ashram to keep in view the holy aspirations of Pujya Swamiji and execute them in our daily life which will make Swamiji blissful. May all the devotees help in nurturing the Shanti tree, in spreading its branches far and wide, sending out the waves of Peace so that Parmpujya Swamiji's endeavour to establish Peace will be remembered for ever, through out the world.

This is the best Gurudakshina and homage that we can offer to our Guru. May Swamiji's blessings be forever upon us all.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

(Original article is in Telugu published in Shanti, September 1982.)

SELF IS WITNESS OF ALL

*Your thoughts are not your own,
Neither work, nor sleep, nor dream,
Self is witness of all,
Abandon yourself to Him.*

When you do a thing, think you that you do it? When you think a thought, believe you that you are its author? When asleep you are, is it, you that sleep? No. It is He, that is the Author of all action, that is the Master of all works (*Karmadyaksha*). Without Him the breeze stirs not, the fire crackles not, nor does the sun shine. "*Thasya bhasaa sarvamidam vibhathi.*" When you are thinking, it is He that thinks, when you are doing, it is He that does. Meditate on Him and merge in Him. Yet, He is beyond speech and thought. What should one do then? Nothing. Abandon yourself utterly to Him, "*Ekam saranam vraja.*"

OM TAT SAT OM !

Swami Omkar - from Cosmic Flashes

श्रीगणेशाय नमः

श्रीमच्छङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्य विरचितं

माया पञ्चकम्

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's

Māyā pañcakam

-Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

(Continued from March 2016)

The fundamental mistake is that of not knowing the inner reality as Bliss. The urge for happiness is genuine, being a reflection of one's true innate nature, except that the effort to satisfy the urge through sense gratification is wrong; that only leads to suffering. Therefore, the right way of seeking happiness is to seek the knowledge of the Self. One cannot attain the timeless happiness without gaining the knowledge of the Self. The ignorance of the Self dooms the pursuit of happiness to failure from the very beginning. Yet, instead of seeking the knowledge of the Self, one only continues to accumulate physical objects. They can only make us comfortable, not happy. They make us even vulnerable. This is the reason why we may be in comfort but remain unhappy and miserable.

The *guṇas* are three. *Tamas* is laziness, physical as well as intellectual. Slothfulness, over-eating, excessive sleeping, and perverse desires are *tamas*. *Rajas* is activity associated with desires and ambition. It is the go-getter attitude, such as is associated with the type A personality. *Sattva* is dispassion, calmness and quietude, and motiveless devotion. The student of Vedanta is encouraged to get rid of *tamas* and *rajas* and abide in *sattva*; yet, eventually, *sattva* is also to be transcended to abide in *Atman*. Even *sattva* is not intrinsic. In *Atman*, there are no *guṇas*.

The three *guṇas* could give rise to four combinations of dispositions corresponding to the four social groups, called *varṇas*.

They are the intellectuals, the security personnel, the merchants, and the working class. It is not the Indian society alone but every other society that has these four groups at all times. However, because there are no *guṇas* in Atman, there are also no *varṇas*. Therefore, the striver should transcend these *guṇas* and the social divisions. Divisions, such as *sāttvika* Atman, *rājasa* Atman, *Brāhmaṇa* Atman, *kṣatriya* Atman, *manuṣya* Atman, *paśu* Atman, etc. are unreal. Atman is not to be associated with these divisions. It is unfortunate that these divisions are literally interpreted and imputed not only to people, but also to celestials, animals, trees, and even rocks and spirits. Some of the practitioners of black magic characterize the imagined spirits not only as male or female, but with caste appellations as well.

It is the collective mental patterns maintained and reinforced by society and family that create the divisions of caste and creed. To know the reality of Atman, one must break away from these inherited mental patterns, lest they keep us in bondage all our lives. Leave alone Atman, even 'I-am-ness' does not have anything to do with such conditioning or appellations. We should learn to recognize the false as false. One needs a lot of courage to do that. There cannot be lasting transformation in the heart unless we rise above such divisions. Without such transformation, one cannot hope to know the truth. Suppose you say, 'I am a New Yorker,' what does it really mean? In fact, New York itself is more an idea than reality. Is a certain space New York? Is the wind that blows there New York? Is it the roads, the houses, or the people that determine New York? In saying that one is a New Yorker, we only identify with an idea. Such misleading identifications create personal problems. Sometimes, people are arrogant about their caste or creed. We should know that the very idea that one is a human being is a superimposition; one is simply the living being, or, better yet, the Being. The body is merely a biped. It belongs to the class of homo sapiens. Suppose I say, 'I am a human being,' I am at once different from the animals, birds, etc. Instead, suppose I say that I am a Dutchman, more than a hundred and fifty nationalities stand against me, and if I say that I am a Christian, more than fifty percent of humanity becomes the other.

One must just be the awareful being that radiates the joy of unshakable peace. It is infinitely greater than anything that the world can offer. In that alone are absent, all the divisions based on birth and gender or caste and creed.

In this universe, everything is because everything else is. If you spend a moment to consider this carefully, you will see that there are countless causes for anything to happen. There is a simple fable that illustrates this: A flower once claimed that it had bloomed. The plant objected to this claim and declared that the flower had only bloomed because of the plant. The earth objected to that and claimed that the plant could not have survived independent of it. It was then the turn of the sun to object and claim ownership of the event for itself. After this came the turn of the Milky Way galaxy, and, finally, the rest of the universe, to object and stake their own claims! Therefore, when the entire universe blooms so that a single flower may bloom, how can anybody claim that he alone is the author of anything at all?

The presence of attachment in our lives is also entirely on account of ignorance. It makes us suffer endlessly. We know full well that we suffer because of attachment, yet we are unable to give it up. In the name of love, we seek to possess not only objects but also people. What could be the reason for this deep-seated attachment amounting to delusion? Without a home and property, a car, a bank balance, etc., a person feels that he or she is a nobody, worthless. It is these things that seem to confer some identity or worth. Similarly, without a wife or husband, or without children, the person feels a lack of self-worth. Married couples undergo a lot of suffering if, for some reason, they are childless. They throng fertility clinics and undergo nightmarish experiences, all because they believe that life is meaningless without children. Such psychological dependence upon every manner of external circumstances for inner fulfillment is the root cause of attachment. This is a good example of the way collective societal and mental patterns bind people. Parents feel compelled to create an elaborate blueprint for the lives they wish their wards to lead. For example, parents in India want their children to attend convent schools and the best of colleges and technical

institutes. They desire their children to become doctors or engineers and gain employment in the USA. Then the desire is that the children marry the person of their choice; of course, a hefty dowry is also a must. These parents are just waiting for this agenda to be fulfilled and are more than willing to propitiate a few gods along the way for this purpose. This is what is called *moha*, crass attachment.

Why do people marry at all? Obviously, there is the biological need and the social and cultural demand. There is also the psychological need for companionship, somebody to call one's own and somebody who takes care of one's needs. Some people may even have the need to possess and dominate, all in the name of love; one may be deriving an egoic advantage out of the relationship. There cannot be love where there is attachment, because attachment is possessiveness. There can be love only when you look at the other person as an entirely independent individual with his or her own aspirations. A person considers himself an empty shell without these things. Yet is he truly an empty shell? No, he is Brahman, the Infinite. What a pity! In spite of being Brahman, not having a bank account is enough to make him feel inadequate. How does this happen? How does Brahman appear to descend to the despicable level of such ignorance and psychological dependence? Such is the power of *māyā*!

I would urge you to examine your inclinations and compulsions honestly: 'What am I? What am I upto?' This is meditation. Contemplate along the following lines: Suppose that you are utterly alone in this world, that you don't have a family or an identity, that you don't own any property or have any money, that you don't have any social status or any titles. Suppose that you do not have any caste or *āśrama*, and that you do not answer to any of the definitions and designations, whether individual, familial, or social. You are a digambara, utterly naked under the sky. You came into this world thus and will leave this world thus. In such a scenario, what are you? Meditate upon this. Whatever you are in the absence of any appellations is your true nature. You have to know that inwardly. One has to discover an extraordinary 'emptiness' within oneself. That emptiness is the key to truth. We are not talking about becoming

mendicants. As the wise say, *cittatyāga eva saṃsāratyāgaḥ*, the renunciation of the mind alone is the renunciation of the world; such is true *sannyāsa*.

In the *Nirvāṇaṣaṭka* and the *Daśaślokī*, Śrī Śaṅkara lists all possible self-identifications and self-designations and negates each one. There is beauty in the emptiness of not being any of them. It is *saccidānanda*, Existence-Awareness-Bliss. Examine and explore it; love that emptiness, do not resent it. There is a richness of inner evolution in that emptiness. Remind yourself, '*Ahaṃ brahmāsmi*, I am Brahman.' One cannot be on both sides of the fence at the same time. One has first to become nothing so that it can be known that one is everything. Only the person who is not afraid of emptiness and also not afraid of being a nobody remains unattached. He alone knows true love. Cupidity is not love, attachment is not love. Indeed, they cover up the true love. Even mutual co-existence is not held in high regard. Marriage is a great institution through which one can discover true love and, in the process, discover one's own fullness. Sage *Yājñavalkya*, Janaka, *Śrī Rāma*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, and, in the modern times, Sri Ramakrishna, are shining examples of unselfish love and the true pursuit of Self-knowledge in marriage.

There is a lot of familial, social, cultural, and religious conditioning with regard to having children. Children are considered important not in themselves but for one's own continuity. A rich man has a very compelling need for children, a need for having an heir to the riches that he has accumulated. Somebody in the family has to take over the mantle of safeguarding those riches. He cannot allow the riches accumulated from the society go back to the society. His family name, caste, creed, etc. have to be perpetuated through children. How can there be love in this situation? Love is a very big thing. Love is Self-knowledge. Sometimes, parents try to fulfill their own unfulfilled desires through their children. I knew a gentleman who wanted to become an engineer but could not. He was ecstatic when his son became an engineer. We use children to cover up our own inner emptiness. When elders have such inner pressure, they cannot have the freedom to love. To love is not easy. A person in

bondage cannot love. He or she can only possess and dominate. The power of such ignorance boggles the mind.

VERSE 5

विधिहरिहरभेदमप्यखण्डे बत विरचय्य बुधानपि प्रकामम् ।

भ्रमयति हरिहरविभेदभावानघटितघटनापटीयसी माया ॥

vidhihariharabhedamapyakhaṇḍe

bata viracayya budhānapi prakāmam,

bhramayati hariharavibhedabhāvān

aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā. 5

bata - alas!; *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī* - capable of making the impossible possible; *māyā* - illusion; *akhaṇḍe api* - even though undivided; *vidhihariharabhedam* - the division of *Brahmadeva*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra*; *viracayya* - having made; *hariharavibhedabhāvān* – having devotion divided between *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*; *budhān api* - even the scholars; *prakāmam* - indeed; *bhramayati* - deludes.

Alas! *Māyā* makes the impossible possible. It creates the division of *Brahmadeva*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra* even in the undivided Brahman. It indeed deludes even the scholars such that they practice devotion divided between *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*.

Māyā makes possible something that is extraordinarily irrational. In the Upanishads, Brahman is presented as the cause for the manifestation and sustenance of this universe. Brahman resolves the universe into Itself. This is the thesis of the *Taittirīyopaniṣat*: *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayantya bhisamviśanti*. The Upanishads do not talk of a trinity. The Reality is *akhaṇḍa*, undivided.

It is the accounts in the Puranas that can cause a serious problem in this regard. Here I would like to make a few comments about the Purana. Please listen with an open mind. It was the opinion

of the great philosopher and poet Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, the renowned disciple of Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi, that the stories of the Puranas have, in quite a few instances, done incalculable harm to Hindu dharma. For example, Valmiki's epic ends with the coronation of Sri Rama; it does not continue on to describe the banishing of the pregnant Sita to the forest. Some other poet has extrapolated the account into the Uttara *Rāmāyaṇa*; it must have appeared as if such an act by Rama glorified his dedication to dharma even further. At a *satsaṅga*, a gentleman once asked me who of the two was older, *Gaṇeśa* or *Kumārasvāmī*? What is the meaning of such a question? What kind of answer am I supposed to give to such questions? Yet there are people who fight over such issues, as well as people who give very scholastic and authentic sounding answers!

A story must have some symbolism or message. In the context of the Puranic descriptions, the three acts of creation, sustenance, and annihilation have become the cause of the division of the Upanishadic Brahman into the trinity of *Brahmadeva*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra* respectively. Thus has the undivided and divisionless monolithic Reality come to be viewed upon as a trinity, leading to the innumerable sectarian divisions and differences that exist today. Even *Śrī Śaṅkara* seems to bemoan this development in the religious life. We cannot justify this division by saying that Sage Veda Vyasa sanctioned it in the Puranas. Neither can we say that every word of all the eighteen Puranas that are current is written by Sage Veda Vyasa. It is a very complex matter and not easily rationalized.

In the final analysis, the effort is not to find fault with any individual. After all, one can explain away all the contradictions of human life as caused by the power of *māyā*. The Upanishads present the Reality clearly as *akhaṇḍa*, *viśatīya sajātīya svagata bheda rahitam*, free from divisions in terms of those obtaining between different classes, free from divisions as are seen between those of the same class, and free from individual divisions that may exist within the same entity. Unfortunately, even scholars are not only

confused but also totally deluded regarding this. Some of them subscribe to the devotion of *Viṣṇu* as opposed to *Rudra*, and vice versa. 'Worship this god,' 'No, worship that god.' Someone writes a commentary on the Brahmasutras highlighting devotion to the one, and someone else highlights devotion to the other.

Vedanta is above all such divisions. In the Brahmasutras, we do not find even one word that supports such division. Those that pursue or promote devotion steeped in division are not philosophers; they are mere theologians and totally deluded. They simply don't know the truth. They cannot ever know the truth either, because their minds are deeply indoctrinated into falsehood.

Bhakti is the love of God. What is love? Love is unity in spite of diversity. Every experience may support division, yet we transcend all the divisions and differences to discover that bond of unity. Such is love. Theological scholarship cannot create such love in the human heart. It can only come up with stunningly distorted theses about God. That is one kind of division. There is another kind of division in which the devotee and God are considered to be ever separate, with no possibility of any unity between the two. Those who subscribe to this maintain that even to think of oneness between the individual and the Godhead is blasphemy. Such a formulation of extreme duality is against the spirit of the Upanishads. There are endless disputations about the vision of the scriptures. One cannot realize the truth by engaging in academic or speculative disputations. The truth of oneness can only be gained through abiding in one's own inner being. Religion should not be meant for effect or public display or become a matter of dispute between diverse social groups. True religion is the achieving of inner communion with the Divinity ever shining in one's own heart as the Awareness Absolute. It is this Divinity that abides in every particle of this universe.

In these verses, *Śrī Śaṅkara* proclaims his vision of the undivided and indivisible Reality in no uncertain terms. The constant reiteration of the pithy phrase *aghaṭitaghaṭanāpaṭīyasī māyā* serves as a reminder that every contradiction that appears to be is unreal

and may be attributed entirely to the power of *māyā*, which can delude, confuse, and mislead even the learned and the wise. Out of ignorance of the knowledge of the Self, the individual, who is indeed *saccidānanda* Brahman, ineffectually seeks the happiness that is his own nature in the objects of the world. The lack of discrimination between the Self and the non-Self is the fundamental bondage that causes the individual to remain forever shackled to misery and drowning in sorrow.

The essence of the individual is the very fullness Itself, yet, in his ignorance of his true nature, he remains bound to the life of becoming that is riven by sorrow and fear. Therefore, the striver needs to make a deliberate effort to get rid of his false notions about himself. Only when we gain clarity about this ignorance and its consequences can we hope to become free of them. A careful study and true appreciation of this marvelous text by the world's greatest philosopher will be of immense use to every sincere striver in achieving this objective.

** हरिः ओम्, तत्सत् श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु **
hariḥ om, tatsat śrīkṛṣṇārpaṇamastu.
* * * * *

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE LIGHT OF YOGA

- Swami Jyotirmayananda

The importance of prayer is recognized in every religious system of the world. It is the most effective means of elevating the mind and raising the level of one's consciousness to the lofty heights of heavenly glory.

In the Yogic tradition, prayer is practiced in many forms:

1. Verbal prayer according to one's choice. 2. Chanting or reciting scriptural prayers composed by great Sages and Saints. 3. Japa or the repetition of mantra (the Divine Name in the form of sacred mystic formulas). 4. Kirtana or singing the Divine Name or the glories of God. 5. Repetition of mantra along with devout meditation on the many attributes of God. 6. Allowing the mind to flow on to God in silent meditation. 7. Awareness of Divine Presence and total resignation to God.

In the midst of the alternating experiences of pleasure and pain, you must not forget that you are merely a traveler through the world-process. You should not forget your goal - God-realization or Self-realization. In a joyous way, you must gain the insight that intrinsically you are one with God, because you have been fashioned in the "Image of God." As Lord Jesus taught, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within thee." This is also expressed in the Upanishadic statement, "Tat Twam Asi" - "Thou Art That."

With this insight, you gradually learn the art of living in communion with God. Your life becomes a stream of prayer flowing towards the ocean of God. You practice prayer not only through words, but also through your thoughts (by entertaining thoughts of love, compassion, and goodwill towards all beings) and actions (by serving God in all beings). The spirit of prayerfulness eventually permeates your entire personality.

In the light of these points, let us study the Lord's prayer: *Japa* or repetition of Divine name is the mystic art of glorifying the name of

God. It is also the easiest method of moving towards God.

The various Sanskrit mantras are nothing but names referring to the different aspects of God. Choose a Divine name (mantra) and repeat it with the help of a mala (rosary). Along with every repetition, feel that you are being enfolded by the Presence of God. By constant practice, a Divine association is generated between the unconscious mind and the mantra, so that when the mantra is recited, the unconscious awakens lofty impressions of Divine Presence. Similarly, you may sing the name of God and thus practice kirtana. Any mantra put to music or chanted becomes kirtana. Have a selected period during the day (preferably in the early morning) when you can practice *japa* intensively for half an hour or more. Then perform your daily duties with a mind filled with the sublimity of spiritual vibrations.

As you advance, the sense of prayerfulness and the awareness of Divine Presence should permeate your entire existence. A sweet stream of Divine remembrance should continue to flow deep within your heart at all times- while you walk, sit, or rest; while you talk, perform actions, experience pleasure and pain, or sleep.

As the practice of prayerfulness advances, you will begin to see the Hand of God behind every development in your life and the world around you. At first you feel the Divine Presence in the glorious objects of the world - you see the effulgence of God shining in the Sun, His bliss radiating through the Moon, His fullness surging in the ocean. Thus, you see the glory of God permeating all the objects that inspire your mind.

Next you begin to feel the Divine Presence even behind objects that are generally disliked: hurricanes and earthquakes, snakes and scorpions, diseases and adversities. In this state, you enjoy absolute surrender to the Divine Will. You become an instrument in Divine Hands, asserting, "Thy Will be done."

Finally, the climax of this spiritual vision is the realization, "All this is nothing but God Himself." It is then that heaven is brought down even on this earth. Divine Consciousness is realized even in one's limited personality.

This ideal is expressed in the Upanishadic peace chant: "Om, That (the Divine Self) is Full; and this (the mortal world which is nothing but God manifesting through Cosmic Illusion) is also Full. When this world (of illusory names and forms) is negated, what is left is Full (the Divine Self). Let there be Peace! Peace! Peace!"

When you advance on the spiritual path leading to the realization of this mystic Fullness, you continue to be a source of increasing peace and harmony for the world around you. You become a cosmic benefactor and thus, figuratively speaking, bring heaven upon the earth.

The message of this stanza focuses the mind on the present day and its realities. Mental energy that is spent dwelling on negative memories of the past and worrying about the future is wasted in vain. You must develop a sense of dynamic contentment with your "daily bread," that is, the realities and duties of daily life, and accept them as a gift from God.

Also, life in this relative world must be lived to fulfill fivefold debts: 1. Debt to the gods or angels in heaven (which are aspects of THE God in the relative world), paid by the practice of prayer, meditation and other devotional exercises. 2. Debt to the Sages and Saints, paid by studying their spiritual works and following their teachings. 3. Debt to one's forefathers, paid by promoting righteous conduct in life that brings glory and fame to the family in which one is born. 4. Debt to human beings, paid by serving them in various selfless ways. 5. Debt to animals, paid by being kind and compassionate towards all living creatures.

For whatever imperfection may exist in the proper fulfillment of these debts, you must seek the forgiveness of God. In turn, you must develop the quality of forgiveness towards others. To the extent you forgive another and have the capacity to understand him lovingly, to that extent you become the recipient of Divine Grace and Forgiveness.

According to Yoga philosophy, the source of evil is avidya or ignorance, which is the lack of the awareness of one's Divine Identity. When ignorance is removed by the intuitive knowledge, "I Am One

with God," you become a Jivanmukta - one liberated in life. This is the goal that must be sought through your prayer to God.

That which leads you away from the path to Self-realization is called temptation. Numerous temptations are as if arrayed before every individual. As an aspirant you learn to turn away from what is merely and apparently "pleasant" and direct your steps towards what is truly "good."

By developing constant devotion to God, you draw inner spiritual strength that helps you withstand the manifold expressions of lust, greed and anger (the triple gates to hell). But those who lack devotion continue to be led astray by the numerous temptations of the world.

One must develop Supreme Dispassion, and thus, should not be tempted by the pleasures of the earth and all the subtle planes extending up to *Brahmaloka* (the highest plane in the world of relativity). Then and only then, can one abide in God - in the Divine Kingdom - forever.

Nothing is impossible. With the assistance of the boundless power and glory of God, you can cross the ocean of the world-process and abide in Him forever.

"Amen" is a mystic word - a modification of *Om*, which symbolizes *Brahman* or the Absolute Self. The power of prayer is enhanced by the utterance of the sacred formula *Om* (or Amen). When the spirit of prayer rises to its fullness, the world of multiplicity is effaced. God alone remains as the Truth that was, is and ever shall be!

May you repeat this glorious prayer composed by Lord Jesus, and live in its spirit until your life flows as a stream of prayer communing with the ocean of God!

"When the spirit of prayer rises to its fullness, the world of multiplicity is effaced. God alone remains as the Truth that was, is and ever shall be!"

- from *International Yoga Guide*, Vol. 50, No. 4,
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GOD'S NAME ALONE SAVES

-Swami Ramdas

There was once a *Sadhaka* who aspired after God-realization . He went to a Sadhu and asked him what he should do for realizing God. The Sadhu said that he should repeat God's name and think of God constantly. The young aspirant did not like this simple advice. He thought poorly of the power of the Name. He had the idea that one should learn Sanskrit and master the Vedas and Shastras, before he could get God-realization. So he left this Sadhu and went to another who was well-versed in the Vedas and Shastras and requested him to teach him Sanskrit so that he might gain proficiency in the same. The teacher agreed, but added that the student should also do some service, besides pursuing his studies. He was given the work of tending the cows in the Ashram .So the young friend took up the service of the Ashram cows and whenever he had spare time, he went to the teacher and took his lessons in Sanskrit. Thus twelve years passed. He became a great Sanskrit scholar and had good knowledge of the Vedas and Shastras . But he did not realize God. So he asked his teacher why he had not attained God even though he had become learned in the Vedas and other scriptures.

The teacher then said that mere scholarship and learning did not lead to God-realization . To realize God, one must love Him intensely and ceaselessly remember Him by taking to His name. Now the young aspirant realized his mistake in not listening to the advice of the first Sadhu, who had asked him to take to God's name twelve years ago. He regretted he had wasted many precious years in merely acquiring learning without chanting God's name or cultivating love and devotion for God.

- from the stories as told by Swami Ramdas, Anandashram Publication, Kanhanghad, Kerala.

BEST FORM OF WORSHIP IS TO SEE HIM IN ALL

Swami Satchidananda

We are here today on the holy Guru Purnima day to offer homage to our Guru - Beloved Papa, Sage Vyasa and Mahatmas. Offering homage to Beloved Papa, Sage Vyasa all Mahatmas means the same thing, that is, paying homage to God, because all saints are manifestations of God Himself.

How do we offer homage? When our Guru is in physical body we request him to permit us to do Puja to His holy feet. We wash His feet, offer sandal paste, offer flowers and ultimately offer our 'little self' with a prayer to Him to make us merge in His universal Self. This is one kind of Puja. When we advance in Sadhana and if Guru's physical form is not easily available for us to do such Puja, we have to be satisfied with doing Puja, keeping His portrait in front of us and praying to Him. The next step will be to see His form within us and mentally do all that you were doing outside, that is, make him sit in your heart, wash his feet, apply sandal paste, flowers and pray to Him. All these can be done mentally any number of times a day, not only on Guru Purnima day but on all days and any number of times every day.

Here we give importance to the physical body of the Guru. By close association with the Guru we come to realise that Guru is not merely the body but being God Himself, He is all-pervading and as all-pervading, he is the entire manifestation and seated in every atom of the manifestation. So when we advance further we do not limit our worship to a particular body. We worship Him in the entire manifestation. Whatever we see before us is the form of our Guru. He is the form as well as the force within that form - the force that activates that form. We must be able to maintain this consciousness. That will be the best type of worship to the Guru.

How to maintain this attitude? To get this attitude, we have to, as advised by the Guru, take the Name of God constantly so as to maintain a ceaseless remembrance of Him. When this is done our

mind gets a certain amount of purification and we will be able to have an idea that the entire universe is His manifestation and His real form is the nameless, formless, attributeless Existence which is the substratum for this manifestation. It is possible to develop and maintain this consciousness if we are very earnest in our Sadhana and try to maintain God remembrance constantly.

That is the main effort of the Sadhaka - to be conscious of the all pervading Reality in the manifestation and accept also the manifestation as His own form.

God is nameless, formless, attributeless, eternal Existence. What is His form? Some may say His form is Lord Krishna's form or Lord Rama's form or Lord Jesus' form etc. They are all Avataric forms. But the Saguna aspect of God is the entire universe. Whatever we see before us is His own manifestation. We must be able to maintain this consciousness when we see anything before us. To maintain this consciousness is the best form of worship.

Our effort must be to have the ceaseless remembrance of God and develop this consciousness, which will give us unending joy and will lead us ultimately to the perfect purification of our mind and ultimate merger in His universal existence. This is the effort of all Sadhakas. When this is attained, they are no longer Sadhakas. They become Siddhas. They become one with the Guru- one with the Guru's universal existence. This is for which we must all try and pray for Beloved Papa's blessings on us.

May Beloved Papa bless all of us so that we may attain universal vision and enjoy eternal happiness in the world!

- from *the book Points to Ponder*, Anandashram Publication, Kanhanghad, Kerala.

THE TRANSCENDENT LIFE

- Edited by Sista Subbarao

There comes a time in the process of Transmutation when, with the decrease of evil and the accumulation of good, there dawns in the mind a new vision, a new consciousness, a new man. And when this is reached, the saint has become a sage; he has passed from the human life to the Divine life. He is born again and there begins for him a new round of experiences; he wields a new power; a new universe opens out before his spiritual gaze. This is the stage of Transcendence this I call Transcendent Life.

When Transcendence is attained, there the limited personality is out-grown and the Divine life is known; evil is transcended and Good is all in all.

The transcendent life is ruled, not by passions, but by Principles. It is founded, not upon fleeting impulses, but upon abiding laws. In its clear atmosphere, the orderly sequence of all things is revealed, so that there is seen to be no more room for sorrow, anxiety or regret. While men are involved in the passions of self, they load themselves with cares and troubles over many things; and more than all else, do they trouble over their own little, burdened, pain-stricken personality, being anxious for its fleeting pleasures, for its protection and preservation, and for its eternal safety and continuance. Now in the life that is wise and good, all this is transcended, Personal interests are replaced by Universal purposes, and all cares, troubles and anxieties concerning the pleasure and fate of the personality are dispelled like the feverish dreams of a night.

We have opened our eyes, and the dark night of error is no more. Long have we slept in matter and sensation; long did we struggle in the painful nightmare of evil; but now we are awake in spirit and Truth. We have found the Good, and the struggle with evil is ended. We slept; yet knew not that we suffered. We suffered, yet knew not that we suffered. We were troubled in our dreaming; yet none could awake us, for all were dreaming like ourselves. Yet there came a pause in our dreaming; our sleep was stayed. Truth spoke to

us, and we heard, and lo! we opened our eyes and saw. We slumbered, and saw not; slept, and knew not; but now we are awake and see, Yes, we know we are awake because we have seen Holiness; and we love sin no more.

Those who are at rest in the kingdom do not look for happiness in any outward possession. They see that all such possessions, are mere transient effects that come when they are required, and after their purpose is served pass away. They never think of these things (money, clothing, food, etc.) except as mere accessories and effects of the true Life. They are, therefore, freed from all anxiety and trouble and resting in Love, they are the embodiment of Happiness. Standing upon the imperishable principles of Purity, compassion, wisdom, and love, they are immortal, and know they are immortal; They are one with God, the supreme Good, and know they are one with God. Seeing the realities of things; they can find no room anywhere for condemnation.

Let it not be supposed that the children of the Kingdom live in ease and indolence (these two sins are the first that have to be eradicated when the search for the Kingdom is entered upon); they live in a peaceful activity; in fact, they only truly live, for the life of self, with its train of worries, grief's, and fears, is not real life. They perform all their duties with the most scrupulous diligence, apart from thoughts of self, and employ all their means, as well as powers and faculties, which are greatly intensified, in building up the Kingdom of Righteousness in the hearts of others, and in the world around them. This is their work, first by example, then by precept. They sorrow no more, but live in perpetual gladness, for, though they see the suffering in the world, they also see the final Bliss and the Eternal Refuge.

The children of the Kingdom are known by their life. They manifest the fruits of the spirit 'Love, joy, peace, long suffering, Kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, self-control' under all circumstances and vicissitudes. They are entirely free from anger, fear, suspicion, jealousy, caprice, anxiety, and grief. Living in the Righteousness of God, they manifest qualities which the very reverse of those which obtain in the world, and which are

regarded by the world as foolish. They demand no rights; they do not defend themselves; do not retaliate; do good to those who attempt to injure them; manifest the same gentle spirit towards those who oppose, those who agree with them; do not pass judgment on others, condemn no man and no system; and live at peace with all.

The Temple of Righteousness is built, and its four walls are the four principles-Purity, Wisdom, Compassion, Love. Peace is its roof, its floor is steadfastness, its entrance door is selfless Duty, its atmosphere is inspiration, and its music is Joy of the Perfect. It cannot be shaken, and being eternal and indestructible, there is no more need to seek protection in taking thought for the things of the morrow. And the Kingdom of Heaven being established in the heart, the obtaining of the material necessities of life is no more considered, for having found the Highest, all the things are added as effect to cause; the struggle for existence has ceased, and the spiritual, mental and material needs are daily supplied from the Universal Abundance.

The righteous man, having nothing to hide, committing no acts which require stealth, and harbouring no thoughts and desires which he would not like others to know, is fearless and unashamed. His step is firm, his body upright; and his speech direct, and without ambiguity. He looks everybody in the face. How can he fear any, who wrongs none? And ceasing from all wrong, he can never be wronged; ceasing from all deceit, he can never be deceived. It is impossible for evil to overcome good, so the righteous man can never be brought low by the unrighteous.

The righteous man is invincible, no enemy can possibly overcome or confound him; and he needs no other protection than that of his own integrity and holiness. As it is impossible for evil to overcome Good, so the righteous man can never be brought low by the unrighteous. Slander, envy, hatred, malice can never reach him, nor cause him any suffering, and those who try to injure him only succeed ultimately in bringing ignominy upon themselves.

"Good will gives insight", and only he who has so conquered his personality that he has but one attitude of mind, that of Good will, is possessed of divine insight and is capable of distinguishing the

true from the false. The supremely good man is therefore, the wise man, the enlightened seer, the Knower of the Eternal. When you find, unbroken gentleness, enduring patience, sublime lowliness, graciousness of speech, self-control, self-forgetfulness, and deep and abounding sympathy, look there for the highest wisdom, seek the company of such a one, for he has realised the Divine; he lives with the Eternal, he has become one with the Infinite. Those who are spiritually awakened have alone comprehended the Universal Reality where all appearances are dispersed, and dreaming and delusion are destroyed.

Where the passion-bound soul sees only injustice, the good man, he who has conquered passion, sees cause and effect, sees the supreme justice; it is impossible for such a man to regard himself as treated unjustly, because he has ceased to see injustice. He knows that no one can injure or cheat him, having ceased to injure or cheat himself. However passionately or ignorantly men may act towards him, it cannot possibly cause him any pain, for, he knows that whatever comes to him (it may be abuse and persecution) can only come as the effect of what he himself has formerly sent out. He therefore regards all things as good, rejoices in all things, loves his enemies, blesses them that curse him, regarding them as the blind but beneficent instruments by which he is enabled to pay his moral debts to the Great Law.

- from the *Book of Meditation for everyday in Life* by James Allen, published by Geeta Pracharaka Sangham, Secunderabad, Telangana State India.

to be continued

VIDYA-AVIDYA-UPASANA

(Meditation on Knowledge-cum-Karma)

- Swami Brahmananda

This meditation is given in verses 9 to 11 of the Isavasya Upanishad. They are:

*andham tamaḥ pravisanti ye avidyāmupāsate,
tato bhuya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyam ratāḥ. (9)*

*anyadevāhurvidyayā anyadāhuravidyayā,
iti śuśruma dhīrāṇām ye nastadvicacakṣire. (10)*

*vidyām ca avidyām ca yastadvedobhayaguṇ saha,
avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā vidyayā amṛtamaśnute. (11)*

Literally translated these verses mean: Those who worship *avidya* (*karma*) enter into blinding darkness, but those who are engaged in *vidya* (knowledge) enter into greater darkness. The wise say that by the meditation on *vidya* and *avidya* separately, different results are achieved. He who meditates on these two together attains immortality through *vidya* by crossing over death through *avidya*.

Vidya here means knowledge and *avidya* means performance of rituals (*karmas*). Knowledge of God is *vidya*, and knowledge of the world is *avidya*. *Vidya* here however does not mean *Brahma-vidya*, the Supreme Knowledge. It means meditation and worship of gods. Those who perform *karma* alone attain after death the world of the manes, and those who do meditation on gods attain the world of those gods. This is the traditional knowledge we get regarding the two, *vidya* and *avidya*, treated as separate. Those who attain the world of the manes return to this world when the results of their *karmas* are exhausted. Those who attain the worlds of gods also have to return to this world after experiencing the fruits of their meditation. But those who wisely combine the two, *karma* and meditation, transcend 'death' in the form of rites and meditation caused by the subtle

impressions of merit and demerit and identify themselves with the deities. This identification with the deities is termed 'immortality' which does not mean the final state of liberation.

Our conduct in the world in the present state of affairs as individual *jivas* is *avidya* in one sense. And our acceptance of God's existence in the world is *vidya*. The acceptance of this world including one's own body as real and substantial according to the reports of the senses, okayed by the mind and intellect, is *avidya* and holding on to this conviction leads one to blinding darkness of ignorance and the endless life of transmigration. *Vidya* is the theoretical knowledge of superhuman beings and of a life after death. To be always absorbed in this knowledge alone to the detriment of normal life-activities in this world, is said to be worse than the other. Those who are engaged in it are said to enter into greater darkness, due to their egoism and pride about their knowledge. They consider themselves superior to the ordinary people and puffed up with their false satisfaction, they completely neglect their duty to this world and suffer degradation. Their fall is from a greater height, the false heights which they have presumed, and naturally the fall takes them to greater depths, the abysmal worlds of suffering.

The world must be accepted for what it is and cannot be rejected completely. But at the same time God must be known as the substratum of this world. We cannot have a world without God and God without the world in our present state, when we identify ourselves with our bodies or even have the idea that the body is ours. To be devoted either to the world alone forgetting God or to God alone neglecting the world would be acceptance of a part alone instead of the whole. To be completely absorbed and immersed in this sense world, or to be fully absorbed in the study of scriptures and acquiring more scholarship and rejecting the world as something unwanted-both are not advisable. In the name of *sadhana*, one should not hate the world. It is worse than attachment to the world. Therefore, one should take into consideration both God and world and do one's duties in the light of the knowledge that God is the substratum for this world phenomena.

In other words, the seeker should bring about harmony between God and world. They are not two distinct, separate, unconnected things each having nothing to do with the other or opposing each other. Many spiritual neophytes hate the world. The out-and-out materialists hate even the name of God. Both are walking the wrong path. Both cannot get out of this painful transmigratory existence. It is true that God cannot be seen as we see objects of this world. But that does not mean that He does not exist. Everyone has to accept the existence of things that are not perceivable to the senses. A little reflection would convince one that the invisible hands of God are everywhere, in all actions and all happenings in this world.

World is like fire which is both useful and harmful, depending on how we make use of it. Fire can be used for cooking food and warming in winter, and at the same time it may be used to burn houses and villages. Even so is the world which through knowledge of God becomes a heaven to live in and a means of liberation, and which without it becomes a hell and the cause of bondage. This meditation prescribes performance of *karma* with the knowledge of God as the substratum or the living spirit in this world.

The modern man habituated to the so-called democratic ways of living and who always wants things to be decided by majority votes may raise the question: All people alike see a real sense-world, but the scriptures tell us that the world is unreal. Similarly, all people alike do not perceive God, but the scriptures say God exists and He is the only reality. How can we accept the scriptural statements in the light of the above experience of all people to the contrary? The reply is that Truth does not depend upon the votes of the ignorant majority. In the parliaments of the nations any law can be introduced by the ruling party with their majority votes, be the law just or unjust. But in the spiritual world this is not applicable. A funny story illustrates this point, how the majority votes of the modern man decides things quite contrary to the truth.

Once an aged man who was ill for a long period died. The doctor seeing that breathing had stopped certified that he was dead. He was taken to the graveyard. All the people of the locality including

the village doctor joined the funeral procession. A retired judge also was among the crowd. They reached the burial ground. To their surprise the corpse showed signs of life coming back. In a few moments everybody found that the man was alive and not dead. The doctor who certified that he was dead was puzzled. He was in a fix. His egoism would not allow him to admit his mistake. There were a few who supported the doctor. They said that the doctor who was highly qualified and had a roaring practice for the last many years, could not go wrong. But the man showed signs of life in him. There was confusion and the whole party did not know how to proceed, whether to bury him or take him back to his house. Now the retired judge who was silently watching the situation so far interfered and said: "I have to my credit thirty years of service in the judiciary and if you all permit me I shall pronounce my judgment after hearing both sides and after taking into account all the facts of this case." All agreed to the proposal. He heard arguments for and against. Then he said, "We have been hearing both sides. Now I will take your votes. Those who are in favour of the doctor's decision, please raise your hands." The vast majority among the crowd raised their hands, because they did not want to incur the displeasure of the local doctor for reasons obvious. The judgment was issued by the learned judge that the man was dead. And he was buried alive. This is how human democracy works in these days. This cannot apply in the case of God whose existence does not depend upon the votes of the ignorant. The only guidance here is the scripture and the spiritual master.

Man must discriminate and use his common-sense. He should not go to the extremes. He must take the middle path. *Samatvam yoga uchyate*-says the Bhagavadgita. A wise combination of *karma* and *upasana* as prescribed in this *vidya* is conducive to spiritual progress. This combination of *karma* and *upasana* takes one to *krama-mukti*, gradual liberation. It can also lead to the Supreme, Absolute Knowledge that results in *sadyo-mukti*, immediate liberation.

- from the book Supreme Knowledge revealed through Vidyas in the Upanishads, a DLS Publication, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand.

Medhā Sūktam

मेधा देवी जुषमाणा न आगाद्विश्वाची भद्रा सुमनस्यमाना ।
त्वया जुष्टा नुदमाना दुरुक्तान् बृहद्वदेम विदथे सुवीराः ॥ १

medhā devī juṣamāṇā na āgādvīśvācī
bhadrā sumanasyamānā,
tvayā juṣṭā nudamānā durukṭān bṛhadvadema
vidathe suvīrā.

विश्वाची *viśvācī* - all-knowing; भद्रा *bhadrā* - all auspicious (the source of welfare); सुमनस्यमाना *sumanasyamānā* - with a mind that is pleased with us; मेधा देवी *medhā devī* - the goddess Medha; जुषमाणा *juṣamāṇā* - blessing; नः *naḥ* - us; आगात् *āgāt* - may come; दुरुक्तान् *durukṭān* - vile words; नुदमानाः *nudamānāḥ* - rejecting; त्वया *tvayā* - by you; जुष्टाः *juṣṭāḥ* - blessed; सुवीराः *suvīrāḥ* - having good offspring; विदथे *vidathe* - having gained knowledge; बृहत् *bṛhat* - about Brahman; वदेम *vadema* - may we speak.

May the all-knowing, all-auspicious Goddess Medha (the intellect personified) have pleasing thoughts about us (be pleased with us). May She come to us and bless us. O! Goddess, may we give up vile speech and by your grace, be blessed with good offspring. May we gain the knowledge (with your blessings) and extol Brahman.

This hymn is an invocation to goddess *Medhā* to come and bestow her grace upon the seeker, in the form of a good intellect -an intellect that is not deluded by the unreal names and forms of the world. *īśvara's* grace takes many forms, like good offspring, material wealth etc. It takes *īśvara's* grace to appreciate how much grace there already is in one's life, even as we go about feeling dissatisfied with our lot!

The state of happiness is the direct result of right thinking and right understanding; it is not the property of external objects or of a given situation. The Self alone is the locus of happiness and one derives happiness only as one's mind abides in the Self. We become happy in the waking state, (which is taken as real) as well as the dream state (which is obviously unreal). The reality or lack of it does not contribute to these experiences of relative happiness, since happiness is always derived from the Self. A pure mind taps the happiness from the Self. The grace of Goddess *Medhā* manifests both as absolute happiness, as well as relative happiness.

Ignorance is bondage and knowledge alone is liberation. An ignorant mind projects an imperfection centered on the individual self, the 'me,' giving rise to a binding desire. The pleasure resulting from its fulfillment is transitory. When we recognize this truth, the bondage of desires ends and the joy of the freedom from desires stays with us.

The bondage of *samsara*, the life of continuous becoming, is not caused by external objects, like a house, car, etc., or people, like a spouse or children, etc. *Samsara* is the result of our attachment to these and lies entirely within the mind. Whatever is outside is *Īśvara's* creation or, if we know better, Brahman. We need the grace of *Īśvara* to know this truth.

All auspiciousness arises from right understanding. It begins at the level of the intellect and blesses everything and everybody around. Self-knowledge is the most auspicious; the knowledge that the world of names and forms is unreal and the Self alone is real is the greatest blessing and happiness. The prayer is that God may grant such a mind as is fit to gain this knowledge.

It is interesting to note that the prayer is in the plural; *naḥ*, to us. The Vedic hymns are generally community prayers. The famous Gayatri-mantra is also a community prayer. It is usually chanted by the individual, but the prayer is for the welfare of the entire family or entire community. The scope of the meaning of the phrase, 'to us,' depends upon the person's inner maturity and may even include

every living being on the planet.

Bṛhad means the Reality, which transcends the limitations of space-time, namely, *Īśvara*. Only by the grace of *Medhā devī* can we even understand and talk about *Īśvara*. When someone takes it upon himself to talk about *Īśvara* without really knowing *Īśvara*, he only does a disservice to listeners by handing over a set of beliefs. There are those who have a set of non-verifiable beliefs and travel to other countries seeking to convert everybody to their system of beliefs. *Vidathe* means having gained the knowledge. The implication is that we become qualified to speak about Brahman only upon gaining the knowledge.

Vadema, may we speak. Speech is a wonderful expression of the inner intelligence and life. The organ of speech is special among all the organs. We have two sets of organs, namely, the organs of action and the sense organs. Though speech is considered to be an organ of action, it is something more than an organ of action; it is a direct expression of the knowledge of a person. We should not use the faculty of speech for uttering inauspicious or harsh and hurtful words. It should be an expression of the inner harmony creating harmony all around. Even in the face of dire provocation, we should maintain control over speech. That becomes possible by the grace of Goddess *Medhā*.

Suviraḥ is an interesting word. It also occurs in the well known prayer, *śatam jīvēma śaradassuviraḥ*. It means may we live a hundred autumns or years together with our children and other members of the family and relatives, in the best of health.

- from *Medha Sūktam*, *Vaidika Sūkta Manjari*; Tattva Prakasika by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati.

ASHRAM NEWS

As a part of the centenary celebrations of the Sri Santi Ashram great many Mahatmas visited the Ashram as a mark of respect to Pujya Omkarji Maharaj. All of them gave their blessings to the ashramites. During February 2016 Pujya Sri Smaranandagiri, secretary Yogada Satsang Society, Ranchi, Pujya Sri Swarupananda Saraswati, Sri Saradapitham, Visakhapatnam, Pujya Sri Kapaleesananada, President Ramakrishna Mat. Rajahmundry, Pujya Sri Rajayogi Suraj, Prajapita Brahmakumari Eswareeya Viswa Vidyalaya, Mount Abu, Rajasthan, Pujya Sri Gambhirananda Saraswati, Sivanandashram, Uttara Kasi, Pujya Sri Krshnananda Swami, Geetashram, Medapadu and Pujya Sri Siddheswarananda Bharati, Kurtalam have visited the Shanti Ashram to give their blessings to the Ashramites and for the development of the Ashram.

During March 2016 Sri K Venkata Sivayya visited the ashram and gave discourses on Upanishad Saaramsa. At Ramateertha Yoga centre the followers of Late Tirumalasetti Venkata Subbarao Performed Sai Satcharitra Parayana for six days. Sri Rani Subbayya Deeshitulu of Swami Ganapati Satchidananda Ashram gave the message on behalf of Pujya Ganapati Satchidananda Swami. Swami Prasannanandagiri, Anandashram Gandipalem visited the ashram and gave his anugraha bhashana.

During April 2016, Mata Yogini Sri Chandrakali Prasad visited the Ashram and gave a discourse on Gurutattvam. Pujya Sri Swamini Chidrupananda Bharati of Nityanandashram, Bonangi visited the Ashram and gave her message. Pujya Sri Lakshmana Swami of Sriramanashram, Rachpalli visited the Ashram and gave his message.

During February, March and April of 2016, Sri Swami Suryabhaskrendra Saraswati has visited different Peace centers in Andhra Pradesh and conducted Prasthanatrayi Parayana and Valmiki Ramayana Parayana and gave discourses on Balakanda. He also gave discourses on Upanishads.

At different centres of the Ashram the usual monthly distribution of the provision to the old and needy people has been done. The yoga camps and spiritual programmes are conducted by inviting local people.

Your contributions and support:

1. Annadanam : a) Permanent- Rs. 5,000/-, Rs. 10,000/- Rs. 20,000/-, 25,000/- (Meals) b) One day -Rs. 500/-, 1000/-, 2000/-, 2,500/-
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