

# **ANANDA RASA RATNAKAR**

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***Selections from Talks and Writings of  
MAHARAJSHREE SWAMI AKHANDANANDA SARASWATI  
Volume 1***

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***Compiled by  
GOVINDANANDA SARASWATI***

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***English rendering by G.Kameshwar***

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Selections from the talks and writings of  
**PARAMPUJYA MAHARAJSHREE**  
**SWAMI AKHANDANANDA SARASWATI**

**Volume 1**

Compiled by  
**Govindananda Saraswati**

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Bhaavana and Bodha

We do things in such a way that not even God can see

Make the mind into a cremation ground!

This is just for you – 1

This is just for you – 2

The greatest folly of life, and the greatest sorrow

Why does it take a long time to understand Vedanta?

Rare, marvelous, is the speaker of Brahmavidya

The distinguishing aspect of Vaidika Dharma

## **February**

Swamishree Karpatriji Maharaj

What is the Dharma of a Jeeva?

In life, what is the way to increase **sadguNa**? (1)

In life, what is the way to increase **sadguNa**? (2)

**Indriya-samyama** (sense-control) should stand on the foundation of

**samatva** (One-ness of all)

Adherence to Dharma should be for purity of the Heart

Gita booklet's family

**Satsang** is more important for children

Sins of speech

This heart is a very beautiful casket

Brother! Reduce your weight a bit!

This indeed is the way to do bhajan!

Materialism is not the end-all of life!

Our God's granary is full to the brim

O, how compassionate the Lord is!

This human body is no ordinary one

Gopika-s are Preceptors of Love

When Jeeva becomes completely helpless, that's when God is met

Relationship with God is the only true relationship

The flowing current of great compassion

Imagined belief of Brahmanubhuti is not the realization of Highest-Truth

There is further road to traverse  
Jijnaasu Beware!  
Siddhaanta and Life!  
Right now, is the right time! The auspicious dawn of good fortune!  
What is Sadhana, in reality  
The auspicious virtues of a Self-Realized man  
Gurudeva is verily the 'Pradhaana Purusheshwar'  
Two verses that were dear to Shree Udiya Babaji Maharaj

### **March**

Brahmamayi Ma  
Victory over one's nature alone is completeness of a Saadhaka  
Let not the 'anger chaandaal' reside in your heart  
Without playing this gamble, there is no release  
The Jnani kills by questioning; and the Bhakta kills by feeding  
Resoluteness of mind  
sAttvik kartA – The 'doer' pure  
Dharma is but the sustenance of ten things  
Whose life is a success?  
Enact a rule, to cause no harm to others  
The whole of Srimad Bhagavata is only about the Leela of Sri Krishna  
Parabrahma Sri Krishna, the Refuge of all  
Mohan's Mohani! (The Charmer's charm!)  
That too was a love-filled Leela of my playful Lord!  
The doer is not "I"; the doer is Ishvara  
Even the pain given by one's beloved is actually pleasing  
God takes the side of those who are devoted to Him  
My mind is throbbing to have your Darshan  
The beauty/shine of Jnana is in this; that it be sweetened with Bhakti  
The way to attain Paramatma, sitting at home  
Bhagavat-stuti is a great form of Sadhana  
Upon attaining Paramatma, all differences dissolve  
Satguru and Shishya

Self-Knowledge : Q & A

A burning question in the heart of a *jijnAsu*

The way of Vairagya is very distinctive!

I am Sat-Cit-Ananda, Non-dual!

Life, unshaken

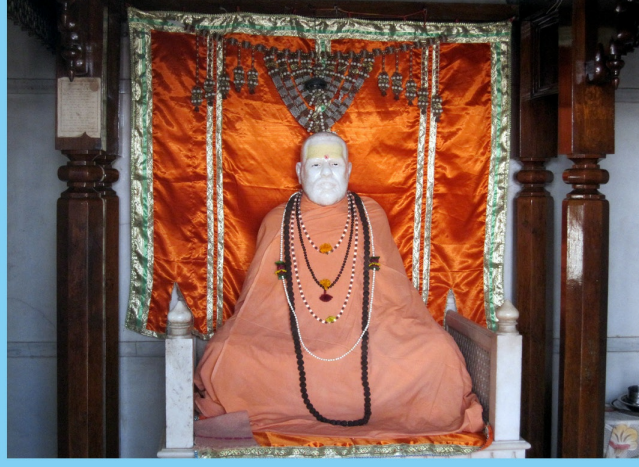
Bondage is but a matter of make-believe

That which you desire

The closeness ceased

**Sadguru Shree Poornananda Teertha - A verse of  
Maharajshree**

ॐ



श्रीपूर्णानन्दतीर्थ स्फुरदमृतगवीविप्रुषाऽऽप्लावितानां  
नास्माकं मोक्षचिन्ता प्रविदितमहसां ब्रह्मभावं गतानां ।  
किन्त्वेषा बोधधारा विघटितनिखिलाकारसंस्कारकारा  
स्वच्छन्दं दन्ध्वनीति प्रतिपदमधुना तामनुव्यञ्जयामः ॥१॥

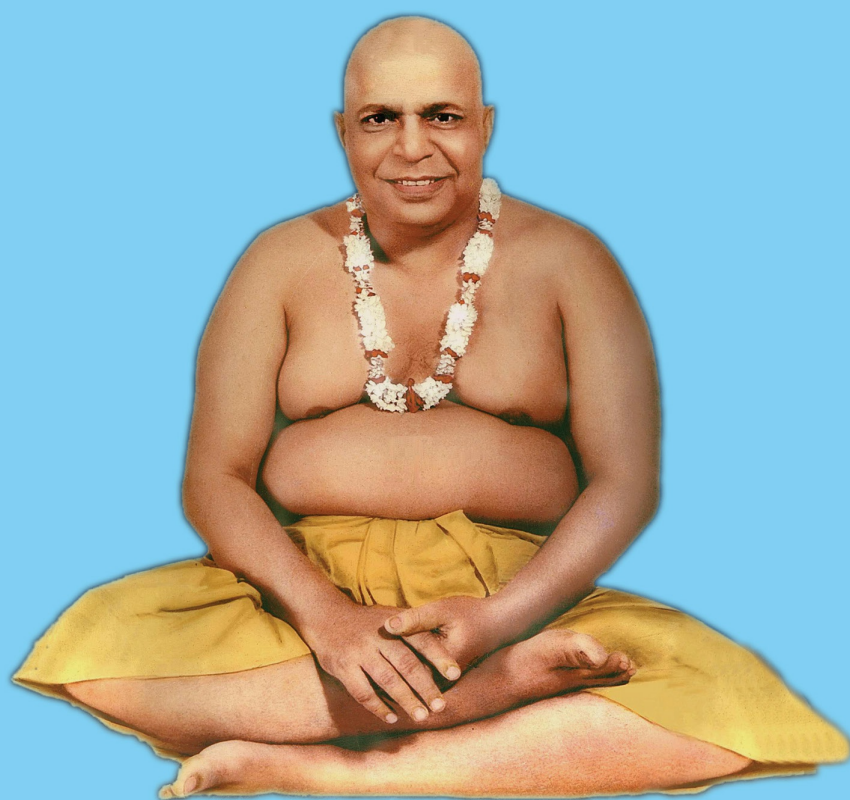
Having been inundated  
By the drops  
Of Amrta utterances  
That throb  
In the holy waters  
Of Sri Poornananda,  
We worry not  
About our salvation,  
Having known well  
The effulgence, (and)  
Having attained  
The state of  
Self-Abidance!

However,  
This stream of knowledge  
Continues to demolish  
All confinements  
Of forms  
And fancies  
(and is)  
Resounding,  
By its own will,  
Everywhere!

And so, now,  
We undertake  
Expressly, word by word,  
To give expression,  
To That!

*Sri Poornananda Teertha Stava, Verse 1  
Swami Akhandananda Saraswati*





**Parampujya Maharajshree  
Swami Akhandananda Saraswati-j Maharaj**

## **Maharajshree : A brief sketch**

Maharajshree Swami Akhandananda Saraswati was born in Vikram Samvat 1968, on the new moon day of the month of Shravana, in the asterism of Pushya – which corresponds to the Western calendar date of 25<sup>th</sup> of July, 1911 CE. He was born in a Sarayupaareen Brahmana family living near the banks of river Ganga in a village of name Mahraai, in the region of Varanasi, the holiest place in Bharatavarsha.

His birth was exactly nine months after his paternal grandfather had prayed to Lord Thakur Shantanu Vihari of Vraj, asking the Lord to bless the family with a son. In gratitude, the child was given the name of the Lord, Shantanu-Vihaari.

When his horoscope was cast, the leading astrologers of the day declared that Maharajshree would live only for 19 years. As a consequence, the fear of death drove young Shantanu to the path of spirituality. All the sages and saints that he met told him clearly that they could not tell him how to escape from death, for death comes as preordained by Prarabdha Karma; but they could give him that 'Jnana' (knowledge), by which the fear of death would cease, once and for all. And that is exactly what happened. Deathless Brahman revealed itself in the heart of Maharajshree, by which the dark shadow of death fled far away, for all time to come.

On one occasion, Maharajshree went to Jhusi in Prayag-raj to meet the celebrated saint Sri Prabhudutt Brahmachari. It was here that Maharajshree first met the Supreme-sage Sri Udiya Babaji Maharaj, and he received many clarifications from Baba on questions related to Vedanta. Seeing the steady, non-dual, Self-abidance of Baba, and the unique bliss of his Jeevanmukti, Maharajshree became quite spellbound. Right from the first meeting, he was blessed with Baba's love and affection. Maharajshree's taking up Sanyaas was at the inner prompting of Baba, and he received the vows of renunciation from Jyotish-Peethadheeshwar Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Shri Brahmananda Saraswati. Prior to his taking Sanyas, he served for seven years in the editorial board of 'Kalyan' magazine, published by Gita

Press, Gorakhpur.

He was first introduced to the study of Srimad Bhagavatam at the tender age of ten by his paternal grandfather. And from that time onwards, right until the end of his earthly sojourn, Srimad Bhagavatam remained with him as a companion in the manner of a 'heart friend'. His daily Satsang, which was a sharing of the revelry springing from his inner bliss, carried on without break till the evening Satsang of 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1987. Devotees of Satsang heartily partake the ambrosia of his words even to this day, by means of his books, audio and video recordings.

At 2 AM, Brahmamuhurtha time of 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1987, corresponding to the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Margasheersha, the individual life-force of Maharajshree merged in the Cosmic life-force of Creation, and He became all-pervading.

It was clearly seen in the life of Maharajshree that he had the same love for all people; irrespective of sect or belief, or whether the person was a dunce or a scholar, a woman or man, a young boy or an aged person, poor or wealthy. Whatever desire a person approached Maharajshree with, the person achieved that. Right to the very end, Maharajshree freely handed out all four *Purushartha*-s (the four objects of human pursuit – viz., *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*), as well as the fifth *Purushartha* – namely, *Bhakti*.

The Ananda-Vrindavan Ashram established by Maharajshree in Sri Brindavan Dham, is equivalent to Teertharaj Prayag, the King of the holy river confluences; for here, there is the convergence of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. The Ashram activities include regular Satsang, service to God-Supreme, service to cows, service to Sanyasis, the study of Shastras in the Veda Vidyalaya, free medical clinic etc. In addition, the tradition of celebrating the birth anniversaries of all the great Acharyas, which was started by Maharajshree and continues to this day, shines as something quite amazing from the point of view of cultural synthesis. Indeed, it is a standout example of the broadmindedness of Maharajshree.

Glory to Maharajshree!



श्रीहरिः

श्रीगणेशाय नमः

**पूर्वाम्नाय श्रीगोवर्द्धनमठ-पुरीपीठाधीश्वर श्रीमज्जगद्गुरु-शङ्कराचार्य-स्वामी निश्चलानन्दसरस्वती**

श्रीगोवर्द्धनमठ-पुरीपीठ-पुरी ७५२००१, ओडिशा

दूरभाष-०६७५२-२३१७१६, फैक्स-०६७५२-२३१०९४, मोबाइल- ९४३७०३१७१६

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पूज्यपाद मान्यश्री स्वामी अखण्डानन्दसरस्वती - महाभाग विद्वान् और विनम्र मनीषी थे। भगवत्कृपासे मुझे सन् १९७२ से १७ नवम्बर १९८७ पर्यन्त उनका सान्निध्य सुलभ हुआ है। इस अवधिमें उनके वचनामृतका मैंने आस्था और अपनत्वपूर्वक आस्वादन किया है। उनकी सरस तथा सरल प्रवचनशैली अवश्य ही अद्भुत थी। वे 'नारायण'- इस भगवन्नामका उच्चारणपूर्वक ही सम्भाषण करते थे। उनके प्रश्नोत्तरकी शैली भी मनोरम थी। अध्यात्मके सुगूढ भावोंको भी सुगम और सरसशैलीमें प्रस्तुत करनेकी कला उनमें स्वभावसिद्ध थी। सन्तों तथा विद्वानोंको वे सम्मान देते थे। वे जहाँ श्रीवल्लभादि - वैष्णवाचार्योंके सिद्धान्तको स्वपक्षको हृदयङ्गम करनेमें उत्तम सोपान मानते थे; वहाँ कश्मीरी शैवदर्शनमें सन्निहित स्पन्दतत्त्वके भी प्रशंसक थे। वे साधकोंको मन्त्रजपके प्रति आस्थान्वित करनेमें दक्ष थे। वे आवश्यकतानुसार व्यवहारकी चर्चा भी अध्यात्मकी चासनीमें पागकर ही करते थे। उनका वचनामृत श्रवणसुखद और मनको विश्राम देनेवाला था।

श्रीभगवत्पाद शङ्कराचार्य - महाभागके द्वारा उद्भासित सिद्धान्तके सम्बन्धमें पूज्यपाद स्वामी श्री अखण्डानन्दसरस्वती - महाभाग कहा करते थे कि विविध दर्शनोंमें औपनिषद -सिद्धान्तको पूर्वपक्ष अथवा उत्तरपक्षके रूपमें जिस प्रकार ख्यापित किया गया है; उसीको श्रीशङ्कराचार्यने युक्ति तथा अनुभूतिसहित सैद्धान्तिक धरातलपर उद्भासित किया है। अतः परम्पराप्राप्त औपनिषदसिद्धान्तका वही स्वरूप ग्राह्य है, जिसे भगवत्पादने ख्यापित किया है। श्रीवैष्णवाचार्योंने ईशादि - उपनिषदोंपर भाष्य न लिखकर मानो मौनरूपसे उसे स्वीकार कर लिया है।

श्री स्वामीजीके प्रवचनोंका स्वान्तःसुखाय आस्था और दक्षतापूर्वक सङ्कलनकर उसे सर्वजनसुखाय 'आनन्दरस- रत्नाकर'- नामसे प्रकाशित कर एवं उसके इंग्लिश - अनुवादके संयोजन तथा पत्रिकाके माध्यमसे क्रमशः प्रकाशनका मार्ग प्रशस्तकर डॉ. श्री स्वामी गोविन्दानन्दसरस्वतीजी ने हमें प्रमुदित किया है।

*निश्चलानन्दसरस्वती*

स्वामी निश्चलानन्दसरस्वती

श्रीमज्जगद्गुरु - शङ्कराचार्य - पुरीपीठ

११.१२.२०२०





**Shree Govardhan Math Puri Peethadheeshwar  
Parampujya Jagadguru Shankaracharya  
Swami Sri Nischalananda Saraswati-j Maharaj**



## Shree Hari Prostrations to Shree Ganesha

Pujyapaada Maanyashree Swami Akhandananda Saraswati Mahabhaaga, was a great scholar and sage, endowed with great humility, gentleness. By the grace of God, I was blessed with his proximity from 1972 CE to 17, November, 1987 CE. During this period, I have, with deep faith and a sense of personal belonging, greatly relished his *vachanaamrita* (the ambrosia of his words). His nectarous and simple style of speaking was indeed wonderful. He would always start his speeches by first voicing Bhagavans Name – ‘**Narayan**’. His manner of answering questions was captivating too. His style of communicating even the most intricate, subtle, points of Adhyatma-Vidya in a nectarous, easy to understand way, was something that came naturally to him. He held sages and scholars in great honour. While he considered the Siddhanta (doctrine) of Vaishnavacharyas like Shri Vallabha as being an excellent ladder for getting to a good understanding of one’s own philosophy, he was also all praise for the *spanda-tattva* (principle of pulsation) embedded in the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. In enabling Sadhaka-s to develop a firm faith in *mantra-japa*, he was an adept. He would engage in discussions on worldly matters when necessary, but only after soaking these in the syrup of Adhyatma-Vidya. His *vachanaamrita* was joy to the ears, and gave tranquility to the mind.

As regards the Siddhanta that has been brought to light by Shree Bhagavatpada Shankaracharya Mahaabhaaga, Shree Akhandananda Saraswati used to say – ‘The Upanishad Siddhanta that has been declared in the *purvapaksha* (prima-facie argument) and *uttarapaksha* (refutation of the prima-facie argument) in different works of philosophy; these very doctrines have been illumined by Shankaracharya in the landscape of Siddhanta, with clear logic, and based on his profound personal experience. Therefore, only that interpretation of traditionally handed-down Upanishad Siddhanta is to

be considered valid, which has been espoused by Bhagavatpada Shankara. The Vaishnava Acharyas, by not writing any commentary on Isha and other Upanishads, have tacitly accepted this.'

Doctor Swami Shree Govindananda Saraswati Ji has, with great faith and skill, collated a selection of discourses of Shree Swami Akhandananda Saraswati for his own inner joy, published them as a book titled as 'Ananda Rasa Ratnakar' (in Hindi language); and has now organized the translation and publication of this in English. By this, he has given us great happiness.

Sd/-

Swami Nischalananda Saraswati  
Shrimad-Jagadguru-Shankaracharya,  
Govardhan Peeth, Puri  
11-December-2020

## A humble submission

कथायां पीयूषं प्रवचनकलायां च पटुता।  
सुलेखे लालित्यं लसति किल यस्य क्षितितले।  
स्मरामि प्रातस्तं भवजलधिभीतैकशरणं  
अखण्डानन्दं श्रीगुरुवरमहं ब्रह्म परमम् ॥

(रचयिता : श्री ओंकारदत्त शास्त्री)

*He whose*

*Nectarous quality, in story-telling;*

*Excellence, in the art of discourse;*

*Charm, in good writing;*

*Shines supreme on earth;*

*He*

*Who is the sole refuge*

*Of those who are seized by the fear*

*Of the ocean of transmigration;*

*Him*

*The best of Guru-s, Supreme Brahman*

*Shree Akhandananda*

*I contemplate in my mind*

*First thing, in the waking-up moment of early morn.*

(Composed by Shree Omkardutt Shastri)

Some year ago, during the course of my daily studies, I was greatly drawn by a particular essay of Pujya Maharajshree, of title 'Sadhana ki anivaaryataa', which was a part of the book 'Bhakti Sarvasva'. I wrote down the important points of this essay in a separate notebook, for the purposes of my contemplation/meditation.

Thereafter, I continued this as a regular practice. Every week, for my own sake, I began putting together a page of material for contemplation/meditation, extracted from different books authored by Pujya Maharajshree.

During my sojourn in South India, I had the good fortune of coming across the book “*Shree Brahmachaitanya Maharaj Gondavalekar Pravachan*”. This book was a collection of *pravachan* (discourses) of the sage, meant for daily reading. The book was so arranged that there was one page of discourse for each of the 366 days of the year. Upon seeing this, there arose this desire in my mind that a similar collection could be made, of discourses of Maharajshree. The thought was to see if this could be done as a part of the ‘Birth Centenary Smrti’ – as a Satsang-blessing of Maharajshree himself, meant for daily reading by spiritual seekers.

In this manner, the weekly page compilation that I began in 2003, selecting material from different books of Maharajshree, was completed sometime in the beginning of 2010 CE, ahead of the birth centenary of Maharajshree. This collection of 366 pages, extracted from over 80 different books of Maharajshree, was first put together as ‘*Janm Shatabdhi Smaarikaa*’ (A Birth Centenary Remembrance), and then took the form of the book ‘**Ananda Rasa Ratnakar**’.

By the Grace of Pujya Maharajshree, the book was well received by learned readers. However, there also arose a request for an English translation for the benefit of those who do not know Hindi, and this request was persistently voiced.

For me it is a matter of pride that my close friend, Sri Kameshwar, in response to my gentle request, took this task upon himself, and now, the ‘First Volume’ is in your hands.

It is to be noted that Sri Kameshwar has been serving the cause of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi literature for the last many years. Among Sri Kameshwar’s writings, the most peerless offering is one that was released recently; a book titled – “*Essence of the Vedas – ‘Upadesha Saarah’ of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, with ‘Tattvabodhini’ commentary in Sanskrit by Atmavidyabhushanam Sri Jagadeeshwara Shastri – English*

*translation and notes – G Kameshwar”.*

The English translation of ‘Ananda Rasa Ratnakar’ comes across as a lucid and accurate rendering. You would yourself say this after perusal of the book.

To our greatest happiness, for this ‘Volume 1’ of the book, we have received the Srimukha, most auspicious words of benediction, from **Poorvamnaya Shree Govardhan Math Puri Peethadheeshwar Shrimat Jagadguru Shankaracharya Shree Swami Nischalananda Saraswati-ji Maharaj**. Our countless prostrations to Maharaj-ji.

Auspicious best-wishes for this publication have also been received from Shree Swami Sacchidanandaji and Shree Swami Shravananandaji.

Shri Alay and Shrimati Shilpi Shah (Vadodara) have offered the Seva for publication of all four volumes of this book, in memory of their parents, (Late) Shri Jitubhai and (Late) Shrimati Suhasiniben Shah, who were ardent disciples of Puja Maharajshree. May Puja Maharajshree’s blessings be with them always.

Our great appreciation for the beautiful printing carried out by Sri Rajeev Batra and Sri Ashish Batra.

Lastly, I humbly request learned readers to please let us know any errors that they notice in this edition, so that these may be rectified in the next edition.

Vrindavan

With humble Pranams

Mahashivaratri, 2021 Resorting to the lotus feet of Shri Guru,

**Govindananda Saraswati**



## Translator's Note

At the outset, I would like to express my immense gratitude to Doctor Swami Govindananda Saraswati Ji, for being my bridge to Brindavan, taking me to the most blessed *sannidhi* of Maharajshree Swami Akhandananda Saraswati. For this, I am eternally beholden to him.

It was in the Asrama of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, that I first met Swami Govindananda Saraswati. At that time, Swami Govindananda Ji was in his '*ajnAta vAsa*', living incognito in South India. During the course of conversation, perhaps spotting some interest about Maharajshree in me, Swami Govindananda Ji took my address, and he mailed me a copy of "*Pawan Prasang*", the Hindi autobiography of Maharajshree. And this book opened my eyes to the great spiritual landscape of North India, the timeless presence of supreme sages like Swami Poornananda Teertha (Udiya Baba), Hari Baba, Karpatriji Maharaj and others. What a treasure of a book! I read, and re-read it many times. The simplicity of language, the musical Ganga-like flow of expression, the depth and sweep of spiritual topics addressed, the confluence of diverse paths of Karma-Yoga-Bhakti-Jnana, the constant "*darshan*" of supreme sages – all these and more made the book one of the most beautiful writings in spiritual literature that I had come across. That Vedanta could be written so beautifully in Hindi was a matter of great wonder for me. Indeed, I was drawn into the world of Maharajshree – by the magic of '*Pawan Prasang*'.

Thereafter, thanks to Swami Govindananda Ji again, I had the good fortune of visiting Maharajshree's Ashram in Brindavan several times, and I could get to sip the life-giving *amrita* of his writings and discourses. To connect to any one of his books or talks is to connect to all sages, all philosophies, all spiritual paths, all Oneness, and more than all this, "all joy". His words are like a cool Himalayan breeze of compassion, bringing with them a wave of Ananda. It is the '*ahaituki kripa*', the Causeless-Grace, of God Supreme.

And Maharajshree has been a prolific writer, his works extending across

the whole landscape of spiritual literature. It is an ocean of knowledge, the ends of which cannot be gauged. It is our great good fortune that Swami Govindananda has selected, edited and compiled a collection of Maharajshree's writings, extracted from across all his works, and brought it out as the Hindi book '**Ananda Rasa Ratnakar**'. The book is structured as a daily reader, a collection of 366 articles of Maharajshree, to be read over one year. On Swami Govindananda's advice, an English translation of the book was decided to be brought out, as a series in four volumes. This first volume, covers the articles from January to March. It was at the gracious request of Swami Govindananda Ji that this task of translation was taken up by me, although with some trepidation. Firstly, the subject matter is profound. And then, the book is a compilation of writings taken from across 80+ different books and articles, and so each 'piece' has its own context and style. Also, in many cases, the style of writing is conversational, informal, and to get that style across in a translation is rather difficult. There is also the realization that not a single word of Maharajshree is redundant, and every nuance and emphasis matters. Therefore, it is desirable that the translation remains absolutely true to the meaning, tone and flow of every sentence of the original. Often, this makes the English rendering somewhat tedious in its construct. And last but not least, this translator's inadequacy of subject-knowledge, coupled with the challenges of expressing technical terms of Vedanta in a non-Indian language without overly affecting the flow, made the whole task a rather daunting challenge. But help was at hand. To get a better understanding of the subject matter, I could take the help of Swami Govindananda Ji, by listening to his daily discourses on '**Ananda Rasa Ratnakar**', which are available in YouTube. And I could also send across my draft translations to him for his review, and get clarifications. And most of all, Maharajshree's words carry His blessings; and these encouraged me to chip away, slowly and steadily. Even so, in this work, errors and misprints are bound to be there, and it is my request and belief that learned readers shall pardon these.

For me, the task of translation is a process of Sadhana. To sit with a diary page of '**Ananda Rasa Ratnakar**', to "listen" to Maharajshree's

compassion filled voice, and to reflect deeply on His words, is a process of meditation; an inner journey in response to Vedanta's call of '*athAto brahma jijñAsa*' – '*Now, therefore, the inquiry into Brahman (should be taken up)*'.

As a most divine blessing, we have received a *Srimukha* for this book from **His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Govardhan Peeth, Puri, Swami Nischalananda Saraswati Ji Maharaj**. Our prostrations to the most revered Jagadguru Shankaracharya.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Sri Madurai Sridhar for the page-design and typesetting, and to Dr Sarada Natarajan for the beautiful cover design.

With prayers to the most compassionate God Ganesha, this book is offered at the Lotus Feet of Maharajshree.

All Glory to Sri Krishna! All Glory to Maharajshree! Prostrations to the dust of Brindavan!

With humble Pranams,  
**G Kameshwar**  
Chennai  
April, 2021

## **Approach to Transliteration**

To give the reader a better appreciation of the pronunciation of some of the key Sanskrit/Hindi terms that have been used in the original, an attempt has been to transliterate these, and render in italics. The transliteration schema is adapted from the Harvard-Kyoto (HK) convention<sup>1</sup>, as follows:

a A i I u U R RR

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ॠ

lR lRR e ai O au M H

ल लृ ए ऐ ओ औ अं अः

k kh g gh G c ch j jh J

क ख ग घ ङ च छ ज झ ञ

T Th D Dh N t th d dh n

ट ठ ड ढ ण त थ द ध न

p ph b bh m y r l v z S s h

प फ ब भ म य र ल व श ष सह



Some freedom has been taken with the above, to make it easier for a normal English reading. For instance:

‘ee’ has been used instead of ‘I’ in a few places (as in ‘jeeva’ instead of ‘jIva’).

‘aa’ may have been used instead of ‘A’ (as in ‘parama<sup>aa</sup>rtha’ instead of ‘paramArtha’)

‘v’ used interchangeably with ‘w’ (‘Ishvara’ or ‘Ishwara’)

‘jn’ has been used in place of ‘jJ’ (as in ‘jnAna’ instead of ‘jJAna’).

‘m’ or ‘n’ used in place of ‘G’ (as in ‘ahamkAra’ or ‘ahankAra’ instead of ‘ahaGkAra’ )

‘sh’ may have been used in place of ‘z’ or ‘S’ (as in ‘vishNu’, ‘gaNesha’, ‘paramEshvara’ instead of ‘viSNu’, ‘ganeza’, ‘paramezvara’ respectively)...

‘oo’ may have been instead of ‘U’ (e.g., ‘roop’ instead of ‘rUp’)

However, transliteration may not have been done for every Sanskrit/Hindi term. For eg, common words like Veda, Atma, Paramatma, Ishvara, Karma, Upasana, Jnana, Avidya etc, may not have been transliterated.

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1 For details refer <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard-Kyoto>

## **ANANDA RASA RATNAKAR**



**Bhagavan Sri Nritya Gopal Ji  
Anand Vrindavan**

**January**

# January 1

## Narayana is with you!

One who keeps Narayana as the charioteer of his life and steps into the battlefield of worldly affairs and dealings, achieves success. And the one who goes alone, suffers fall and destruction.

This pertains to your everyday life. There is a narrative from Sri Malaviya-ji's life that I may have told you many times before. He used to say – *"Whenever you step out of home on some work, chant 'Narayana' four times – **Narayana, Narayana, Narayana, Narayana** – and then set off."* What happens because of this is that – (speaking with an example) – so long as a flowing river or a canal continues to have a connection to its source, it does not dry up; whereas, a river or canal that loses connection to its source, dries up. Same is the case with a human being. His root-source is Narayana, Parameswara (Supreme God Almighty). If he conducts his worldly affairs keeping his connection with Parameshwara intact, his power/strength continues to remain.

By maintaining your connection with Parameswara, you always get three things.

1. Your life's flow does not get interrupted or torn asunder, ever.
2. Your mind/thinking shall always have clarity. Your intellectual clarity will never cease.
3. In your life, there will be a perpetual flow of joy

And contrarily, if you break your connection with God, then the flow of your life will suffer interruptions and injury; the flow of your life, the flow of your mind/intelligence, your discrimination/ knowledge/ awareness/ understanding will deteriorate and die; the joy that springs from your inner-self will cease, and you will start living on borrowed happiness. You will borrow life from medicines; wisdom/ understanding from books and from other people; and happiness from pleasures of sense objects; this is a

demonstration of the fact that we have been cut off from our inner root-source of life, knowledge, and happiness.

To my mind, one may well forget every fact of life, but it is not proper to forget the fact that inside this human body of ours, it is Parameswara, the Lord of entirety (the totality of creation), who is residing (in our heart)!

(Often) People who are big shots, big businessmen, big thought-leaders – end up forgetting Narayana. When Duryodhana entered the battle-field, he did not take Narayana with him; whereas Arjuna entered the battle-field taking Narayana alongside.

And so, on behalf of Gita, we would like to make this request to you – when you undertake any work, do not go about it in a solo, helpless, pitiful, deficient manner. Commence your work, making Narayana your associate and taking his help. Do not think that there is no one to help you; have the conviction that in the work that you are undertaking, Narayana is with you.

(Dainik Jeevan Mein Gita : p 6.7.8)



**Parampujya Sri Poornananda Teertha  
Brahmamurti Sri Udiya Baba-ji Maharaj**

## January 2

### Teachings of Brahmamurti Sri Udiya Babaji Maharaj

In the life of a *tattvajna* (Knower of Reality; a sage who has Self-Knowledge), absorption of mind in *brahman* (Non-dual Existence; Self; Supreme Reality) is steady and unbroken. A person with Self-Knowledge does not have the experience that *avidyA* (erroneous-knowledge) has ceased. That would have been experienced only if there was such a thing as *avidyA* that existed before, which then disappeared later. As far as a *tattvajna*-s experience is concerned, *avidyA* never existed at any time – it did not exist in the past, doesn't exist now, and shall never exist in the future.

This experience is known upon constant practice, and the total destruction of *vAsanA*<sup>1</sup>. By merely reading the scriptures, nothing happens. So long as *vAsanA* remains, the mind cannot be at peace. It is only the *vAsanA*-free mind that is qualified to enquire/deliberate about the *paramatattva* (supreme-transcendent truth/reality). It is by constant practice alone that the complete uprooting of *vAsanA*-s take place and there is realization of *tattva* (Supreme Truth; Self-Knowledge). For the annihilation of *vAsanA*, one should practice constant non-attachment – *vairAgya* – to worldly objects, and fix the mind's attention on God at all times.

The fruit of *vairAgya* is *bOdha* (right understanding), and the fruit of *bOdha* is *uparati* (extreme abstention, when the mind ceases to function through the sense organs). The difference between the two is that upon having *vairAgya*, one understands the harm that exists in sense objects, and therefore one desists from sense enjoyment. Whereas, upon gaining *uparati*, even when the sense-object is right in front of oneself, even the least urge to enjoy that object does not arise. Thereafter, the fruit of *uparati* is *Ananda* (joy) and the fruit of *Ananda* is *shAnti* (peace).

*rAga*: In the event that one's mind gets so attached to an object that it does let go even when faced with insult, disgrace, or distress, then it should be understood that there is *rAga* for that object. *dvEsha*: If the mind gets so removed from an object that it sees defects, and defects alone, in that

object and sees no positive qualities whatsoever, then it should be understood that there is *dvEsha* for that object. *rAga-dvEsha* originates only by ruminating on good and bad qualities of objects, or (by reflecting upon) criticisms and praise. By taking a vow to attain freedom from *rAga-dvEsha* and to abstain from criticism/praise; and by meditating upon a supreme *jnAnI* (Self-realized sage) or *bhakta* (perfect devotee of God), it is possible to gain freedom from the clutches of *rAga-dvEsha*. Upon the falling off of *rAga-dvEsha*, the mind becomes light and there is the primacy of *sattva-guNa* (pureness, goodness, divine qualities) in it. One then attains the eligibility and capability to realize the unwavering non-dual Truth/Reality. A person with *rAga-dvEsha* cannot advance on the golden footpath of (spiritual) progress. But, yes, the cessation of *rAga-dvEsha* cannot be brought about by *vivEka* (discriminative intellect) alone. The total disappearance of *rAga-dvEsha* comes about (only) by *bhagavat-prEma* (Love of God) and *Atma-prEma* (Love of Self).

Position (status) and pride only distracts/disorients by means of *mOha* (delusion) and *mAyA* (illusion). What is there to gain from these?

Maharajji<sup>2</sup> considered '*jihvA-svAd*' (attachment to the tongue, the sense of taste) to be the root of all reverses/misfortunes.

What is *jeevanmukti*? On being asked this question, Maharajji would say – Just as listening to your praise/insult uttered in a language unknown to you would cause no wobble in your mind; in like manner, if praise or insult that is uttered in a language known to you causes no excitement or indignation whatsoever, then one has to agree that you are a *jeevanmukta* (one liberated while yet alive).

By the sage-company of Maharajji, one was blessed to hear many such lines of thought, not heard before. There was no distinction between seeing Him/His life and seeing Brahman (the supreme, infinite, limitation-free, non-dual, Reality). He was the icon/symbol of (virtues such as) equanimity/indifference to honour or humiliation, magnanimity, forbearance, freedom from anger... Even the biggest calamity, conflict, or external happening was incapable of affecting him in the least. He was the earthly form of Brahman. For seekers of knowledge, He was a



*brahmavidvarishtta* (knower of Brahman of the highest type) Mahatma. For *bhakta*-s (devotees) he was God. That said, what He was in reality, even He couldn't say. Where can one now see that incarnation of knowledge, love and bliss anymore?

(Paavan Prasang / Sadhana aur Brahmaanubhuti)

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1 *vAsana: Behavioural tendencies; desires in a seed form, existing in the mind.*

2 *Brahmamurti Sri Udiya Babaji Maharaj*

## January 3

### The flow of yajna

The doer-ship that exists in man – that *‘I have done this’, ‘I have done that’* ; at the root of this doer-ship is *ajnAna* (ignorance). It is this very ‘I’-ness that renders a person a ‘limited’ entity. Indeed, whatever are the hard knocks and hurts that one experiences in the world, all those knocks fall on the *kartA* (doer), *bhOkta* (enjoyer) alone. If one does not have the egotism of ‘doer-ship’, then one will not be hurt. In reality, if one has eyes only for the doings, enjoyments and renunciations of God – who is the Great Doer, Great Enjoyer, Great Renunciate – then one will never fall into the grips of egotism.

Loosening of doer-ship comes about by surrendering to God. So long as there is doer-ship, manifestation of God in one’s life does not come about.

Look here, there is a differentiation here based on the maturity of the seeker. To a seeker of low maturity, it is said – “Go do work”. When he starts performing work, he is told to desist from ‘proscribed’ activities; do the ‘prescribed’ ones. When he begins to perform ‘prescribed’ activities with an eye for the fruit, he is told to work without desiring personal gains. When he begins to perform work in a selfless manner, with no desire for the fruit, then he becomes eligible to receive the teaching – *‘Do not entertain the notion (pride) of doer-ship’*. And it is precisely for breaking the *‘I am the doer’* notion of the person who has the pride of doer-ship, that *‘surrender to God’* is counselled.

In reality, it is only by the power of the eternal-existence and supremacy of God that all activities are going on.

If, however, one was to say, that desire-driven activities and unethical deeds are also carried out only as impelled by God – then that would be a totally wrong attribution. Actually, God doesn’t want to keep anyone idle, worthless. Only a dead body is totally devoid of activity. God doesn’t make one perform activities that are forbidden (by Shastra). Unethical deeds are carried out only because of one’s own *vAsanA*<sup>3</sup>. God does not impel one to

do desire-motivated work. It's one's own selfishness that makes one do that. In the same way, it is not God who gives us the sense of doer-ship that we have in us; it is our foolishness that gives us that.

Thus, the Shastra gives instructions to each person in accordance with his/her eligibility, spiritual maturity. If it is said to a sinful person that '*it is God who is actually making you perform sinful acts*' – then such a statement can only be ill-judgment causing, foolishness producing, and lead to severing the person from God.

When you perform any good act, you should feel in your heart that it is God who got that done by you. But when we end up doing some wrong act, then we should realize that it happened due to our oversight, error. It is with this view that Tulasidasji has said – *guna tumhAra samujhai nija dosA/ jehi saba bhA.Nti tumhAra bharosA* // (He who attributes his virtues to you and holds himself responsible for his faults, nay, who entirely depends on You...)<sup>4</sup>... And so, if any good work is carried out by you, then do not take pride of doer-ship. Realize that this has happened as impelled by God. And if you do any wrong act, then realize that it is because of one's own error, oversight.

And after this, if you were to say – '*I do not remain a doer anymore; it is God who remains as the Doer*' – then that would be quite correct. Indeed, a real devotee feels thus. The truly surrendered devotee says – '*God! Nothing has been done by me. All has been done by you. You alone know.*' In this manner, casting the burden of doer-ship totally on God, surrendering to Him, is the means of breaking (one's) notion/pride of doer-ship. If you, systematically uplift yourself by cleansing your heart step-by-step, then alone will you have advancement. And contrarily, if you let go and halt midway, saying – '*Ah! Good and bad acts are done by everyone; desire for fruit exists in everyone's heart; doer-ship is there in everybody; who doesn't ever do something wrong?*' etc., then the consequence is that the process of advancement that started in one's life – the portion of progress that was to be made – the doors would close on these.

Therefore, from the commencement of an activity, and right up to realization of consummate Brahman (Self), all is but the flow of *yajna*.

3 vAsanA: *One's behavioural tendencies; desires in a seed form existing in one's mind*

4 *This is from Ayodhya Kanda of Ramacaritamanasa. This statement is a part of Maharshi Valmiki's response to Sri Rama, who has asked the Rshi to suggest a suitable place for him and Sita (and Lakshmana) to stay in the forest. Here, Valmiki says – "He who attributes his virtues to you and holds himself responsible for his faults, nay, who entirely depends on You and loves your devotees – it is in his heart that you should stay along with Sita"*

## January 4

### Have *dhairya*

Just as tempests/typhoons come in the physical world, people too experience such tempests of feelings in their lives. When a furious wind blows, one should turn one's back to it, not confront it. Have *dhairya* – forbearance, tolerance, courage, equanimity, coolness...

Just as you encounter dreams when you sleep – so also, even as you are sitting idly during your waking times, waves of memories keep lashing at you, tormenting you. O courageous one, be indifferent amidst these...

All right... Let us say you have some enthusiastic thought of doing a particular work, sometime in the future; say, after six months... Do not expect to sustain the wave of enthusiasm that you now have for that idea throughout the six months period. This wave will subside in an hour/half-an-hour, and a second wave will be upon you. And that too will go, and a third wave will come. These are dreams upon dreams that come and go all the time. Face them with patience, fortitude; let them come, let them die... Do not attach any value to these – they are worthless.

It is not that you can think only good thoughts all the time. A person who tries to ensure that he entertains only good feelings, good emotions – he too experiences much distress. My good fellow! Just as no one has any control on what he dreams – some dreams are good, some are bad; in the same way, the reign of the mental fancies happens only in an uncontrolled mind. Isn't that so? Ha! There comes a wave, and there it goes... In the holy Ganga, sometimes flower garlands flow by, sometimes a dead body flows by... In the same way, in our minds too, we get both kinds of sights...

Take the case of a man of power, a feudal lord, who sees a person he dislikes go past his house in a pompous procession. And let's say that the man becomes angry because of that, and beats up that person for daring to go in front of his house. Now, it is a very similar mental attitude that gets displayed when a *sAdhaka* (a spiritual aspirant) gets very upset because a distasteful thought happens to cross his mind and berates himself because

of that. Firstly, a bad thought, and then to be angry with that? Keep cool!

Self-Knowledge is pure, unstained...It has no association with any object... It has no duality; it is indestructible; it is perfect fullness. Your Self, which is of the nature of Awareness, is such that no object or sight can leave any impression on it. Sights shall flow in front, show their antics, and then flow away... Why do you get worried about these? Being untouched by these is termed as *dhairya* – fortitude, composure, coolness, courage, forbearance, equanimity... Whatever happens outside – whether someone dies, someone comes, someone goes; whether one is poor, or one is in richness; whatever it may be that is seen outside, or whatever is seen in a dream, whatever the mind's meandering... Know all of that to be but a kingdom of fancies, a world of dreams. Do not think that some mountain has torn into your chest. Be light, be cool, and just be as you are, wherever you are – O courageous one!

So, in this manner, whatever be the affairs that chance to happen – outside or within the mind – do not allow yourself to be affected by that. Have equanimity... Do not let these cause you any hurt... Ha! There it comes, and there it goes...

(Kathopanishad Pravachan – 2 : p 14-16)

# January 5

## Mind's voice is a cheat

The mind's voice is a deceiver. I say this based on the experience of many great people, as well as mine.

During my childhood, a Mahatma once told me – *“If God manifests in front of you, and orders you to do something which is contrary to vairAgya (dispassion) and nivRtti (renunciation), then tell God – “Perhaps some vAsanA (seed of desire) has remained in my mind, and it is to fulfil that desire of mine that you are ordering me thus. Why are you impelling me to act contrary to vairAgya and nivRtti? Why don't you erase my rAga (attachment) and vAsana? Surely you are capable of doing that. What kind of God are you that you do not remove the impurities of my mind? Instead, you are asking me to fulfil my desires!’. Reply in this manner if God impels you thus.”*

Now, if you say – “My conscience is clean. It is the voice of my conscience that I heed.”

Then, remember... You do not know how many *samskara*-s (mental impressions, memories, habituations) and *vAsanA*-s lie hidden in your mind. Therefore, you must always act in accordance with the commands of *shAstra* and your Guru, so that you may attain your *ishtaEva* (favourite God), and also to do all that which is necessary for erasing your *vAsana*-s.

This ‘voice of the conscience’ can, one day, deceive man in such a manner that he is left nowhere. That which is spoken of as ‘*ilhAm-ilhAm*’ (divine inspiration; revelation; voice of God) – that inner guidance does indeed come about for some Mahatma-s; not for all people. And sometimes this voice is true as well.

Listen to ‘*ilhAm*’ only if it is in opposition to your *vAsanA* (tendencies, desires), and do not obey it if it is in line with your *vAsanA*. Let us say that you feel like helping someone by giving him some money, and your inner voice tells you - “Do not give...”, then what is it that you understand? Do you believe that it is the voice of God, telling you not to give that money? No! God hasn't stopped you. Your greed has stopped you. And you are unable to

recognize that.

If your inner voice impels you, saying – ‘Marry this girl’... Is it the voice of God ordering you? No! It is your ‘desire’ that has spurred you. Man is not able to recognize this.

Do not go by the dictates of your mind. This *vAsanA* drowns you in both ways.

1. When we work according to the pulls of our desires, and attain success, then we feel proud that we have succeeded because of our own intelligence. By that we get egoistic, proud of our astuteness. This ego then leads us to a second, and then a third desire. Then, man is caught in the vicious cycle of ego and *vAsanA*, and thereby falls from *paramArtha* (supreme goal of life).`
2. What if the end result is not what we desired? Then, there is sorrow. One wails – “Woe! Woe! What I wanted has not happened.” Then the serenity of one’s mind is broken. Mind becomes unclean, impure.

And so, when one works as per one’s *vAsanA*, even if the results are successful, one goes on the ‘bad path’; and if the results are a failure, then too one goes down the ‘bad path’. Because, that is the very nature of ego and desire.

(Mandukya Advaita Pravachan : p 411, 412, 414)



# January 6

## Disgrace, begets Grace

Disciple: 'Master! Many a time, I have to undergo the bitter experience of insult/ humiliation/ disgrace. People offend/hurt me in different ways. What am I to do?

Master: 'When you experience an affront to your dignity, you have lowered yourself to a level where the slur is able to touch you. Try and remain at a level where insults cannot touch you.'

(Disciple begins to think. "When I feel offended, what level am I in? Who, indeed, is the one getting offended?

1. When I feel offended, I find that I am at a level where I am bound in the fetters of dignity and desire. At that time, I am in the domain of '*Kama*' (desires), not '*Rama*' (God).
2. I am sozzled with the delusion of identifying myself as the body, mind, intellect; proud of my identity.
3. Forgetting God, forgetting *Atma* (Self), I find that I am in the grips of 'I and mine'.

Indeed, it is I who offend myself, and so I should award punishment only to myself. How can an insult/affront by a third person even touch me?")

Disciple: 'Master! Yes, that is correct! Indignity does not touch me at all.'

Master: 'Not just that, my son! Disgrace kindles your Self-Radiance! Destroying your forgetfulness, it refreshes your mindfulness. Disgrace is not a reason for disturbance; on the contrary, *it is a begetter of Grace*. As soon as someone heaps an offence on you, you should bloom with happiness, thinking – 'It is in order to refresh my mindfulness that God's own messenger, nay, God Himself, has come in this form. This is my great good fortune! This is, indeed, an unprecedented opportunity!'

Disciple: 'Indeed, Master! May your compassion and blessings ever be

with me.'

(Pavitrataa ke Prayog - Saadhana aur Brahmaanubhuti : page 162)

## January 7

### Go on doing *bhajana*, constantly.

Seeker of Knowledge: 'Master! In day-to-day life, anxiety creeps in, even if one does not desire it. And when anxiety grips us, all else is forgotten, and whatever little *bhajana* (acts of devotion, to God) we do, comes to a halt. Master! How is one to erase anxiety?'

Master: 'What is the cause of anxiety? It is in regard to one's body, and body's associates/associations, that anxiety comes about. I need such-and-such object...Or my family needs such-and-such thing... How do I get it? Where do I get it? Worldly anxiety is indeed of this nature. Anxiousness about matters of the next world is usually mental: concerned with one's mind and conscience. The essential point is this; if one has a lot of material possessions, then one is anxious to protect it. And if one has very little possessions, then one is anxious about increasing it.

The best way to discard anxiety is to amass nothing – internal or external. In reality, all possessions are internal, not external. Anything that the mind seizes as '*This is mine!*', becomes an addition to one's inventory of external possessions. Do not allow your mind to think of any object as yours, even if any number of objects are right next to your body. Indeed, do not think even your body as yours. Why speak of anything else – do not allow yourself to consider even the mind as your own. Even your *Atma* (soul), whosoever's *amsha* (part/fraction) it may be of; whosoever's property it may be; whatever, indeed, it may be; let it be. Let not any feeling of "I"-ness with these, come about in you. As a matter of fact – the body, senses, *prANa* (life-breath), mind, intellect, soul – all of these belong to God. And all entities that seem linked/associated with these, they too belong to God. Then why should you have any attachment or sense of ownership to any of these. Indeed, it is this *mamata* (sense of ownership; feeling of 'mine'-ness) that is the mother of anxiety. When *mamata* is erased, anxiety is also destroyed.

Is it that you do not have faith in God? Under His watch, indeed, when

everything is He, can any injustice happen? Can any harm come to you? Can anyone steal anything from you? It is a hundred percent lie. The fact is that you do not yet have a firm faith in God.

One must learn to be happy with whatever God does. Do not worry about your livelihood and prosperity. Remain, always, in continuous contemplation of God.

Is it that we value our body and body-associates so much that we are willing to give up contemplation of God? If that is the case, then one must realize that one is in the beginning stages of one's *sAdhanA* (spiritual practice). With continued practice, one starts developing a taste for remembrance of God and His adoration/worship. And in comparison to this, the Kingship of the three worlds is miniscule. So, what are you anxious about? Go on doing *bhajana*, constantly.

(Sadhana aur Brahmaanubhuti : p 34-35)

## January 8

### Can we not do even this much?

The Lord's *leela* (play/pastime) is very delightful. Indeed, in the form of *leela*, it is but Himself that He manifests. The Lord and His *leela* are not apart... They are one... In a way, this entire world is but the form of God's *leela*. All these names-forms are His; indeed, they are all He.

When a *jeeva* (individual being), out of negligence, forgets the true nature and *leela* of the Lord, and instead wishes to attain happiness from material objects (thinking that they are) apart from God; and when, in that process, he rambles around with his mind looking outwards, running after sense objects; then he is surrounded by feelings of agitation, restlessness and distress. When the *jeeva* is in the grips of such a state, God is actually sounding notes of caution to him, repeatedly, and is anxiously waiting, thinking – *“Abandoning pride/ego and faith in material objects, as soon as the jeeva calls out to me with a sincere heart, I shall go forthwith and embrace him; I shall manifest my infinite love and give him eternal abidance in the Empire of happiness and peace”*. God, on His own, gives the *jeeva* many opportunities for this, inspires/urges him from within (his heart), sends sages, and even comes Himself.

But it is only if the *jeeva* were to wake up from his dream of delusion that God's scheme can succeed. How are we to even begin to describe the compassion of God! Indeed, He has placed all *jeeva*-s in an ocean of Grace. Each and every *jeeva* is pressed by the weight of God's favours, boundless Grace, and immeasurable love.

When, even after agonizing repeatedly by the slaps of pride, ego, desires, and fear; (when, even after being) fed up with the multifarious dealings of *rajOguNa*<sup>5</sup> and going round and round, repeatedly, to heaven and hell; when even after all this, the *jeeva* does not seek the refuge of God and the treasure of divine virtues, and instead embroils himself in the deep sleep of *tamOguNa*<sup>6</sup>... If, even after all beings, moving and non-moving, are dissolved during *pralaya* (destruction/dissolution of the world), God does

not agitate *prakRti* (mother nature) and awaken all the *jeeva*-s; then, how can one ever get release from the deep sleep of delusion?

Indeed, God awakens *jeeva* from this sleep; endows him with knowledge; impels him to move from *tamas* to *rajas*; and from *rajas* to *sattva* (from sleep/inactivity to wakefulness/ activity /passion; and from restless activity and ambition, to pure being and peace). Now, is it not our bounden duty to seek the refuge of God who is granting us the gift of life (saving us from the deep sleep of delusion and death)? Can we not do even this much?

Mere sense of gratitude is not enough. However much we may try, however much we slash around on our own; we can find no abiding peace and happiness without resorting to God. Perhaps we can find the shade of some form of goodness and happiness for a day or two, but it is impossible to sustain this without the grace of God. This is not something which is only a present-day truth. This is the way it has been for all time...

(Bhagavan ke Paanch Avataar : p 131, 132)

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5 *rajOguNa*: the quality of passion, restlessness, pushiness, ambition, activity...

6 *tamOguNa*: the quality of dullness, inactivity, spiritual darkness, apathy, inertia...

# January 9

## Walk the path of Sadhana

Look! If your mind is inclined to earning of money, or if you have thirst for enjoying worldly pleasures, then there is no need to pretend otherwise. Earning money is no sin. Neither is enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Just ensure that you earn money honestly, and enjoy pleasures in line with dharma. By doing just this, you shall attain the state of Yoga. You shall attain detachment from the world.

There was a good person in Vrindavan who had great devotion to Lord Banke Bihari. By the Grace of the Lord, this person was able to successfully launch a factory. In that business, he had a partner. That partner displayed much affection to this man outwardly; but inwardly, he would think – *“If this man dies, then the factory will become fully mine”*. One day, the good man wanted someone to buy some acid for doing some cleaning; and also, some *paan* (betel leaves) for chewing. His partner himself went and got these from the market. The good man did some cleaning, after which, when he reached out to take the betel leaves, his partner said – *“Please don’t handle the betel leaves without washing your hands. Come, I shall feed you the betel leaves myself. Open your mouth.”* The good man smiled at the affectionate gesture of his partner and allowed him to put the *paan* into his mouth. At that very moment, the cork that was the lid of the acid bottle, popped out of the bottle, and landed into the open mouth of the good man, even as the partner put the *paan* into it. Immediately the good man spat out the cork as well as the *paan*. And then he noticed that the *paan* had quicksilver (mercury) in it (which is poisonous). It appeared now that the partner may have given him some mercury even on some earlier occasions; for he would enquire of the good man everyday – *“Why are you appearing dull? Are you in good health? How is your hearing? Is your eyesight ok?”*, etcetera.

Narayan! This is the nature of the world! Now, do tell – *“When the Lord of Janaki comes to your help, then who can do any wrong to you, O man?”* You would have surely heard the saying – *“jAko rAkHE sAi-yAn, mAr sake nA*

*kOy | bAl na bAnkA kar sakE, jO jag vairee hOy ||*" (He who is protected by Gods, none can slay. Not even a hair on his head can be harmed, even if the world becomes his foe"). Lord Bihariji had blessed this man with a factory. Given him wealth and property. Saved him from poison. Revealed an enemy to him, who was hiding in the garb of a friend. And also made him experience and realize the distress of artificial love that the world offers. O brother mine! Beware! The world's associations are always based on selfishness. With unflinching belief in your *ishta* (chosen deity of worship), proceed on the path of *sadhana* with absolute faith and courage. Do not try to earn wealth by dishonest means. Enjoy *bhoga* (worldly pleasures) only to the extent that is ethical and right. Do not partake any pleasure, drink or eat anything, which upsets your mind's balance or control. Try to detach yourself from the world gradually, and practice binding yourself with God. Develop forbearance, tolerance, endurance with respect to the world. Engage with God with faith, trust, love.

(Anand Manjusha : p 227, 228)



# January 10

## Make an effort

In a man's life, mistakes happen. Committing a mistake is not a crime. Not rectifying a mistake, however, is wrong. When a man makes all effort to practice *sadhana* diligently, then his mind becomes pure, and he is able to attain realization of his own *Paramatma-svarupa* (Supreme-Self; Divine Self). Make an effort.

In my childhood, I used to walk to school. In my village, I had to walk along a footpath through the fields. During monsoons, many a time, I would fall in the slush. Had I picked myself up and proceeded to school, then it would be ok. But, were I to return home instead, I would be scolded.

To fall is not wrong. To not pick oneself up after a fall, is wrong. To turn back after getting up, is cowardice. Get up, and proceed ahead with courage, your eyes on your goal. Rising after every fall, we shall, in the course of many births, ultimately attain the goal of life. We shall surely attain the highest state. It is indeed true that prior habits drag a man towards itself. Just as a man caught in the current of a river is dragged along by the current; a man is dragged along helplessly by the force of habits and inclinations stemming from his previous lives. Prior practices give rise to preferences and predilections. But upon making an effort, these preferences, predilections will be overcome, destroyed.

How much effort do you put in the furtherance of your business interests? How busy are you in pursuing pleasures of the senses? What, indeed, do you not do for fulfilling the desires of your mind? Is *Samadhi* (profound absorption in meditation), attainment of God, or Self-Knowledge alone so lowly that you do not want to put in any effort towards achieving these? If indeed you do not want to make any effort towards this, then it means that you have no interest in *Paramartha* (supreme goal of life). When a man has some desire in mind, then he surely strives to fulfil it. Where there is desire, there is a way (to achieve that). If the desire for Supreme goal of life dawns in your heart, then, from one source or another, you will

surely find the way to attain that. If you do not find a way, then know that your desire is not strong enough. If you would like to attain *Samadhi*, to realize God, to abide in the Self – then make an effort for it. When man undertakes such an effort, then his sins fall away. His mental tendencies (that drag him to worldliness) drop off. His mind becomes pure.

Self-effort should be undertaken. One should have the firm resolve in one's mind that one shall keep striving till one attains God; and attain God one will.

*janam kOti lagi ragari hamAree |  
baraon sambhu na ta rahaun kumAree ||  
It is my resolve that even if I am born a crore times,  
I shall wed Lord Shiva alone, else I shall remain unwed.  
(Ramacharitamanas, 1.81)*

(Anand Manjusha : p 21, 22)

# January 11

## The Nature of Bhakti

Following are a few typical obstacles, due to which a man is unable to succeed in the practice of *Dharma*, *Yoga* or *Jnana*.

1. Being overcome by one's mental tendencies at every step because of weakness of will, and thereby falling into the abyss of vice / bad conduct.
2. Being bound by the fetters of deprivation, destitution.
3. Harmful attachment towards intoxicating substances and egoistic people.
4. False pride of transient/perishable things – such as one's own intelligence, knowledge, wealth etc.
5. Mistaking *ajnAna* (false-knowledge / worldly knowledge) for *jnAna* (real-knowledge / Self-Knowledge).

Inability to do *Sadhana* is entirely due to one's own deficiencies in competency. To rise above these deficiencies, one needs some strong comforting factor, a sturdy pillar of support. For any person to gather hold of himself even as he slips; or to rise after falling; or to forge ahead after lagging behind, there is surely a need for some anchor, some refuge, some supporting hand... In order to raise a fallen one, embrace the poor, the destitute, and to provide support to the helpless, there is surely the need for someone... And indeed, there is such a 'One'.

Such a 'One' has to be somebody who does not see our deficiencies; someone, who out of His natural and spontaneous goodness, protects/nourishes us, helps us progress. It is only to fulfil this hope of people that *Bhagavata Dharma* or *Bhakti* has come about.

In *Bhagavata Dharma*, whatever work we do should be offered and surrendered to God. Here, the work itself is not of key importance; it is the *samarpaNa-bhAva* (the spirit of devotion and surrender) that is of

importance. Hence, whatever act one performs – by one's body, speech, mind, sense organs, intellect, ego, force of habit; whatever it is that one does, should all be done as a service rendered to *antaryami* (in-dweller), *paramEshwar* (Supreme God), Narayana.

Mother Bhakti raises any child to her lap, inundates his whole being with her motherly love, and fills him with happiness. She finds such a child more loveable, who is ignorant, unlettered, and incapable of doing *sadhana* - in comparison to someone who has all the qualifications prescribed by *Shastra*, or someone who practices *sadhana* in seclusion, or someone who desires spiritual knowledge. (She loves) Such a (helpless) child – who cries when alone; who is afraid; who does not seek liberation; who finds the bondage of *prEm-maadhurl* (sweetness of devotion/love) more pleasing... That child may well forget Her, his Mother, at times, but She will never forget him. She bathes her ignorant child with her *Ganga* flow of compassion. When She, Goddess *Bhakti*, sees that her child is being soiled by filth; or is about to put his hand into fire; or is being afflicted by obstacles of ego/attachments (me and mine); then She, just like one's mother, takes him into her embrace; cleanses him with her sweetness of love; saves him from taking the wrong path; and fills his body and mind with happiness and smiles. She grants Knowledge (*Jnana*) to the dull-brained ignoramus; cleanses the filthy; makes the distressed one happy. She cares for the ignorant ones; takes interest in eliminating dirtiness; showers Her smiles and makes the lotus-face of the child blossom; quietens those who are crying; makes the silent ones laugh; satiates the hungry and the thirsty. She has no restrictions regarding any form of God; or any child; or any *Leela*...

To experience one's Lord in one and all, is Bhakti's nature.

(Charu Chintan : p 25,26,27,30)

## January 12

### Howsoever it is that you keep me, I shall happily be, O Lord!

Now, we shall speak a bit about *Sadhana*.

In reality, the state of a *Premi* (ardent devotees of God) is quite unique.

Among the true devotees of God, there are a few who hesitate to come and face the Lord. They are just not able to gather the courage. They feel a sense of shame that – ‘*We are so impure; how can we go and face the Lord?*’ The minds of such people does not remember the compassion, love and tenderness of God; and tends to focus only on itself. While It is quite alright to look at one’s own defects in order to remedy them, one should not, however, hesitate to go to the presence of *patita-paavana-parameshvara*<sup>2</sup> on account of one’s defects.

Indeed, they too are *bhakta*-s, who, even while desiring to, do not go to the presence of God, as they feel that they do not have the needed eligibility. But they are “I”-focussed / Self-centred. Their mind is turned towards their own selves, not towards God.

When *bhakti* (devotion) moves ahead, it discards looking at its own self. The devotee, then, looks towards God alone. ‘*How am I?*’ – (my real state) if God wishes to see, that’s just fine; and if God doesn’t care to see, that’s fine too. We shall set our eyes on God alone. If God casts his eyes on us, all our issues will be remedied there and then. Howsoever we may be, we belong to God. ‘*Lord! What do we know of our own virtues and defects! But this we know; that you are our beloved; you are tenderness itself; you are most forgiving; you have great love for us. We know all about you, but we know nothing at all about ourselves. If you see any deficiency/defect in us, please remedy them. Then again, if you like me just as I am, then there is no need to effect any change in me; may I then remain just as I am, right through this birth and for all births to come.*’ Such are the contemplations of a devotee who is absorbed in God.

So long as a man thinks only about his own self, *bhakti* does not begin. It is only when the man begins to think of God that his journey of *bhakti* begins.

Now the question is – To whomsoever you bestow your love, is it that you wish to give happiness to your beloved, based on whatever it is that you desire (for your beloved)? In this process, if you are suppressing your beloved's own desire, and are imposing your own desires instead – then know, that such is not the way to grant happiness in love.

Then again, if you wish to bestow only such happiness as what your beloved desires, know that, for this, you would have to be subordinate to your beloved. That is why a devotee has to be subordinate to his beloved Lord.

*jaisE jaisE rakhiyat houn, vaisE vaisE rahiyat houn hE hari! - 'O Hari! Howsoever it is that you keep me, I shall happily be!' - so say the devotees of Brindavan!*

(Uddhav Vrajagaman : p 191,192,193)

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*~ Lord who purifies the fallen ones*

# January 13

## Sorrow is also Grace

The basic thing is this... When things happen in accord with our desires, then we feel that it is due to God's Grace. And when things happen otherwise, then we do not think that that too is due to Grace. What this means is that we do not recognize 'Grace'; nor do we attach any real significance to it. Rather, we only give importance to our own *Vasana*-s<sup>8</sup> and desires.

Whatever is ordained by God is always auspicious. One feels some shortcoming in that only when one fails to see God's will and wish, and instead, driven by our own *Vasana*-s, we want God to do what we like and deem necessary.

If you see God's Grace with 'special glasses' that says – *'If God gives me 'x' amount of money then He is gracious and kind; if He gives me a good body, then he is gracious and kind; if He gives me opulence, then he is compassionate; if He gives me a family of this kind, then He is merciful...'* – then you will not be able to recognize God's grace in real.

When God does something contrary to our desires, then we should be ready to respect and honour His will and wish, more than whatever value we lay store on our ego, pride, attachments, desires... We should be able to say – *'What God has done is indeed wonderful, for He acted as per His own mind.'*

Recognize God's hand in whatever comes from Him. God is All-knowing, All-powerful, and All-merciful. Whatever activity he sends to us, whatever things he sends to us, whatever experiences he sends us, whatever family he sends us – all these are completely filled with His Grace. When we start respecting God's grace in every form, it is then that we start experiencing God's grace in real. Here, we have to discard attaching significance to our own desires, and give primacy to God's desires. This is the *Siddhanta*<sup>9</sup> of *Bhakti*, as well as that of *Vedanta*. In as much as we loosen the bonds of our desires more and more, we shall be proportionately going closer and closer

to the experience of our real *Svaroopā* (i.e., the supreme state of Self-Realization).

The actual fact is that it is indeed difficult to recognize the Grace of God. Those who are attached to the world, are not able to recognize it. However, those who have *Vairāgya* (non-attachment) to the world, recognize God's hand, His Grace, in every single situation.

God is Grace personified. Never does any inauspiciousness result from His hands of Grace. Thus, what we people consider as sorrowful, is also, in actuality, God's Grace. All is auspicious, and auspicious alone.

(Hridayakash ke HeerE : p 7,8,9,10,129)

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8 *Vasana*: mental tendencies; the impression of anything remaining unconsciously in the mind;  
knowledge derived from memory

9 *Siddhanta*: Settled opinion or conclusion of a school of thought; final aim or purpose



**January 14**

## **In Krishna's happiness alone does the happiness of Gopikas lie!**

A man finds fulfilment in life only when there is fullness of:

*Sadbhaava*, i.e., the power of activity

*Chidbhaava*, i.e., the power of intelligence

*Anandabhaava*, i.e., happiness in one's heart

People live; but not everyone knows the art of living. If you wish to learn the art of living, then cast a glance on Sri Krishna! If you wish to see a *Jnani*, see Him! If you wish to see *karma* (activities), see Him! If you wish to see a life of happiness, see Him! Mere talk of *sat-chit-ananda*, and the experiencing *sat-chit-ananda* in one's life – these are two different things. After all, *sat-chit-ananda* has to reflect in worldly life as well, isn't it?

That's the reason why the character and conduct of one's daily life should be such that it makes one's home a heaven.

There is this person, a good man, known well to us. While he earns a lot of money, his family life is characterized by miserliness and constant skirmishes, every single day. All his earnings are of no use to him, and will end up going to his son. Surely his own life has become meaningless. If you have the strength to work, and your earnings are strong as well – then should you not have happiness in life? If you sell away or destroy your own happiness, what use is all your earnings?

Now, look here! Don't we often chat about the *Prema* (Love) of *Gopikas*? We do that in order that stirrings of love may rise in our own hearts, on account of our hearing of the love of *Gopikas*! And therefore, we shall tell you the story of *Prema*, of *Bhakti*, so that the deserts of your heart may be transformed to lush greenery.

Hark! See the greenery in the love of *Gopikas*!

*Gopikas* are telling each other – 'Why should Krishna care if we are happy or not, when we ourselves are least concerned whether we get

*happiness or not, or get peace or not. When we fell in love, we did not impose a condition that we shall love only if we get happiness, peace... Krishna has given us heart-burns, not peace; pain alone, not pleasure. We voice no complaints about this to Krishna. Indeed, we fell in love with Krishna, so that 'He' may get happiness. If he gets happiness in Mathura (instead of here in Vrindavan), we feel no rancour, no envy, no rivalry, no sadness, no complaints – because of that'.*

*Sri Sanatana Goswami says – “In Krishna’s happiness alone does the happiness of Gopikas lie!”*

## **Equipoise in worldly life**

This discussion on *Krishna-Prema*, is all about setting our hearts on Sri Krishna. When God becomes the most valuable thing in our life, then the value of worldliness depletes automatically. As a result of this, we need not become subservient to someone who gives us the world; nor do we need to have any enmity to someone who places obstacles in our getting the world. We then attain equipoise in worldly life.

(Uddhav Vrajagaman : p 463, 464, 465, 589, 590)

# January 15

## Sharanagati : The way of life

*You say – ‘Maharaj! You are speaking of God, God, all the time. If we get too involved in this God business, we shall end up forgetting our food and drink. Where would money come from? How would the Missus remain happy?’*

*(To this question) One responds – ‘Listen. The One who worries and cares about you, also worries and cares about all others. So, why should you worry?’*

All right. In your life, is it not so, that at times, some things happen which you do not desire? Tell me, do you ever desire sorrow? *No*, you say. Don’t you try to avoid anything sorrowful? *Yes, I do*. Then why does sorrow come despite your wishing otherwise? Surely, there is someone more powerful than you, who gives you sorrow even though you do all you can to avoid it – right? Now, He, who is alert in handing you the fruits of *karma* – would He not give you happiness as well? In my own life, I have seen many times, that when I remain silent, God begins to speak for me. The work that I give up, God takes up and executes. When I stopped cooking my meals, God served me ready-to-eat meals. This I have seen, not once, but thousands of times. What would you understand, caught, as you are in the clutches of vanity – proud of your *buddhi* (intelligence)! Let your *buddhi* bow now and then, let it soften. Let some humility enter your *buddhi* as well.

Ishvara, based on *karma* and *dharma*, bestows results. Embrace these results, experience them. Do not refuse them.

When, indeed, is the right occasion to refuse? When your hands and feet set out to commit a bad deed, or when your tongue rises to utter something wrong – if you exercise your right of refusal at that time, then why would something sad ever happen to you in your life? Doing something wrong, and refusing the results of that deed later – that won’t fly. The time for that has gone.

Let me share an event that happened right in front of me. A certain man

committed a mistake, right in front of a *satpurusha* (a noble person, worthy of respect). That *satpurusha* did not like this. He caught hold of the man with his left hand, and slapped him twice with his right hand, saying – why did you do this wrong deed? That man, being a *sadhaka* (a sincere spiritual aspirant), was actually happy, thinking – ‘*Sir! That you, in order to correct me, would become angry with me and land me a sound slap – I did not even imagine that! What this means is that you consider me your very own!!*’

You see... Man often makes a mistake in recognizing real affinity, sympathy. He thinks that life has dealt unjustly with him.

*Arrey baba!* Why don't you enjoy Him who gives you His love? Why do you give weight to the object given to you, instead of seeing the hand that gave it to you? Who is the giver? An enemy who gives you a delicacy today, may give your poison tomorrow. And if your well-wisher gives you some poison, it may well be the right medicine for your ailment. Do you not have even this much faith that God is your friend? His giving birth to us, making us cry, separating us from our loved ones, giving us a bad name, insulting us, keeping us hungry – all these are His acts of Grace! His beating us, and his transporting us from one mortal body into another – that too is his compassion alone.

This then is the question – what should be the way of our life? (To this question) We say – Moisten your heart, speech, body. Make all of them bow to God. Do not allow them to be hard. If God has a mind to play with you, then moisten yourself so that you become like wet dough, or wax, and place yourself in His hands. Whatever be the form he shapes of you, whether he renders you naked, makes you cry, makes you laugh – whatever he does to you – if that gives **Him** happiness, then your life has become a success.

Tell God this – ‘*God! Do with me, just as you wish! For you, indeed, are the Lord of my very life!*’

(Unki Kripa : p 21,22,23,24)

## January 16

### The signs that manifest in a bhakta, upon attainment of bhakti<sup>10</sup>

*‘siddhO bhavati’* – (He becomes *siddha*)...

A *bhakta* (devotee) does not try for, desire, or determine to attain *siddhi* (perfection). The extraordinary signs that manifest in him are actually sent by God. Once, someone asked Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa – ‘What are the signs of *siddhi* (perfection)?’. Sri Ramakrishna replied – ‘Rice, in its raw form is hard. But when it is *siddha* (well boiled), it becomes tender. Neither does it remain as granules, nor does it melt totally.’

The implication is that ‘individuality’ remains, but not a granule of ‘ego’ remains. This is the *siddhi* (perfection) of a *bhakta*. In him, no pride remains of any kind – be it of knowledge, power, race, position, self-control / austerity, wealth etc. ‘*Siddha*’ means ‘*komal*’ (soft / tender). A *bhakta* is soft/tender, externally and internally.

*‘amRtO bhavati’* – (He becomes immortal)...

By sipping *amRta* (ambrosia), a man becomes immortal. But then, a *bhakta* has no interest in making this gross body immortal. While it is true that if the body remains, one can use it for serving the Lord; but then why should we demand that one should serve God only through that single body? A *bhakta* gets as much joy in pleasing God, by donning different forms such as that of a peacock, koel, squirrel etc. Would a *pativrata* (chaste) lady demand that a certain *saree* of hers become *ajar-amar* (remain fresh and immortal)? She would rather please her loved one by putting on different, new, *sarees*; different, new looks...

*‘amRtO bhavati’* – a *bhakta* does not become immortal; rather, he becomes ‘ambrosia’ itself. He becomes so *madhura* (sweet) that all those who come to be associated with him also attain *madhurya* (sweetness) and *ananda* (joy). His words become the words of God. He does not give distress to anybody. He gives love to everyone.

*‘tRpto bhavati’* – (He becomes satiated)...

The thirst that is present in a bhakta, is known as *tripti* (satiation).

*pyAreejU kO roop mAnO pyAs hee kO roop hai*

What is the *Radha’s*, *Bhakti’s*, form? Indeed, it is of the form of thirst. This thirst is verily the satiation (*tripti*) of *bhakti*. In this, there is no *‘iti’* (i.e., one never feels that it is enough). No one knows its origin, and none knows its end; for the origin of *Prema* (love) is God, the end is God, and the middle, which you refer to as *Prema*, is also God alone.

The extent of satiation and joy that a *bhakta* gets because of *viraha* (separation) from God, no sense-pleasure seeking person attains; even if he gets to enjoy the pleasures of all sense-objects from the whole universe.

(Narada Bhakti Darshana : p 57, 58, 59, 69)

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10 This selection is an elucidation of the sutra – *‘yallabdhvA pumAn siddho bhavati amR^ito bhavati tR^ipto bhavati’* (Narada Bhakti Sutra 1.04), which describes the characteristics of a person who attains *bhakti*.

# January 17

## Bhaagavata Dharma is for the Good of all

Let no one think that *Bhaagavata Dharma* is only about sitting in temples, caves or jungles. While it is indeed necessary in *Sanyasa Dharma* and *Paramahansa Dharma*<sup>11</sup> to dwell in forests, caves etc., all this is not mandatory in *Bhaagavata Dharma*.

You would notice in the life of Dhruva that he first achieved God-realization, and got his Kingship later. Indeed, there is no conflict between *Bhagavan*, *Bhakti* and Kingship. As marriage happened after his Kingship, there is no conflict between *Bhakti* (devotion to God) and married life. Well then... War happened later... When war is necessary, there is no conflict between that and *Bhaagavata Dharma* either. If one has to jump into a battle, then remember that the conductor, director, and instigator of both violence and non-violence is none other than God Himself. There is no guilt or anxiety in Dhruva's mind; he knows that "*all this is the Leela (sport) of the Lord who abides in my heart.*"

*Bhaagavata Dharma* is not exclusively meant for those who are *nivRtti-parAyaNa* (i.e., those who have turned back from worldliness; those who are renunciates). It is also meant for people who are *pravRtti-paRayaNa* (i.e., those who pursue worldly interests and goals). Shuka Deva, who was an ascetic/renunciate, was an adherent of *Bhaagavata Dharma*; and so was Dhruva, who was *pravRtti-parAyaNa* (worldly).

Now, I want to draw your attention to an event in Dhruva's life. When Lord Vishnu's attendants came to Dhruva to take him to Vishnu's abode, Dhruva asked them – "*Well, you have brought your vimAna (aircraft) for taking me to Vaikunta. But what about my mother?*"

Vishnu's attendants replied – 'King! Please do not have the least anxiety about this. God has thought about this earlier itself, that '*Any mother who begets a son like Dhruva, should attain Vaikunta first!*'

A child being a devotee is something that brings great good to the mother as well. That indeed is the uniqueness of *Bhaagavata Dharma*.

Sometimes God plays his hand differently; often to our chagrin. While man desires something, something else happens. Indeed, even in this, there is great compassion of God. Long ago, a Mahatma gave me this understanding. He said – *‘Let’s say that all your desires keep getting fulfilled... Whatever you wish for, automatically happens. Then, would the presence and greatness of God be known at all?’* No one would believe in God! It is only when there is some greater entity present, who does something quite contrary to what we desire, that we end up realizing that *‘yes, there is some other power present’*. It is the kind of authority that a mother exercises when she stops her child from following its desires and preferences. Similarly, a husband and a wife have the right to exercise such authority over each other. Indeed, if each person is free to always do just as his own mind pleases, then he would become so selfish that he would not believe in God at all!

Then again, man is not alone. He lives in a society, with so many other people. If each person starts doing only what he pleases, then there will be mutual conflict, resulting in growing disturbances and distress. So it is, that there is a Controller who regulates desires and outcomes. That Controller is God.

*Bhaagavata Dharma* is not just for priests or monks. It is meant for the good of every single being born in God’s Creation. Just as a father’s wealth is meant for all his children, so also, Dharma, which is God’s wealth, has been given by him for his entire offspring, all of mankind.

(Maanav Jeevan aur Bhaagavata Dharma : p 103, 104, 105, 117)

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11 *Sanyasa Dharma is for monks; Paramahansa Dharma is for supreme ascetics who have transcended all worldliness of time, space, matter. It is not essential for Paramahansa-s to be formal Sanyasi-s.*



# January 18

## The secret of God's Leela

God, in His incarnation as *Matsya* (Fish) said – “King! He who has no compassion in his heart for creatures who are in distress, will never progress. Such a person will never be able to know me. Or you may say that I shall never manifest in front of him.’

‘My incarnations do not have any reason. Of my own sweet will, I manifest myself from time to time, for the welfare of my devotees. This whole universe is my Leela! It is I who am all this! So it is, that I can manifest myself in any body-form whatsoever. I can be spotted, recognized, at any time, any place, in the form of any object, and in actuality, I am that, I am there. However, as people do not recognize me there, I incarnate myself, of my own will, taking any form I wish. Not for me is there any difference between the form of a fish and that a man. I alone am all forms. I am all. He who recognizes this, that I am all this; sees me as the One who is manifest in all these forms; such a person has understood the secret of my Leela. Indeed, I cannot be removed from anywhere. One can have faith in my Being, as any which form.’

The fact is this. The secret of God's Leela is **most-difficult** and **most-easy**, at the same time.

**Most-difficult** because the entirety of *Veda*, *Shashtra*, *Purana* have been unable to describe God. They have searched for Him ceaselessly, but in vain; and in the end have said ‘Not this, not this’ and become silent; the secret of God remained as incomprehensible as before. In fact, God Himself decided to take thousands of mouths to speak of and describe his own Leela; and for this he took the form of *Shesha-Naaga*. It is not known as to how long he has been describing, or till when he will continue describing, but even he has not succeeded in getting a measure of His own Leela, nor is there any hope that he ever will. The reason for this is that God is *Ananta* (boundless / infinite); his *Leela* is *Ananta*; his secret is *Ananta*. When there is no endpoint, how can even He himself reach the end?

**Most-easy** because, he is so compassionate that at times he has to dance along with cowherd-kids; sport with Gopika-s and steal butter from their homes; or cry aloud after allowing himself to be tied by a rope. He, who can destroy the whole of creation merely by a single thought, takes the trouble of incarnating Himself for the sake of killing small-time demons. Such are the manifestations of his compassion, so sweet and so straightforward, that no person with a soft heart can resist to choke with tears upon remembrance of God's compassion...

(Bhagavan ke Paanch Avatar : p 111, 115, 116)

## January 19

### Nauka Leela<sup>12</sup>

One day, by the time Gopikas of Brindavan finished selling their stock of yoghurt, evening set in; a bit of the day remained. The Gopikas had to cross the Jamuna river, and the river was rising. There was no boat in sight. Then, out of nowhere, a dark-skinned boy, who was the son of a boatman, suddenly came there, plying a boat. The Gopikas called out to him, asking him to take them across. The boy said – *‘Listen, I am very hungry. So how can I now ply the boat and take you across?’* The Gopikas scrambled and gathered all the Yoghurt, milk and butter that was left in their pots and offered it to the boy. The boy finished all of that in quick time. Then the boy told the girls – *‘You are too many in number. I can’t take you all in one go. You need to come in batches of one-s and two-s.’* But on this the girls were adamant. They said – *“No, no. All of us shall go together. That’s non-negotiable. So, hurry up now. We have to go across to have darshan of our Shyam Sundar.”*

The boy agreed but asked them to discard all the pots, so as to reduce the load. The Gopikas, in their eagerness to have darshan of Krishna, agreed, and threw their pots into Jamuna-ji. Then as they were starting, the boy pointed out that the girls were all wearing heavy ornaments, and made them throw away the ornaments as well. But then, the boy told the Gopikas that the boat was still overloaded, and they better discard their heavy clothes. And they did that too. Then, somehow, they got going. And after a short time, the boy said – *“O Gopikas! I am too exhausted. I am not able to row the boat. I have overeaten and am feeling rather heavy. I shall lie down now, and you should press my legs. Don’t bother about the boat. Let it float adrift in the Jamuna.”*

So goes the *Nauka-Leela*, at the end of which the boy suddenly tells the Gopikas that it looks as if the boat is going to capsize. To this, the girls protest vehemently saying that this was just not on. They ask the boy to do something, something, anything, so that they can somehow go across and

get to have darshan of Shyam Sundar.

The thing was, the Gopikas were all so focused on reaching Shyam Sundar as soon as possible, that they were renouncing all that they had, and were putting up with all the difficulties. Then, when they were all at their wits' end, the boy told them – *'Listen! Unless you get initiated with a mantra by me, the boat will drown.'* They agreed to that too. Then that boatman's boy asked the Gopikas to bring their ears close to him. He then bent close to their ears and whispered – *'He, whom all of you are seeking to meet so desperately; that Shyam Sundar who is loveable as life, is none other than I.'*

That was *Nauka-Leela*.

Now, take the case of Arjuna's chariot in the war of Mahabharata. That chariot is quite like the boat of *Nauka-Leela*. The one who came first as the charioteer of Arjuna, in the manner of the boatman's boy of *Nauka-Leela*, turned around at end and told Arjuna – *'I am not just the driver of your chariot. The Supreme-Knowledge of the Oneness of Brahman and Atma that you seek to acquire; that God, that Brahman, that Atma, that root cause of the whole Cosmos, is none other than I.'*

So, now check if the reins of the chariot of your life are held by Lord Narayana or not. Even if it is not, all is not lost yet. It is all due to the forgetfulness, the error, which one has been in the grips of, since origin-less beginnings of time. Be that as it may. Do not fret over it. Gather yourself now, be vigilant, and hand over the reins of your life to Narayana. Look, Narayana is telling you – *'I am not merely your Antaryami Sarathi (the charioteer abiding in your heart).'* Actually, to be your *sarathi* implies being your *antaryami*. *Antaryami* does not merely mean someone who is dwelling in you and knows everything about you; it means someone who drives you in your journey of being.

Narayana is telling you – *'I am not merely a Sarathi! Rather, the one who you seek, the one who is the favourite of your life, the one who is your very goal, I am He!'*

Now, what exactly is all this? Indeed, this is what is *'Nauka-Leela'*.

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12 *The Boat game*

## January 20

### The magic of Ishwar Bhakti!

To know God as being of a certain ‘form and fashion’, does not constitute ‘knowledge’; rather, it implies faith, a matter of belief. Because, when we see God as a being of three-and-a-half cubits measure; then, to attribute the creation of the whole cosmos to Him, or to attribute Omniscience, Omnipotence to Him – is a matter of faith, belief. In other words, when we feel that a very small thing, a small form, *is God Himself* – than that is but a belief. However, when we attain complete *bhakti* in God, we will get to ‘know’ how vast He is... Indeed, we will know that he is so vast that *Time, Space* and *Matter* is continuously conceived and erased, constantly, in but an atomic fraction of his being. What is He? What is his *tattva* (essence, reality)? A small child that wears a golden ornament sees it is a shining ornament, but does not recognize it to be gold. Similarly, people who see God as a limited form are like children who wear golden ornaments, who do not have the ‘knowledge’ that it is actually gold. It is only when they develop *Prema* (devotion / love) for gold, that they are able to realize what the ornament is in reality.

Knowledge of *Bhagavat-tattva* comes about only when *bhakti* blossoms in our life. When we attain knowledge of *Paramatma*, then there remains no distinction between *Atma* and *Paramatma* – just as there is no distinction between a golden ornament and the material gold.

The implication of this is quite unique and pragmatic.

So long as you do not experience the fullness of knowledge and power in yourself, all your desires, plans and successes will remain incomplete. But, if you do experience ‘fullness’ in yourself, then, whatever you do will be fulfilling. Your life will always be full of energy and enthusiasm, without any break. You will always achieve success; never will you fail. Never will you be sad. You will always be happy. Never will you feel yourself to be pitiable or wanting.

Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra first attained the *Jnana* of his Fullness.

Thereafter, as a *Jeevanmukta* person, he performed all his actions, with Godliness. There was then no place for dejection or hopelessness in his life any more. With complete Fullness, as God, all his deeds were for the welfare of the whole world. And so, it is to be understood that this *Jnana* (Knowledge of Fullness; Self-Knowledge) is not just for practicing *Samadhi* (absorption in meditation); nor is it for going away to the Himalaya; nor is it meant just for sitting in a temple. It is not meant merely for occupation in a *Yajna-shala* (the place where Vedic fire-sacrifices are performed). The sense is, that after attaining *Jnana*, wherever one may be – be it a mountain, forest or battlefield; whether one is in solitude or one is amidst a crowd; whether one lives with good people or bad– (wherever one may be, whatever the circumstances, whatever the situation) one will always be spreading joy; one will always be spreading knowledge... One will always be gifting life to all...

And this *tattva-jnana* (Knowledge of Reality) is obtained through *bhakti* (devotion to God).

*Ananya-bhakti* (distraction-less devotion) means that one should have such devotion to God, which never changes, never strays. Whereupon it remains constant, whether you are at home with your family, or are moving about in the society... You may be a businessman, or be in politics – but you will never be trapped... As an antidote for all the worlds traps, partialities, cruelties – when *bhakti* blossoms in one's heart, then it displays such magic that no trace of sadness, pitifulness, or penury exists in one's life anymore.

(Gita Darshan 11 (13<sup>th</sup> adhyaya) : p 60, 61, 62)

# January 21

## This is He, Banke Bihari!

God noticed that people in the world were in distress. (And He reflected) *'Why are they distressed? Ah...It is because they have separated from me.'*

Listen! If someone experiences his nature as being pure joy, and notices some other people in the world who are sad; then, what thought would come to his mind? Would he not reflect thus – *'These people have turned their backs on me, and therefore they are unhappy.'* For sure this is what he will think, what else. Indeed, people are, largely, quite unhappy in the world. And this is because most people are rooted in self-centred anxiety; our minds obsessed with our money, our work, our personal pleasures, our bodies, our divisions...

Why don't you allow your minds to look in front of you, just a bit? Look, who is in front of you! Look at him, the one with the gentle smile, the one with the bent stance! Do you know him? Do you know this bent legged one? **Banke Bihari**, the charming one with the three bends – in the chin, waist and knee – bent in three places, yet so charming! Aye, this is He, Banke Bihari! Of soft and gentle smile, love-soaked eyes, and those exquisite arrows of compassion springing from his eyebrows! How fascinating, the arrows!

Indeed, this is He, who is the very foundation of all beauty! This is He, in whose chest, Goddess Lakshmi resides! The one with the *shrivatsa*! This is He, whose whole being, every single cell, calls out – **'Come! Come! If you want happiness, come to me!!'** When his chin moves, it says *'Come to me!'*; when his hand moves it says *'Come to me!'*; when his eye moves, it says *'Come to me!'*; when his eyebrow moves, it says *'Come to me!'*. It is He, who is beckoning you to come to him! It is He who is inviting you to come!

For other Gods, the onus is on us to extend an invitation, (as for instance) saying – *'O Lord Ram-ji! Do come one day to our house, riding your chariot! O Prince! We welcome you!'* Whereas, here, with *Bihari-ji*, it is He who invites you. He invites you with his eyes; he invites you with his lips, his



teeth, his fingers! He invites you by jangling his anklets! He invites you with the tinkle of his waist-belt bells! He invites you with his flute! He invites you with his fragrance, his form, and his *Rasa* (aesthetic essence)! Surely it seems as if he is inviting the whole world to come to him!

All these lost people of the world; the ones wallowing in separation; these unhappy people – all these people have pursued the love of sense objects, and have ended up stricken with sorrow. And in order to relieve them from their misery, here stands *Banke Bihari*! He, the most compassionate one, the ocean of mercy, the one with eyes that are red with compassion... Carrying compassion in his heart; having eyes that have become ruddy on account of compassion; He is repeatedly calling, inviting us all, saying “*Come – Come – Come – Come! Come and take from me, whatever you desire! If you wish for fragrance, take fragrance! If you want Rasa, take Rasa! If you want beauty, take beauty! If you want the joy of touch, touch me! If you want the happiness of sound, take sound! If you want heart, take my heart! If you want intelligence, take intelligence! If you want none of these, then just feel free to take all of me!*”

‘*yOgamAyamupAshritaH*’ – (He resorts to his *Yogamaya*)<sup>13</sup> : In order that the *Jeeva*-s attain God; in order that they attain indestructible ‘*sat*’ (Reality-Existence); in order that they get self-radiant ‘*cit*’ (Consciousness); in order that they effortlessly get *nitya-ananda* (eternal bliss); the Lord decided to resort to his *Yogamaya*.

(Raasa Panchadhyayi : p 63, 64)

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<sup>13</sup> The phrase refers to *Srimad Bhagavata* 10.29.1, where Sri Krishna resorts to his *Yogamaya* to go out in the full moon night of autumn and sport with *Gopika*-s, perform *Rasaleela*

**January 22**

**Realization/Experience of the Supreme-Reality  
comes about by knowledge derived from the  
Upanishads**

From the point of view of Vedanta, three qualities are seen in *tattva-jnani-s*<sup>14</sup>, without any effort on their part.

- a. *Sarva-vijnAna ( Knowledge of all ) from eka-vijnAna (Knowledge of One)* : The meaning of this is that the *tattva-jnAni* knows each and every name, form and activity in this world. What this signifies is that upon realization of *brahmAtmA* – Supreme-Self – which is of the nature of self-radiance and is the basis/substratum of all existence, the reality of existence of any object apart from the Self stands annulled. This is the state of non-refutable, unsurpassable erudition.
- b. *sarvatyAga sAmarthyA (Ability to be all-renouncing)*: Because, the world of objects, being merely a superimposition on the substratum-Self, has no reality. And so, they are wholly renounced already.
- c. *abhaya pratishThA (firm establishment in a fear-free state)*: For he has no fear at all of any decline or augmentation of any kind in this world or next... No anxiety at all about existence/non-existence, happiness/distress, attachments/aversions, oneself/God, bondage/liberation ....

Many practitioners of Vedanta succeed in attaining discrimination/realization of the seer-self being distinct from the 'seen' world consisting of one's own body etc. And, by the *charama-vRtti* (the last remaining thought which destroys all notions, including itself, finally) that is produced by the knowledge of the *mahAvAkyA-s*, they also succeed in

realization of the oneness of the Self and Brahman. But then, (sometimes) the mental-impression of negation becomes so deeply engraved that *anvaya-dRshTi* (vision of concordance/oneness) is not able to blossom. 'Negation' should indeed have primacy during the process of *vivEka* (discrimination of real and unreal). But then, *anvaya-dRshTi* comes forth on its own after one attains Self-Realization. What this means is that, while a mud-pot or earthen-cup is indeed different from mud; however, the mud-pot or earthen-cup has no existence as distinct from mud. The sense is that, upon realization of oneness of Self and Brahman, the world's substance and sense is (realized as being) but of the nature of the underlying *chaitanya*, Absolute-Consciousness, alone. Therefore, a man of wisdom need not harbour any aversion towards the '*seen world of objects*'. Rather, all of that is his Self alone. The author of *Sankshepa-sariraka*<sup>15</sup> has stated that from a *sAdhAraNa-buddhi* – simplistic perspective – the universe is a *pariNAma* (transformation of Brahman); from *shudda-buddhi* – the perspective of a pure mind –the universe is *vivarta* (transfiguration of Brahman); and from *brahma-buddhi* (perspective of absolute reality) the universe is our Self<sup>16</sup>.

In one Mahatma's life I saw that he had 'acceptance' of all, because his *sarvAtma-bOddha* (the realization that one Self is in the form of all) was very firm. On the other hand, in his life, there was a negation of *sarva* (all forms). That was because, *sarva* (the entirety of forms/objects) is not the true nature of the Atma (Self).

Atma (Self) is but One; '*sarva*' (entirety) is a collection of many-ness.

Atma is Conscious; '*sarva*' is the world of insentient objects.

Atma is *ekarasa* – unchangeable; '*sarva*' is subject to change.

Atma is Eternal-Existence, of the nature of great bliss; '*sarva*' is painful, insentient, destructible.

Atma is unrefuted reality; '*sarva*', which, in reality, does not exist, seems to exist in its underlying substratum – *chetana* – Absolute-Consciousness. Thus, '*sarva*' is '*mithya*' (false / unreal / illusory).

The real nature of this entirety of existence is this (Atma) alone. The realization/experience of this Supreme-Reality comes about by the knowledge derived from the Upanishads.

- 14 *tattva-jnAni : Sage who has realized the Supreme Reality; has attained Self-Realization*
- 15 *Sarvajnatman, a well-reputed advaita Acharya of the 9th-10th century, was the author of samkshepa shArIra. As the title indicates, this book is a brief presentation of Sankara's sUtra bhAshya in four chapters corresponding to the four adhyAya-s of the brahma sUtra-s. (Source : <https://www.advaita-vision.org/the-ghost-of-bharcchu/> )*
- 16 *When the cause and effect are of the same order of reality, the effect is a transformation or parinaama of the cause, as for example, when milk turns into curd. When the cause and effect belong to different orders of reality, as when a rope appears as a snake, the effect is called a vivarta or transfiguration of the cause. (Source : <https://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/snsastri/vedaparinama.html> )*

# January 23

## Bhaavana and Bodha

Bhaavana<sup>17</sup> is of two kinds. One that is in conformance with *bOdha-siddha-vastu*<sup>18</sup> (the Self, which is the substance of existence that is known upon attaining enlightenment); and the other that is adverse. Bhavana that is in opposition to the *siddha-vastu* is a source of harm. On the other hand, even if one has not achieved Jnana, the Bhavana that is in conformance with the object that is realized upon Jnana, is equivalent to Jnana. For instance, upon attaining Jnana it is established that apart from Paramatma, who is a substance of Knowledge and Bliss, there is no object at all. Everything is Paramatma alone. Even if one does not have the knowledge or conviction of this true state of existence, if one develops '*paramAtma bhAva*' towards any object, then that is indeed favourable to attainment of Jnana; because such a Bhavana is in conformance with the real/true nature of all things in existence. When the feeling that a particular object is indeed Paramatma becomes firmly settled in one's mind, then that object becomes limitation-free, infinite.

While Bhavana, to begin with, is a mental state generated through practice; the same Bhavana, at end, goes on to produce the capability to achieve Bodha (enlightenment). However, if one develops a Bhavana of *siddha-vastu*-Paramatma as being some other object, then this is a retrogressive bhavana. Such Bhavana is the mother of duality, insentience, and sorrow. However, from the point of view of a Jnani (Self-realized sage), even though Bhavana is a state of the mind, it is but Jnana alone in terms of its essential nature. Thus, it is non-different from Jnana.

So, what is the difference between Bhavana and Bodha?

The core impetus of Bhavana is *shraddhA* (faith); and repeated practice is its nature. The fruit of such Bhavana is the attainment of one's object of worship; i.e., the realization of the object in the form contemplated. The core impetus of Bodha is: Inquiry, research, investigation with principal emphasis on *pramANa-vRtti* (right knowledge)<sup>19</sup>. In Bodha, the role of faith

and esteem (towards the object of search) is secondary. Bodha, works in the lines of new thoughts, new flashes, new blossoms... Therefore, in Bodha, repetition/practice too becomes secondary. What Bodha does is to destroy the veil of ignorance that is lying upon the *siddha-vastu* (Self).

Bhavana is under the control of the 'doer'. A person may choose to do, not do, do in an opposite way... He is free to have Bhavana in whatever form, or not have any bhavana at all, just as he wishes. But Bodha (enlightenment) is not dependent on the *kartA* - doer. It is dependent on the *vastu* – the object of inquiry. In other words, in Bodha, the result is not in conformance with the mental notions of the spiritual aspirant. Rather, one realizes the true form of the object (of inquiry).

In Bodha, the aspirant has no freedom in terms of doing, not doing, or doing differently.

By Bhavana, the pride of doership gets silenced. By Bodha, the delusions of doership, enjoyership etc., cease completely.

Thus, from the point of view of methodology, there is a vast difference between Bhavana and Bodha. But from the point of view of the *bOdhavAn-purusha* (person who has achieved enlightenment), there is nothing at all which is apart from Brahman; (Brahman being) non-different from his own inner Consciousness, Omniscience, Self. And so, for him, *akhanDArtha bhAvanA* (mental state of contemplating the infinite object) and *akhanDArtha bOdha* (actual realization of the infinite object) – are both of the nature of his own Self. So, in actuality, there is no difference.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 75-76)

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17 Bhavana – pronounced as bhAvanA. The mental formation of an image or feeling concerning the object of one's devotion or meditation.

18 Siddha-vastu: An existing object. Not something new. For instance, the Self is a siddha-vastu. It exists. It is just that in the state of ajnAna, we are not aware of the Self in reality. Upon bOddha (enlightenment) we realize the Self.

19 pramANa vRtti: In this context, it is the chitta-vRtti (thought form) which comprises the form of the object of inquiry, namely, Brahman

## January 24

### We do things in such a way that not even God can see

God has no difficulty in going anywhere. He is '*sarvaga*'.

Once, Mokalpur Baba said – 'Look here! In this place the waste output of the mill is being expelled. And noxious smoke is being released into the sky. No *devatA* (celestial deity) stays within a radius of four miles around this place.'

'What about Ishvara (God)?', I asked.

To this he laughed and said – 'God stays here, indeed, yes. Where can He go, poor fellow!'

I replied – 'Well, let *devatA*-s not remain. If God stays here, then we can make do.'

*God is everywhere. 'sarvatra gacchati' – 'He goes everywhere', and so he is called 'sarvaga'. When you commit a sin, He exists inside your 'sinner being'. When you are in distress, He is inside your 'distressed being' as well. And when you are fast asleep, it is He who is inside your 'sleeping form' as well.*

God is He, who will never leave you at all – '*sarvaga*'. If you think that you can escape His eyes, please don't even try. For His troops are everywhere.

Earth is in his army. Sun is in his army. The moon is in his army. The wind is in his army. Our eyes are in his army. The mind is his trooper, the intellect is his trooper, the sense-organs are all his soldiers.

Don't even imagine that you can do anything without His knowledge. His troops are everywhere and they see each and every act of yours. And they hold your reins. His name is '*vishwaksEna*' – meaning, 'He whose powers go everywhere.'

People try to hide and do things... Secretly...

I heard of a person who was observing *rozA* (religious fast), as a part of

which he was not supposed to even drink water during daytime. He would go to a pond for his bath, and while immersing himself in the waters, he would secretly open his mouth and gulp some water. And he would think that he was doing this in a manner that not even God can see!

One day, when he immersed himself in the pond and secretly gulped some water, he happened to swallow a fish along with the water. Now, that fish got stuck in his throat. Shrieking in distress, he came out of the pond. He rushed to get medical attention and the attending doctor removed the fish from his throat, and saved him from death.

And he said – “Cor! Today, God saw what I was doing!”

The moral of the story is that God’s sentinels are everywhere, and He keeps a watch on everything, everywhere.

(Sri Vishnu Sahasranam : p 80,81)



## January 25

### **Make the mind into a cremation ground!**

Guru's voice spoke to my heart, saying:

Child! There is nothing more enchanting than the saga of self-progress. When there is self-progress, then life becomes one of happiness. It is not such a bad thing that you undergo great hardships and sufferings before realizing that the world is non-real and distressful. The more you suffer, the nearer you come to me.

Practice patience, tolerance, endurance. Think through and understand what your responsibilities are. Before seeing the faults of other people and voicing criticism, investigate your own deep defects.

Softness, simplicity, goodness, endurance, absence of ill-will... All these are primary components of Self-abidance. Have no anxiety about what others do to you.

Ahamkara (egoity) lies at the heart of all things. Destroy it from its roots. As regards your desires, keep a careful watch on them and keep them in check. There is no certainty of conquering one's desires till one's body does not reach the crematorium.

Make the mind into a cremation ground. If you wish to attain liberation in this very life, then burn down all your desires.

You must learn to obey without questioning. What are you other than a small child? Do you really have true Jnana? And so, like a child, walk right behind me... Follow me in the path...

Make yourself a follower of every wish of mine. Am I not like your own mother in my love for you? To you, I am like your father as well... For, if necessary, I shall also award punishment to you.

If you have a desire to be a Guru someday, then learn to be a shishya (disciple) first.

I shall make you a responsible person, truly committed, and of good conduct.

I shall transform your devotion and love into truth and firmness. Go

forth! Lead from the front! My love and blessings are always with you!

(Dhyan ke Samay : p 75 – 78)

# January 26

## This is just for you – 1

In the rapid current of time, everything is flowing, all the time. There is not a single thing in this whole universe that remains static. Right in front of our eyes, we see so many ups and downs, disturbances, all the time. When we get attached to some desirable thing, or feel an aversion to something fearful, then our heart gets coloured by the hue of love and hate. And possessed by such a state, we end up forgetting our self and all that is conducive to oneself; one forgets the spirit of devotion, practice, and dharma. One gets fully immersed and engaged in the quicksand of the world. The current state of affairs is that we neither know our real Self, nor do we know the nature of God. Neither do we have good thoughts in our hearts, nor do we practice good conduct in life. And for such a person, whose every cell is coloured by the hues of attachments and bad associations, what is the point in even talking of *tattva-jnAna* (Knowledge of Reality) that removes ignorance? Where there is no *bhagavad-archA* (worship of God), *brahma-charchA* (talking of Supreme-Reality) does not have any shine.

For the cessation of body-identification, the Knowledge of the non-body Self is essential. One is not the body. One has a body. One is the doer of ethical and unethical deeds, earning merit and demerit respectively. One is the experiencer of happiness and distress. The body is not the be-all and end-all of life. One had life even before acquiring this body, and one shall continue to exist even after this body drops. Also, distinctions of appearance, age, strength, resolve, knowledge, happiness, distress etc., are clearly seen across all beings. Whether the material cause of the universe is *shoonya* (nothingness), *vijnAna* (universal consciousness), material substance, *prakRti* (primordial substance), *paramANu* (atoms) or Brahman; whether the cause is one or many; whether the causes are similar or dissimilar; the seeds of *samskAra* (mental impressions and tendencies; the mould that shapes a person and his conduct) are in accordance with one's

past deeds alone. Without these seeds in the form of *samskAra*, there can be no basis at all for creation of creatures with distinct, diverse, variegated species, bodies, character etc.

Therefore, in order to plant and nurture happiness-giving *samskAra*-s in oneself, *dharma-nishThA* (firm adherence to dharma) is an essential attribute to be inculcated while one is abiding in the human form; with the knowledge that the self (jeeva), which is completely different from one's body, is the *kartA* (doer), *bhOkta* (experiencer of happiness/sorrow), and that it moves from form to form in its journey across bodies.

Along with *dharma-nishThA*, it is necessary to have *bhakti-nishThA* (firmness of bhakti) too; because a man is very sensitive and sentimental at heart. Prone to instant likes/dislikes, he gets carried away by attachments/aversions, and gives a firm anchorage to good and bad feelings in his heart. And as a consequence, he experiences sorrow. Be it attachment or aversion, the ultimate consequence of either is heart-burn. Therefore, one should constantly contemplate God in one's heart... God, who is the Supreme Almighty; God whose marvels transcend worldly limitations. By this one develops disinclination towards all objects of desire of this world and the heaven to come. Without developing indifference towards that which is 'miniscule', it is neither possible to develop a desire to know and enjoy the 'infinite', nor will one progress in that direction. The man who is tempted by the 'miniscule' objects of the world, does not have the eligibility to realize Paramatma (Supreme-Self).

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 3-4)

## January 27

### This is just for you – 2

It is seen that when one elevates one's thoughts to rise above the material world, a certain kind of pride/vanity surfaces. (Along the way) By adhering to dharma (*dharma-nishThA*), one could eschew unethical conduct, and good-conduct found a place in one's life. By adherence to Bhakti (*bhakti-nishThA*), one became free of attachments and aversions; and one attained *vairAgya* (detachment). Indeed, such a life is a blessed one. Defects were dismantled; and good nature was installed. But on the high throne of this renunciation and installation, a demon in the form of 'pride' took his seat, and made himself the enjoyer of 'respect and praise'. In order to exorcise and remove this demon from one's heart, it is necessary to attain the state of high *samAdhi* (absorption), by *AdhyAtma* means; it doesn't matter how the *samAdhi* is attained – whether it is by realization of *tanmayata* (oneness) in *tat-padArtha*<sup>20</sup> (God) by means of continuous worship of God; or by abidance as '*tvam-padArtha*'<sup>21</sup> (the Self), the state of no thoughts, attained upon the complete cessation of movements of the mind.

Even when all this is achieved; even when 'pride' or 'I'-vanity in one's conduct of worldly affairs ceases; *avidyA-mahArAnI* (Queen who presides over Ignorance), ensconces herself there and then on the throne, and continues her reign, going about just as she pleases. This state cannot be destroyed without burning it down in the inferno of *brahmAtma-aikya-bOdha* (Realization of oneness of Self and Brahman). Therefore, in the end, one has to inevitably seek refuge in Upanishad Vidya, Vedanta knowledge / *brahmAtma-aikya-bOdha*. All the spiritual paths are aids to this alone.

Herein, above, it has just been declared that the cessation of ignorance comes about by Brahma-Jnana. Jnana is the direct means; cessation of *avidyA* is the fruit. However, this does not mean that karma, bhakti, or yoga are not paths of spirituality at all. You have seen earlier, how useful these are for purifying one's conduct and for cleansing of *antaH-karaNa* (inner

organ, that comprises of mind, intellect, memory and ego). In one's quest of the supreme reality, the above methods (karma, bhakti and yoga), in a natural manner, systematically remove the gross and subtle veils of delusion. The greatest gain arising from the diligent practice of these methods is that they entrench themselves as 'natural behaviour' in the lives of the seekers. Thus, even after attainment of *aikya-jnAna* (Knowledge of Oneness) and *avidyA-nivRtti* (cessation of ignorance), these practices make that Jnani come across as a Mahatma even in worldly conduct. They continue to reside in the very nature of the Jnani without any effort on His part, and give a distinct bliss of *jeevan-mukti* (liberation while being alive). Without these, no one can become an Acharya in any tradition of Jnana, nor can one protect and advance the Jnana tradition and its progression. The common people put their faith in the Jnana of only those great, extraordinary, men, who are of pure and good conduct in their worldly affairs. Without these qualities, Jnana does not qualify to be faith-worthy.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 4, 5)

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20 *tat-padArtha* : God, who is the substance that is pointed out by the term 'tat' in the mahAvAkya 'tat tvam asi'

21 *tvam-padArtha* – Self, that is the substance that is pointed out by the term 'tvam' in the mahAvAkya 'tat tvam asi'

## January 28

### **The greatest folly of life, and the greatest sorrow**

Look here. Man, ordinarily, is bound in his body. He thinks of his body as “I”, and the relations of his body as “Mine”. What does this result in? See how this belief manifests in worldly dealings! When we consider this three and a half cubits body as “I”, then we feel happy based on the body’s pleasures, and sad based on the body’s distress. We feel attracted to those things that gives pleasure to the body, and we feel averse to such things that gives us pain. We have bound ourselves inside a boundary – the boundary of the body. And so we say, ‘This body is me. All else is not me.’ And now, when we believe ourselves to be the body, then other people too consider us to be that; and there lies the hook where all our happiness and sorrow hangs.

Once, I was undertaking a train journey, traveling from Bareilly to Hardwar. It was night time. A Peshawari man was asleep on a lower berth. I saw that he was sleeping with his legs spread out. Seeing some space, I thought that it would not be an issue if I sat there, near his feet. And so, I sat there. Now then, when that man found me sitting there, he got very angry. And in anger, not only did he start verbally abusing me, he also started kicking me. I continued sitting there silently. Needless to say, I was feeling hurt in my mind. He continued showering me with insult and injury. Finding me quietly putting up with this abuse for a long time, he exclaimed in anger that I seemed to be some sort of pupil of Gandhi! Upon reaching my destination, I got off from the train. In my mind, I was feeling very hurt. (In Hardwar) I had gone to meet a sage, and I told him – “Sir! Sages such as you tell us that – ‘*You are not the body! You are not the body*’. And here we are in a state that anybody insulting or abusing us causes so much pain! What is this?” The sage replied – “Brother! When you are being subjected to hurt and humiliation, you are sitting in such a place where such hurt and humiliation should indeed be inflicted upon you. Whenever you are in a situation where you are feeling humiliated, at all those times you are sitting

in such a place where it is but right that you receive abuse.”

I asked – “Sir! How is that?” He replied – “Ok! If someone goes and sits in a garbage dump, or if some man goes and lies down in a gutter... And on that person, someone comes and empties a garbage bin, or throws a bucket of dirty water, then the person who throws that garbage or slime is not at fault. The point is this...When you consider this package of bones, flesh, skin, excreta, urine, puss etc., as “I” and “mine”, then what kind of holy place do you think you are sitting in? Bones, flesh, skin, excreta, urine, puss... What kind of stuff are these? Dirty stuff, right? All this is garbage! And that man in the train unloaded garbage upon that, right? You were sitting in a humiliation-bin. Therefore, you were abused.”

The sage then said that not only was the humiliation quite appropriate, but then that was actually doing me a lot of good. When a child does something wrong, and his parents chastise him or even give him a slap or two, then that chastisement is actually for the good of the child, as a lesson to the child that he should not do such a thing. In the same way, if someone abused you, when you are sitting inside the body, identifying yourself with the body – then that person has chastised you like a parent would an erring child. He has given you a slap. Meaning – he is alerting you, saying – *“Don’t sit inside the body; don’t sit as the body; elevate yourself above that.”*

So! Narayan! What we are saying is that we have come, and we are sitting down in a garbage dump, right? Here, we shall receive only abuse, only humiliation.

We have taken the body to be “I”. Indeed, this is the greatest folly of life, and the greatest sorrow...

(Mandukyakarika Aagama Prakarana : p 226-7)



## January 29

### **Why does it take a long time to understand Vedanta?**

The truth be told, Vedanta can be explained in quite a short period of time. Our Master, Sri Udiya Babaji would sometimes say – ‘The teaching of Vedanta, which is the high truth...Indeed, it is perfect. But then, if we think that a person who listens to these teachings would grasp it immediately, understand it easily; well, it doesn’t quite happen like that. Because, up until now, the person has been engrossed in knowing pleasures; knowing objects of the senses...He knows activities that he performs, and understands only the acts of his mind. Till now, he has never attempted to know anything that does not serve his selfish purpose; does not result in sensual pleasures/happiness; is not of material use to him...Tell me, do we strive to know things from the point of view seeking the truth, or is it that we try to know things to see what use they can be for us? So it is, that whatever a man has done till date, whatever material wealth he has accumulated, whatever he has read, written, thought about, or understood – every single thing has been done with a view to personal gain, in one manner or the other. Never has he attempted to acquire knowledge without being motivated by some desire. Never has he sought knowledge purely for the purposes of knowing the truth about things. He has never thought of selfless learning. In your case, you have taken scores of years in the pursuit of truth. You have done years of Upasana (worship / meditation); constantly practiced dharma and cleansed your mind and heart; practiced deep meditation; studied Vedanta... That substance of Vedanta which took you scores of years to understand, if you entertain a fancy that someone who listens to your teaching, or reads it, would get to understand it in no time; well, such a fancy is not a good thing!

It takes time for people to understand Vedanta. Because they are not focused on knowing only one thing. In any given day, they spend four hours in acquiring a certain knowledge, two hours in knowing something else; they are busy acquiring something, discarding something. They are always

carrying a baggage of notions upon their head. It is not possible for them to understand Vedanta all of a sudden.

But then, here is the crux of the matter. You should have no hesitation in speaking of Vedanta, which is the truth. For if you do that, then:

1. Some impressions would be formed in your listener's mind. Some impressions, that the truth is like this...
2. A person whose mind has no desire to know the truth, will suddenly think – 'Come, why don't I try it once, and try and find out what indeed is the truth...'
3. He who is afflicted by distress would think – 'Hey! This is a jolly good thing. By this, all my distress will be destroyed!'
4. Those who have digressed from true spirituality, and have wandered into diversions such as: a) their own flights of fancy, b) desires for fruits in this world or heaven, c) miracles, d) supernatural powers etc... Those who have digressed into these kinds of paths... When such people hear that the mere knowledge of truth frees them from all quarrels of mind and heart; and that this path is so easy... Then they get interested in the path of truth. They get a taste for it. They are distracted no more.
5. Those who are *jigyAsu*-s (those who desire to acquire Jnana), and have done some contemplation/inquiry... When they listen to Vedanta, the knots of ignorance that bind their mind are torn apart.
6. Those who are engrossed in worldly attachments... When they listen to Vedanta, they may start deliberating – 'All the things that we derive pleasure from; all things to which we are bound, and are not able to escape from... Every one of these things is but a figment of my imagination.'... With this thought, they commence doing serious inquiry...
7. Those who are *jeevan-mukta*-s (Self-Realized sages), Jnani-s.... They too get great joy in hearing the high truths of Vedanta. In reality, it is not that they need to know anything, nor do they need any new avenue of happiness... Even then, they quite like listening to

Vedanta, because that's what they do... It's a habit...It's their very nature...

8. In this manner, when one conveys the truth (of Vedanta), a deep desire for knowledge dawns in the minds of the listeners. And if one were to have any doubts or wrong beliefs, then one would be motivated to resolve these...

(Mandukya Karika, Agama Prakarana : p 313-315)

## January 30

### **Rare, marvelous, is the speaker of Brahmanidya**

It has been stated in Srimad Bhagavatam that when we have a desire to discuss or listen to some topic about God, then, at that very moment, God comes and sits inside our heart. Indeed, one gets to listen to Vedanta only as a result of:

- God's grace
- Fruition of good karma done over many-many lives
- Guru's compassion
- Auspicious desire, arising in one's own heart

And if, after listening, one gets to understand it as well, then that is a result of even more Grace.

One issue is this, that most people never get to hear this at all, for where does one find someone who can tell you about Vedanta! One can find people who can tell stories of Kings, stories of sensual gratification, stories of the world...One can find speakers who discourse on family matters... But one cannot easily find someone who can tell you about Brahmanidya. And even if you were to find some teacher, what happens if your own mind tends to grasp only fragments, and is obsessed with prior attachments?

Once, I was walking to some place, and on the way, I happened to meet a merchant who was known to me. Walking along with me, he spoke to me at length. He spoke of so many worldly matters, so many attachments, so many aversions, so many praises and criticisms... Hearing all this, I was indeed surprised, and I wondered about the sheer strength of mind that such people possess... That they are living in such an environment of attachments and aversions, and are engrossed in discussing these, and yet they do not suffer from heart failure! How much heart-burn they constantly cultivate within! Narayan! For them, every other person has this or that defect; the world is full of defects... They hardly find anything good in

anyone else. We people are not able to listen to such talk; indeed, one forgets the fact that *Parabrahma Paramatma* resides in one and all. The whole world is engrossed in discussions of absolute '*asat*'. In such an environment, it is only when God grants one some goodness of mind, and one gets some detachment from this fragmented world of objects; and if the thought comes to one's mind that one should listen to discourses on the infinite, division-less, *brahma-padArtha*... Only then does one have a chance to hear of that One, which resides in the hearts of all.

One should never discuss or listen to any talk that pollutes one's heart. But then, worldly people do not even know what it is that contaminates the heart. They try to scare other people, saying that listening to Vedanta would make one lose one's home and family life. But Vedanta has no enmity with home or family life. If at all Vedanta – or in other words '*Jnana*' – has any enmity towards anything – it is towards '*Ajnana*' (ignorance). Jnana will not spoil your home, your family, your wealth, or your health... It will do no harm at all to any of these... But as regards all the stuff that you hold in your mind with so much respect; your mind's past impressions and tendencies; all the small-little things that obsess you; all these senseless things that you believe to be valid and worthy... All this stuff will surely be destroyed by Jnana.... Jnana is not done until all these are destroyed, root and stalk.

Acquire the knowledge of your ever-pure, all-knowing, ever-free Self. Do not waste time blaming your bad fortune. Thinking about your challenges and constraints all the time, do not lose hope. Know that every single person is eligible to attain Jnana (Self-Knowledge). After all, it is a matter of reaching one's own home; not someone else's. Our Self is our home. What is the quarrel about going back to one's self? If a home has a sign on the door that says – 'No entry without permission'; and if the owner of the house happens to come there... Does the restriction apply to him as well? Indeed, it is true that if we were to enter our house, especially when we enter the place of worship in our house, we wash our feet first. We do not enter with our feet dirty. We first cleanse ourselves. Likewise, when you want to listen to Vedanta, do enter with a pure mind. Do not come with thoughts of malice, anger... Do not come with a polluted heart... Do not come with your

mind contaminated by attachments and aversions... Do not come with your mind polluted by “I” and “mine”. Come with purity to listen to Vedanta. Remember this. *Rare, marvelous, is the speaker of Brahmanidya!*

(Kathopanishad Pravachan, Bhaag 1 : p 199 to 209)

# January 31

## The distinguishing aspect of Vaidika Dharma

It is one thing to fold one's hands in prayer, in the belief that God is some entity who exists somewhere else. And it is quite another thing to have the belief that God is within one's own self. That said, why are we not able to see the God who is within us? That's because we get no recess from our shopping, our businesses, our sights that are set on the external world. But then, if we were to really have the taste, the desire, then we can always make time for it. So, the call (of the Upanishad) is this – *"If you wish to search for God, then come! Search!"*

You know that there are people (following other religions) in the world who believe that God is some external entity in front of whom we should press our hands together, bow, in reverence. They believe that praying once in seven days, clasping one's palms together, is good enough. In their belief, God is not someone that you can actually come face to face with. He won't enter your world and affairs. What you need to do is to go on performing your duties. We (the priests) shall keep instructing you about His laws. You need to work in compliance to those laws. (Obedience to His law is paramount. There is indeed no room for any questioning or inquiry.)

Whereas, our God is very different. If He is formless, then He is our own Self, *nirvishesha* (without qualifying attributes), *sAkshAt-aparOksha* (directly, immediately experienced); He is manifestly realized, experienced, as one's own Self. And if He is an entity having a form, then He is in *Vaikuntha*, *Goloka* etc. And as an act of compassion to His devotees, he incarnates from time to time, manifesting Himself as one endowed with form (whereupon, He can be directly seen, engaged with).

And then there are those (who belong to of our religion) who keep saying 'Faith-Faith'... Schooled in beliefs that are foreign and non-*dharmic*, they believe that God is solely an article of faith (and not of experience). This is not the view of our Vaidika dharma. Where our dharma goes on asserting – *'yat sAkshAt aparOkshAt brahma (sarvAntaraH)*<sup>22</sup> – *That Brahma (God),*

*which is immediate and direct – (the self that is within all)'*; to object to that view of God, and to say that God can never be met with (experienced) by anyone is indeed not right. The point is that such people do not study the Veda or the Upanishads, and merely believing in the formlessness of God based on their faith in the books of other religions, they start challenging Vaidika dharma.

In no dharma other than *vaidika sanAtana dharma* is it declared that the 'Efficient', as well as the 'Material', cause of the perceptible universe is Brahman, the Supreme-Self. He is the clay; He is also the potter. He is the maker; He is also the 'made'. He is the one who is moving; He is also the one impelling the movement!! This entire Creation is His form. The stone Shaligrama is also Paramatma (the Supreme-Self). Narmadeshwar is also Paramatma. The Peepal tree is Paramatma. The cow is also Paramatma. This sage here is also Paramatma.

This stand cannot occur in other religions, because their God is not the 'Efficient AND Material cause' of the universe. Whereas in our case, after God-experience, there remains nothing at all which is distinct from God. This being the case, why do you mix it up with other religions, saying – 'all is one! all is one!' My good man, all is indeed one in the context of meetings, conferences, and friendship. But in the context of determining the truth, the actual reality, can all be the same? Where indeed is a belief that God is someone who is in the seventh heaven; someone who is formless alone; who can never be directly experienced by any person; and is ever an object of reverence alone!! Whereas, in our Vaidika Dharma, in all our activities – walking, speaking etc., - it is He alone that fills all! In terms of experience, He alone is the *adviteeya* ('One without a second'), and in worldly context He is the *sarvAtmA* (Self of one and all). Indeed, all is He. This is such a unique and distinguishing aspect of our Upanishad Siddhanta, that upon seeing this one is struck with absolute wonder!

(Brihadaranyakopanishad : p 267,8,9; 338)



**February**



**Dharma Samrat Parampujya Swamishree Karpatri-ji Maharaj**

# February 1

## Swamishree Karpatriji Maharaj

It was in Jhusi (Prayagaraj) that I was blessed with the darshan of Swamishree Karpatri Maharaj for the first time. At that time, he had already taken Sanyasa, and was known by the name of Sri Hariharanandaji Saraswati. I came to know that he had been initiated into the Sanyasa order by Sri Brahmananda Saraswati, Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath. For almost 40-45 years thereafter, I had the good fortune of *satsang* and discussions with Karpatri Swamishree. During those days, he was gaining prominence and respect for his erudition in Brahma-vidya, *darshana-shastra* and for his sheer genius, resplendent like the rising Sun. His extraordinary intelligence, and his elucidations, flashing with novelty and innovation, had so much power that people at large felt persuaded to repose their faith on the teachings of Shruti and Smriti. He would say that it is indeed imperative that one conduct oneself in accordance to the Varna-Ashrama rules till the time one attains Brahma-jnana. He openly criticized the people who transgressed the bounds of Varna-Ashrama dharma and conducted themselves as per their own whims.

Once, in response to a question from me, he laughed and replied – ‘*In reality, Jnana-svarupa Atma alone has the nature of nityatA (eternal existence). The true meaning and supreme-goal of Veda is Atma alone. The nityatA of all other things, which are anAtma (non-Self), is but attributed, imagined.*’

In response to a question from me on the subject of Ishvara (God), he said – ‘*From Supreme-brahma sattA (eternal-existence), a slightly reduced reality/being is created as Ishvara by Maya.*’

He would say – ‘*In reality, that which is expressed by the Upanishads by names such as rasa, Ananda, sukha-bhUMA etc., is none other than the rasa-svarUpa AtmA (Self, which is of the nature of Rasa)*’. Enunciating Advaita from Siddhanta point of view, and Bhakti from Bhava (emotion) point of view, was very dear to him. He would say that for bhakta-s (devotees), who

are by their very nature devoid of any desire – be it for any pleasures, others longings, or even for liberation; for such bhakta-s, the *nirvishEsha* (attribute-less) aspect of God would bring no satisfaction. Therefore, for them, God is obliged to manifest himself with a form, as Sri Rama, Krishna etc. Sages such as Sant Jnaneshwar, Nivruttinath, Muktabai, Tukaram, Eknath, Samaratha Ramdas etc., were all *ananya* Vaishnava-s (devotees who are devoted to Vishnu alone), even though they were proponents of Advaita philosophy.

Sri Karpatri Maharaj's power of organizing people was quite special. By his skills, intelligence, and affability, he was able to transform even his opponents, making them his supporters. His love for me was spontaneous and natural. Sri Swamiji was a knower of Dharma and Brahman; and he was himself the very personification of all the sinless, world-transcending *muneendra-s/paramahamsa-s*, whose lives he described through the medium of his discourses such as Bhaktisudha, Bhakti Rasarnava, and Bhagavata Sudha. The consistent and correct way in which he conveyed the teachings of Veda and all the associated Shastra-s through his speeches and writings, is indeed worthy of emulation.

In the last phase of his life, he lived in Kedarkhand in Varanasi, shining as the division-less Shiva Tattva, in the form of Enlightenment, liberated from the risings of time and space. He never felt satiated sipping the ambrosia of Bhagavata-katha. May the vision of his auspicious form, with horripilation in his body, his eyes filled with tears of love, ever reside in the hearts of *bhAvuk-rasika-s* (devotees who are filled with emotions of love) and *rasajna-s* (knowers of rasa).

(Paavan Prasang : p 31,34,35,38,40,43,44,53,56)

## February 2

### What is the Dharma of a Jeeva?

Taking a single human body as being “I”, and identifying with that body’s associates as “mine”, the Jeeva has got himself entangled in the bondage of *samsAra*<sup>23</sup>. Now, the role of Dharma is to slacken the “I”-ness and “mine”-ness of the Jeeva, and then to liberate him, once and for all, from the bondage of *samsAra*. The nature of such a Dharma is this; that a person not bloom with his personal pleasures, or wilt with his own sorrow. He should connect his own self with the happiness and sorrow experienced by all creatures; their happiness being his happiness, their sorrows, his sorrow. By this, the bondage of egoity gets reduced, and worldly attachment (‘mine’-ness) loosens. However, Dharma is not confined to just this. The path of Dharma goes further. A human being should have some special qualities. What are those? Just this, that upon seeing any person in distress, the heart of a human being should melt with compassion. He should be filled with sentiments of sympathy for those in pain. While sympathy in itself has great strength, and distressed persons derive great power from it; even so, a person who can offer tangible help should help the distressed people by means of his body, mind and money. A human being’s greatness and glory is consummated by this alone.

Those who turn a blind-eye towards the suffering of fellow creatures, or entertain ill-will towards any other being, and occupy themselves in dry rituals of study and worship; (such people) will never obtain peace, nor will they be able to please God. In the fourth canto of Srimad Bhagavata, it is said that even in the case of an impartial Mahatma, knowledgeable in all four Vedas; if he shows no concern towards the poor and the sorrow-stricken people, then all his Vedic knowledge would become fruitless and die, just as water leaks out totally from a pot which has broken.

Praiseworthy is he, who puts up with his personal distress stoically, even though he has the capacity to overcome them. In other words, a person who puts up with his own pain, even as he goes about relieving others of pain;

keeps his own desires unfulfilled, even as he fulfils the desires of others (such a person is a blessed one). It is indeed true that such an attitude may have a detrimental effect on one's wealth, one's family, or one's own health. But then on the face of the gain that accrues on its own from such an approach, the harm that one faces is nothing at all. That's because all detriment is only of worldly nature; whereas the gain is of *paramArtha* (Supreme goal of life). Such a person becomes eligible for attaining supreme good, because of his adherence to Dharma.

This, then, was about common, worldly Dharma.

There is also a '*parama-dharma*'. Even the knowledge of *parama-dharma* is a matter of great good fortune. This has been conclusively stated in Srimad Bhagavata. Lord Brahma, after repeatedly scrutinizing the scriptures, reached the conclusion that the essential message of all the shastra-s lay in constant remembrance of God by means of *japa* (repetition), *keertana* (singing) and *artha-chintana* (contemplating the meaning) of God's names. It is this that is declared by the shastra-s as '*parama-dharma*'.

(Bhagavata Darshan – 1 : Bhumika p 114-116)

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23 *samsAra: the world, and the transmigratory cycle of birth, death, rebirth etc.*

## February 3

### In life, what is the way to increase *sadguNa*? (1)

One day, there was a *satsang* going on with Bhai Lakshmipati. On the question – ‘*In a human being’s life, what is the way to augment sadguNa (good/auspicious qualities)?*’ – I shared a verse from Srimad Bhagavata.

आगमोऽपः प्रजा देशः कालः कर्म च जन्म च।  
ध्यानं मंत्रोऽथ संस्कारो दशैते गुण-हेतवः॥

AgamO apaH prajA deshaH kAlaH karma ca janma ca  
dhyAnam mantrO-atha samskArO dashaitE guNa-hEtavaH  
(Srimad Bhagavatam – 11.13.4)

Bhai Lakshmipati was very pleased with the message of this verse, which goes like this :

As regards the blossoming and augmentation of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* qualities of a man, ten points need to be kept in mind. If these are characterized by *sattva* nature, then *sadguNa* (good qualities) will flourish in man. These ten points are as follow.

1. What is the subject of your study? Do you study heart-cleansing scriptures like Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Ramayana etc? Or is it that you study books that dwell on sensual pleasures and accumulation of money? Or books of fiction that are about ghosts/spirits, thieves, dacoits etc.? Or film stories of cheating, cunning, sorcery, or those that deepens one’s *vAsanA* (desires/tendencies)? Your life is drawn in different directions based on the books that you study.
2. What kind of water do you use, for your bath, drinking, and in food? Do you use the *charaNamrita*<sup>24</sup> of God? Pure water from rivers or streams? Do you consume juices of fruits and vegetables? Or is it that you drink intoxicating substances like liquor etc? You can never isolate yourself from the effects of the water that you partake.

3. What kind of people do you like to stay and mingle with? Depending on the kind of people that you like to live with, and those you respect, serve; depending on the kind of person that you would like to be, so will you become.
4. What kind of place pleases your mind? Riversides, mountains, green fields and forests, holy ponds and lakes, temples, the residence of sages, places where *satsang* is held? Do scrutinize and analyse your personal tastes. For you will surely go on to be shaped by these very things.
5. How do you spend your time? By any chance, are you becoming an idler on account of sleep, laziness or inattentiveness? If so, you will end up losing your prowess. Do you perform your work, driven by desire for money and sensual pleasures? If so, your life will become increasingly agitated, tossed, bewildering – for sure. What portion of your life’s priceless moments do you assign to contemplation of *satya*<sup>25</sup>, one-pointedness, devotion to God, and for welfare of the world? Even a single moment of your life is capable of making your life into a heaven or hell.

(Paavan Prasang : p 260)

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24 charaNAmrIt: water that is sanctified by offering in worship of God

25 satya: Truth; Brahman or the Absolute; Pure Existence / Consciousness



## February 4

### In life, what is the way to increase *sadguNa*? (2)

1. What are the things that you like to do? Do you try to keep away from delusion-born activities such as stealing, adultery, violence, prejudice etc.? Do you or do you not try to do good to others, even at the cost of bearing difficulties yourself? However small or insignificant an activity may seem to be (externally), the effect of every activity is quite far-reaching. Even if one does something with no one else knowing about it, one's own inner-being will not remain free of the effect of that activity. Every action has a reaction which affects every part of the person, including one's inner-being/mind. The fruit of an activity is not in the creation of an external thing; rather, it is in the sculpting/shaping of the inner-being. The best thing would be that you, before you embark on any activity, deliberate deeply and consider whether the activity is likely to reform your habits or worsen them? Never do any activity that harms anyone, or makes your habits bad.
2. Which lineage have you been born in? For one's spiritual body, the parent is one's teacher or Guru. Noble lineage, elimination of defects, addition of good qualities and good conduct – all of these improves our life. Steadfast adherence to good conduct is the right way to live.
3. What is the line of your thinking? What is it that your mind doodles and dwells on when you are awake, when you are relaxing, or when alone, or before you go to sleep? Do you introspect and contemplate on the Self? Do you think of the welfare of the world? Or is it that you think of body, pleasures, diseases, desires, or fancies? **Attention!** If the field of your contemplation is towards inappropriate or impure directions, then you will find yourself nowhere...Falling between two stools, you will belong neither here, nor there.

4. With what aim do you give or take counsel? Towards what objectives do you make resolutions and plans? What is it that comes to your mind repeatedly? What kind of '*mantra*' do you do *japa* (recitation) of? 'Mantra-s' that purify the heart are filled with self-control and contemplation of God. *Bhoota-bhairava* 'Mantra-s' (for invoking evil spirits), and counselling/conferring on harming others, are things that push you into the abyss of evil.
5. Nature's flow, filled with good and evil, is origin-less and endless. The river of *chitta-vRtti* (thoughts) flows inwards, as well as outwards – i.e., towards the Self, and also towards the world. Sometimes the flow is of venom, and sometimes, the juice of immortality. Sometimes peace and compassion; and sometimes jealousy and hate. It has river-basins of attentiveness; and depths where you need to be most alert. Make yourself flow in the river of noble thoughts. You may find yourself sink at times, and float at times. Sometimes you may get distracted as well, flowing hither-thither... However, do not leave the river of good thoughts. That will not only improve your worldly life, it will also fill your inner-life with *amRta* (juice of immortality). In a short time, you will find yourself amazed, and wonder how is it that your life has been made so sweet, succulent, fragrant, youthful and melodious! You are the children of *amRta* (immortality), and in being and remaining immortal lies the success of your life.

(Paavan Prasang : p 261,262)

## February 5

### ***Indriya-samyama* (sense-control) should stand on the foundation of *samatva* (One-ness of all)**

There are many things that need to be perfected by practice.

*'All is Brahman'* – this is worthy of being contemplated upon, practiced, repeatedly.

Control of the group of senses may well be done; but it should be done on the basis of the conviction that *'all are one's own Self'*. What is inside, is outside; what is outside, is inside. There is indeed nothing at all in the whole cosmos, which is additional to what is in me.

If one thinks of any object as – *"It is present there, not here; it is not present now, and will be there later; it is not in me; it is in something else."* – then that entity is not *'brahman'* (Supreme Reality). That bliss which is found in Vaikuntha, or in heaven, or in Samadhi (Yogic absorption); since that bliss exists in your own heart; then, directing you to seek that bliss outside you, is a wasteful show of poverty. That *'Being of Bliss'* is actually in you; verily, it is you.

The whole of Creation is pervaded by indestructible, wholeness, essence of One-Reality. Therefore, there is absolutely no need to make one's sense-organs frisky. While it is the nature of sense-organs to be flighty, such a nature comes about by *'doing'*. By *'not doing'*, it drops away. For instance, one may become habituated to drinking tea. However, if one desists from drinking tea and puts up with the stress for some days, then the habit drops off completely. One does not even have a thought about needing tea.

This sense-control should stand on the foundation of *'samatva'* (One-ness of all).

Let's say we go to someone's house. He greets us, bows, and offers us something. Seeing all this, it occurs to us that he has *shraddha* (devotion). We go to someone else's house. He bows to us, but does not make any offering. Seeing this, it occurs to us that he sees us as *virakta* (unattached to

material things). Neither is good or bad. In this manner, we should practice 'samatva'.

Take the case of a doctor who practices 'nature-cure'. When I have a cold, he says – *'This is good. All the body's muck is coming out.'* If I have fever, he says – *'The disorder in the body has now got expelled.'*

Say there is a man who comes to meet me every single day. He has love for me. And so, he comes every day and chats for an hour.

And there is another person, an acquaintance, a wise man. He is very careful about using my time. He does not come to meet me, for he thinks – *"If I go to meet Swamiji, he would have to speak to me, and his time would be lost for this."*

Thus, *'All are Brahman'*. With that as the foundation belief, exercise control of your senses. Practice this repeatedly, all the time.

(Aparokshanubhuti pravachan: p 217,219,220)

## February 6

### Adherence to Dharma should be for purity of the Heart

Dharma means a 'Shakti' (Power) that gathers the *mana-indriya-prANa* (mind, sense organs and life-breath) and fixes it within a boundary (of conduct). This 'Shakti' has to be awakened by means of discipline. Without this, there is no difference between a man and a beast. The '*artha*' (wealth), '*kAma*' (desires) that are in accordance with Dharma, are conducive to attaining '*shrEya*' (spiritually beneficial ends) and '*prEya*' (worldly good). Without Dharma, '*artha*' and '*kAma*' become seeds of disaster. There exists a doubt in the minds of some people that Dharmic conduct and thought in terms of food, lifestyle, work etc., result in hindrance to worldly progress. Because, in today's society and the associated scenarios of work/dealings and give-and-take, the world has reached such a state that simple Dharmic behaviour is considered by people to be a fad, eccentricity, madness. It does come to be seen that a person who is very dharmic in worldly conduct becomes a subject of ridicule, and such a person's success remains a matter of doubt.

Considering the climate and circumstances of present times, there is indeed some truth in what has been said above. That said, for Dharmic conduct, a small amount of austerity, difficulty, forbearance, and courage is indeed expected. However, it is my definite view and experience, and, indeed, one does hear and see in worldly dealings, that a *Dharmatma* is not made fun of for long. If a person leads his life with honesty and integrity; with enthusiasm, patience and courage; without getting affected by the ways of life of those nearby; then, he wins the trust of most people in a short period of time.

In commercial business, there is no better way to attain success than by winning the trust of people. He who is trusted by people, is wooed by success at every step, and with every step he moves ahead in the path of

happiness and prosperity. People at large prefer to conduct business only with a person who is steadfast on Dharma, and is endowed with honour and faith, irrespective of how they themselves are.

I have seen small shopkeepers and businessmen, who won the trust of the people, and have gone on to become well-accomplished and prosperous. While it is true that we are living in the age of advertising, advertisement-broadcasts are subject to doubt, whereas simple advertisement of personal trustworthiness has a permanent value. If we are straightforward in our conduct and become *Dharmatma*-s, then, even if it is delayed a bit, we will draw the attention of the common man. However, we should bear in mind that our adherence to Dharma is not for the purposes of drawing people's attention. Rather, it should be for purity of one's heart.

(Vyavahar aur Paramarth : p 9, 10)

## February 7

### Gita booklet's family

Generally speaking, people do lead proper lives. But, when faced with situations of serious reversals or great attractions, we are seized by temptation; and where this temptation drags us and leads us to is not something that we realize in time.

There was a Mahatma who lived a life of great dispassion and detachment. He owned nothing, not even a loin-cloth. Some devotee gifted him a small booklet of Bhagavad Gita, saying – *“Maharaj! Indeed, you are an all-renouncing ascetic, and that's just fine. If at all you have the thought to read the Gita sometime, please flip through this Gita booklet.”* Mahatma said – *“After all it's the Gita. What's the harm in taking it!”*, and so he accepted it.

Now, when it happened to rain, the Mahatma sheltered the booklet from getting wet by keeping it in his armpit. Some other devotee saw this and said – *“Maharaj! How long are you going to keep the Gita like this, in your armpit? We will construct a makeshift thatch roof. You too may live under that, and you can keep the Gita safe and dry. We are making this thatch roof for the Gita, after all, and it is not for you. So please accept it.”* Mahatma said – *“What's the harm in that?”*, and so a roof was made.

When he was asleep at night, a rat came there and bit the Gita booklet. The devotees said to the Mahatma – *“Maharaj! These rats are rascals. We will get a cat, to keep away these rats. What is the harm in this, for you?”* Mahatma agreed. A cat was brought there. Now, the cat had to be provided with some food every day. The devotees suggested that they would get a cow. By that, one could do ‘*gau-sEva*’ (service to the cow, which is a sacred task of worship), and then one would get some milk as well, for the cat. Mahatma said – *“What's the harm in that? A cow may be brought.”* Now, the cow needed fodder, and for that one needed to do some cultivation. There being no harm in that, and so that was arranged too. Now there was a need for workers to take care of the cultivation, the cow etc. Some men and

women were employed for this. Now, these helpers could also provide care to the Mahatma, and so they started to do tasks of personal service, such as massaging his feet and arms. The Mahatma said – *“What’s the harm in that?”* After some time, the worker family welcomed the birth of children. And the Mahatma said – *“What’s the harm in that?”*

And then one day, the devotee who had first gifted the Gita booklet, happened to come there again. And stunned by what he saw, he said – *“Maharaj! What is all this?”* The Mahatma replied – *“All this is the lineage of the Gita booklet that you gave me. This is Gita’s family.”*

The moral of the story is that we should not accept anything and everything, saying – *“What’s the harm in that?”*; rather, we should see and deliberate, whether, for life, it is needed at all.

(Aap Sabse Shreshth Hain : p 74, 75)



## February 8

### ***Satsang* is more important for children**

Till such time as one does not realize Oneness with *nirguNa-brahma*; till such time the whole of Creation, other than *AtmA* (Self), does not get negated; till that time, to speak of any object in the world as being without *shakti* (energy/power), is to turn one's face away from reality.

And so, that which here is *saguNa Ishwara* (God), is a great *shakti* for you. Bhakti (devotion) is *anurakti* (deep love/attachment) to the holy feet of God. And that bhakti is a big shakti in one's life. The resolve/will of a *siddha-purusha* (sage), the natural shakti of a *mantra*, and our faith – these three, coming together, erase every degeneracy and stain of our life. I can tell you with good authority, on the basis of my own experience, that scholarship alone will not stand you in good stead in life. Faith is absolutely necessary. If faith is erased from one's life, then sorrows will multiply. Anyone who disturbs the faith that already resides in our hearts, is an enemy of our spiritual practice. One must keep away from such people.

Even if one is the most *ajnAni* of *ajnAni* persons, unable to feel true devotion to God; even then, one can and should emulate what good devotees do. Just as Mahatma-s say '*Sita-Ram*' '*Sita-Ram*', one may do so too. Just as they roll the rosary (and do *japa*), one may do so too. Just as they offer *bilwa* leaves in the worship of Lord Shiva, one may do so too. In acting thus, what is one doing? By doing such acts, one is actually utilizing a great medicine. Gopika-s utilized Krishna in their lives/thoughts/ speech etc., just as someone might utilize a medicine. This is known as 'bhakti'.

In daily lives, people are engrossed and stuck in small-time stuff, thinking these to be the be-all-end-all. Often, we find old people attending *satsang*, while they tell their children that they are not ripe enough; as if the children would get spoilt by attending *satsang*, while they themselves would stand to gain. Ha! *Satsang* is not for oldies; rather, it is more important for children. The *samskAr*-s (impressions) that children gain from *satsang*-s, would be of use to them right until their old age.

So, this bhakti is actually *sEvA* – Service. Bhakti manifests as *sEvA* in the case of those people, whose hearts have some attachments, aversions, afflictions. Wherever such ailments exist, bhakti enters and brings with it such contemplation of Rama, Krishna, Shiva – *such absorption in saguNa Ishwara* – that it cleanses every bit of dirt from the heart of the devotee. For this reason, bhakti is especially important in one’s life.

So it is, that in the case of Gopika-s, their life’s-wealth, their life’s everything, took the form of the divine name ‘Krishna’, and took residence in their tongues – with the constant throb of ‘Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna...’.

Uddhavaji says – “Oh that I could get a bit of dust from the feet of these Gopika-s! That’s enough, that’s enough!”

(Uddhava Geet : p 29, 30, 31, 37, 38, 41)

## February 9

### Sins of speech

I heard of an incident relating to a woman who lived in a village. Her daughter's wedding was to take place in a few days, and so she had put together some jewellery and other items for her daughter, to the extent that she could manage within her means. A band of dacoits in that area came to know of this, and so, one night, they broke into her house with the intent of looting everything. The woman (mother of the girl who was to be married) said to the leader of the dacoits – *'Bhaiya! You are my brother. Your sister's daughter's wedding is to take place. If you so wish, you may take away all the jewellery and other items here, or leave them here. Just as you wish.'* Upon hearing this, the dacoit's heart melted, and he told his gang – *'Brothers! Let us return. It is not for us to loot here. Rather, we should be giving.'* He then took the whole responsibility for conducting the girl's wedding, undertook all the expenses, and got her married.

A true human is that person, who, by means of his will, attitude, and love, unites others with himself; makes aliens/outsideers feel that they are his own family; makes, even, birds and animals his own kin. This kind of shakti (power) that can transform a dacoit into a brother is the manifestation of true humanness. By the manner of our lives, by our attitudes and behaviour, it is necessary for us to prove our humanness. This responsibility is not applicable to birds or animals. Men, alone, have the onus of proving their excellence.

As per *Manusmṛti*, our speech should be free from four defects.

1. We should not speak harsh words; our speech should not be hard, abrasive.
2. We should not speak something which is contrary to what we know. When we know something, and we do not voice it, it may be ok. But if we speak the untruth to someone, then it is not that we are deceiving the other person; rather, we are insulting our own

knowledge.

3. Our speech should not be slanderous; we should not backbite or gossip. Reporting information from here to there, and there to here, is gossip. This falls under the category of '*aasuree sampatti*' (demoniac qualities). Because of such speech, misunderstandings and feuds come about, ill will arises. Where, indeed, is the need to know the secrets of others and to gossip and spread the information?
4. The fourth defect of speech is – unrelated prattle. One's speech should be in accord with the question or context in hand. Where there is talk of marriage, one should not speak of death; where there is some condolence talk on someone's death, one should not bring up the topic of marriage or some child birth. This kind of garrulousness is called '*asambaddha pralAp*' – 'unrelated prattle'; which has filled our lives.

Thus, while one may not have many virtues of speech, one should ensure that one does not have these four defects of speech. These have been termed as 'sins of speech'. And so, people should keep away from these.

(Aap Sabse Shreshth Hain : p, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12)

## February 10

### **This heart is a very beautiful casket**

A special aspect of *prEma* (love) is that it carries on dispute/argumentation, voicing one's own points and one's lover's counterpoints, all on its own; with one's mind being ever preoccupied with the churn of love-talk – *'If I say this, they He (the beloved) will say that'* etc., etc.

In contrast, if your mind latches on to petty issues and gets obsessed with agitations like – *'He said that to me; he did this to me'* etc., then it results in a huge loss, with one's beloved slipping from one's grasp...

An incident that I saw comes to my mind... A person spoke some abusive words to another person. The person who was abused took it to heart and fumed over it for several days; while the person who had uttered the abuses lost no thought over it, went to a restaurant, had some stuff to eat, and was having a happy conversation with some friends, filled with fun and laughter. Rightfully, it is he who should have felt remorse over what he had spoken, for it was he who had committed the sin of speaking words of abuse. However, as it turned out, some sounds had taken off from his tongue and flown in to the sky... And no sooner had that touched the other person's ears, that person held on to it and pressed it to his self, as if stuck with glue. For two or three days, he fumed over it; his eyes red, face twisted, head bent...

Look here... Being obsessed with petty issues makes one totally lose the bigger things. Actually, every single thing of this world is petty. If we latch on to these, we lose that space in ourselves which is meant for a very big treasure. For a happy life, we should not clutter up that space with petty matters. Know that this heart of yours is a very beautiful casket. In this, you should keep a thing of value, the most valuable diamond that you possess. It is not meant for keeping garbage.

The fact is, that as a lover, one emmeshes oneself only with one's beloved. One cries for the beloved, one laughs for the beloved...One eats,

drinks, and lives only for the sake of one's beloved.

If it happens that one laughs for the sake of a certain person, cries for another, eats and drinks for pleasing someone else; then what does one's heart become? It would become a travellers' lodge. Many would come, and many, go. It will no longer be the restful abode of one's beloved. It would be a *dharamshALA* (a free lodge for travellers), a *sarAi* (Inn).

Thus, it is the very nature of a lover to keep one's heart enmeshed with one's beloved lord; one holds on to one's beloved at all times.

प्रीतम छबि नैनन बसी, पर-छबि कहां समाय।

भरी सराय 'रहीम' लखि, पथिक आप फिर जाय॥ <sup>26</sup>

*When the beloved's person fills one's eye,  
Where is the space for another affair?  
Says Raheem, seeing the Inn full already,  
Other travellers, on their own, just return from there.*

(Pranay Geet : p 84,85)

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26 *A verse of Abdul Raheem Khankhana*

# February 11

## Brother! Reduce your weight a bit!

In our Veda-s, in the *moola-samhitA* itself, there are *mantrA*-s which speak of the four great walls that obstruct our life's progress. When some big hurdle comes in your life, you need to overcome it. Among such hurdles, the first one is '*ashraddhA*' (lack of faith). Lack of faith is the biggest obstacle in your life; overcome it by means of '*shradhhA*' (Faith). The second obstacle is '*anRta*' (falsehood). Overcome the caging walls of falsehood by means of '*satya*' (Truth). The third obstacle is '*krOdha*' (anger). By means of *kshamaA* (patience/forgiveness), attain victory over anger. The fourth obstacle is '*adAna*' (absence of giving; not giving '*daan*'). We have become used to being solely 'takers'; we just take and take and take; we keep on accumulating, and build whole walls of accumulations around us. Overcome this barrier of '*adAna*' by means of '*dAna*' (giving). So, for overcoming these four barriers in human life, it is necessary to cultivate *shraddhA*, *satya*, *ahimsA* (non-violence) and *dAna*.

From the point of view of *adhyAtma* (spirituality), '*dAna*' (giving) results in reduction of your '*mamatva*' (possessiveness). Reducing the burden that you carry, it makes you light on your feet.

Here is a story that illustrates this.

A person went to a Mahatma, and said – 'Maharaj! Please reveal God to me.'

The Mahatma replied – 'Ok! Come tomorrow, and you and I shall climb to the top of the hill that is yonder; and there I shall show you God; you can have a vision of Paramatma.'

The seeker promptly presented himself to the Mahatma the next day. The Mahatma had prepared a big sack, filled with some large stones. He told the seeker – 'Lift this bag and carry it, while you walk along with me.'

They started walking. After walking some distance, the seeker said – 'Maharaj! I am not able to carry this any further'. The Mahatma replied – 'All right. Just take out one stone from the sack'. A stone was removed. The sack



became somewhat lighter. They started walking again. After walking some more distance, the person could not proceed any further. He said – ‘Now I can proceed no more; not at all. I think I will die.’ The Mahatma said – ‘Throw away one more stone’. And so, one more stone was thrown off. In this manner, as they climbed the hill, one stone after another was thrown off. By the time they reached the top of the hill, all the stones had to be thrown away. It was a tough climb, and the seeker gathered his breath and asked the sage – ‘Maharaj! You made me carry so many stones; made me climb this hill...Now that we have reached the top, please enable me to see God!’

The Mahatma replied – ‘When you could not climb the mountain carrying just five pieces of rocks, how do you think you can reach God carrying the burden of the world in your mind?’

And so, brother, reduce your weight a bit!

(Grihasthashram Dhanya Hai : p 37,38,39)

## February 12

### This indeed is the way to do bhajan!

What is the means to overcome Maya? Here lies the essence of *bhakti-siddhAnta*. What you need to do is this. Place God in Maya's lap. Whatever be the many forms and ways in which Maya enters and grips your life, just drop this tiny-tot, little Bhagavan Krishna in the lap of Maya, there. And know that this little boy is one who is 'छिगुनी छूकर पहुँचा पकड़नेवाला'... This is a proverb from Vraj – which means this : A kid touches a person's little finger; and finding no opposition to it, he goes on to grab the whole hand of the person.

That is what God does. He enters our hearts seeking a small space to stay, saying 'Please give me just a thumb-size space in your heart; I shall enter your life'. And when God enters your life, Maya, who is of the form of the demoness '*pUtanA*', is destroyed.

And note this; you may even just pretend, entertain a fancy, that God has come into your heart. *Arey Narayan!* Even this imagination has such power, that the concept of Maya is totally decimated. So, here's what you need to do. Whatever be the entity that you are infatuated about, attached to; whatever it is that you deeply desire; just attach God to that. Alternate every worldly thought with that of God. And you will find that, step by step, slowly, your worldliness will lose, and God will win. Poison will perish, and *amRit* will remain. I know that you are holding on, hard, to your world; yet, this indeed is the way to do Bhajan!

Once, I went to a Mahatma, reaching his abode with great effort. There was a river, in swift flow, which I had to cross. Water was coming up to my thighs, and the river bed was full of stones. One slip, and I would have flown with Ganga. It was a serious risk that I took. Putting my life on the line, I crossed the river, and reached the Mahatma. The Mahatma was of fearsome looks. Big, red, protruding eyes; dark skinned, tall, massive body. That Mahatma told me – “*Look here. If you insist on keeping sand in your hand, how can you keep butter there? First, wash your hands. And then you take*

*butter in your hand... You will see for yourself how enjoyable it is. Whatever may be the infatuations/attachments weighing in your mind; reduce this burden, and attach yourself to God.'*

That is all that he told me. Whenever I remember that fearful evening, I recall this *upadEsha* of that Mahatma. But then, I received this teaching after undergoing so much difficulty to reach the Mahatma. Whereas we, you see, deliver this truth to you right at your doorstep; we print pamphlets/posters; put up loudspeakers; and tell you tens of teachings, not just one or two. But then you will not retain these in your memory. Whereas, had you done some *tapasya* and had received these teachings after that; then you would have realized the great value of these teachings.

(Bhagavat Vimarsh – 2 : p 63,64,65)

## February 13

### Materialism is not the end-all of life!

It is also the case, that when one lives during the rule of an evil monarch, it becomes difficult to live in peace if you take enmity with him. So, one should do a bit of this and that for the pleasure of that ruler as well.

There was an acquaintance of mine, a *satsangi*. In his house, he would organize a *satsang*, where bhakta-s would gather and the *satsang* would go on for hours together. In between, as a break, there would be some light conversations of fun and laughter. One day, someone asked – ‘Why have these jokes and chatter during the *satsang*?’ To this the *satsangi* replied – ‘Look here. In our hearts, our devotion is only to God. Our primary focus in the *satsang* is towards God only. However, *kaliyug* (the personification of the current cycle of time) comes here to create obstacles in our devotion. So, we have some chat about him as well, so that he feels that he is not being ignored, and does not create obstacles for us.’

Take the case of Nandbaba. He too did his bit to keep Kamsa happy; and his trip to Mathura from Braj, for paying his tribute, was with that in mind. As it happened, God, in the form of baby Krishna, had arrived in his house; and so Nandbaba had set off for Mathura, keeping the best interests of the baby in mind, albeit only for a short trip. (And so, to keep on the right side of things) Even upon *prEma* entering his heart, a parting did come about.

When Nandbaba reached Mathura, he also met Vasudeva. Vasudeva told Nandbaba that some calamity was about to strike Braj. No sooner did Nandbaba hear this, that he ‘हरि जगाम शरणं’ – he sought refuge in the feet of Lord Narayana. It is the very nature of a *satpurusha*, that, on the face of a calamity, he thinks of God, and prays – ‘Lord! Please protect us!’ He becomes *antarmukha* (mind turned inwards), and gets great faith in God. His mind gathers great strength from this. And so, Nandbaba took refuge in God.

Now, this story in Bhagavata Mahapurana, is being narrated by Shukdeva to King Pareekshit. King Pareekshit is anxious on hearing of the

demoness *pUtana* reaching Braj, and is deeply worried about the destruction and mayhem she would cause there. Shukdeva, allaying his apprehensions, says:

*“O King! In what kinds of places does a demoness create problems? Only in places where there is no shravaNa (hearing) of God, no singing of God’s glory, no worship, can that demoness cause harm. So Parikshit, do not fear. Here, in Gokul, God himself is present. He is here, in person. He whose very name has the power to destroy the demoness, has manifested in Gokul!”*

Listen. If a bit of the fragrance of *Tulasi* enters our nose, the thought of God surely enters your mind. If one’s eyes sees God’s image, one’s tongue chants his name, one’s ears listen to his story and song, one’s heart meditates on him a bit; then, you will see that life becomes free of obstacles.

Materialism is not the end-all of life.

(Bhagavat Vimarsh – 2 : p 49, 54-56)

## February 14

### Our God's granary is full to the brim

When I read in the newspapers that 'X number of people have died because of hunger', for a moment I am unable to believe that news. I ponder, 'How is it possible in God's kingdom, that the creatures that he has created, die of hunger? Could these people not have found some work to do, something to earn, get some food somehow?'

I feel so because, wherever a bhakta goes, he sees in every one of those places, that *"our God's granary is full to the brim"*.

One day I stepped out from my house with five annas in my pocket. I left in some direction, and that night I halted at the residence of someone who was known to me. I was probably around eighteen years of age. And until that day, there had never been an occasion where I had any dealings of money with that person in whose house I halted. In the morning, when I took leave, he came and handed me twenty rupees.

I asked – 'Why? What's the matter?'

He said – 'God has given me this prompting; that I should give you twenty rupees.'

He had no idea where I was headed. I accepted that money, and travelled to Asansol. There, someone gave me fifty-eight rupees. Then I went to Jagannath Puri. In this manner I travelled to several places, throwing my burden on God; and He always made some arrangement for me. There is never a need to fear as to where one's next meal is going to come from. Such a worry is but a weakness of one's self.

Let me share another incident from my life. One day, Sudarshan Singh 'Chakra' and I were traveling together in a train. I do not recall the name of the railway station; perhaps we were coming to some place near Jhariya. We had purchased a ticket for that station, for we could purchase tickets only up to that station with the money that we had. We got down in that station, sometime in the night. There was a Sadhu there, who offered some food and said – 'Here, eat this.' And we ate that. At that time, I was not yet a

sanyasi, and so I was wearing white clothes. The next morning, we left that place and started walking. We walked the whole day, covering around 26 or 27 miles. We got no food the whole day. At night, we halted in the retiring room of some train station. As we unrolled a blanket to lie down and sleep, two young boys came to us. Very charming boys, glowing boys, neat looking. They looked as if they had come down from heaven. Tired as we were, we did not think that there was anything supernatural about all this. The boys asked us – “Would you like something to eat?” They brought some *khova*, a preparation of milk. It was eleven o’clock at night when they gave us this to eat, and they told us that they lived nearby. We ate that *khova*, and slept.

Next morning, we went around looking for these two boys. Although we searched everywhere, there was no sign of them. In fact, there lived no one there except the Station-master of that railway station.

The point of my sharing this incident is that a person who places his faith in God is never in want of food or fare. As to what time, and through which person, God provides help, one knows not.

(Madhurya Kadambini : p 7-8)

## February 15

### O, how compassionate the Lord is!

When the bhakta (devotee) remains unsatiated, and his yearning only grows, then God says: “O best of devotees! Birth after birth, across so many lives, you have been worshiping me. For my sake, you renounced your wife, your home, your wealth, your pleasures and comforts. Purely out of your desire to serve me, you endured heat and cold, hunger and thirst. O devotee of mine! You have endured much hardship for my sake. As for me, what can I give you in return? Indeed, I owe you; I am under debt to you.”

“Were I to make you an Emperor, would that be fair compensation for your devotion to me? I wonder. Even if I were to make you Indra (the King of heaven) or Brahma (the Creator); or if I give you Yoga-siddhi by which you attain all supernatural powers; even then, it would not equal the devoted service that you have offered me.”

“Granted that cows love grass... Just because that is so, would it be right to reward human beings with grass? In quite the same manner, while worldly people may like to attain positions of power, becoming a King or Indra or Brahma; how can I give that to my bhakta? And so, while I remain undefeated in general, you, my dear devotee, have conquered me by your devotion.”

“I am under your control. Out of your grace, your goodness of heart, please release me from my debt to you. Otherwise, I shall remain your debtor for all time to come.”

Upon hearing these word of God, the devotee’s heart melts so much, that he says: “O Lord! Why are you saying such things? Lord, you are an ocean of compassion. And I am caught in the swirling current of the worldly life, and many are the times that I have been swallowed by tall waves of problems and pains. Seeing my plight, you were moved to compassion. Although you are beyond all worldly concerns, you appeared before me, taking the form of Gurudeva. You gave me such a *mantra* that all the disturbances in my mind were silenced. Everything became calm.”



“My ignorance has been removed. I was like one who is caught in the jaws of a tiger, and you rescued me from that, and made me a loving devotee of your lotus feet. You whispered such a *mantra* into my ear that all my suffering was erased, and the repeated chant of your holy name echoed in my heart. The song – ‘*Krishna! Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!*’, became mine; hearing which my heart became ever so pure.”

“Lord, I haven’t served you even for a single day. So lowdown am I, so crooked my mind, that I have not offered you any service, even though I have always known what is the right thing to do. My conduct has not been pure at all. I deserve to be punished. But then, O Lord, you have showered me with kindness, instead! When I hear you telling me, in your own voice, that you are indebted to me, I am absolutely amazed!”

“O, how compassionate the Lord is! What am I to do?”

(Madhurya Kadambini : p 74, 75)

## February 16

### This human body is no ordinary one

*‘EtAH param tanubhRtO bhuvi gOpavadhvaH’<sup>27</sup>* – Uddhavji says that if there is anyone on earth who has truly utilized his/her physical body; if there is anyone who has made his/her life a success – it has been done by Gopikas (cowherd girls). Indeed, the Gopika-s have done that.

Sridhar Swamy<sup>28</sup> has explained this in a beautiful manner.

Where does ‘love’ draw its greatness from? To this question, the response is – ‘Love with who? Love with a mortal or with the deathless? With the ‘incomplete’ or with ‘fullness’? With an object of sense-pleasure or with *Paramatma*?

Question: What is great about the love of Gopika-s?

Answer: It is the greatness of the object of love of the Gopika-s. Such is the greatness of this object that the love of Gopika-s achieved greatness. Since the Gopika-s loved a great person, they too attained greatness. What happens if one loves an insignificant entity? Doesn’t a mosquito or a dog love its respective mate? In this world, there are any number of persons who roam around as Romeos and Juliets. Such love is of little value. Love attains real value only when it is connected with *Parameshwara* – the Lord Supreme.

Question: Who is it, whose ‘body’ can be considered to have attained success?

Answer: Know that the ‘body’ doesn’t attain success by earning money or enjoying sense-pleasures.

Question: All right. Does the body attain success by performing wonderful work?

Answer: Narayan! You would get wages for all the wonderful work done, that’s all. So, to say that the body attains success by performing a lot of work is not quite right.

Question: All right, then. I have attained Brahma-Jnana. Surely, we are now successful body-bearers?

Answer: No. You have become body-less now. As far as spiritual practice is concerned, your body has attained success. But then, for the body of a brahma-jnani, after realization of brahma-jnana, there remains no purpose to be achieved.

Question: So then... Whose body, in reality, is successful?

Answer: That body is successful, which serves the purpose of God.

The Gopika-s dedicated their bodies, life, youth, hearts and all, towards the cause of Krishna. Indeed, such a body is the right one to have.

Look here... One's mind/intellect achieves success by gaining Jnana born as a result of realization of the truth of Mahavakya-s like '*tat-tvam-asi*'. One's sense-organs achieve success by the penance of practice of sense-control. However, what would be truly wonderful is if one attains God by means of one's body! Blessed, blessed! Grab God's hand and don't let go!

Surdas said:

*'hAth chudAyE jAt hO, nibal jAni ko mOhi;*

*hriday sE jab jAogE, marad kohOngo tOhi'*

*Krishna! Knowing me to be a weak person, you are going away, releasing your hand from mine; Know, that I shall call you a real man, only if you manage to depart from my heart!*

Never lose faith. In this very human body, by these very eyes, one attains the vision of God. By means of these very hands one can catch hold of God. By these very ears, one can hear his speech. This human body is no ordinary one.

(Uddhav Geet : 2 - 17)

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27 *Srimad Bhagavatam – 10<sup>th</sup> skanda, 47<sup>th</sup> chapter, verse 58. Meaning – “On this earth these young cowherd women are the only ones [of real success in] acquiring a body...” (Translation source: [www. http://bhagavata.org/](http://bhagavata.org/) )*

28 *Sridhar Swami is the well-known commentator of Srimad Bhagavatam, who lived sometime in 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> Century CE*

# February 17

## Gopika-s are Preceptors of Love

For making one's life most blessed, follow the maxim '*harikathA kathA, aur sab vyathA*' – "*Hari's story, story; All else is but misery*". Do come to see the truth of this sometime; for, if you don't, your life will be spoilt. Let me tell you this straight. If you spend all your time in stories like – 'their daughter-in-law is like this; their daughter is like that; that fellow is like this, and this one is like that' etc., then your heart will be totally desecrated. It will wallow in worldliness. You will be unable to make any progress in the path of God.

Whereas, if your conversations at home are centred on topics like – "Krishna is like this; cowherds are like that; Gopika-s did this; Brindavan is like that; Yamuna river is so; Rasa Leela is beautiful..." etc., then your mind would dwell on God, and that would be for your good.

So, if your mind ever has the slightest desire to turn away from worldliness, then you have to change the topics of your conversation.

When Gopika-s got to meet each other, they would sit down and talk about Krishna. Likewise, like those Gopika-s, you too should dwell on such katha-s (stories) of Krishna. Actually, the story of Gopika-s themselves are equal to the story of Krishna. And so, any person who listens to, reads, discusses, or thinks of the stories of Gopika-s – such a person sanctifies all three worlds.

Notice this. Goswami Tulasidas was a poet-devotee of Lord Rama. But he has also composed the *Krishna-Gitavali*. It's a very beautiful composition. Look here! Without Krishna-katha, poesy is incomplete; and without the story of Gopika-s, the story of Krishna is not complete either! So, a secret has been revealed to the world, that, if you want to attain Krishna, recite the *Gopijan-vallabh mantra*! By the *japa* of this mantra; by repeatedly reciting the 'feelings' of the Gopika-s; by reciting, again and again, the many ways by which the Gopika-s served Krishna; by these means, learn about the topic of Krishna-Love.

When a Gopika is churning curds and singing, the churning rod dances to the beat of the song, the churning sound in chorus with the voice of the Gopika. 'Cling-cling' sounds her bangles, as if cymbals are being struck, while the Gopika sings '*Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!*'. Indeed, these Gopika-s are banners of love. You may adore any which God - Rama, Krishna, Shiva or Narayana; but if you truly wish to learn about love, you have to learn that from the Gopika-s. Gopika-s are preceptors of love.

The songs of Krishna-katha that the Gopika-s used to sing, sanctified all three worlds even as they sang. It released people's minds from their attachment to sense-objects, and made them dwell on Krishna-thoughts. And even today, the songs of the Gopika-s, their words, the melody, pervades the whole of universe. Even today, they are doing good to the world.

Uddhava-ji says – '*I bow, again and again, to the feet of those Gopika-s*'.

(Uddhav Geet : p 83, 84, 85, 86)

## **February 18**

### **When Jeeva becomes completely helpless, that's when God is met**

When pride and intoxication dawned in the minds of Gopika-s, they stopped paying attention to Krishna and started doting on their own selves – ‘Oh, I am so beautiful! So sweet am I! How wonderful my qualities are!’ Thus, whether your attention is to the external world of objects, or towards your own (ego) self, the outcome is that your attention is no longer towards God. And if the bhakta no longer looks to God even though he is right in front of God’s eyes, what is God to do? God’s eyes cannot close. As far as He is concerned, irrespective of anyone seeing Him or not seeing Him, He sees all the time.

So, when the Gopika-s stopped looking at Krishna, He made himself invisible. While they could no longer see him, he could see them all the time.

Now the Gopika-s became distraught and started searching for him. They walked here and there, till their feet allowed them to. They spoke about him to each other, till they could; they asked for Krishna from everybody around, till they became exhausted. They then started play-acting by acting like him... All this only made them more distraught, and they ended pouring out the feelings of their heart in entirety; their pride gone, their intoxication depleted. At end, they had no thought about their own selves either. Indeed, this is the embodied form of yearning for Krishna. The Gopika-s just wept. Their own strength, prowess, power and means – all of these, accepting defeat. That then was the time for Krishna to present himself. When Jeeva becomes completely helpless, that’s when God is met.

When Sri Krishna appeared in front of them, he came with a smile. What is the meaning of that smile? By that smile, he wished to convey to the Gopika-s that all this business of becoming invisible and making them suffer pangs of separation was all a matter of levity. Thus it is, that from the point of view of God, it is all but a sport. And from our point of view, it is all His

compassion, His grace.

So, from the viewpoint of us jeeva-s/mortals/seekers, it is but the Grace of God, who is an ocean of compassion, that He manifests in front of us. Even though he is *nirguNa* (unconditioned / free of attributes), he comes to us as *saguNa* (conditioned / having attributes); although he is formless, he appears before us with a form; even though he has no parents, he comes as someone who has a mother and a father. Although he is *abhOkta* (has no enjoyership), he comes as a *bhOkta* (one who has enjoyments). This is his kindness; this is his compassion; this is his *Leela* (sport). This, indeed, is the means by which he lifts us (from the quicksand of worldliness).

(Gopigeet : p 354, 355, 357, 361, 362)

## February 19

### Relationship with God is the only true relationship

In Raasa-Leela, there is an episode, where Krishna tells the Gopika-s, ‘All of you! Go back home, and serve your husbands’. To which the Gopika-s say – “O Dharmashastry! O expert of Dharma and Shastra! Resolve this question for us. Give us your ruling about a situation that we shall describe. Once, there was a man, who had to leave for a foreign country. As his wife was feeling distraught upon his departure, he gave her a photograph of his and told her to find solace with that photograph. After the man had left, his wife took the photograph to heart. She would dote on it, apply sandal paste, garland it, offer worship to it. She would spend hours with the portrait. Time elapsed in this manner. After a couple of years, her husband returned home. When he came, the house door was shut, and his wife was offering her adoration to his photograph inside the house. Her husband called out loudly to her, asking her to open the door. So, what should she do? Should she continue adoring that photograph-husband, or should she open the door and let her real husband in? O Narayana, tell us. What is the right thing to do?” My friend, until such time as the husband is not at home, it is fine to dote on the photograph. However, when the husband is now actually present, alive and real, in front of her eyes, then she would surely abandon the photo and shower her love on the actual person. The Gopika-s tell Krishna – “O Krishna! For all the jeeva-s of the world, you, O Shyamasundara, are the real Lord and Master. And all the people in the world are but your images, your photographs; all, mere shells. For us women, this photograph has been given to us so that we may apply our minds on it, exercise moderation, and restrain our desires of lust. But then, how long do we hold on to the photo? Only till such time as we don’t find God. The purpose of one’s spouse is to help one realize God.”

In like manner, is the question – ‘When should a man become a Sanyasi? Should it be when he is a Brahmachari, or a married man, or when he is in his Vanaprastha Ashram?’ The answer is that a man should become a



Sanyasi, when he gains true vairagya (dispassion / detachment). That is the only condition.

Question: Till when should one nurture relationships with one's associates in the world?

Answer: Until such time as a Jeeva gains true love of God, their remains thousands of duties for him to perform in the world. However, if the jeeva gains true love of God, then he may renounce the world and love God alone.

Know that all these relationships of the world are illusory, and relationship with God is the only true relationship.

The world's relationship is not a real one.

(Uddhav Geet : p 7-8)

## February 20

### The flowing current of great compassion

People talk a lot about *anubhava* (experience), and so we too shall talk a bit about that. But not about *Brahmanubhava*, because Brahman is not an object of experience. Brahman is of the nature of self-experience. It is our very Self. It is veiled; and removal of the veil is verily Brahman-experience.

So, let me share an experience.

Sometimes, some people come to me, needing some monetary help. It is my experience that the day one gives something, say ten rupees, to a deserving person, a good man, then that money comes back to the giver, ten times or many times more, by the evening of the very same day. While, sinful people may not have experienced this, the fact is that 'giving' never goes waste. It gives good returns to the giver, sooner or later. Fools do not know about the value of giving. But Mahatma-s know it. Giving is indeed a '*yajna*' – a ritual act of devotion to God; a sacrifice, where the oblations offered in fire, reach God.

In like manner, offer oblations of knowledge into those minds that are ignorant/foolish. Where there is disease, offer oblations of cure. Where there is hunger, offer oblations of food. This is what is known as '*yajna*'.

God has created this world so that it may serve as a means of his worship. Every object in the universe is for the purpose of being utilized in the worship of the Lord of the universe.

And therefore, do everything for the sake of others. If you walk, walk for doing good to someone. Move your hand for helping someone; speak, for aiding someone; 'see' for doing good to someone... This is what is known as '*yajna*'.

Note that Jains, Buddhists and Vedanti-s, all agree on one thing. In all three schools of philosophy there is a common link. They all say – 'Upon attainment of *Paramartha* (highest goal of life), it is not that one just attains *Moksha* (liberation) and is freed from distress. One other thing happens. For the liberated being, the life that remains after he attains liberation becomes

a channel for the flow of current of great compassion'. By such a life, goodness flows to one and all. And it is to the detriment of none.

Jains say – “Ahimsa becomes firmly established’.

Buddhists say – “Compassion becomes firmly established”

Vedanti-s say – “*sarvabhUtahitE ratAH*” – i.e., “One becomes firmly established in doing good to all living beings”.

Such is a *brahmajnAni*.

For the person who attains realization of Brahman, his life becomes such that it is purely for the welfare of all beings. Indeed, if a Jnani-s life serves any purpose for the world, it is that people’s distress should alleviated one way or the other; their *ajnAna* be erased.

(Shivasankalpa-sukta : p 54,55,72)

## February 21

### Imagined belief of Brahmanubhuti is not the realization of Highest-Truth

Let us tell you this in plain words... Every single thing in our mind is something that has been put into it from outside. So, when you go and sit alone somewhere, such things will come to your mind that have been put there from outside. Your mind's reign of fancy may well hold court, but Satya (supreme reality) will not be experienced. Irrespective of whether the objects of the world come to mind or not, Satya will not be experienced. In our Astika-samaj (the spiritual society), '*Bhagavadakar Vrtti*' (the focus-beam of God) too has to be put into the mind by means of '*shravaNa*' (hearing of scriptures) etc., (for attaining fruition in the path of devotion). Similarly, one has to put in *Brahmakara-vrtti*<sup>29</sup>, *Mahavakya-vrtti* of *tattvamasi* etc., by means of *shravaNa*<sup>30</sup> (for attaining fruition in the path of Jnana).

Bhagavad-bhakti (devotion to God) is like honey mixed in water. The water becomes sweet. Brahamakara-vrtti is like mixing cleansing-herbs in water. The dirt in the water gets removed. In other words, the seeming-division that prevents one from experiencing the Self as Brahman, is removed.

Ok, let me ask you a question. Let's say you experience something. Does the memory of that experience come to your mind later? Or does it not? Arey! This is indeed a sharp sword! Any experience that you remember, is absolutely related to some object of experience; it is not related to Paramartha (highest truth).

I remember a Mahatma, who resided in Uttarkashi. Once, at five minutes past ten in the night, he had the experience of Brahman. And after that, for his whole life, he kept recalling the memory of that experience. Look here! Anything that we remember is something that has gone with the past. That experience has now become *parOksha*

(indirect/imperceptible/past); it has died. And its corpse is rotting in your mind.

What indeed is remembrance? Is Brahman not existing now? Are you not Brahman here and now? My dear fellow! You seem to believe that you had experienced Brahman at night, and are remembering that experience now! That Brahman that you experienced was merely a momentary one! For what you remember now, is something that is *parOksha* (something of the past; something that is not directly experienced now). That which is *parOksha* is surely not Brahman. Rather, it is something that has been cut off in time.

Know this. That which is not here; that which is not present now; that which is not this; that which is not your Self; the repeated recollection of such a thing, and imagining that experience, does not amount to realization of the highest-truth.

The principle is this... At the point of time when something is experienced, it is not remembered. And at the point of time something is remembered, it is not experienced.

(Shivasankalpa-sukta : p 69-70)

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29 *The focus-beam of Brahman that burns away the ignorance that veils Self-Knowledge*

30 *The focus-beam of Supreme-Truth that a Guru imparts to his disciple by initiating him into the truth of the Veda Mahavakyas (great utterances of Veda), such as Tattvamasi (That Thou Art) etc., which reveals to the disciple the great truth that Brahman is his own Self.*

## February 22

### There is further road to traverse

The philosophy of Sri Vallabhacharya is known as *Shuddha Advaita*. As per this philosophy, all is Brahman alone, be it space, time, matter, cause, independent entity, dependent entity, I, this, etc. There are no distinctions of Maya (Illusion), shadow etc. Fullness, as is, where is. All is Brahman.

The Advaita philosophy of Sri Shankaracharya is not Shuddha Advaita. His school is known as Kevaladvaita (pronounced as *kEvalAdvaita*). Kevaladvaita holds the view that Advaita is the Self. In other words:

The Advaita that results :

- Upon attaining true knowledge of the *adhithAna* (core reality; substratum) by annulment of the *adhyasta* (erroneous superimposition)
- Upon attainment of true knowledge (*vidyA*) by the cessation of *avidyA* (ignorance)
- Upon the dawn of *akhandArtha-dhee* (knowledge of undivided/non-dual supreme reality), arising from realization of the import of Mahavakya-s such as Tattvamasi etc., and the annulment of duality.

(the advaita that results as above)

Is *AtmAdvaita* – the Non-dual Self. It is not Advaita of any ‘other’. Only the Advaita of the Self is true Advaita. For if there is Advaita of some ‘other’, then, where would ‘I’ be?

There is one other thing that I would like to tell you, and it is this – Nowhere in Shankara doctrine is there any opposition to Bhakti (devotion to God). So where is the difference between Shankara and other schools? Where is the difference of opinion between the four primary Vaishnava Acharyas and Shankaracharya on the subject of Bhakti? The difference is this. The four Vaishnava Acharyas consider Bhakti to be the absolute terminus, the very limit of spiritual attainment. Their view is that Bhakti

itself is the ultimate fruit. And Shankaracharya's view is that Bhakti's fruit is Jnana. So, in his view, Bhakti is a Sadhana (spiritual means) and not the fruit. Whereas, the Vaishnava Acharya's consider Bhakti to be the supreme end, the ultimate fruit of spiritual progress. As far as attainment of *savishEsha-Ishvara* ( God with attributes ) is concerned, there is no difference between the Vaishnava Acharyas and Shankara. What Shankaracharya further states is that Jnana alone is the means of attaining *nirvishesha* (attribute-less, unconditioned, Brahman).

The key point about Shankaracharya's view is that Advaita experience cannot be realized without realization of the illusory nature of the external world.

I tell you this just in case any of you believe that you have become *pUrNa* (i.e., you believe that you have reached the pinnacle of spiritual progress), without having a clear understanding of your real state. In which case, you should know, there is further road to traverse.

(Bhagavat Vimarsha - 1 : p 7,8,9,10)



## February 23

### Jijnaasu Beware!

For the sake of removing the delusion of *Jijnaasu*-s (seekers of Knowledge), Mahatma-s. seers of Reality, first superimpose various concepts in the seeker's mind based on the level of maturity of the seeker. By these superimpositions they purify the *karma* (actions), *bhaava* (emotions) and *vichaara* (thoughts/inquiries) of the *Jijnaasu*, making him eligible for attaining vision of God. The methods and stratagems that are utilized for attaining the eligibility are not to be mistaken to be *tattva* (reality) or God.

It is only by means of first superimposing and then negating, that all the Shastraic paths of Dharma, Yoga, and Upasana, find their oneness in *tattvajnAna* (knowledge of Truth/Reality). It is only by this oneness-view that the compatibility of all these paths with God-vision stand validated.

Upasana (worship / meditation) is done by faithfully believing in the divinity of:

- Gods, such as Ganesha, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Surya...
- Avatara-s (incarnations) such as Rama, Krishna etc.
- Guru-s and such other people.
- Substances such as Agni (and other great elements such as Vayu, water, space, earth).

By such Upasana, one attains the state of mind of *tadaakaara-vRtti* (i.e., where one is fully absorbed in a single, continuous, thought of that divinity). And the purpose thereof is for one to lose all sense of attachment to the variegated universe of objects, and for inquiry into the nature of One-Reality. And the state of *tadaakara-vRtti* may well give rise to experiences of wonder, attainment of supernatural powers, divine visions, and elevated states of being. However, such experiences are not meant for the seeker to become tied to them. On the contrary, they are meant for the seeker to realize his own Self to be distinct from these, existing as an unattached

witness. The seeker who remains enamoured by these, ends up being entangled in these kinds of false superimpositions.

From the union of Vasudeva, of the form of pure *antaH-karaNa*, and Devaki, of the form of pure intellect, when *brahman* of the form of Krishna incarnates, then he puts an end to *avidyA* of the form of Putana and the effects of *avidyA* of the form of Kamsa. Elevated consciousness leads to cessation of *avidyA*; and when that heightened consciousness descends (incarnates as the sadguru), then that leads to cessation of defects such as sorrow etc. For cessation of *avidyA*, ordinary faith in God is not enough; what is needed is the realization of the Supreme-Reality, by being non-different from it (i.e., by oneness with it). So, from this perspective, it is necessary for seekers of knowledge to be absolutely cautious.

It is our experience that upon attaining this *tattvadRshTi* (knowledge of Truth), there remains no anxiety about what might happen later, nor any fear of anything related to the external world. In fact, thereafter, nothing at all remains to be known. Other than Self-Beingness there remains nothing. All that is to be known or inquired into, finds its conclusion herein. From the point of view of establishment of truth, ethical conduct, *pramANa-meemAmsa* (investigation of evidence) and from Self-reality, this *tattvadRshTi* is ever complete.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 91-92 ;  
Vyavahar aur Paramarth : p 63, 135)

# February 24

## Siddhaanta and Life!

It is the rule of nature that every being's conduct is in accordance with his knowledge, beliefs, inclinations. One does nothing that goes against one's own knowledge, beliefs or inclinations, unless there is some compulsion. It is because we believe that our body, money, spouse, child etc., are good things, that we are forever engaged in protecting these. So much so, that every activity of ours is towards this objective.

Whereas, if every cell of our heart  
is soaked  
in the conviction that *sat-cit-ananda* God alone exists;  
and that no other object exists;  
That 'All is He', or "All exists as I";

Then

There is no question of any proclivity  
To think of, or do anything related to  
The whole gamut of Creation and the objects therein,  
Which are all but determinations of illusion.

For instance, if a man has the firm conviction that what he is seeing as 'water' is actually a mirage; then he would not go towards that waterbody for quenching his thirst. And if he sees someone else mistakenly going there for getting some water, he would stop that person and tell him that it is only a mirage. And if someone else forces him to go there for water, he would have no happiness in doing so! In the same manner, the people who have realized the illusory nature of the 'seen' world and have deliberated about its painful nature and its rejectability, will no longer have any proclivity for worldliness.

All this deliberation relates only to ordinary people like us. However great our intellectual knowledge may be, however beautiful the essays we write, however wonderful the discourses we deliver, however ascetic our outward show of renunciation; the fact is that, for us, the outer world *has*

*not* become void of reality, likeability, and desirability. All our “greatness” is merely for the attainment of some selfish ends; be that money, self-importance, or fame.

From the point of view of Siddhanta (final purpose of life), every thought and action sprouts from Avidya (ignorance of Reality) and desire. Needless to say, this observation is not applicable to accomplished sages. Fact is that when we come to this world, we do so only upon accepting “difference”, i.e., the false belief in duality. And as a consequence, we cannot escape from desires. And due to this, we are always surrounded by all kinds of attachments and distress, and we fall from the great purpose of life. We have not attained the ideal state. What would be for eternal good is if we engage ourselves constantly, with all our strength, in attaining this ideal state, namely, the actual experience of supreme happiness. This effort is not meant for the welfare of others; nor for worldly achievement or show. Rather, as a sincere effort to attain self-purity, this should be practiced for our own welfare. And only such a person can do this, who has the sincerity and keenness to ascend the throne of life’s true objective. This journey of Self-Realization is very much a personal one, dependent entirely on one’s own self. We have to walk this path on our own, and in the end, the matchless state of non-duality will surely be realized.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 49-51)

## February 25

### **Right now, is the right time! The auspicious dawn of good fortune!**

Existing from beginningless time, life after life in this world, the impressions of the world have become so firmly rooted in our psyche, that to get rid of them is no easy task. For accomplishing this, one needs effort, practice, absolute faith, total devotion, and firm self-control.

Gripped by delusion, holding one's spouse and children ever locked in a tight embrace; spending the whole night counting every penny that one has got; and then believing that *paramArtha* (supreme purpose of life) will come to us on its own, is living in a world of wild fancy. The man who is in the clutches of illusory words of greed can never walk the path of Paramartha. For walking that path, it would be necessary to do *tapasya* (perform penance). One should be ready to renounce all. In this world which is of the form of an ocean, to face the diverse obstructions that arise in the form of countless tidal waves, one should stand firm like the rock of Gibraltar. Just as a lion, upon sighting its prey, leaps that very moment and attacks the prey with all its strength; so also, should we launch ourselves on our life's target. The journey is a long one, but to reach its end is imperative. Weak enthusiasm is of no use. Right now, is the auspicious time, the dawn of good fortune! This place, right here, is the most holy of places! Without the least hesitation, one should launch oneself in one lunatic leap and tear apart the veil that separates us from our life's goal.

Know this too, that this 'veil' is nothing but the deficiency of our own enthusiasm. It is only because we lack sincere eagerness, sincere desire for knowledge, that we create fancy reasons to justify our current ways of greed. And in that pursuit, we deceive others; and by doing so, we actually end up deceiving ourselves alone.

We do not possess the strength to reform others. Let us first reform ourselves. We can raise ourselves out of worldliness only if we mount the

vehicle that helps us reach the final aim of life, the ideal state. Indeed, we should do such Upasana (worship/meditation) that the meditator-meditated, seeker-sought etc, all become one in that infinite Upasana/Sadhana, and Sadhana alone remains. In actuality, this alone is the *siddhAnta* (settled-objective of life); the ideal state. Until such time as this *siddhAnta* does not permeate every cell of one's life, and this life-speck does not join the great ocean of *siddhAnta* and become one with it, one should relentlessly push onwards with this hard practice of spiritual-seeking.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 51,52)

## February 26

### What is Sadhana, in reality

Real sadhana is a journey from artificial to natural, from non-Self to Self, and finally becoming poised in that. In other words, to gather all the thought streams that are gushing towards external objects, channelizing them and making them flow towards inner consciousness, is what is Sadhana, in reality. But then, what usually happens is this. Although we do attempt to internalize our conviction about the causticity and sorrowfulness of worldly experiences, whether they are pleasant or otherwise, we do get affected by them again and again. And due to the behavioural tendencies that we carry across our lives from time immemorial, we end up slipping repeatedly. Even so, there is no need to lose hope. Fierce battles with different types of obstacles only goes to further our self-development. Of this there is no doubt. Currently, we do not have firm faith in our own strength or prowess. The attempt to develop this faith is what is Sadhana.

In ancient times, there was a system of Sadhana, a systematic progression. In the five sheaths of the body, one would progressively identify oneself with the immediately inner one, and renounce one's oneness with the outer one, and in this manner, the knowledge of one's innermost Self was revealed to the seeker. And in this way, the four paths of Yoga – *Mantrayoga*, *Hathagyoga*, *Layayoga*, and *Rajayoga* – arrived at a point of total harmony with this path of Knowledge.

In this Sadhana, the **God of Vairagya** (dispassion) would be personally present, helping the seeker to cut off attachment to outer body sheaths, and guide him to the state where all his *Vasana*-s get destroyed.

Installing divineness in the mind of the seeker, taking him forward towards the realization of '*tat padArtha*' (Brahman or Ishvara), **Goddess of Bhakti**, establishes the seeker in the supreme palace of 'death of the mind'.

And **God of Jnana**, who is a witness of the complete non-existence of worldly/supernatural attainments, and of different kinds of bondage and liberation etc., and who is Non-dual, independent; that God of Jnana,

remains in Self-bliss, his true nature.

Until such time as we do not attain oneness with our goal (Self, or God, or Guru etc.), we should constantly persist with stern Sadhana in order to attain that oneness. We should be ever alert that we do not deceive ourselves, thinking that we have reached the goal.

*Vasana*-s are very powerful. Therefore, they should be subjected to severe scrutiny. A very frightening form of *Vasana* is when it installs a seeker on the throne of spiritual success. Rare is the valorous hero who escapes from the grips of that quicksand. The actual ideal state is that from which there is no return to this world of bondage.

Let those who have started commercial enterprises granting deliverance to seekers, do so. They are of no concern to us. We should scrutinize our own selves, and always bear in mind that our goal/philosophy is our life and vice-versa (i.e., if our goal is Self-Realization, then we should not be leading a life devoted to duality. Similarly, if our goal is God-realization, then we should not have or nurture *raaga-dvesha* – attachments and aversions – in our life). Until such time as these (life and *siddhAnta*) remain apart, neither of them is fruitful.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 53-54)



## February 27

### The auspicious virtues of a Self-Realized man

Upon abidance in the state of Self-Knowledge, the following virtues are found to be naturally abiding in the Self-realized man. These virtues are – purity of conduct, stainlessness of mind, and *sahaja sthiti* (natural, steady, poise as the Self). During the period that one is striving for Self-Knowledge, these qualities are also to be strived for. However, upon attainment of Self-Knowledge, these virtues become spontaneously established in the person, without the need for any separate effort.

#### 1. Purity of Conduct:

Virtues such as self-restraint, straightforwardness, simplicity, equality, auspiciousness of actions, etc., automatically appear in one's life. As one no longer entertains any pleasurable notion about external objects, there is no question of accumulations or possessions. Violence, which is the offspring of one's desire for enjoyments, disappears by itself. There is no fear of losing anything. The great virtues of *daivi-sampat* (treasure of divinity) are seen in every single activity that one performs. One's obsession with one's community, religion and language, stands erased. And one becomes a true servant of the society, community, country, humanity, the world, and *Vishwatma* (God, who is the Self of all Creation). One's whole being, every single cell of one's body, is filled with *Bhagavatprema* (divine love) and Self-Knowledge, which is then continuously showered on the whole universe, whereby the whole of Creation is constantly flooded with love and joy.

#### 2. Stainlessness of mind:

By the establishment of one's mind in the permanent and imperishable Reality, all maladies associated with sense-objects depart on their own. By the abidance of virtues such as truthfulness, non-violence, desirelessness, greedlessness, the mind remains

object-free and stainless at all times.

3. Abidance as pure-consciousness; natural, steady, poise as the Self:  
Just as the *dream* and the *seer of the dream* are one and the same, so also, it is the Self that exists as the changeless-principle, transcending space, time and causation. This is the pure-consciousness, natural-existence, which is verily the attributeless, ever-full, Brahman. This is known only by enlightened sages, and this, is verily, their very Self. This is the sameness of pure-consciousness. *Yoga* and *Bhoga*, *Samadhi* and distraction, are all the same, because the eyes of the Jnani see no differences. This vision is the mother of inner integrity, morality, goodness. What is great or small from the point of view of others, is all one and the same as far the sage is concerned. They are his own Self. Nothing and no one can surprise him or excite him. For Him, there is no seer, sight or scene, apart from his own Self. He remains, ever steady, in the natural state of Self-abidance. He does not attribute or exhibit any kind of specialness or greatness as far as his own self or life is concerned. He is of even conduct, even thought, even nature, and he is even, even in, unevenness. He is a *Jeevanmukta* – one who is liberated, while still alive.

All the great sages who have walked this earth, have remained established in the state of steady Self-abidance (as existence-consciousness-bliss). As do those sages who live now. As will those sages who shall come in the future.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 182, 183, 218)

## February 28

### Gurudeva is verily the 'Pradhaana Purusheshwar'

(In Srimad Bhagavatam, 7.15) Narada says – “O Yudhisthira! Just as a disease is defeated by medicines; similarly --

- In order to defeat 'desire', the medicine is 'avoidance of *sankalpa* (intent / expectation)'
- To defeat 'anger', the means is 'avoidance of desire'.
- In order to overcome 'greed', constantly reflect on all the problems that money causes.
- By *tattva-vichaara* (enquiry into the Truth), and by realization of Reality, fear is eradicated.
- By *Adhyatma-vidya* (philosophy of Self-knowledge), sorrow/delusion is driven away.
- By contemplation and worship of *Mahapurusha-s* (great sages), pride is overcome.
- By *Mauna* (Silence), the obstacles to Yoga are overcome.
  - What this implies is this. During your Sadhana (spiritual practice), if you get the vision of any deity, or you get any supernatural powers, or some other miracle happens, then do not disclose it to others. In case you tell someone else, then that will become an obstacle in your Sadhana. Whereas, if you remain *mauna*, then your Sadhana will progress. '*yogAntarAyAn maunena*' – By silence, overcome obstacles to yoga (obstacles to focus and control of mind). If a Sadhaka gets some *siddhi* (supernatural power), and brags about it, and then he loses that *siddhi*.
- Overcome impulse to violence by giving up attachment to the body and other possessions.
- Have compassion towards all. Overcome the pain inflicted by others, by displaying compassion even towards them.

- Overcome afflictions caused by providence/*past-karma*, by the cultivation of *samadhi* (equanimity). For instance, if one gets caught in a torrent of rain, or in a lash of lightning, then it is advisable to go into '*samadhi*' (state of inner absorption).
- Overcome bodily ailments by the power generated by Yoga.
- Get over one's addiction to sleep by having only *Sattvik* food, resorting to *Sattvik* places, and associate with *Sattvik* company.
- Overcome *Rajas* and *Tamas* by *Sattva guna*.
- Overcome *Sattva guna* by cultivation of dispassion.

Narada then goes on to say that whatever problems one faces in life, whatever obstacles one faces in Sadhana, they can all be overcome with ease by devotion to the Guru.

Never think that the Guru is a mere man. He has come carrying the lamp of Jnana (Supreme Knowledge), in order to show you the way. Those who think of their Guru as a mere mortal, all their learning is as much a waste as the bathing of an elephant.

Gurudeva is verily *Pradhana Purusheshwar* – the exalted Lord Himself, supreme over Prakrti and Purusha, whose feet is ever sought by all great Yogi-s.

(Bhagavat Darshan 1 : 7<sup>th</sup> Canto, p 58)

## February 29

### Two verses that were dear to Shree Udiya Babaji Maharaj

Bhagavan Sri Krishna explains the qualities of a Sage to Uddhava :

न स्तुवीत न निन्देत कुर्वतः साध्वसाधु वा ।  
वदतो गुणदोषाभ्यां वर्जितः समदृङ्मनिः ॥  
न कुर्यान्न वदेत्किञ्चित् ध्यायेत्साध्वसाधु वा ।  
आत्मारामोऽनया वृत्त्या विचरेज्जडवन्मुनिः ॥

Let anyone do good or bad, speak well or otherwise; for he does so on the basis of his goodness or flaws. From your side, neither praise him nor blame him. Remain as a *samadarshi-muni* (a silent sage, seeing all things with an even eye). Do nothing, neither good nor bad actions; speak nothing, neither good nor bad words; think nothing, neither good nor bad thoughts. Remain as *Atmaaraama* (delighting in your own Self). A Mahatma should conduct himself in this wise, like an idiot.

Shree Udiya Babaji Maharaj says – ‘Just keep these two verses in mind, and then roam around happily in the world; nowhere is there any sorrow.’

Now, the thing said (in the first verse above) is – Neither praise those who say or do what is right, nor blame those who say or do the contrary. It may be noted that this advice is not meant for those people who are driven by tendency to activity. Rather, it is meant for those who are established in the natural poise of the Self. When there is no notion of good and evil, then who is to be praised and who blamed? Thus it is, that the sage looks on all things with an equal eye. He remains the same in his conduct, whether it be towards a thief or to a money-lender. And all people flock to him.

The second verse says – How should the Jnani conduct himself? Neither do good nor bad actions; speak neither good, nor bad words; think neither good nor bad thoughts. Remain as *Atmarama*, delighting in your own Self.

Conduct yourself in such a way that people think that this fellow is a fool, and we are going to gain nothing from his association.

Listen to a story.

Once upon a time, there was a sage, and many people would come to visit him. Now, there was a parrot, living in a cage, in a certain man's house. The parrot told the man – 'Can you go to the sage and ask him how I can get liberation from this jail?' The man then went to the sage and asked the parrot's question. The sage did not give any reply, and instead, just fell in a faint. The man got scared and quickly returned to his house. After some days, he went again to the sage and asked the parrot's question, once again. The sage again fell down unconscious, no sooner he heard the question. Now the man came home and roundly scolded the parrot, saying, 'what kind of question are you asking, hearing which the sage falls unconscious?' The parrot said, 'Ah, that's quite enough. I have got the answer to my question.' The next day, the parrot fainted and fell inside the cage. The man immediately took the unconscious bird out of the cage and began sprinkling water on it. No sooner he did that, than the bird fluttered and flew away!

And so... How should a liberated person conduct his life in the world? He should live as if he is an idiot, who understands nothing of what the worldly people say or do.

(Mukti Skandh: p 419-421 ;  
Bhagavat Darshan – 2 : Ekadasha Skandh p 42)

**March**



**Brahmamayi Maa**



## March 01

### Brahmamayi Ma

Vikram Samvat 1975 was an eventful year. It was in that year that my elder brother passed away. And in the same year, my father died as well. My mother managed to gather herself somehow. My paternal grandfather was there. And it was my mother who had to take care of the household affairs.

My mother was devoted to the reading of *Ramacharita-Maanas*. And whenever she read it, tears would stream down her face. It was through *Maanas* that she conducted my *Akshara-Jnana* – the first lessons in my learning of alphabets.

After my grandfather died, my stay in the village increased. During such periods, I would narrate the meaning of verses from *Adhyatma Ramayana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Srimad Bhagavata* etc., and my mother would be my sole listener. Swami Yoganandaji made a great impact in her life, and *Bhakti-rasa* (taste for devotion to God) dawned in her life. She would remain in deep absorption in a mood of devotion, for hours together.

When I started residing in Gorakhpur, working with Bhaiji Sri Hanuman Prasad ji (of Gita Press), mother too started visiting Gorakhpur and became well acquainted with Bhaiji. Seeing that the people working in Kalyan publications (of Gita Press) were largely householders, my mother, whose name was Bhaageerathi, was quite pleased. She felt that this augured well, and that I would refrain from becoming a renunciate and go away somewhere.

But what happened is that in the beginning of the year 1942 CE, I received *Sanyaasa-deeksha* (vows of renunciation) and became a monk. Becoming a *dandi-swami* monk, I went away to Madhya Pradesh. Because of my act, my mother's heart was deeply hurt.

After my *Sanyaasa*, my mother started studying and reflecting about the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. Being very devoted to God, she also developed a high sense of dispassion (*vairagya*) consequent to my becoming a Sanyasi. Consequently, her attachment to household work started waning.

And then one day, when I was in Kashi, my mother came there and told me – *“I have now renounced home and hearth. When you can renounce the world, why can’t I? God is with me, and He will provide for my needs.”* During the same trip, she came away with me to Brindavan, and began staying in the Ashrama of Udiya Babaji.

Thereafter, she would request me, now and then, to grant her *Sanyaasa*. After some time, I could no longer decline her persistent entreaty, and I gave her ochre robes and the *sanyaasa*-name of ‘Brahmamayi Ma’.

She remained happy and contented, at all times. She was simple minded, totally untouched by the slightest of crookedness or artifice. She was least enamoured by supernatural powers and miracles. *Atma* (Self) is *Brahma* (Supreme Reality) – this was her firm conviction. She would speak minimally. She made no fuss over food, and ate whatever was available, plain or dry. She would say – *“How does it matter if all teeth fall? After soaking in one’s mouth for some time, all food becomes soft and tasty.”* Her body-identification had, more or less, dropped off. Upon worldly talk, she would ask *“Where indeed is the world, in reality?”* She underwent surgery for cataract in Mumbai. When people asked her – *“Ma! Are you having any problems?”*, she said - *“Problem can not so much as even touch me. Is there any such thing as a problem, in reality?”*

One morning, when there was a feast on Sri Udiya Babaji Maharaj’s remembrance day, she mentioned to Swami Omkarananda – *“Baba came in my dream. And he said to me, ‘Come along with me.’ I told him – ‘Yes. Now I have no work left to do here.’”* That day, in the afternoon, she lay down in her bed. Around 3 PM or so, someone saw that she was breathing no more. I went and saw, and it seemed to me that her life had subsided without any difficulty, very peacefully.

Her body was consigned to the Yamuna river. The turtles had a feast.

## March 02

### Victory over one's nature alone is completeness of a Saadhaka

People get so entangled in their own mental kingdoms /*vAsanA-s*<sup>31</sup>/*samskAra-s*<sup>32</sup> that they get tied up in knots by bondages of their own creation.

There was a man of name Gupta in Delhi, in whose family a marriage was taking place. Guptaji decided, based on his own convenience, that the bridegroom's ceremonial *baraath*<sup>33</sup> would depart from home at 6 pm for the venue of the wedding, and that the wedding ritual would be solemnized at 7 pm. Belonging to the league of new world thinkers, he felt no necessity to consult any priest or astrologer regarding all this.

Now, there was a delay in the arrival of the bridegroom's group, and as a result, the *baraath* could not begin even at 6 30 pm. And Guptaji was stomping his foot, furious that the *muhUrat* (time fixed for the wedding) was getting affected.

Say, was this *muhUrat* time decided after consulting some *panchAng* (almanac) to ascertain the auspicious time? No. For it was decided by Guptaji on his own, based purely on his personal convenience and fancy. And now he was beating his own head, venting his irritation on all around.

The moral is that man creates his own bondages, and then rues over them. It is this that is described as the bondage of *vAsanA-s* or *samskAra-s*.

There is also this unique 'daring', where a man, in one stroke, shakes off all his bondages... Bondages that have been clung to for years on end; worlds of fancy that one has roamed in forever, kingdoms of thoughts... To cut off all this in one stroke is what is known as *Sanyaasa* (Renunciation).

Consider this... One has, right from one's childhood, been attached to one's family – calling out 'mother, mother', 'father, father' etc... What is this daring, this capacity, that all this bondage is cut away in one stroke? Indeed, such a person, who renounces the world of attachments, the *vAsanA-s* of his

mind, is the great one who crosses over (the transmigratory cycle of birth and death) in a flash. Narayan! It is like a lion that catches its prey in one leap!

The fact of the matter is that man is trapped in a web of his own creation... A web of attachments / worries. No object of the world has come and tied him up in bondage.

And then there are some people who say – ‘Swamiji! *This has become a part of our nature!*’

My friend, the point is this... Whatever nature one nurtures, can be done away with as well. What then, really, is bravery, valour, in life? To bow one’s head to, and become a prisoner of one’s *kAmana* (desires/passions), is the way of cowards. Desire is one’s enemy. To fight this enemy, the sword of valour has to be drawn. And then, to gain victory over that enemy is indeed what is true valour.

### **‘svabhAva-vijayam shauryam’**

So, here’s what one can do. If you have become habituated to something – e.g., speaking untruth, or running after your desires, then discard that habit. Victory over one’s nature alone is completeness of *sAdhanA* (spiritual discipline). For that which we consider to be our nature, is not our real nature. It is totally artificial, just a make-believe habit. It is not a nature that has been handed down by *mUla-prakRti*<sup>34</sup>. This is just something that you have, by repeatedly doing, developed as a bad habit in your own life.

Your mind’s habits are bad; the habits of your eyes are bad; the habits of your hands are bad... You can fight them, and gain victory over them.

(Jnan-Vijnan-Yog : p 405-407)

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<sup>31</sup> *vAsanA*: Behavioural tendencies; desires in a seed form, existing in the mind.

<sup>32</sup> *samskAra* - mental impressions, memories, habituations

<sup>33</sup> *Baraat*: A celebratory wedding ritual, where the bridegroom comes in a procession to the venue of the wedding.

<sup>34</sup> *mUla-prakRti*: The root-nature that underlies the whole of Creation, from which evolved the nature of all substances – living and non-living.

## March 03

### Let not the 'anger chaandaal' reside in your heart

Once upon a time, there was a King. One day, in some religious ritual that was being performed in the King's palace, the priest who conducted the ritual committed some error. Upon this, the King became very angry. Even though the priest prayed for forgiveness, the King was adamant and threw out the priest, dismissing him from service. The priest persistently sought the pardon of the King, but the King did not relent.

One day, a ragpicker in the city asked the priest – "Maharaj! Why are you looking so unhappy nowadays?"

The priest replied – "Brother! The King has dismissed me from his service. Having lost my job, I have no way to eke out a living. I have sought his pardon many times, but his anger does not go away at all."

The ragpicker told the priest – "Keep courage. Let me see if I can help."

From that day onwards, the ragpicker went every day to the King's court, pleading for his case to be heard, and justice be done. One day, the King called him and asked him – "What is your complaint?"

The ragpicker replied – "It has come to my notice that my *chaandaal* brother has been here, and has been held by you. I pray to you to please release him."

King – "Why on earth would I retain him?"

Ragpicker – "I have come to know that you have done just that. You are holding him captive."

King – "Who is this brother of yours?"

Ragpicker – "My brother's name is 'anger'".

The King laughed, and asked the ragpicker to explain. The ragpicker narrated the plight of the priest, explaining that the King was holding on to his 'anger' and refusing to pardon the priest. The King then relented, pardoned the priest and employed him back in his service.

The word '*chaandaal*' is derived from the root '*chaDi kOpE*' – 'anger'. Therefore, let not the *chaandaal*-anger reside in your heart. Let *prajna* (True

Wisdom/Discernment) reside there. Why don't you vent your anger on your own anger?

Remember, 'anger' is the worst of culprits. When he rises, the heart burns. The face darkens. The body trembles. Good sense is destroyed.

It is "anger" alone, which commits such a great offense.

(Bhaktiyog : p 185-186)

## March 04

### Without playing this gamble, there is no release

One should walk the *satpatha* (path of righteousness) with faith, in accordance with the guidance of Shastra, Guru, and good people in general. No one can bring down a man who is on the *satpatha*.

Just as one needs money to buy a Saree, one needs 'faith' to walk the path of *paramaarth* (the highest goal of life). Now, it is often said that 'faith' is blind. But ask yourself this. Between a man who conducts himself in accordance with his own reasoning as well as the guidance of others, and another man who acts based on his own reasoning alone, who is the blind one? The person who has blind faith in his own reasoning, and has no concern for what his parents or Guru or other sensible people's advice, is the one who is truly blind.

In the case of a physically blind person searching for the way, if he is given the right direction by someone else, the blind person would heed that advice. Whereas, the man who has blind faith in own reasoning alone, is sure to fall into a ditch. That's because he has no faith in others. You have no faith in any other person; you consider no one in the world as being trustworthy; none whose advice you may accept; then you are in a very helpless situation. It is a situation where you are bound to drown in the sea of *samsara* (the ocean of bondage; endless cycle of birth and death)!

Now, if it is said that it is dangerous to proceed on 'faith' alone, without any definitive knowledge, then know that that is a risk that you have to take. There is no other way. No risk, no gain. If you wish to gain God, then you have to put your own 'individual being' at stake. If you wish to gain the knowledge of oneness of *brahman* (Supreme Reality) and *AtmA* (individual being), then you have to put this whole Creation of the nature of cause and effect, at stake. Without playing this gamble, there is no release.

Consider this. There are airplane mishaps happening every now and then. Car accidents occur every day. Train accidents happen too. That being so, is it not a gamble to travel by these modes? Just because there is a risk, is

one to stop traveling altogether? Fact of the matter is that people buy travel insurance for risk to life, and then undertake air travel. In worldly dealings, you are willing to take so many risks, and if you are not willing to take any risk for attaining God, then how is one to believe that you are sincere in your desire to walk the path of *paramaārtha*? Therefore, if you really wish to walk the path leading to the highest goal of life, you can do that only if you wear the armour of 'faith'.

(Bhaktiyog : p 353-355).



## March 05

### The Jnani kills by questioning; and the Bhakta kills by feeding <sup>35</sup>

Once, Shree Udiya Babaji was running a high fever – some four or five degrees above normal; and it was the night of Shivaratri. But, as far as his devotees were concerned, he was Lord Shiva himself in human guise. So, with Baba sitting on a stool, the devotees offered worship by showering him with heaps and heaps of *Bilwa* leaves, and thereafter they showered flowers, *akshata* (whole grain rice), and sandal paste... And after that they performed *abhisheka* by pouring pot after pot of water on his head, with the view that they were, after all, offering worship to Lord Shiva Himself. Some people tried asking these devotees – “what nonsense are you all doing? Baba is having high fever. How can you do all this?” To which the devotees replied – “Arrey! Baba is Lord Shiva! What discomfort will he have?”

And then Hari Baba came there, stopped all this, and evicted everybody from there. He then made Baba lie down, and covered him with a blanket. And then a man was posted there for the rest of the night, to see to it that Baba remained covered with the blanket; for Baba would make no attempt to put the blanket back on, in case it fell off from his body.

These people who think that a sage is a God with superhuman qualities, end up perpetrating great harm at times. Impacted by the divinity of the sage, they develop great devotion towards Him; that is so... But, in their own hearts, they have little or no empathy towards the physical inconvenience they put the sage to. There is a proverb – “*jnAni bakaai maarein; aur bhakt khavaai maarein*” – “*The Jnani kills by questioning; and the Bhakta kills by feeding.*” The Bhakta wishes that his offerings (eatables etc.,) be consumed by the sage, at least in part (and so they insist on the sage accepting their offerings of food, even if the sage is inconvenienced). And the Jnani wishes to get an answer to one more question!<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> In this title, Maharajshree has quoted a proverb that is expressed in the earthy language of village

wisdom. Here, the terms 'Jnani' and 'Bhakta' have been used humorously. 'Jnani' here refers to those who follow 'Jnana marga', the way of 'Knowledge'. 'Bhakta' here refers to those who follow 'Bhakti Marga', the path of 'Devotion'. However, the reference here is to such seekers who are in the path but are devoid of sensitivity or ripeness.

36 The insensitive seeker of knowledge insists on getting answers to questions from the Guru. And so, he pesters the Guru with one question after another. The Guru, being full of compassion, answers these questions, even if the questions are meaningless, endless, or are posed at some inconvenient time. Due to this, the Guru is forced to speak more and more, ending up being greatly inconvenienced. With this in mind, the proverb says 'Jnani bakaay maarein' (Literally: The Jnani (seeker) kills (the Guru) by making him speak on and on!).

## **A saint's way of life**

There is a Punditji in Giriraj Govardhan, whose name is Gaya Prasad. People have noticed that until the time Shree Sadgurudev Udiya Babaji Maharaj was living in Brindavan, Punditji would never lie down with his feet pointing towards Brindavan. He would sleep with his head in that direction.

And on the occasions that Babaji visited Girirajji, Punditji rarely sat down in his presence; he would remain standing throughout. If at all it was necessary to sit down, he sat in front of Babaji's feet, and never towards the head.

It is now sixteen years since Udiya Babaji has dropped his body. Up until this day, Punditji always mixes some Prasad – food or other article, blessed by Babaji – in every meal he eats. The Prasad given by Babaji has not run out till now. He keeps adding some Prasad to Prasad... This too is a way of life, for a saint.

(Yugal Geet : p 272, 273, 276)

March 06

## Resoluteness of mind

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते।

भगवद्गीता 17.16

Serenity of mind, gentleness, restraint of the mental urge that impels one to speak, control of mind, thorough purity of expression of one's *antaHkaraNa* ( mind/intellect/ego/memory) – all these are spoken of as the austerity of the mind.

***manaHprasAdaH*** – Keeping one's mind stainless, happy, at all times.

***saumyatvam*** – Just as the moon showers its cool, soothing rays on all; in like manner, one should shower the sweetness of one's heart on one and all, at all times. If there happens to be any sourness in your heart, suppress it. Consider this... If you have a guest for dinner, and some of the *roti*-s get burnt, would you not keep these *roti*-s away and give your guest the good *roti*-s alone? In like manner, when you have a mix of sweet and sour emotions in your heart, express your sweetness alone to the people you meet.

***maunam*** – Sri Krishna designates 'silence' as being an 'austerity of the mind'. By silence, 'mental silence' is meant. What this implies is that one should not indulge in unnecessary, useless, thoughts. One should not make it a habit to dwell in useless thoughts of the past, which rise again and again, lacerating the heart. Separation from someone, death of someone, someone's swears, insult by someone... One should silence one's mind from thinking of these and such... Do not nurture thoughts of your own praise – "I have done this; I have done that", etc. For that is the doorway for conceit. Do not think of the defects of others, or think ill of them, for that will nurture emotions of hostility and hate.

One should make one's mind truly dwell on God, and carry on one's life.

Dwelling too much on the future or on the past, are all signs of weakness of the mind. Such should be the resoluteness of the mind that one should squarely face the present moment, and proceed ahead.

***AtmavinigrahaH*** – Keep your mind in check. Do not let it loiter here and there.

***bhAvasamshuddhiH*** – Our heart should harbour no ill-will towards anyone in the world, whosoever he may be. In Mahabharata, it is said – “Only he knows the secrets of Dharma, who harbours no ill-will towards any creature.” The fact is that the one who you think is a sinner, is not a sinner. For no one openly commits a sin; how then do we know what is in his mind? In order to protect oneself from impurity of the mind, it is necessary to have *bhAvasamshuddhi* (purity of heart/thought/intent). But, if we blindly label someone a crook, and wish to throw him out of our village without knowing the true nature of the person, it is wrong. By such behaviour, we end up giving residence to ill-will in our hearts, and defiling our own mind. Therefore, the means for keeping our hearts pure, is by keeping thoughts and intentions good and pure.

(Vibhutiyaog : p 165-168;  
Gita Rasaratnakar: p 587;  
Vyavaharashuddhi : p 85-87)

March 07

## sAttvik kartA – The ‘doer’ pure

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते।

भगवद्गीता 18.26

That agent is said to be *saattvik* who is free from attachment, who speaks no words of vanity, who is endued with steadiness and zeal, and feels no thrill or sadness because of success or failure.

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी – One thing is that there should be no attachment to the ‘doer’ (i.e., one should be a person who has given up attachment (to the notion of Agentship) - *Bhashya* note). He should be of cultured conduct, non-egotistic. He should not entertain self-beliefs such as ‘I am of such and such religion or race’, ‘He is of a different race’ etc. One should not speak egoistically, assert egoism, or even think egotistically.

धृत्युत्साह-समन्वितः – A person should not be of the category that he drives a car, but is not capable of applying brakes. One should always be able to take hold of oneself, exercise self-command, restraint. The lack of this will spoil one’s work. Then again, while one should have fortitude, one should also have enthusiasm. If you do not have zeal, you can accomplish nothing.

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः – In fruition or non-fruition of one’s aim, in success or failure, one should remain unaffected. Such a ‘doer’, is called a ‘*sAttvik kartA*’ – an agent endowed with purity.

Listen... Being unperturbed by success or failure, is a big thing. Once, setting out to meet a friend of mine, I walked many hundreds of miles to his village. I had only 3 Anna-s (20 paise) with me, and I had decided that I would somehow make it to my friend’s home, spending within that amount. I bought *chidwa* (beaten rice) for 1 Anna, and when I felt hungry, I would mix some of it in water, add some salt, and eat that. Indeed, I imagined that when I reach my friend’s house, I would have every kind of gain. But when I

reached there, I found that my friend had gone away to some other town, some two hundred miles away. It was evening time when I reached, and my friend's wife, who was alone at home, welcomed me, saying that my friend spoke very highly of me as one of his very close friends. She quickly took the help of an elderly lady in the neighbouring house to make some food for me, and made some arrangement for my night's stay. As it was late evening, I had no choice but to halt there for the night, although it was not quite the right thing to do. I left early next morning, with no money in my pocket...

When I had set off for my friend's house, my belief was that I would meet my friend, and he would help me with the means for my return journey. But that was not to be. I was wrong in setting off with very little money in hand, solely depending on the success of my attempt to meet my friend. I should have thought about the possibility that my friend may not be home, and what would I do then? In gambling, what would be the option if we fail in our bet? We should weigh the options before we gamble. Likewise, in our worldly dealings, we should carefully weigh the consequences of success or failure, and then commence our activity, with an unperturbed mind. Such a 'doer' is known as a '*sAttvik kartA*'.

(Gita Rasa Ratnakar : p 620, 621)

**March 08**

## **Dharma is but the sustenance of ten things**

Dharmacharya Manu defines Dharma as the sustenance of ten things.

**धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।**

**धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्मलक्षणम् ॥**

*Fortitude, forgiveness, (self) control, non-stealing, purity, restraint of senses, intelligence, learning, truth, non-anger – these ten qualities constitute the characteristics of 'Dharma'.*

1. **धृति** – Fortitude... e.g., remaining calm and courageous even when one has lost all one's wealth... Remaining unperturbed and cheerful when faced with obstacles or distress during the course of some work that one has embarked on. Not slipping from one's duties/responsibilities... Never abandoning one's dharma.
2. **क्षमा** – Forgiveness... Tolerance, when offended by someone. Not giving in to anger, even though the circumstances warrant anger. Not taking revenge on someone who has wronged you. Enduring the pairs of opposites (such as heat and cold). Bearing insults with equanimity. Peacefulness.
3. **दम** – Self-control... Remaining unagitated. To be able to endure the pains that one encounters in a life of ascetism/austerity. Keeping one's mind undisturbed, even when circumstances are such that there is reason to be agitated. Keeping one's mind in check. Not allowing the mind to do as it wishes.
4. **अस्तेय** – Non-stealing... Not having a desire for someone else's property. Not seizing someone else's money etc., unjustly.
5. **शौच** – Purity... Purity of food etc. Cleansing one's body by bathing, applying *mRttika* (Fuller's earth) etc. Use Shastraic methods for keeping one's body pure... Internal and external purity.
6. **इन्द्रियनिग्रह** – Not allowing the senses to run after objects. Keeping



one's sense-organs (eyes etc.,) disengaged from their respective sense-objects. Keeping one's senses under complete control.

7. धी – Intelligence... Having a clear understanding. The ability to clear the doubts of the opposite party. Understanding the true significance of the *Shastra* of *Atmopaasana* (deep contemplation of the Self). Having a clear, unimpaired, intellect.
8. विद्या – Discriminate between Self and non-Self. Being well learned in *Shastra, Atmopaasana*.
9. सत्य – Refrain from speaking falsehoods and useless things. Speaking the truth. Speaking the right facts, as per one's understanding.
10. अक्रोध – Non-anger... Not giving in to anger, even if someone offends you all over again after you have forgiven him once. If anger does rise by chance or destiny, then one should make an effort to restrain it. Remaining non-angry even when there is a genuine reason to be angry. Remaining composed and unaffected in mind, even towards those who wilfully obstruct your achieving what you desire.

In the view of Vyasa, the promulgator of Vedanta-philosophy, Dharma comprises of those actions that are conducive to purification of one's mind/heart. By adherence to Dharma, control is established over one's acting in an unrestrained, perverse, manner. One's *Vasanas* (innate tendencies) remain within acceptable boundaries. One develops faith in the statements of *Veda*. The power of discrimination, for analysing what are the *do's* and *don'ts*, increases.

One's attention turns towards the Self, which is apart from the body. By adherence to Dharma, one gains an understanding of the divine forces (that govern all phenomena). In accordance with the extent of one's adherence to Dharma, one's attention is drawn to *pitRuloka*, *devaloka*, or *brahmaloka*. One gets the conviction that it is God-Almighty who is the bestower of fruits of one's actions. By adhering to Dharma without desiring the fruits of actions, one becomes steadfast in being desire-free. In reality, purity of mind is that where the mind remains alert and desire-free. By purity, one

develops *vairAgya* (dispassion), and by alertness, one develops *vivEka* (discrimination).

(Vyavahar aur Paramarth : p 29-30-31)

**March 09**

## **Whose life is a success?**

Question: The Shastra-s declare that the person who conducts himself unethically, does vile deeds, is punished by God and faces a lot of problems. But then, what we see nowadays is quite the opposite. The success that a man achieves in life is proportional to the extent of his immoral, thieving, deceitful deeds. The question then, is this. Why doesn't God punish such a person?

Answer: My friend! What you speak of as 'great success', is no success in my eyes. If, instead, you say that a person's life is a success if his heart and mind is filled with happiness and peace, then I shall readily agree. But I cannot accept a person's life as being a success, if he is unhappy, agitated – even though he may be ruling a big dominion, have loads of wealth, high position, sons-grandsons etc., and lots of followers and servants.

What is meant is this... A person who earns money by immoral, thieving or deceitful means; it does not matter how big a mound of wealth he accumulates. He can never be truly happy, at heart. Rather, his heart will be afflicted by anxiety – that's absolutely for sure. Someone is distressed that he is not respected, honoured; another is distressed that he does not have some particular thing... Someone else is distressed because of some physical sickness; and another one is pained because he has no progeny. Therefore, to say that the people who commit impropriety are happy at any point of time, does not seem acceptable to my mind. You may well believe that wealth, job, position etc., as being symbols of success... But I do not.

There is a certain gentleman who comes and meets me from time to time. He has mentioned to me that he has a huge horde of wealth stashed away overseas, and that it is so large that even he is unable to accurately say how much money he has. But whenever he comes to me, he is always very sad, often about trivial things. Sometimes it's about some disagreement with his wife; another time it was about his brother taking some stuff from his house; sometime it is about his son not being obedient; or about some

physical ailment that he is suffering from. How much he cries, what do I say.

In reality, 'success' is not some outward adornment. Only a person who is happy and peaceful at heart can be said to be a '*puNyAtmA*' (pure soul), a successful man.

Only such a person can be said to be successful in life, who gives happiness and peace to others; even if it happens to be that he has zero material possessions of his own.

A person whose conduct is immoral and dishonest, will never have any success in his life.

(Hridayakash ke Heere : p 73-74)

## March 10

### Enact a rule, to cause no harm to others

If one sets off to do *sAdhanA* (spiritual practice) while one's mind has no *vairAgya* (dispassion), then that weakness will lead to a quick fall. Let's say that the man decides to establish control over his desires-anger-greed etc., and finding that he is unable to control them, ends up saying – "Let it be. If desire-anger-greed arises, let it arise." Such an attitude is but a manifestation of weakness in one's *sAdhanA*. In true *sAdhanA*, such an attitude is frowned upon.

To begin with, one should give up defects, vices, such as 'hatred towards foes', 'attachment to one's friends', 'infatuation with one's family'. But one is unable to figure out how.

What you need to do is to make a firm resolve that you shall bear no enmity towards anyone – i.e., "we shall not cause distress to anyone". We shall not commit any violence by means of thought, word or deed. We shall cause no harm to anyone.

If we take such a vow – *if we enact a rule to ourselves that we shall cause no harm to others, by thought, word or deed* – then, even if some anger or hate surfaces any time, these will not find a path to express themselves in actuality. Never relax this rule. Do not make light of this, and think – "What harm is there if I abuse someone? What's the big deal if I steal someone's money? What is wrong if I cause harm to someone?"

The point is this. One should block defects/vices from expressing themselves in one's conduct. If one gets infatuated with someone, or falls in love with someone, then, the question is not about 'so what?' The question is this – "By this infatuation/attachment, will we end up committing acts of partiality?" For in such a situation, will we not be weighed down by our feelings of attachment – 'my nephew, my beloved' etc.? If we become infatuated with someone, then we may feel no qualms in harming someone else.

Ok. If one does fall in love, let it be. But then, abandon any impulse to

help your beloved by resorting to dishonest means. Let not matters reach such a state that you are willing to go to any lengths to please your loved one... That you are willing to lie, deceive, commit fraud, cause harm to others... If we become so attached to someone that we start showing favouritism to that person, then our affection has flowed down the wrong path.

Therefore,

1. We should not allow our attachments/aversions to proceed in the wrong paths.
2. The expressions of anger/hate/indiscrimination that comes to one's mind – viz., speaking evil, hearing evil, and thinking evil... Ensure that you never fall a prey to these.

(Vivek Kijiye : p 280,281)

**March 11**

## **The whole of Srimad Bhagavata is only about the Leela of Sri Krishna**

It is not right to say that the Leela of Bhagavan Sri Krishna is described in a specific Canto of Srimad Bhagavata. In fact, the whole of Bhagavata is only about the Leela of Sri Krishna. In some places it is openly seen, and in other places it is not openly perceptible. And even in the latter case, wise people can make out that the matter described pertains to Krishna Leela only – the text does provide indications to this effect. *Rshi*-s, humans, animals, birds, *daitya*-s (demons), *deva*-s (deities), and all objects are stated in various portions of the Bhagavata as being different forms of Bhagavan. By stating thus, a clear indication has been given to *bhAvuk-bhaktas* (worshippers whose hearts are filled with devotion-emotion) and *tattvajnas* (seekers who follow the path of knowledge), whereby they can recognize Sri Krishna even in those parts of Bhagavata where He performs his Leela while keeping his presence and glory a secret.

If, however, we were to categorize the parts of Bhagavata as being *sarasa* (nectarous), *sarasatara* (more nectarous) or *sarasatama* (most nectarous), then it must be stated that the Leela-s of Krishna described in the tenth Canto of Bhagavata are the most nectarous. To get a clear understanding of this subject, it is necessary to realize the subtle difference between *charitra* (deeds / conduct ) and Leela (pastime).

*Charitra* (deeds / conduct) tends to have an objective. And such conduct invariably has a bit of ‘doership’ latent in it, even if it is only a non-real appearance. And whether it is from the perspective of the ‘doer’ or from that of the ‘onlooker’, it comprises of the objective of ‘doing good for the world’.

Whereas, Leela is Lord’s ‘fun’ – his whim or fancy. It is just his pastime. And till today, there is no one born in this world who can, in the manner of the indwelling being in the heart of God, understand the inner workings of

Bhagavan's mind and come out and say that Bhagavan did such-and-such Leela for attaining such-and-such purpose. Bhagavan, even as a 'doer', is actually a non-doer; and even as an 'enjoyer / experiencer', is actually a 'non-enjoyer / non-experiencer'. Without realizing this, people set off to figure out the aim of Bhagavan's Leela, and in that process, they forget the very nature of Bhagavan's Leela. And they think of Bhagavan's Leela as if it is like the activity of a mere mortal. A person who lacks the power of discrimination cannot distinguish between the 'characteristics and ways of mortals' and the 'characteristics and ways of Bhagavan'. Why talk of Bhagavan; such a person may not be able to comprehend the 'ways and characteristics' of another person who is nobler than him. His expectation would be that Bhagavan should behave like human beings, remaining bound within boundaries and conduct Himself in accordance with our own mental framework.

Bhagavan's Leela, which is happening all the time, is but innate and natural to Him. That Leela has no objective, nothing impelling it, no division in terms of past or future, nor is it within the reach of the 'present moment'. The people who understand His Leela, accept it, and enjoy its nectar, become one with Him. And there is no count of the number of people who have attained fulfilment of life's supreme purpose, and those who shall do so in the future, by singing, listening to, and remembering the glory that naturally spreads from the Leela-s of Bhagavan. And then there are those who may make the mistake of thinking of Bhagavan's Leela-s as being impelled by reason of wanting to attain some objective; as being rooted in karmic bondage, and being within the bounds of 'doership' and 'enjoyership'... Such people will, by themselves, fall from their true nature, and get entangled in the 'net of worldliness' (the endless cycle of birth-death, activity/experience).

Bhagavan's Leela has no origin and no end. It is changeless, and of the nature of the Self. In that, there is no activity, no desire, no movement. Nor is there the difference of first, second, third or fourth... It is just Leela... Pure Leela, just as it is...



(Bhagavat Darshan - 1 Bhumika: p 54, 55, 57)

## March 12

### Parabrahma Sri Krishna, the Refuge of all

The subject of enunciation in Srimad Bhagavat is but Paramatma Himself. As regards the name of Paramatma, there is no special insistence... One may call that as Brahma<sup>37</sup>, or as Bhagavan...

What then is the nature of Bhagavan?

To answer this question from the point of view of Bhagavata is a bit difficult. Srimad Bhagavata is a consummate treatise, fullness in itself. In Bhagavata, Bhagavan has been described in different contexts and forms – *nirvishEsha* (without attributes)/*savishEsha* (having attributes), as formless, or as having a form etc. Depending on the seeker's spiritual ripeness (background and eligibility), he can realize God in Bhagavata as having that specific nature or form that is right for him. In actuality, God is of the form of all. And so, He can be realized as being of all natures and forms.

In Srimad Bhagavata, Sri Krishna and Brahman are not two... They are One and the same.

'*brahman*' of Brahma-sutra, '*purushOttama*' of Gita, and '*Sri Krishna*' of Srimad Bhagavata, are all the same *paramavastu* (supreme, transcendent, Reality/Existence).

It has been declared in Srimad Bhagavata that the 'knowers of Reality', call the One, Non-dual reality, which is of the nature of Knowledge, as '*brahman*', '*paramAtmA*' and '*bhagavAn*'. Sri Krishna alone is the Self of all the countless living beings of this universe. And it is He, who, out of his own Maya, manifests Himself as having a form/body, for the sake of the welfare of the world.

In actuality, there is no difference of body and in-dwelling consciousness as far as God is concerned.

The *jeeva* (individual consciousness-being) is distinct from the body; the body is grasped by the *jeeva*, and can be released as well. Whereas in the case of God, the body is not insentient; it is consciousness-filled. In that, there are no distinct aspects such as something which can be

grasped/accepted or something which can be rejected. It is *AtmA* (Self) in-toto.

And just as God's body is non-distinct from God, so also is the case in regard to his qualities. They are His very nature.

The difference between man and God is this. A *jeeva's* qualities are worldly (pertain to *prakRti*), and so a *jeeva* has the choice of renouncing (changing) his qualities. Whereas God's qualities are his very nature, transcending the boundaries of worldliness (they are *aprAkRt*), and they cannot be renounced.

There is one thing quite singular. All this business of God, His forms, and His qualities, are all from the point of view of the *jeeva* alone. Not from God's point of view. God, actually, remains poised in His Self, where all is same. There, there is no distinction such as entities or qualities. It is this very aspect of God (as the One, in-dweller, Self), which is the aim/goal of all Acharyas. As different Acharyas describe this goal in different ways, it looks as if there are differences of opinions amongst them, in places. But if one examines these with the eye of keen inquiry, one finds that all of these views find their harmony in the sole substratum, sole refuge, Parabrahma Sri Krishna.

(Bhagavat Darshan - 1 : Bhumika p 31,34)

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37 In this article, *Brahma* refers to *Brahman*, the Supreme-Transcendent-Reality. It is not to be confused with the four-faced Creator, *Brahma*.

## March 13

### Mohan's Mohani! (The Charmer's charm!)

*(Note: This extract is from a long piece written by Maharajshree. He wrote this as an outpouring of Krishna-love, where he, as a devotee, travels to the time when the charmer, Krishna, walked the earth... He imagines himself finding Krishna, somewhere in a forest...)*

Devotee: "Hey! This is that very charmer, Sri Krishna! He's a bigtime cheat!"

"Ho! What's this? No sooner I called him a cheat, he disappeared! God be blessed. O Krishna, where have you gone? Leaving me in a sorry plight in this forest, you just can't go away like this! Dear me, what's this now? My body has changed! I have now been transformed into a twelve-year-old boy! What am I to do now, all alone in this jungle? Let it be... Let it be just as this super-duper play-actor wishes it to be!"

"Well, well! What do we have here? Who are these two girls coming this way? Let me eavesdrop on their conversation!"

(The devotee listens as the girls converse) –

Sakhee 1: "Oh *sakhee* (*female friend*)! It is the command of the *Yugal-sarkaar* (Divine-Duo, Radha-Krishna), that this boy be inducted into their inner circle. First, may this boy be bathed in the Radhakunda pond and transformed into a *sakhee* (*girl*), and then presented in front of *Yugal-sarkaar*!"

Sakhee 2: "Yes, *sakhee*! That's exactly what we need to do! In actuality, the entirety of *jeeva*-s, every single living creature, is but a manifestation of *parAprakRti* (higher nature)<sup>38</sup> of our love-personified Bhagavan Sri Krishna. And the relationship of every *jeeva* with Krishna is that of a beloved with her Lord-consort. Today, this boy is going to realize his true nature (as a *sakhee* in the inner-circle of Krishna)!"

Sakhee 1: "Yes, my friend! That is indeed true. But then, how does this reconcile with the Vedantic view that '*brahman alone is real*', '*jagat (world) is unreal*', and '*Atma (Self) alone is brahman*'?"

Sakhee 2: “Well, that Vedantic view is very useful for developing dispassion towards the world – to dissociate one’s mind from worldly things. By believing in one’s inherent Shakti, the true nature of the Self, and the unreality of this manifest universe – by constant deliberation about these truths – one dissociates one’s mind from its fixation since time-immemorial to the perceived world. The state that the mind attains upon dissociating from the world and gaining entry into the inner-circle experiences of Bhagavan’s Leela-s – the state where there is no thought of any worldly object or concern – it is this very state that is known as *nirguNa* (devoid of qualities/attributes/properties), *nishkriya* (where there is no activity whatsoever). It is after attaining this state that one enters the Leela of Sri Krishna, the sole Self of all selves. In this category of devotees of the Lord (who first acquired Jnana and then attained supreme Bhakti), are Gods such as Shiva, Narada, and Rshis such as Sanaka, Sanandana etc.. O *sakhee*! You have seen with your own eyes that Lord Shiva Himself, taking the form of a *sakhee*, offers service, alongside us, to our Lord who is worthy of worship. Ok, then... What we need to do now is to take this boy along, as commanded by the Lord.”

Devotee: Holy God! What is this! No sooner did I take a dip in Radhakund, I have become a girl! And to which place are these girls taking me along, so lovingly? Aha! Now, where have I come? Under this large, enchanting *kalpavriksha* (wish-fulfilling tree), amidst the thick overgrowth of *kalpalata* (wish-fulfilling creepers), amidst a host of *sakhee*-s at their service, the *yugal-sarkAr* (Divine-duo), Radha and Krishna, are standing, arms on each other’s shoulders, with a gentle smile playing on their lips. Oh, what am I to do? Should I fall at their feet? I know not what to do... My mind, though, is singing on its own – ‘*O Beloved! I am yours, and yours alone. You may keep me just as you wish!*’

O *sakhees*! What are you saying? That I am supposed to offer *aarati* (light lamps and wave them in worship)? Ok, I shall offer *aarati*, Bhagavan Sri Krishna shall play the flute, and you, my friends, shall play the *Veena*, drums etc., and dance! Blessed me, my life has achieved its purpose!

*aarati yugal-sarkAr kee,*

*nitya nUtan sahaj sushamA-sadan kumAr kee*

*aarati yugal-sarkAr kee!*

*Worship the divine-duo, Radha-Krishna, by waving lamps!*

*Worship that youth, who is ever-new, natural, the abode of beauty!*

*Worship the divine-duo, Radha-Krishna, by waving lamps!*

(Mohan ki Mohani)

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38 parAprakRti: Refer Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 7, verse 5, where this is described as the higher nature of Bhagavan. It is the life-principle by which the entire universe is upheld. It is the sentience, the life-principle, at the heart of every single life-form – be it man, beast, or plant...

## March 14

### That too was a love-filled Leela of my playful Lord!

It is only by *Atmasamarpan* (dedicating one's self to God) or *sharaNAgati* (surrender to God) that a man can be free of identification with doership. If one were to think about it, then, in comparison to the immeasurably great 'doership' of God, the 'doership' of a *jeeva* (individual being) is so lowdown and little that there is no way to actually determine that it even exists. When a *bhakta* gets to see this perspective, then, to begin with, he no longer considers himself to be the 'doer'. Even if some sense of doership happens to arise in him, he surrenders it to the feet of his God. He thinks – 'It is the love of my God that energizes and operates every single atom of the universe. Body, life-breath, sense-organs, mind, intellect, individual-self etc., of every creature in this universe, derive their being from God, and exist in Him. There is no object, no purpose or plan, that is opposed to God's plan. And therefore, the entirety of this cosmos, the entirety of living-beings, the entirety of 'I' – howsoever it has been, it is, and will be in the future – the whole of these have their refuge in God.

*Sharan* (state of surrender / taking asylum) is not an activity, nor is it a mood/emotion. It is the ever-present reality. *Sharan* is a self-evident fact. *The sense of doership and enjoyership that I had was actually a delusion...* And this delusion was the cause of all my sorrow, tears. Well, that too was a love-filled Leela of my Lord. Today, he has placed in front of me, a different aspect of his Leela. Today I saw that there was no 'doer' apart from Him; not even I, the seer. 'He alone is; He alone is' – indeed, even this cannot be said. Once one has this firm belief, then not even a trace of 'sense of doership' remains.

In the case of a *bhakta* – the intellect, mind, life-breath, body etc., are all actuated by God, and becoming One with God's Being, they conduct themselves naturally, in the right manner. A *Jnani's* 'He' (God) becomes 'I' (Self), and a *Bhakta's* 'I' (self) gets swallowed in 'He' (God). What remains is the same.

What then is the difference between a Jnani and a Bhakta?

The final fruit of all *Sadhana* (spiritual practice) is the annulment of all differences. While 'differences' do remain during the time of *Sadhana*, no difference remains upon fruition of *Sadhana*. In the eyes of a Jnani, the physical Cosmos has no 'existence' from the point of view of absolute reality. Therefore, he naturally accepts that his conduct in life is but the playout of his *Prarabdha* (predestiny). Whereas, in the eyes of a Bhakta, the whole of manifest universe is filled with God, and is his Leela. The bhakta sees every single thing as actuated and operated by God. For both, the Jnani as well as for the Bhakta, there remains no personal sense of 'doership'.

The conduct/behaviour of both is actuated by God.

(Sadhana aur Brahmanubhuti : p 71-72)



## March 15

### The doer is not “I”; the doer is Ishvara

In bhakti-bhava, the path of devotion, this (world) is not seen as merely a forest; rather, it is our beloved Lord’s forest. *‘pashya dEvasya kAvyam’* (Look at the poem of the Lord!) – how beautiful is this poem of Ishvara! Ishvara can be known in poetry, and in music as well. The Lord goes by many names, and he declares – *‘The tree am I; the vine am I; I am the insect; the moth am I; the man am I; I am God; All animals am I; the bird am I; I am the boar’*... Just as He has different names in His different incarnations, so does he have various names for the forms that he dons as the entirety of this universe. God, having manifested himself as all these different names and forms, then speaks as those forms. It is He who shines in all colours of creation.

The word ‘Ishvara’ means one who is habituated to rule; one whose nature is to Lord over one and all; one who likes to be the commander; one who, residing inside one and all, rules over one and all.

Now, where does ‘Ishvara’ reside? Let’s see that... *‘IshvaraH sarvabhUtAnAm hriddEshE arjuna tishthati’* (O Arjuna! Ishvara resides in the heart of all creatures! – Bhagavad Gita). Ishvara is seated firmly in the hearts of all! And by His own Maya, He grasps the body, universe etc., and makes them spin. Residing in the hearts of all creatures, it is He who operates our mind/intellect. This being so, a question arises... Since it is God who operates our mind/intellect, it stands to reason that virtues and defects pertain to God alone... How then can a man be subject to *paapa/puNya* (sin and merit)? The answer to this is follows. The same electricity flows to light up a bulb, revolves a fan etc. However, when a bulb or fan or some other electrical appliance is in a state of repair, catches fire, makes a noise etc., then the fault is not because of the electricity; rather, it is due to the particular appliance’s defect.

So, (from a spiritual aspirant’s perspective), give no attention to the ‘bulb’ (gross body), or to the *sUtrAtmA*<sup>39</sup> ‘wire’ (subtle body), or to the

*prajnAtmA*<sup>40</sup> ‘power station’ (causal body). Fix your attention on pure-consciousness alone. Know for yourself what that pure-Jnana substance is... Now that it is understood that there is one way of reaching that Paramatma (Supreme-Self), the question still remains as to how does one get to that path.

Inquire... The reflection of Jnana and Bliss that we feel in the heart/mind, where does it originate? Wherefrom dawns that desire in us to remain immortal? If it were impossible to be deathless, then such a desire would never have arisen in the first place. If it were impossible to attain Jnana (Self-Knowledge), then the desire to attain such knowledge would not have arisen at all. So also, is the case with Ananda. If it were impossible to attain pure, eternal, bliss, then the desire to attain such bliss would not have arisen at all.

But then there is some deathlessness, knowledge, bliss from somewhere that is reflected in our heart/mind. Wherefrom does it originate? Inquire and seek the source of this. ‘That’ source (Ishvara) is not far; there is no delay in finding it; for it is not different from one’s own self. ‘That’ is verily in the very place where one experiences ‘self-radiance’. It is ‘that’ which is enabling all activities to take place. Therefore, the ‘doer’ is not I. The ‘doer’ is Ishvara. It is the doctrine of *shraddhA-bhakti* (path of faith-devotion) that God alone is the doer; God alone is the ‘enjoyer’ (experiencer of fruits of karma). The ‘I’ of man is neither the doer nor the enjoyer.

(Vyavahar Shuddhi : p 130,131)

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<sup>39</sup> *sUtrAtmA*: thread-soul; soul which threads the universe

<sup>40</sup> *prajnAtmA*: intelligence-self

## March 16

### Even the pain given by one's beloved is actually pleasing

The devotee of God surrenders even his cultured-conduct to God. What this means is, that he makes his conduct, thoughts and joys – all three – in accord with God. If a Bhakta's joys are apart from the joys of God, then what kind of Bhakta is he? For in that case, the situation would be akin to the relationship of brothers, and there would be ground for conflict. And so, what is one to do? Well, one should dedicate one's body, i.e., one's existence and activities, to the cause of *satsvaroopā* Bhagavan<sup>41</sup>. One should dedicate one's mind/intellect, i.e., one's Jnana, to God. In other words, one's Jnana should be dissolved in the *cit-svaroopā* Bhagavan<sup>42</sup>. And one should realize that one's happiness is derived from the bliss of the Self<sup>43</sup>. In *Sharanaagati* (absolute surrender to God), one needs to abandon one's personal identification with one's activities, mind/intellect, and happiness.

One of my uncles was a wrestler. During my childhood days, he would sometimes tie my hands and suspend me inside the wall of a well. I had faith in my uncle. And so, I wasn't afraid of this. Rather, I found it quite frolicsome. If we have faith in God in like manner, then we shall never be afflicted by fear or anxiety in any situation we face. Anxiety arises only when some situation is not to our liking. But, when we regard every situation as the script of God, and therefore being only for our good, how can there be any scope for anxiety?

So, what is one to do if anxiety does come anyway? The presence of anxiety is a sign of some flaw/shortcoming in our surrender to God. Anxiety comes about only when our faith in God is incomplete, and we depend on some other agency. E.g., let's say your faith is on wealth. Then, you should use your money in some service to society; use it for charity, philanthropy. If your faith is in your body, then do some Sadhana where physical effort is needed. You should constantly reflect that everything, verily, belongs to

God.

Say, someone takes away some money of ours. While the ordinary view would be that we have incurred a loss, a Bhakta does not see it that way. The money was God's. If God decides to give it to someone else, one should not worry.

What is the source of one's mental anxiety? Indeed, 'anxiety' too has been sent by the Lord. If our mind recognizes this – that the anxiety has been given by God – then, anxiety ceases. Instead, if our mind tries to overcome anxiety on its own strength, anxiety will not cease. It ceases when one realizes that it is impelled by God.

Once, a wealthy merchant sent a man to his accountant, with a letter of recommendation to employ him. The accountant gave him a job. That man was quite unsuitable, and the accountant was very dissatisfied with his work. Even so, the accountant did not terminate his employment as he had been sent by the merchant. In like manner, while 'anxieties' sent by the Lord cause pain, they do remind us of the presence of God-almighty.

Even the pain given by the Beloved is actually pleasing. And therefore, no difficulty, no deficiency, no disaster causes any serious anxiety to a Bhakta, as he sees it as being given by the Lord.

(Narada Bhakti Darshan : p 349,350,351)

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41 God, whose nature is Existence

42 God, whose nature is pure-consciousness

43 God, who is the One Supreme-Self, who is in the hearts of all

## March 17

### God takes the side of those who are devoted to Him

Look here... The story of Vritrasura is a long one. Vritrasura had a long and horrific battle with Indra. And during the course of this battle, at first, Vritrasura vanquished Indra and the Deva-s. The defeated Deva-s, woebegone, went to Bhagavan Vishnu and narrated to him their story of sorrow.

Now, Lord Vishnu is partial towards his devotees. Unlike Dharmaraja, he is non-judgmental about the sins and merits of his devotees. All that he notices is their Bhakti (devotion). He takes the side of only those people who are devoted to Him.

Were God not to be partial towards His devotees, there is no doubt that the *Bhakti-sampradaya* (the tradition of devotion to God) would cease. Were God not to act for the welfare of his devotees, not come to their aid, not rescue them from sin and torment, not free them from the harm and distress – why, indeed, would anyone offer worship to God? So, Bhagavan Vishnu has to display partiality for his devotees. *Daitya*-s (anti-Gods) were well aware of this fact – that Bhagavan Vishnu takes the side of his devotees.

When Vishnu heard of the distress faced by the *Deva*-s, He told Indra to go to Rshi Dadheechi and pray to him, asking him to gift his bones. He told Indra that he should make the Vajra weapon from the bones of the Rshi, and that Vritrasura could be killed by that Vajra alone.

Thus, Dadeechi's bones were used for making the Vajra, and Indra came to the battlefield, Vajra in hand.

A horrific battle followed. During the course of this terrific fight, such a wave of Bhakti arose in the heart of Vritrasura, that such prayerful words emanated from his devotion-filled heart, which were truly amazing.

He began by saying – “*I shall offer my mind to the Lotus-feet of my worshipful deity, Bhagavan Sankarshana<sup>44</sup>, in the same manner as instructed by him. This body will be cut down, and I shall go away to my world. The fact is that God does not bestow the wealth of this world or of the three worlds to*

*his devotee. Because, wealth brings in its wake many defects – enmity/aversion, agitation/distress, worry/anxiety, vanity/arrogance, conflict, pain and stress.”*

Look here. What Vritrasura said is true. Upon deep deliberation, everyone can understand this. Even so, this truth is not easy to digest – that wealth is always accompanied by such a lot of misery.

Vritrasura then went on to say – *“Oh Indra! Such is the nature of our Lord, that when a person makes efforts to attain his objectives of Dharma, or wealth or pleasures – the Lord renders his efforts futile. Oh Indra! Bhagavan will give you glory because of the fact that you are not His own; you are an outsider. And He will snatch away my glory, because I am His own. I recognize well the love that God has for me.”*

Just look... the strength/firmness of Vritrasura’s words... how deep his faith in God is. How good it would be if such firmness, faith arises in the hearts of all people.

(Bhagavatamrut : p 120-122 ;  
Bhagavat Darshan – 1 : Sixth Canto, p 34,35)

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44 *In his earlier birth as King Chitraketu, he had offered worship to Sankarshana (Adi Sesha).*

## March 18

### My mind is throbbing to have your Darshan

There was a fierce battle between Vritrasura and Indra. Even as he fought, prayerful words emanated from Vritrasura's devotion-filled heart, which were truly amazing. He said – "Oh Indra! I know that victory will be yours. But then, the person to whom God gives victory, glory, Kingship etc., is not a recipient of God's compassion. Rather, the people that God considers as His own, are those from whom he snatches everything that they have. This sacred blessing of compassion is available only to those people who are renunciates/devotees. For others it is extremely difficult to get.

Take the case of a baby that is playing with some toy, and refusing to drink milk. Seeing this, the baby's mother may well snatch the toy away, and clasp the baby to her breast. In doing this, she does no wrong. Rather, it is an act of great love. In the same way, when a man starts playing with wealth/property, God snatches his assets, throws it away, and clasps the man to His heart."

Even as he spoke these words while engaged in battle, Vritrasura had a vision of God, standing right in front of him. He spontaneously sang four verses in praise of the Lord, which are well known by the name 'chatushlokee'. Gazing at the face of the Lord, Vritrasura prayed:

*"Lord! I wish to be born again, in order that I may offer service to the servants of the servants of the soles of your lotus-feet! You are the Lord of my life! May my mind always contemplate your virtues; may my voice always speak of your virtues; and may my body be engaged in serving you, O Lord, who are Self of all beings. I seek not heaven, nor the position of Brahma; nor do I seek any supernatural powers; nor liberation. I want you alone; I seek nothing other than you."*

Just see, how so much love has swelled in Vritrasura's heart! He is an Asura (demon) by birth; he stands in the battle-field, ready to kill or be killed... Yet, choked with devotion, he says:

*“O my beloved lotus-eyed Lord! Just as – when a mother bird goes in search of food, its new born babies, featherless, lie around helplessly in the nest, waiting for the mother to come; just as – when a cow goes into the jungle to graze, its calves, bleating in hunger, wait for the mother to come and give them milk; just as – when her beloved husband has gone overseas, the wife, suffering pangs of separation, remains at home, anxious, awaiting his return... In the same manner, my mind is throbbing to have your darshan, O Lord!”*

*And then he says: “O Lord! I do not desire liberation! What I do desire is this... That, based on my karma, wherever I may be, from whichever womb I may be born, I should always have the friendship of those who are devoted to you!”*

It may be noted that Goswami Tulasidas has said just the same thing:

**जेहिं-जेहिं जोनि करम बस भ्रमहीं। तहँ तहँ ईसु देउ यह हमहीं॥**

**सेवक हम स्वामी सियनाहू। होउ नात यह ओर निबाहू॥**

*Grant us this wish O Lord! From whichever creature’s womb we may be born, wandering around in the grips of Karma; in every birth, always your servants, may we be; and you, O Lord of Sita, ever our Master. And may this relationship forever prevail!*

*And in conclusion, Vritrasura prays – “O Lord! Towards this body of mine, or to my children, wife or home – may I never be attached. May your Maya never cast its net on me.”*

(Bhagavat Darshan – 1 : Sixth Canto, p 35;  
Bhagavatmrut – p 122,123)



**March 19**

**The beauty/shine of Jnana is in this; that it be  
sweetened with Bhakti**

The great uniqueness of Srimad Bhagavata is in this – that in this treatise, *naishkarmya* (the state of actionlessness; where doership is absent) has been discovered/revealed as that state which is associated with (the combination of) *Jnana* (knowledge), *Vairagya* (dispassion / non-attachment), and *Bhakti* (devotion). Here and there in Bhagavata, one sees that those who practice or attain Jnana by taking a path that is devoid of Bhakti are roundly censured.

Bhagavata is the wealth of Vaishnavas, and the treasure of Knowledge for Paramahamsas (Jnani-s). In this book, it is clearly enunciated that devotion to Ishvara brings about *vairAgya* (dispassion) towards all objects that appear to be distinct/different from Ishvara, and one's experience of *Ishvara-tattva* (Supreme-reality which manifests as God) progressively increases. In other words, Vairagya is useful in getting a clear understanding of '*padArtha*' ('*tat*' and '*tvam*' *padArtha* of the Mahavakya '*tat tvam asi*', whereby one realizes the identity of Jeevatma and Paramatma); and experience Jnana within (as the Self). In this manner, Bhakti is the mother of both types of spiritual practices, *bahiranga* (external) and *antaranga* (internal), which enable one to attain Self-Knowledge. Just as when we eat, we attain increasing happiness, health, and cessation of hunger with every bit of food that we consume – so also, with every emotion/expression of Bhakti, one attains increasing love towards Paramatma, dispassion towards the world of objects, and this bhakti becomes the enabler of *Brahmanubhuti* (experience of Brahman, the Supreme-Reality, *sat-cit-ananda*, Self).

This Paramahamsa-samhita (Srimad Bhagavatam) has spoken of the supreme greatness of Bhakti-bhava. Starting from the attainment of worldly ends and going all the way up to attainment of *paramArtha-vastu* (that which is the supreme goal of life), Bhakti as a means of achieving these goals

has been accepted. Verse 2.3.10 of Srimad Bhagavatam says:

**अकामः सर्वकामो वा मोक्षकाम उदारधीः ।**

**तीव्रेण भक्तियोगेन यजेत पुरुषं परम् ॥**

*Whether he be free of desires, or filled with all desires, or desire liberation alone; the wise man should offer worship to Bhagavan, the Supreme-Lord, alone, intensely, with a heart filled with Bhakti.*

It has been said in Srimad Bhagavatam that while Jeevanmukta-s<sup>45</sup> may be many, those among them who are intensely devoted to Narayana are far and few. As Bhakti is a *bhagavadAkAr-vRtti* (thought focused on God alone), it does not allow the karma-born pleasures and pains to impact the devotee. It also purifies the actions that one undertakes during the course of one's worldly dealings, as also the future effects of these actions. It augments one's *vairAgya* (dispassion) and six treasures<sup>46</sup> – *shama-dama* etc. It brings clarity in analysis and understanding of '*padArtha*' ('*tat*' and '*tvam*' *padArtha* of the Mahavakya '*tat tvam asi*'). And it abides as infinite satisfaction, when, upon dawn of *vidyA* (Self-knowledge), *avidyA* (ignorance) is removed.

This amazement in the form of Bhakti renders all spiritual-paths – *Dharma, Kriyayoga, Ashtangayoga, Buddhiyoga* etc., – conducive to gaining experience of Paramatma... It corrects the seeker from his course of seeking fruits such as heaven etc., and turns him towards Paramatma (i.e., towards Self-Realization). This enunciation of this truth is a special distinction belonging to Srimad Bhagavatam.

(Bhagavat Darshan : Bhumika, p 3, 4, 14)

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<sup>45</sup> Jeevanmukta : One who has attained liberation, even while he is alive

<sup>46</sup> Shatsampatti : Six treasures - *shama, dama, uparati, titikShA, shraddhA, samAdhAna* (control of mind; control of senses; disengaging from sensual or worldly actions; forbearance/endurance; unwavering faith; one-pointed concentration)

## March 20

### The way to attain Paramatma, sitting at home

Yudhishtira said to sage Narada – “Lord! Real happiness is seen in *Avadhuta*-s alone! How does it matter that I am an Emperor? Please tell me some means, some way, by which we may attain the happiness, the sheer pleasure, that *avadhuta*-s enjoy.”

Narada replied – “All right! I shall tell you a way by which a man may well live at home, and also attain the bliss of Paramatma.”

Now, this concept is quite appealing... That a person sits at home and also attains God. But the point to ask yourself is this... Is it that you desire to attain God, but are not willing to give up anything from your side? If that is so, then you should know that God is not a fool. Yudhishtira did want to realize the bliss of Paramatma while remaining at home, but his whole life was offered to the feet of God.

Narada continues – “O Yudhishtira! Let the person who desires to attain God at home continue to perform his duties, while offering them as a service to God. Also, he should never abandon *satsang* – the company of noble people. He should listen to the stories of God, His Leela etc., with the conviction that this is *amrita* (nectar that grants immortality). By means of *satsang*, he should renounce all attachment to worldly objects and relations. While remaining detached at heart, he should remain outwardly attached. He may accept worldly things only to the extent that he actually needs.

Remember, that caught in the rapid flow of ‘Time’, man’s worldly relationships are all dropping away on their own.

Never insist on anything. Never be adamant... Have no attachment to kith and kin at home – wife, son, or others. (If they want something done) Just do as they say. For in doing so, one’s own *Vasana*-s (latent desires) do not come into play. Therefore, have the attitude that whatever your home folks say is quite ok. Let it be.

Know that a man can claim ownership of only that much wealth as is needed for maintaining his life. What is meant by this is that as far as

material objects or wealth is concerned, you can be its trustee; you can be its servant; but you cannot be its owner. It cannot become your own. Just as all living beings are the progeny of God, all material objects too belong to Him.

You should assign your wife too, to the service of society. For, one tends to have tremendous attachment and sense of ownership as regards one's wife. O Yudhishtira! One day, this physical body is bound to become vermin, dung, or ash. This body is extremely lowly; mere chaff. Where indeed is our infinite Self, and where is this business of finding delight in such a lowly body, arrogating ownership of wife, kin etc. How vast the Self is, covering even the whole of sky and space.

Oh Yudhishtira! A householder should perform Yajna first, offer food to others, and have food himself only after that. And whatever food remains after one has finished eating is not to be considered as one's own.

If one acts in this manner, then one attains the status of an *Avadhuta*, even while remaining in family and home.

(Bhagavat Darshan - 1 : Seventh canto, p 52 to 54)

# March 21

## Bhagavat-stuti is a great form of Sadhana

The simple meaning of the word '*stuti*' is 'praise'. It is often said that '*stuti*'-s should necessarily have '*arthavaada*' (eulogy; exaggerated reverence). But this is applicable only to those *stuti*-s that are in praise of humans or *devata*-s (lesser deities/divinities), and is not applicable to the *stuti* of *Paramatma* (Supreme Omnipresent Omnipotent Omniscient Self). As far as *devata*-s or humans are concerned, their qualities, power, strength, deeds etc., are limited; and therefore, when there is a need to make them happy, one sings paeans about them, with expressions of exaggerated praise. Sometimes they are even praised as God Supreme. The men and deities who are so praised, are pleased by these paeans, and grant boons, rewards etc., to the singer of the *stuti*.

However, as far as God is concerned, there is no limitation to his virtues. His glory, sweetness, activities etc., are all infinite. What to speak of fully describing his glory, one cannot describe even a fraction of it. That being so, when one cannot describe even a fraction of his greatness, it is indeed impossible that His praise can ever be overstated. With this perspective in view, devotees voicing *stuti* become silent, after confessing – “Lord! It is not possible to have a measure of your greatness, and therefore, your *stuti* is not possible!” Even so, from a Bhakta’s own perspective, he cannot help praising God.

To the extent a person’s intellect can imagine  
the greatness of God’s divine attributes  
such as His glory, sweetness etc.;

To the extent one’s intellect can measure the greatness of God;  
To the extent one’s words can express one’s depth of devotion;  
–

To that extent  
Is one’s assessment of God’s nature and qualities,  
And one describes them accordingly.

Just as a child's enthusiastic efforts at doing something brings happiness to elders as well as to the child; in like manner, God, with great affection, is always pleased with the flight of imagination of his devotee, and his sweet words of praise. And the devotee too, by thinking and expressing the glory of God to the extent of his ability, experiences peace and happiness.

At the same time, it is indeed worth remembering that whatever it is that one thinks in connection with God, it shall always be real and true, as that would surely pertain to a part of God's actual greatness. For God is in the form of All (He is the superset). Thus, even if the *stuti* of God is miniscule when measured against the actual greatness of God, from the Bhakta's perspective the *stuti* surely pertains to God-Supreme; of that there is no doubt.

*Stuti* leads to *Atmashuddhi* (the cleansing of one's heart/mind). *Stuti* leads to realization of God's reality. *Stuti* leads to firm faith in Sadhana (spiritual practice) and about the nature of God. What happens is this... By *stuti*, a devotee's mind, constantly dwelling on God's divine qualities / form/ Leela etc., becomes filled with thoughts of God alone. And, at end, by this very means, one attains God realization. For this very reason, the *stuti* of God is very useful in the life of man, and is a great form of Sadhana.

(Bhagavat Darshan – 1 : Bhumika, p 17-18)

## March 22

### Upon attaining Paramatma, all differences dissolve

In different contexts of Srimad Bhagavatam, wherever (the path of) Jnana (Knowledge) is spoken of, special emphasis is given to *shravaNa*, *manana* and *nididhyaasana*, which are the internal means of Jnana sadhana. Even so, in declarations such as '*tatrOpAya-sahasrANAm*'<sup>47</sup>, *Bhakti* (path of devotion) alone has been given prime importance.

This emphasis on *Bhakti* is not just as a *Sadhana* (method of spiritual practice). For, when *Bhakti* becomes established in one's nature, then, in the same manner as other virtues like *advEsha* (non-maliciousness) etc<sup>48</sup>, *Bhakti* remains in the hearts of *Jeevan-muktas* (liberated beings) even after attainment of *tattvajnana* (Knowledge of Supreme-Reality), bringing with it a unique relish of bliss. It has been said in Srimad Bhagavatam that while *Jeevanmukta-s*<sup>49</sup> may be many, those among them who are intensely devoted to Narayana are far and few.

*Advaitasiddhi-kaara*<sup>50</sup> Sri Madhusudhana Saraswati, in his book '*Bhakti Rasayana*', has associated *Bhakti* of the forms of *Sadhana* and *Sadhya* with different types of devotees based on what is appropriate for them<sup>51</sup>. He says that *Sadhana-bhakti* is a path that all devotees have to necessarily traverse. Sincere practice of *Sadhana-bhakti* guides different devotees to different paths based on that which is suitable for their spiritual progress.

Eligible spiritual aspirants are of two types – those who are soft hearted and others who are hard of heart.

Soft-hearted devotees are those whose hearts melt upon hearing accounts of Bhagavan's Leela, compassion, pure-heartedness etc. Their eyes stream tears, voice chokes, hair stands on end. For such devotees, the practice of *sadhana bhakti* results in the dawn of *sadhya-bhakti*. In the words of Srimad Bhagavatam – '*bhaktyA sanjAtayA bhaktyA*' (by the *bhakti* that is born of *bhakti*), what is said is – that by the practice of *Sadhana-bhakti* dawns *Premabhakti* (devotion of the form of pure love), whereby the devotee realizes the *Paramatma* (God, the Supreme-Self), attains the highest

purpose of life, and begins to see God everywhere, as every which form, at all times.

Hard-hearted devotees, by the practice of Sadhana bhakti, gradually attain purity of heart. Thereafter, by following the path of *shravaNa*, *manana*, *nidhidhyaasana*, they attain Self-Realization, the highest purpose of life. In their eyes, the body and the world do not really exist. They remain firmly poised in the form of Pure-Consciousness at all times.

In actual fact, there is no difference between *Bhakti* (Devotion) and *Jnana* (Knowledge). The Shashtra-s have said that the culmination of Bhakti is in Jnana, and the culmination of Jnana is in Bhakti. Wherever any treatise speaks of Bhakti as being greater than Jnana, what is meant by 'Jnana' is '*parOksha jnAna*' (Indirect knowledge)<sup>52</sup>; and wherever Jnana is spoken of as being greater than Bhakti, what is meant by 'Bhakti' is '*sAdhanA bhakti*'. In culmination, *parAbhakti* (Supreme Bhakti) and *paramajnAna* (Supreme Knowledge) are one and the same in substance.

Questions such as 'Is Paramatma *saguNa* (with attributes) or *nirguNa* (without attributes)?'; is He formless or does he have form?' etc., are resolved upon realization of God, when all such differences get dissolved. Those people who constantly dwell on sense-objects, do not give up attachment to them, and make no effort to dwell/meditate on God; (such people) by endeavouring to argue and establish the nature of God as being *saguNa* / *nirguNa* etc., only end up roaming around in a world of imagination, going in circles within the limitations of intellection.

(Bhagavat Darshan – 1 : Bhumika, p 4, 14, 15, 16)

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<sup>47</sup> Refer Verse 7.7.29 *Srimad Bhagavata* – “Of all the thousands of processes [possible], that method, as offered by the *bhâgavata* [the Lord, the pure devotee and the book], is the one to quickly bring about the love for the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (Translation source: <http://www.srimadbhagavatam.org/>)

<sup>48</sup> Refer *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 12, verses 13 to 20

<sup>49</sup> *Jeevanmukta* : One who has attained liberation, even while he is alive

<sup>50</sup> *Advaitasiddhikaara* : Sri Madhusudhana Saraswati, the author of the treatise '*Advaitasiddhi*'

<sup>51</sup> *Sadhana bhakti* refers to bhakti as a path; i.e., devotion that is practiced as a means of attaining God realization. *Sadhya Bhakti* is the bhakti that is the goal; i.e., the surging devotion experienced naturally upon attaining the goal of God-Realization or *tattvajnana* - knowledge of Supreme-



*Reality.*

52 *Paroksha Jnana : Indirect knowledge; mental knowledge; knowledge as realized from books, or from others. Knowledge that is not directly experienced as one's own Self.*

## March 23

### Satguru and Shishya

When a person's goodness and purity of heart, nurtured and ingrained across many lives, comes to such a state that God's glance of grace falls upon that; then the person develops a longing in his heart to practice Sadhana in order to attain the highest goal of life, namely, realization of Paramatma (God , Supreme-Self). Sadhana is nothing but the means of bridging the distance between *Sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) and *Sadhya* (spiritual goal). And for this Sadhana, one should have such faith as is vaster than the sky, deeper than the sea, heavier than the Sumeru mountain, and harder than diamond. But how is one to attain such faith in Sadhana? It is for this that the all-knowing Sadguru is needed, who alone is qualified to instruct one on Sadhana.

Sadguru is but the tangible grace of that which is spoken of as *paramArtha-tattva* (Absolute Reality) or Bhagavan (God). By the remembrance of the name of the Sadguru, or by his darshan (by seeing him), or just by conversing with him, one feels peace coursing through one's veins; the thirst of a long time gets quenched, and a sense of contentment is felt even in circumstances of discontent. He, the Sadguru, for whom one has waited with great expectation; he, without whom one has been stumbling around like a blind person; upon meeting that sadguru, it is not possible that one's heart does not find cooling solace.

The Shashtra-s have elaborately described the glory of the sadguru, and the qualities of a good disciple. In precis, what one should understand is this. Without a sadguru, a disciple can never know the secrets of *upAsanaA-mArga* (the path of devotion and meditation), nor will the obstacles in that path get cleared. Know, that in Guru's happiness lies the disciple's fulfilment. The gross body of the Guru, which you see, is not He. The human form of His that you see, is not He. He is, actually, Pure Consciousness. Other than Pure-Consciousness, who or what is capable of tearing down the veil of *ajnAna* (ignorance) and make the *jeeva* (individual seeker) attain Self-

## Realization!

Only a disciple realizes the gloriousness of his Guru, and that too only when the Guru reveals his true form to him. To other people, the Guru remains unknown, for he keeps his real self a secret.

The disciple knows and avers – *“My Guru is omnipresent. He is the sole knower of every secret about me and of the whole cosmos. He is all-powerful; even the highest of deities derive their respective strengths from Him, by which they are able to carry on with their respective duties. He has boundless compassion; overpowered by that compassion alone has he laid out elaborately the Leela-s of rescuing Jeeva-s who are lost in the ocean of worldliness. In the form of God, it is He alone who exists. All the other Guru-s in this world, are all but the Leela-forms of my Sadguru. Everywhere, all that is manifest is but his Jnana, his mercy. Indeed, I am supremely blessed to have attained Him!”*. Such a view of a disciple is not only virtuous, conducive for his progress, it is actually ‘auspiciousness’ itself. Even if one does not have the requisite qualifications to become a disciple, the Guru vouchsafes him the required eligibility when the person sincerely seeks His refuge. Therefore, people who entertain in their hearts a desire for attaining God, and are ready to perform Sadhana sincerely, should first seek the refuge of the Sadguru. That is their foremost duty.

(Bhakti Sarvasva : p 194-201)

## March 24

### Self-Knowledge : Q & A

Once, Sri Karpatri Ji and Sri Krishnabodhashram Ji came and met Sri Udiya Baba Ji after fixing an appointment to speak to him in private. As it happened, I too was present during the meeting. The topic in question was this – ‘*Many are the religious rituals performed, in great scale. E.g., Yajna-s<sup>53</sup> are performed where a crore of oblations are made, or a laksha chandi, where the Chandi (Devi Mahatmyam) is chanted 100,000 times. Even so, as far as the objective of safeguarding Dharma is concerned, these rituals do not result in any special success. Why is that?*’

Baba replied – “The times that we are living in, is opposed to this. We are now in Kali era. And the times that we live in has its own bearing (on the outcome of Dharmic activities). In the face of the high objective that is being aimed for, the rituals performed are indeed miniscule. In large scale rituals, shortcomings do happen. Whether it be the Yajamana (the chief patron)<sup>54</sup>, Acharya or Vidwan – none is able to follow all the Vedic injunctions properly and completely. *Anna* (food offerings) and *dhana* (money used in performance of a Yajna) do not have the requisite purity. Even with such shortcomings, the performance of the Yajna does yield results. Indeed, the decline of dharma is slowed down. (Therefore, the effort is not entirely fruitless). If one sees a bullock cart cartwheeling and heading for a ditch, one should, surely, try to stop it. However, while we need to put in the effort, the result is bestowed by God.

(A disciple put a question to Sri Karpatri Ji)

Question: In a Jnani’s life, do shortcomings such as *Kaama* (desire /lust) and *Krodha* (anger) remain or not?

To this question, Sri Karpatri Ji gave the following explanation. It is indeed true that *avidyA nivRtti* (removal of erroneous knowledge)<sup>55</sup> does come about as a result of realization of the *akhanDa*<sup>56</sup> (Self) by means of the teachings of Upanishad *Mahavakya*. But then, (even for a Jnani) till the physical body remains, it is subject to conditions of youth, old age, illness

etc. One is also subject to the states of dreams, deep sleep etc.

The attainment of the knowledge of *sAkshi*, the seer-Self, does not result in the *antahkaraNa* (the mental faculty) changing, or the perception of objects becoming any different (from that of an *ajnAni*). All that Brahma-Jnana (Knowledge of Brahma/Self) does is to remove the delusion (of the world having a real, distinct, existence). It does not eliminate the mental perception (of the world). *Antahkarana*, being but a reflection that is manifested by the seer-Self, may well have *vikAra* (passions / agitations / emotions / disorder) even after attainment of *tattva-jnAna* (Self-Knowledge). These disorders, however, do not affect the state of *mukti* (emancipation / liberation) of the *tattva-jnAni* (Self-Realized sage). For the Self is ever-*mukta*<sup>57</sup> in nature. *The avidyA-nivRtti* (cessation of delusion) is merely an indicative expression.

And so, for the welfare of the society, it is good for one to keep in mind that even a *tattva-jnAni* can have passions/disorders; one should not have blind-faith, and end up being deceived, fooling oneself that a Jnani is *nirvikAra* (devoid of any disorder). By being cautious and discerning, one's Guru-parampara is protected from ills. Rather, one gains respect in the society for being frank and truthful.

(Paavan Prasang : p 32, 41)

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<sup>53</sup> *Yajna*: Vedic ritual, where certain oblations are made into the sacred fire, accompanied by the chanting of specific mantra-s.

<sup>54</sup> *Yajamana* is the patron, on whose behalf a religious ritual or a yajna is performed

<sup>55</sup> *avidyA nivRtti* : Cessation of the false knowledge that mistakes the Self to be the body-senses etc.

<sup>56</sup> *akhanDa* : The Supreme Reality, Self, undivided by time, space or matter.

<sup>57</sup> In terms of absolute reality, the Self is never the subject of any bondage. It is ever free.

## March 25

### A burning question in the heart of a *jijnAsu*<sup>58</sup>

A *jijnAsu*'s (seeker's) *ajnAna* (lack of Self-knowledge) cannot be removed by the *chintan* (meditation/ deliberation / inquiry) performed by any second person. It is only one's own contemplations/inquiry that progressively wears down the veil of *ajnAna*. Now, how does one attain the realization of such 'Truth' that cannot never be belied / contradicted? This is a burning question in the heart of a *jijnAsu*.

Any *jijnAsu*, as he proceeds to inquire into the 'Truth', finds himself facing many paths of inquiry and many forms of 'truth'. Resolving different questions, the seeker embarks on many unknown paths, and at times takes '*asatya*' (the false) to be '*satya*' (true). In order to be free of such confusions and problems, it is advisable that you first understand and imbibe the approaches and methods that have been followed by Rshi-s and Muni-s of yore.

For purity and fruitfulness of inquiry, the following are absolutely necessary:

1. Purity of conduct in one's life.
2. Knowledge of Shastric paths.
3. Following the paths that have been taken by *jijnAsu*-s of yore.

Shastra-s declare only such seekers as being eligible to hear the teachings of Vedanta, who have the following pre-requisites.

- *Viveka* (sense of discernment);
- *Vairagya* (non-attachment);
- *Shat-sampatti* - The six great virtues, viz., *shama* (control of mind), *dama* (control of senses), *uparati* (inward focus; turning the attention to the Self), *titiksha* (forbearance, tolerance), *shraddha* (faith), and *samadhana* (single-pointed focus)

- Intense desire for realization of ‘*satya*’ (Eternal-Truth).

For the realization of ‘*satya*’, there are two ways of studying Shastra.

- Scholarly way: Where one learns from scholars who are learned in Shastra.
- Spiritual path: Where a seeker, who has a burning desire to attain liberation, surrenders at the feet of a Guru, and hears and absorbs the Shastra-s that reveal the true nature of Atma, Brahma and their oneness.

Such a seeker, who has a desire for knowledge and liberation, should understand that the Shastra-s are of two kinds.

1. Shastra-s that explain the methods of generating ‘*apoorva*’<sup>59</sup> fruits. E.g., *Yajna*, *yaaga* etc. By such methods (religious rites), one attains limited fruits that are obtainable as a consequence of ‘effort’. For a seeker of Supreme-Knowledge, the only utility of such methods is that it reveals to the performer of the rite the perishable nature of the fruits desired for, whereby the seeker of Truth develops *vairAgya* (non-attachment) towards the path (of *karma*). He begins to realize that such artificial products (of *karma*) end up perishing some time or the other. They have a limit.
2. The other kind of Shastra-s are those that remove the seeming-veil of ignorance, which seemingly covers the ever-present, unchangeable, *paramArtha-vastu* (Supreme Truth, Highest Reality, Eternal Existence; the Self); and thereby seemingly bestow the seeker the knowledge that is actually ever known, ever obtained (being his very Self). Proper guidance on this path can be got only if the seeker approaches a sage-*sadguru* for this purpose, and undertakes sincere *shravaNa-manana* (learning and contemplating) of Vedanta-shastra.

Even a momentary flash of brilliance of ‘*satya*’ (Supreme-Reality) is

greater, more glorious, than the all the happiness of past-present-future, of all three worlds.

(Paavan Prasang: p 149-151)



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58 *jijnAsu: A seeker of knowledge; a spiritual aspirant*

59 *Apoorva: a power that did not exist before the activity/ritual was performed, and which was generated by the act, and results in a remote or unforeseen consequence of that act (e.g., a specific religious rite performed, results in apoorva that makes the performer of the act attain heaven after his death) .*

## March 26

### The way of Vairagya is very distinctive!

The Sadguru takes his disciple forward, very gently, with great love, slow and steady. He doesn't tick off his disciple, saying – 'You are incapable'... He doesn't tell him – 'You will never be able to comprehend'... He doesn't tell him – "Your mind is impure, depraved" ... On the contrary, he is sympathetic to his disciple, encouraging him at every step, giving him gentle assurance, leading him forward with great affection.

*[Note: The following paragraphs relate to the episode of Nachiketa, as described in Kathopanishad. The context here is this. Yamaraja has offered Nachiketa three boons. As the third boon, Nachiketa asks Yamaraja, as a disciple asking his Guru, to reveal to him the secret of death; as to what happens to a person after death; does he continue to exist in some form or not. Yamaraja is very reluctant to reveal this secret. Instead, he offers all kinds of wealth and pleasures. Nachiketa rejects these, pointing out that these are filled with defects, and insists on getting an answer to his question.]*

Yamaraja is all praise for his disciple. He says – "Bravo! You have, by deep contemplation and discerning inquiry, understood the harmfulness of sense-objects and their enjoyment; and with the aim of attaining true knowledge of the Self, you have renounced all objects and enjoyments."

By these words, the disciple's heart is filled with energy and enthusiasm.

Here, two things have happened. One, the seeker has come, having voluntarily become a *virakta* (non-attached to worldly objects and enjoyments). Even so, such seekers may proclaim – 'I have renounced! I have renounced'; and when someone offers something, they accept it, with the thought that – 'I did not desire to have this. So, its ok to accept it.' Here, in the case of Nachiketa, that is not the case. Here, Yamaraja is offering all kinds of wealth and enjoyments, and Nachiketa is renouncing these (as well).

Our knowers of ethics and philosophy tell us – 'Let us state this to you

with all clarity. The paths are only two. The first one, which is full of dangers and debacles, is when the person has no control over his sense-organs and enjoyments. This path has typhoons, oceans, rivers; this path has ups and downs in terrain; it has wild animals, snakes, lions... it is a path of much pain.

The second path is one where the person gains victory over his sense-organs. This is the way of good fortune, prosperity, happiness.

Now – ‘*yEnEshtham tena gamyataam*’ – you may take the path that appeals to you. You may entangle yourself in the path of dangers and debacles, if that’s what pleases you. Or take the path of prosperity and progress, if that’s your wish...Do as you please.

In this manner, the path of *Atmajnana* (Self-Knowledge), *Paramananda* ( Supreme-Bliss), *Paramasukha* (Greatest happiness; Supreme peace), *Amritatva* (Deathlessness) is the path of *Brahma-Vidya*. Other paths are small-time, fractured, lowly; by traversing which, a man gets entangled in worldly sensual-engagements. And then there are a few people who come and say – “Maharaj! We have come, with a great sense of Vairagya (non-attachment), for attaining Jnana.” On being asked how they happened to attain Vairagya, they say that they had a quarrel at home, with their wife, or some such thing.

Well, to develop dispassion towards something unpleasant is quite natural. But is that Vairagya? No. One may develop hatred, aversion, or a sense of guilt etc. But that is not Vairagya. Vairagya is when one develops it towards that which one finds pleasing, one loves... Towards some worldly object / experience which gives happiness, pleasure... And one develops Vairagya as a result of deep contemplation about the temporariness, inertness, sorrowfulness of such objects, experiences.

Thus, the way of Vairagya is very distinctive... Here, there is no hatred, no guilt, no aversion...Here, there is the slackening of attachments and aversions, whereby the mind’s urge to grasp and experience worldly fragments is pacified, and there dawns the competence to reach out and grasp the infinite, unbounded, limitation-free...

## March 27

### I am Sat-Cit-Ananda, Non-dual!

It is stated in Chandogya Upanishad that this whole Creation is in the grips of death. Such being the case, what is there to be afraid of, and why? Why should you allow yourself to be under the control of your *Vasana-s*<sup>60</sup>? Why are you quitting the path of *Satya*? For what reason are you performing *anyAya*<sup>61</sup>? This Creation just carries on, as always.

How, indeed, is death to be known, in real? It is thus. When '*pramAda*' (carelessness / inattentiveness / distraction) comes into one's life; and one neglects one's duties, keeps away from *satsang*; then, know that death is dancing above one's head. Without being possessed by the giddiness of death, no one abandons the path of virtue.

Firstly, have a look at the 'seen' world, and realize that there is no happiness there. It is we who fill the 'seen' object with pleasure or happiness. In food, Indians get much pleasure by flavours of chillies and spices, whereas foreigners find it very difficult if they have to eat a meal that has a lot of chilly, spice or oil. Where does our taste reside? Are we really boxed in by the world? Actually, it is by giving too much importance to our 'taste' that we end being entangled.

The fact of the matter is that the world has no object that gives us real happiness. It is we who infuse that object with our own happiness, and thereby experience happiness. Just like tea, which is not sweet by itself, but is made sweet by adding some sugar. In the same manner, the objects in this world have no sweetness; it is we who infuse it with our *Vasana-s* (tastes) and make it sweet. So, understand this clearly. In no object of this world is there any inherent sweetness of happiness. That sweetness is imbued by our *Atma* (Self).

The second thing to realize is that no object comes on its own and ensnares us. It is we who grasp it and make it stick to our person. The object is not self-existent, self-radiant. We are self-existence, self-radiance. Even so, we end up bearing the burden of external objects on our heads. The fact

is that we are grasping the tree and proclaiming that the tree has caught hold of us.

Once, there was some black object floating down a river. Two friends were roaming by the river. Seeing that object, they thought that it was a blanket, floating downstream. One of the friends dived into the river, swam to the object and caught hold of it. And upon catching it he realized that it was no blanket; it was a bear. Now, the bear caught hold of this chap. The friend who was standing on the shore, seeing his friend being swept along the river, shouted to him – “Bro! Where are you going? If you are unable to get the blanket, just leave it! Come back.” His friend replied – “I haven’t caught the blanket. The blanket has caught me and is dragging me along!” So there... He had gone on his own volition to catch hold of it, and instead had got caught himself.

The third thing is this. Do notice that no object in this world is eternal / real.

When we put all these three together, what emerges is this. The ‘seen’ world of objects is not *sat-cit-ananda*; world is not *Ananda*, bliss; world is not self-radiant consciousness; the world is not *satya*, real. Whereas, we are *Ananda*, bliss; we are self-radiant consciousness; we are real; i.e., we are *sat-cit-ananda* (existence-consciousness-bliss).

The fourth thing is this. The world is not non-dual (One, without a second), Because, to render it as a ‘second thing’, I myself am present. Whereas, I, am the non-dual Self; one without a second.

(Kathopanishad Pravachan - 1: p 27, 29, 193)

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60 *Vasana* – Subtle desires, inclinations, stored unconsciously in the mind. These *Vasana*-s are based on one’s behavior across lives.

61 *Acts of anyAya* – Acts of impropriety; unethical, immoral, illegal, unjust acts.

## March 28

### Life, unshaken

To lead a life of truth and purity, man should see Godliness everywhere.  
Come let us talk of Ishwara – the Almighty Lord.

Knowledge of God is Vedanta. Meditation on God is Yoga. Love of God is Bhakti. And the inculcation of God's nature and virtues in one's own life is character building. Keeping these four points in mind, we begin describing God...

Seek that thing in this world, which never perishes, never changes; seek the Jnana of such a substance. Indeed, you too are a portion of that substance. In you too, somewhere or the other, there is that One-Essence-ness. Do notice this fact - *'I have experienced childhood, adulthood, and now, I am experiencing old age. With the passing away of childhood I did not pass away; with the passing of youth, I did not expire; and now, old age is passing on, but I am not going away with it; I am just the same, as I always am. So, do give your attention to this unshaken life of yours. Everything has slipped away; yet, this Atma (Self) of yours, this Brahman, this Parameshwara (Lord Supreme) remains intact, unchanged.'*

Look here! This knowledge is very useful in life. States of life change all the time. Sometimes, in life, one is in good health, and sometimes one is sick. Happiness comes sometimes, and sometimes sorrow. Sometimes poverty overcomes you, and sometimes, wealthiness. Despite all this, in your core Being, you are a part (a portion) of God. And so, do aspire to know God. Indeed, you too are like what God is; indeed, you are, verily, He.

Look at the life of Sri Rama. At the time he was to be crowned with Kingship, he was exiled to the forest. Even so, he remained unshaken. Rama does not bloom with happiness upon being informed of his coronation; and he does not wilt and dry up upon going to the forest. This quality should manifest in your life too. By seeing the life of Rama, nurture virtues in your life too. Have Bhakti for Rama; bring steadiness to your mind. Do meditate on Rama; your strength of mind will increase. Gain the knowledge of Rama;

and you will be just like him.

When a devotee expresses his Bhakti for Krishna, he says – “मेरे तो गिरधर हाथ बिकानी, होनी होय सो होय रे।” (I have sold myself into the hands of Giridhar Gopala! Let whatever happens, happen!) – Let anything happen; we remain as we are, holding on to God.

Creation happens; sustenance happens; dissolution happens; remembrance happens; forgetfulness happens; waking, dream, deep-sleep happens; but, across all these, Paramatma remains ever the same. You too should practice to be like that; ever the same, unmoved, unaffected. The nature/attribute/quality of *brahman* (Absolute Reality) is *sahishnuta* (endurance/tolerance). If someone thinks that the sky is blue, the sky does not think – ‘Oh! Someone has superimposed the stain of blueness upon my pure, colourless, self.’ If someone mistakes a rope to be a snake, the rope does not get angry over that. If someone thinks of you as being other than what you are in reality, there is no need to be distressed about it.

Try being like a tree. Give fruits; give flowers; give leaves; give fragrance; give tree-bark; give your inner wood; give your roots; give your seedling... And if someone begins to hack you down, remain unshaken. Do not rue – ‘I did so much for you; why are you doing this to me?’ My dear chap, let them do whatever they wish. To live this way, is the unflinching, unshakable, unshaken way.

(Ishanubhuti : p 41,42,43,44,45)

## March 29

### **Bondage is but a matter of make-believe**

It is the mind alone that is great or petty. If someone gets it into his mind that he is not capable of doing anything great, then there will be a decline in his ability to undertake big tasks. And on the other hand, if someone low on means and money has the frame of mind that says – ‘I can do this work’, then it is seen that even such a man, of little strength, is able to accomplish big tasks. Indeed, any feeling of self-deficiency is but a defect of the mind.

Once, when I was around 17 or 18 years of age, I wrote a letter to a Mahatma, stating that the spiritual Sadhana that I was advised to perform was too difficult, and that I was not capable of doing it; how then was I to get success? To this he replied – *“This attitude of yours is but a lowdown weakness of your mind. A human it is, who goes to the moon, travels in outer space; a human it is who does great research in science and accomplishes great inventions. You too are a human. Therefore, have this certainty that you can fly in the seventh sky; you can penetrate into the seventh pAtAla (region under the earth). You can attain the knowledge of yourself as being Lord-God Himself. You can know yourself as being the Non-dual Brahman; for you are indeed the Non-dual Brahman, and have been so right from before.”*

There is no bondage in this world that is capable of handcuffing you and putting you in some confinement. Whether it be the bondage of marriage, family, community, race, culture, regionality, or nationality; all such bondages are beliefs that we have imposed on ourselves, by our own imagination. *paap-puNya* (sin-virtue), heaven-hell, pain-pleasure; nothing whatsoever can stop you.

Sometime, somewhere, some experiences have come about in one’s life, and then ceased; fame came, and went away; infamy came, and went away; friends and relatives came, went... Lo! Hundreds of people have we loved and abandoned; and we have left hundreds of people after being



loved by them.

If you examine your life, you will realize all the places where your mind got stuck, and from where all did you move away...Actually, *Mukti* (freedom) is your very nature. Your life-aircraft is flying smoothly, with no hinderance. Your deathless nature is expressing itself unhindered, unstopped. 'Time' does not impose its effects on you; 'space' affects you not; nor does *vastu* (physical object) have any effect on you.

Pray, what is there in this world, without which you cannot live? What work is there without doing which you cannot live? What object is there, without getting which you cannot survive? Indeed, is there any such object? Is there any such bondage? '*mAnee mAnee bandhan mein AyO*' (*By make-believe, one became bound*). Indeed, bondage does not exist; it's all a false notion. It's like the story of the tied-up donkey. Once, there was a donkey, owned by a potter. Every day, when the potter had to go out, he would tie up the donkey to a post and untie upon his return. One day, there was no rope to tie the donkey with. The potter was very worried, because the donkey would surely stray away. Seeing his anxiety, a Mahatma told him – "Just catch the donkey by his leg and pretend that you are tying him up." The potter did as suggested, and sure enough, the donkey foolishly believed that he had been tied up. When the potter returned in the evening, the donkey was standing in the same place. When the potter tried to take him along, the donkey refused to move. Even when beaten by a stick, he would only walk around the same spot. Seeing this, the Mahatma told the potter – 'Just as you pretended to tie him up, you may now pretend to untie him'. The potter did as advised, whereupon the donkey felt that he had been released from the bondage. We too are in such a state. If we inquire deeply, then nowhere shall we find bondage to be real. Bondage is but a matter of make-believe.

## March 30

### That which you desire

What do you desire? Money, mansion, glory, family, prestige, fame, *dharma*, *karma*, enjoyments, accomplishments, liberation, connections, separations? Come on, say something. If you believe that you desire any of these, then you are deluding yourself. Actually, you desire none of these. What you desire is the 'happiness' that you get from these. While these (money, mansion etc.) are multiple things, 'happiness' is single. The essence of all human efforts is this alone. It is 'happiness', 'happiness', 'happiness' ... Not anything else.

And so, what kind of happiness do you seek?

Do you seek the kind of happiness that is there at times, and absent at other times? No, no. You desire that kind of happiness, which is there always, forever, unbroken, constant, continuous...

Do you seek the kind of happiness that is present here, but is absent there? No, no. It should be here, as well as there – that's the kind of happiness we seek. It should be present everywhere. What is the 'happiness' that is present everywhere? Figure that...

Do you seek the kind of happiness that is got from this and not from that? No. You desire that kind of happiness that is got from this and from that; indeed, from everything, all the time, everywhere, continuously, forever.

All right... Tell us this... Do you seek the kind of happiness that is dependent on someone else? Controlled by someone else? The giver of which gives it sometimes, and doesn't give sometimes? Gives some, and doesn't give some? Gives somewhere, and doesn't give somewhere else? For sure, you do not desire such a happiness, which is based on dependence, slavery. You desire happiness that has no dependence whatsoever.

Now, then... Do you desire happiness that can be attained only by a great amount of toil? No, no, no. You desire happiness that can be attained without any effort, or with minimum effort. Yes, that's the kind of happiness

you seek.

Also, you would know that happiness is of the nature of 'known-existence', not 'unknown-existence'. What this means is this... Happiness should make itself perceptible. It should be seen, known... It should sparkle, glisten, shine... You do not desire happiness that is imperceptible, unknowable. You wish to 'know' happiness.

Now, combine all these points. You want happiness and happiness alone; all the time; everywhere; in all things; independent; toil-free ... And it should be perceptible, knowable... Right? And so, tell me this now. If such a happiness has a name, what can it be other than '*Parameshwara*' (Supreme, All-transcendent, Lord-Almighty) or Bhagavan? This may be your *Atma* (Self), *Brahman* (Supreme-Reality) or *Jagadeeshwara* (Almighty Lord of the universe)!

Now, we are not saying that you should desire Bhagavan or Ishvara. Nor are we asking you to inquire into the reality of your *Atma* (Self) or of the nature of *Brahman*. What we are saying is this – whatever it is that you desire, everything, is in reality *Parameshwara* alone.

It is in mistakenness that you end up believing gross, counterfeit, petty things to be objects of desire. '*I want this; I want that; I want it here; I want it there; I want it now; I want it at that time; I want it to be like this; I want it to be like that*'... By such notions, a veil is drawn over what you truly desire.

Net result is that a petty object suppresses a mighty one. The 'destructible' weighs down the 'indestructible'. A gram of weight presses down a ton. And so, you should understand the anatomy of this 'mistake' – root and stalk. Do not give it weightage. By the realization of the fuller-than-full 'Fullness, Allness', decimate and dismiss this delusion/ignorance. If you come to understand what is it that you actually desire, then you will find that it is near at hand. Rather, to say that it is 'near at hand' is to distance it. Do not delay. Do not make that 'happiness' to be something apart from you. It is your very self. This infinite happiness is you! It is the *Paramatma*, who is the in-dweller in the heart!

**मिलेइ रहत मानो कबहुँ मिले ना।**

*Ever attained; but seems as if never attainable.*  
*Ever at hand; but seems as if ever beyond reach.*

(Ananda Sutra : p 18,19,20,21)

## March 31

### The closeness ceased

Many people know that I used to live for some time in Gorakhpur, working in Gita Press. Once, I came from there to Karnavas, in order to have darshan of Udiya Baba.

Baba began enquiring from me about 'Kalyan' Gita Press. I told him that all was wonderful. That the people there were good, golden hearted. Sethji (Jaydayalji Goyandka) is a big proponent of Dharma. Bhaiji (Hanuman Prasad Poddar) has great bhakti in his heart. Everybody in Gita Press is very, very, good, said I. As it happened, I ended up praising in excess. Seeing this, Baba told me – 'Shantanu! Listen to this. I shall tell you a story.

Listen.

Once, there was a Faqir – a renunciate Sadhu. The only thing he spoke was this – He would go from village to village, asking – "Is there any *kabr* (tomb/grave) here? *Kabr?*" *Kabr* is a place where a dead body is buried. And this Sadhu would go from village to village, asking – "Is there any *kabr*? *Kabr?*" People could not understand what he wanted.

In one village, there was a knowledgeable householder, who had a good grounding in spiritual matters. He understood what the Faqir was asking for. And so, when the Faqir came to his village and asked 'Is there any *kabr*? *Kabr?*', while no one else responded, the good householder replied – 'Is there any corpse? Corpse?' To this question, the Faqir replied – "Here is a corpse', pointing out to his own body. The householder then pointed to his own house and said – "Here is a *Kabr!*"

Then, this 'corpse' went into that '*kabr*' and started living there. Some ten or twelve years elapsed. The Faqir hardly spoke or did anything. Had food, water, for sustenance.

One night, some thieves broke into that house, and looted all the gold, jewels etc., that were in the house. The Faqir was awake. When the thieves were getting away with the loot, there arose the thought in his mind – "I have been residing in this house for twelve years. And if this house is

burgled in front of my eyes, it is not a good thing.” Deciding thus, he quietly started following the thieves as they made their way out.

The thieves took the loot and hid it in a well in some unknown place, and went away. The Faqir tore his clothes, and made his way back to his house, keeping bits of torn cloth as markers of the way.

Next morning, the Faqir told the householder about the robbery that had happened in the night; told him where the stolen goods were hidden, and how to get there. The householder went and recovered all the stolen goods.

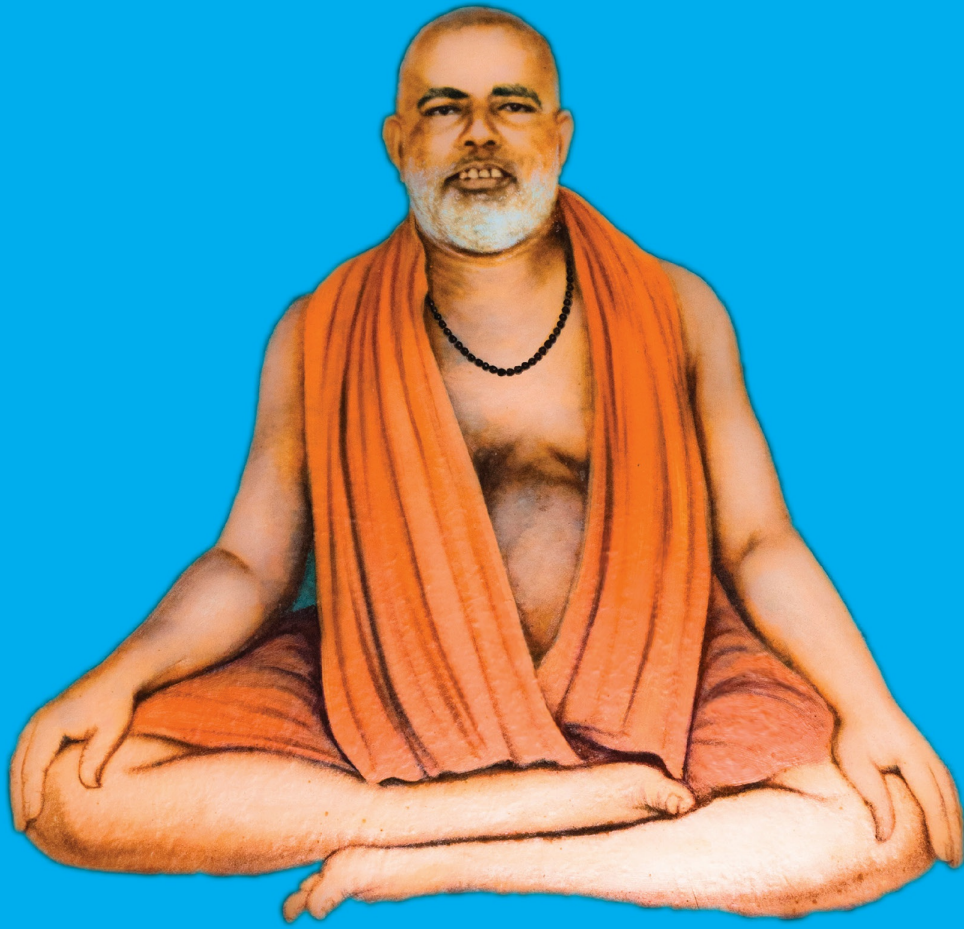
Upon returning, the householder asked the Mahatma – “What is real, the *kabr* or the corpse?”

The Mahatma replied – “The *Kabr* is real. The corpse is false.” And he left the house forthwith.

This was the story that Baba told me.

The effect of this story told by Baba to me was that the closeness that I felt for the Gita Press family, ceased.

(Brahmamurti Udiya Baba : p 79)



**Parampujya Sri Poornananda Teertha  
Brahmamurti Sri Udiya Baba-ji Maharaj**





वृष्णात् परं किमपि

नत्त्वमहं न जाने ॥

अविष्टा ॥ १०८६ ॥

# ANANDA RASA RATNAKAR



*People live; but not everyone knows the art of living. If you wish to learn the art of living, then cast a glance on Sri Krishna! If you wish to see a Jnani, see Him! If you wish to see karma (activities), see Him! If you wish to see a life of happiness, see Him! Mere talk of sat-chit-ananda, and the experiencing sat-chit-ananda in one's life – these are two different things. After all, sat-chit-ananda has to reflect in worldly life as well, isn't it?*

*Maharajshree:  
January 14 – Ananda Rasa Ratnakar*

*'Ananda Rasa Ratnakar' is a collection of selections from Hindi talks and writings of Maharajshree Swami Akhandananda Saraswati, structured as a daily reader. Extracted from over 80 books of Maharajshree, this collection of 366 articles is meant to be read one per day of the year. Released during the birth centenary celebrations of Maharajshree in 2010, the book has been well received by learned readers.*

*On the persistent request of devotees, an English translation of the book was decided to be brought out, in four volumes. For me it is a matter of pride that my close friend, Sri Kameshwar, in response to my gentle request, took this task of translation upon himself, and now, the first volume, covering articles from January to March, is in your hands. It is to be noted that Sri Kameshwar has been serving the cause of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi literature for the last many years. Surely, this English rendering has been possible only by the Grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, Brahmamurti Sri Udiya Baba, and Parampujya Maharajshree.*

*May this book, a vehicle of Bhagavat Kripa, bring joy to all readers and propel them forward in their spiritual journey.*

*Govindananda Saraswati, Vrindavan.*

