

Vicharasetu

The Path of Introspection

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To glimpse the oneness of oceans is not difficult, it is evident before the eyes. But to get at the oneness of Creation, abounding in infinite variety and multiplicity, a sustained spiritual quest is necessary. Such an effort has the immediate effect of redressing all kinds of agitation, which plurality or diversity is bound to cause to the mind. When the mind, as a result, becomes free and light, it can function and interact with natural clarity and ease. This will make all actions greatly facile and effective.

— *Swamiji*

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News & Notes

□ Centre for Inner Resources Development (North America): On Gurupoornima Day this year, CIRD (North America) was registered in Virginia State as a “not for profit” welfare organization. For the past 2 years, devotees in North America have been meeting for Satsangs, receiving inspiration and guidance from Poojya Swamiji, Nutan Swamiji and Mj via Tele-satsa´gs. From these satsa´gs coalesced a sa´kalpa (resolve) to serve their Guru through the four ‘S’s’ – Satsa´gaÅ, S;dhanj, Sande;zaÅ and Seva. Soon they expressed to Poojya Swamiji the need for a CIRD through which they could serve in his loka-sa´graha (World-welfare) mission along with the pursuit of their individual s;dhanj. Receiving his consent, a core group has been working in close contact with the Ashram for the past one year to complete the process of setting up CIRD (NA) as per American legal requirements.

□ Jñ;na Yajña in Malaysia: Poojya Swamiji, along with Ma and Nutan Swamiji, arrived in Malaysia on August 19 morning. Details of the programmes in Kuala Lumpur and Seremban were published in the July issue of Vicharasetu. Besides the public programmes, Poojya Swamiji will hold satsa´gs at CIRD every morning between 10:45 and 12:00. Also, from August 24 onwards, Nutan Swamiji will conduct classes on “From Death to Deathlessness” based on Kathopanishad, between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. Contact CIRD (Malaysia): 006 03 7781 6110

Although CIRD (Malaysia) was inaugurated in 2004, Poojya Swamiji started staying there only from 2005. To fulfill Poojya Swamiji’s wish to feed all those who come to CIRD for satsa´g, Malaysian devotees enthusiastically undertook the expansion and modification of the existing building, and in a very short period, an airy, spacious Annakshetra with sufficient preparation, storage, cooking and washing facilities has come into being. The devotees of Poojya Swamiji worked together for procuring suitable cooking vessels from India and Malaysia, finding cooks and arranging for provisions. A devotee wrote to Poojya Swamiji “Those who have been to the Ashram say that this place resembles the Annakshetra at the Ashram. I too think so.”

□ Discourses in Chennai: After a hiatus of almost 7 years, devotees and seekers in Chennai are joyously preparing to host Poojya Swamiji, Nutan Swamiji and Ma for a mini Jm;na Yajña. A three-day discourse series on “Loftier Dimensions of the Mind” based on Yoga V;siÅha R;m;ya_ãa will be held at the Music Academy, TTK Road from 5th to 7th September at 6:30 p.m. Contact: Sri M. Balasubramanian 044-2435 8521, Sri P.R. Natarajan 2499 0666/98410 46000, Sri N.N. Subramanian 2452 3654/98410 97740

□ Book Release: The long awaited 3rd edition of “Quietitude of the Mind” (revised) will be released during the Chennai Jm;na Yajña, in the first week of September.

□ Anna-vastra D;na Satra: The 21st Annual Anna-vastra D;na Satra commenced from the Ashram, with the first distribution covering 5100 beneficiary families, over two days

(17th and 23rd July). On 23rd, Swami Jnanatmananda ji Maharaj, Head of Bhaarat Sevashram Sangha, Jamshedpur and Swami Atmajnanananda ji Maharaj, Secretary of their Delhi Centre, were also present at the Ashram and participated actively during the programme. Participants of Gurupoornima-Retreat, along with some children of Cultural Heritage Class, packed the rice and helped in the sublime and orderly distribution.

At Vyasa Tapovanam, D;na Satra programme was held on Aug 14. Poojya Swamiji and Poojya Purushotham Swamiji distributed rice, clothes and p;yasam to more than 4,500 families. Total number of beneficiaries this year is about 22,000 with distribution taking place from nearly 50 centres.

The response to the D;na Satra from those participating in this holy mission, has been quite heartening. Though held in Kerala, the event has a global relevance with many sending their offerings even before receiving our intimation. Poojya Swamiji's mission of instilling the d;na-dharma – sharing of one's resources with the rest of humanity – in the hearts of the people, seems to be casting its roots far and wide.

□ Cultural Heritage Class: 13th August, was a special day for the children of the "Cultural Heritage Class". Poojya Swamiji along with Nutan Swamiji and Ma presided over a prize distribution ceremony held in the V;na Bhavan to recognize the growing talents of these children. For the past few weeks, cultural competitions on ;loka-chanting, quizzes and story telling etc. were being conducted to inspire the children. While some received prizes for their growing talents in these areas, others were awarded for good behaviour, regular attendance and also for scoring above 90% in their schools. Delighted by their proficiency in chorus chanting of ;lokas and lauding their talents, Poojya Swamiji emphasized the importance of the cultural inheritance and characteral integrity that would remain with them as life-long assets.

□ Ashram Building Reconstruction: The second phase of reconstruction of the Ashram Main building is about to commence. The plan includes a sound-proof octagonal Meditation Room, a small Satsa'g Hall, Poojya Swamiji's office & meeting room, Publications Gallery, Ashram Office and Reception.

□ 32nd Delhi Annual J;na Yajna (8 –28 November): Poojya Swamiji, along with Ma will leave for Delhi on November 08 and return to Ashram on November 28. To fulfill the wish of Delhi devotees for an extended programme, Nutan Swamiji is expected to be in Delhi for about four weeks from November 15 onwards.

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S̥ttvika Knowledge

Perceiving Oneness in Many

As the discussion reaches the concluding phase, Krishna's analysis also grows subtler, deeper and more incisive. The classifications he presents also grow finer. This is something that students and seekers should particularly note and assimilate. As seeking advances, the spiritual concepts should also become clearer and more comprehensive.

Karma, when closely studied, is but a course of vibration or movement (spandana or calana). When coupled with an attitude and objective, it becomes an action, an effort for achieving an end. Attitude and aim are inner notes originating from the mind and intelligence. These are quite variant – good or bad, short-ranged or long-ranged, worldly or spiritual, self-centric or expansive.

The role of spirituality is to discover the inner notes of attitude and aim, and strive to make them nobler, purer and more pervasive. Arjuna is told clearly that his attitude should not be just to confront and kill the opponents for regaining the kingdom, proving his fighting skill and superiority. He has to discern well in what fundamental context does fight become necessary. What is its relevance to the individual and the society? The subject calls for a deeper analysis and the right perspectives have to be evolved.

Krishna discusses the matter so wholesomely that Arjuna's selfish and narrow views melt away and in their place benevolent, universal and all-enfolding perceptions rise forth. To bring about this inner transformation of purity, nobility and expansion, the sole focus has naturally to be on one's own mind and intelligence.

Krishna thus enters into a very beautiful, subtle analysis of attitudes as well as objectives that generally govern human activities. The discussion is very relevant to the process of spiritualizing the seeker's personality and all that it displays.

An action is always an expression or display of the actor. The actor has his character and qualities. He is not the body or senses alone. Senses are at best gross, external instruments for action. But before employing the senses, each time a specific wish or will must originate from within. And wherefrom does this emerge? It is a creation of the mind and intelligence, the knowledge constituents.

Before proceeding to cause any activity, a clear concept, knowledge, about it is inevitable. This knowledge (j̥m̥ nam) then becomes the first factor in the context of any karma, activity. Every action must have a clear objective (j̥meyam) to be gained. This then becomes the second factor. The one having this knowledge (parij̥m̥ t̥j̥), is the third factor, says Krishna. Thus there are j̥m̥ nam, j̥meyam and parij̥m̥ t̥j̥.

Next in the list are the instruments for action, like eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, etc. (kara_ am). Other external material instruments come in addition. With these instruments alone, the actual action (karma) is performed, implemented. Equally so, there should be the actor (kart̥j̥), performer, the subject of the action.

Krishna's enunciation does not end here. He categorizes the intelligence also as three-fold. Then he goes on to describe qualities of the will, which is responsible for the execution of an act.

Any activity is an interaction between the sentient factors within the body and the insentient ones outside. By enunciating in this manner, Krishna takes us from the gross and external to the subtle and internal. A great deal of spiritual knowledge and refinement can be imbibed by the seeker from this enunciation.

To grasp and assimilate these ideas will itself mean a subtle measure of spiritual depth and refinement.

**ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ।**

(18.18)

The knowledge, the object to be known and the knower – thus three-fold are the persuasion for action. The instrument of action, the action (itself) and the actor – these three constitute action.

The persuasion or compulsion for any activity is first to be traced to the knowledge about it. Take, for instance, farming. It will be possible only when one has the requisite measure of knowledge about the activity. What is meant by farming, how it is done, what all factors are necessary for tilling, sowing, planting or transplanting, to nurse the sprout or plants and finally to harvest and process – unless knowledge about these is there, no farming can be thought of at all. This is the *jñānam* Krishna speaks about.

What is the objective of farming? What is its immediate personal relevance and what is the larger social, collective relevance? What is the ultimate purpose to be served by farming? How do we evaluate it? *Jñeya* refers to this, the object and purpose to which the activity links. To produce a crop of grain, fruit or flower, which the society needs in one way or another, is a pursuit of far more significance than an ordinary farmer or farmland worker thinks of or imagines.

These two, namely *jñānam* and *jñeyam*, will not themselves complete the activity. If knowledge is available in books or even with someone, will it suffice? There must be someone, the knower (*parijñātī*), through whom or by whom it could be implemented.

Thus unless (i) the knowledge, (ii) the object it relates to and (iii) the knower are concurrently present and function with mutuality, no act can result or even be thought of. These three are the source and inspiration for activity in any field. Krishna's analysis is quite general, not particularly related to spiritual or religious activity.

Next come the actual constituents of activity. In this list, the first is the organ or instrument (*kāraṇam*) to do the activity. Its movement or vibration actually results in activity (*karma*). To employ the instrument and cause activity, there must be the doer (*kartā*), who originates the entire pursuit.

Kāraṇam, *karma* and *kartā* thus become the three constituents of activity in all cases.

Krishna now categorizes the six into groups of three and then submits them to a three-fold classification, based on *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the three *guṇas* of Nature:

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गणसंख्याने यथावच्छण तान्यपि ।। (18.19)

Knowledge, action and the actor become three-fold based on their guṇas, as discussed in the system classifying Guṇas. Listen duly to this also. Jṣṇam here has a very significant place as a fundamental coordinate of the individual, the seeker. It is jṣṇam that guides his vision and attitudes in general as well as in particular. Thus it can be broad, immaculate and benevolent or narrow, constricted and harmful. First Krishna speaks of the most sublime, the sṇttvika kind that can lead to universality:

सर्वभतेष येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेष तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् । (18.20)

Know that knowledge to be sṇttvika, by which one perceives the Singular, Imperishable and Undivided presence in all the manifold beings. In front of our senses, the world is amply divided, various. The senses categorize these endless, numerous objects into five – sound, touch, taste, colour and smell. In each reigns ample variety. In spite of such unlimited variety, the sṇttvika intelligence will always be able to perceive a singular Presence, interpenetrating and enfolding all.

For many things to be in a place, each of them has to be distinct from the rest. This distinctness, in fact, is what conduces to variety or plurality. This is only the first fact, inevitable, no doubt. But there is equally the other deeper fact that in all these distinct individual entities, something singular and uniform also permeates. For instance, is not air present in every one and all? The bodies are different, but the air surrounding and permeating them is the same. Likewise, the same kind of heat permeates the living bodies. The separateness prevailing at the bodily level is no interference to the inner unity. In fact, physical separateness is what enables the permeating oneness. But this is a point people are not given to think about. They do not feel the need for such a probe or discovery.

The sensory perceptions are no doubt true, necessary. But that does not mean that we should not submit the variety to any intelligent enquiry to find out to which extent or to what depth the sensory variety prevails. The spiritual seeker has to be relentlessly discerning and explorative to unearth the deeper level of singular existence.

Every sensory entity is perishable by nature. This means, it constantly changes, getting destroyed every moment. How can such a destructible entity last forever? Yet, the world and its contents are long-standing. Naturally, something Imperishable must be acting as their support, substratum, enabling the perishability to endure.

This Imperishable is the spiritual Presence, the Soul, Brahman, not readily perceptible to the senses like the objects. The perishability of the sensory entities enables and persuades the seeker to arrive at the subtler uniform Presence by his dedicated search.

Normally, the divided character revealed by the senses enslaves the mind, generating various emotions and conflicts. And people are left with no means of dealing with them

to arrive at some kind of softness and lightness helpful for benign behaviour and interactions.

When by spiritual introspection, the seeker becomes rich in his inner depths and expansion, his mind becomes free and begins to unearth the singular uniform Existence permeating all entities. This deeper note of singularness will govern his mind more than does the variety and dividedness.

While with the senses he sees multiple entities, the greater vision he has will be of the single Presence revealed in them all. The plural things just become a cause and occasion to bring to light the majesty and magnificence of the single Imperishable Presence. The external loses the impact of its imprint and the inner takes over.

Is this kind of *śīttvika jñāna* more a pious imposition or is it a true, realistic, factual attainment?

Let us analyze sensory knowledge and perception, to begin with. For the external existence, be it alive or non-alive, our senses are the only proof. If this be so, the subject requires further exploration with a view to ascertain how far have senses their independence in adjudging external existences.

The senses cannot work independently. They are at best links and instruments to the mind. When the mind feels like seeing, only then the eyes are employed for the purpose. So the senses follow the dictates of the mind. Before as well as during seeing, the sensory function rests upon the mind.

In seeing, what do the senses do? What exactly is their role? They only act as a medium in linking the object to the inner mind. The objects remain where they are and senses remain in our body. One does not replace the other, nor merges or blends with the other.

Like the lens in a camera, the senses merely help in forming or gaining an imprint of the objects, inwardly by the mind itself. Every sensory perception is, in effect, nothing but a mind-imprint. Any imprint the mind causes by and in itself, can only be mind's – mental, like a wave or bubble, which is watery. It is of the mind, in the mind and for the mind. It is not the senses that preserve and remember the imprints. The mind alone makes use of the imprints every time.

So all perceptions, like their memories, are solely internal, mental. Whether of green, red or yellow object, as mind-imprint everything is but mental. Sounds, smells, touches and tastes also are, like colours, mind-imprints and therefore mental. The same mind, an expression of Consciousness, displays all these in itself, as its products.

Imprints are various, infinitely so. Yet, all of them are but creations of the same mind and hence mental alone. Cannot the keen seeker arrive at this truth and be conscious of it every time? In other words, every perception, like thoughts and memories, is but an extension of the Consciousness alone. In every such extension, should not the discerning seeker find the same single Consciousness?

This is the content of all our perceptions and experiences. Hence whenever we perceive and interact with the variety outside, the reality is that it is all the unique display of the same inner Consciousness. Wisdom becomes *śīttvika*, when it comprehends this truth and applies it to all sensory perceptions, objects and existences. *Sattva-guṇa* is noted for

light, wisdom and happiness. Hence the s_ittvika wisdom will always discern matters, bringing forth the truth about them.

As the mind is present in every imprint in it, so too in every form of existence perceived by the senses, the same inner Consciousness alone permeates.

Does an image in water change the nature of water or the reflection in a mirror change its glass the least? Likewise, no imprint changes the mind's character. This is the truth, which s_ittvika wisdom alone will be able to unravel and reveal unambiguously.

Look at the huge forest. Trees, plants, creepers and the rest fill it to the full. In fact, the thick greenery conceals the whole earth below. Does this mean the greenery alone is there, not the ground, its support and source? Or the fact is that the entire green canopy rests on the single earth?

The vegetation consists of ample variety, but its substratum, the earth is but one. It is the earth's minerals that get transformed into plants, creepers and trees. As true is the variety of vegetation, more so is the singular nature of the earth below.

In what a beautiful harmony are the huge forests, that feast the eyes and the inner perception that delights the intelligence! Both are so mutual and complementary!

To glimpse the oneness of the oceans is not difficult, because it is visually evident. But to get at the oneness of Creation, consisting of infinite variety and multiplicity, a sustained spiritual quest is needed. The difference is obvious.

To discern the truth of the permeating Oneness of existence, s_ittvika wisdom is necessary. Such wisdom has the immediate effect of relieving all kinds of agitation, which plurality or diversity is bound to cause to the mind. When the mind becomes free and light, it can function and interact in the world with a natural clarity and ease, making all actions greatly facile and effective.

(to be continued)

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Growth & Enrichment of Devotion – III

Ma Gurupriya

[Continued from August issue. 3rd part of the talk delivered by Mj on 29th December 2005 in the 4th āreemad Bhj gavata Tattva Sameekshj Satram. – Ed.]

The Great Gift of Fearlessness

I would like to chant some ūlokas composed by Shankaracharya. Are you ready to listen? I think one of the greatest blessings I have got from my Guru is my love for Sanskrit ūlokas. When I started learning and chanting ūlokas as suggested by my Gurudev, a new horizon opened before me. I don't know wherefrom tunes were coming to me. Each word opened up in my mind its deepest meaning. But as you know, sarvendriyij ūjm jarayanti tejaÅ – all our sense organs lose their power with age. As I am becoming older, my memory is failing. I have a fear whether when I start chanting I will forget the lines. Let me try:

द्वारसंसारदवाग्नितप्तं दोधयमानं दरदष्टवातैः ।
भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाहि मृत्योः शरण्यमन्यद्यदहं न जाने ॥

(VivekacE. jma_i 36)

The seeker goes to the Knower and says, "I am scorched by the wild-fire of worldliness. As if a big storm is trying to sweep me away. I am afraid. I do not know what to do. I have come at your feet. Please protect me. Tell me how to transcend this fear of death."

There is a beautiful ūloka by Bhartshari on fear and fearlessness:

भोगे रोगभयं कले च्यतिभयं वित्ते नपालादभयम्
माने दैन्यभयं बले रिपभयं रूपे जराया भयम् ।
शास्त्रे वादिभयं गणे खलभयं काये कतान्तादभयं
सर्वं वस्त भयान्त्रिं भवि नृणां वैराग्यमेवाभयम् ॥

(Vairjgyaatakam 31)

Everywhere there is fear. Bhoge roga-bhayam – If we have many things to enjoy, the fear is whether I will have health to enjoy. Kule cyuti-bhayam – If we are proud of our lineage, then there is the fear of losing the reputation. The son may misbehave or become immoral to spoil the reputation. Vitte nãpilit bhayam – If we have acquired a lot of property, the fear will be that the King may take it away. If it is not the King, it might be the thief or dacoits.

Mjne dainya-bhayam – In prestige or fame, there is the fear of being humiliated. Bale ripu-bhayam – If we are powerful then we will be scared of the enemy who might be even more powerful. RÈpe jarjy bhayam – If we are proud of our beauty, then we are afraid of old age and decay. We will do so many things to protect our beauty.

ājstre vjdi-bhayam – In scriptural erudition, there is the fear of getting defeated by another scholar. Gu_e khala-bhayam – In having merits and qualities, we have the fear

that somebody may vilify us. K_i ye k_ṛt_i n_ti t bhayam – As long as we have the body, we are afraid of death.

Sarva_Æ vastu bhay_i n_vita_Æ bhuv_i n_ṛ_i _Æ vair_i gya_m-eva-abhayam – In this world, everything is laden with bhaya, fear. The only abhaya, fearlessness, is Vair_i gya. Vair_i gya means desirelessness. Know that nothing belongs to us. Any possession is the cause of fear and anxiety. The redemption lies in getting rid of possessiveness.

So, this seeker comes at the feet of the Knower and asks:

कथं तरेयं भवसिन्धुमेतं का वा गतिर्मे कतमोऽस्त्यपायः ।
जाने न किञ्चित्कृपयाऽव मां प्रभो संसारदःखक्षतिमातनञ्च ।।

(Viveka_Æ _i ma_i 40)

He enquires: “How shall I cross this worldly ocean, O Lord, my Master? I have come with a lot of agitation in the mind. What is the way out? Is there a redress? I am surrounded by darkness. I do not know the way. Please tell me what I should do and protect me.”

I told you earlier what the nature of a Mah_i tm_i is. He is karu_i -sindhu – an ocean of mercy. When he sees a seeker like this, he wants to lift him up. So he looks at him with a glance full of love and mercy. And what does he give him? Dady_i t-abh_ṛti_Æ sahas_i mah_i tm_i – Instantly he gives him fearlessness. Can we buy fearlessness from the market? Can we get it from anybody as a gift? We cannot. But a Guru can give it. He looks at the humble devotee with graceful eyes, merciful eyes, and immediately there is fearlessness. There is one more _i loka:

न भद्रदानं न सर्वर्णदानं न गोप्रदानं न तशान्नदानम् ।
यथा वदन्तीह महाप्रदानं सर्वेषु दानेष्वभयप्रदानम् ।।

(Subh_i Āitam)

If I gift you some land, it is a great gift. Is it not? The _i loka says: “No! Neither gold, nor cows, nor even food can be considered as mah_i -prad_i nam, the great and the most noble gift. Then, what is that greatest gift? Sarve_À d_i ne_À abhaya-prad_i nam – bestowing fearlessness is the best d_i na of all. But, this supreme fearlessness only a Mah_i tm_i can give, because he has reached the abode of fearlessness. And how? By having supreme devotion to the Lord and embracing the Lord in his heart:

मन्येऽकतश्चिदभयमच्यतस्य पादाम्बजोपासनमत्र नित्यम् ।
उद्विग्नबद्धेरसदात्मभावाद्द्विश्वात्मना यत्र निवर्तते भीः ।।

(āreemad Bh_i gavatam 11.2.33)

It is from Bh_i gavatam. It says: “For people suffering from miseries caused by their wrong identification with the body, constant worship of the Lotus Feet of the Lord is the only way to rise above fear and suffering.” But, why is it that we are not able to do it? How to do it? There comes the role of the Guru. If we are associated with a Sadguru, he

will watch us, correct us and tell us: "See, you have drifted from the path. Come back, my son, I will hold your hand and show you the path again and again. Even if you fall, do not be disheartened. I will again lift you up and put you on the right path."

If this is the role of the Guru, then why, in spite of having a Guru, we are not able to reach the destination? Because, we are yet to become a *ġiĀya*, a disciple. We may have holy association for ages. We may be going to a *Mahġtmġ*, a *Sannyġsin*, a Guru for a number of years. But we will remain what we are unless we become a *ġiĀya* and follow the Guru's instructions. We have to be receptive. We have to be open before him.

(to be continued)

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143 The Right Perspective on Sukha-DuÅkhas

25 July 2005

Harih Om Tat Sat. I wonder whether the sukha and duÅkha discussion we had last night as applied by the concepts of sat and asat has clung to your mind and whether you have been thinking and reflecting on it. I would like to continue the discussion for a short while now.

Our purpose is to tackle the mind and redress the troubles and torments it generates. We also want to illumine the intelligence. Our mind is generally engaged in thinking about external objects and their impressions. So, let us give the mind and intelligence something loftier to constantly look into and enquire into.

When the mind and intelligence are occupied subjectively or spiritually like this, that occupation itself will carry us through and to that extent the external allurements will lose their importance. And ultimately you will find that your own mind, instead of depending upon external objects, starts generating its own internal comforts and delights.

Whether it is through interactions or not, it is the mind alone that generates delights and comforts. When the intelligence too gains ample clarity through knowledge, that knowledge-realization also will start giving you a lot of delight, so much so that external material object-based-delight will have lesser hold on you.

Now, let us apply the concepts of sat and asat to sukha and duÅkha. Sukha as a substance or as an independent existence has no basis. It is not sat. DuÅkha also has no basis of its own. Then how is it that they are manifesting?

See, no example can be perfect and complete. Examples can be helpful in understanding the concept. Think of fire. Fire certainly denotes an object. It reveals itself through two aspects: It generates heat and it brings about brilliance. Light and heat are the two properties or expressions of fire. Heat is a form of energy; so too is light. They are not themselves fire. But fire gives rise to these. We cannot have fire without giving rise to these two.

In the same manner sukha and duÅkha are expressions or revelations which a third factor gives rise to. What is that third Factor in the presence of which sukha and duÅkha are felt, and are expressed?

If you go on probing and thinking in this manner you will find sukha or duÅkha ceases to become important. Instead, that Third Substance which gives rise to sukha and duÅkha – that causal factor or the Source – becomes a revealed entity. That entity is constant. It is the basis.

This Source reveals sukha and again after sometime it reveals duÅkha. Both of them are alternately revealed by It. Now understand that this Third Factor, the Revealer can be sought, known and realized.

So, instead of running after sukha – which at best has only been deluding you – its presence becomes an occasion or a compulsion for you to search for and find out the source of sukha. In the same manner when duÅkha manifests – leaving the feelings of duÅkha aside – you must look for the source. And you will find the source of sukha and duÅkha is the same. It remains intact and is present uniformly.

When you are able to shift your attention from the transitory sukha-duÅkha to the ever present source, the problem of sukha and duÅkha ceases. Sukha no longer deludes and attracts and duÅkha no more afflicts and repels.

**आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जन ।
सखं वा यदि वा दःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥**

(Bhagavadgeeta 6.32)

He who sees the Self everywhere – in the instances of sukha or duÅkha – and is established in Its uniformity, is known as the supreme Yogin.

This is what Krishna says in Bhagavadgeeta. See everything and all alike. See all things around you with this vision. When you have likeness towards sukha-duÅkha, it virtually means likeness towards all the external causes, events and instances which bring about these.

What is meant by seeing everything as alike? It is seeing the Self everywhere – the Self, Ētmj being the source giving rise to sukha-duÅkha. In sukha you find the Self and in duÅkha also you find the same Self so much so that sukha and duÅkha become the same to you. When in both you see the Source, they lose their distinction and also their effects.

When you are given to this as a s; dhanj, intensity of sukha and duÅkha progressively declines, to become virtually extinct. Well, the state of total extinction may not be reached, nor is it necessary. To some extent sukha will be there. DuÅkha will be there too. To understand this, think of a man in coma. As long as he is in the state of coma nothing happens to him. Even if you prick him or cut his body, he may not be aware. He is not interactive.

We don't want that. We want to have an active and vibrant state of life. In order to have such a vibrant state of life, let the constant alternates of sukha and duÅkha prevail. Then the state of dense dullness will not come. We want to remain vibrant and active. So the sukha-duÅkhas are inevitable to keep us wakeful and be engaged in interactions. The interactions are preserved, but free of their afflicting, tormenting, and distracting effects. Sukha does not distract and duÅkha does not afflict.

This is what Krishna says:

दःखेष्वनद्विग्नमनाः सखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्निरुच्यते ॥

(Bhagavadgeeta 2.56)

He who remains unruffled in duÅkhas and un-yearning, un-hankering amidst sukhas, who is constantly given to sublimate and transcend r_i ga, dveÅa and bhaya (desire, resentment and fear) is a sthitadhee. He is verily a muni, one given devoutly to renunciation.

You will have ample sukhas and comforts, but you will not have spªha (yearning or hankering) towards them. May be you will have a variety of duÅkhas also. But they will not agitate, afflict and torment you. In the company of both, in various degrees and measures, you will still remain abundantly uniform and unaffected. You will always be aware of the presence of the Causal Source. That is a very beautiful state provided you can understand it.

It requires an extremely subtle and sharp intelligence. We are not speaking of any external things and research into them. These are regular and repetitive experiences – but with one difference. By delving into these experiences you are reaching an altogether different transcendental realm – the Source. Be flooded and inundated by the Source and live in its splendour and brilliance.

Harih Om Tat Sat

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Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Last night, Binita was telling me that I should tell all of you something inspiring. I said: "Unless you ask me some questions, how will the satsang be effective?" "No Swamiji," she appealed, "without being specifically asked, you please say something". Then I started explaining how the scriptures tell us a variety of things and how a good seeker should rightly take to those statements which have a bearing on the mind, and on s; dhan; .

Always look for those scriptural statements which can be applied to your daily life and s; dhan; . If you are able to discern them and if you start applying them in your life, I think, it will make a great difference. Unless all of you have sufficient stock of spiritual material with you, your progress will be slow and limited. Fill the mind with spiritual statements, spiritual aphorisms and spiritual analysis. That means your whole thought process should become spiritual.

The whole of the Bhagavadgeeta dialogue deals with the mind and intelligence. Sri Krishna was providing ideas one after another, and Arjuna was listening to and absorbing them with unshaken ;raddh; . The outcome was a complete change in Arjuna's personality. He resolved to take up the battle with a free and enlightened mind. It was by exposure to the ideas presented by Krishna, that Arjuna's perspective changed. So, reflect upon these ideas and absorb them.

Maa is teaching you a number of verses. I think this learning of verses is a much more effective s; dhan; than anything else. But how far you respond to it remains to be seen. Are you learning them, and remembering them? As you keep absorbing them, your whole being should become spiritual. Bhagavadgeeta says:

तदबुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्त्रिषुस्तत्परायणाः ।

tad-buddhayaÅ-tad-; tm; naÅ-tan-niÅh; Å-tat-par; ya; ; Å (5.17).

There are four clauses here: Tad-buddhayaÅ – those whose intelligence is steeped in That. Intelligence, buddhi, should be given to reflecting upon spiritual Truths.

Tad-; tm; naÅ – those who see themselves identified with That. Your enquiry should be: "Am I not wholesomely spiritual, wholesomely devotional? Being a wholesome seeker, how did I slip? Is this the way? Where is the wrong? Where did I distance myself? Am I not the Self? Let me abide by this Truth. I am the Self, different from the body." That identity with the Soul should be there. And that identity should set right all errors and omissions in thoughts and behavioural expressions.

Tan-niÅh; Å – those whose constant pursuit is That. Your only pursuit should be that of gaining identity with the Self by virtue of reflection done by the intelligence and absorption by the mind. That alone should be your niÅh; .

Tat-par; ya; ; Å – those to whom That alone is the refuge. That alone should be your support and help. Drop all other reliance completely.

See, our R comes here regularly. He still wears the sacred thread and follows all the rituals on special days. He has a number of religious obligations, I believe. As long as

these other pursuits are there, tan-niÅh; – that exclusivity in this pursuit – will not be had.

He should reflect: “I am a seeker and seeking is my niÅh;. Every ritual is answered by this niÅh;. Every duty is met by this niÅh;. I have nothing else to become. I need no other discipline. This and this itself will look after everything”. This kind of exclusiveness is tan-niÅh;. And for those given to this exclusiveness, what is the assurance that Krishna gives?

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्यपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ (9.22)

For those who take to the thoughts of the Supreme exclusively, making such exclusiveness itself the core and content of their worship, the Supreme itself ensures their welfare and prosperity.

Krishna does not advise you to run to a temple or a special abode, whenever difficulties arise. Do not look for any change. “I am a devotee. I am a seeker. Whatever is, let it be. Whatever will take place, let it. I need nothing more.” – this kind of reliance you should have. Instead, if you look for some other refuge, some other reliance, that feeling is the slip. That is the error, insufficiency.

Similarly, whenever there are shortcomings in your interactions, you should see the cause for it. “Did I speak properly? Was my attitude right? If it was not right, why was it not right? Where was the k; ma in me? Where was the krodha? Was there r; ga, dveÅa or bhaya?” This constant examining of your mano-vrttis is the niÅh;. Have a sense of refuge in this.

All of you are struggling. What is the struggle? Whenever we explain a proposition or an aspect of s; dhan; – may be you understand it at that time – but that understanding is not able to wash and remove the stains in you. The understanding has not become a broomstick. The impurity is not getting removed by that understanding. The knowledge-orientation should become a broomstick and sweep your mind through.

Why is it that it is not taking place? It is because you are not sensitive to wisdom. Your mind and your intelligence are still opaque to spiritual wisdom. Maa told me this; Naya Swamiji mentioned this; Swamiji has revealed this. No further persuasion should be necessary. Why should there be any opacity?

If you are not able to be sensitive, and if you are not able to respond correctly, then who will know it? Nobody else will know. That examination and analysis can be done by you alone. You yourself will have to do it.

Unless the mind becomes sensitive to spirituality and spiritual wisdom, I don't think this s; dhan; can progress at all. How many years have passed – why should you not become wholesomely spiritual? How will you become? Have a sense of reliance on your niÅh;. You must be able to say: “I am a seeker. I am a devotee. I must always rely upon my niÅh; and nothing else” .

We are having different types of activities here. Many kinds of assistance and support are necessary for these. Huge funds will be required. Manpower will be required. There will be problems to be resolved. In all these things, my mind does not resort to any additional source for refuge or help. My reliance on God, on Providence is total. He is surrounding me. He is penetrating me. I am engulfed by Him. Besides this, what further do I need? Can I bring a basket of lotuses and place them on God's feet? Can I undertake a pilgrimage? Can I do any fasting? Because He surrounds me and permeates me, other than this reliance, nothing else is necessary.

In this perception, feeling, experience and realization, I think every form of s; dhan; is covered. And whatever is to follow, will follow. If something follows, well and good. If nothing follows, then also good. This is how you have to rub your mind and intelligence against the wisdom.

So, fill your mind with spiritual thoughts. And how will you do that? For that, you must have ample stock of spiritual material in you. This is where ųlokas play their excellent role. Learn at least one hundred verses. These verses should become part and parcel of your mind and intelligence. And they should start constantly ringing in you – suggesting solutions to your problems, correcting you, improving you, elevating, refining and reforming you, inspiring and empowering you.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

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Inaugural Address at Br̥hmaṣṭa Sammelana

[Poojya Swamiji was invited to give the inaugural address at Br̥hmaṣṭa Mah̥j-sammelana at Palakkad on 23rd April 2006. Extracts from his speech are presented below. –Ed]

Harih Om Tat Sat.

Dear and blessed sons and daughters of Bh̥rat:

When I look at you, I am reminded of the ancient Brahma-sadas, that used to be held in our country on important occasions like Y̥gas and Yajnas. The purpose of these assemblies was to enlighten people about the supreme Reality as well as the ultimate goal of human life. Bṛhad̥iraṣṭya Upanishad depicts one such assembly of King Janaka, in which Y̥jṇavalkya shone as the great Knower.

For a true Br̥hmaṣṭa, the sole refuge and strength for everything in his life lies within. Through religious and spiritual austere means, he must develop and access his inner glory. When harnessed, this will stand him in good stead in prosperity as well as adversity. We have abundant illustrations in our pur̥ṣas depicting such virtuous lives.

A Br̥hmaṣṭa is distinct from the rest because his life primarily embodies teaching and officiating over ceremonies. He has the task of enlightening and elevating others. This is not just restricted to religio-moral matters. No society can exist without teachers. A good teacher is honoured everywhere. A society is what the Teachers make it.

The Īgvedic G̥yatri contemplation, initiating a Br̥hmaṣṭa into Vedic life, paves the way for inner growth, refinement and strength. All the rituals and ceremonies are subservient to this.

Br̥hmaṣṭatva – not by Birth, but by Qualities

For generations, we have been guided by two epics describing human life and interactions. Both emphasize how righteousness or dharma has the intrinsic power to be effective everywhere. Human history is depicted in all its complexity in these narrations. And who are the people who authored these great epics?

V̥lm̥ki, who wrote R̥m̥yaṣṭa was a forest-dweller and a dacoit. Vy̥sadeva, the author of Mah̥bh̥rata was the son of Satyavati, a fisher-woman. Our culture looks to qualities and mere lineage is not the final consideration.

गणाः सर्वत्र पज्यन्ते पितृवंशो निरर्थकः

वासदेवो यथा तावद्-वसदेवो न नम्यते ॥

Qualities are adored everywhere. Family or lineage holds no meaning. Just as V̥sudeva is adored, (his father) Vasudeva is not.

This is best evidenced in the two epic authors. Our people esteem the epics as a treasure house of knowledge and guidance. A Br̥hmaṣṭa-birth may at best help as a conducive inheritance and environment. But the effort at building relevant qualities cannot, in any case, be spared by the individual and family. Do not be deluded in this.

The Four Ashramas

Human life consists of four phases. The first two are devoted to education and raising a family. By embracing brahmacharya and gṛhasthya, you will be gaining only half br̥hminhood. The other half consists of v̥jnaprastha and sanny̥sa.

Austerity and asceticism are indispensable for a Br̥hmaṇa. V̥jnaprastha initiates these and sanny̥sa completes them. Are you aware of this?

Maybe some of you are. That is why you preferred to have one like me to inaugurate this august assembly. Sreeman Ramachandran, your Chairman, insisted that I should come here and seeing his earnestness, I could not refuse. It expresses your fondness and affinity for Sanny̥sa. Very Good. You should intensify this affinity and incorporate adequate austere disciplines and pursuits in your life. Some of you should also embrace sanny̥sa. Remember that Sanny̥sins are born of householders and their life also is meant for householders.

Realizing the Inner Strength

As an individual, you are second to none. All, including Rama and Krishna, had only a body, mind, intelligence and ego. You too have these. Why feel poor, weak or timid? The Īgvedic G̥yatri gives all the strength and inner affluence you want. Float in inner profusion.

Compared to the constituents of the outer world, the inner ones are greater. Go to a seashore and look at the endless expanse. Does it not instantly get imprinted in your mind? Should not the mind then be greater than what it images? Likewise, go to a mountaintop. Take a grand look all around. By dint of what, do you see the infinite distances and variety? You have not gone to any object, nor have the objects come to you. Yet how is the seeing had? Your inner mind alone forms the imprint of all the distances and variety! Is it not superior to the objects outside?

Yes, the mind is far above matter. It is sentient. It is an expression of the Inmost Supreme Self. Sky is the limit for the mind. A Br̥hmaṇa knows this, contemplates on this and infuses the effects into his thoughts, words and deeds.

Serving the Society at Large

An individual is a part of the family. Likewise, the family is a part of the society at large. The individual, family, society, nation, globe – all these are concentric circles, mutually complementary. All our scriptures look for and emphasize this collective welfare.

A cell's well-being determines the health of the aggregate body. Likewise, the welfare of the individual and family determines society's health and cohesion. So, while paying sufficient attention to strengthen yourself and your family, foster equal concern for the society's welfare and growth too. Or else, a grave imbalance, disharmony, will result.

Hindu society is huge and complex. It has a number of divisions, groups and even classes. The teeming millions of Hindus have never been under one Teacher or Preceptor. We have many Gotras and Rishi lineages. Naturally, the Hindu society will always have a variety of leaders and teachers. Let it be so. Growth of any one group but contributes to the overall growth. May you be cohesive and strong. May your strength

benefit the rest. Let the other sections like NSS, SNDP and others also equally grow and prosper.

It is in this light that I have come here and lit the lamp of inauguration for this august assembly. In your deliberations, the widespread growth and cohesion of the whole Hindu society must be upheld in all earnestness.

As a Daḥanġmṡ Sannyġsin, I represent and uphold our eternal scriptures and what they stand for. To any Hindu group, I have the same message, in a manner adapted to their needs. My mission is to enlighten and strengthen the entire society. In fact, our message is valid for other religious groups also. We spiritualists transcend religious denominations and limitations.

Vedas enjoin ġġġ and pġrta as the disciplines for human life. ġġġ covers rituals and ceremonies. Many of you are not conscious of the other counterpart, namely pġrta. It denotes societal services. In ancient times, these consisted in making public roads, digging wells and tanks, planting trees on the footpaths, providing drinking water, constructing places of rest (inns) and the like.

The dimensions have changed. Educational Institutions and Public Health Centres are our present needs. In fact, these are eternal needs of any society. Educational Institutions are in fulfillment of the 'teaching role' of Brġhmaġas. Take up these pġrta items earnestly. A good educational institution is an asset to the society. It will always be acclaimed by all sections and groups.

Dedicate everything possible to bring up such institutions. The society will always esteem only such people who have shared their fortunes with others and striven for societal amelioration. Remember this. Any societal venture needs multiple contributions from people. Pool your resources. I would like to say anything up to 20 percent of your income would not be an excess.

Every individual begets his income from the society. He certainly owes it back to the society. So be liberal. Be liberal in words and thoughts, in giving and helping. Only then your family will have a sustaining benediction.

A true Brġhmaġa's life is for the sake of others – paropakġra-arthaġ idaġ ġartram (This body is for the benefit of others). He cannot be selfish or blind. His thoughts and contemplations are for world welfare. Sarve janġġ sukhino bhavantu (May all people become happy) is his choice prayer. So be societal in your mind and heart. Mere Atirudram and Mahġrudram will not suffice.

The true goal lies in realizing the Universal Reality and becoming expansive. So, give and share liberally. As are familial feelings, so are societal ones too. Both go together. As you enrich your family, empower the society too. Family is the fabric of the society, no doubt. Individual strength builds family health as well as societal wellbeing. Let this message be widely known.

(to be continued)

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Intensifying S_i dhan_i in Daily Life

Some Fundamental Concepts

– Nutan Swamiji

[“When you explain these spiritual concepts, Nutan Swamiji, we understand them very well. But later, at home, we are not sure how to apply them and benefit from them in our daily life...” – this has been the dilemma of many, including some serious s_i dhakas. Understanding the difficulties faced by them, at the conclusion of his afternoon classes “Intensifying S_i dhan_i in Daily Life” (during the Gurupoornima Retreat '06), Nutan Swamiji summed up the fundamental concepts seekers need to remember and follow in their daily lives. A handout (presented below) containing these was distributed to participants to facilitate subsequent s_i dhan_i . —Ed]

A. Spiritual S_i dhan_i

Step 1. Turn the outward mind INWARD.

Focus to shift from external objects, events and situations to the Mind's response to them.

Step 2. Look into the mind's responses and practise Expansion, Transparence and Evenness.

Expansion: Ensuring that whatever we think, speak or do, results in a feeling of expansion within.

Transparence: Removing the opacity and grossness caused by false ego and stealth, by practising straightforwardness and openness in thoughts, words and actions.

Evenness: Not to cling to what we like and not to fear what we dislike.

B. S_i dhan_i of Bh_i va-¿uddhiĀ

Mind is an expression of the Soul (Consciousness).

Bh_i va is the causal substratum bringing forth the thoughts, words and actions.

If the bh_i va is purified, then whatever expressions (thoughts, words or actions) arise from the mind, will also be pure.

If the bh_i va is impure, it is impossible to correct our expressions individually. Wrong expressions come from wrong bh_i va. Constricted expressions point out the sublimation to be brought in the bh_i va. Once the bh_i va is sublimated, the expressions automatically get corrected.

Bh_i va-ud_{dh}i means bringing in sublimation at this causal level of the mind. A pure mind itself is the Soul.

So, shift the focus from the thoughts, words & actions to the bh_i va giving rise to them.

C. How to Purify the Bh_i va

Worldly interactions with gross and fragmented objects breed grossness and fragmentation in the mind. To annul these effects and take the mind to its pristine unfragmented evenness, interact as often as possible with the concept of the taintless singular Soul. Try to shift the identity 'I' from the small selfish constricted personality to the infinite universal One – the Brahman.

Remember and Offer.

Remember your Real Universal Identity and offer your small ego
as an oblation to It.

D. Test of Growth

1. Freedom from dependence on external objects and situations. The mind must remain prasanna (placid) irrespective of the objective circumstances.
2. Fearlessness. Freedom from the fear of losing what we like, and fear of facing what we dislike.
3. Bh_i va-ud_{dh}i should make Meditational absorption facile, even spontaneous. The after-effect of absorption also would remain longer, even throughout the day.
4. In a nutshell, the effect of S_i dhan_i is Vair_i gya – a feeling of sky-like impersonality and impartiality growing within.

आकाशवल्लेप-विदरगोऽहं आदित्यवद-भास्य-विलक्षणोऽहम् ।
अहार्यवन्नित्य-विनिश्चलोऽहं अम्भोधिवत्पार-विवर्जितोऽहम् ।

ī kī ṛaval-lepa-vidrāgo'haḥ | ditya-vad-bhī sya-vilakṣṇo'haḥ |

ahī ryavan-nitya-viniṣcalo'haḥ | ambhodhivat-pā ra-vivarjito'ham ||

(VivekacE: j ma₃i 499)

Like the sky, unstained am I. Like the sun, self-luminous am I. I am ever poised
and unshakeable like the mountain. I am vast and unbounded like the ocean.

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